

A NEW BRIDGE MAGAZINE

Postcards From Germany

Crossword

The Abbot's Change of Mind

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A NEW BRIDGE MAGAZINE

Editor:

Mark Horton

Advertising:

Mark Horton

Photographers:

Ron Tacchi

Francesca Canali

Proofreaders:

Danny Roth, Monika Kummel, Herman De Wael

Typesetter:

Ron Tacchi

Reviews:

Martin Cantor

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Norwegian Blues

Kapital, a Norwegian news magazine, has reported that an appeal by Tor Helness and Geir Helgemo has found the original charges relating to taxation to be less-egregious than originally stated by Norway's Ministry of Finance. Consequently they have had their prison sentences reduced from 16 and 14 months respectively, to eight and six months. They must also pay fines of 250,000 NOK (roughly €25,000) and 200,000 NOK respectively.

A Sight of Bridge

The Hellenic Bridge Federation is running a project that is designed to teach bridge to those whose vision is impaired. At the beginning of October 2018, three teams of vision-impaired players contested their own tournament within the Pan-Hellenic Bridge Clubs Championship (which attracted 270 teams from all over Greece). Their teacher, Emmanuela Kaliampa, started playing bridge in 2012. She knows Braille, sign language, and teaches the history of art.

<http://youth.worldbridge.org/a-bridge-for-the-vision-impaired-by-marina-lantzouni-greece/>

Master Point Press Bidding Battle

Starting this month we are making changes to the prize structure for our Master Point Press Bidding Battle. Each month the three contestants with the highest scores will receive an e-book of a specific title. The books will be relatively advanced when technical, or of general interest. This month it is Peter Fredin's 'Master of Bridge Psychology'. A fourth prize will be awarded, using the time honoured method of a random draw from Mrs Tacchi's 'sorting-hat'.

Restoration

During the ACBL Nationals in Honolulu the Board of Governors readmitted Massimo Lanzarotti to the ACBL.

I tell you, there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents.

Luke, Chapter 15 Verse 10

Resolutions

Our cunning plan to publish this issue before the end of the year was thwarted (as so many cunning plans are) by unforeseen circumstances. So unforeseen, they have resulted in a slight delay, meaning that our salutations for Christmas and the New Year are delivered after the events.

Resolutions, like cunning plans, usually come unstuck, so we do not propose to make any. However, we see no harm in setting ourselves a target for 2019. It is to double the size of our readership. If every one of you encourages a friend to register our band of brothers will reach 20,000. So, to paraphrase Winston Churchill:

Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that if A New Bridge Magazine lasts for a thousand years, everyone will still say 'This was their finest hour'.

The Hills are Alive

The Austrian Bridge Federation is backing a revamped Festival in the World Heritage site of Wachau, 4-10 August 2019. It promises to be a great event. For more information email: wachauer-bridgewoche2019@bridgeaustria.at



East or West - Home is Best?

A recent posting on Facebook drew attention to the fact that the US State Department has issued a travel warning for citizens planning to go to China (the 2019 World Championships will be in Wuhan). Further investigation revealed that this is a 'two-level advisory' which urges increased caution and that other countries with a similar status currently include Belgium, France, Germany, Denmark & the United Kingdom.

Keep Bridge Alive

The University of Stirling is setting up a Keep Bridge Alive campaign which will run in February and March 2019 and will be linked to the Sociology of Bridge research projects.

For more information visit: <http://www.sociologyofbridge.wordpress.com>

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Test Your Technique

with *Christophe Grosset* see Page 51

IMPs. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

- ♠ AJ1094
- ♥ Q63
- ♦ 6
- ♣ K954



- ♠ 3
- ♥ KJ8
- ♦ AQ7543
- ♣ Q76

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥*	Pass	2NT

All Pass

This first problem of the year is an easy one ... but typically the kind that will make the difference between winning bridge and losing bridge, as the type of thinking required to solve it happens all the time. You are in 2NT after some optimistic bidding by partner and West leads the ♥4 (2nd and 4th). What is your plan?

Madeira Comes of Age

The Editor reports on the latest edition of the world-famous festival.

In November the best bridge ticket involves a trip to Madeira to the legendary Festival, this year celebrating its 21st incarnation.

There is no stopping the extraordinary phenomena that is the Madeira Festival. Last year it celebrated its 20th anniversary – and, to no one’s surprise it produced yet another record-breaking entry. Surprise, surprise – that record was eclipsed this time around. There are many reasons why this tournament is so successful; the location, the venue, the night-life, the weather, the cuisine – they all play a part, but the people who organise and run the event also go a long way to make it special. Miguel Teixeira and his partner Betty, Carlos Luiz, Pedro Nunes and Jose Julio are the organisers and they have put together a tremendous team.

For Ron Tacchi and me it is something of a ‘Busman’s Holiday’ but one that we hope to keep repeating for a good while yet.

After our traditional morning break, involving a bica (espresso) and a Pastel de nata (custard tart) it’s down to business.

‘Write something for the Bulletin’, says Tacchi. ‘About what?’, I reply. ‘Some of the deals they have already played’.

Personally I think Ron should have emailed David Bird, who writes a regular feature in *A New Bridge Magazine* entitled ‘Deals that Caught my Eye’ and asked him to contribute something, but he needs something today and mindful of the words of Andrew Marvel...*at my back I always hear. Time’s winged chariot hurrying near* I reluctantly decide to put pen to paper (in a manner of speaking).

This deal is from the National Simultaneous played on the first of November:

Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

	♠ 984		
	♥ 864		
	♦ QJ97		
	♣ 842		
♠ AQ	N	♠ K7653	
♥ –	W	♥ 95	
♦ A10654	E	♦ 832	
♣ AQ10765	S	♣ J93	
		♠ J102	
		♥ AKQJ10732	
		♦ K	
		♣ K	

The first question is what should South open?

Those singleton kings are of incalculable value, and the choice lies between 1♥, 4♥ or perhaps 1♣ for those playing Precision or some other strong club system.

After an opening bid of 4♥ West has an easy 4NT and East bids 5♣. With no room to manoeuvre would you as West advance to 6♣?

When Douglas Rotchell and Dave Blackman held the E/W cards their opponents Mara Vogt and Dorothy Springer played in 6♥ (undoubted!) which suggest that E/W might have bid 6♣ – if so they were the only ones in Madeira to do so.

The following day this was Board 18 in the IMP Pairs:

Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ KQ5 ♥ KQ8632 ♦ 2 ♣ KQ9		♠ 98762 ♥ 4 ♦ J109764 ♣ 3
♠ AJ10 ♥ J975 ♦ K83 ♣ J104		♠ 43 ♥ A10 ♦ AQ5 ♣ A87652

If South opens 1♣ North responds 1♥ (in the days when 1♣ promised real clubs North might have forced with 2♥) and South rebids 2♣. How would you continue? One possibility is to try 2♠ and then bid 3♣ over South's 2NT. Now you should be able to reach 6♣ without too much difficulty.

Donna Wood and Jade Barrett were the only pair to bid 6♣, which was worth 11.13 IMPs.

You might like to consider how you would approach the N/S hands were East to open 3♦?

It was too much to expect board 18 to deliver for a third time when the players sat down for the second IMP Pairs, but this deal was not without interest:

Board 25. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ J654 ♥ J763 ♦ Q53 ♣ 83		♠ K97 ♥ 1085 ♦ 864 ♣ Q1054
♠ AQ10832 ♥ 42 ♦ 1092 ♣ 92		♠ — ♥ AKQ9 ♦ AKJ7 ♣ AKJ76

If South opens 2♣ West is sure to bid 2♠ and when North passes East has an easy raise to 3♠. When South doubles North must choose between playing for a penalty (+800 on this layout) or bidding 4♥. In the latter case South is not going to stop short of 6♥ and the odd pair might stretch to 7♥.

On a spade lead declarer ruffs, draws trumps and takes three rounds of diamonds ending in dummy. With West just about certain to be 6-2-3-2 declarer takes the club finesse and then realises that there is no entry back to dummy to cash the long clubs!

Naturally you would take only two rounds of diamonds before finessing in clubs, thereby ensuring that you do not feature in a *Misplay these Hands with Me* story.

I would love to tell you if anyone bid 7♥ – but the movement meant this deal was not played.

Sun Sea and Slams

The traditional start to the Festival is the warm-up pairs. In the even numbered years Tacchi and I enjoy our annual outing where we always do just enough to make sure we are not amongst the prize-winners.

ANBM's David Bird is renowned for his dislike of low level contracts, especially 1NT. Whilst these can be very important in a Pairs event they are not the type of deals that are designed to entertain the reader.

So, I make no apologies for selecting deals where more than seven tricks were required.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ Q1083 ♥ 97 ♦ A72 ♣ Q1053		♠ AJ942 ♥ KQ10863 ♦ K9 ♣ —
♠ K7 ♥ AJ8 ♦ Q84 ♣ K9762		♠ 65 ♥ 42 ♦ J10653 ♣ AJ84

West	North	East	South
<i>Tacchi</i>	<i>Seculer</i>	<i>Horton</i>	<i>Seculer</i>
-	-	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦*	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♣*	Pass
5♠*	Pass	6♥	All Pass
3♦	Fourth Suit Forcing		
5♣	Cue-bid		
5♠	Cue-bid		

♠ Q1083			
♥ 97			
♦ A72			
♣ Q1053			
♠ K7			♠ AJ942
♥ AJ8			♥ KQ10863
♦ Q84			♦ K9
♣ K9762			♣ —
♠ 65			
♥ 42			
♦ J10653			
♣ AJ84			

This was our last deal of the event and I survived the dreadful decision to open 1♠ (at the time I suspect the ♥3 had metamorphosed into a diamond). The key bid was Tacchi's decision to go past 5♥. He reasoned that missing the ♠K and those important trumps that East would not have bid 5♣ without a diamond control.

There was nothing to the play, and +1430 was worth 91.8/10.2.

Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ —			
♥ AJ54			
♦ A7543			
♣ KJ107			
♠ AQ97			
♥ Q82			
♦ —			
♣ A96543			
♠ J10843			
♥ K963			
♦ 10			
♣ Q82			
♠ K652			
♥ 107			
♦ KQJ9862			
♣ —			

West	North	East	South
<i>Olafsson</i>	<i>Tacchi</i>	<i>Olafsson</i>	<i>Horton</i>
-	-	-	1♣
1♦	Pass	3♦	Double
Pass	3♠	4♦	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

Only eleven pairs reached 6♦ and -420 was worth 78-24.

Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ —			
♥ K92			
♦ KJ92			
♣ A108743			
♠ A32			
♥ A4			
♦ Q105			
♣ KQJ95			
♠ KJ1054			
♥ Q1083			
♦ A76			
♣ 6			
♠ Q9876			
♥ J765			
♦ 843			
♣ 2			

West	North	East	South
<i>Axelsdottir</i>	<i>Tacchi</i>	<i>Ludviksson</i>	<i>Horton</i>
-	-	Pass	1NT
2♣*	Double*	2♦	Double
Pass	3♥*	Pass	3NT
All Pass			
2♣	Clubs and a another suit		

North's double of 2♣ was intended as Stayman and the jump to 3♥ showed five spades and four hearts. West led the ♣8 and declarer won with the nine and played a spade. When West discarded a club declarer went up with dummy's king and played the ♠J, covered by the queen and ace as West pitched the ♦2. Declarer continued with the ♣J and West won and tried a diamond. Declarer won with the ten and played the ♥4, putting up dummy's queen when West followed with the nine. Declarer cashed the ♠10 and when West parted with a club declarer came to hand with a heart and cashed three club tricks. On the last of these West pitched a diamond, so declarer also took the last two tricks for twelve in all and 92-10; +660 would have produced exactly the same score.

Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ J2 ♥ K43 ♦ 1074 ♣ KJ1052	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ AQ5 ♥ 9875 ♦ 83 ♣ A843	♠ K7 ♥ QJ1062 ♦ Q96 ♣ Q96
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West	North	East	South
<i>Gool</i>	<i>Tacchi</i>	<i>Hoebe</i>	<i>Horton</i>
1♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT*	Pass	5♠*	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

4NT RKCB
 5♠ 2 key cards +♠Q

North led a spade and declarer went up with dummy's ace and played three rounds of diamonds, ruffing in dummy, followed by the ♠Q. They were the only pair to bid 6♠ so their reward was 0-102 (or should that be our reward?).

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ 875 ♥ A75 ♦ Q10643 ♣ 74	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K92 ♥ 843 ♦ 98 ♣ J10862	♠ AQJ10643 ♥ 1062 ♦ 5 ♣ 93
------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

West	North	East	South
<i>Kravchenko</i>	<i>Tacchi</i>	<i>Nekhoroshev</i>	<i>Horton</i>
1♦	Pass	Pass	1♠
2♥	2♠	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	3♣	3♠
4♠*	Pass	5♣	All Pass

I confess it did not occur to me to pass West's 1♦ – it happened once where Halldór Thorvaldsson & Hulda Hjalmarsdóttir were N/S and gave them 60-42. I did consider bidding 3♠, but I doubt it would have prevented E/W reaching game. I am willing to confess that if I had held West's cards I would not have been able to resist bidding 6♣ which would have been worth 96 matchpoints. The more modest 5♣+1 still collected 76.

Following the Law

I had travelled more or less direct from the International Bridge Press Association's annual awards ceremony which takes place in October in Sanya, China, and now vies with the Oscars as one of the glitziest events of the year: http://www.jannersten.org:1500/~server/IBPA/archive/Awards/2018_IBPA_Awards_HBF_Sanya_%20Hi-Res.pdf


As a result Bridge journalists around the world are busy typing until their fingers bleed in the hope of being nominated for and then winning one of the coveted awards thereby earning an all expenses paid trip to Sanya in 2019. One of the categories is for the Best Bid Hand of the Year.

Most people are familiar with the concept of the Law of Total Tricks – *The total number of tricks available on a deal is equal to the total number of trumps each partnership holds in their best suits, being the sum of the number of tricks available to each side if they could choose trumps.*

Although he did not invent it, it was popularised by the brilliant American writer and player, Larry Cohen in two books, *The Law of Total Tricks* and *Following the Law*.

This deal from the Warm Up Pairs saw one pair apply the Law in spectacular style:

Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ — ♥ AJ54 ♦ A7543 ♣ KJ107		♠ J10843 ♥ K963 ♦ 10 ♣ Q82	♠ K652 ♥ 107 ♦ KQJ9862 ♣ —
♠ AQ97 ♥ Q82 ♦ — ♣ A96543			
West	North	East	South
<i>Schoonen</i>	<i>Bocker</i>	<i>Hop</i>	<i>Schneider</i>
–	–	–	1♣
1♦	1♠	6♦!	Double
All Pass			

East reasoned that 7+5 = 12 and bid the unbeatable slam, the reflex double from South giving E/W 92/10 match points.

Is this a candidate for the best auction of the 2018/19 season?


Bridge the Old Way

Before the advent of BBO, Funbridge and Our Game, reporting on bridge meant watching at the table – not too difficult unless you play with screens, when it can sometimes be difficult to follow the play. In those

pre-computer days scoring a big event took a fair amount of time, but the advent of computers and Bridgmate changed all that. However, nothing is infallible and if something goes wrong then one has to resort to the old ways. The first session of the Pairs Championship saw the Bridgemates go on strike and at one point I began to wonder if I might have to go in search of some travelling score sheets.

I decided to follow the fortunes of my old friend Carlos Luiz and his partner Nuno Paz.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ QJ8 ♥ 76532 ♦ KQ3 ♣ K7		♠ 64 ♥ QJ109 ♦ 106542 ♣ 43	♠ A1073 ♥ A ♦ 987 ♣ QJ1082
♠ K952 ♥ K84 ♦ AJ ♣ A965			
West	North	East	South
<i>Stanchnik</i>	<i>Paz</i>	<i>Ivanov</i>	<i>Luiz</i>
–	–	–	1NT
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	2♦	Pass	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	All Pass

South led the ♠2 and declarer won with dummy's eight and played the king of clubs. South won and played a second spade and that allowed declarer to win in dummy, come to hand with a club and play a diamond to the queen. When that held declarer played a spade to the ace followed by the winning clubs and was assured of ten tricks, only 18/186 for N/S.

The way to hold declarer to nine tricks is for South to return a club or play the ♦J. In either case if declarer wins and plays a spade South takes the king and now switches to a heart, putting the defenders one step ahead, but – 140 would only collect 45/159.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ KJ743 ♥ AK4 ♦ J83 ♣ K8	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A109 ♥ 93 ♦ 109764 ♣ A105
♠ Q862 ♥ Q62 ♦ KQ52 ♣ 43	♠ 5 ♥ J10875 ♦ A ♣ QJ9762	

West	North	East	South
<i>Stanchnik</i>	<i>Paz</i>	<i>Ivanov</i>	<i>Luiz</i>
-	1NT	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			
2♦	Transfer		

East led the ♦10 and declarer won and played a club to the king. When it held he cashed the top hearts before playing a second club, so he lost three tricks and scored 135/69. Taking the heart finesse delivers the overtrick and 183/21.

Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ A7 ♥ AQ965 ♦ 75 ♣ AQ109	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K84 ♥ 1074 ♦ AQ84 ♣ KJ3
♠ 9632 ♥ 83 ♦ K963 ♣ 876	♠ QJ105 ♥ KJ2 ♦ J102 ♣ 542	

West	North	East	South
<i>Valkanov</i>	<i>Paz</i>	<i>Velischkov</i>	<i>Luiz</i>
-	-	1♦*	Pass
1♠	2♥	Double*	Redouble
2♠	Double	Pass	3♥
All Pass			
1♦	Precision		

East led the ♥4 and declarer won in dummy and ran the ♠Q. When East won and played a second trump declarer had an easy route to ten tricks, as he could pitch his losing diamonds on dummy's spades.

Clearly a diamond switch is needed, but how can East work that out? Well, if West follows to the first round of spades with the nine it might operate as an alarm clock, suggesting West has something useful in diamonds.

+170 was worth 133/71, while +140 collects only 92/112.

Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ KQ ♥ AKQJ954 ♦ Q98 ♣ 10	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A654 ♥ 8 ♦ AKJ7 ♣ K854
♠ 10987 ♥ 7 ♦ 105432 ♣ QJ2	♠ J32 ♥ 10632 ♦ 6 ♣ A9763	

West	North	East	South
<i>Rotchell</i>	<i>Paz</i>	<i>Blackman</i>	<i>Luiz</i>
-	-	-	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

North led the ♣Q, so the defenders took a trick.


Easy to see that East should have done something over 4♥ – maybe

ask for key cards and then settle for 6NT?

Losing only 480 gave N/S 195-9, but even if E/W had bid 6♥ N/S would have collected 125-79.

One pair made 7♥, but it was 2 points short of a complete top, that going to the pair who made 7♥ doubled when North led a diamond.

Board 16. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ AK62 ♥ 942 ♦ 10854 ♣ 54	♠ J95 ♥ AJ8 ♦ K9 ♣ KQ763		♠ 8743 ♥ 103 ♦ QJ63 ♣ J109
	♠ Q10 ♥ KQ765 ♦ A72 ♣ A82		


West	North	East	South
<i>Rotchell</i>	<i>Paz</i>	<i>Blackman</i>	<i>Luiz</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♣*
Pass	4♦*	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

- 2♦ Transfer
- 4♣ Cue-bid
- 4♦ Cue-bid

There is an auction that screams for a spade lead. However, East preferred the ♣J and now declarer can take all the tricks by playing for everything to break, simply ruffing a diamond in hand. Still sleepy (his own words!) declarer drew trumps, apparently settling for twelve tricks, but West decided to discard the ♠AK!

N/S racked up 195-9 – had East led a spade their score would have been only 40-164.

Board 17. Dealer North. None Vul.


♠ A103 ♥ AKQ86 ♦ A6 ♣ AK9	♠ J52 ♥ J9754 ♦ 97 ♣ 764		♠ K9 ♥ 1032 ♦ KQJ4 ♣ Q1082
	♠ Q8764 ♥ — ♦ 108532 ♣ J53		

West	North	East	South
<i>de Paauw</i>	<i>Paz</i>	<i>Snoeck</i>	<i>Luiz</i>
–	Pass	Pass	2♦*
3NT	All Pass		
2♦ Weak only Multi			

Bidding a direct 3NT over a Multi with this type of hand is not recommended – its better to reserve it for hands with a running minor and major suit stoppers. It's better to start with a double, generally played as 13-15 balanced or any 19+.

All one can add is that N/S scored 156-48. Losing 1020 was worth 88-116 while the 25 pairs who reached 7NT collected 24-180.

Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ Q 10864 ♥ 6 ♦ Q7532 ♣ A2		♠ K7 ♥ A10843 ♦ A98 ♣ 653	♠ A932 ♥ Q72 ♦ 4 ♣ KQ1087
-------------------------------------	---	------------------------------------	------------------------------------

West	North	East	South
<i>de Paauw</i>	<i>Paz</i>	<i>Snoeck</i>	<i>Luiz</i>
-	-	1♥	Pass
2♥	All Pass		

South led the ♣K and when it held he continued with the seven, North taking the ace and switching to the ♠4. When declarer put up the king South won, cashed the ♣Q and then played a spade, North winning with the queen and playing the ♠10. Declarer pitched a diamond from his hand, ruffed in dummy and cashed the ♥K – one down but only 45-159 for N/S.

Do you think N/S should have got into the auction?

I am not a fan of overcalling at the two level on a five card suit, but those clubs are chunky and if South bids 2♣ North can then introduce the spades over West's 2♥.

After South's initial pass it looks bit rich for North to bid 2♠ over 2♥, but South might have done something, despite the singleton diamond. If you are prepared to bid 3♠ over 3♦ you can double 2♥, but otherwise you might bid 3♣, which surely suggest you have clubs and spades, given that you did not overcall 2♣ in the first place.


A steady performance saw the boys score 56.73% which left them in 40th place.

The Second Session

For the players who have not spent the night partying, there is a morning seminar where I review the deals from the previous day. When more than 50 people turned up for the first one I was mildly surprised – but then I realised it was raining.

On day two of the Open Pairs my guinea pigs were Gerbrand Hop and Mark Thiele, hoping to consolidate after scoring 61.29% on the opening day.

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ Q ♥ 1052 ♦ AQ109 ♣ KQ854		♠ KJ10 ♥ K843 ♦ K87 ♣ A96	♠ 9765 ♥ AQ6 ♦ 542 ♣ J32
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West	North	East	South
<i>Wilt</i>	<i>Hop</i>	<i>Haugstad</i>	<i>Thiele</i>
-	-	-	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass

There is nothing special about this deal, but I have included it because earlier in the day during the seminar I had mentioned Benito Garozzo's assertion that a player who always made the best opening lead would win every prize on offer. Here South led a spade and declarer won and played back a spade for eleven tricks, 76/128.

The few pairs who restricted declarer to +630 were rewarded with 165/39.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ 9 ♥ 10965 ♦ K86 ♣ AK872	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ K10532 ♥ QJ72 ♦ 3 ♣ 1054	♠ 864 ♥ 843 ♦ AQJ4 ♣ QJ3
N						
W E						
S						
♠ AQJ7 ♥ AK ♦ 109752 ♣ 96						

West	North	East	South
<i>Wilt</i>	<i>Hop</i>	<i>Haugstad</i>	<i>Thiele</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠
Double*	3♦*	Pass	4♠
Double	All Pass		

3♦ Spade support

Opening bids are getting lighter by the moment, but East's 1♦ strikes me as wafer thin.

South's overcall hit the jackpot. You can understand why West doubled, but no-one had forced South to jump to game. The double increased the N/S share of the match points from 165/39 to 196/08.

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ A109 ♥ 873 ♦ 9875 ♣ K84	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ Q832 ♥ A642 ♦ J642 ♣ 10	♠ J76 ♥ KQJ95 ♦ KQ10 ♣ Q7
N						
W E						
S						
♠ K54 ♥ 10 ♦ A3 ♣ AJ96532						

West	North	East	South
<i>Utter</i>	<i>Hop</i>	<i>Tulonen</i>	<i>Thiele</i>
-	Pass	1♥	2♣
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♣
All Pass			

West led the ♥8 and declarer won with dummy's ace and played a club for the queen and ace and another club, West winning with the king. A diamond switch would have been good at this point, but West preferred a heart. When she came in with the ♠A it was essential to play a diamond and failing to do so allowed declarer to duck a spade and then take advantage of the 3-3 break to dispose of the losing diamond. The overtrick increased the score from 129-75 to 178/26.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ AK103 ♥ A4 ♦ K42 ♣ Q1064	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 654 ♥ J10975 ♦ J ♣ AK92	♠ Q92 ♥ KQ82 ♦ A1076 ♣ 73
N						
W E						
S						
♠ J87 ♥ 63 ♦ Q9853 ♣ J85						

West	North	East	South
<i>Utter</i>	<i>Hop</i>	<i>Tulonen</i>	<i>Thiele</i>
-	-	Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♦*	Pass	3♠*	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
3♣ Puppet Stayman 3♦ At least one four-card major 3♠ Hearts			

North led the ♥J and declarer won with the ace and played a diamond,

ducking when North produced the jack. North's next move was to lay down the ♣A, and when South followed with the eight he unwisely continued with the ♣2. Declarer won that and should now have tested the diamonds, cashing the king, then playing a diamond to dummy's ace followed by four rounds of spades. On the last of these, North, down to ♥1097 ♣K will be squeezed for an eleventh trick.

However, declarer did not spot this possibility and cashed dummy's hearts immediately for +630 and 73/131. +660 would have changed the score to 14/190.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ A3 ♥ QJ82 ♦ K10653 ♣ J3	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ Q9 ♥ AK1075 ♦ 4 ♣ AK1052	
♠ 10876 ♥ 964 ♦ A82 ♣ 864		♠ KJ542 ♥ 3 ♦ QJ97 ♣ Q97	

West	North	East	South
<i>Eltz</i>	<i>Hop</i>	<i>Malinovska</i>	<i>Thiele</i>
Pass	1♦	1♥	1♠
Pass	1NT	2♣	2♦
Pass	Pass	3♣	3♦
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

There was no defence and +670 gave N/S 203-1.

♠ AK103 ♥ A4 ♦ K42 ♣ Q1064	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 654 ♥ J10975 ♦ J ♣ AK92	♠ Q92 ♥ KQ82 ♦ A1076 ♣ 73
♠ J87 ♥ 63 ♦ Q9853 ♣ J85			

In theory E/W can make eight tricks in hearts, but it is easy to see how declarer might go wrong in trumps and that would be important if the contract was 3♥ doubled. However, even – 100 would still see N/S score 170-34.

Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ 5 ♥ AQ87632 ♦ A982 ♣ Q	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ Q82 ♥ K ♦ 1054 ♣ AJ7652	♠ J10763 ♥ J109 ♦ KJ763 ♣ —
		♠ AK94 ♥ 54 ♦ Q ♣ K109843	

West	North	East	South
<i>Stephenson</i>	<i>Hop</i>	<i>Stephenson</i>	<i>Thiele</i>
–	–	Pass	1♣
4♥	All Pass		

I wonder why North didn't bid 5♣ – a few pairs few pairs were allowed to play there for 182/22 (one lucky partnership made 6♣ for a maximum 204). 6♣ doubled down one was worth 159-45, but you risk driving E/W to 6♥ – and those who played there and made it (doubled of course) racked up 1/203.



North led the ♠8 and South won and tried the ♦Q. Declarer won with the ace and laid down the ♥A for +480 and 56/148.

A solid, not unlucky session saw N/S move up to fifth place – another 60% would surely see them on the podium.

Where the Action Is

By strategically placing myself at the start of Session 3 I was able to see if some of the leading pairs could get away to a good start. Not for the first time I was lucky with my choice of which deals to follow.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.



♠ K85 ♥ A107 ♦ AKQ4 ♣ Q92		♠ 3 ♥ KJ82 ♦ 9876532 ♣ 4	♠ QJ962 ♥ 65 ♦ 10 ♣ AK1053
			

West	North	East	South
<i>Karlsson</i>	<i>Gromöller</i>	<i>Karlsson</i>	<i>Häusler</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♦	2♦*	5♦	5♠
6♦	Double	All Pass	

2♦ Black suits

East's jump to 5♦ put South on the spot and when he opted to bid 5♠ a minus score was on the cards. However, West came to the rescue with a questionable 6♦ which North was delighted to double. North cashed the ♣K and switched to a spade, South taking the ace and exiting with a spade. Declarer ignored the evidence of the bidding and played North for the ♥Q, thereby conceding – 500 which was worth 195-9. Had West doubled 5♠ the score would have been 86-118.



Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ Q104 ♥ AK74 ♦ Q75 ♣ 964		♠ 82 ♥ Q10862 ♦ A862 ♣ KQ	♠ J753 ♥ J53 ♦ K10 ♣ 10872
			

West	North	East	South
<i>Eyde</i>	<i>Gromöller</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>Häusler</i>
–	–	–	1♦
Double	Pass	4♥	All Pass

West's emaciated take-out double saw East jump to game. South started with three rounds of spades and declarer pitched a diamond on dummy's queen and played a club to the king and ace. He could not avoid the loss of a diamond for one down, – 100. With N/S able to take nine tricks in spades this was just above average, 95-109.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ Q92 ♥ AQJ2 ♦ KJ10753 ♣ –		♠ A108764 ♥ 984 ♦ Q ♣ Q72	♠ J53 ♥ 3 ♦ A64 ♣ AK10543
			

West	North	East	South
<i>Eyde</i>	<i>Gromöller</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>Häusler</i>
1♦	2♣	Double*	3♣
4♥	Double	4♠	All Pass

East's bidding suggested a moderate hand with a six card suit. He ruffed the club lead in dummy and played a diamond. North went in with the ace and switched to the ♥3, declarer taking South's ten with dummy's jack. After pitching two clubs on dummy's diamonds declarer ran the ♠Q and South won and returned a heart, so the defenders took three tricks, +420 – dead average at 102-102. If declarer had played a spade to the ace, the overtrick would have delivered 69-135.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ 854	♠ K103	♠ AJ9762
♥ KQ1098	♥ A75	♥ 63
♦ AJ432	♦ 6	♦ 98
♣ —	♣ QJ9854	♣ AK2

♠ Q	♠ N	♠ E
♥ J42	W	S
♦ KQ1075		
♣ 10763		

West	North	East	South
<i>Thiele</i>	<i>Gromöller</i>	<i>Hop</i>	<i>Häusler</i>
–	–	1♠	Pass
2NT*	Pass	4♠	All Pass

2NT Spade raise

South led the ♦K and declarer won with dummy's ace and played a spade to the ace (in isolation the technical line is to run the eight, which delivers five tricks 57.34% of the time). When the queen fell it looks obvious to ruff the ♣2 and then play a second spade, but taking his eye off the

♠ Q92	♠ J53	♠ A108764
♥ AQJ2	♥ 3	♥ 984
♦ KJ10753	♦ A64	♦ Q
♣ —	♣ AK10543	♣ Q72

♠ K	♠ N	♠ E
♥ K10765	W	S
♦ 982		
♣ J986		

ball, declarer continued with a heart to the queen. He would have survived had North taken that with the ace, but he astutely ducked and now declarer was stuck. He tried the ♥K, but North won and played two rounds of spades, ensuring the demise of the contract.

That gave N/S 170-34. Making 4♠ was worth 105-99, as a surprisingly large number of pairs recorded +650 for 38-166.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 10	♠ 85	♠ J962
♥ KJ752	♥ AQ98	♥ 106
♦ KQ65	♦ 109873	♦ A
♣ 643	♣ Q10	♣ KJ9875

♠ AKQ743	♠ N	♠ E
♥ 43	W	S
♦ J42		
♣ A2		


West	North	East	South
<i>Nedelcu</i>	<i>Gromöller</i>	<i>Micescu</i>	<i>Häusler</i>
–	–	–	1♠
Pass	1NT	2♣	2♠
3♣	3♠	4♣	All Pass

South led the ♠Q and switched to the ♥4. North playing three rounds of the suit. When declarer ruffed with the ♣9 South overruffed and exited with the ♠A. Declarer ruffed in dummy, played a club to the ten, unblocked the ♦A, and ruffed a spade. North overruffed, but had to return a red suit for two down, – 100 and 99-105.

I wonder if North considered doubling 3♣, which would make it clear his primary values were in the red suits. Bidding 3♥ is also a possibility, but I think partner would expect at least a fifth heart. Those who doubled 4♣ for – 300 scored 181-23.

In theory you can make 3♠ – but you have to play for the spades to be 4-1, which is hardly obvious.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ K8 ♥ AK832 ♦ AQ97 ♣ 95		♠ 10954 ♥ 1097 ♦ 65 ♣ J642	♠ AQ62 ♥ Q5 ♦ K2 ♣ AQ1083
		♠ J73 ♥ J64 ♦ J10843 ♣ K7	

West	North	East	South
<i>Nedelcu</i>	<i>Gromöller</i>	<i>Micescu</i>	<i>Häusler</i>
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	3NT	Pass
4NT	Pass	6NT	All Pass

South led the ♠3 and declarer won with dummy's king and played three rounds of hearts. When the suit behaved he cashed two more hearts, discarding three clubs. South was under pressure and I am pretty sure that declarer would have played for a club-diamond squeeze to have operated, but North parted with a spade, so declarer cashed his winners, making sure that trick thirteen was taken by the ♠2.

That gave E/W 17-187.


Two pairs went 'all in' and recorded +1520, one of them after the helpful lead of the ♦J, the other after the more testing lead of the ♠4.

(K)Night Moves

By tradition, the first day of the teams championship involves a late night session. My unsubtle title pays homage to the fact that while play was going on in Madeira, at the same time the first game of the World Chess Championship was being contested in London, World Champion, Norway's Magnus Carlsen missing several opportunities during the seven hours it took to complete the game against the challenger from the USA, Fabiano Caruana.

By coincidence the round 1 match I followed involved a team from Norway, Solbjort, who faced JustPlay.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ K4 ♥ QJ82 ♦ Q ♣ QJ9852		♠ 1065 ♥ K1074 ♦ 854 ♣ 743	♠ AQ98732 ♥ A65 ♦ J107 ♣ —
			♠ J ♥ 93 ♦ AK9632 ♣ AK106

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Valdur</i>	<i>Barbosa</i>	<i>Halldor</i>	<i>Palma</i>
-	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♦
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♦
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

South's decision to bid 3♠ almost backfired when North went on to 6♠, but although there was a spade to lose declarer recorded +980.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Häusler</i>	<i>Gabriel</i>	<i>Gromöller</i>	<i>Gisli</i>
-	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♣*
Pass	4♥*	Double	Pass
Pass	Redouble	Pass	6♦
All Pass			


4♣ Cue-bid

4♥ Cue-bid

Rdbl First round control

West led the ♥Q and declarer won with dummy's ace, cashed the ♠A, ruffed a spade, cashed the top clubs pitching dummy's remaining hearts, ruffed a heart, played a diamond to the ace, ruffed a club, pitched a club on the ♠Q and claimed, +940 but the loss of an IMP.

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ AK5 ♥ J10 ♦ K97643 ♣ A10		♠ J9632 ♥ AK854 ♦ 10 ♣ K2	♠ 87 ♥ 62 ♦ AJ852 ♣ Q753
	♠ Q104 ♥ Q973 ♦ Q ♣ J9864		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Valdur</i>	<i>Barbosa</i>	<i>Halldor</i>	<i>Palma</i>
-	-	Pass	Pass
1NT	2♣*	Pass	3♥
4♦	4♥	5♦	All Pass
2♣	Majors		


I'm not convinced this is the auction – did West really bid 4♦ all on his own? More likely East bid 2♦ over 2♣. South's 3♥ was very aggressive and it was matched by North's decision to go on to game. It was tempting to bid 5♦ over 4♥, but it turned a potential +500 into - 50.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Häusler</i>	<i>Gabriel</i>	<i>Gromöller</i>	<i>Gisli</i>
-	-	Pass	Pass
1♦	2♦*	2NT*	3♥
Pass	4♥	5♦	All Pass

If 2NT promised a diamond raise East might have passed over 4♥, leaving the decision to West. So the score remained 1-0.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 102 ♥ K942 ♦ 96542 ♣ 92		♠ J75 ♥ 863 ♦ 10 ♣ A107654	♠ KQ96 ♥ 75 ♦ KQJ7 ♣ QJ3
	♠ A843 ♥ AQJ10 ♦ A83 ♣ K8		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Valdur</i>	<i>Barbosa</i>	<i>Halldor</i>	<i>Palma</i>
Pass	Pass	1NT*	Double
Redouble*	2♣	All Pass	
1NT	12-15		

West's redouble may have been the start of a scramble.


East led the ♦K and declarer won with dummy's ace, played two rounds of trumps and took the heart finesse. When West won and returned a diamond declarer had ten tricks, +130.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Häusler</i>	<i>Gabriel</i>	<i>Gromöller</i>	<i>Gisli</i>
Pass	Pass	1NT	Double
2♦	3♣	3♦	3NT
All Pass			

West led the ♦2 and declarer's task was hopeless. Two down meant the loss of 8 IMPs.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 73 ♥ KQ97 ♦ 9852 ♣ AJ10		♠ 952 ♥ 1085 ♦ J10 ♣ Q8765	♠ AJ8 ♥ 6432 ♦ AK743 ♣ 2
♠ KQ1064 ♥ AJ ♦ Q6 ♣ K943			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Valdur</i>	<i>Barbosa</i>	<i>Halldor</i>	<i>Palma</i>
-	Pass	2♣*	2♠
4♦*	All Pass		

2♣ 6♦ or nine cards in ♠+♥ or strong


Although 4♦ was alerted the BBO operator did not annotate it. with diamonds breaking and the ♥A onside there were eleven tricks, +150.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Häusler</i>	<i>Gabriel</i>	<i>Gromöller</i>	<i>Gisli</i>
-	Pass	1♦	1♠
Double*	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Those red suit positions meant the same eleven tricks, but this time they were worth +450 and 8 IMPs.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ K7 ♥ A952 ♦ AQJ6 ♣ J43		♠ 9542 ♥ K10764 ♦ 3 ♣ KQ9	♠ A ♥ J8 ♦ K1098542 ♣ 1072
♠ QJ10863 ♥ Q3 ♦ 7 ♣ A865			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Valdur</i>	<i>Barbosa</i>	<i>Halldor</i>	<i>Palma</i>
-	-	2♣*	2♠
3♥	4♠	5♦	All Pass

2♣ 6♦ or nine cards in ♠+♥ or strong

For the second deal in a row the 2♣ opening did not show to advantage as E/W reached the wrong game. South led the ♠Q but there were only ten tricks, -100.

Closed Room


West	North	East	South
<i>Häusler</i>	<i>Gabriel</i>	<i>Gromöller</i>	<i>Gisli</i>
-	-	3♦	3♠
3NT	4♠	Double	Pass
4NT	All Pass		

That was well-judged by Helmut Häusler and on a spade lead he took the first ten tricks, +630 and 12 IMPs to JustPlay, who won 28-0.

More (K)Night Moves

Having failed to get on the score-board in round 1, the Norwegian team got a tough draw in round 2.

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ AQ5 ♥ 6532 ♦ K109876 ♣ —		♠ KJ1094 ♥ K ♦ 3 ♣ K108763	♠ 732 ♥ AQ1074 ♦ J54 ♣ J2
		♠ 86 ♥ J98 ♦ AQ2 ♣ AQ954	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Valur</i>	<i>Pzsczola</i>	<i>Halldor</i>	<i>Sakr</i>
–	2♠*	Pass	3♣

All Pass

- 2♠ Spades and a minor
- 3♣ Pass or correct

West led the ♦10 and declarer was not hard pressed to take twelve tricks, +230.


Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Welland</i>	<i>Gabriel</i>	<i>Auken</i>	<i>Gisli</i>
–	1♠	Pass	2♣*
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥*
Pass	3♥	Double	4♣
4♥	5♣	All Pass	

- 2♣ 9-11 with clubs or any game force
- 2♦ 11-15
- 2♥ Asking

West led a heart, which restricted declarer to eleven tricks, but the game bonus meant a 6IMP pick up.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ AJ ♥ KQ82 ♦ AKQ ♣ KJ73		♠ Q982 ♥ 95 ♦ 97542 ♣ 82	♠ 10754 ♥ J74 ♦ J8 ♣ AQ65
		♠ K53 ♥ A1063 ♦ 1063 ♣ 1094	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Valur</i>	<i>Pzsczola</i>	<i>Halldor</i>	<i>Sakr</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♦*	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3NT	All Pass

2♣ Diamonds or nine cards in the majors or strong
2NT 20-21

North led the ♠9 and declarer took South's king with the ace, finishing with eleven tricks, +660.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Welland</i>	<i>Gabriel</i>	<i>Auken</i>	<i>Gisli</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♦*	Pass	4♠*	Pass
6♥	All Pass		


2NT 22-24, 5422 or 6332 or a singleton honour possible
3♣ Puppet to 3♦

Over 3♦ East could have bid 3♥ to show 4/5♠, but I have no idea what 4♠ promised and I have breakfast long before Roy & Sabine are at the table.

6♥ was hopeless and although declarer negotiated the trump suit for one loser it meant the loss of another 13 IMPs.

Another 11 went on the next deal (the play record is missing from the Open Room) making the score 30-0.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ A87543 ♥ 6 ♦ AK96 ♣ 53		♠ 109 ♥ AJ1098 ♦ QJ ♣ KQ106	♠ KQ62 ♥ Q53 ♦ 832 ♣ 874
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Valur</i>	<i>Pzsczola</i>	<i>Halldor</i>	<i>Sakr</i>
Pass	1♠	2♦*	3♠
4♥	4♠	Pass	Pass
5♥	Double	All Pass	

2♦ Hearts

If you employ transfer overcalls you give your opponents an extra shot, as they can now assign a meaning to both double and the bid of your suit.

Having bid 4♥ West decided to take out insurance on the next round. Getting the trumps wrong meant the premium against the non-making game was – 300.


Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Welland</i>	<i>Gabriel</i>	<i>Auken</i>	<i>Gisli</i>
Pass	1♠	2♥	2♠
4♣*	4♠	5♣	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	5♠
All Pass			

4♣ Fit jump

Only South knows why it was necessary to bid 5♠. Even though no-one saw fit to double it resulted in the loss of 11 IMPs when the contract failed by two tricks.

Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ J874 ♥ 1075 ♦ 109532 ♣ 3		♠ 32 ♥ QJ98632 ♦ AK ♣ 95	♠ 65 ♥ AK4 ♦ Q764 ♣ AKQJ
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♠ AKQ109
 ♥ –
 ♦ J8
 ♣ 1087642

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Valur</i>	<i>Pzsczola</i>	<i>Halldor</i>	<i>Sakr</i>
–	–	–	1♠
Double	3♠	4♦*	4♠
Double	All Pass		

4♦ Hearts

Had West started with a trump (generally a sound idea when you know your side holds the balance of power) or a top heart, declarer would have been hard pressed to score more than nine tricks, but leading a top club

gave the game away.

Declarer won the trump switch (too late the hero) in hand, cross-ruffed clubs and hearts, drew the outstanding trumps and cashed two long clubs for +790.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Welland</i>	<i>Gabriel</i>	<i>Auken</i>	<i>Gisli</i>
-	-	-	1♠
Double	3♠	4♥	All Pass

That was +450 and 15 IMPs, Solbjort hanging on for a 32-28 win.

Late (K)Night Moves

My trilogy is completed by the match between Die Mauer and Porto

Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ A9		♠ K64
♥ J752		♥ AK1083
♦ QJ43		♦ 6
♣ A106		♣ QJ75
♠ J107	♠ N	
♥ Q964	W	♠ K64
♦ 10852	E	♥ AK1083
♣ K8	S	♦ 6
		♣ QJ75
		♠ Q8532
		♥ —
		♦ AK97
		♣ 9432

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Pinto</i>	<i>Grude</i>	<i>Torres</i>	<i>Grude</i>
Pass	1♦	1♥	Double*
3♥	Pass	Pass	Double*
All Pass			

♠ 65		♠ 32
♥ AK4		♥ QJ98632
♦ Q764		♦ AK
♣ AKQJ		♣ 95
	♠ N	
	W	♠ AKQ109
	E	♥ —
	S	♦ J8
		♣ 1087642

Unwilling to sell out to 3♥ East tried a take-out double in preference to 4♦, but it turned out badly.

South started with two top diamonds and East ruffed, cashed the ♥K and then played a club to the king, North winning and switching to ace of spades and a spade. Declarer won with the king, cashed two clubs pitching dummy's last spade and ruffed a spade with the ♥9. North overruffed, but declarer could not be prevented from taking the rest, winning the heart exit in hand and ruffing a club with dummy's ♥Q for +730.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Halois</i>	<i>Henriq</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Luis</i>
Pass	1♦	1♥	1♠
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♦
Pass	Pass	3♥	All Pass

The play ran along similar lines save that declarer ruffed the third round of clubs in dummy and then drew trumps for +140 – a loss of 11 IMPs.

Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 107		♠ Q942
♥ J10		♥ 653
♦ 109753		♦ AQ
♣ KQ82		♣ J975
♠ —	♠ N	
♥ AQ9842	W	♠ Q942
♦ K862	E	♥ 653
♣ 1063	S	♦ AQ
		♣ J975
		♠ AKJ8653
		♥ K7
		♦ J4
		♣ A4

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Pinto</i>	<i>Grude</i>	<i>Torres</i>	<i>Grude</i>
-	Pass	Pass	1♠
2♥	Double*	3♥	4♠
5♥	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			

♠ —	♠ 107	♠ Q942
♥ AQ9842	♥ J10	♥ 653
♦ K862	♦ 109753	♦ AQ
♣ 1063	♣ KQ82	♣ J975
	♠ AKJ8653	
	♥ K7	
	♦ J4	
	♣ A4	

North led the ♠10 and declarer ruffed with the ♥4, unblocked dummy's diamonds and played a heart to the queen.

When it held he cashed the ♥A and then played the ♦8. According to the BBO operator North followed with the seven so had declarer pitched a club on this, followed by another club on the ♦K he would have been able to ruff a club for his contract.

If North really did follow with the ♦7 he got away with his Grosvenor as declarer ruffed the ♦8 settling for one down.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Halois</i>	<i>Henriq</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Luis</i>
-	Pass	Pass	2♣*
2♥	Pass	3♥	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	
2♣	Strong		

West led the ♥A and when East followed with the six he continued with the queen. Declarer won with the king, cashed the ♠A and played three rounds of clubs pitching a diamond before running the ♠10, +620 and another 11 IMPs to Porto, leading 29-2.

Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ A97	♠ K10
♥ KJ	♥ Q10942
♦ K4	♦ AQJ98
♣ AQ9632	♣ K
♠ Q85	♠ J6432
♥ A75	♥ 863
♦ 653	♦ 1072
♣ J854	♣ 107

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Pinto</i>	<i>Grude</i>	<i>Torres</i>	<i>Grude</i>
-	-	1♥	Pass
1NT*	2♣	2♦	Pass
2♥	Double	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

1NT Forcing

East led the ♥2 and West won with the ace and switched to the ♦5, East taking declarer's king with the ace, cashing the ♦Q and continuing with the jack. Declarer ruffed, cashed the ♣A and the heart king and then exited with the ♠7. East does best to take that with the king, but followed with the ten, for the jack and queen. West exited with a spade and declarer won with the ace, cashed the ♠9 and played a club to the ten and jack, only one down, - 50.


Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Halois</i>	<i>Henriq</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Luis</i>
-	-	1♥	Pass
2♥	3♣	4♥	All Pass

South led the ♣10 and North took the ace and switched to the ♦K. Declarer

won with the ace, played a heart to the ace and a heart, soon claiming ten tricks and 11 IMPs.

Board 23. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ AQJ7 ♥ Q87 ♦ 4 ♣ A9852		♠ 10 ♥ K54 ♦ KJ10865 ♣ K43	♠ K9843 ♥ 102 ♦ AQ32 ♣ QJ
		♠ 652 ♥ AJ963 ♦ 97 ♣ 1076	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Pinto</i>	<i>Grude</i>	<i>Torres</i>	<i>Grude</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	2♦	2♠	Pass
4♦*	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♠	All Pass		

The combination of the splinter and Blackwood saw E/W reach the five-level. South led the ♦9 and declarer won with the queen and ran the ♣Q. North took the king and switched to the ♥4, South taking the ace and retuning the jack for the queen, king and ten, one down, – 100

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Halois</i>	<i>Henriq</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Luis</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	1♦	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

That was +620 and 12 IMPs.


Die Mauer completed their recovery with a 5 IMP pick up on the last deal to record a win, 30-29, 10.44-9.56 VP.

All Quiet on the Western Front

On the 11th November, the day that the guns fell silent to mark end of hostilities in the First World War exactly 100 years ago this was a title that could not be overlooked.

It also happened that in Rounds 4 & 5 the matches I followed were not exciting, the first of them producing a score line of just 7-1 with five flat boards.

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ 876 ♥ A ♦ KQ1098 ♣ K1084		♠ 109 ♥ 108643 ♦ AJ3 ♣ 753	♠ AQJ2 ♥ J953 ♦ 52 ♣ AQ9
		♠ K543 ♥ KQ7 ♦ 764 ♣ J62	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wpirjo</i>	<i>Tomaszek</i>	<i>Erkki</i>	<i>Miszewska</i>
–	Pass	1NT	Pass
3♥*	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

3♥ Shortage

South led the ♠3 and declarer won with the queen and played a diamond to the king, continuing with a spade for the ten, jack and king. South exited with a low heart (at this point anything should be good enough) and declarer won perforce with dummy's ace, played a club to the ace and a diamond for the eight and jack. North's heart return was ruffed in dummy and declarer ruffed a diamond, cashed the ♠A and played on clubs, South eventually ruffing and cashing the ♥K for one down.

Once the ♦K holds declarer can cash dummy's ♥A and then play to

ruff two hearts in dummy. The fall of the ♥KQ mean that ten tricks cannot be prevented – indeed, if declarer judges the clubs to be 3-3 he can forget about a second heart ruff and play four rounds of clubs pitching the ♦5 which will result in eleven tricks.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Paluchowski	Utter	Dmowski	Tulonen
-	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

♠ 876	♠ 109	♠ AQJ2
♥ A	♥ 108643	♥ J953
♦ KQ1098	♦ AJ3	♦ 52
♣ K1084	♣ 753	♣ AQ9
	♠ K543	
	♥ KQ7	
	♦ 764	
	♣ J62	

South led the ♥Q and declarer won with dummy's ace and played a spade to the queen and king, South continuing with the king of hearts and a heart. Declarer was now assured of ten tricks, +630 and 12 IMPs.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ 832	♠ 7654	♠ J9
♥ Q6	♥ KJ108	♥ 943
♦ A96	♦ J102	♦ K843
♣ 109873	♣ 64	♣ KQJ2
	♠ AKQ10	
	♥ A752	
	♦ Q75	
	♣ A5	

In the Open Room N/S sailed into 4♥ and took ten tricks, +620.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Paluchowski	Utter	Dmowski	Tulonen
-	-	Pass	1♦
All Pass			

In one of the morning seminars we discussed how weak you could be when responding to an opening bid. Many years ago I wrote a 'Bols Bridge Tip' entitled 'Don't be afraid to Respond', suggesting that you should be happy to respond with very weak hands, an idea subsequently supported by Larry Cohen in *The Law of Total Tricks*. I'm willing to bet that none of the forty or so players who attended that particular seminar omitted to respond where South started with 1♦, thereby avoiding the loss of 11 IMPs.

This was one of those occasions when silence was definitely not golden.

Double Header

Saturday is a real test for the teams as they have to play six matches between 11.30 and 20.30. That's about the same length of time it takes to play back-to-back Baseball games.

In Round 6 Gladpack faced Team Sara Silva (do you think there should be a prize for the best team name?)

The first board was one of the most interesting we have seen so far:

Board 17. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ Q1042	♠ J98753	♠ A
♥ KQ873	♥ -	♥ J1092
♦ 96	♦ AQJ103	♦ K8754
♣ 63	♣ 84	♣ KJ10
	♠ K6	
	♥ A654	
	♦ 2	
	♣ AQ9752	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Bartnes	Bilde	Bakke	Eyde
-	2♠*	Double	4♠
All Pass			

East led the ♥J and declarer won with dummy's ace, pitching a club, played a diamond to the ace and ran the ♦Q throwing a heart from dummy. He then threw a club on the jack of diamonds and West ruffed and exited with a heart, declarer ruffing and playing a spade. East won with the ace and exited with the ♥9 (the ♦K is a killer). Declarer ruffed, played a club to the queen, pitched a diamond on the ♣A ruffed a club, ruffed a diamond and played a club ensuring a trick for the ♠J, +420.

♠ Q1042	♠ J98753	♠ A
♥ KQ873	♥ —	♥ J1092
♦ 96	♦ AQJ103	♦ K8754
♣ 63	♣ 84	♣ KJ10
		♠ K6
		♥ A654
		♦ 2
		♣ AQ9752

West had given declarer a chance by returning a heart rather than a spade, as if he leaves trumps alone and takes the club finesse and then cross ruffs (using the ♠K to ruff a diamond) he will come to ten tricks.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Brian	Bogo	Hagen	Fastenj
–	1♠	Double	2♣
2♥	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

East led the ♥J and declarer won with the ace pitching a club, cashed the ♦A, ran the ♦Q throwing a heart and then threw another heart on the ♦J, West ruffing and exiting with a spade. East won and returned a heart (as mentioned before, the ♦K is the card to defeat the contract).

Declarer ruffed, took the club finesse, cashed the ♣A and ruffed a club. He then ruffed a diamond and ruffed a club, but lost the last two tricks to West's ♠Q10, a loss of 10 IMPs.

In the four-card ending declarer needed to cross to dummy with the ♠K and then play a winning club. If West ruffs with the ♠Q declarer throws the losing diamond away.

Look closely at the trump pips. They are such that as long as declarer does not allow anyone to score a cheap ruff only three trump tricks will be lost.

Having taken a discard on the ♦Q, declarer can take the club finesse,

then cross-ruff, using the ♠K to ruff the third diamond before ruffing the fourth round with the ♠6. West can overruff with the ♠10, but declarer has already scored eight tricks and the ♠J987 are worth two more. This relies on East holding the ♠A, but the opening lead and the bidding more or less make that 100%.

This line, not playing trumps at all, will work even when East holds a doubleton ♠A.

Another 10 IMPs went astray when in one room 3NT went one down for -100 while in the replay the contract was 6NT going five down (the bidding is unsuitable for inclusion).

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 1063	♠ 8
♥ K	♥ 643
♦ A63	♦ QJ102
♣ KQ10852	♣ A9764
♠ KJ95	
♥ J98752	
♦ 5	
♣ J3	
	♠ AQ742
	♥ AQ10
	♦ K9874
	♣ —

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Bartnes	Bilde	Bakke	Eye
–	–	–	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

West led the ♥9 and declarer won with dummy's king, cashed the ace of diamond and played a diamond to the king, West ruffing and exiting with the ♥8. Declarer won with the ten, discarding dummy's last diamond, cashed the ♠A, ruffed a diamond, ruffed a club, ruffed a diamond, and ruffed a club. West could overruff and cash the ♠K but that was only three tricks and declarer had ten tricks, +420.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Brian	Bogo	Hagen	Fastenj
-	-	-	1♠
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♦
Pass	4♠	All Pass	
	2♣	Game forcing	

West led the ♥9 and after winning with the king declarer played a spade to the queen and king. West switched to the ♦5 and declarer won with dummy's ace, played a spade to the ace, cashed the ♥A and tried the ♦K. West might have ruffed that, but he pitched a heart and then threw another one as declarer ruffed a diamond with dummy's last spade. The king of clubs was covered and ruffed and declarer cashed the ♠Q and exited with a spade. West took the nine and jack and cashed the ♥J for one down, and another 10 IMPs.

Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ 87		♠ 87
♥ 8		♥ 8
♦ QJ83		♦ QJ83
♣ KJ8762		♣ KJ8762
		♠ AQ105
♠ J2		♥ 10643
♥ KQJ975		♦ 76
♦ 10952		♣ A53
♣ 9		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Bartnes	Bilde	Bakke	Eyde
-	-	Pass	1NT
2♦*	2NT*	4♥	Double
All Pass			
2♦	One major		

♠ 1063		♠ 8
♥ K		♥ 643
♦ A63		♦ QJ102
♣ KQ10852		♣ A9764
♠ KJ95		♠ 8
♥ J98752		♥ 643
♦ 5		♦ QJ102
♣ J3		♣ A9764

Declarer had to lose two diamonds a heart and a spade for one down, - 200.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Brian	Bogo	Hagen	Fastenj
-	-	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠*	Double	2NT*
Pass	3♠*	Pass	4♣
Pass	5♣	All Pass	
2♠	Transfer		
2NT	Fit		

That was an easy +400 and 5 IMPs – the only score for Gladpack in the match.

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ 87		♠ 87
♥ Q864		♥ Q864
♦ 1094		♦ 1094
♣ J765		♣ J765
		♠ 5
♠ AK964		♥ AJ103
♥ K92		♦ KQJ86
♦ 752		♣ 983
♣ Q4		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Bartnes	Bilde	Bakke	Eyde
1♠	Pass	1NT	All Pass

South led the ♠3 and declarer won with dummy's ace and played a diamond for the king and ace. Back came a spade and according to the BBO operator declarer took nine tricks – perhaps, but eight or ten look more likely.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Brian	Bogo	Hagen	Fastenj
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

North led the ♥6 and declarer won with dummy's jack and played the ♦K. South took the ace and laid down the ♣A, North following with the six. When South continued with the ♣2 a grateful declarer took eleven tricks, +460 and 7 IMPs.

It was a big win for Team Sara Silva.

♠ 87	♥ Q864	♦ 1094	♣ J765
♠ AK964	♥ K92	♦ 752	♣ Q4
♠ 5	♥ AJ103	♦ KQJ86	♣ 983
♠ QJ1032	♥ 75	♦ A3	♣ AK102

CSI Madeira

There are plenty of English language programmes on Portuguese TV—many of them are related to criminal investigations. The Round 8 encounter between Team Sara Silva and Sol Da Caparica was not without incident – let's investigate.

On the first deal of the match a soft defence allowed 2♠ to make at one table while in the replay N/S climbed all the way to 4♠ which went three down. That was 6 IMPs for Sara Silva.

Then with ♠A5 ♥J97 ♦K10976 ♣AK8 opposite ♠KQ743 ♥AKQ3 ♦2 ♣Q73 the N/S pairs reached 3NT and 6NT by North. Spades were 3-3 so Sol Da Caparica picked up 13 IMPs.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ A4	♥ Q982	♦ 432	♣ 9764
♠ K1072	♥ AK5	♦ K7	♣ KQJ10
♠ Q653	♥ 3	♦ AQ10	♣ A8532
♠ J98	♥ J10764	♦ J9865	♣ —

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Fanha	Bilde	Morbey	Eyde
–	–	–	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♦*	Pass	3♥*	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♥*	Pass	5NT*	Pass
7♠	All Pass		
3♣	Puppet Stayman		
3♦	At least one major		
3♥	Spades		
4NT	RKCB		
5♥	2 key cards		

Clearly there was confusion about the meaning of the 5NT bid. It should be a grand slam try, promising that the partnership has all five key-cards and the queen of trumps.

You may be wondering why 7♠ was not doubled?

South was going to double in the hope of attracting a club lead, but North revealed that he held the ♠A by putting it to his forehead, after which South felt constrained to pass and North was enjoying himself far too much to double.

One down and – 50.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Brian	Cunha	Hagen	Costa
–	–	–	2♦*
Double	2♠*	3♣	3♥
3NT	All Pass		

Declarer took 12 tricks and 11 IMPs.

Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ J5 ♥ J109432 ♦ 976 ♣ KQ		♠ K109432 ♥ 8 ♦ 108 ♣ A976	♠ 876 ♥ A ♦ AQJ42 ♣ 10852
♠ AQ ♥ KQ765 ♦ K53 ♣ J43			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Fanha</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>Morbey</i>	<i>Eyde</i>
–	Pass	2♦*	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
4♠	Double	All Pass	

North led the ♣K and declarer won with dummy's ace, played a heart to the ace and ran the ♠6. South won and returned the ♣4, North winning and switching to the ♦9. Declarer took South's king with the ace and played a spade for the jack, king and ace. South's ♣J was the setting trick – or at least it should have been, but getting ahead of himself he forgot to cash it and exited with a diamond to lose 790.

I am sympathetic.

At a demonstration event in Ostend at this year's European Championship I was defending 3NT with ♥AKQ864 and led the ♥K. Dummy held three hearts and everyone followed. On the layout I thought the only hope of a seventh trick was in the club suit so after cashing six hearts I switched to a club. Or at least that was my intention, but in reality I forgot to cash the three little hearts, allowing 3NT to make.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brian</i>	<i>Cunha</i>	<i>Hagen</i>	<i>Costa</i>
–	2♦*	Pass	2♠*
All Pass			
2♦	Multi		
2♠	Pass or correct		

Declarer emerged with four tricks, – 400, and a somewhat fortuitous 9 IMPs.

Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ J86 ♥ KQ953 ♦ 1032 ♣ 52		♠ 104 ♥ 6 ♦ K98654 ♣ AK84	♠ Q9753 ♥ J108 ♦ J ♣ Q1063
♠ AK2 ♥ A742 ♦ AQ7 ♣ J97			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Fanha</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>Morbey</i>	<i>Eyde</i>
–	–	Pass	2♣*
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠*	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥
All Pass			
2♣	18-22 balanced		

West led the ♦J and declarer won with the queen and drew trumps, East discarding a diamond and a club. A club went to West's eight and he

returned the ♠3. Declarer did not put in dummy's jack so the ten forced the ace and declarer exited with the club jack. East won with the king and returned the ♣A, declarer ruffing in dummy, playing a spade to the king, cashing the ♦A and exiting with a diamond to endplay East, +420.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Brian	Cunha	Hagen	Costa
-	-	1♦	1NT
Pass	2♦*	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

The play was more or less identical, but having ruffed a club declarer played two more rounds of spades to endplay West.

Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

	♠ J32	
	♥ K54	
	♦ AKQJ85	
	♣ A	
♠ AKQ1086		♠ 974
♥ Q1086		♥ 97
♦ 103		♦ 62
♣ J		♣ KQ10654
	♠ 5	
	♥ AJ32	
	♦ 974	
	♣ 98732	



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Fanha	Bilde	Morbey	Eyde
-	-	-	Pass
1♠	Double	1NT	2♣*
3♠	4♦	4♠	5♦
All Pass			

East led the ♣K and declarer won with the ace and gave up a spade, after which it was easy to ruff two spades in dummy for eleven tricks.

A trump lead is a better start for the defence, but not enough to defeat the contract. Declarer wins and ducks a spade. He wins the trump return, unblocks the ♣A, ruffs a spade, ruffs a club and runs the diamonds. West will be forced down to the ♠A and ♥Q108 and now declarer cashes the ♥K and throws West in with a spade to lead into dummy's heart tenace.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Brian	Cunha	Hagen	Costa
-	-	-	Pass
1♠	Double	1NT*	2♥
2♠	3♣	3♠	Pass
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

West led the ♠A and continued with the king. Declarer ruffed, played a heart to the king and a heart to the jack and queen. West continued with the ♠Q and when it held he exited with a trump. When he ruffed the third round of diamonds he had three spades to cash for four down and 14 IMPs, not enough to prevent Sol Da Caparica scoring a narrow victory.

The 22nd Madeira Bridge International Open will take place from November 4 to 11, 2019 (with side events starting on October 31st). One to note in your diary!



Misplay These Hands With Me

Asleep at the Switch

Hoping for a quiet start to what may prove to be a difficult match I pick up a solid looking hand:

♠ QJ96
♥ AKQ
♦ A85
♣ 843

I am the dealer with no one vulnerable and when I open 1NT partner bids 2♣. When I dutifully show my major with 2♠ partner jumps to 4♠. It has been a straightforward auction:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1NT
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

West leads the king of diamonds and I see dummy has a number of useful cards:

♠ K1083
♥ J965
♦ 74
♣ AQ6

♠ QJ96
♥ AKQ
♦ A85
♣ 843

When I duck the opening lead, somewhat annoyingly West does not continue diamonds, but switches to the ten of clubs. It is possible that West is playing a deep game and has the king of clubs, but as I am not playing against Garozzo I go up with dummy's ace and play a trump. There is good news when East goes in with the ace and cashes the king

of clubs. However, when he plays a third club West ruffs and I have to concede one down.

This was the layout:

♠ 72 ♥ 10832 ♦ KQJ63 ♣ 107	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px;"> <table style="border: none; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S		♠ A54 ♥ 74 ♦ 1092 ♣ KJ952
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ K1083 ♥ J965 ♦ 74 ♣ AQ6		♠ QJ96 ♥ AKQ ♦ A85 ♣ 843									

Post mortem

Declarer should have foreseen the danger of a club switch and won the opening lead. He then plays on trumps. East can win and put West in with a diamond for a club switch, but now declarer can win with dummy's ace, draw trumps, unblock the hearts and cross to dummy with a diamond ruff to discard a losing club on the jack of hearts.

Had West led the ten of clubs at trick one declarer would have had no chance.

Quick off the Mark

Teams who survive to the final stages of the Gold Cup have to play matches of 64 boards. In the quarter-finals with both sides vulnerable I pick up the following hand as dealer:

♠ KQJ6
♥ K
♦ AJ92
♣ KQ102

Plenty of high cards but 4-4-4-1 shapes are notoriously difficult. Although the textbooks suggest you should open 1♦ with this particular shape, I prefer to start with 1♣. Partner jumps to 2♥, which is game forcing, promising either a good fit for clubs or a self supporting suit. When I rebid 2♠ partner confirms it is the latter by rebidding 3♥. In an attempt to simplify matters I jump to 4NT and partner responds 5♦, promising 0 or 3 key cards. Clearly it is the latter, so I continue with 5♠, asking about the queen of hearts. Partner responds 6♦, showing both the queen of hearts and the king of diamonds. I can't quite count 13 tricks but as it appears a grand slam will at worst depend on a diamond finesse I jump to 7NT.

This has been our somewhat protracted auction:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	4NT*
Pass	5♦*	Pass	5♠
Pass	6♦*	Pass	7NT
All Pass			

West leads the ten of spades and when dummy appears I see that one important card is absent:

♠ A5
♥ AJ1097652
♦ K8
♣ A

♠ KQJ6
♥ K
♦ AJ92
♣ KQ102

With an eight card suit partner felt entitled to show the queen.

I win the lead in dummy, cross to the king of hearts, play a club to the ace and cash the ace of hearts, throwing the two of diamonds from my hand. Alas, East discards the four of spades That's a blow, but I am not yet down. I cash the king of diamonds and play a diamond to the jack. When that holds I cash my winning spades followed by the ace of diamonds. When I take the top clubs the jack refuses to appear and East takes the last trick.

The full deal:

♠ 10982 ♥ Q84 ♦ 643 ♣ 865	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; padding: 5px;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A5 ♥ AJ1097652 ♦ K8 ♣ A
♠ KQJ6 ♥ K ♦ AJ92 ♣ KQ102		♠ 743 ♥ 3 ♦ Q1075 ♣ J9743

Post mortem

Declarer should have been in no rush to play hearts. After winning with the ace of spades he unblocks the ace of clubs and then plays three more spades, discarding two hearts from dummy. Now declarer cashes the top clubs, unblocks the king of hearts and goes to dummy with the king of diamonds.

In the four-card ending declarer cashes dummy's ace of hearts and although the queen does not drop, East, down to ♦Q107 and ♣J is squeezed. When he throws a diamond declarer discards the ten of clubs and then takes the diamond finesse.



Deals that Caught My Eye

David Bird looks at an international women's Swiss event staged at London's Young Chelsea Club.

A quality international field was drawn to London for a two-day women's Swiss Teams. I will look at some of the double-digit swings, attempting as always to judge whether they were (a) unlucky, (b) caused by good play or bidding or (c) caused by bad play or bidding. Perhaps you may disagree with me on the odd deal. Let's see.

In round 3 the Black Ewes (Denmark/Norway) met French CanCan.

R3. Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.


♠ 103 ♥ K52 ♦ 1075 ♣ K10852		♠ AKJ2 ♥ J4 ♦ KJ9 ♣ A964	♠ 976 ♥ Q1093 ♦ Q842 ♣ Q7
			
		♠ Q854 ♥ A876 ♦ A63 ♣ J3	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Binderkrantz</i>	<i>Puillet</i>	<i>Bekkouche</i>	<i>Bessis</i>
–	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Nadia Bekkouche led the ♠6, Carole Puillet winning West's ♠10 with the jack. When she led the ♣4, preparing for ruffs in the dummy, East won with the ♣Q and returned the ♠7. Declarer would do well to play dummy's ♠8, but she won instead with her king. She cashed the ♣A and led the ♣6. East discarded a diamond and Puillet ruffed with the ♠8. After a diamond to the king, she ruffed her last club with the ♠Q. The ♥A was

followed by a low heart, West rising with the ♥K. These cards were still out:

♠ – ♥ 5 ♦ 107 ♣ 10		♠ A2 ♥ – ♦ J9 ♣ –	♠ 9 ♥ Q ♦ Q8 ♣ –
		♠ – ♥ 87 ♦ A6 ♣ –	

Only two tricks have been lost and a red-suit return will permit an over-trick. Trine Binderkrantz reached for the ♣10. How should declarer play now?

Discarding a diamond will allow East to throw a heart; West can then lead the ♥5 (or the ♣10) for a trump promotion. Declarer chose to ruff with the ♠2 and East overruffed. She was not endplayed, because on this trick declarer had no good discard from dummy. She threw a heart and East then exited safely with the ♥Q to put the game one down.

If declarer reads the cards correctly, she can succeed by ruffing the ♣10 with the ♠A. It is then East who will have no good discard. If she underuffs or ditches the ♥Q, declarer will have an immediate tenth trick. If instead she throws the ♦8, declarer will play the ace and jack of diamonds. East ruffs and the ♠2 becomes good. It is an example of the rare Suicide Backwash Squeeze.

In the Closed Room declarer ducked the heart lead, won the ♠10 return with the ace and ducked a club. She won the next trump with the jack and cashed the two top diamonds. She then crossruffed her way to ten tricks for a gain of 12 IMPs.

In round 4, the Space Girls faced the Golden Girls.

R4. Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ AJ93 ♥ K9 ♦ 642 ♣ K1087		♠ K84 ♥ 1064 ♦ A109 ♣ AJ94	♠ Q1076 ♥ AQ82 ♦ KJ75 ♣ Q
	♠ 52 ♥ J753 ♦ Q83 ♣ 6532		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Remen</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Leslie</i>	<i>Battiscombe</i>
–	–	1♣*	Pass
1♥*	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

The 1♥ transfer response placed the spade game with Paula Leslie in the East seat. Nevena Senior won the diamond lead with the ace and returned the ♦10. Leslie rose with the ♦K and played three top hearts to ditch dummy's last diamond. The ♠Q was allowed to win, North taking the second round of trumps and returning a third round. A club to the queen won the next trick and Leslie ruffed a diamond to set up the ♦J. A club ruff was followed by the ♦J and a ruff of the last heart in dummy. That was ten tricks.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nettleton</i>	<i>Grude</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Fuglestad</i>
–	–	1♦	Pass
1♠	Double	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Liv Marit Grude led an apparently safe heart, which in fact gave declarer

a fourth trick in the suit. Diana Nettleton won with the king and led a club. When North took the ace and switched to the ♦10, it was necessary to rise with the king. North's somewhat aggressive take-out double indicated this play, but declarer called for the ♦J and went one down. It was 12 IMPs for the Space Girls.

Next we will look at a 3NT contract from a match between Four Belles and the Black Ewes. (Who would guess it was a bridge competition, with these team names?)

R5. Board 17. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ K986 ♥ K532 ♦ Q3 ♣ K105		♠ 3 ♥ 109874 ♦ KJ1084 ♣ 96	♠ Q72 ♥ QJ6 ♦ A92 ♣ AQ72
	♠ AJ1054 ♥ A ♦ 765 ♣ J843		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Binderkranz</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Bekkouche</i>	<i>Bell</i>
–	Pass	1♣	1♠
Double	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Sarah Bell led the ♠5. I rather like this lead, compared with the ♠J. It can work well when partner has a doubleton (or singleton) king, queen or 9. Bekkouche won with dummy's ♠6 and played a heart to the 10, queen and ace. When South switched to diamonds, declarer held up the ace until the third round. She then cashed the ♥J and finessed the ♣10 successfully. The ♥K, followed by two more clubs, left her with ♠Q7 opposite ♠K9. North had two red-suit winners but South held the ♠AJ. A ninth trick was on its way and that was +400.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Godfrey</i>	<i>Rom Anjer</i>	<i>Clench</i>	<i>Holmoy</i>
-	2♥	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	All Pass

North's 2♥ showed hearts and a minor. West had indicated four spades with her Stayman bid and Stine Holmoy led the ♦7. Dummy's ♦Q was headed by North's king, allowed to win. The ♦J took the second trick and North then switched to the ♥10. How should declarer continue the play?

Looking no further than North's 2♥ opening bid, Gillian Clench put up the ♥Q. This restricted her to two heart tricks and cost the contract. She led a spade to the king, played clubs from the top and endplayed South with a club for a second spade trick. That was one down.

Go back to trick three, when North switched to the ♥10. If North held the ♥A, would she not have cleared the diamond suit? It was 10 IMPs to the Black Ewes.

One 3NT play hand deserves another, so they say. The next round saw the Space Girls (Norway) facing the Four Belles (England).

♠ 3	♥ 109874	♦ KJ1084	♣ 96
♠ K986	♥ K532	♦ Q3	♣ K105
♠ AJ1054	♥ A	♦ 765	♣ J843

	N	
W		E
	S	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Fuglestad</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Grude</i>	<i>Bell</i>
-	-	Pass	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

A Kokish 2♥ rebid, showing hearts or a very strong balanced hand, would have allowed the 4-4 spade fit to be found. The spade game goes down if declarer starts with the top trumps. What would happen to 3NT?

Ann Karin Fuglestad won the ♣J lead with the ace and played the ♠K followed by a low spade. When North won and persisted with the ♣10, the game was down, whether or not declarer played the queen from dummy. She chose to do so and the defenders collected four club tricks for one down.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Godfrey</i>	<i>Leslie</i>	<i>Clench</i>	<i>Remen</i>
-	-	Pass	2♥
3NT	All Pass		

It may not be apparent, but South's 2♥ was a straight weak-two, rather than a two-suiter. Once again, West ended in 3NT. Lisa Godfrey won the ♣J lead with the ♣A. Unwilling to let North in for a club continuation, she continued with the ace and king of spades. South discarded the ♥9 and Godfrey then played her three top hearts. South was thrown in with a fourth round of hearts and exited with a diamond. Godfrey won and played a second top diamond. She then threw South in again, with a diamond. Down to the ♣K4, Remen had to concede a ninth trick to dummy's ♣Q. This admirable piece of cardplay was rewarded with a 12-IMP swing.

The Four Belles collected further IMPs after a wayward effort from declarer on this deal:

R6. Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ QJ52	♥ 107	♦ Q8	♣ J10973
♠ AK64	♥ AKQ4	♦ AK6	♣ A8
♠ 10983	♥ 52	♦ 10543	♣ Q65
♠ 7	♥ J9863	♦ J972	♣ K42

	N	
W		E
	S	

R6. Board 28. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ AQ72 ♥ 6 ♦ Q9753 ♣ AKQ		♠ 103 ♥ A432 ♦ J2 ♣ 98642	♠ K9865 ♥ Q105 ♦ 106 ♣ J53
		♠ J4 ♥ KJ987 ♦ AK84 ♣ 107	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Fuglestad</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Grude</i>	<i>Bell</i>
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♠	All Pass

West's 3♥ was a mini-splinter. With diamonds bid against her, Bell chose to lead the ♣10. Grude won with dummy's queen, and Sally Brock followed with the ♣9 (suit preference). When the ♥6 was led, Brock rose with the ace and returned the ♣4 to dummy's king.

As you see, declarer could now make the contract by drawing two rounds of trumps. Perhaps reading the deal as similar to a crossruff, she decided to cash the ♣A next. Bell accepted this early Christmas present. She ruffed and returned the ♠J, putting the game was one down.

Whatever the potential merits of cashing a third club may be, it seems that declarer had missed North's ♣9 at trick one. The lead of the ♣10, when missing the nine, surely meant that South held only two clubs.

At the other table, Solvi Remen led the ♠J. Clench won and played a second trump, claiming the contract for a gain of 10 IMPs.

We will end with another 3NT battle. The Dutch Highlanders faced the Space Girls in round 7.

R7. Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ A984 ♥ 95 ♦ Q75 ♣ Q985		♠ 10732 ♥ Q ♦ AK8 ♣ J10643	♠ KQ ♥ J10842 ♦ J1063 ♣ 72
		♠ J65 ♥ AK763 ♦ 942 ♣ AK	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Fuglestad</i>	<i>Sheasby</i>	<i>Grude</i>	<i>Saldzieva</i>
-	-	-	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West led the ♣8 (most Norwegians lead third-best) and Saldzieva won with the king. She cashed the ♣A and crossed to a diamond to lead the ♣J. East, who was about to have a problem with her discards, threw the ♥8. Declarer pitched the ♦4 and West won with the ♣Q. When West switched to the ♦Q, declarer won in dummy and played the ♣10 and ♣6.

East had to find two further discards. She could afford the ♥4, leaving her with ♥J102 to guard declarer's blocked heart suit. She could not afford her next discard of the ♥2. Declarer then overtook the ♥Q and scored four heart tricks for a score of +630.

East needed to discard one of her diamond winners. How could she tell this? Declarer had thrown the ♦4 on the ♣J. So, even if South's hand was ♠J65 ♥AK76 ♦9742 ♣AK, there was no need for East to keep the ♦J10 to prevent declarer from establishing a ninth trick in diamonds. (Declarer might have given East a true guess by discarding a heart rather than the ♦4.)

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Kane	Leslie	Symons	Remen
-	-	-	1NT
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

♠ 10732	♥ Q	♦ AK8	♣ J10643
♠ A984	♥ 95	♦ Q75	♣ Q985
♠ J65	♥ AK763	♦ 942	♣ AK
♠ KQ	♥ J10842	♦ J1063	♣ 72

North's 2♠ was invitational with four spades. West led the ♣5, declarer winning with the ace and crossing to the ♥Q. A club to the king was followed by the ♥A. Declarer turned to spades after this somewhat puzzling start. She might have gone two down at one stage but ended one down. The Dutch Highlanders gained 12 IMPs.

The event drew to a close, leaving this final leaderboard:

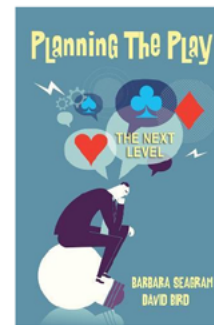
- 1st The Black Ewes** (Denmark/Norway) 140 VPs
(Maja Rom Anjer, Stine Holmoy, Nadia Bekkouche, Trine Binderkrantz),
- 2nd Four Belles** (England/Wales) 129 VPs
(Sally Brock, Sarah Bell, Gilly Clench, Lizzie Godrey)
- 3rd Grand Slam Drag Queens** (Norway) 113 VPs
(Tonya Brogeland, Lizbeth Glaerum, Gunn Tove Vist, Torend Heskje)



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Master of Bridge Psychology

an extract from this month's prize in the Master Point Press Bidding Battle

GET RID OF THAT ACE!

Peter Fredin was just out of his teens when this epic deal was played at the Swedish Junior Pairs Championships in 1990. It is a Fredin classic, and it demonstrates that even at this tender age he had an uncanny knack of knowing when to disregard 'normal' lines of play, and find brilliant, gutsy and deceptive alternatives.

Dealer West, Both Vul.

♠ A53
♥ KJ
♦ K976
♣ 9874

♠ KJ76
♥ AQ
♦ AQJ1043
♣ K

West	North	East	South
	<i>Björnlund</i>		<i>Fredin</i>
Pass	1♣	4♥	6NT
All Pass			

The ♥3 was led, and young Fredin had good reason to be disappointed when his partner tabled the dummy. There were no tricks coming from the club suit, and the two honors in hearts were worthless. Trying hard not to convey his worries to his opponents, Fredin instantly played a card from dummy. He wasn't a favourite to make this slam, far from it. It was – however – by no means hopeless, and he had already made up his mind how to play the hand.

STOP

Before you read on: How would you play the contract?

Did you go for the only mathematical chance – ♠Qxx in the East hand,

giving you twelve tricks by way of four in spades, two in hearts and six in diamonds? Well, don't feel bad, most players would – but not Fredin. He dismissed this possibility outright. Fredin was very confident that East would have an unbalanced two-suited hand, thus dramatically reducing the a priori 18% probability of his having ♠Qxx. However, he would of course never dismiss a winning plan, no matter how small its chance of success, if he weren't absolutely convinced that a better alternative existed, a better plan, plain and simple.

Fredin realized that West would always be able to hold on to his ♠Qxx and two clubs, preventing an endplay, and no squeeze was on. His first objective was to get a trick with the ♣K. This would bring his total tally up to eleven tricks, giving him the same result as the players who ended up in six diamonds minus one, and with a club trick in the bag maybe, just maybe, something else would materialize. East might still have the ♠Q, or perhaps he could set up an endplay anyway by way of a devious deception!

STOP

Before you read on: So what card did Fredin play at Trick 2?

After winning the opening lead with the ♥K in dummy our fearless prodigy immediately played a smooth and innocent-looking ♣9 toward his hand! This was the full deal:

♠ A53		♠ 8									
♥ KJ		♥ 10987542									
♦ K976		♦ –									
♣ 9874		♣ QJ1052									
♠ Q10942											
♥ 63											
♦ 852											
♣ A63											
	<table border="1" style="text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td style="background-color: #008000;"></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ KJ76										
	♥ AQ										
	♦ AQJ1043										
	♣ K										

Leading a club from dummy might look crazy or even desperate. But it really isn't when you are playing against competent opposition, as you are about to see. After all, even if the ♣K lost to the ♣A, he would still be able to try for the small chance of East's holding ♠Qxx any time the opponents didn't continue clubs, which would be the case if the club honors were divided between East and West.

It started out perfectly. East ducked dummy's ♣9, which is good technique if South has the ♣AK6. Having survived the first hurdle, Fredin turned his attention to West, also a very promising junior, and inwardly sighed with relief when he too followed the script and ducked the ♣K. Ducking is a correct and standard play against a known balanced or semi-balanced hand. It gives a declarer with ♣KQ10 a later guess, and West was sure it could never cost anything.

Wrong! This was precisely what Fredin had banked on. He now cashed five of his diamonds and the ♥A, noting that West along the way discarded an encouraging ♠2 followed by the ♠10, while East discarded all his useless hearts. This gave away the spade distribution as 5-1, West having started with ♠Q109xx.

The five-card position with South on lead looked like this:

♠ A5 ♥ – ♦ – ♣ 874	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 8 ♥ – ♦ – ♣ QJ105
N					
W E					
S					
♠ Q94 ♥ – ♦ – ♣ A3	♠ KJ76 ♥ – ♦ 3 ♣ –				

Fredin now played the ♦3. This was the critical moment. It is obvious to anyone looking at all the cards that West must unblock his toxic ♣A. But this is not easy for West to figure out. He was convinced that

South had the ♣QJ or ♣Q10. East could of course have helped him out by discarding a helpful ♣Q earlier, but he never thought about it, because he was convinced that Fredin had the ♣A.

Poor West, bridge is just harder when you play against Fredin. It looked like the only hope was that partner held the ♠K, so he discarded a fatal ♠3, and Fredin discarded one of his small clubs from dummy. He then played a low spade to the ♠A in dummy, and the ♣4 to West's stiff ♣A.

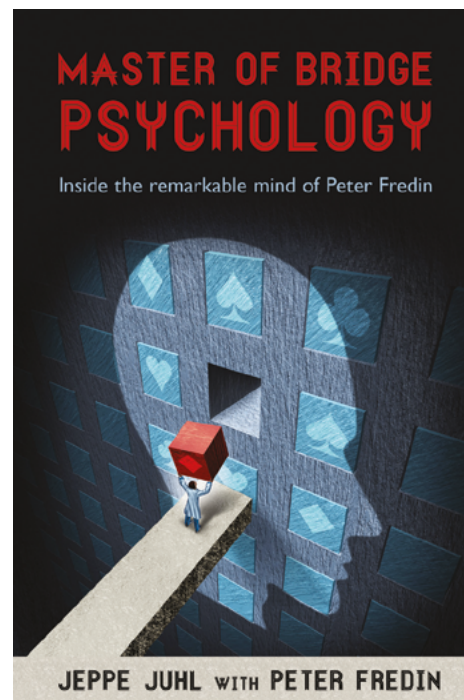
Finito la comedia: West had to lead from his ♠Q9 into Fredin's ♠KJ.

THE INTUITIVE FREDIN

Fredin felt great when he wrote +1440 on his score sheet for making 6NT. He had trusted his intuition and made an impossible slam by using a psychological line of play based on deception instead of the 'normal' textbook play.

I give the credit for this deal to Fredin's 'intuition' for a good reason. It may come as a surprise to you (it sure did to me), but Peter Fredin has no intimate knowledge of card statistics or probabilities. They don't interest him all that much. He puts more trust in his table presence and natural instincts than in numbers from a probability chart.

This deal is a great example of Fredin's intuitive way of playing bridge. It was his instinct, not his non-existent knowledge of probability theory,



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MASTER OF BRIDGE PSYCHOLOGY

Inside the remarkable mind
of Peter Fredin

by Jeppe Juhl with
Peter Fredin

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that made him reject the 18% line for his contract ($\spadesuit Qxx$ onside) as an acceptable benchmark. He was also intuitively aware that after East's preempt it was the much lower a posteriori odds of around 8% to which his plan should be compared. His intuition also 'told' him that his plan was superior to all other alternatives.

As it turned out, Fredin was right. He apparently made the 'correct' intuitive choice.

It is hard to argue against success. It is, however, also hard, if not impossible, to say anything meaningful about exactly how often Fredin's plan will succeed without simulating the deal on a computer, but a 'guesstimation' can give us an idea. Fredin will make the contract one out of four times playing the way he did, if the guesstimation numbers are correct. This is a whopping seven percentage points better than the 18% for finding the $\spadesuit Qxx$ with East and more than three times as good when you adjust these odds to 8% after the preempt.

Chances of making the contract a priori = appr. 18%

Chances of making the contract a posteriori = appr. 8%

Chances of making the contract with

Fredin's psychological plan = appr. 25%

(a) Fredin needs the $\clubsuit AQ$ to be divided between his opponents. Making this a slightly less than 50-50 proposition cannot be far from the truth ($P1 = 0.48$). (b) He also needs both of his opponents to duck when the honors are divided. Good players will do that very frequently. Let's put this number at 90% for each player ($P2 = 0.81$). And finally (c) when West has the $\clubsuit A$, Fredin needs West to fail to unblock it or East to have the $\spadesuit Q$. I put the probability that West doesn't unblock as 80%, and the combined probability of East having the $\clubsuit A$ as well as the $\spadesuit Q$ as 25% ($P3 = 0.65$). For Fredin's play to be correct, the probability of all these three events occurring must be higher than the approximately 8% chance of finding East with $\spadesuit Qxx$ after pre-empt. If not, Fredin lucked out, and won with an inferior plan. Lets find out. This is done by multiplying $P1$, $P2$ and $P3 = (0.48) \times (0.81) \times (0.65) \times 100\% = 25.3\%$.

Fredin: 'Numerical approximations have nothing to do with practical bridge. No one does it like that. Listen... when I decide to disregard the normal so called "mathematical" line of play and go for a psychological plan instead, I – more or less subconsciously – utilize four things: 1) my intuition, 2) my experience from having played hundreds of thousands

of hands, 3) my table feel, and last, but not least, 4) I play the players. Almost all my opponents in a big tournament are strong international players, but now and again I play festival bridge where the skill level of the pairs varies from world-class to near beginner. I would, of course, never embark on a complicated deceptive play against a normal recreational player.' He goes on to reject totally the notion that there should be some kind of fundamental difference between a psychological approach to bridge and a mathematical approach:

'Of course not. It is utter nonsense to think that way. Bridge is a game of incomplete information. The expert players are better equipped to extract the missing information utilizing a variety of different skills, ranging from deductions, system agreements, positive and negative inferences, card play technique, table presence and a host of other methods. All bridge players, from the expert to the beginner, weigh the pros and the cons of any given plan and at the end they go for the line of play that they think has the highest likelihood of success. Sometimes this line of play is based on a deceptive or a psychological plan, much more frequently it is not.'

Fredin goes on to explain that it is therefore a gross misconception to think that psychology and mathematics represent two different ways of playing bridge. They are in fact two sides of the same coin. He speculates that the misconception about the nature of the game stems from the indisputable fact that the vast majority of bridge players simply are unaware of how often there will be a psychological plan that is superior to the 'correct' technical line of play.

'Oh, yes... deceptive opportunities occur all the time. Unfortunately most bridge players are not wired to think in these alternative lines. Their local bridge teacher has often effectively killed their imagination and creativity on their first day of learning about the game. I have actually been accused of cheating several times by ignorant players who simply refused to believe that you could play a hand the way I did without some inside information.'

Postcards from Germany

Martin Cantor

Going through the ever increasing in-tray the Editor discovered a pile of postcards from our German correspondent, Martin Cantor.

Two Coups

I was sitting here in Germany, looking over into France, and I saw a deal that involved both a variant of the Biltcliffe Coup, and a previously unseen (at least by me) distant cousin of the Striped-Tailed Ape.

I spent part of Easter Saturday commentating on BBO on the French Ladies Trials. That this was an event the French were taking extremely seriously was made abundantly clear by the fact that, as your colleague Ron Tacchi will doubtless be horrified to hear, the play in France continued right through lunchtime, with just a 20 minute break between 14.00 and 14.20.

The format was not without interest, especially given the recent controversy about this year's English Ladies Trials. The French Ladies competed over three weekends, each of 144 deals. For this weekend (I believe all three used the same format) six French pairs lined up N/S against three Dutch and three Danish pairs E/W.

This was the two coups hand.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ 109873 ♥ Q876 ♦ 95 ♣ 73	♠ AJ62 ♥ A1092 ♦ — ♣ A10642	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 4 ♥ KJ53 ♦ AKQ864 ♣ QJ
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ KQ5 ♥ 4 ♦ J10732 ♣ K985												

West	North	East	South
Bruijnste	D'Ovidio	Dekkers	Willard
Pass	1♣	1♦	1♠*
Pass	2♣	Double	3♣
Pass	Pass	3♦	Double
Redouble	All Pass		
1♠	No majors		

The Biltcliffe Coup – it's really more of an anti-coup or a suicide coup – is one where the opponents subside in a part-score and you protect, after which they bid on to and make a game. As the auction developed my co-commentator Pierre Schmidt alias Chmitty and I were pointing out that N/S can make a grand slam in clubs, though even getting to the small slam would not be so easy. So when it looked like they were passing the hand out in 3♣ we started to discuss whether North or South was more to blame. Pierre thought Willard's 3♣ was undercooked, while I found D'Ovidio's third round pass rather timid. Alternatively you could say that they had been unlucky in both taking conservative views.

However Dekkers looked to have rescued them with her 3♦ Biltcliffe, since it now seemed certain that Willard would take another bid, and D'Ovidio would surely raise at least to game. Neither of us predicted South's double, though it is perfectly reasonable. West's redouble came both quickly and as an even bigger surprise. And there they played, going 2 down, losing one spade, one heart, two clubs and two trumps for – 600.

In its classic form the Striped-Tailed Ape Coup sees you double the opponents' making game, so that they play there, because even with overtricks it's cheaper than their making slam. I've never seen this analogue in which you redouble your partner's doubled sacrifice to make sure that they don't bid on.

At the vulnerability D'Ovidio might have been tempted to bid on without the redouble; only she could tell us, just as only Bruijnste could tell us whether she redoubled to avoid that. Whatever the intention, it was certainly cheaper than slam would have been at 1370/1390 or even 2140

for the grand. At the table it gained a single IMP against 5♣+1. If Bruinjstee's redouble was deliberately aimed at saving against a slam, then it was inspired. If not, I have no idea what she intended.

A Very Rare Mistake

BBO is a fantastic boon for bridge players, letting us play, practice, train and watch, anytime anywhere. I use it to practice with regular partners, but mostly I'm on there to kibitz world class players on VuGraph. It's entertaining and instructive, although my partners might query whether it ever improves my performance. It's also sometimes nail-bitingly exciting, for example the trials for the USA1 team for the next Bermuda Bowl, which was all square after 119 of 120 boards, and Board 120 was a possible slam.

It was an earlier hand that caught my eye. Swings in matches at this level come mostly from differences in bidding systems, or in judgement whether of bidding or play. Out and out mistakes are very rare, especially in declarer play, and even more so when the declarer in question is Jeff Meckstroth. So rare in fact that I might not have trusted my analysis of this as a mistake, if it hadn't been supported by other online kibitzers including Kit Woolsey who was commentating the match.

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ A10876 ♥ 107 ♦ A63 ♣ 974		♠ QJ53 ♥ AK5 ♦ KQ104 ♣ KQ	♠ K94 ♥ 8632 ♦ — ♣ J108532
	♠ 2 ♥ QJ94 ♦ J98752 ♣ A6		

West	North	East	South
<i>Zia</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Pepsi</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Double	3NT	All Pass	

The Puppet Stayman sequence gave Zia the opportunity to double for a spade lead, which he duly got in the shape of the ♠4. He took the ace and returned the ♠6. Which card should you play if you're North? Meckstroth played the queen, Pepsi took the king and played back the ♠9, overtaken by Zia who soon got in with the diamond ace to cash out for one down. The conversation on BBO was along these lines:

“If he had ducked the second spade he would have made.”

“But if Zia had started with AKxxx that would be wrong.”

Which seems fair and reasonable until:

“But if he had that spade holding and the diamond ace he might well have opened.”


Let me be clear – this conversation took place after the hand had been played, and with the benefit of double dummy vision. And I don't know whether there were any significant inferences from the lead of the ♠4 or the return of the ♠6. But if West has either the spade king or the diamond ace it's right to duck. And while you or I failing to duck might not qualify as a mistake, I think we can fairly charge it against the great Meckstroth's account. But I'll be delighted if I've missed something and he can show me wrong.

A Master's Mistake or a Masterstroke?

You remember I recently sent you a postcard about that rarest of things, a mistake by the master Jeff Meckstroth. Well I thought I'd also found one from that other top master Giorgio Duboin. But on further reflection I'm not so sure.

Now even the greatest of players – and they both are – will sometimes make decisions in the bidding or play that don't work out, but you can't often call them mistakes, because their decisions are perfectly reasonable and consistent with everything they know or could deduce. So I'm loathe to call a bid a mistake. But this one seemed so egregiously misguided. This was the hand and the auction, which comes from a pre-European Championships practice match between Italy and France.

Board 10. Dealer East. Both Vul.

♠ AK ♥ KQJ43 ♦ KQ73 ♣ 82		♠ Q976 ♥ 97 ♦ J ♣ AK10943
♠ J1042 ♥ A86 ♦ A10642 ♣ 5		♠ 853 ♥ 1052 ♦ 985 ♣ QJ76

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sebanne</i>	<i>Duboin</i>	<i>Lorenzini</i>	<i>Donati</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
Pass	1♥	2♣	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

The bid that shocked me was Duboin’s 3♦, clearly a game try. I don’t have their convention card but it looks like his second round double showed a good hand rather than being take out, though I suppose it could be two-way. Donati’s 2♥ bid after his failure to raise on the previous round shows serious weakness – at best either fewer than three hearts with a scattering of points, or three hearts with almost no points. Either way it’s hard to imagine him holding an ace. In which case there are at least three top losers and a fair few other losers that need to be covered. 3♥ going down a trick or two looks to be very much more likely than the chance of making game, so even vulnerable 3♦ looked to me like a huge overbid. “What’s he thinking of?” I was saying to myself, “give Donati the three card heart support he has and say jack to four in diamonds together with a black queen and he’d be bidding a no-play game.”

It was only when I looked at the result in the other room that I started to reassess.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Volcker</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>T. Bessis</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♦	Double	Redouble	Pass
1♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	


Had he worked out that opponents had either a club or a spade fit, perhaps even both? And if he passed one or other of them would protect and they’d find it. The 3♦ bid certainly inhibited the opponents from competing, so in that sense it worked since 2♠ certainly makes, and 9 tricks will often be made. Which was what happened in the Closed Room, but in 4♠x for – 200 while Duboin also went one down in his contract for a further – 100 and Italy lost 7 IMPs.

All in all I’m still not sure what to think. Yes he kept them out of a spade partial. Did he do it on purpose? Maybe, but did he also, consciously or not, run the risk of getting himself into a no-play 4♥? I think I’ll let the jury (or the Editor) decide.

Back and Forth

This hand from the round of 16 in the Rosenblum Open Teams at the Bridge World Series in Orlando grabbed my attention.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

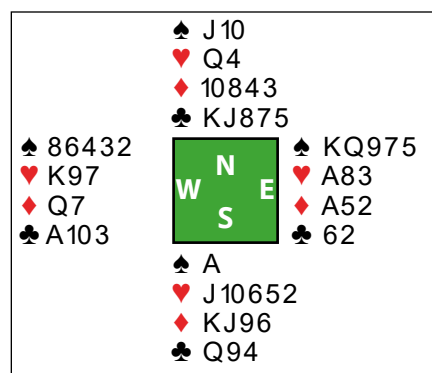
♠ 86432 ♥ K97 ♦ Q7 ♣ A103		♠ KQ975 ♥ A83 ♦ A52 ♣ 62
♠ J10 ♥ Q4 ♦ 10843 ♣ KJ875		♠ A ♥ J10652 ♦ KJ96 ♣ Q94

At the table I was watching this was the auction:

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>S Drijver</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Brink</i>
-	-	1♠	Double
3NT*	Pass	4♠	All Pass
	3NT	Spade raise with some defence	

Brink led a low ♥ which I commented was the only lead to beat the contract, since after anything other than a heart declarer can play a diamond towards the queen, setting up a discard of a small heart on the diamond ace. But now he has to take the lead in hand to make that diamond play, and then has no quick route back to hand for the discard. Bocchi took quite a while before playing to the first trick, took it in hand with the ace and, to my surprise, played a small club to the 10 and jack. At which point I saw his plan, and decided he would make after all. North cleared the hearts, but Bocchi cashed the ace of clubs, ruffed one, and exited a high spade to endplay, as it seemed South, who could cash a heart but then have to lead away from the king of diamonds. But no, he wasn't endplayed, as long as his partner ruffed the heart to play a diamond through. And Drijver was up to the task – but then Brink made it easy for him by playing a SMALL heart to dummy's nine. It was off, it was making, but in the end it was one off.

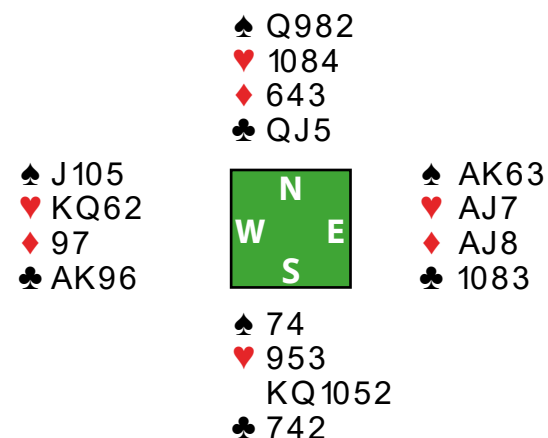
The board was flat in this Pszcola versus Lavazza match, as Bilde (North) and Duboin (South) found almost the same defence against Nowosadzki, the only difference being that at trick seven Duboin led the master ♥J, but Bilde trumped it just the same. In the other matches shown on BBO: Meckwell for Nickell made 4♠ on a club lead, while El Ahmady for Strul went off when Weinstein (N) and Levin (S) found the same defence as Bilde-Duboin; Gawrys for Zimmermann made 4♠x after a heart lead because when he played a diamond up at trick two Skrzypczak for Connector took his king but switched to a club. In the other room Helgemo led the spade ace against Wiankowski's 4♠ for an easy make; Platnick for Diamond made 3♠ losing IMPs to Mesbur of the Texan Aces who bid to 4♠ and saw Brogeland lead the ace of trumps; and Hurd for Spector made 3♠, losing to Tulin's Van Prooij who made his game when Demuy led a club.



Cash Your Long Suit

This hand came up at our local club in a teams event.

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.



At both tables West played 3NT and made 11 tricks, once on a spade lead, once on a heart lead. Nothing very remarkable, but when I was going through the hands the next day I noticed that a diamond lead would have made overtricks harder to come by. And then I noticed that the computer said the optimal contract was "E/W 3NT+2". Played by East yes since an opening diamond honour lead could be ducked, and then a spade finesse taken followed by a club finesse. But what if the hand is played by West on a diamond lead? It took me quite some time to work out how to make 11.

I figured it had to be some sort of squeeze, but in which suits and on who and how can you rectify the count without leaving yourself wide open? I got there in the end (many readers may have got there much quicker). I think it was the late Patrick Jourdain whose winning Bols Bridge Tip was 'play off your long suit early'. I don't think he much had four card suits in mind, but that is the secret here. Duck one round of diamonds, take the second, then cash your four heart tricks. What is North to discard? A club gives that whole suit for four tricks, and twelve in total. A spade gives four in that suit and 11 tricks. And a diamond means you can safely finesse a club into North for three in that suit with your three spades, four hearts and a diamond = 11.

A squeeze without the count in three suits. Not that one overtrick

more or less matters at teams, and at pairs you have to be in desperate need of tops to play this way. So really this is just for theoretical interest.

Guess the Contract

Earlier today I tuned into BBO VuGraph just in time for the last board for the first set of the British Gold Cup semi-final between Crouch and Cliffe. It was fun. Here's the hand, now see if you can guess the final contract.

Board 8. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ A9 ♥ Q ♦ A10764 ♣ KQ863		♠ J1075 ♥ K1083 ♦ 2 ♣ 10754
♠ KQ4 ♥ A9752 ♦ 83 ♣ A92	♠ 8632 ♥ J64 ♦ KQJ95 ♣ J	

If I hadn't warned you to look for something out of the ordinary you'd probably say 4♥ E/W or 4 or 5♦ N/S, with or without a double in each case. Now try again after I tell you that Zia was South. Even then, your first choice probably wouldn't be right so I'll tell you. 4♣ by South.

You'd probably like to know the auction.

West	North	East	South
<i>Mayo</i>	<i>Michielsen</i>	<i>Cliffe</i>	<i>Zia</i>
1♥	2NT*	3♥	4♣
All Pass			

Sarah Bell was the BBO operator and she commented 'Zia has bid for a club lead against 4♥'. (I think this was her analysis rather than anything Zia said).

Alan Mayo led the ♠K to the A, J and 2. Zia played a small club to his jack, ducked. Then the ♦J to the ace, and the ♣K discarding the ♦Q. West took this, but now Zia was set for 9 tricks – even if Mayo found the ♦ for

partner to ruff it would with a natural trump trick. And, even knowing by now that Zia had bid 4♣ on the singleton jack, even Zia was surely unlikely to hold five diamonds after partner's unusual no trump bid. Mayo continued with two more rounds of spades, Zia ruffed, drew a round of trumps and played diamonds.

Zia's wry comment, as relayed to us by Sarah: "Got to give VuGraph something to watch".

What makes it even more fun is that it was a flat board, since in the other room N/S bid to 5♦ and also went one down. And one final twist: Zia bid 4♣ for a club lead against the 4♥ he expected opponents to bid. 4♥ goes down on best defence (though it isn't easy), losing 2 clubs, a diamond and a spade. Except that, on the lead of the club king, the club losers shrink to one and it makes in comfort.

Is virtue its own reward? or Can you argue with success?

The proverb tells us that virtue is its own reward, and it's certainly true that in bridge if you play with correct technique you will more often get good results than if you don't. Of course the proverb actually means that sometimes your virtue has no reward other than the knowledge you did things right. And in bridge it's also true that sometimes your vices – or at least your carelessness – bring a good if undeserved score.

I watched a couple of hands on BBO this morning from the China University Bridge Championships, and on this one a mistake by declarer at trick one paid off not once not twice but three times. Incidentally, David Bird is welcome to include this in any revised edition of his recent book *Trick One*. Chapter 2 Winning in the right hand seems appropriate.

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ 10973 ♥ Q97 ♦ 1094 ♣ 964		♠ K52 ♥ KJ85 ♦ KJ5 ♣ 532
♠ QJ864 ♥ A10 ♦ AQ2 ♣ AK10		
	♠ A ♥ 6432 ♦ 8753 ♣ QJ87	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

3♣ Puppet Stayman

North led the ♦4 and declarer put up dummy's king and followed with the ♦5 from hand. Which was his or her mistake. You have a certain trump loser, and are in danger of also losing a club as well as possibly a second trump. You can get rid of the club loser if you can find the ♥Q, as long as you can get to dummy for the discard. The second trump loser on a 4-1 break can be avoided if you can make the first lead through a stiff ace on either side, but also if there is a singleton 9 or 10 in North, again provided that you have entries to dummy to finesse against South. The stiff ace being a 50-50 shot it's best to preserve dummy's entries by winning the first trick with the ace, then lead a spade to the king. So declarer's mistake brought its first reward when a small spade from dummy picked up South's ace, who switched to the ♣7. I suspect that declarer now realised where s/he had gone wrong at trick 1. After drawing trumps s/he would be stuck in hand with no way to finesse hearts against South who, with

the singleton spade, was likely to have the longer hearts. And so with no other real alternative declarer drew trumps and played ♥A then ♥10 to the J for the second unmerited reward.

And the third? Well at the other table North led the ♥7, solving the club loser problem for declarer. Who now led the spade queen from hand (small would have been better to cater for stiff ace in North, but queen would still be OK with stiff 9 or 10), and with a second trump to lose that was one down for a loss of 17 IMPs. 17 IMPs which might easily have gone the other way. And on the subject of undeserved benefits, I can't say that North's choice of a heart lead away from the queen would have been mine.

Which contract do you want to be in?


This hand came up in the regional semi-final of the German inter-club knock-out. Take a look at just the East-West hands and decide which contract you'd like to play.

Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ A2 ♥ AK72 ♦ AK10 ♣ K632		♠ K9543 ♥ Q10 ♦ J85 ♣ AQ4
------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------

I imagine you'd say 6NT, and it seems routine to bid it with a balanced 21 opposite a balanced 12. If you were offered a second choice, I imagine you'd say 6♠. And indeed 6NT was played by East at both tables. I got the lead of the ♥3 giving me 11 top tricks, and fancied my chances which included a 3-3 break in either black suit, or the diamond finesse, or one of several squeeze possibilities. None of them materialized, and I went down, as did declarer at the other table on the less helpful but usefully informative lead of the ♦7. From which you will gather that spades and clubs were 4-2 (so a spade slam has no play), the diamond finesse was offside, and by the time I had tested the black suits the entries were wrong for the squeeze on North.

Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ A2 ♥ AK72 ♦ AK10 ♣ K632		♠ Q1086 ♥ 964 ♦ Q643 ♣ 108	♠ K9543 ♥ Q10 ♦ J85 ♣ AQ4
		♠ J7 ♥ J853 ♦ 972 ♣ J975	

Looking at the full hand you can see that after the heart lead into the tenace you can strip squeeze North by cashing all your heart and club winners, together with one top diamond (unblocking the jack), then either dropping the ♦Q if North has discarded two of them, or endplaying her with the third round of spades to lead into the diamonds. Not an unreasonable line, and certainly a more elegant one, but whether it offers a better percentage chance than mine I leave to the experts.

So, assuming that your opponents will find a safe club or diamond or top spade lead have you decided you want to be in 3NT? Wrong. The slam that can always be made is 6♣. You just have to ruff the third heart, draw three rounds of trumps, cash the fourth heart and two diamonds, then play ace and king of spades to score the ♣2 en passant. Simple. Can't think why we didn't bid it.

Low Level Redoubles


The 2018 NABC Fall Nationals are being held in Honolulu, which means that the times of play aren't well suited for Europeans to watch on VuGraph. Still, as an inveterate night owl, I managed to watch some early boards of the first offering, the semi-final of the Baze Senior KO Teams between Nickell and O'Rourke.

Joe Stokes is a top VuGraph operator, not just inputting all the bids, alerts, explanations and play accurately, but also providing the audience with titbits from the table. I loved this little exchange that he reported at the end of trick 1 of Board 2: 'Nickell asks if it is OK to look back at

the last trick after it is turned. JC (Jerry Clerkin) "Sure, it is the seniors".

The auction on the next board brought up some interesting points which I was pleased to discuss with Jan Martel, who was commentating. It highlighted an area of bidding theory that is under-explored, despite it being far from an esoteric situation, namely advancer's action after an opening bid is doubled by your partner, then redoubled by responder. This was the hand:

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul

♠ Q3 ♥ Q8 ♦ QJ643 ♣ AJ53		♠ AJ109 ♥ KJ63 ♦ 8 ♣ 10874	♠ K872 ♥ A10975 ♦ K5 ♣ 96
		♠ 654 ♥ 42 ♦ A10972 ♣ KQ2	

West	North	East	South
<i>J Clerkin</i>	<i>Katz</i>	<i>D Clerkin</i>	<i>Nickell</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♦*	Double	Redouble	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♦	All Pass

- 1♦ Precision 2+♦
- 2♣ Clubs and confirms real diamonds

Now I'll be the first to say that Nick Nickell is a much better player than me, and I think we can be fairly sure that he and Steve Katz have discussed this kind of sequence. Nonetheless Nickell's actions – or rather lack of action – seem odd to me (for those not fluent in bridgespeak, the correct translation of 'odd' is 'wrong').

When the redouble is of the strength showing type (i.e. not for example Rosnkranz showing a top honour in partner's suit) then there are generally three variants of it:

- hands of 9/10+ points short (maximum doubleton) in partner's suit,

so heavily penalty oriented

- all hands of 9/10+ points, with all other bids non-forcing
- hands of 9/10+ points where no other system bid like Jacoby is available, with new suits at the 2 level or above non-forcing.

For what it's worth I favour the first of these, and I very strongly favour 10+ not 9+, especially in these days of ever lighter openings.

Most partnerships will have agreed one of these or some minor variation of one of them. But what next for the doubler's partner? One standard agreement is that pass says no particular preference for any of the unbid suits, and a bid shows a notable preference. Alternatively, pass can be used to say 'happy to play this redoubled contract'. This latter is much less common, and generally much less sensible since it is clear that the points are at best roughly evenly divided, and you hold the suit opened on your left and responder probably sits over partner's suits. However, if the opening bid is potentially short, as the 1!d bid here, it is certainly a playable method.

Nickell's second round pass wasn't alerted, suggesting no 'happy to play here' agreement. But then, since you don't want to hear 2♥ from partner, why not 1♠? Or maybe 1NT? Whatever the partnership's agreements about that pass, it left him poorly placed on the next round, since doubling the 2♦ preference would presumably have been takeout, something like these values with at least 4-3 majors or somewhat fewer values with 4-4+ majors. As he hadn't shown any values he could hardly expect Katz to produce a reopening double.

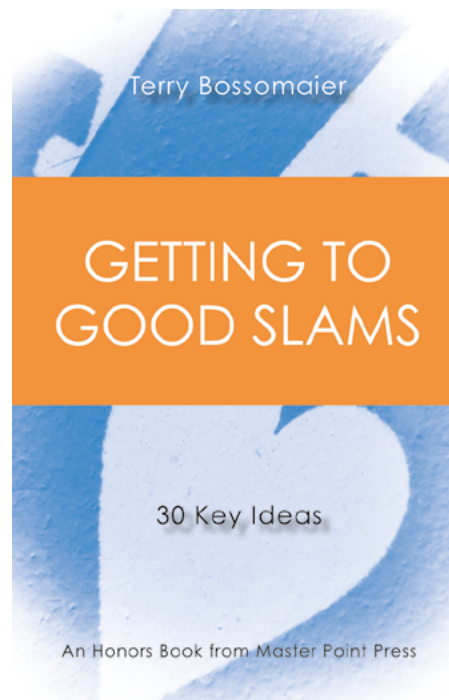
And so the bidding ended in 2♦, going one down which it will on any sensible defence. I admit I would have bid 1NT on the second round, even knowing that my suit and probably partner's suits are sat under opponents', but it would get across my values and diamond stopper. Yes it would likely go two down, but on this occasion partner is very minimum for his initial double. I admit too that I would then have doubled 2♦ – having bid 1NT I believe this would be penalties. Yes, you know it will be tight, but overtricks seem most unlikely, meaning you might concede 180 instead of 90 if it makes, while you are turning +100 into +200 or possibly +200 into +500.

At the other table West made 1NT+1 so the Nickell team gained 6 IMPs on the board – like I said, Nickell is better than me since I'd have gained only 1 for 1NT-2. Or maybe I'd have gained 8 if E/W had still competed

to 2♦ and I could have doubled. Regardless of the results on this one hand, the issues around advancer's actions are worth sorting out with your partner, taking into account the different possible meanings of the redouble, as well as whether your agreements are different if the opening bid is possibly short, and if so how short does it have to be to make a difference – 2+ or 1+ or 0+?

Just for the record, long after I went to bed – in fact shortly after I got up again – the match ended with Nickell winning 104-71 and progressing to the final where they lost 93-113 to Kasle. And, since the ACBL has decided to discontinue this event, the Kasle team (Gaylor Kasle, Drew Cannell, Drew Casen, James Krekorian, Michal Kwiecien and Wlodzimerz Starkowski) will be champions for all time. Congratulations.

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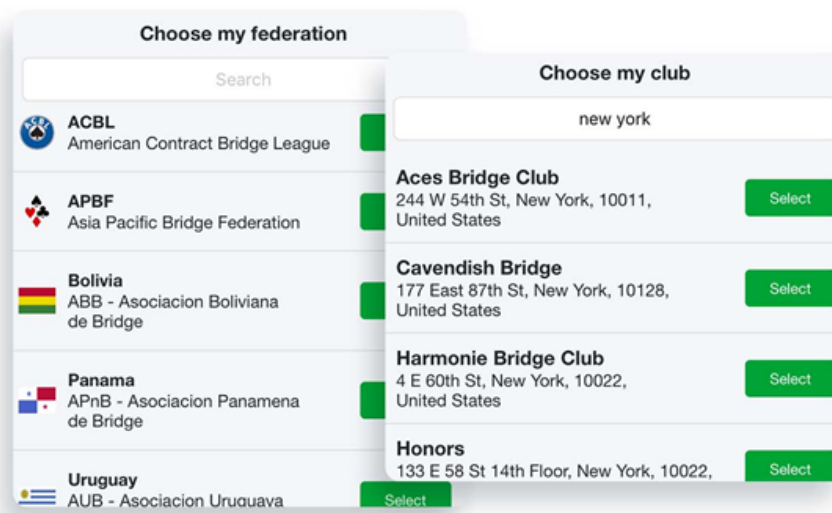
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DEFEND WITH JULIAN

POTTAGE

The Questions

1

♠ A
 ♥ Q10754
 ♦ KQJ3
 ♣ K73

♠ J9764
 ♥ K6
 ♦ 72
 ♣ AQ92

N			E
W			S

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	-	1NT*
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
1NT	12-14		

2♦ Transfer to hearts

You lead the six of spades. After dummy wins performe (five from partner), declarer leads a heart to the jack. What is your plan?

2

♠ Q97
 ♥ Q5
 ♦ K64
 ♣ Q8764

♠ 10862
 ♥ J97
 ♦ 987
 ♣ KJ9

N			E
W			S

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	1♠	2♦
2♠	3♦	4♠	5♦
All Pass			

You decide to lead a trump. Declarer wins in hand, partner discarding a spade, leads the ten of hearts to the queen and ruffs a spade. Then comes the ace-king of hearts, a spade going from dummy, followed by a trump to the king and a second spade ruff. Now declarer leads a low club. What do you do?



Test Your Technique

with Christophe Grosset

see Page 4

IMPs. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ AJ1094
♥ Q63
♦ 6
♣ K954

♠ 3
♥ KJ8
♦ AQ7543
♣ Q76

West	North	East	South
-	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥*	Pass	2NT
All Pass			

This first problem of the year is an easy one ... but typically the kind that will make the difference between winning bridge and losing bridge, as the type of thinking required to solve it happens all the time. You are in 2NT after some optimistic bidding by partner and West leads the ♥4 (2nd and 4th). What is your plan?

To reach 8 tricks, there are not many choices. You must develop tricks from either spades or diamonds. Clubs will not be enough.

Even though spades are much stronger than diamonds, establishing spades for 3 tricks would need a lot of good things to happen: it will require either West to have ♥ or being able to reach dummy twice with both the ♥Q and the ♣K ... and you will also need the diamond finesse for the 8th trick (3♠, 2♥, 2♦ & 1♣). All of this while hoping E/W won't be able to take 6 tricks before you get your 8 (with 2♠, 3♥ and 1♣ or 2♠ 2♥ and 2♣ for example).

Let's see what we need to make the contract playing on diamonds: if the diamond finesse works and the diamonds are 3-3, we will make 9 tricks: 1♠, 2♥, 5♦ & 1♣. If they are 4-2 with the king onside or 3-3 with the king offside, we will still have a good chance: Hope that the ♣Q can provide an entry and that the opponents can't take 6 tricks before we take 8. This line has to be better ... as long as you realised it before playing the first card from dummy. Indeed, you must play the queen of hearts in order to play diamonds from dummy immediately.

Did you find this line? And more importantly, would you have found it at the table?

The Sting

Alex Adamson & Harry Smith Give Us More Tales From The Over The Rainbow Bridge Club

There were few national bridge events in the Land of Oz in the summer months. He was desperate to get back on the national scene. Now he had won the Ozian National Pairs, he would be known. He would be rated. He would be feared, and not just by his partners and teammates.

Three weeks had passed since he and Dorothy had triumphed in the Emerald City, and the taste was still bitter in his mouth. After all that effort, the national rankings still only had him as the second top player from Munchkinland. He should have realised. Of course Dorothy had played in more national events than he had. And she was quite a good player. Indeed she was probably the second-best in the club. He was willing to partner her, which any astute observer would realise was all the accolade that she could possibly need.

But after all the effort of their glorious win, he, the Tin Man, was still second to her in terms of these blue national points.

It was only in the last year that he had realised their importance, when he had found that Almira Gulch was the club's highest ranked player – an affront to his dignity and a wrong he had been determined to right. He had entered comparatively few national events before that point, but had made a supreme effort over the season just finished. Now he found that he was spending hours scouring the Ozian Bridge Union web site.

Finally, something had caught his eye. It would be on the last Saturday in August. He had to plan it carefully. A one-day Swiss Pairs was being held at Poppyfield, and blue points were being awarded. He must find a suitable partner, and ideally Dorothy shouldn't even be aware of the event. Her work kept her very busy over the summer months, so with a bit of luck she wouldn't be looking for other than games on club nights.

Dorothy had already gone home. An early start for work the next morning, she had told him. That evening, they had won the Thursday evening pairs with a score of 62%. 'Acceptable,' he thought, 'but should have been better, if that brainless Scarecrow hadn't accidentally found a killing defence by pulling cards from his hand in what seemed like a random order. Or if the cowardly Lion had gone beyond part score with fourteen points opposite the Scarecrow's One Spade opening. The 27-count game

had been bid at every other table, but was destined to fail.'

He looked again at the results. Just behind them on second place was the pairing of Almira Gulch and Professor Marvel. 'Yes,' he thought, 'that Professor is a pretty fair dummy player. He must be quite good if he can consistently score well playing with Miss Gulch. His bidding lacks discipline, but maybe he could be knocked into shape by a superior partner.'

He knew without looking that Miss Gulch's bike had already departed. He had heard the distinctive sound of the chain and padlock clanking as they were put in the bag above her rear wheel. On top of that, the irritating sound of her constant haranguing of her partner had stopped which could only mean that she was no longer on the premises. But Professor Marvel was still here, glass of elderflower wine in hand, listening attentively to several elderly ladies who were clearly in need of sympathy and affirmation that they had done the right thing, or possibly reassurance that whatever had gone wrong was clearly their partner's fault.

'And on board 22 she put me into Four Spades with only a nine-count,' he heard one lady saying. 'It's an impossible contract. I think one person made it, but whoever it was must have faced very poor defence.'

The Professor smiled comfortingly. 'Indeed I am ashamed to say I was in that contract, but I did receive a very lucky lead.'

The Tin Man's brain was ticking over, absorbing all this. The corners of his lips twitched infinitesimally. He had his answer. He didn't usually stay on at the club for long after the end of play. He would normally just tell a select few about some of his more instructional brilliancies that evening, but was not inclined to squander his time listening to what others had done. This evening, however, was different. He just stood quietly at the notice board and waited until the Professor and his coterie rose to depart.

'Excuse me a moment, Professor,' he said standing directly between Professor Marvel and the door. 'I wonder if I might have a word with you.'

'Of course, young man,' the Professor smiled, 'is there a hand you wanted to discuss?'

The Tin Man wavered for a second. The very idea that he might need

advice on any hand from anyone! ‘No, of course not,’ he responded curtly. ‘I was wondering if you might be able to play in the Poppyfield Swiss Pairs with me.’

The Professor pulled out his diary from one of several inside pockets in his jacket. ‘I know the event,’ he said, ‘but hadn’t planned to play as Miss Gulch will be away that weekend. Is your partner also on holiday?’

‘I’m sure she wouldn’t be interested.’ The Tin Man’s face turned a rusty red as he spoke. ‘I thought you might enjoy a game with a national champion.’

‘I’ll be delighted,’ the Professor responded. He dug into yet another pocket. ‘You must try some of these camomile pills. They’re very good for the hot flushes.’

By the end of the train journey, The Professor had yet again offered him some camomile pills. He hadn’t mentioned the event to Dorothy, and yet here she was on the same train, going to the same place, for the same purpose, but partnering her Aunty Em.

‘I had thought you weren’t playing in this Swiss Pairs, Dorothy,’ the Professor smiled, with a wink at Aunty Em. ‘It was good of you to allow me to play with your regular partner. I am so looking forward to a game with him.’

Dorothy suppressed a smile. It had come out in conversation a week earlier, and the reason hadn’t taken them long to work out. It was Aunty Em who had suggested that she play with Dorothy, and that she shouldn’t mention it to the Tin Man beforehand. ‘If he wants secrets, he can have secrets,’ she asserted.

By mid-afternoon the players were ambling around the room looking for their seats for the fourth round. The Tin Man snorted. ‘What is it that makes bridge players so incompetent? The director told us the arrangement of the tables before we started, and for those too important to bother listening there are numbers on the walls. To look at this lot you would think that the table numbers were being randomly shuffled after each round!’ For him, this was a good-natured observation: the Tin Man was in a generous mood. He had to admit that this Professor was good. Well at least in the card play, though having seen some of his partner’s bids, he thought he could most charitably describe them as intuitive. They seemed to work out well, but would certainly not feature

in any textbook.

They had won their first three matches. Even better, Dorothy and Aunty Em had suffered a small loss in their first match. He had focused on his own results after that, and so it was a surprise to him, as he fought his way past the eddying masses to table two, to find Aunty Em making herself comfortable in the North seat. ‘Are you sure you’re at the correct table?’ he gurgled, clearly hoping that she had suffered a senior moment.

‘Quite sure,’ she put on her sweetest smile. ‘It took us a match to get into our stride, but after two 20 – 0 wins, we did expect to be up at the top of the room. You must be doing fairly well also, to be up here. Well done you!’

‘Good steady play, as you would expect.’ He lowered himself carefully into the West seat.

The first two boards of the eight-board set had passed quietly. Both had been routine Three Notrumps played by the Tin Man and Aunty Em respectively, with ten tricks each time easily available to declarer and no prospect of an eleventh. All four of them at the table were aware that some weaker declarers would manage to hold themselves to nine tricks. Dorothy, knowing her normal partner well, could see his spirits fall when his advantage after the first board was negated by the second.

They extracted their hands for the third board:

Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 97 ♥ KJ1052 ♦ K1073 ♣ 95	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ AKQ65 ♥ A7 ♦ J92 ♣ KJ2	♠ J83 ♥ 86 ♦ 854 ♣ 87643
N						
W E						
S						
♠ 1042 ♥ Q943 ♦ AQ6 ♣ AQ10						

After Dorothy opened the South hand with a weak Notrump, the Tin Man came in with Two Hearts showing that suit and another. Aunty Em

forced with Three Hearts and when Dorothy showed some heart values by bidding Three Notrump, the rest of the auction was a typical Aunty Em sequence. With a withering look at her westerly opponent, she took the Six Notrump card from her bidding box, and placed it firmly on the table.

The full short auction had been:

West	North	East	South
<i>Tin Man</i>	<i>Aunty Em</i>	<i>Professor</i>	<i>Dorothy</i>
-	-	-	1NT
2♥	3♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	6NT	All Pass	

Clearly there was no point in looking for values in his partner's hand, so the Tin Man selected the safe lead of ♣9.

After playing two rounds of spades to confirm they were splitting, Dorothy could see ten tricks, and, remembering the auction, she could be sure that both red kings were lying badly should she try to open up either of these suits. She played off all her clubs and two more spades, throwing a heart from her hand, and the deal was now an open book to her.

Before she led her last spade from dummy, the situation was as follows:

	♠ 5	
	♥ A7	
	♦ J92	
	♣ —	
♠ —	N W E S	♠ —
♥ KJ10		♥ 86
♦ K107		♦ 854
♣ —		♣ 8
	♠ —	
	♥ Q94	
	♦ AQ6	
	♣ —	

The Tin Man could see a fatal endplay approaching, whichever card he threw on this trick. Trying to look unconcerned, he discarded the ♦7. Dorothy now played the ♦A on which the Tin dramatically pulled out his king, praying his partner had the queen. It was not to be, and Dorothy had her twelve tricks.

The Professor knew how important this particular match was to the Tin Man, and could see his body sag. 'Well-defended partner,' he said,

just a shame you were up against a good declarer and I had absolutely nothing in my hand.

'Well defended perhaps,' Aunty Em interrupted, knowing this was a good time to press home her moral advantage, 'but without that inane bid, even Dorothy would probably take a losing line. Surely everyone knows that you bid constructively over a Weak No-trump in case it is your hand.'

The Tin Man's body sagged a little further.

After four more deals, it was Aunty Em who was starting to look the worse for wear. She and Dorothy had done nothing wrong. Indeed they had bid and defended well. The fourth board was probably above average for them, when the demoralised Tin Man had taken a very passive line in defence, and the fifth looked like it would be flat around the room. But the Professor had been declarer in both of the remaining two boards. Aunty Em doubted if a single other declarer in the room would have tried the lines the Professor took in each of these two hands, but somehow he managed to extract a trick more than appeared to be there.

Disgruntled, she took out her cards from the last board of the set.

Dealer West. N/S Vul.

	♠ AK2	
	♥ Q109	
	♦ Q6	
	♣ KQ1073	
♠ Q107	N W E S	♠ 9543
♥ 4		♥ K8765
♦ K1098753		♦ —
♣ 82		♣ J954
	♠ J86	
	♥ AJ32	
	♦ AJ42	
	♣ A6	

The auction was once again brief, as were most auctions involving Aunty Em:

West	North	East	South
<i>Tin Man</i>	<i>Aunty Em</i>	<i>Professor</i>	<i>Dorothy</i>
-	-	Pass	1♦
Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	6NT	All Pass	

The Tin Man almost smiled as he realised that he was about to lead from a doubleton club against a slam for the second time in this set of eight boards.

Dorothy looked at dummy, keeping a smile on her face to disguise her feelings. She had shown 15 – 19 points with her Two Notrump rebid. Was it too much to ask that Aunty Em would use the fairly limited system they had available to find out her actual count? It wasn't as if her partner had a hand with exceptional trick-taking power. As it was, even if the clubs came in for five tricks, she would still need the heart finesse.

Resignedly, she decided to try the hearts first. Winning the lead in dummy, her spirits rose when the ♥Q won the next trick and the ♥10 the succeeding one. She won the next trick in hand with ♣A. The opponents' carding in clubs was not encouraging as it looked as if the suit might well not be breaking, but what else could she play for? Not only that, but if the Tin Man really had a doubleton club as well as a singleton heart then the chances of a last-gasp diamond finesse were not good. She was about to play a spade to dummy to try the club suit with her fingers crossed when she saw another chance.

With a real smile now forming she played her ♦2, and with the king

inside, there was no answer for the defence. If the Tin Man won the king, Dorothy would have three tricks in diamonds, and with four tricks in hearts and two in spades, she would only need the one remaining top club for her contract. Ducking was no better, as she would now only need four club tricks in total, so could afford to give up one.

A few moments later, Aunty Em was entering the making slam onto the scoring machine. 'Bad hand for the Strong No-trump pairs,' she observed. 'After a One No-trump opening by South and a Three Diamond overcall it would be very hard to bid the slam.'

The Tin Man rasped 'Well if anyone would bid it anyway, I'm sure it would be you.'

Aunty Em turned to Professor Marvel. 'It's the meal break now and they're serving a lovely buffet. I'm sure you and your partner will join us.' 'Of course, ladies,' smiled the Professor, 'we would be delighted to.'

The Tin Man sat stunned in his seat. How many pairs would bid that slam? How many of these would make it? This was definitely a losing match; that was bad enough. But it put Dorothy well ahead of him. His blue point plan looked as if it was backfiring.

INTERNATIONAL WACHAUER BRIDGE-WEEK RELOADED

2019

Sunday 4th to Saturday 10th of August

Venue:
Römerhalle A-3512 Mautern Austria

Organisation:
Austrian Bridge Federation (ÖBV)

Management:
Executive Board of ÖBV

Contacts:
wachauer-bridgewoche2019@bridgeaustria.at

MAUTERN AN DER DONAU

AS OF THE 51st WACHAUER BRIDGE-WEEK FROM AUGUST 4 TO 10 2019, THE AUSTRIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION (ÖBV) WILL REPLACE THE NÖBV AS PREVIOUS ORGANIZER OF THIS TRADITIONAL TOURNAMENT. HOWEVER, THE NÖBV WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THE ÖBV, FOR WHICH WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL.

WACHAU, AN UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE
With its outstanding cultural and natural landscape, the Wachau region is a more than worthy destination in its own right.

Bild: Roman Zöchlinger

BRIDGE SCHEDULE 2019

Sunday	4 th of August	12:30 p.m.	Opening Pairs Tournament - 2x18 boards, 30€/player
Monday	5 th of August	12:00 p.m./noon	Mini Team - 6x8 boards, 120€/Team
Tuesday	6 th of August	2:00 p.m.	Individual Tournament - 26 boards, 15€/player
		7:30 p.m.	Barometer Tournament - 32 boards, 25€
Wednesday	7 th of August	5:00 p.m.	Team Tournament - session1, 6x8 boards, 240€/Team
Thursday	8 th of August	12:00 p.m./noon	Team Tournament - session2, 6x8 boards
Friday	9 th of August	1:30 p.m.	Main Pairs Tournament - 1 st session, 32 boards, 50€
Saturday	10 th of August	1:30 p.m.	Main Pairs Tournament - 2 nd session, 32 boards
Saturday	10 th of August	appr. from 9:30 p.m.	Festive awards ceremony, closing event with live music and dance

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Registration:
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Detailed information about the event will be available on the ÖBV homepage (www.bridgeaustria.at) as of November 2018.

The organizer reserves the right to make changes for convenient reasons.

Bild: Dany W. P. 2018

Crossword - Famous Bridge Players

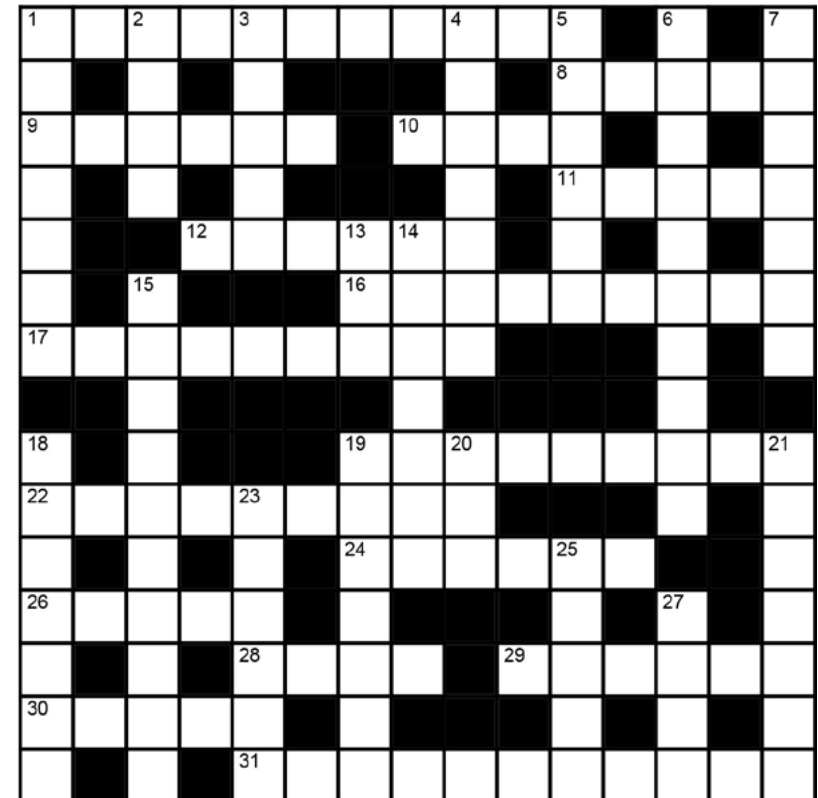
Composed by Ray Lee - See Page 61 for Solution

Across

- 1 A cinema idol played the Chancellor (4,7)
- 8 Blackwood—but East has wasted values (5)
- 9 Get all the matchpoints on one round? Director enters the score here (6)
- 10 Start a public free-for-all (4)
- 11 Cover primarily in no trump each round (5)
- 12 Most of 14 gets a glass (6)
- 16 Hogtown (hi-ho Silver, away!) gets left-winger—a pianist (5,4)
- 17 Flower near fella—namesake of 1 ac.—from Asia. (9)
- 19 We hear singing down by the old whirlpool (9)
- 22 Pink bowls found in fine furniture (9)
- 24 Inland, that is sort of a connection (4-2)
- 26 Which airline fare includes seat selection? (5)
- 28 Sympathy for lady in a book (4)
- 29 Actor in transfer, after the last change (6)
- 30 Slide one place to the right at the beginning—then skip. (5)
- 31 see 21

Down

- 1 Man cut short a speaker like 25, probably? (7)
- 2 Naughty boys change sides on swings (4)
- 3 Chairman starts right, comes from down under (5)
- 4 Make clear that it was obvious (7)
- 5 Ironed out cab driver (2,4)
- 6 The French keep watch outside a store on a hill in Paris (10)
- 7 Monster cut at at old cinema attracts a group (7)
- 13 The answer is here in 6 (3)
- 14 Daily drink is part of the game (7)
- 15 Hairs from a circus owner? (4,6)
- 18 Classify the category for part of a team game (7)
- 19 Fiery drink might go 'vroom' a lot (7)



- 20 Agency leading European space activities (3)
- 21&31 Naval aviator Martin—a matchpoint specialist (7, 11)
- 23 A railway in Dr. Johnson's London? Add a self-serve restaurant and get very rich (6)
- 25 Corn adds energy from the Middle East (5)
- 27 Idiot—it's just a game! (2-2)

Answers to “Defend With Julian Pottage”

1

♠ A
 ♥ Q10754
 ♦ KQJ3
 ♣ K73
 ♠ J9764
 ♥ K6
 ♦ 72
 ♣ AQ92
 ♠ Q53
 ♥ 9832
 ♦ 986
 ♣ J84
 ♠ K1082
 ♥ AJ
 ♦ A1054
 ♣ 1065



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	-	1NT*
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
1NT	12-14		

2♦ Transfer to hearts

You lead the six of spades. After dummy wins perforce (five from partner), declarer leads a heart to the jack. What is your plan?

You will take the king of hearts, to capture the jack and to make a trick with it at all if declarer has AJ doubleton.

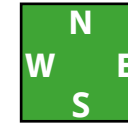
With 15 HCP in dummy and an opening bid on your right, partner can have little. Unless the opening bid is out of range, the red aces are both on your right. This means your opponent has plenty of tricks ready to run.

The spade suit would run if declarer has a doubleton queen because the queen would fall under the king. Alas, partner would have found a more encouraging card than the five from a five-card suit to the king.

You need to focus instead on running the club suit, bearing in mind that declarer cannot see your hand. You should switch to the queen of clubs, as you would from QJ. If you really did have the jack with it, ducking the first two clubs would be the winning play. Today, you make the queen on the first round, partner the jack on the second round and then you the ace and a long card.

2

♠ Q97
 ♥ Q5
 ♦ K74
 ♣ Q8764
 ♠ 10862
 ♥ J97
 ♦ 986
 ♣ KJ9
 ♠ AKJ543
 ♥ 86432
 ♦ —
 ♣ A10
 ♠ —
 ♥ AK10
 ♦ AQJ10532
 ♣ 532



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	1♠	2♦
2♠	3♦	4♠	5♦
All Pass			

You decide to lead a trump. Declarer wins in hand, partner discarding a spade, leads the ten of hearts to the queen and ruffs a spade. Then comes the ace-king of hearts, a spade going from dummy, followed by a trump to the king and a second spade ruff. Now declarer leads a low club. What do you do?

You should have a complete count on the distribution. Partner had no trumps, giving declarer seven. A void in spades was on your right, giving partner six. Although there are still two hearts missing, you can place them both opposite; this is in part because declarer would probably not choose to crash heart honours and in any case you have no hope against a 0-4-7-2 shape.

You have established that partner has a doubleton club, which must include the ace on the bidding. If declarer has 10xx, it will work fine for you to play the nine. If the nine wins (declarer knows you do not have ace-king), you lead a trump next, drawing dummy's last trump and so giving partner safe exits in the majors. If, however, declarer's clubs are all low, the contract makes. Partner will have to overtake the nine with the ten and, having cashed the ace, give a ruff and discard. The solution is to insert the jack, catering for Ax and A10 opposite.

Bridge with Larry Cohen

www.larryco.com

The brilliant American player, writer and teacher presents a series of articles aimed at intermediate players

Defence – 2nd Hand Play

In this article our RHO will be leading to the trick (either declarer or dummy is leading to the trick). It won't matter if it is a suit contract or no-trump.

The old saying for defence is: "Second Hand Low, Third Hand High." In general, when playing second to the trick, play low. The major exception is "cover an honour with an honour" (which also has exceptions). Don't you just love bridge?

In this brief summary, I think it will be helpful to start with a very common suit combination:

♠ J76 ♠ K104

If the 6 is played from dummy, follow low with the four.

But, if the jack is led from dummy, cover with the king.

♠ A92
 ♠ J76
 ♠ Q or 3

If declarer leads low (♠3) from his hand, follow low with the two.

But, if the queen is led from declarer, cover with the ace.

Now let's look at all 4 hands:

♠ A92 ♠ J76 ♠ K104
 ♠ Q853

If declarer leads this suit from dummy or hand, he should lose 3 tricks. When he leads low from dummy (or hand), the next defender plays low. If declarer leads an honour from either hand, the next defender covers.

This basic premise: "2nd hand low, but cover an honour with an honour" will cover most situations.

When declarer leads low from either hand, be wary about grabbing an

ace when playing second to a trick. Usually, this is a losing play. Your ace will capture "air." Aces are meant to capture higher honours. Also, you often remove a guess; declarer leading up to king-jack (trying to decide who has the ace and who has the queen) will be delighted if you grab your ace, removing the guess. Here is a very typical ace-grab to avoid:

♥ K86
 ♥ A107 ♥ J954
 ♥ Q32

Declarer leads the ♥2. If West grabs the ace, you can see what happens. West should play low, and declarer gets only one trick.

If they are in seven, then feel free to grab your ace. Every now and then, you will duck an ace and "go to bed with it." That's okay. If you never go to bed with an ace, you are grabbing them too quickly. I'd say that 90% of the time, it is wrong to take an ace when playing second to a trick.

As far as covering an honour with an honour, there are exceptions. Even experts don't always get it right. Here are two common exceptions, worth learning:

♦ AK109
 ♦ Q8765
 ♦ J

When you see the jack from declarer, don't cover. What good could it do? If covering won't promote anything in partner's hand, don't cover.

If dummy had ♦AK9, then covering is okay (hoping to promote partner's 10)

The other main exception is: Don't cover the first honour. Cover the second honour. For example:

♣ QJ9 ♣ K65
 ♣ 10742 ♣ A83

When dummy's queen is led, East should not cover. If he does, declarer will win the ace and finesse against West's ♣10.

After the queen wins the trick and the jack is led next, East should

cover.

Second-hand play is tough, but following the basic rules above should be good enough 90+% of the time.

Here are 4 deals to practice 2nd hand play:

If you are playing on a PC, Mac, or ipad, click [here](#).

If you are playing on a smart phone, click [here](#).

Defence – 3rd Hand Play

In this article our partner will be leading to the trick (either the opening lead at trick one, or any trick later in the hand). It won't matter if it is a suit contract or no-trump.

The old saying for defence is: "Second Hand Low, Third Hand High." In general, when playing third to the trick (on defence) play high. That covers more than half the battle, but unfortunately, there are exceptions and special situations. In this brief summary, I think it will be helpful to break it down into 4 situations as follows:

1) Dummy has low cards and partner has led a low card.

Or, put another way, you have a card higher than all the cards you've seen so far (your cards are all higher than dummy's cards and higher than the one partner led). In this case, play third hand high: For example:

Partner leads the ♠3 and dummy has ♠1042. Dummy plays low and you hold any of the following:

- A) ♠AJ7 play the ace
- B) ♠K85 play the king
- C) ♠AQ play the ace
- D) ♠J765 play the jack

If partner leads an honour, like a jack or queen, and dummy plays low, and you have the ace, you will typically win it. For example:

E) Partner leads the ♠Q and dummy has ♠874 and plays low. Win your ♠A if you have it.

F) Partner leads the ♠J and dummy has ♠976 and plays low. Win your ♠A if you have it.

Now, a slight exception to rule 1:

2) If you have touching honours/cards, play 3rd hand "high," but with the cheapest in the sequence. For example, partner leads the ♥4 and dummy has ♥865.

G) ♥AK7 Win the king – not the ace.

H) ♥KQ10 Play the queen – not the king

I) ♥QJ109 Play the nine – the cheapest in the sequence.

You will note that this is the opposite of the card you would play if you yourself were to lead the suit. Why? It has to do with helping your partner. It is a long answer, but trust me – play the cheapest – your partner will appreciate it. If you are my partner, and you put up the king as 3rd hand, I will "know" you don't have the queen-and that will help me out.

3) If dummy has the king, queen or jack – and you have a higher honour, usually, you will withhold your honour and try to insert a "medium" or "in-between" card (hopefully, you were dealt one). For example:

J) Partner leads the ♦4 and dummy has ♦Q87 and plays low. You should insert the jack from ♦KJ3 or ♦AJ3.

K) Partner leads the ♦2 and dummy has ♦K105. You should play the ♦9 from ♦AJ9x.

4) What if you don't have a card that might win the trick?

If 3rd hand can't beat dummy (let's say dummy's ace wins the trick, or the opening leader leads a high honour), a signal should be given.

If you can't win the trick, the size of the small/spot card you play is meaningful. Though some players at certain times might signal count or suit-preference, the most important signal is attitude by far. Here is a summary of how to signal attitude if you can't win the trick (and partner has led to the trick):

Attitude Signal

This is by far the most important signal. It is used in two very important situations. One is when you discard, but that isn't the subject of this article. The other is when partner leads to the trick – so you are playing third to the trick. That is the subject of this article. If partner or dummy is winning the trick, tell partner your attitude. Play a high spot card if you like it, low if you don't. For example, partner leads a spade and dummy's ace takes the trick. Play the ♠8 if you have ♠KQ82. Play the ♠3 if you have ♠843. (See alternative methods in the footnote at the end).

Do not make attitude signals with cards above the 10. Don't signal with what potentially could be a trick. Of course, you won't always be dealt the right card to signal with.

There are many possible variations to what is shown here. There are many methods I like, (such as upside-down). This is just intended as a

mainstream summary.

Here are 4 deals to practice 3rd hand play:

If you are playing on a PC, MAC, or ipad, [click here](#).

If you are playing on a smartphone, [click here](#).

Smith Echo

Smith Echo is a defensive signalling method (usually used only against no-trump) and quite popular amongst experts.

Playing hi-lo in the first suit declarer plays says nothing about that suit. It sends a message about the suit the defence has led at trick one. Hi-lo means “I like the opening lead suit.” Lo-hi means “I don’t like it.” This signal is used by both defenders and requires lots of judgment and inference. If count is important (for example, a long entryless suit is in dummy), then that overrides the Smith signal.

Example 1:

The opening leader has ♠KJ976 and ♦82.

He leads a low spade and dummy has ♠xxx. Third hand plays the ♠Q (yeah!) and declarer wins the ace.

Declarer plays diamonds. The opening leader plays the ♦8 to say: “I like spades.”

Example 2:

The opening leader has ♠108762 ♦82 and ♥AQ10x. He leads a low spade and dummy has ♠Jxx and ♥xxx. Third hand plays the ♠K and declarer wins the ace. Declarer plays diamonds. The opening leader plays the ♦2 to say: “I don’t like spades; try something else.” (Usually, partner can figure out from the context what that “else” means.).

Example 3:

Third hand has ♠QJ102. His partner leads a low spade and dummy plays low with ♠xx. The ten forces the ace. Declarer now plays diamonds. With such a great spade holding, 3rd hand plays hi-lo in diamonds to tell partner to persist with spades when he gets in.

Example 4:

Third hand has ♠10 singleton. His partner leads a low spade and dummy plays low with ♠xxx. The ten forces the ace. Declarer now plays diamonds. With a desire to have partner play something other than spades, 3rd hand follows with a low diamond to say: “I don’t like spades.”

Note: Smith-Echo is used by both defenders one time only. It is used on the first suit declarer plays.

Note: Sometimes, count has to take precedence over Smith Echo. If dummy has, say ♦KQJ10x with no side entry, and declarer plays a low diamond at trick 2, it is crucial to give count. (If declarer leads the ♦A, then count isn’t important and a Smith signal is given).

Note: Some pairs play “reverse Smith echo” – the opposite of what is described.

Note: Sometimes it is obvious that a player (usually the 3rd-hand player) can’t possibly like the suit led (maybe his 3rd hand “high” play was a little one). In that case, hi-lo in declarer’s first-played suit is usually suit-preference amongst the remaining 2 suits.

Note: There are many subtle inferences, exceptions, subtleties – experienced partnerships need to work on the details.

Note: Tempo is important. Try to think at trick one about your future signals. Don’t take a long time for your Smith signal as this give partner unauthorized information.



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MORE CONVENTIONS,
MORE PRACTICE

THE SEQUEL TO
'PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT'

by Barbara Seagram
and David Bird

AVAILABLE FROM A BRIDGE
RETAILER NEAR YOU

Crossword Solution

see page 56

1	I	A	2	I	N	3	M	A	C	L	4	E	O	5	D	6	M	7	H
S		M		A						X		8	E	B	O	N	Y		
9	L	A	P	T	O	P			10	O	P	E	N		N		D		
A		S		R					L		11	I	N	T	E	R			
M			12	S	I	L	13	I	14	C	A		R		M		O		
I		15	O					16	C	H	I	C	O	M	A	R	X		
17	C	A	M	B	O	D	I	A	N						R		Y		
		A						R							T				
18	B		R					19	M	A	20	E	L	S	T	R	O	21	M
22	R	O	S	E	W	O	O	D	S						E		A		
A		H		A			24	L	E	A	D	25	I	N			R		
26	C	H	A	I	R		O						R		27	Y		T	
K		R		28	R	U	T	H			29	J	A	C	O	B	I		
30	E	L	I	D	E		O					Q		Y		N			
T		F		31	N	A	V	R	A	T	I	L	O	V	A				

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Funbridge is a game available on smartphones, tablets and computers allowing you to play duplicate bridge anywhere, anytime.

As you know, bridge is played with four people sitting at a table and it may be hard to find four players... With Funbridge, this problem is a thing of the past! Indeed, you don't have to wait until your partner or opponents are available to play a deal with you because on Funbridge, they are managed by the artificial intelligence. Yes, you partner a robot and play against robots that are available 24/7!

Robots offer many advantages. Among them, you can pause and resume the game later. You are the game master! Moreover, and this is precisely the very essence of Funbridge, you are judged fairly against thousands of other players of the app who play the same deals as you.

As the app is easy to navigate around and well-designed, you will easily and quickly discover the various game modes offered that are split into three main themes: tournaments, practice and challenges between players. Each of them comes along with sub-game modes that are equally attractive. You won't get bored!

Funbridge will be the perfect ally if you want to take up bridge or just improve your skills. Indeed, you will make rapid progress thanks to the practice modes available including "exclusive tournaments", i.e. customised tournaments created by other community players providing opportunities for exchanges about the deals played. You will thus be able to ask your questions to advanced players and to increase your knowledge.

The app is full of very useful small features: watch a replay of other players' moves (bidding and card play), replay deals to score better, get the meaning of the bids played by the other players sitting at the table, ask the computer for advice, get an analysis of the way you play by the artificial intelligence at the end of a deal played... You will definitely learn from the app!

When you will feel ready, you will be able to pit yourself against thousands of other players by playing tournaments on Funbridge: tournaments of the day, series tournaments and Team Championships. As you can understand, this is the competition part of the app. In these different game modes, you will join rankings and see your rank change live based on your results.

You will also find "federation tournaments" in that section of the app. Several national bridge federations including the English Bridge Union and the French Bridge Federation have placed their trust in Funbridge to hold official tournaments awarding federation points allowing their members to increase their national rank directly via the app. You can't find your federation on Funbridge yet? Be patient, it is only a matter of time! Meanwhile, you can take part in tournaments of other federations since they are open to all.

Finally, you will enjoy comparing yourself with the other community players thanks to short individual tournaments called "challenges". The aim is to get the best scores on all the deals of the tournament to beat your opponent. May the best win!

Note also that the developers of the app are surrounded by experts... Indeed, Jérôme Rombaut, 2017 Vice World Bridge Champion with France, is by their side. He is in charge of the artificial intelligence of the app. His objective? Make it behave like a human player.

Funbridge is the perfect bridge app. It suits all players with its comprehensive and various game modes. Its weak point? It is highly addictive! We strongly encourage you to try it out if you have not already done so, especially since you get 100 free deals when you sign up. Once you have used them up, you receive 10 free deals every week or you can opt for one of our subscription offers with unlimited deals (from €9 per month).

A few figures

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Kit's Corner

by World Champion Kit Woolsey

World Champion Kit Woolsey reveals how an expert thinks, using real deals from major events. Sit beside the master and compare his thoughts with your own.

An Extra Chance

In a Round of 32 match in the Open Trials for USA2, you have to decide whether or not to open a marginal hand 1♣.

Dealer South. Both Vul, As South, you hold:

♠ AJ1073
♥ AQ74
♦ 53
♣ A10

An opening 1♣ bid is normally 16+ HCP, but you may upgrade if appropriate.

If you open 1♠ and partner responds 1NT, a 3♥ bid by you would show a maximum 5-5 hand.

Your call?

You have only 15 HCP, but you have aces and your minor honours are in your long suits. This could well be worth an upgrade.

If you open 1♣, the auction figures to go smoothly. If partner has a positive response you will get to some game, but maybe that game will make even if partner is minimal. If partner bids a negative 1♦, you can bid your spades and then your hearts if necessary, and all should be well.

If you open 1♠, you may have a difficult time catching up. In particular, if partner responds 1NT you will have to bid only 2♥, since 3♥ would show 5-5 in the majors. Partner won't play you for this strong a hand, and game may be missed.

It looks better to upgrade and open 1♣.

You choose to open 1♣. The bidding continues:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♠
2♣	2♠	Pass	?

Partner might have anything short of a limit raise for his 2♠ raise, since your hand is limited.

If you make a move, game tries are natural.

Your call?

Partner could be quite weak, and 8 tricks could easily be the limit of the hand. Still, you have so much playing strength that you have to make a move towards game. This is not the sort of hand you want to bring back +170, lose 10 to the comparison.

The right game try is certainly 3♥. Not only does this help partner evaluate correctly by upgrading heart honours and downgrading xxx in hearts, it also keeps open the possibility of playing in a superior heart contract.

You bid 3♥. The bidding concludes:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♠
2♣	2♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

West leads the queen of clubs. Standard leads. Upside down count and attitude.

♠ K986
♥ J105
♦ K982
♣ 85

♠ AJ1073
♥ AQ74
♦ 53
♣ A10

East plays the ♣2. Do you win or duck?

There is no reason to duck. You don't need to keep East off lead. Perhaps you will be able to discard dummy's other club on the fourth heart.

You win the ace of clubs. What do you do next?

♠ K986
♥ J105
♦ K982
♣ 8

♠ AJ1073
♥ AQ74
♦ 53
♣ 10

On some hands it is correct to diddle around with the side suits before tackling a trump holding like this. You might get some extra information, or you might get some help from the opponents.

There doesn't seem to be any reason to delay going after trumps. You can be pretty sure the clubs are 6-3, but you won't find out much else. If you exit with a club, East will win and lead a heart through, and you won't have found anything of value. Even locating the king of hearts and the ace of diamonds won't help. West would have the same 2♣ overcall holding a stiff spade or queen doubleton.

In isolation, the right way to start the spade suit is low to the king. If the spades are 4-0, it will almost certainly be East who has 4 spades, since West has the club length. If nothing exciting happens, you will be left with a guess whether to play for the finesse or the drop.

There might be an extra chance. Suppose you cash two top spades and somebody has ♠Qxx. If you planned ahead to win the second spade trick in dummy, you will be in position to take a heart finesse. If the king of hearts is onside and the hearts are 3-3, you will be able to pitch dummy's other club and avoid a club loser.

Suppose Kxx of hearts is onside. Where would the ace of diamonds be? It would have to be with West. Assuming the opening lead is honest, and why shouldn't it be, West would have to have the ace of diamonds to have anything close to an overcall. Also, if East had the king of clubs, ace of diamonds, and king of hearts, he would have been heard from.

The conclusion is that the extra chance is a phony. If it works, you don't need it, as all you are ever losing is 1 spade, 1 diamond, and 1 club. You should forget about discarding a club on the fourth heart, and concentrate on the best play in the spade suit. That means leading a spade to the king, guarding against East having Qxxx of spades.

You lead a spade to the king, and a spade off dummy. Both opponents follow small to the first round of spades, and East follows small to the second round. Your guess?

♠ 986
♥ J105
♦ K982
♣ 8

♠ AJ107
♥ AQ74
♦ 53
♣ 10

What will you need to make this contract? If both red-suit finesses work, you won't need to get the spades right. You will lose at most 1 spade, 1 diamond, and 1 club. If both red-suit finesses lose, you will never make. Even if you get the spades right, you will lose 2 diamonds, 1 heart, and 1 club. Therefore, the only relevant layout is when one red-suit finesse wins and one red-suit finesse loses. This means that one opponent has both the ace of diamonds and the king of hearts. That opponent must be West, since with neither of those cards he wouldn't have had an overcall and with both of those cards East would have acted over 2♠.

Would ownership of the queen of spades have affected West's decision to overcall? His two possible hands look something like: ♠Qx ♥Kx ♦Axx ♣QJxxxx or ♠x ♥Kxx ♦Axx ♣QJxxxx with perhaps some minor honour in diamonds. Both of these hands look like overcalls, so there is no clue there.

It is a matter of vacant spaces. You inferentially know of 9 of West's cards: his 6 clubs, his small spade, the ace of diamonds, and the king of hearts. There are 4 vacant spaces. For East, you know only of his 2 small spades and his 3 clubs. That leaves 8 vacant spaces. This makes East an 8 to 4 favourite to hold the queen of spades.

You finesse the jack of spades. It holds, West discarding a club. You cash the ace of spades, West discarding another club. Now what?

♠ 9
♥ J105
♦ K982
♣ 8

♠ 107
♥ AQ74
♦ 53
♣ 10



There is no reason to delay. You need the ace of diamonds onside. If it is off you can't do anything about it, and the king of hearts will certainly be off also. If the ace is onside, the king of diamonds will be your entry for the heart finesse, and if the heart finesse wins you will be able to ruff your fourth heart in dummy for the overtrick.

You lead a diamond towards the king. The ace of diamonds is onside, the king of hearts is offside, and you make 10 tricks. The full hand is:

	♠ K986		
	♥ J105		
	♦ K982		
	♣ 85		
♠ 4		♠ Q52	
♥ K92		♥ 863	
♦ A74		♦ QJ106	
♣ QJ7643		♣ K92	
	♠ AJ1073		
	♥ AQ74		
	♦ 53		
	♣ A10		



How was the E/W bidding?

West's overcall is minimal with both vulnerable, and the overcall doesn't consume any space. Still, West does have a 6-card suit and a singleton in the enemy suit. It is normally better to bid than to pass if you have something to say. On this hand the overcall worked out badly, as it gave declarer the distributional information to pick up the spade suit.

East has 3-card support for his partner's likely 6-card suit, and the opponents apparently have at least an 8-card fit. That makes the trump

total 17, and bidding 3♣ over 2♠ contracts for 17 total tricks. Even though East's hand is defensively oriented, he should raise to 3♣.

How was North's auction?

North could have bid an immediate 3♠, pre-emptive. While this wouldn't be an attractive call in a Standard structure, it is quite reasonable opposite a limited opening bid. There doesn't figure to be a game, and N/S have at least a 9-card fit, so going to the 3-level is okay. North figured that holding the spade suit he might buy it for 2♠, and he could compete to 3♠ if necessary. If the N/S fit had been in hearts and E/W might have a spade fit, the pre-emptive jump raise would be more attractive.

When South unexpectedly makes a game try, North can re-evaluate. The high cards for game still aren't there, and there won't be a game opposite a normal 1♠ opener. However, South's 3♥ call says he doesn't have a normal 1♠ opener. North has four-card support which is unexpected, and his ♥J10 are in South's game try suit which might be important. Finally, there is that vulnerable game bonus. North doesn't want to languish in 3♠ if there is a reasonable play for 10 tricks.

One of the best bridge books ever written is *Master Play (The Expert Game)* by Terence Reese, and the most valuable chapter in that book is: Playing on an assumption. The chapter illustrates how declarer should decide what he does or does not need to make the contract, and play the hand accordingly. This hand is a perfect illustration. Declarer didn't need the king of hearts onside, so he didn't have to play for it. That allowed declarer to make the percentage play in the trump suit.



Press Release - 5 December 2018

The Royal Belgian Bridge Federation Joins Funbridge

And ten! The online bridge app Funbridge has been licensed by the Royal Belgian Bridge Federation to run their federation tournaments. The RBBF thereby becomes the tenth national federation joining the app. This announcement comes a few weeks after the partnership signed with the Spanish Bridge Federation (AEB) and a few months after those signed with the World Bridge Federation (WBF) and the European Bridge League (EBL).

As with other partner federations, the app will offer official tournaments and Expert Points will be awarded to participants, allowing them to improve their national ranking.

RBBF tournaments started on 2 December and take place every Sunday. The competition is scored by Match Points.



2018 Book of the Year

*“The ABTA wishes to award its first-ever Newcomer Book of the Year Award to **Jeff Bayone** for his amazing work, *A Taste of Bridge*.”*

It’s magic how much they know when they finish without realizing just how much they learned.”

Betty Starzec, ABTA President.

*“If I could recommend just one book for beginning players it would be *A Taste of Bridge*.”*

Barbara Seagram.

“I’m reviewing your book and I absolutely love it.”

Chip Dombrowski, ACBL Bulletin editor.

“This is the only beginner book I know that begins by concentrating almost 100% on card play. I like this approach.”

Phillip Alder.

A Taste of Bridge is fun, but it is only half of the Honors Bridge Club beginner course. The amazing Israeli online teaching site, **bestebriidge.com**, is the other half. Teacher and student notes, along with all the example hands your beginners will ever need, are included in the program. Contact sally@masterpointpress.com and ask that she send you a complimentary e-book, course material, and free access to BeB.

This fun combination of *A Taste of Bridge* and **bestebriidge.com** work wonders. Together they helped, and continue to be instrumental, in building Honors into the largest bridge club in the world.

Jeff Bayone



The Abbot's Change Of Mind

by David Bird

The monastery's annual pairs championship, with double the usual number of master points, was traditionally held in May. This year, with the senior team already out of the Gold Cup, he had decided to add some interest to the January time-table by holding the championship in mid-winter. Despite mutterings in the cloisters, this change of heart had been in no way affected by the fact that Brother Lucius would be away in Ireland, visiting a seriously ill cousin.

'Ireland, did you say?' exclaimed the Abbot. 'Well, it's a shame if Lucius won't be able to play. I certainly hope we hear good news about his cousin's recovery.'

The event was held on two consecutive Thursdays. To ensure that he would be performing at maximum capacity, the Abbot went to bed early the previous night. Lucius and Paulo had won the event for the last two years, and it would make little sense not to make the most of the opportunity that had opened.

The Abbot felt suitably refreshed as he took his seat, the following evening. The first visitors were Brother Simon and Brother Jules, two novices who had been at St Titus for only a few months.

'What a shame that Brother Lucius won't have a chance to make it a hat-trick of wins,' said Brother Simon. 'Still, I suppose traditions have to be upheld. If the championship has always been held in mid-January, it couldn't really be changed just for his benefit.'

The Abbot pretended not to hear, reaching for his cards. If Brother Xavier had any sense, he wouldn't prolong this line of conversation.

'It's been held in May for as long as I can remember,' said Brother Xavier.

The Abbot peered over his glasses. 'It's you to speak first on this one,' he said. 'Best not to keep the other tables waiting.'

This was the deal before them:

Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ 1097	N W E S	♠ 4
♥ Q8753		♥ A109642
♦ 3		♦ J75
♣ Q872		♣ K96
♠ AKQJ83		
♥ –		
♦ 10986		
♣ AJ3		

West	North	East	South
<i>Brother Simon</i>	<i>Brother Xavier</i>	<i>Brother Jules</i>	<i>The Abbot</i>
–	1♦	2♥	2♠
4♥	Pass	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

Brother Simon led the ♦3 and down went the dummy. The Abbot paused to assess his prospects. Six trump tricks, five diamond tricks unless this opening lead was ruffed, and the ♣A. Excellent! No doubt some foolish pairs would play in 6♦, not realizing that +940 was less than +980.

'Ace, please,' said the Abbot. He was about to follow suit from his hand when he noticed that there was a potential blockage in diamonds. Yes, diamonds couldn't be 2-2 after this ♦3 lead. What could be done?

The Abbot drew trumps and played a second diamond to the queen, West showing out. 'King of hearts, please,' he said.

Brother Xavier looked uncertainly across the table. 'Er... did you mean the king of diamonds?' he queried.

'I don't believe that's what I said,' retorted the Abbot. 'The king of hearts is my intended card.'

Brother Jules covered with the ace and the Abbot ditched one of his blocking diamonds. He won the club switch with the ace and was then able to score three more tricks in diamonds, discarding his club losers.

‘I didn’t expect to make a heart trick,’ observed Brother Jules. ‘Still, the slam was there anyway.’

The Abbot puffed out his cheeks. Predictably, his sublime cardplay had been unappreciated. ‘The diamond suit was blocked,’ he informed the novices. ‘If I don’t discard a diamond, I make six trumps, four diamonds and the ♣A. That’s one down.’

Brother Xavier showed no sign of praising his partner’s dummy play. ‘We should be in Seven Diamonds,’ he said. ‘Can’t you raise diamonds with your four-card support? Then you could use Exclusion Blackwood.’

‘You think anyone will even consider bidding a grand on just 28 points?’ exclaimed the Abbot. ‘Plus 980 will be an 80% score. You can be sure of it.’

A few rounds later, the Abbot faced Brother Hubert and Brother Richard.

‘I see that Brother Lucius is not with us tonight,’ observed Brother Hubert. ‘He and Paulo won the event last year, didn’t they?’

‘And the year before,’ added Brother Richard.

‘He’s visiting some relative in Ireland,’ the Abbot replied. ‘Strange time of year to choose, I must say. Even in summer, the weather can be pretty rough over there.’

‘It’s not a holiday, Abbot,’ said Brother Xavier. ‘From what I hear, this may be the last time he can visit his poor cousin.’

The Abbot pointed at the board to be played and withdrew his cards.

Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ A752 ♥ A ♦ Q87 ♣ A8753		♠ 3 ♥ J1062 ♦ K10943 ♣ J94
♠ 10984 ♥ K943 ♦ J52 ♣ Q10	♠ KQJ6 ♥ Q875 ♦ A6 ♣ K62	

West	North	East	South
<i>Brother Hubert</i>	<i>Brother Xavier</i>	<i>Brother Richard</i>	<i>The Abbot</i>
–	–	–	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♠
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

Brother Hubert nearly always led a trump against suit contracts. On this deal he was actually blessed with a sequence in the suit. In his view, it was quite amazing how many players were disparaging about trump leads. His book on the subject was packed with deals where trump leads worked well. Once it was published, the world’s bridge players would soon change their minds.

The ♠10 was led and down went the dummy. Not much there for me, thought the Abbot. Still, if clubs broke 3-2 perhaps twelve tricks were there. Four trumps, four clubs, the two red aces and two heart ruffs. Mind you, he might have to be careful with the entries.

The Abbot won the trump lead with the ace, a necessary first step. He then cashed the ♥A and ducked a round of clubs. Brother Hubert won with the ♣10 and was quick to persist with the ♠9, East discarding a diamond. In hand with the trump king, the Abbot ruffed a heart in dummy. He then returned to the ♣K and ruffed another heart. A diamond to the ace allowed him to draw trumps. With a flourish, he then claimed the contract. What magnificent cardplay it had been! Lucius’s absence or presence would make little difference to the final result if he continued to play at this exalted level.

‘We needed a diamond lead,’ complained Brother Richard. ‘Set up a diamond trick before he can duck a club, that’s the way to beat it.’

Brother Hubert chuckled to himself. ‘That may work as the cards lie,’ he replied. ‘I hardly think any West will look further than a sequence in the trump suit. Read my book and you’ll realize that trump leads work well on around 80% of deals.’

It seemed to the Abbot that a club lead might have been successful too. Whether he won or ducked, he would be an entry short to the South hand.

‘Do you have a publisher for your book?’ enquired Brother Xavier.

‘Well, yes, it’s going to be published by Amazon,’ replied Brother

Hubert. ‘I haven’t quite worked out how to do it yet.’

Halfway through the evening, the Abbot faced his nemesis, Brother Cameron. He gathered his concentration. Perhaps on this occasion the novice would have no opportunity to affect the result. With any luck, he’d have to sit in his seat and watch another dazzling piece of cardplay from yours truly.

This was the first deal before them:

Dealer North. E/W Vul

♠ AQ4 ♥ KQJ5 ♦ J864 ♣ AJ		♠ KJ7 ♥ 63 ♦ KQ97 ♣ Q975	♠ 9862 ♥ A94 ♦ A10532 ♣ 2
	♠ 1053 ♥ 10872 ♦ — ♣ K108643		

West	North	East	South
<i>The Abbot</i>	<i>Brother Damien</i>	<i>Brother Xavier</i>	<i>Brother Cameron</i>
–	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

The Abbot led his singleton club and down went the dummy. Brother Cameron showed no great liking for its contents. A six-loser hand? Was that worth a raise to game? ‘Jack, please,’ he said.

The queen of clubs appeared from East and Brother Cameron won with the king. The novice paused to consider his next play. The opening lead was surely a singleton. If he played on trumps now, setting up and enjoying the club suit would involve too much work. Instead of playing a trump, he led the ♣3. The Abbot ruffed with the ♥4 and switched to the ♠9. Brother Xavier took dummy’s ♠Q with the king and switched to the ♦K. Brother Cameron ruffed low and led a third round of clubs.

When the Abbot discarded a spade, the novice thought for a moment or two and then ruffed with the ♥J, retaining dummy’s ♥5. ‘King of trumps, please,’ he said.

The Abbot won with the ace and returned a second round of diamonds. Brother Cameron ruffed with the ♥8 and led the bare ♥10 from his hand, drawing the last trump. Thanks to his previous unblock, he could follow with dummy’s ♥5 and stay in his hand. He then played the remaining clubs, discarding a spade from dummy, and claimed the contract.

‘That was a hairy one,’ exclaimed Brother Cameron. ‘I wasn’t sure if that was right, ruffing the third club high.’

Brother Damien nodded enthusiastically. ‘Looks like it,’ he replied. ‘Otherwise that second round of diamonds would screw you. Er... sorry, beat the contract, I mean.’

The Abbot returned his cards to the board. What on earth had Brother Cameron held for his 1♥ response? A near Yarborough. Bidding on rubbish was losing tactics in the long run. It was typical that it had worked luckily just against him.

The final round of the evening’s play saw the Abbot facing Brother Aelred and Brother Michael.

‘Why is Brother Paulo partnering Brother Arbuthnot?’ asked Brother Aelred, taking the West seat.

The Abbot’s head dropped slightly. Were they not here to play bridge? Almost every pair had made some needless comment about the absence of Brother Lucius. Did the whole universe rotate around him? ‘Shall we play this one?’ he suggested.

‘Lucius is visiting a cousin in Ireland,’ Brother Xavier replied. ‘He’s very ill, apparently. Lucius had to book his trip the moment he received the phone call.’

‘This event could have been played at any time,’ persisted Brother Aelred. ‘It’s a pity for Lucius to miss it. Didn’t he and Paulo win last year?’

‘Can we get started?’ interjected the Abbot. ‘There’ll be plenty of time for checking on past results tomorrow morning.’

This was the deal before them:

Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 8 ♥ KJ104 ♦ QJ106 ♣ KQ76		♠ J1097 ♥ Q97 ♦ 8752 ♣ J10	♠ K43 ♥ 8652 ♦ K4 ♣ 9543
♠ AQ652 ♥ A3 ♦ A93 ♣ A82			

West	North	East	South
<i>Brother Aelred</i>	<i>Brother Xavier</i>	<i>Brother Michael</i>	<i>The Abbot</i>
–	–	–	1♠
Double	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Brother Aelred led the queen of diamonds and down went the dummy. The Abbot assessed his prospects. Five trump tricks, four side-suit winners, and a diamond ruff would bring the total to ten. Unless he had imagined it, though, Brother Michael has hesitated slightly before his final pass. Perhaps he had something good in the trump suit.

The Abbot won the diamond lead with dummy's king and played a trump to the ace, the ♠8 falling on his left. His next move was to play ace and another heart, preparing for some heart ruffs in his hand if East held four trumps. Brother Michael won the second heart with the queen and switched to the ♣J.

The Abbot won with the ♣A and crossed to the ♠K, West showing out. A heart ruff in his hand was followed by the ace of diamonds and a diamond ruff. These cards were still in play:

♠ – ♥ K ♦ – ♣ KQ7		♠ J10 ♥ – ♦ 7 ♣ 10	♠ – ♥ 8 ♦ – ♣ 954
♠ Q6 ♥ – ♦ – ♣ 82			

'Play the heart,' instructed the Abbot.

Brother Michael discarded the ♦7 and the Abbot ruffed with the ♠6. The trump queen was his tenth trick and the game was made. If East had ruffed, the Abbot would have discarded a club loser.

'That should be a very good board,' declared Brother Michael.

The Abbot nodded his agreement. Who else in this moderate field would consider playing ace and another heart at such an early stage? It was cardplay at a Bermuda Bowl level. No other description could do justice to it.

'I had four trumps to the J-10-9 and two other honour cards,' continued Brother Michael, 'and partner had made a vulnerable take-out double. Most players will have doubled 4♠ on my hand and conceded 590. The contract was there in top tricks, as we just saw.'

The Abbot had rarely heard a more hopeless assessment of a player's likely score on a board. Strangely, it was rather a pity that Lucius wasn't competing in this year's event. He would surely have found it beyond him to match the superbly played hands at his own table. Lucius or no Lucius, the result would never have been in doubt.

The uBid Auction Room

Mark Horton

Welcome to the Auction Room, where we examine bidding methods from recent events. This month we take a look at the final of the Baze Senior KO from the ACBL Nationals in Hawaii.

Only ten teams entered and as a result the event is being removed from the ACBL calendar.

Nick Nickell, Ralph Katz, Robert Levin, Bob Hamman, Jeff Meckstroth, Eric Rodwell.

Paul Lewis, Linda Lewis, Marc Jacobus, Mike Passell, Eddie Wold, Mark Itabashi.

Curtis Cheek, Arthur Crystal, Allan Graves, Neil Chambers.

Lou Ann O'Rourke, John Mohan, Roger Bates, Ron Smith, Jerry Clerkin, Dennis Clerkin.

Bob Drake, Jan Van Cleeff, Michael Yuen, Bob Zeller.

Allan Falk, John Lusky, William Pollack, Barry Rigal, David Caprera, Dan Jacob.

Gaylor Kasle, Drew Cannell, James Krekorian, Drew Casen, Michal Kwiecien, Wlodzimierz Starkowski.

Steve Robinson, Peter Boyd, Mark Feldman, Ross Grabel, Mitch Dunitz, Iftikhar Baqai.

Bonnie Broders, Tim Berta, Renae Gunstone-White, Tim White.

M. Gay Conklin, Marvie Kelly, Lola Gebauer, Barbara Kim.

The Hands

(This month all the deals were played at IMPs.)

Hand 1. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ 83		♠ AQ102
♥ AJ1085		♥ Q
♦ Q7		♦ KJ95
♣ KQJ8		♣ 7643

North opens 1♦

West	East
Nickell	Katz
- (1♦)	Pass
1♥	1NT
2♣	2♠
3♣	Pass

Gaylor Kasle's 1♦ was based on ♠KJ6 ♥432 ♦A1064 ♣A109 so it was not difficult for declarer to record eleven tricks. It's not clear why West bid 3♣ – had he opted for 2NT North would surely have advanced to game.

West	East
Kwiecien	Strakowski
- (1♦)	Pass
1♥	1♠
2♣	2NT
3NT	Pass

East led the ♦2 and declarer finished with ten tricks and 10 IMPs.

Recommended auction: I prefer the Polish auction, although there is nothing wrong with bidding 1NT over 1♥.

Marks: 3NT 10, 5♣9, 3♣/2NT 5.

Running score: Nickell 5 (0) Kasle 10 (10)

Hand 2. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 5		♠ AK10943
♥ A96		♥ KQ7
♦ AKQ102		♦ 4
♣ AK98		♣ 543

West	East
Katz	Nickell
-	1♠
2♦	2♠
3♣	3♥*
4NT	Pass

3♥ Fourth suit forcing

West's 4NT was undoubtedly quantitative. Declarer won the heart lead with the ace and played off dummy's top spades, followed by the ten. When South, who had started with ♠62 ♥J54 ♦J9873 ♣J76 discarded declarer claimed eleven tricks.

West	East
Starkowski	Kwiecien
-	1♠
2♦*	2♠
2NT*	3♥*
4NT*	6NT

Pass

2♦ Game forcing

2NT Relay

3♥ 6♠, no fit

4NT Natural, invitational

Here too North led a heart and declarer won with the ace, cashed two top diamonds and then played spades from the top, one down.

The odds play in spades is to cash the top cards, but it is also possible to play a spade to the ten. However, if that loses and a diamond comes back you are hardly likely to finesse, although doing so would give you excellent chances of bringing off a double squeeze. If dummy had held a second diamond declarer might have opted for an early spade finesse.

Recommended auction: Slam is pretty good, so I have to prefer the sequence that leads to 6NT.

Marks: 6NT 10, 6♠ 6, 4NT 5.

Running score: Nickell 10 (11) Kasle 20 (10)

Hand 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ -	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 94
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ AJ10976	♥ K85										
♦ AKQ85	♦ 9										
♣ 96	♣ AK105432										

South opens 2♠ and North raises to 4♠

West	North	East	South
Katz	Cannell	Nickell	Kasle
-	-	-	3♠
4♥	4♠	5♥	5♠
6♦	6♠	Pass	Pass
7♦	7♠	Double	All Pass

According to the BBO operator Nickell initially bid 7♥ over 7♠.

South's hand was ♠AQ10853 ♥4 ♦J76432 ♣- and West started with the ♦K followed by the ♥A. At this point declarer claimed – and because the diamonds were 5-1 he was deemed to be four down instead of the three that was possible in more than one way, the simplest being to ruff two diamonds high drawing trumps along the way and ruffing a third diamond.

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	Levin	Kwiecien	Hamman
-	-	-	2♠
4♦*	4♠	5♣	Pass
6♣	All Pass		
4♦	♦+♥		

When East bid 5♣ West placed him with a very good suit and raised to the excellent slam.

South led the ♠A and declarer ruffed and played the ♣9, covered by the jack and ace. A diamond to the ace was followed by the king, but North was not tempted to ruff (which would have allowed the contract to make) and in due course he took two trump tricks for one down.

Recommended auction: Although it is possible to make 7♥ if you make the right guesses, its hardly the contract of your dreams.

Marks: 6♣/6♥ 10, 5♣/5♥ 6, 7♣/7♥ 4.

Running score: Nickell 14 (25) Kasle 30 (10)

Hand 4. Dealer North. N/S Vul

♠ A54
♥ 8752
♦ K32
♣ AQ4



♠ 92
♥ AJ
♦ 654
♣ KJ9875

West	East
Rodwell	Meckstroth
-	3♣
3NT	Pass

North had to find a lead from ♠Q863 ♥106 ♦AJ1098 ♣32 and went with the ♦10. Declarer claimed nine tricks. From the comfort of my armchair I would obviously lead any of the other three suits, which would leave declarer a trick short.

West	North	East	South
Cannell	Katz	Kasle	Nickell
-	Pass	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♠	3♣	Pass
Pass	Pass	3♠	All Pass

2♦ Flannery, 11-15, 4♠+5♥

With the ♦K onside it was easy enough to score nine tricks and when the defenders did not cash two clubs declarer finished with ten.

Recommended auction: For me it would be Meckwell's sequence. You cannot criticise East for failing to open, but this type of aggressive action is meat and drink to Meckwell – and in the long run it must surely be winning bridge. If you keep putting your opponents under pressure the points will come.

Marks: 3NT 10, 3♣ 6, 3♠ (EW) 5.

Running score: Nickell 24 (36) Kasle 35 (10)

Hand 5. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AK532
♥ J4
♦ K105
♣ J65



♠ Q
♥ AK853
♦ AQ84
♣ K42

West	East
Drewski	Krekorian
1♠	2♥
2NT	3♦
3♥	3NT
4♦	5NT*
6♦	Pass

5NT Pick a slam

South's hand was ♠J10874 ♥Q976 ♦- ♣A1098 and he led the ♣A and continued with the ten. Declarer won with the king and played three rounds of hearts, ruffing. North overruffed, cashed the ♣Q and still had a trump trick to come for three down.

West	East
Nickell	Katz
1♠	2♥
2♠	2NT
3NT	4NT
Pass	

South led the ♣10 and declarer won with the king, unblocked the ♠Q and exited with a club. North won with the queen and returned a club and South cashed two tricks in the suit and got out with the ♠J. Declarer won in dummy, played the ♦10 to the ace followed by the ♦Q and a diamond to the king, which squeezed South in the majors for the tenth trick.

Recommended auction: This is a tough deal – East has every suit controlled and the ♠Q must be useful. However, in these days of ultra light opening bids the invitational raise to 4NT is not without risk. After 1♠-2♥ (game forcing) do you prefer to rebid 2♠ or 2NT? If you prefer 2NT would you then bid 3♥ over 3♦? Although 2♠ lacks a sixth spade, it feels superior, so let's go with the Nickell auction.

Marks: 3NT 10, 4NT 8, 6♦ 2.

Running score: Nickell 32 (47) Kasle 37 (10)

Hand 6. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ A106		♠ 7
♥ K9753		♥ QJ6
♦ Q93		♦ AK106
♣ J3		♣ A8764

South overcalls 1♠ and North raises to 3♠

West	North	East	South
Drewski	Rodwell	Krekorian	Meckstroth
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♣	1♠
Double*	3♠	Double*	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

South held ♠QJ852 ♥A84 ♦852 ♣Q9 so 4♥ was easy – indeed declarer took eleven tricks.

West	North	East	South
Hamman	Starkowski	Levin	Kwiecien
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠
Double*	3♠	All Pass	

3♠ was two down.

Recommended auction: The key decision here fell to East – should he double 3♠? If partner does not have a wasted card in spades – the king for example would be a dreadful card to hold – then a potential 5-3 heart fit might prove to be golden. The double is not gilt-edged, but it was in pursuit of a vulnerable game, so I'm with Krekorian.

Marks: 4♥ 10, 3♠ (NS) 5.

Running score: Nickell 37 (47) Kasle 47 (21)

Hand 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ KQJ3		♠ 9654
♥ 9743		♥ K
♦ A72		♦ KQJ4
♣ K9		♣ J632

South opens 1♦ Precision, (10) 11-15, 2+♦

West	East	
Drewski	Krekorian	(1♦)
-	-	
Double	2♠	
3♠	3NT	
4♠	Pass	

3♠ is pushy, but as on the previous deal a thin vulnerable game is not to be sneezed at.

South led the ♥J and when North failed to play the ace from his ♠108 ♥A1062 ♦1053 ♣Q1075 (he would then have needed to switch to a trump) declarer won, played a club to the king and then played to ruff three hearts in hand, scoring eleven tricks.

West	North	East	South
Hamman	Starkowski	Levin	Kwiecien
-	-	1♣*	
Double	Pass	1♠	Pass
Pass	Double	Redouble	Pass
2♠	All Pass		
1♣	Polish Club		

Here South led the ♥Q and once again North withheld the ace, declarer taking eleven tricks.

Recommended auction: Despite the result, I don't think the West hand is worth a try for game.

Marks: 2♠ 10, 4♠ 6.

Running score: Nickell 47 (47) Kasle 53 (31)

Hand 8. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ AJ652	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <table style="border: none; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S		♠ K94
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ AKJ8	♥ 6										
♦ A102	♦ 9876										
♣ 8	♣ J7643										

South opens 1♦.

West	East	
Meckstroth	Rodwell	
-	-	(1♦)
Double	2♣	
2♠	4♠	
Pass		

North was looking at ♠1083 ♥95432 ♦K3 ♣Q95 and led the ♦K. Declarer won, played a spade to the king and heart to the jack. When it held he continued with the ♥AK pitching diamonds and then played a fourth heart throwing dummy's remaining diamond. Winning with the ♥9 North returned a spade and declarer was a trick short. Had he ruffed a heart at trick three, the fall of the ♠Q would have given him an easy route to ten tricks.

West	East	
Kwiecien	Starkowski	
-	-	(1NT*)
2♣*	2♠	
4♠	Pass	
1NT	15-17	
2♣	Majors	

South led the ♣K and switched to the ♥10. Declarer won with the ace, played the ♥J, ruffing it in dummy, ruffed a club, ruffed a heart, cashed the ♠K, came to hand with a diamond, drew the outstanding trump and claimed.

Recommended auction: Anything that gets you to 4♠ is fine.

Marks: 4♠ 10.

Running score: Nickell 57 (47) Kasle 63 (43)

Kasle won the bidding battle, but Nickell had the edge in IMPs. However, after building up a lead of 75-36 the favourites had a disastrous

third set which they lost 2-50, to trail 77-86. There was only one double figure swing in the final session and that went to Kasle, who added a further 11 IMPs to win 113-93.

You can play through the deals mentioned in this article.

Just follow the links:

Hands 1,2 & 3 [here](https://tinyurl.com/yca2qphv) or <https://tinyurl.com/yca2qphv>

Hands 4 & 5 [here](https://tinyurl.com/y9eg96bq) or <https://tinyurl.com/y9eg96bq>

Hands 6, 7 & 8 [here](https://tinyurl.com/ybw4neqd) or <https://tinyurl.com/ybw4neqd>

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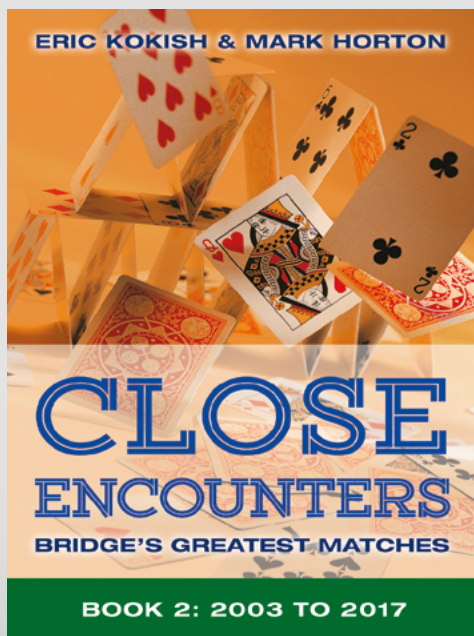
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The Master Point Press Bidding Battle Set 12

Moderated by Brian Senior

I'd like to start by passing on news about two of our panellists to their friends around the world. The first is Pablo Lambardi, who tells me that he had a heart attack a few weeks ago and has been told to take it easy while he recovers. Pablo is taking a break from the panel this month but assures me that he is safe and is recovering well, and will have an operation in the near future. On your behalf I'd like to wish Pablo good luck with that operation and with his ongoing recovery.

And secondly, Tommy Sandsmark, who has answered this month's problems as normal despite being in considerable pain, has for the third time in three years suffered a compression fracture of his spine. That sounds nasty and again may I wish Tommy the best of luck with his recovery from this injury.

And so, on to the problems. I'm sure that everyone spotted that the first two are Pairs scoring.

PROBLEM 1

PAIRS. Dealer South. None Vul.

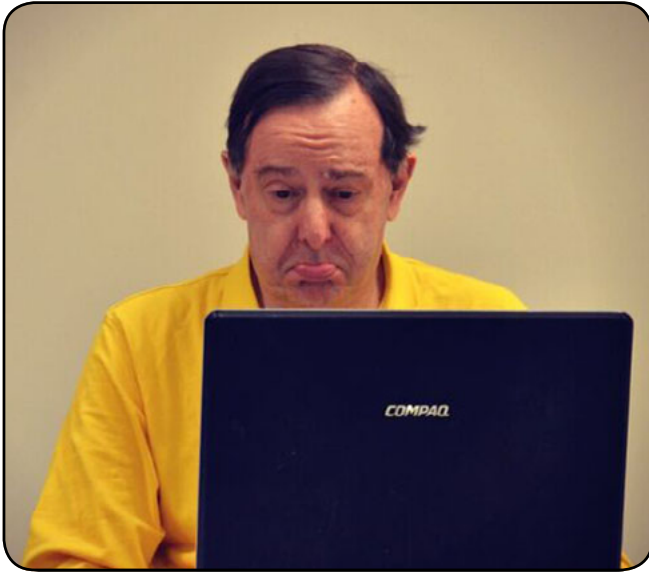
♠ Q6
♥ AJ875
♦ 73
♣ K853

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦*	2♠	3♦

?
1♦ Precision, promising 2+ diamonds

THE BIDS & MARKS

	Bid	No. of Votes	Marks		Bid	No. of Votes	Marks
1.	3♠	11	10	5.	3♦	9	10
	Pass	5	6		2♦	3	7
	3♥	2	5		2♣	2	5
	Dble	0	2		3♠	1	4
2.	3♥	9	10	2♠	1	3	
	4♣	3	8	4♦	1	3	
	Pass	4	6	3♣	1	2	
3.	3♠	2	4	6.	2♠	14	10
	4♠	7	10	4♠	3	7	
	5♣	6	10	3♠	0	4	
	Pass	4	7	3♦	1	2	
	Dble	1	3	7.	4♣	12	10
4.	4♠	9	10	3♠	3	5	
	3♠	7	8	Pass	2	4	
	Dble	1	3	3NT	1	2	
	Pass	1	3	8.	3NT	12	10
				Dble	6	6	
				4♣	0	2	



Brian Senior—your Moderator—universally and affectionately known as Mr. Grumpy

Bid	Votes	Marks
3♠	11	10
Pass	5	6
3♥	2	5
Dble	0	2

Leufkens: Pass. In pairs it's not good to bid with only eight trumps.

Alder: Pass. Double or 3♠ could work, but it seems as though we do not have a nine-card fit anywhere, so LTT addicts will understand.

Indeed, the Law of Total Tricks says, in that inversion of the famous phrase, Eight Never, Nine Ever. Which means that we don't compete three over three with fewer than nine trumps.

Mould: Pass. Why do I want to bid opposite a WJO on this rubbish? Obvious at teams. Maybe

the Pairs specialists (which I am not) think this is a 3♠ bid. It is likely to be three off or so if they forget to double it.

Pairs does surely make a difference, particularly at Love All, with both sides going down in 50s.

Robson: Pass. Facing partner's pressure bid, I should not punish him. He could easily have ♠KJ109x and out.

A very important point, expanded upon by Ben, that knowledge of partner's style is absolutely crucial. I should add that the five-card weak jump overcall is definitely gaining ground in the expert game, though it is still far less frequent than the five-card weak two opening from what I have seen.

Green: Pass. I think this depends on your pre-empting style, if you are playing opposite a rock then you might try 3♠ but otherwise you are offering up a penalty. The opponents haven't shown a fit on this auction so it is dangerous. Since 1♦ will often be a weak NT unless playing advanced methods (such as transfers starting with 2NT) 3♦ will often be forcing. There might be a case to bid 3♠ here as you steal their 3♠ cue-bid, but you would still be offering up a penalty. I would pass regardless of the meaning of 3♦.

The rest of the panel appear to have assumed that 3♦ was non-forcing, which was also what I believed when I set the problem. Even without the use of transfers, I'm guessing that most would simply play the cue-bid as a forcing diamond bid and 3♦ as competitive/constructive NF.

The passers have a good case, but they are outvoted 13 to 5 by the bidders.

Teramoto: 3♠. They have a fit most days, it being rare for partner to have 4+ Diamonds. 3♠

is good if we can make or save 3♦.

Byrne: 3♠. I was given this problem a few weeks ago and said I would probably bluff with 3♠. I'm sure a double and accurate defence would lead to a poor matchpoint score but in my experience you rarely encounter either. Facing a traditional ♠KJ10xxx ♥xxx ♦xx ♣Qx we will make at least 7 tricks and – 100 won't be as bad as – 110. (Actually with that quoted hand 3NT is probably cold so – 300 won't be too bad either). This may help partner with the lead against no trumps or it may push the opponents up too high, another hidden gain is the opener can't bid 3♠ to ask for a stop (although most should play double there as a 3♠ cue-bid they rarely do).

That makes fair sense as long as partner can be relied upon to produce something close to a traditional overcall.

Rigal: 3♠. This won't be so easy for them to double; I'm hoping to push them up a level or escape with my life if doubled at – 100.

Bird: 3♠. We have a very likely 6-2 spade fit, so I don't see why Double (yes, give them the 10 points) is a better idea.

Not this time, David – there were no votes for double. We'll see at a later date if that is the choice of some of the readers, however.

Smith: 3♠. This looks fairly normal, particularly at pairs. Certainly not worth game facing a non-vulnerable weak jump overcall, so the alternatives are pass and double. It's not our hand and we've already found a fit, so double just gives away information unnecessarily. Pass might be right, but bidding takes North's 3♠ no-trump probe away, which just may be the key, and anything that persuades them into a

minor-suit game at pairs has a plus side.

Apteker: 3♠. While a violation of the law, it pays to be aggressive both non vul at match-points. The opponents may not double when you are down two and they make or do double down one when they make, or it may push them to an unmakeable 4♦ or they may not be able to ask for 3NT when that is right or you may even make. Basically there are many ways to win while losing only when they catch you for down two doubled or when 3♦ and 3♠ both don't make. Would pass with two small spades.

Yes, if we are going to violate the LAW this is the vulnerability at which to do so. Several panellists mention a 3♥ fit-non-jump:

Cannell: 3♠. Competing and taking some room from N/S. Second choice is Three Hearts as a lead director, but would prefer better hearts.



Eric Kokish

Cope: 3♠. Bidding it for one down or two down (with the probability they cannot double us for penalties even if two down) as it sounds as if they may make 3♦ but we might have a chance against 4♦ if they bid on. With an extra Heart pip (the 9 instead of the 8) might try 3♥ as a FNJ, but not sure I want the heart lead here.

Brock: 3♠. Looks normal enough. I guess I could bid 3♥ or Double, but don't really see why I should when we almost certainly belong in spades. Love All is a bidder's vulnerability so I would not pass.

Sime: 3♠. Pairs problems should be divided into 'trying to qualify' and 'trying to win.' I shall assume the latter, in which case I won't accept a 35% board from defending 3♦. I thought about 3♥ (Fit Non Jump by a passed hand). I decided that that was more likely to help the opponents; we incur minus 300 if North has heart honours, and we give North an extra round to decide what to do over 3♠. And I am not sure that I would welcome a heart lead.

Kokish: 3♠. Hearts not good enough to make a lead-directing fit bid and passing is too deep a position for me. Could this be a new place to add a responsive double to our quiver of broken arrows?

I incline to agree that I would like to add the nine or ten of hearts before making a fit-non-jump, but we have two panellists who are willing to go that route with the actual hand:

Stabell: 3♥ Doesn't mean that I forgot to open a Multi, but that I have some spade support and would prefer a heart lead (or perhaps a sacrifice) against 3NT. Not foolproof, since a spade lead might be best if partner has AJxxxx and out.

Sandsmark: 3♥. This is not exactly what I would call anything but a luxury problem. For once in your life you have the opportunity to kill two (even three) birds with one and the same shot (blow?), and I recommend you take it! Since you have passed the first time, there is no chance that partner is going to get it wrong if you bid 3♥! 3♥ is an 'all-in-one-bid' which says: a) close to an opening, b) at least 5♥ and c) I have a preference for ♠ if the ♥ doesn't fit. In addition to these goodies, 3♥ provides East with an alternative and deadly lead against e.g. 3NT from North. With e.g. ♠AJ109xx, he will be thrilled and extremely grateful for the opportunity to kill the contract with a heart lead. In on the ♥A you will then play the ♠Q, and: thank you for the coffee! My prediction is that some of the panellists will say 3♠, presumably nobody will pass and all the brilliant ones will land on my solution.

Your predictions are as accurate as ever, Tommy. I'm sure Leif-Erik will be proud to be the only other brilliant one on the panel.

The first message which we should take from this problem is that it is vital that we know partner's style and tailor our own to fit with it. If partner will often hold only five spades, we cannot afford to compete aggressively in support. However, there is a substantial majority who believe that partner has six spades and who are willing to risk a penalty in order to compete and make life a bit tougher for the opposition. Something which nobody mentioned is the fact that we are a passed hand and that partner may well have made a weak jump overcall on a better hand than would have been the case otherwise. Perhaps that

is not your style, but my partners do it all the time because they argue that there will not normally be a game our way and they want to get to the level of our assumed fit as fast as possible to make life difficult for the opposition. In real life, partner held: ♠AJ10xxx ♥KQx ♦xx ♣xx, and 3♠ would have made.

PROBLEM 2

PAIRS. Dealer East. EW Vul.

♠ J10
♥ 853
♦ A652
♣ AKQ2

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♦*	2♦*
2♥*	Pass	3♦*	Pass
?			

- 1♦ Natural, unbalanced
- 2♦ Majors
- 2♥ Constructive diamond raise
- 3♦ To play facing invitational raise

Bid	Votes	Marks
3♥	9	10
4♣	3	8
Pass	4	6
3♠	2	4

Mould: 3♥. Marvellous! But hardly unexpected. However, if pard is definitely unbalanced then the shortage is surely clubs as we have not heard North either double 2♥ or bid 2♠/3♥. I shall therefore guess that pard is something like 4-4-4-1 or 4-3-5-1 and hopefully has stops in both majors. I will therefore try and get pard to bid 3NT. If pard has AKQx of spades and a stiff heart,

well good luck to the opponents!

Byrne: 3♥. er...yes good problem. I am not going to pass as missing cold games normally scores worse than going off in them, and my hand is still very respectable. I assume partner has a singleton club (no one has competed further in the majors, not even a little double) in which case 3NT is looking good but I better make sure partner plays it. I think I shall grope with 3♥ and see what happens. I'm sure partner has something like ♠Axx(x) ♥KJx(x) ♦KJxxx ♣x and 3NT will be a walk in the park.

Brock: 3♥. It sounds to me as if partner is 4-3-5-1, in which case 3NT is probably our best spot – ideally played by him. North did not double 2♥, so probably won't double 3♥, and with any luck partner will have a spade stopper and bid 3NT.

Leufkens: 3♥. One more try. Wouldn't partner bid 3♦ with ♠Kxxx ♥Kxx ♦KQxxx ♣x?

Rigal: 3♥. Partner had a lot of space to make a game try so something like a 4-4-4-1 minimum ♠Qxxx ♥AQxx ♦KQJx ♣x. I'll guess to bid 3♥ rather than 3♠ – who knows, Jxx of hearts opposite may be enough with a blockage?

Stabell: 3♥. If all other bids from partner show extras, then I should perhaps not have started with 2♥ since it was predictable that I would end up in this situation. It looks like partner might be short in clubs, in which case he would hopefully have an honour in each major. Pass could be right, but would look silly opposite something like ♠Qxx ♥Kxxx ♦KQJxx ♣x, when 3NT is an easy make and 3♦ goes down on a couple of heart ruffs. 3♥ should really show something in hearts and ask for a spade stopper, and I hope North will come to the rescue with a double if

we have no heart stopper.

They are all assuming partner to be short in clubs, but he wasn't, as we shall see later.

Sime: 3♥. Partner presumably has an opening bid somewhere. I expect that the field will be in game, probably 3NT at matchpoints. Let's try to make partner declarer.

Cannell: 3♥. Asking for a stopper for no-trump. North did not offer Two Spades or a double of Two Hearts so partner 'may' have some major-suit smattering. I hope so anyway. If 3NT has any play it must be from partner's side of the table.

Everyone else seems to be showing a stopper, while Drew is asking for one. It is of course perfectly reasonable to play that way around when there are two suits to worry about – I've just always thought it felt more natural to show than to ask.

Teramoto: 3♥. I hope partner bids 3NT. 3♥ tends to show stopper in Hearts, but we don't have any good bid.

No, we don't.

Cope: 3♠. Ostensibly showing a spade stopper. 3NT remains the most likely game and the silence on my right might suggest partner has spade length in their unbalanced hand, so we are assuming partner might be able to try 3NT with a heart stopper – even a hand such as ♠Axxx ♥Qxx ♦KQxxx ♣x might make 3NT a reasonable favourite with 5♦ having no play. Will respect a sign-off in 4♣.

Green: 3♠. Ah yes I remember playing this hand against you. It didn't end well and for once it wasn't my fault! It's clear to make another move but I won't drive to 5♦ at pairs. I will show a spade stopper and see what partner does; if he

bids 4♦ then I will let it go. I know I've only got half a stopper but I think that's more descriptive than 3♥ where I don't have any semblance of a stopper. One could shoot out 3NT but if partner is known to be unbalanced then a bit of science is called for.

I don't see any particular benefit to treating ♠J10 as a stopper rather than ♥853, where we have greater length. OK, partner has queen-to-three, I suppose, but the main difference is that over 3♥ partner can hedge his bets with 3♠, while the reverse is obviously not the case over 3♠.

If we have no good bid, perhaps we shouldn't make a bid at all?

Alder: Pass. I am not expecting much (any?) company on the panel, but it looks as though we cannot make a game. Partner seems to have a weak no-trump, something like: ♠AQx ♥xx ♦KQJxx ♣xxx

Smith: Pass. Perhaps this is too deep a position, even at pairs, but North's silence suggests that partner will have some major-suit length. It seems like the sort of hand where we will have three major-suit losers in diamonds and a bare suit in notrumps opposite something like ♠Axx ♥Qx ♦KQxxxx ♣xx. Partner could also still have a weak no-trump, when even 10 tricks in diamonds might be too high.

Panellists moan when I fail to give what they consider a useful footnote. When I do give a footnote, some of them can't be bothered to read it. Partner cannot have a weak no-trump because the footnote tells you that 1♦ is always unbalanced.

Kokish: Pass. It's likely that East's short suit (when he's not 4M5D22) is clubs, so this hand may not be worth its raw point count, especially

when East did not rebid 2NT rather than 3♦. When East is 4-3-5-1 with nothing in hearts (with something in both majors he might have tried 2NT rather than risk endplaying me) we may not have a game and it's tempting to pass as there's no meaningful try for 3NT available, so as weird as it looks my instinct is to choose between 3NT and pass, based on how well we're faring in the session.

Apteker: Pass If partner had both majors stopped, he would have probably bid 2NT. I have no intelligent way of investigating 3NT as a bid of three of either major should show values there, asking partner to bid 3NT with the other major stopped. As it is matchpoints, I am not concerned about the loss of game bonus and settle for the plus, notwithstanding my game-going values.

Yes, partner with weak no-trump values and stops in both majors might have bid 2NT instead of 3♦. Remember that we know he is unbalanced, so a 3-4-5-1 hand would be no surprise, in fact we should almost expect that the thing which makes his hand unbalanced is a club shortage – what else can it be if he has both majors stopped? He could surely trust us to bid 3♦ over 2NT if we did not have game values facing a near-minimum opening bid.

If we trust that he would have bid 2NT with both majors stopped, foreseeing our potential problem and realizing just how descriptive his bid would be, then I'm afraid that I think the 3♥ bid which I made at the table was wrong, as it was very unlikely that he would have what I required for 3NT. I'm coming round to this next idea:

Bird: 4♣. 3NT is unlikely when East declines

to rebid 2NT, but I'm not willing to pass 3♦ on so much. Since I would have bid a stopper with one major covered, 4♣ seems descriptive.

Sandsmark: 4♣. Is there really anybody in the whole universe who will pass 3♦ with 14+ active points when partner has shown an unbalanced opening with 4+♦? I know nobody in Norway who would (please excuse me, Leif-Erik, if you did...), and I must admit, I am more in the mood for a hard slam rather than only a game. However, this will be somewhat difficult to stage, but one could try: My next bid is 4♣. If partner reverts to 4♦, or cue-bids ♠ (which denies a ♥ control), I will just raise to 5♦ for play. If partner bids 4♥, I will cue-bid 5♣, and if he now has the necessary major controls, he will bid 6♦. Or maybe I have taken a spoonful of cod liver oil too much...? This would not at all be a surprising scenario.

Tommy is an incurable optimist. I'm more in line with this next comment.

Robson: 4♣. Game try, will pass 4♦. If partner is stopped in both majors, I'm disappointed he didn't try another bid than 3♦.

Exactly.

Partner held ♠KQ73 ♥Q ♦KJ93 ♣J865. He bid 3♠ over 3♥ – no, I didn't ask why not 3NT – and I took that as showing rather than asking on the grounds that he would expect me to have bid 3NT already if I had both majors covered. As we saw already, Ben remembers the deal. He led the ten of hearts from ♥109xx and his partner defended, shall we say, sub-optimally, to allow the contract to make.

Regarding the option of passing; this could easily be the winning decision, as indeed was the case

in real life opposite partner's filthy non-opening bid, but in a mixed field I would expect almost nobody else to be out of game when I hold 14 HCP and a fit for partner's suit, and this is just not a way in which I want to gamble and risk a zero.

PROBLEM 3

IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ AKQ1094
♥ K7
♦ A642
♣ 3

West	North	East	South
–	–	4♣	4♦
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
4♠	7	10
5♣	6	10
Pass	4	7
Dble	1	3

Cope: Pass. We have reasonable, but uncertain defence against 4♦ – and better chances in defence than finding partner with a miracle partial spade fit. If partner say has a 1-3-1-8 shape and the spades are sitting over us this could see a lot of spilt blood from our side.

Kokish: Pass. All the arguments about East's likely diamond shortness pointing to buying some spade support aren't worth much when East is a favourite to hold only five cards that are not clubs. Perhaps 4♠ will make it more difficult for N/S to find the right level in hearts, but that may not be worth the risk of a penalty against nothing. If I were to bid something, 5♣

rates to be more effective than 4♠.

Alder: Pass. Again, in a small minority, I expect. I cannot be sure of beating Four Diamonds. I think Four Spades is an underdog and will probably be doubled. My main fear in passing is that North bids Four Hearts and can make it, but I believe that is unlikely – he cannot have many points, and the contract could well fail.

Robson: Pass. Give partner the expected pure hand and we're crashing down and they're not even in game.

But in today's pre-empting mad world how often does partner deliver the 'expected pure hand'? There was one more defender, but he doubled:

Apteker: Double. It appears that South has judged incorrectly to bid and it is time to punish the bad guys. If North runs to hearts, partner is involved. I will have a decision if North passes that, either to double again or bid 4♠.

But:

Teramoto: 4♠. Double may get big score, but I have little defence in Hearts and Diamonds. South has long Diamonds, so partner often has a singleton.

Sime: 4♠. I can see cases for Pass and Double, but these allow an easy 4♥ by North. It is likely that partner has more spades than diamonds, which could make 4♠ a difficult contract to defend even if beatable.

Green: 4♠. With diamond length I think partner is likely to have some spades and so I will gamble out 4♠. Bidding 5♣ could be right but I am going to shoot for the major-suit game.

Sandsmark: 4♠. Oh, Man...! This one was a solid nut to crack! Maybe we should put 4♠/4NT,

5♣/5♠/5NT, 6♣/6♠/6NT as well as a double in a basket and make a draw? Everything could be right here and everything could equally easy lead us into a mere disaster! However, if I am forced to choose a bid, and I am, my bid would have to be 4♠! For once I feel that I am treading slippery slopes here, and my glass only seems half empty. I would like to add that there is every reason to be both pessimistic and a little cautious here, as 4♦ has probably not been landed vulnerable by South for no reason at all. We are moving in dangerous circles, and we will surely suffer if we ride out into the dark winter night without any clothes at all. Be careful! That's all I say!

Rigal: 4♠. Partner's short diamonds make this plausible – and if I bid it slowly enough partner will correct if unsuitable. What? You don't play like that? Well how come my opponents always get away with it?

Dunno – doesn't seem fair, does it?

Mould: 4♠. Complete guess. Dble could be right, Pass could be right, 5♣ could be right. I cannot stand doubling and finding pard with a 3-2-0-8 shape and 4♦ cold for an overtrick. The whereabouts of the hearts is a bit of a mystery. 4♠ could easily be – 1100 against a plus score or could be cold with game cold for the opponents.

Byrne: 4♠. I appear to have a straightforward choice between Double and 4♠, with a cowardly Pass and obscure 5♣ bid thrown in for good measure. First, at game all, I am sure partner should be sound, but ♠x ♥xx ♦xx ♣KQJ10xxxx leaves 4♠ rather lacking. Having said that, as South and I appear to hold ten diamonds between us and only eight spades,

maybe partner is more likely to hold a singleton diamond? Ah well, my rubber bridge roots are showing through and I will bid 4♠ and claim my hundred for honours. What's this – we don't get them at duplicate? Seems unfair if you ask me, but it's too late now....

They are not totally confident but basically prefer to die fighting than lying on their sickbed. If we are going to bid then there is strong support for simply supporting our vulnerable partner.

Brook: 5♣. The choices seem to be 4♠, 5♣ and Double. 4♠ seems quite unilateral and I may never get to partner's hand. If he thought 4♣ was a good idea, then surely I have enough to add one for the road. It could be right to double but (a) it might be cold, and (b) someone might bid 4♥ which might be colder.

Well, I would say that 4♣ was also unilateral, as partner doesn't get another go to overturn our decision, but you had plenty of support.

Leufkens: 5♣. Must have a chance. While 4♦ might be a disaster, but maybe not. And what would you do after 4♦ – X – 4♥ – P – P – ?

Stabell: 5♣. What I would have bid without interference. It might be tempting to try 4♠, but a well-fitting textbook hand like ♠Jx ♥Qxx ♦ – ♣KQJ10xxxx gives very little play for 4♠ on a trump lead, with 5♣ laydown.

Cannell: 5♣. Bidding for a make. Four Spades will lose control as the club suit may become inaccessible.

Smith: 5♣. Very difficult. Pass, Double, Four Spades and Five Clubs are all viable options. Where do I want to play opposite ♠x ♥xxx ♦x ♣KQJ10xxxx, which is not an unlikely hand on the auction so far? If the ♥K is a trick then we're

booked to go plus on defence, but Five Clubs is also a likely make. Pass is a close second choice, and I changed my mind at the last gasp.

Bird: 5♣. All too easy to bid 4♠ without thinking, but just look at how many side-suit losers need to be covered. I will take a shot at the other possible game.

How many panellists give the same basic example of ♣KQJ10xxxx and little else? That of course means only one trump loser in a club contract and zero defence to diamonds or tricks in a spade contract. The ace of clubs would make a big difference, as would removing the queen from the suit, but of course everyone suddenly turns into a book pre-empter for the purposes of this problem. I confess



Enri Leufkens

that 5♣ hadn't occurred to me as an option, but it clearly could be a winner if partner does hold the pure hand. It seems to be once again an example of a problem which is greatly affected by knowledge of partner's style. 5♣ doesn't look right facing a loose style, but could well be right facing a solid style.

I would probably have bid 4♠ had I held the hand, and I quite agree that this could go terribly wrong. It's time to reveal partner's hand: ♠Jxxx ♥xx ♦x ♣KQJ10xxx. You wouldn't open 4♣ with this hand? Well I don't have a problem with 4♣, even if it worked out badly at the table. Both black-suit games would have made, while 4♦ made an over-trick when West passed. And yes, switch opener's major suits around and 4♠ would be horrible. More likely, dummy will go down with a doubleton spade and short diamonds.

PROBLEM 4

IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ AKJ108762
♥ 9
♦ 107
♣ 73

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	1NT*
?			
1NT 15-17			

Bid	Votes	Marks
4♠	9	10
3♠	7	8
Dble	1	3
Pass	1	3

Sandsmark: Double. There is something wrong with the spade suit, as I have never heard about the 0 of spades! I suppose it should be the 10? With a hand like this I always double (penalty). The normal thing is that the other side pulls in a suit, and you will have to mention the fact that you would like to play a ♠ contract. The advantage of doubling first is that the enemy will believe you to be strong, and that will increase your odds of buying the contract at the right price. It will also have some impact upon your partner, who may find a ♠ game which will have some chances of making.

Yes, well spotted, the typo was intended to be the ♠10 not the ♠0. Double will indeed make us sound strong, and many pairs will not have as good methods after a double as when they are left to their own devices, though they should surely still be capable of counting their points. And nobody has as good methods over an opposing pre-empt as if left to themselves. Hence, for most it was simply a question of 3♠ or 4♠.

Teramoto: 4♠. Hope either to make or have a good sacrifice. Also it can take space away from them.

Apteker: 3♠ Feels about the right level of pre-emption given the colours and my shape. 3♠ pre-empts often provides a tougher problem for opponents than 4♠, where the opponents often will double and leave it in as the five level is unappealing.

Alder: 4♠. Initially, I settled for Three Spades, but I have had a change of heart ... or should that be spade? I wonder that if Two Hearts were a natural overcall (not hearts plus a minor), whether that would have appealed to the

comedians on the panel. Three Hearts would be an imaginative overcall!

Brock: 3♠. Seems enough at the vulnerability. 4♠ is just too likely to force them into double which is probably winning for them. Barry would like to double (as it must work some time!) but I don't play double for penalties.

Stabell: 4♠. Anybody's guess. On a good day, partner has AK in a minor and it rolls home. On a bad day, partner has QJ in all suits and I go for 800 against nothing.

Cannell: 3♠. Respecting the vulnerability somewhat. Partner is a passed hand after all. Though, it is close to a Four Spade overcall.

Cope: 3♠. We will need two working pieces from partner to make game, so they will know when to raise to game and it is a high enough level of intervention to make life difficult for the opposition.

Sime: 4♠. Looks prototypical to me. Bid your hand, cut out their space, make them guess.

Rigal: 3♠. If I had the S10 instead of the zero I might bid 4♠ but as it is the 3♠ call seems enough? Otherwise I expose myself to the penalty double for – 500 for no obvious reason.

Green: 4♠. If they double I hope they lead a trump.

Kokish: 3♠. Or 4♠. Or 2♠ (or 2♦ if that's the system bid). No one knows the truth, so this is really a survey of what the panel had for breakfast on the day of. Clever psychic overcalls are not us. I can live with 3♠ or 4♠ and will settle for three to expose myself to accusations of wimpyness from my cellmates.

Smith: 4♠. Something of a respite in one of the most challenging sets of problems for some

time. Three Spades seems the only alternative, and since I am never defending Four Hearts (even if partner doubles) there seems little point, since we are surely never going to be allowed to play there and I'll have to bid Four Spades next time anyway. Expect a heavy majority on this one.

Leufkens: 3♠. Pass is naïve, but 3♠ possibly as well.

Bird: 4♠. Don't tell me that Andrew Robson would bid only 3♠. Even if I have chosen the wrong moment for 4♠, North/South may go wrong over it.

Mould: 4♠. This is based on the assumption that I have the 10 of spades, rather than the 0 of spades.

Another genius!

And one who Enri assures us is naïve:

Robson: Pass. One can dream.

Byrne: 4♠. I held this hand in Orlando and chose a clever Pass, hoping to be on lead to 3NT. The next hand bid 4♥ on a 0-5-4-4 shape and then I backed in with 4♠, offering them a choice between +1430 and +800. They took +680 and all was well. My partner at the end of the hand lent under the screen and asked me if I was enjoying myself, the suggestion being that Pass was not a mainstream choice! 4♠ has the merit of being a semi-bluff, and gets the hand off your chest straight away. I seem to remember one English player scored a huge goal by overcalling Landy 2♣ to show both majors – he did actually defend 3NT which he got down, fair play to him.

There! Pass is clever, not naïve. None of the panel mentioned a psychic overcall, but the fact

that I knew of Michael's pass and, I think it was Jason Hackett's Landy bid, suggested that it might be worth trying out the panel to see how imaginative they might be. Apparently not very. Oh well. Put me with the 4♠ bidders, though that could obviously be a level too high. Partner held ♠94♥QJ8♦9632♣QJ106, and 6♥ was making the other way while we would have gone for –800.

PROBLEM 5

IMPs. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ Q42
♥ 2
♦ K1098532
♣ K6

West	North	East	South
–	1♣*	1♠	Double

?
1♣ Three+ clubs, playing 15-17 NT

Bid	Votes	Marks
3♦	9	10
2♦	3	7
2♣	2	5
3♠	1	4
2♠	1	3
4♦	1	3
3♣	1	2

Teramoto: 2♣. Limit raise in spades. If bid 2♦, it may be difficult to support spades later.

Green: 2♣. Obviously I could bid 2♦ but I'm worried about losing the spades. I don't fancy 4♥ coming back to me after a 2♦ bid (especially with the king of clubs being of questionable value) so I'll show my spade support first.

That looks about right in terms of overall strength, and does not overstate the spade support. This next, however, implies that a mere 2♣ is inadequate. It also suggests that Tommy has not read the system, which states that a jump cue-bid facing an overcall is a Mixed Raise. Well, 8 HCP fits into the Mixed Raise range, but the distribution certainly does not.

Sandsmark: 3♣! Shows a very good raise to 3♠, which is exactly what you have. If partner then doesn't bid the game, you shouldn't either! This raise is also somewhat prophylactic, as the enemy will believe that you have a better hand than you actually hold, and this may keep them from bidding a ♥ game. I have no doubts whatsoever, that my fellow panellists will pre-sacrifice in both 3♠ and 4♠. I have been up that alley before, and it has never prevented the opposition from bidding 4♥. I think my approach is better.

Well, yes, I suppose you do, otherwise it would be rather masochistic to follow that approach. Another possibility is to simply raise spades.

Cope: 2♠. The value of our♦ suit is an unknown quantity, whereas our spade fit is at least known. We know they have an 8+ card fit in hearts, but partner may also have a 5-4-1-3 shape which would be good for defence. So, I can take the high road with a 2♦ bid but may then find myself having to support spades at the three level when the auction gets back to me, or the low road. Colour me yellow.

Never, Tim, never.

Robson: 3♠. Important to remove space as we know they have a heart fit but they haven't told their partners yet.

A very good point. A pre-emptive raise, usually promising four-card support, may shut out the hearts altogether, depending on how the high cards are distributed.

The rest are keen to get their own long suit into the game.

Alder: 2♦. I hope this is not passed out. Would redouble be snapdragon: diamonds and spade tolerance?

Byrne: 2♦. Followed by spades later. An alternative choice of raising spades and then trying to get the diamonds in won't work and will leave you too high, partner always just goes back to spade never realising your disparity in suits. The disadvantage of the scheme is that I let opener bid 2♥ but bidding suits in the right order is always the winning strategy with these hands. **Kokish:** 2♦. Or 2♠, intending to bid diamonds at any level short of five. Hey, it's a strategy. Any sensible alternative could work better or worse. But in real life most (or all) of us would transfer to diamonds and voluntarily support spades later.

Well, as Barry is the only other panellist to mention that no doubt very sensible method, I suspect that 'most of us' is a slight overbid. It does allow us to get diamonds into the fray without risking either losing the spades altogether or over-emphasising our support.

Rigal: 3♦. These days 2♣ to show diamonds or 3♦ as a fit jump would be the norm...wouldn't they? I'll go for whichever of these is systemic but if neither apply I'll bid 2♦ and balance with spades later – extremely huffily.

Brock: 3♦. Maybe people think that shows four spades, but not me!

Sime: 3♦. Fit Jump. Not perfect, but it will help partner's decision over 4♥.

Cannell: 3♦. Fit-jump for spades. Perhaps I might have a fourth spade, but this may get the lead or help partner in a competitive auction.

Apteker: 3♦. According to system a fit, although I probably should have another ♠. Bidding either 2♣ or 2♠ will leave me not having shown the primary feature of my hand, being the diamonds, to go along with ♠ support. The bidding likely comes back to me at 3♥.

Smith: 3♦. Even as I type this I have changed my mind back and forth four times between Two Diamonds and a fit-jump of Three Diamonds. This really should show 4-card support, so partner may be misled into the wrong decision. The problem with bidding just Two Diamonds now, though, is that LHO rates to be bidding some (probably large) number of hearts next. If Four Hearts comes back to me am I not going to wish it wasn't my decision and eventually bid Four Spades anyway? At least now, if partner passes or doubles Four Hearts, I'll feel a lot more comfortable passing.

Bird: 3♦. Even with only three cards in spades, a fit-jump seems sensible. It will assist partner's next effort over a heart bid.

Mould: 3♦. I owe partner a trump for this fit jump, but the double fit may be important.

Leufkens: 3♦. Should be some fit bid, I hope. 4♦ with three spades is not my cup of tea.

They are mostly of the mind that a fit-jump really ought to have a fourth trump, but that tactically it is the best option, as much to shut out the heart suit as to describe their own hand. Leif-Erik is made of sturdier stuff than Enri – as we might

expect from someone of Viking heritage.

Stabell: 4♦. Surely a fit-jump. Yes, I do give North an opportunity to bid 4♥, but that might not be a bad thing if partner has four of them and no diamond fit

So, if we want to describe our hand accurately we should be playing transfer advances, a la Eric and Barry – but they are not part of the system and are, I think, a bit too complex to include. Failing that, the mood of the majority is to use up some bidding space in the hope of cutting out the opposition's heart fit, even if we have to lie a little about our spade support to do so. I'm with the 3♦ bidders.

Partner held ♠J10875 ♥AK7 ♦Q64 ♣J4. Four Hearts was making and 4♠ was down two or three.



Alan Mould

PROBLEM 6

IMPs. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ AQ3
♥ 64
♦ J73
♣ AQ1062

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
2♠	14	10
4♠	3	7
3♦	1	2
3♠	0	4

The point of this problem was to discover what the panel feels is the difference between bidding 2♠, 3♠ and 4♠. It was not to check if they were aware that we play two-over-one GF, but I'm afraid that small point seems to have tripped up Tommy, who bids FSF to create what I suppose must be a double-game force.

Sandsmark: 3♦. This hand may be powerful, but how powerful remains to be seen. I therefore think it is better to make a GF first, and then support my partner's spade suit. This will for sure be a faint slam try, and perhaps an idle such, but in teams it is better to be safe than sorry. Maybe the delayed game raise will be exactly what the doctor ordered, and will give your partner confidence enough to examine the slam possibilities if his lay-out makes him feel somewhat in doubt?

Alder: 4♠. If this guarantees four-card spade

support (and 4=2=2=5 distribution), then I will rebid 2♠ and bid 4♠ next. But I like the principle of fast arrival, along with picture-bid undertones here.

Those who know the basic system (whether 4♠ is picture or just any minimum is not specified in the notes):

Cope: 4♠. First easy problem of the set (unanimity?). In 2/1 a standard picture jump to show only black suit values and no red suit control.

Robson: 4♠. Hopefully a picture-type raise.

They play the jump to 4♠ as showing a close to minimum two-over-one response with almost all the high-card strength in the two bid suits. Some simply play a jump to 4♠ as any poor minimum that has no interest in slam, so it is defined just as 'weaker'.

Teramoto: 2♠. This hand is sound, while 4♠ should be weaker.

Others are looking towards the picture jump but actually choose to go slowly.

Byrne: 2♠. Maybe I am missing the problem – am I supposed to bid 4♠ to show nothing outside my two suits? Actually that might not be so foolish given that we almost certainly can't make a slam and also that we do clearly belong in spades. Well, I suppose it could be right to play in no trumps to avoid the ruff (♠Kxxxx ♥KQJ ♦K10x ♣Jx), so I had better give us the room to find out. I will raise a 2NT rebid to 3NT and everything else will lead to 4♠.

Smith: 2♠. Whilst my inclination is to jump to Three Spades to show the good spade support, I have been persuaded by my students (most of whom grew up playing 2/1), that Two Spades here promises three-card support and can never

just be preference on a doubleton, as it would be in the Acol-world. If Two Spades promises three-card support, then I suppose it must be right, particularly if it then allows partner to bid something like Three Clubs, patterning out, with 5-4-1-3 shape. It still doesn't look quite right to me, though.

Brock: 2♠. Who knows! Depends on agreements. I don't like the Principle of Fast Arrival, and so would bid 4♠ as a picture jump, but I think most people play that as a load of rubbish. Maybe 3♠ should show this, but I wouldn't inflict it on anyone without discussion.

Bird: 2♠. This promises three spades according to my spy in Two-over-one-Land. Since no-one seems to know what 3♠ would show, I can hardly bid that.

But some are confident that 3♠ would show a better hand:

Leufkens: 2♠. Don't understand the problem. Initial 2NT would be 4+card support. And not enough for 3♠ now.

Sime: 2♠. A question of methods. Presumably everyone knows by now that we are Game Forcing. I play 3♠ is 15+, or the equivalent in playing strength. I do not like 4♠ as a 'picture bid' showing high cards only in the suits bid. If this happens to be a good hand for picture bids, I can produce plenty where the space consumed leaves partner with a high level guess. I prefer 4♠ to show a grotty 2♣ game force, which this is not.

Apteker: 2♠. Playing two over one, this seems normal showing 3-card support and a minimum hand. I would only jump to 3♠ with either 4-card support or three cards and extra values.

Does 2♠ have to be a minimum hand, or should it also be bid with good hands that want to find out more about partner's pattern?

Kokish: 2♠. Conveniently leaves room for East to pattern out and show suit quality, as follows: 3m=short or long by agreement – I prefer short; others = 5422: 3♠=good spades; 3♥=good hearts; 3NT=good doubletons; 4♠=good spades and hearts, NF; 4♥=good spades and hearts, stronger; 2NT=others. 2/1 GF is not the answer to life, but it certainly improves constructive bidding when responder has a good hand. FWIW, 3♠ can be reserved for 4225 slam-suitable.

That comprehensive method would seem to suit Ben also:

Green: 2♠. Bidding 2♠ seems automatic to me. I play it as guaranteeing three-card spade support. I want to find out whether partner has a short diamond and if he/she bids 3♣ then my hand gets a lot better. If I were to jump to 3♠ I would never find out this crucial information and a jump to 4♠ would show a sub-minimum game force in my style.

Then we are back to a hankering for a picture bid:

Rigal: 2♠. I'll only bid 4♠ if it is fit and a minimum with good cards in my bid suits. After all slam is excellent facing ♠KJxxx ♥Axxx ♦x ♣Kxx. If 4♠ is any minimum I bid 2♠ so long as it is forcing and 3♠ (ditto I suppose), if it isn't.

I'm reasonably confident that playing 2-over-1 2♠ is forcing, Barry. And then there is another possibility mentioned for a picture bid:

Stabell: 2♠. I would have liked to bid 3♠, picture jump here, but the system dictates that this is a splinter with heart support, so I have will have

to do with 2♠ followed by 3♠. I presume that 2♠ could initially be a good doubleton looking for the best game.

I don't know. The rest of the panel fails to discuss that point so I guess that they think 2♠ shows three?

Mould: 2♠. This is really a system question. Our system at the moment says 'jumps when a bid of the suit one level lower is forcing are splinters', so 3♠ would be defined here as a splinter. I believe that is standard in Scandinavia, but in the rest of the world I think it is more usual to play 2♠ as about 15+, 3♠ as 12-14, both with three-card support and 4♠ as either the old fashioned DGR or a hand you wish you had not bid a FG 2♣ on. I will claim that I have read the system however and bid 2♠. Perhaps the conductor will award me a couple of much needed bonus marks.

Yes, this is a system question. As you and Leif-Erik point out, the system states that jumps when a bid one level lower would be forcing are splinters. However, that would seem to be poor wording. It did not occur to me that this sentence would apply to this situation, nor does it seem to have occurred to several panellists who mentioned 3♠ in their comments – nor do I think this is simply a matter of their not reading the system notes, as I think that they would just have assumed that 3♠ was natural. As of today, this is an exception to that rule, and a jump to 3♠ would be natural. I'll take that a stage further and say that it also shows extra values. Prior to this discussion, I would have assumed three decent spades and some slam interest, just setting the trump suit. I wouldn't mind at all if it was the picture bid, a la Leif-Erik.

On the actual problem, I would bid 4♠, picture jump, but the majority choose 2♠, and who am I to argue?

Partner held ♠109764 ♥AQ107 ♦A ♣J43.

PROBLEM 7

IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ 1064
♥ 5
♦ KQJ75
♣ K863

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
4♣	12	10
3♠	3	5
Pass	2	4
3NT	1	2

Partner is showing interest in game with four clubs and either six hearts or five hearts which are strong enough to play facing a small doubleton or possibly even less than that. The chances are that if he has only five hearts the clubs are also strong as he might have bid a stopper had he had a concentration of strength in an unbid suit. So, what should we do?

Apteker: Pass. My hand has not improved with partner's 6+ Hearts and extras. I do not believe this is forcing. I could bid 3NT but I lack spade values and so will depend on partner probably having the ♦A and the opponents not being able



Alon Apteker

to run five spade winners. 4♣ could be silly if partner only has three even though he is likely to have four.

Brock: Pass. Sorry if it is supposed to be forcing (and I can see why maybe it should be), but I can't see where we're going. If his hearts are good enough, then he would have bid 4♥.

Mould: 4♣. Pard presumably believes 3♥ to be forcing. I do not have the hand for 3NT opposite a 6-4 shape and do not have a suitable hand for partner full stop. I sign off.

How do we know what partner presumes? I agree that 3♥ should be passable. If he really wants to force he can bid spades or diamonds or, as Sally says, he can jump to 4♥. Everyone else, however, finds another bid.

Rigal: 4♣. This one seems familiar with 5♣ about to go for 800 if I bid it (but partner will anyway if I bid 4♣). He shouldn't but he will... passing 3♥ was our last small minus score but it is 100% forcing in my book.

Which of your excellent titles covers this situation, Barry?

Alder: 3NT. Partner knows my hand is limited because I did not rebid 2♠. It is unlikely I have both spades and diamonds stopped, because I might well have preferred to rebid two no trumps. Thus, this definitely shows diamonds held and is iffy about spades. The saner panelists will presumably bid 4♣.

We'll check in with the rest of the saner panelists shortly. You appear to have answered this next query, saying that 3♠ would show spades, while 3NT only guarantees diamonds.

Bird: 3♠. I look forward to hearing the theorists' answer to 'Does 3♠ or 3NT show a spade stopper?' I have heard both views expressed.

Robson: 3♠. Grope, probably headed for minus now.

Such enthusiasm.

Smith: 3♠. This is what I believe is known as a 'grope'. The problem here is that you have three things to show (assuming you are not raising hearts) – a spade stopper, a diamond stopper, and stoppers in both suits, but you have only two bids (Three Spades and 3NT) to do so. If we could bid both suits, then obviously we bid the one in which we have values, but in the situation where we can bid only one of the suits, I am convinced it is right to bid 3NT with stops in both suits and with a spade stopper (with similar holdings the oppo invariably strain to



Phillip Alder

lead the unbid major in these auctions), and to bid Three Spades on a hand with just a diamond stopper.

Marc jumps the opposite way to Phillip, saying that 3♠ asks about spades. I can see the problem, of course, but I would vote with Phillip. A significant point is that we are known to have some diamond length so may get away without much in the way of high cards in the suit, while we are known to hold a maximum of three spades so will need to have that suit properly stopped.

And so, on to the 'saner' majority.

Sandsmark: 4♣. Partner is looking for 3NT, but your sad spades makes this an impossible bid for you. Since you have already bid a maximum 1NT with ♣ support, there is no reason to go to

game on your hand. Let partner do it and take the blame! For blame him you will, won't you?

Only if what he does doesn't work.

Green: 4♣. Partner has shown 6-4 shape. I don't have a spade stop and for me 3♠ would show a stop and suggest worry about diamonds. I don't have heart support either and I also don't have enough to jump to 5♣. That leaves 4♣.

Teramoto: 4♣. This hand is a minimum and looks no good for 3NT.

Byrne: 4♣. How strange, the spade suit seems to have vanished. Partner is suggesting 6♥/4♣ (although what he is supposed to do with ♠Qx ♥AKQ109 ♦xx ♣AQJx is anyone's guess) which means I am short a spade stopper for no trumps. Given that we have a lot of slow cards I can't believe it will play well even if partner has something in spades, so I am going to rule that out. I think I will just bid 4♣, as I seem to have a lot of non-working cards and a singleton in partner's suit is a huge liability. Even facing ♠Ax ♥AKxxxx ♦x ♣Axxxx, game looks no play on an (automatic) spade lead.

Cope: 4♣. Partner does not guarantee six hearts for their bid – just five good ones where they might be prepared to play 4♥ opposite a doubleton – maybe a hand such as ♠xx ♥AKQxx ♦xx ♣AQJx). I am worried with my aceless hand that 4♣ may be too high already so would like to bid 3♣ again if our esteemed moderator allows an insufficient bid.

Leufkens: 4♣. Partner is asking, I don't have it: no support, not both stoppers in other suits. And no quick tricks for 3NT or 5♣ to be good anyway.

Stabell: 4♣. Partner shows a decent 6-4 hand,

but not necessarily more than ♠xx ♥AQJxxx ♦x ♣AQxx Here, even 4♣ might be a struggle. With a different hand, partner might be able to deduce that I have something in diamonds from my failure to bid 3♠.

Sime: 4♣. It would be unusual to have a hand in this feature where it was right to apply the brake. However, I made my move with 3♣ and have little excuse for making another one. Dearth of aces is bad for five-level contracts. Even a spade stop might not save 3NT.

Cannell: 4♣. In 2/1, this Three Club raise should be five-plus clubs since Two Clubs is three-plus clubs. I prefer Two Diamonds after Two Clubs. But, here we are. I am unsure that Three Spades would be a probe for 3NT that shows diamonds stopped and spades unstopped. So, I will plod along with a nebulous Four Club bid.

No-one else mentioned the possibility of 2♣ being bid on only three cards, and the way I play that would be rare enough that failure to raise with four-card support would be a greater distortion than waiting for five before doing so. Now, of course, we assume that partner does have the fourth club.

Kokish: 4♣. Ugh. The opponents' silence hints at East having more than one spade, so these diamonds may not come into play in time. If we have a game it is more likely to be 4♥ or 3NT than 5♣, but stalling with 3♠ won't help East do the right thing. I'm being asked for an opinion about game (so far) and I'm voting no.

OK. Apart from the assumption by a number of panellists that partner has guaranteed a sixth heart – ♠xx ♥AKQ109 ♦xx ♣AQJx anyone? – the panel seems to have got this one right. Whatever

the meaning of 3♠/NT, it doesn't seem likely that 3NT is going to be a good spot, while the danger of considerable wastage in diamonds suggests that neither 4♥ nor 5♣ will be much fun either. Four Clubs just looks right for so many reasons, though I have a fair degree of sympathy with those who pass – whether partner thinks 3♥ is forcing or not.

Partner held ♠QJ9 ♥AJ9854 ♦ – ♣AQ94, and 3♣ was the limit on the hand, and he would have passed our 4♣ bid.

PROBLEM 8

IMPs. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ KQ4
♥ A6
♦ K
♣ AK98742

West	North	East	South
1♣	3♦	Pass	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
3NT	12	10
Dble	6	6
4♣	0	2

This one is pretty straightforward. Either we 'man up' and bid 3NT, or we double. Surely no member of the panel would pass?

Teramoto: Double. This is best if partner is waiting for a double. If partner bid 3♥, I will bid 3NT

Sandsmark: Double. Ha, ha! Very good. This is a forcing pass situation, and since you apply negative doubles, your partner cannot double for penalty. Therefore you must do it for him.

The rule is that the shorter you are in the intervention suit, the more important it is that you reopen with a double, and no other bid! I must admit that I cannot even start counting all the times my partner has led me down by bidding e.g. 4♣ on a hand like this. Unfortunately, I have also had partners who bid 3NT, after which the enemy started with seven diamond tricks. You just have to double on such a hand in such a situation!

Well, he might want to double for penalty, but that's quite unlikely when I hold the ♦K and North bid 3♦ at adverse vulnerability. He might feel that he has to pass when we reopen with a double if he has no obvious alternative, and if so we'll see how well that works out.

Apteker: Double. I intend to convert 3♥ or 3♠ to 3NT, 4♥ to 5♣ and pass 4♠. Won't love it if partner passes given my seven-card suit but at least I have extras and sharp cards which should ensure defeat. An immediate 3NT is also possible as 9 tricks in NT looks very gettable with North on lead. I have found that tactically this nearly always works as North will have his values for the Vulnerable bid but will not lay down the ace. But double first is most flexible and keeps all options open.

Byrne: Double. Our flexible friend! I am prepared to accept that 3NT will work most of the time but there is no need to put all our eggs in one basket, given that partner can't raise clubs we might still have a slam on (♠AJxx ♥xxx ♦xx ♣xxxx), and I need to see what is happening. We may find spades or we might be able to bid 3NT over a 3♥ response and leave clubs in the picture. Having just spotted the vulnerability

I think it is unlikely that we will collect a huge penalty (adverse pre-empters normally have a good suit so I don't expect partner to pass when I hold the king), but I can't face the thought of ♦Q being led to the ace and the look of glee on our opponents face as they cash the first seven.

Cope: Double. Kudos to those with the courage to pot 3NT – maybe 40 years ago I would have tried that. Whilst there is a virtual necessity unless we have a holding in the opposition's suit to re-open nearly all auctions after a lower-level overcall, at this level we will need either extra strength or shape suitability. We have the former, so a double followed by a 4♣ bid will show the extra strength (and length). This does not rule out playing four of a major as there are plenty of hands partner might have (say ♥QJ10xxx) where they may not have had the strength to bid over 3♦, but after a double then 3♥ from them and a strength showing 4♣ bid they can still bid 4♥.

Sime: Double. I think I can handle whatever happens next, and a penalty Pass is not impossible. 3NT might work against naive opponents. John Matheson once made two tricks in 1NT with a singleton king in hand and 10x in dummy – that's true greatness! All the best.

A fine player, John Matheson. One of Scotland's best.

Alder: 3NT. Even easier on a panel! Did I break the record for the lowest ever panellist score? In my defence, this was a tough set.

Brock: 3NT. What else?

Leufkens: 3NT No alternative, so not perfect but easy as it is.

Stabell: 3NT. Would have liked to double in

case partner has something in diamonds and decides to pass, but I can't really afford to hear 4♥ from the other side. Too strong to pass and North doesn't know that I don't really have a diamond stopper

Green: 3NT. It's now or never. I admit it's a gamble but sometimes it's worth throwing the dice. I suppose I could double and correct 3♥ to 3NT or 4♣, but now partner might think I have four spades and I don't want them to look beyond clubs or NT.

Cannell: 3NT. Gulp.

Smith: 3NT. You do or you don't, but what are the alternatives? Pass? Your defensive play must be much better than mine, but then you obviously get plenty of practice. Double? Are you intending to pass if partner bids a major? Do you really expect him not to do so? Four Clubs? You have little faith in your partner – mine always puts down the ♣Q and ♦Jxx.

Bird: 3NT. GIB and Deep Finesse may look disdainfully at my chances in this contract. If I'm lucky and North is a mere human, I may bring in nine tricks or even more.

Kokish: 3NT. Enough said. This is an auction that might well prompt North to lay down the ♦A, but he might not do that if he has neither the ♠A nor a slow club trick. It's not as if 5♣ has a better chance to succeed, or that we will know to play in spades when we belong there. I could pretend I'd do something else at the table, but why lie?

Rigal: 3NT. Breathes there a man whose soul so dead who never to himself has said "lets have a flutter on the opening lead"?

Mould: 3NT. Might make three tricks.

Robson: 3NT. Cheeky but don't we all...

Apparently not, but two-thirds of the panel do indeed bid 3NT. The doublers may talk about flexibility, but I'm not at all sure that we will always end up in the right spot. Yes, 3NT may go tumbling down, but I think the chance of partner having a penalty pass of a double is very small, while 3NT is far and away our best shot at bringing home a game. And, by the way, is partner obliged to pass 3NT with the ♥QJ10xxx quoted by a couple of panellists?

In real life, partner held ♠105 ♥KQJ753 ♦8743 ♣10. The ♠A was onside and diamonds seven-one. Four Hearts made, any other game was doomed (unless North led a diamond other than the ace).

We have a three-way tie at the top with Sally, Drew and Barry all on 78 points. Congratulations to them and we'll see you all next month. In the meantime, may I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



Sally Brock



Drew Cannell



Barry Rigal

SET 12 – THE PANEL'S BIDS & MARKS

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Sally Brock	England	3♠	3♥	5♣	3♠	3♦	2♠	Pass	3NT	78
Drew Cannell	Canada	3♠	3♥	5♣	3♠	3♦	2♠	4♣	3NT	78
Barry Rigal	USA	3♠	3♥	4♠	3♠	3♦	2♠	4♣	3NT	78
Iain Sime	Scotland	3♠	3♥	4♠	4♠	3♦	2♠	4♣	Dble	76
Alan Mould	England	Pass	3♥	4♠	4♠	3♠	2♠	4♣	3NT	76
Enri Leufkens	Netherlands	Pass	3♥	5♣	3♠	3♦	2♠	4♣	3NT	74
David Bird	England	3♠	4♣	5♣	4♠	3♦	2♠	3♠	3NT	73
Michael Byrne	England	3♠	3♥	4♠	4♠	2♦	2♠	4♣	Dble	73
Marc Smith	England	3♠	Pass	5♣	4♠	3♦	2♠	3♠	3NT	71
Tadashi Teramoto	Japan	3♠	3♥	4♠	4♠	2♣	2♠	4♣	Dble	71
Eric Kokish	Canada	3♠	Pass	Pass	3♠	2♦	2♠	4♣	3NT	68
Leif-Erik Stabell	Zimbabwe	3♥	3♥	5♣	4♠	4♦	2♠	4♣	3NT	68
Ben Green	England	Pass	3♠	4♠	4♠	2♣	2♠	4♣	3NT	65
Alon Apteker	South Africa	3♠	Pass	Dble	3♠	3♦	2♠	Pass	Dble	57
Phillip Alder	USA	Pass	Pass	Pass	4♠	2♦	4♠	3NT	3NT	55
Tim Cope	South Africa	3♠	3♠	Pass	3♠	2♠	4♠	4♣	Dble	55
Andrew Robson	England	Pass	4♣	Pass	Pass	3♠	4♠	3♠	3NT	52
Tommy Sandsmark	Norway	3♥	4♣	4♠	Dble	3♣	3♦	4♣	Dble	46



Master Point Bidding Battle Competition – Set 13

Open to All – Free Entry

PROBLEM 1

IMPs. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 103
♥ 52
♦ A9
♣ AKQ8532

West	North	East	South
1♣	Double	1♦	Pass
?			

PROBLEM 2

IMPs. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ K9
♥ J94
♦ AKJ10962
♣ A

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	Double
?			

PROBLEM 3

IMPs. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ J
♥ 1094
♦ Q85
♣ AQ10953

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	3♦	Pass
?			

PROBLEM 4

IMPs. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ AK5
♥ A42
♦ Q5
♣ AK1052

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	Pass	1♥
Double	Pass	1♠	2♥
Double	Pass	2♠	Pass
?			

PROBLEM 5

IMPs. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ KJ104
♥ 93
♦ 105
♣ QJ1094

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	Pass
?			

PROBLEM 6

IMPs. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ 43
♥ A105
♦ AKJ962
♣ 105

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	1♣	1♥
2♦	3♥	4♣	4♥
Pass	Pass	5♣	5♥
?			

PROBLEM 7

IMPs. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ AKQ108754
♥ –
♦ A1098
♣ 2

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1NT	2♠*
?			
2♠ Hearts and a minor			

PROBLEM 8

IMPs. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ AJ10
♥ –
♦ AJ98752
♣ A102

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♦	Pass	1NT*	Pass
?			

1NT (11)12-14, Does not deny a four-card major

Send entry to biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com or enter via the website www.newbridgemag.com.

Entries to arrive before the end of the month.

A New Bridge Magazine Bidding System

Attention!!!

The Bidding System has been modified – please read carefully, this is the system to be used for the Bidding Battle from now on

Basic Method

Natural

Five-card majors

Minors are three cards in length minimum. Always open 1♣ with 3-3 but 1♦ with 4-4, so 1♦ is 3 cards only if precisely 4-4-3-2 shape.

15-17 no-trump in all positions and vulnerabilities.

Two over one is game forcing in all uncontested auctions.

A 1NT response is up to a non-game force but it is not forcing. However, the only hands that pass are weak no-trump types.

Jumps at the two-level are weak (eg, 1♦ – 2♠) and at the three-level are invitational (eg 1♥ – 3♣).

1M – 3M is a limit raise.

Inverted minors are played. 1m – 2m is F2NT and 1m – 3m is pre-emptive.

Over 1m – 2m, next step is a WNT and 2NT is GF with the next step suit; 3m is unbalanced and non-forcing. All other bids are at least quasi-natural and FG.

After, say, 1♣ – 2♣ – 2♦ – 2NT/3♣ are WNT/long

clubs minimum so NF, anything else is GF.

Weak 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ (5 – 9, six-card suit).

In response 2NT is a relay asking for a high-card feature if not minimum with 3NT showing a good suit, non-minimum. 4♣ is RKCB. 2any – 2new = NAT Constructive NF; 2any – 3new = NAT Forcing.

Three-level openings are natural and pre-emptive. Over 3♦/♥/♠, 4♣ is RKCB and over 3♣, 4♦ is RKCB.

3NT opening is Acoll gambling – solid suit and at most a queen outside.

Four-level opening are natural.

No-trump bidding:

After 1NT 15 – 17, 2♣ = Stayman, 2♦/2♥ = transfers, 2♠ = ♣s with 2NT/3 denying/showing a fit, 2NT = ♦s with 3♣/♦ denying/showing a fit. After this new suits are splinters. 3♣ is 5 card Stayman, 3♦ is 5-5 ms FG, 3♥/♠ 1-3-(4-5) / 3-1-(4-5) and FG. 4♣ is 5-5 majors, game only, 4♦/♥ = ♥/♠s (then 4NT = RKCB and new suits are Exclusion).

1NT rebid = 12 – 14 with 2♣ a puppet to 2♦ to play in 2♦ or make an invitational bid, 2♦ is game forcing checkback, new suits at the 3 level are 5-5 FG and higher bids are auto-splinters.

Jump 2NT rebid = 18 – 19 with natural continuations.

After 2 over 1, 2NT is 12-14 balanced or 18-19 balanced and 3NT is 15-17 range with a reason not to have opened 1NT.

3NT rebid after a one-level response in a suit shows a good suit and a good hand. Where the response was 1NT, 3NT may be a flat 19-count.

After 2NT, 20-22, 3♣ = Stayman with Smolen, 3♦/3♥ = transfers, 3♠ = slam try with both minors. Four level bids are as after 1NT opening.

Reverse Kokish is played after 2♣ opening (2♣-2♦-2♥-2♠-2NT is 23-24 balanced, and 2♣-2♦-2NT is 25+ balanced GF).

Initial response:

Jump shifts are weak at the two-level and invitational at the three-level. Bidding and rebidding a suit is invitational, bidding and jump rebidding a suit is FG (eg 1♦, 2♥ is weak, 1♦, 1♥, 2♣ 2♥ is invitational; 1♦, 1♥, 2♣, 3♥ is FG).

2NT after 1♣/1♦ is natural and invitational without 4M.

2NT after 1♥/1♠ = game-forcing with 4+ card support. Continuations in new suits are natural, 3 partner's suit extras with no singleton, 3NT

=18-19 balanced, 4 of new suits are splinters but deny a second suit. 4 of partner's major shows a bad opening. Such as 1M – 2NT – 3♦ – 3M – 4♣ = splinter (3NT is 5M-4♦-2-2).

Continuations:

1x – 1M – 2M promises four-card support or three-card support and an unbalanced hand. Balanced hands with three-card support rebid 1NT.

Reverses are forcing for one round after a one level response. The lower of 2NT and 4th suit encompasses all weak hands, responder's rebid of own suit is F1 but not necessarily strong, all other bids are FG.

All high reverses are game-forcing.

Jumps when a bid of the suit one level lower is forcing are splinters, as are four-level responses in a lower-ranking suit to 1♥/1♠. Jumps when the previous level is forcing are splinters.

Where responder jumps in a third suit after opener has bid and rebid a suit, that is a splinter, with a non-jump new suit NAT F1.

Sequences such as 1♦ – 1♠ – 2♦ – 2♥ are F1; 1♣ – 1♠ – 2♣ – 2♦ = ART GF, while 2♥ would be NF but opener is can raise. 1♦ – 1♠ – 2♦ – 3♥ = splinter in support of ♦.

4th suit = game-forcing.

When responder's suit is raised a return to opener's suit is forcing.

Slam bidding:

Roman Key Card Blackwood (1 or 4, 0 or 3, 2, 2 + trump Q).

Exclusion Blackwood only in clear circumstances including a jump to the five-level in a new suit and after 1NT – 4♦/♥. Responses are 0, 1, 2. 4NT followed by 5NT is for specific kings.

Cue-bids are Italian style, that is the lowest control is shown regardless of whether it is first or second round or a positive or negative control and skipping a suit normally denies a control in that suit, except that a player may revert to traditional cue-bidding, e.g. spades are trumps, cue-bidding 4♦ then 5♣ with 1st-round ♦, 2nd-round ♣ if he feels that to be appropriate and he is happy to commit to the five level.

Exception: a shortage control in partner's suit is not shown immediately.

The default for 5NT is "pick a slam" unless following on from 4NT by the same player.

Competition:

Responsive and competitive doubles through 4♦ – after that, doubles are value-showing, not penalties.

1x – Dble – 1y – Dble = 4y and some values; 2y = 5y and a hand that would have bid 2y over a pass from RHO.

Negative doubles through 4♦ – after that, doubles are value showing, not penalties.

Game try doubles where no space for any other game try.

After our 1M opening bid and an overcall, 2NT = four-card limit raise or better and a cue-bid is a three-card limit raise or better, raises are pre-emptive, change of suit forcing one round but not FG. New suits at the three-level are FG.

After a 1m opening and an overcall, 2NT is natural and invitational and the cue-bid is a limit raise or better, raise are pre-emptive, change of suit F1 but not FG, new suit at the three-level is FG.

Fit-jumps after opponents overcall or take-out double.

Fit jumps after our overcalls. Jump cue-bid is a mixed raise (about 6-9 with four-card support). Where we overcall 1M, a 2NT response is a four-card limit or better raise, a cue-bid could contain four-card support if only worth a two-level raise, but is otherwise a three-card raise.

Double jumps are splinters.

Lebensohl applies after interference over our 1NT and facing our T/O double of a weak two bid or of 2M after they opened a multi 2♦ against us. An immediate 3NT shows a stopper but not 4oM, 2NT then 3NT shows a stopper and 4oM, 2NT then cue-bid shows no stopper but 4oM immediate cue-bid shows no stopper and no 4oM. In summary 3NT at any time shows a stopper and cue-bid at any time denies one, a jump to 3♠ (eg

How to Enter

Send your chosen bid in each of the eight problems, by email to biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com or enter via the website www.newbridgemag.com. Entries must be received before the end of the month. Include your name, email address and number of the set which you are entering.

1NT – 2♥ – 3♠ is FG). Note that most relatively balanced hands with no stopper will start with a T/O double.

We open 1NT and they overcall. Whatever its meaning, double of the overcall is T/O of the suit BID. Pass then double is also T/O and therefore implies length in the first opposing suit.

2NT is rarely natural in competition (except as defined above). Possibilities include Lebensohl or scramble if game is not viable. Scramble will tend to apply in balancing situations, Lebensohl (Good/Bad) where game is still a live possibility.

This includes the Good/Bad 2NT in situations where it is appropriate.

We double their Stayman or transfer over 1NT: if 1NT = 14+, double shows the suit doubled. If 1NT is maximum 15 HCP, double is PEN of 1NT.

Our Overcalls:

After a 1M overcall, 2NT = four-card limit raise or better and a cue-bid is a three-card limit raise or better, raises are pre-emptive, change of suit forcing one round. Fit single-jumps, splinter double-jumps. Jump cue is a mixed raise (about 6-9 and four trumps).

After a minor suit overcall, 2NT is natural and invitational and the cue-bid is a limit raise or better, raises are pre-emptive. Fit jumps, jump cue is a mixed raise (about 6-9 and four trumps)

Weak jump overcalls, intermediate in 4th.

Michaels cue-bids. 1m – 2m = Ms, 1M – 2M = oM and m with 2NT asking for the m, inv+ and 3m P/C.

Defences:

Against all pre-empts, take-out doubles with Lebensohl responses against two-level openings – same structure as above.

2NT is rarely natural in competition (except as defined above). Possibilities include Lebensohl or scramble if game is not viable.

Over 2M, 4♣/♦ are Leaping Michaels (5,5 in ♣/♦ and oM, FG). Over Natural weak 2♦, 4♣ = Leaping Michaels (5, 5 in ♣ & a M with 4♦ to ask for M). Over 3♣, 4♣ = Ms and 4♦ = ♦&M with 4♥/♠ as P/C. Over 3♦, 4♣ = ♣&M and 4♦ = Ms. Over 3♥, 4♣/♦ = Nat, 4♥ = ♠&m, 4NT = ms. Over 3♠, 4♠/♦/♥ = nat, 4♠/4NT = two-suiter.

Over their 1NT, Dble = pens, 2♣ = majors, 2♦ = 1 major, 2♥/♠ = 5♥/♠ & 4+m 2NT = minors or game-forcing 2-suiter.

Over a strong 1♣, natural, double = majors, 1NT = minors, pass then bid is strong.

Grand Prix

In addition there is an annual Grand Prix with Master Point Press prizes of £100, £50 and £35. Only scores of 50 and over will count and the maximum score is 400. Each contestant's Grand Prix total is their five best scores over the year (January – December).



WEST

Hands for the
January 2019 The uBid Auction Room

Bid these hands with those on the following page with your favourite partner; then turn to The Auction Room inside to see how your score compares to that of the experts

Hand 1. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ 83
♥ AJ1085
♦ Q7
♣ KQJ8

North opens 1♦

Hand 2. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 5
♥ A96
♦ AKQ102
♣ AK98

Hand 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ —
♥ AJ10976
♦ AKQ85
♣ 96

South opens 2♠ and North raises to 4♠

Hand 4. Dealer North. N/S Vul

♠ A54
♥ 8752
♦ K32
♣ AQ4

Hand 5. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AK532
♥ J4
♦ K105
♣ J65

Hand 6. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ A106
♥ K9753
♦ Q93
♣ J3

South overcalls 1♠ and North raises to 3♠

Hand 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ KQJ3
♥ 9743
♦ A72
♣ K9

South opens 1♦ Precision, (10) 11-15, 2+♦

Hand 8. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ AJ652
♥ AKJ8
♦ A102
♣ 8

South opens 1♦.

MASTER POINT BIDDING BATTLE



Results – Set 11

Dean Pokorny is the first reader to score a perfect 80. **Derek Markham** case second with 73 points, **Robert Brown** had 71. 69 was scored by **Dominic Connolly**, **Lars Erik Bergerud** and **Alex Athenasiadis**. Dominic wins the draw for the fourth prize.

Other Good Scores

68 Rodney Lighton

65 Mike Perkins

63 Mike Ralph

61 Simon Hill

Grand Prix standings:

None of the top-five were able to better their scores, so the race continues to be very interesting with one round to go.

Alex Athanasiadis	367
Rodney Lighton	367
Mike Ralph	367
Mark Bartusek	363
David Barnes	360
Lars Erik Bergerud	359
Michael Prior	359
Stuart Nelson	357
Mike Perkins	356
Dominic Connolly	354

Nigel Guthrie	351
Bill Linton	351
Colin Brown	351
Andrew King	350
Peter Barker	350
Bill Gordon	347
Derek Markham	345
Simon Hill	340
Jeff Callaghan	340
Olga Shadyro	338

How to Claim Your Prize

The winners will receive an email from Master Point Press sending you a Gift Certificate. You will then need to create an account using your email address in order to validate your Certificate.

Comments on Bidding Battle Set I I

Brian Senior examines the responses of the readers and compares them against those of the panel.

OK, let's take a look at those bids chosen by readers but not by any of the panellists.

From this month forward we are repeating the hands to make it easier for our readers to follow Brian's comments.

Only those hands where readers had differences are reported.

PROBLEM 2

IMPs. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ J94
♥ AKQJ432
♦ —
♣ K73

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	3♠	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
4♥	6	10	12
4♣	6	10	3
4♠	4	9	11
6♥	1	4	2
6♠	2	3	4
5♦	1	3	2
4♦	1	2	0
5♣	0	2	1
5♥	0	2	1

We had reader-votes for two actions which were not mentioned by the panel – jumps to 5♣ and to 5♥.

Five Hearts first. The system includes that jumps to the five level in new suits are Exclusion Key-card in clear situations. Is this a clear situation? Maybe. I assume that the 5♥ response was intended to simply show a hand too good for a simple 4♥. Well, OK, but we did award points to a

5♦ response as EKCB, so maybe to be consistent we should argue that 5♥ ought to also be EKCB, though the two suits are not quite the same as we have a forcing 4♦ response to 3♠ available while 4♥ would not, of course, be forcing. I'll award 2 points, as it's Christmas very soon, but I'm not convinced by 5♥.

Five Clubs is even more complicated, because the system states that a 4♣ response would have been RKCB for spades, so if we want to bid clubs naturally we have to jump to 5♣. I think that this consideration is sufficient to mean that a jump to 5♣ is not clearly EKCB, which is a shame because, while it could get us to quite the wrong level, a psychic EKCB bid to attract the wrong lead against our final contract has to be admired, at least for imagination if not necessarily for judgement. On much the same lines as for 5♥, I'll award 2 Christmas points to 5♣.

PROBLEM 4

IMPs. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ AQ1098
♥ A106
♦ AK2
♣ K9

West	North	East	South
–	2♦*	Pass	3♥*
?			

2♦ Multi: Weak 2M or strong balanced
3♥ Pass or correct
If West doubles, that is T/O of hearts

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
Dble	13	10	11
3NT	6	7	17
4♠	2	4	2
3♠	0	2	5
Pass	0	0	1

We have one reader-vote for passing. Three Hearts is going to end the auction as hearts is clearly opener's suit – there aren't enough spades in the pack for it to be spades. Passing may be a safe way to go plus, but our experts were unanimous in taking some action or other because we have so much that game is very likely to be on our way. +50 or +100 simply won't be enough. There would be a little more case for passing at Pairs, where anyone who bids and goes down gets a minus score, while passing goes plus, but at IMPs the size of the gain or loss is more important than its frequency, and anyway I would expect game to be on more often than not, so that we simply cannot afford to go quietly.

PROBLEM 6

IMPs. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ J10842
♥ A983
♦ 2
♣ AKQ

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	2♥*
2♠	3♥	4♥	Pass
?			

2♥ Weak, frequently five cards when Non-vul

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
4NT	13	10	19
5♣	6	9	7
5♠	1	3	2
6♠	1	2	0
4♠	0	2	6
5♥	0	2	1
Pass	0	0	1

One reader passed 4♥ but that was surely due to misreading the question. Four Hearts here agrees spades, showing a hand too good to just bid 4♠, so no points for trying to play in the opponents' suit.

PROBLEM 7

IMPs. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ A87
♥ –
♦ Q84
♣ AQJ10985

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦*	Pass
?			
2♦	ART GF		

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
3♠	7	10	4
3♥	5	10	3
4♥	1	8	0
2♠	4	7	21
3♣	4	7	5
4♣	0	4	2
5♣	0	2	1

Three readers had comments on this problem, ranging from 2♠(easy) over 3♣(and 3♠ next time) to 3♥(or 3♠ if that is not a splinter).

One reader jumped to 5♣. That does show the self-supporting club suit, but this is a complex hand with a partial spades fit and two first-round controls outside clubs. Five Clubs destroys any hope of having a sensible exploratory auction. Sure, 5♣ could be the right spot, but so could 6♣ or 7♣ or various levels of spades, and 5♣ gives partner no chance at all. Two points because at least 5♣ does show the big trump suit.

PROBLEM 8

IMPs. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ 6
♥ AQJ76
♦ J108
♣ AQ97

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♣*	3♠
Double	Pass	3NT	Pass

?
1♣ 3+ cards and we play 15-17 NT

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
4♣	8	10	5
4♥	6	9	0
Pass	7	8	27
4NT	0	2	3
Dble	0	0	1

We had one reader-vote for double. I'll leave you to work out why that is getting zero points.

There were also three votes for a raise to 4NT. Sufficient of the panel were bidding on in case slam was a possibility that I have to award something(2 points) to 4NT, but it is a seriously misguided effort, I think. Firstly, for it to make sense at all it must assume that partner's 3NT shows a strong hand – it doesn't, being entirely consistent with a weak no trump type. Secondly, while slam is possible as partner doesn't have to have a weak no trump, that slam is far more likely to be in a suit contract, and in particular in clubs – partner may hold a weak no trump with only three clubs, but may also hold long clubs and a spade stopper, when a club contract could be the way to go. If we bid 4♣, we can always get back to no trump if necessary, but it will be harder for partner to know to go back to clubs over 4NT when that is best, and it is so easy for partner to make a co-operative noise over 4♣ when he is suitable for slam.

We should congratulate Dean Pokorny, who is the first reader in the A New Bridge Magazine era to score a perfect 80 – very well done!



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EAST

Hands for the
January 2019 The uBid Auction Room

Bid these hands with those on the previous page with your favourite partner; then turn to The Auction Room inside to see how your score compares to that of the experts

Hand 1. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ AQ102
♥ Q
♦ KJ95
♣ 7643

North opens 1♦

Hand 2. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ AK10943
♥ KQ7
♦ 4
♣ 543

Hand 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 94
♥ K85
♦ 9
♣ AK105432

South opens 2♠ and North raises to 4♠

Hand 4. Dealer North. N/S Vul

♠ 92
♥ AJ
♦ 654
♣ KJ9875

Hand 5. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ Q
♥ AK853
♦ AQ84
♣ K42

Hand 6. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 7
♥ QJ6
♦ AK106
♣ A8764

South overcalls 1♠ and North raises to 3♠

Hand 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ 9654
♥ K
♦ KQJ4
♣ J632

South opens 1♦ Precision, (10) 11-15, 2+♦

Hand 8. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ K94
♥ 6
♦ 9876
♣ J7643

South opens 1♦.

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