

A NEW BRIDGE MAGAZINE

Chinatown
Brother Hubert's Misfortune
The Road To Hell

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A NEW BRIDGE MAGAZINE

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Another Winter is Coming

It is a truth universally acknowledged that anyone in need of a European Title, medals, EBL Masterpoints and a share of more than €350,000 should make sure they are in Monaco between February 29 and March 8 2020, where they can compete in the 2020 Winter Games. The Zimmermann Cup, FMB Trophy and Top Open Pairs events offer all these elements. There are special prizes for Ladies, Juniors and local players. All the information you require is at: <http://www.wintergames.bridgemonaco.com/>

Registration is via the EBL website: <http://db.eurobridge.org/repository/competitions/20Monaco/microsite/Information.htm>

The China Syndrome

In the IBPA's August Bulletin Editor John Caruthers reported that the 2019 National Middle School Bridge Championships were held from August 1st to 5th at Chongqing Hechuan Middle School. Twenty-seven schools entered the High School Team Competition and 75 (!) schools in the Junior High School Team Competition. More than double those numbers competed in pairs competitions.

In the same issue, Jerry Li reported on the Chinese National Championships. He mentioned that they have four big tournaments each year, the Premier League (in three legs), the National Club Championship, the National Team Tournament, and the National Championship Tournament. Like the NABCs of the ACBL, the National Championship is a very popular tournament. It has open teams, women's teams, mixed teams, open pairs, women's pairs, mixed pairs

and side games. The Open Teams is the most important event. The 2019 Chinese National Championship were held in Hangzhou May 3-12. The Open Teams started play on the morning of Monday May 6; 56 teams took part. The format was two days of Swiss qualifying, after which the top 32 teams went to the knockout stage. After four rounds of KO, two strong teams met in the final: Jinshuo (Jacek Kalita/Michal Nowosadzki, Ju Chuancheng/Shi Zhengjun, Zhuang Zejun/Jiang Tong) and PD Times (Boye Brogeland/Christian Bakke, Jerry Li/Zhong Fu, Hou Xu/Dong Lidang). The same teams met in the final last year, with Jinshuo winning, and an exciting match saw them hold on to the title.



On a Roll

David Mossop's team is enjoying an *annus mirabilis*. Having led his team to victory in the Schapiro Spring Fours and the European Open Championships, the latest triumph came in the Four Star Teams at the EBU's Summer Festival. This saw Paul Hackett join sons Justin & Jason along with David.

Get Connected

While looking for a recipe for crumpets, our Layout Editor discovered that the popular BBC2 quiz show Only Connect is restarting this month. The opening round is between Darksiders and Suits, the latter containing two former members of the EBU's Junior Squad, Kyle Lam and Toby

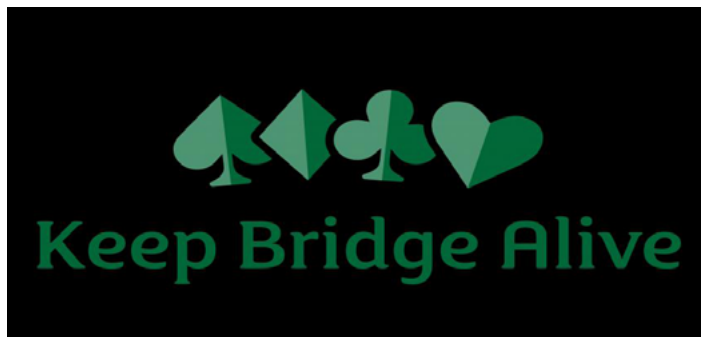
Nonnenmacher, along with a non-playing friend Isi Bogod. The show is hosted by Victoria Coren Mitchell, the daughter of Alan Coen, former Editor of Punch, who was a regular visitor to the Chess & Bridge Shop in London. If you miss the show, on 2 September it will be available on the BBC iPlayer.

Keep Bridge Alive

In order to continue promoting the benefits of bridge, the University of Stirling and Sam are organizing a Keep Bridge Alive Pro-Am Event on Thursday 20 February 2020 in central London, with drinks reception from 6pm, buffet dinner and bridge with world class players such as Sabine Auken (Germany), David Bakhshi (UK), Dennis Bilde (Denmark), Boye Brogeland (Norway), David Gold (UK), Fredrik Helness (Norway), Zia Mahmood (USA), Artur Malinowski (UK) and Roy Welland (USA).

The charity Pro-Am will give amateur players an opportunity to bid and play with professional bridge players whilst giving back to the game itself. Sam said: "We're really hoping to make it a very special event with two aims: to fundraise for KBA projects and promote bridge in general." There will also be a chance for players to 'sponsor a junior to play' as the Pro-Am aims to raise the profile of bridge as an inter-generational game for young people and families.

Do contact Sam (punchings@stir.ac.uk) or philanthropy@stir.ac.uk if you could be in London next February and are interested in attending. The Keep Bridge Alive Pro-Am is also offering a wide variety of fantastic sponsorship/advertising opportunities for individuals, companies and organisations looking to benefit from an association with bridge with a local, regional and international reach.



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Test Your Technique

with Jérôme Rombaut

see Page 56

Dealer South. Game All. IMPs.

♠ J95
♥ J9
♦ A76
♣ QJ1093

♠ Q10876432
♥ K4
♦ K
♣ A2

Here is the auction at my table:

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♠
2♥	2♠	4♥	4♠
Double	All Pass		

West leads the spade ace and continues with the king, East discarding the heart 3 and 2. West now makes the most inconvenient return: a low diamond to East's 10. What to do next?

Chinatown

The Editor reports on the 2019 IMSA World Masters in China

The 1st IMSA World Masters Championship was staged in Hengshui City, China. In the Open, the teams competing were China, France, Netherlands and Norway, while the Women’s teams featured China, England, Poland and Sweden.

The teams would play a double round robin of 16 board matches, followed by a final and a play-off for the bronze medals. That would be followed by a Pairs event comprising four sessions of 22 boards.

There were lavish prizes: US\$69,000 in each teams event and US\$31,000 in each pairs event, making a total of US\$200,000, with every pair and every team guaranteed a prize.

With Brian Senior looking after the Bulletin, my brief was to present the Live News and act as VuGraph commentator.

Origin

On the journey to Hengshui I finished reading Dan Brown’s latest book Origin, featuring the adventures of Professor Robert Langdon. The plot features artificial intelligence and that was referenced at the spectacular Opening Ceremony when Alpha Zero, the brilliant Go and Chess playing programme was mentioned. It might only be a matter of time before Alpha Zero masters Bridge.


Origin also features a character named Winston (in honour of Sir Winston Churchill) and at one point, this famous quotation is included:

Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm.

Not a bad one for a bridge player to be aware of!

Early on in the match between England and China, both declarers faced a tricky play problem:

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

	♠ Q4		
	♥ KQ973		
	♦ K5		
	♣ KJ95		
♠ A732		♠ 10986	
♥ A1064		♥ 52	
♦ 8		♦ QJ76	
♣ 10876		♣ A43	
	♠ KJ5		
	♥ J8		
	♦ A109432		
	♣ Q2		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Shen</i>	<i>Draper</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Fawcett</i>
–	–	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT

West led the ♠2 and declarer won with dummy’s queen, East following with the six. A heart to the jack saw West win and return the ♥4. A suspicious declarer might put in dummy’s nine, but here dummy’s king took the trick and declarer continued with a club to the jack and a club to the king and ace. When East returned the ♠10 West won with the ace and exited with a spade to leave these cards:

♠ 7 ♥ 106 ♦ 8 ♣ 108	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 9 ♥ — ♦ QJ76 ♣ 3	♠ — ♥ — ♦ A109432 ♣ —
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Declarer played a diamond to the king and then cashed the ♥Q and the ♣J. When neither missing ten put in an appearance, she was one down.

The winning line is to cash the ♦A and then play a diamond to the king. West cannot afford to part with a heart or a club, so must discard the ♠7. Then declarer can play either hearts or clubs from the top, end-playing West.

Perfection

Relaxing in my room, I happened upon a TV channel showing an archery contest in Shanghai. Each contestant shoots five flights of three arrows, scoring 10 for every bullseye, a maximum of 150 being available for perfection. You don't necessarily score points for perfection in bridge, but on this deal from Round 1 the E/W pairs had a chance to demonstrate their skills:

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ 1053 ♥ K754 ♦ KQ95 ♣ 87	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ AJ96 ♥ A986 ♦ 864 ♣ K4	♠ 87 ♥ QJ32 ♦ J1073 ♣ J103
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Shen</i>	<i>Draper</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Fawcett</i>
–	–	1♦*	Pass
2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥*	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♦	Double	6♠	All Pass

This auction was going along reasonably well until East jumped to 6♠. Perhaps passing the double and then bidding 6♥ over West's redouble would have been the way to suggest a grand slam was possible.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wiseman</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Smith</i>	<i>Liu</i>
–	–	1♣*	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♦*	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣*	Pass	4♥*	Double
Pass	Pass	Redouble*	Pass
4NT*	Pass	5♥*	Pass
5NT*	Pass	6♣*	Pass
7♠	All Pass		

- 1♣ 1+♣, natural or 12-14 balanced or 18-19 balanced or any 1444 (15points can contain 5♦)
- 2♣ Game forcing
- 2♦ Checking for a major
- 4♣ Cue-bid
- 4♥ Cue-bid
- Rdbl First round control
- 4NT RKCB
- 5♥ 2 key cards, no ♠Q
- 5NT Kings?
- 6♣ ♣K

An impressive way to collect 13 IMPs.

Imperfection

This deal from the second round appeared to be a bidding test for E/W, but at the table I was watching, it also proved to be a defensive problem:

Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 542 ♥ K86 ♦ KQ10964 ♣ J	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ Q83 ♥ J975 ♦ 8 ♣ K10765	♠ AKJ6 ♥ AQ32 ♦ J73 ♣ A3
		♠ 1097 ♥ 104 ♦ A52 ♣ Q9842	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wiseman</i>	<i>Rimstedt</i>	<i>Smith</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>
–	Pass	1♣*	Pass
1♦	Pass	2NT*	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

- 1♣ 1+♣, natural or 12-14 balanced or 18-19 balanced or any 1444 (15points can contain 5♦)
- 2NT 18-19

South led the ♣2 and declarer took North's king with the ace and played three rounds of hearts ending in dummy. Had the suit divided she would have tried for four tricks in spades. When South discarded on the third round declarer played the ♦K and South won and played the ♣4 for two down.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Larsson</i>	<i>Dhondy</i>
–	Pass	2♣*	Pass
2♠*	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
2♣	18-19 NT or any game force (not ♦)		
2♠	Transfer to 2NT		

For the second time 6♦ was never in the picture.

South led the ♣4 and declarer won with the ace and played a diamond to the king. When it held she continued with the queen of diamonds dropping the jack and North pitched the ♠8. When South ducked for a second time declarer changed tack, cashing the top spades, finishing with ten tricks.

I can't explain why South ducked the second diamond (her partner could hardly have an ace in addition to the ♣K) but could North have done anything to make things even easier?

Assuming the club lead promises an honour, North knows that the defenders can cash four tricks as soon as they get the lead. To alert South to that, maybe North should discard the ♠Q! That should make it clear to South that she should grab the ♦A and play clubs.

Back to Earth

After their astonishing demolition of England in Round 2, Sweden faced China. This was a crucial deal:

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ Q874 ♥ J8 ♦ K5 ♣ AQJ105	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 6 ♥ K3 ♦ AQJ9732 ♣ 873	♠ AKJ102 ♥ AQ542 ♦ 10 ♣ K6
	♠ 953 ♥ 10976 ♦ 864 ♣ 942		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Zuo	Grönkvist	Wang	Ahlesved
2♣*	2♦	Double*	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♦*	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♣*	Pass	6♠	All Pass

- 2♣ Precision
- 4♦ Splinter
- 4NT RKCB
- 5♣ 1key card

North led the ♦A but that only served to speed up the play, +1430.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Bertheau	Lu	Larsson	Liu
1♣*	3♦*	4♦*	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♣*	Pass	5♠	All Pass

1♣ 2+♣
 3♦ Weak jump overcall (!)

Here East could not be sure that 6♠ would be no worse than a finesse – that was 13 IMPs to China.

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ 2 ♥ 632 ♦ K1094 ♣ J9743	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A63 ♥ 75 ♦ A8652 ♣ 652	♠ Q974 ♥ AKQJ984 ♦ 3 ♣ 8
	♠ KJ1085 ♥ 10 ♦ QJ7 ♣ AKQ10		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Zuo	Grönkvist	Wang	Ahlesved
-	-	-	1♠
Pass	2♠	3♥	4♠
All Pass			

West led the ♥2 and East played king, followed by the ace. Declarer ruffed, cashed the ♠K and followed it with the ten, West pitching the ♣3 as East won with the queen. Another heart at this point would ensure the demise of the contract, but East returned a spade and declarer won with dummy's ace (West pitching a heart) and came to hand with a club. When she played a second club East ruffed and played a heart and declarer was two down when she failed to endplay West.

Having come to hand, declarer should draw the outstanding trump, which squeezes West in the minors. The best she can do is pitch a diamond, but she can then be thrown in on the third round of the suit to lead into the club tenace.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Bertheau	Lu	Larsson	Liu
-	-	-	1♣*
Pass	1♠	4♥	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	

South led the ♣A and switched to a trump, and denied more than one ruff in dummy declarer was two down, losing 12 IMPs. That made the score 1-40 and for the time being Sweden knew what it felt like to be on the wrong side of the scorecard.

Red Card

Bidding at bridge would be much tougher if the red card was not available. Its significance is such that books about the correct way to use it have been penned by some of the world's finest players, including World Champions Mike Lawrence (Double!) and Sally Brock (Double Trouble).

One of the most difficult applications is deciding when to make a penalty double. The legendary English player John Collings, once ascribed victory in a tournament to the fact that his partnership had never doubled their opponents into game.

English stalwart Keith Stanley, upon seeing the score -470 inscribed on his teammate's scorecard, enquired, 'did you need the extra fifty points?'

I don't recall anyone writing a Bols Bridge Tip about when to play for penalties, but it has always been my view that if you want to be on solid ground then having a decent trump holding is a good idea.

There is also the issue of whether partner will misinterpret your double, imagining that one you intend as being for takeout is for penalties. See what you make of this deal from Round 3:

Board 16. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ A1094 ♥ 103 ♦ Q8 ♣ AK1072	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K83 ♥ AQ8 ♦ 10742 ♣ Q93	♠ QJ75 ♥ 74 ♦ A963 ♣ J65
		♠ 62 ♥ KJ9652 ♦ KJ5 ♣ 84	

Open Room

	West	North	East	South
	Zuo	Groknvist	Wang	Ahlesved
	2♣*	Pass	Pass	2♥
	Pass	3♣*	Pass	3♥
	Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass
2♣	Precision			
3♣	Heart support, invitational			

I am sure that East intended her double to be for takeout. On that basis West should have bid 3♠, but as you can see the situation was obviously not entirely clear.

West started with three rounds of clubs and declarer won with dummy's queen pitching a spade from her hand. A heart to the king was followed by a spade and West took the ace and switched to the ♦Q, East taking the ace and trying the ♠Q. Declarer ruffed that high and claimed, +530.

They made 3♥ in the other room, but Sweden collected 9 IMPs.

Searching for IMPs

To paraphrase Jane Austen, It is a truth universally acknowledged that a team not in a qualifying position must be in want of some IMPs. That was certainly the case for England when they met the leaders, Poland, in Round 4.

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ AJ104 ♥ 9 ♦ AK10875 ♣ K10	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 98 ♥ 743 ♦ Q432 ♣ AQ82	♠ K6532 ♥ QJ1082 ♦ — ♣ 743
		♠ Q7 ♥ AK65 ♦ J96 ♣ J965	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Fawcett</i>	<i>Kazmucha</i>	<i>Draper</i>	<i>Sarniak</i>
-	-	-	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
3♥*	Pass	4♠	All Pass
3♥ Splinter			

♠ 98			
♥ 743			
♦ Q432			
♣ AQ82			
♠ AJ104	W	N	E
♥ 9			
♦ AK10875			
♣ K10			
			♠ K6532
			♥ QJ1082
			♦ —
			♣ 743
			♠ Q7
			♥ AK65
			♦ J96
			♣ J965

Seeing no advantage in leading a top heart South started with the ♣5 and North played three rounds of the suit.

Declarer ruffed in dummy and played the ♥9. South won with the ace and returned the ♥5. Declarer ruffed in dummy, cashed the ♦A and ruffed a diamond. At this point one winning line is to play a spade to the jack, ruff a diamond and play a spade to the ace, dummy's diamonds taking care of the losing hearts. When declarer elected to ruff a heart instead she could no longer arrive at ten tricks.

It was a strong defence.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Baldysz</i>	<i>Wiseman</i>	<i>Baldysz</i>	<i>Smith</i>
-	-	-	Pass
1♦*	Pass	2♥*	Pass
4♠	All Pass		
1♦	(10)11-21PC, 5+♦ or 4♦441♣ or 4441, 3rd/4th seat 4+♦		
2♥	7-9, 5♠+4♥		

North led the ♥4 and South won with the king (perhaps the ace is a better card) and switched to the ♣9, the defenders playing three rounds of the suit. Declarer ruffed, ruffed a diamond, played a spade to the ace, a spade to the king and advanced the ♥8. She was going to run it, but when South covered she claimed, +620 and 12 IMPs.

Higher, Faster, Stronger

As the standard for an opening bid appears to be falling faster the stock market, it has become safer to adopt a more variable approach to third in hand pre-emptive bids and weak jump overcalls.

On this deal from Round 3 you can contrast the different approach of

the West players in the match between Poland and England:

Board 26. Dealer East All Vul.

			♠ A104
			♥ 109
			♦ Q63
			♣ AQ932
			♠ 7532
			♥ QJ5
			♦ AJ5
			♣ 1076
			♠ KQJ86
			♥ 6
			♦ 10972
			♣ K85

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Rimstedt</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>	<i>Liu</i>
-	-	Pass	Pass
1♥	Double	2♥	4♠
All Pass			

West led the ♥A and when East followed with the queen she continued with the ♥8, a grateful declarer ruffing, drawing trumps and cashing the clubs, +620.

Given that East had supported hearts there was no chance that a second round of the suit would stand up, but does that make it easier for West to switch to a diamond?

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Shen</i>	<i>Larsson</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bertheau</i>
-	-	Pass	Pass
3♥	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	4♣	All Pass	

Here, if N/S had reached 4♠ (which they would have done if South had

overcalled 3♠) East might have followed to a top heart with the jack. Even so, it would not be easy for West to find the killing switch.

East led the ♥Q and when West followed with the four (why not the ♥2?) she switched to the ♠3, so declarer took ten tricks, but Sweden lost 10 IMPs.

Out of Luck Out of Form

When you are at the top of your game, the luck tends to go with you. When you are below your best it tends to go the other way.

That was certainly the case for the English team – as witness this deal from Round 4:

Board 23. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ 5 ♥ K1073 ♦ KQ753 ♣ 862	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 2 ♥ AQ9864 ♦ A4 ♣ AKJ10	♠ KQ10963 ♥ J2 ♦ 102 ♣ 973
		♠ AJ874 ♥ 5 ♦ J986 ♣ Q54	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Fawcett</i>	<i>Kazmucha</i>	<i>Draper</i>	<i>Sarniak</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♣*	2♠	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	

1♣ Balanced 2+♣ 11-14; 4+♦ 15+ or 18+any

It looks normal to overcall and 2♠ is a reasonable approach, but here it cost -1100. Still, it would be a bargain if teammates happened to alight in 6♣!

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Baldysz</i>	<i>Wiseman</i>	<i>Baldysz</i>	<i>Smith</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♥	1♠	Pass
1NT	2♣	All Pass	

NS did play in clubs – but not at the required level.

Perhaps suspecting that a double might be coming, West decided to take a bid, but to be honest 1NT is unsound. Had North doubled, which is certainly the indicated action, East would probably have bid 2♠ when South would have joined the party. Even if East passes, the defenders should be able to collect ten tricks against 1NT doubled.

The Learning Curve

Do you recall the remark made by bridge legend Benito Garozzo, who pointed out that although he had been playing for more than forty years, he still learnt something new every day. I am always looking for deals that might have something instructive to offer and this one from Round 5 might fit the bill:

Board 12. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 109842 ♥ 763 ♦ KQ5 ♣ 52	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 7 ♥ K10982 ♦ 98642 ♣ 107	♠ J643 ♥ – ♦ AJ1073 ♣ KQ83
		♠ AKQ ♥ AQJ54 ♦ – ♣ AJ984	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Shen	Wiseman	Wang	Smith

-	-	-	2♣*
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♥*
Pass	2♠*	Pass	3♣*
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠*
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

2♣	23+ balanced or any game force
2♦	Relay
2♥	Kokish
2♠	Forced
3♣	♥+♣
3♠	Cue-bid

♠ 7	♥ K10982	♦ 98642	♣ 107
♠ 109842	♥ 763	♦ KQ5	♣ 52
♠ AKQ	♥ AQJ54	♦ —	♣ AJ984
♠ J643	♥ —	♦ AJ1073	♣ KQ83

Not quite the optimum contract.

What should North do over 3♠?

My first thought was to jump to 4♠, which might be enough for South to envisage the possibility of a grand slam (it will require North to hold at most three clubs unless she is void in spades). While discussing the hand with Ron Tacchi I remembered that there was another way to go, North bidding 3NT over 3♠ as a serious slam try. If South then cue-bids 4♣ North can bid 4♠ and once again South might consider bidding 7♥.

Bidding 5♥ over 3♠ is another idea, but the key to the hand is the singleton spade.

How many IMPs would England lose?

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Dhondy	Zuo	Senior	Wang

-	-	-	1♣*
Pass	1♦*	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♥	Double	Redouble
4♠	Pass	Pass	Double

All Pass

1♣	Precision
1♦	Negative

South's decision to play for a penalty was surprising.

North led the ♣10 and South won with the ace and returned the jack, declarer winning in dummy and playing a spade. South won and cashed two more spades, but declarer had the rest, -200 -not exactly shabby against a possible 7♥.

It deserved to be worth more than the 7 IMPs that were garnered.

The Well Reasoned Lead

Many a deal turns on the opening lead. This board near the end of the last round looked as if it might have a significant role to play in whether Sweden or China would contest the final of the Women's teams against Poland:

Board 29. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ KJ84	♥ AJ9	♦ K96	♣ 863
♠ A	♥ 6532	♦ 103	♣ J109742
♠ 109652	♥ 10	♦ AQJ875	♣ 5
♠ Q73	♥ KQ874	♦ 42	♣ AKQ

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Dhondy	Grönkvist	Senior	Rimstedt
-	1♣*	1♦	Double*
Pass	1♥	1♠	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

1♣ 2+♣, a) (11)12-14/18-19 bal w/o 5M b) Natural unbalanced with (4)5+♣

The Swedish pair use a lot of transfers in competition, so the double promised 4+♥.

East knew that North held the ♦K and there appeared to be little point in leading a heart or a club, either of which might pick up partner's holding. She went with the ♠10 and West won and tabled the ♦10 for a very rapid 3 down, -300.

♠ A	♠ KJ84	♠ 109652						
♥ 6532	♥ AJ9	♥ 10						
♦ 103	♦ K96	♦ AQJ875						
♣ J109742	♣ 863	♣ 5						
<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">W</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">N</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">S</td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> </table>			W	N	E	S		
W	N	E						
S								
♠ Q73	♥ KQ874	♠ AKQ						
♥ 42								

Board 32. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ 83	♠ KQ952	♠ AJ1074						
♥ 5	♥ AJ3	♥ 109872						
♦ AJ6542	♦ K1083	♦ 7						
♣ A1042	♣ 8	♣ Q6						
<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">W</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">N</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">S</td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> </table>			W	N	E	S		
W	N	E						
S								
♠ 6	♥ KQ64	♠ KJ9753						
♥ Q9								

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Larsson</i>	<i>Draper</i>	<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Fawcett</i>
-	1♣*	1♦	1♥
Pass	1NT	2♠	3♠*
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West missed a trick here when she failed to double 3♠ - a point she mentioned to me when we discussed the deal.

East led the ♦J and that cost 14 IMPs. It almost cost Sweden a place in the final!

Last Board

When the final deal of the round robin settled on the table in the match between Sweden and England, the situation was clear – Sweden needed a swing.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dhondy</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Rimstedt</i>
2♦*	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

East led the ♥10 and declarer won with the jack and played a club for the six, jack and ace, West returning the ♠8 for the king and ace, East continuing with the ♠J. Declarer won with the queen and played a diamond for the queen and ace. West exited with the ♦5 and declarer put up the ten and cashed three hearts. That forced West down to ♦J6 ♣104 and declarer could cash the ♣K and exit with a club, forcing West to lead a diamond into declarer's ♦K8 – a Stepping Stone squeeze no less.

If East ducks the ♠K declarer would play a diamond to the queen. It would be superhuman of West to duck that, but even if she does, she must then take the ♦A on the second round of the suit and switch to a low club.

Maybe Alpha Zero could find that defence, but I certainly couldn't – had Sweden stepped into the final?

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Larsson</i>	<i>Draper</i>	<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Fawcett</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
All Pass			


West led the $\heartsuit 6$ and declarer won with the nine and played back the queen, West winning and switching to the $\spadesuit 8$, covered by the king and ducked by East. The $\clubsuit 8$ was covered in turn by the queen, king and ace and East won the spade switch with the seven and exited with the $\heartsuit 9$. Declarer could now have secured an overtrick by following declarer's line at the other table. However, there may be something wrong with the play record, as declarer is credited with ten tricks, +180 – and 6 IMPs to Sweden that saw them into the Final by 0.16 of an IMP.

Meckwellian

As you doubtless know, the Oxford English Dictionary adds new words every three months. (The less well-known Uxbridge English Dictionary also adds new words, but concentrates on improving their definitions in a humorous way, for example: Champagne – to fake injury.)

Will the OED accept Meckwellian (bidding 3NT with inadequate values and usually making it)?

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

\spadesuit K109 \heartsuit J9543 \diamondsuit K9 \clubsuit Q86		\spadesuit Q75 \heartsuit AQ2 \diamondsuit 842 \clubsuit K753	\spadesuit AJ32 \heartsuit 106 \diamondsuit A1073 \clubsuit AJ9
	\spadesuit 864 \heartsuit K87 \diamondsuit QJ65 \clubsuit 1042		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Ahlesved</i>	<i>Dufrat</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>	<i>Žmuda</i>
Pass	Pass	1 \diamondsuit	Pass
1 \heartsuit	Pass	1 \spadesuit	Pass
1NT	All Pass		

North led the $\clubsuit 3$ and declarer won with the queen and ran the $\spadesuit 9$, an effortless nine tricks, +150.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Baldysz</i>	<i>Rimstedt</i>	<i>Baldysz</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>
Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass
2 \diamondsuit^*	Pass	2 \heartsuit	Pass
3NT	All Pass		


Once East upgraded her hand to a 15-17 1NT game was sure to be reached.

South led the $\diamondsuit 6$ and declarer won with dummy's nine. I was expecting her to play a heart next (you have a 64.59% chance of developing two tricks) but she cashed the $\spadesuit K$ and ran the ten, scoring nine tricks, +600 and collecting 10 IMPs, giving Poland the early lead in the Final.

Movie Star

In my club players who lead the king from Kx are credited with making a movie star lead – most of the time they end up with egg on their faces, but when it works, they make the headlines.

Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

\spadesuit 54 \heartsuit A94 \diamondsuit 10654 \clubsuit AQJ9		\spadesuit J \heartsuit Q1085 \diamondsuit QJ873 \clubsuit K54	\spadesuit KQ107632 \heartsuit 3 \diamondsuit A9 \clubsuit 1032
	\spadesuit A98 \heartsuit KJ762 \diamondsuit K2 \clubsuit 876		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Ahlesved	Dufrat	Grönkvist	Žmuda
-	Pass	4♠	All Pass

South led the ♥6 and declarer won with dummy's ace and played a spade for the jack, king and ace. She lost three tricks, +620.

♠ 54	♠ J	♠ KQ107632									
♥ A94	♥ Q 1085	♥ 3									
♦ 10654	♦ QJ873	♦ A9									
♣ AQJ9	♣ K54	♣ 1032									
	<table border="1"> <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		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A98										
	♥ KJ762										
	♦ K2										
	♣ 876										

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Baldysz	Rimstedt	Baldysz	Grönkvist
-	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

South led the ♦K!

Declarer won with the ace, crossed to dummy with a heart and played a spade for the jack, king and ace. South returned a diamond and North won and played a third diamond, promoting a trump which meant the ♣K was the setting trick.

Declarer could have made the contract by ducking the opening lead, or, after crossing to dummy with a heart by playing a second heart, pitching a diamond – a type of scissors coup. Whatever, South and Sweden would happily accept the 12 IMP swing.

Missing the Boat

There are many ways to lose points at the bridge table. One of the most annoying is failing to reach the optimum contract. Consider these five deals from the second session of the Women's Final:

Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 6	♠ A75	♠ J832									
♥ Q732	♥ 10	♥ AKJ4									
♦ 1097543	♦ A862	♦ KQJ									
♣ Q4	♣ AK853	♣ J6									
	<table border="1"> <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		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ KQ1094										
	♥ 9865										
	♦ -										
	♣ 10972										

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Bertheau	Kazmucha	Larsson	Sarniak
Pass	1♣*	Double	1♥*
2♦	Double*	Redouble	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♠

All Pass

- 1♣ Balanced, 2+♣ 11-14; 4+♣ 15+ or 18+any
- 1♥ Spades
- Dble Support double

It would not be a crime to reach 6♣ – it will make when you can bring in the clubs, which will happen 46.34% of the time.

Declarer took 12 tricks, playing East for four spades after ruffing a heart in dummy.


Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Žmuda	Rimstedt	Dufrat	Grönkvist
Pass	1♣*	1NT	2♣*
2♦	Double*	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

- 1♣ 2+♣, (11)12-14/18-19 bal w/o 5M or natural unbalanced with (4)5+♣
- 2♣ Majors
- Dble Values

Worried about the possibility of being forced in diamonds South decided not to go on to game. Eleven tricks meant the loss of 10 IMPs.

Board 22. South. E/W Vul.

♠ K6 ♥ J74 ♦ QJ652 ♣ 1076		♠ J109742 ♥ K5 ♦ A7 ♣ K85	♠ A83 ♥ Q1062 ♦ K108 ♣ J42
------------------------------------	---	------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Kazmucha</i>	<i>Larsson</i>	<i>Sarniak</i>
-	Pass	2♠*	All Pass
2♠	6♣, 8-11		


The perfect fit delivered ten tricks.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Żmuda</i>	<i>Rimstedt</i>	<i>Durfrat</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>
-	-	1♠	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♠	All Pass		
2♣	Game forcing, semi-natural		

That gave Poland 10 IMPs.

Board 23. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ KQJ86 ♥ 875 ♦ 65 ♣ J87		♠ 1042 ♥ Q62 ♦ J1084 ♣ KQ4	♠ A9 ♥ AKJ94 ♦ AK7 ♣ A63
-----------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

♠ 753 ♥ 103 ♦ Q932 ♣ 10952

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Kazmucha</i>	<i>Larsson</i>	<i>Sarniak</i>
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	Pass	2♦*	Pass
2♥*	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥*	Pass	3NT	All Pass
2♦	5+M 0-7 or 22-24 NT or GF with ♦		
2♥	Pass or correct		
3♥	Transfer		


Unless 3NT promised two spades and five hearts, hearts were never in the picture and on a diamond lead declarer took all the tricks, +720.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Żmuda</i>	<i>Rimstedt</i>	<i>Durfrat</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♣*	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♥	Pass	6♥	All Pass
1♣	0+♣, 11-14 balanced or 4441♦ (4315/3415), 15+ 5+♣ or 4414, 18+ any		
1♠	4+♠, 7+		

South led the ♥10 and declarer played to ruff a diamond in dummy, taking all the tricks and 12 IMPs.

Board 23. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ Q8765 ♥ AK975 ♦ J54 ♣ —		♠ 103 ♥ 2 ♦ Q10973 ♣ AKQ102	♠ AK4 ♥ QJ843 ♦ A2 ♣ 953
		♠ J92 ♥ 106 ♦ K86 ♣ J8764	

Open Room

	West	North	East	South
	<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Kazmucha</i>	<i>Larsson</i>	<i>Sarniak</i>
	1♠	2♦	2♥	Pass
	4♥	Pass	4♠*	Pass
	5♣	Double	Pass	Pass
	Redouble*	Pass	5♦	Pass
	6♣	Pass	6♥	All Pass
4♠	Cue-bid			
5♣	Cue-bid			
Rdbl	First round control			
5♦	Cue-bid			
6♣	Cue-bid			


West was doing a lot of bidding missing the ♠AK. It was not enough to persuade East to go past 6♥.

Closed Room

	West	North	East	South
	<i>Żmuda</i>	<i>Rimstedt</i>	<i>Durfrat</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>
	1♠	2NT*	3♣*	5♣
	5♥	Pass	6♦*	Pass
	7♥	All Pass		
2NT	Minors			
3♣	Hearts			
6♦	Cue-bid			

Fantastic bidding which gave Poland another 11 IMPs.

Board 31. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ 8 ♥ QJ1042 ♦ 9543 ♣ J109		♠ 1064 ♥ 876 ♦ AKJ ♣ AQ43	♠ 7 ♥ AK53 ♦ 107 ♣ K87652
		♠ AKQJ9532 ♥ 9 ♦ Q862 ♣ —	

Open Room

	West	North	East	South
	<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Kazmucha</i>	<i>Larsson</i>	<i>Sarniak</i>
	—	—	—	1♠
	Pass	2♣*	Pass	3♠
	Pass	4♣*	Pass	4♥*
	Pass	4NT*	Pass	5♠*
	Pass	6♠	All Pass	
2♣	Game forcing, any			
4♣	Cue-bid			
4♥	Cue-bid			
4NT	RKCB			
5♠	2 keys +♠Q			

West led the ♥Q giving the defenders a trick, +1430.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Żmuda</i>	<i>Rimstedt</i>	<i>Durfrat</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>
-	-	-	3NT*
Pass	4♥*	Pass	4♠
All Pass			
3NT	Sold 7/8 card major		
4♥	Pass or correct		

I'm sure North would have liked to bid 4♣ to ask for a possible shortage, but she could not tell which major suit her partner held. Bidding on over 4♠ risked finding partner with three small hearts.

Another 13 IMPs to Poland, who had picked up 56 IMPs on these five deals.

A Cunning Plan

Aficionados of the British Television series Blackadder, will know that one of the main characters, Baldrick, was always coming up with a cunning plan that was designed to find a way out of an awkward situation.

At the start of the third session of the Women's Final, Sweden trailed Poland 31-89 and if they were to turn the match around they needed a very cunning plan indeed.

Not much has been written about the strategy to adopt in this situation, but it seems to me that a number of things are self-evident; you must be reasonably aggressive in the bidding; you must avoid unforced errors – it's no use scoring the IMPs you need if you keep adding to your opponent's total; you must consider playing against the odds from time to time in the hope of creating a swing; the bigger the deficit, the more luck you may need; teams holding a big lead tend to play conservatively. Having said all that you also need to get a set of boards that offer the right sort of opportunities.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ AKJ106		♠ Q5
♥ 1097		♥ A32
♦ Q10		♦ A954
♣ A94		♣ J1065
♠ 82		♠ 9743
♥ J6		♥ KQ854
♦ KJ762		♦ 83
♣ Q873		♣ K2

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Grönkvist</i>	<i>Kazmucha</i>	<i>Rimstedt</i>	<i>Sarniak</i>
-	1NT*	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♥	All Pass	
1NT	15-17		
2♦	Transfer		

Declarer got the trumps right and took ten tricks, +170.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Żmuda</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>	<i>Durfrat</i>	<i>Ahlesved</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♠*
All Pass			

A system change saw South inadvertently make the wrong response (3♦ would show four-card spade support).

With that information North should raise to 4♠ – once spades have been supported the fifth spade is the equivalent of an extra king and I would be tempted to try it even opposite the actual response, hoping to find partner with a maximum.

Here too declarer took ten tricks – an opportunity missed.

Sweden gained 10 IMPs by making a game that failed in the other room and then faced this deal:

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ A8 ♥ 8653 ♦ 9843 ♣ 1073		♠ 543 ♥ AJ7 ♦ QJ2 ♣ K842	♠ Q976 ♥ Q92 ♦ K106 ♣ AJ6
	♠ KJ102 ♥ K104 ♦ A75 ♣ Q95		

Open Room

	West	North	East	South
	<i>Grönkvist</i>	<i>Kazmucha</i>	<i>Rimstedt</i>	<i>Sarniak</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♣*	Double
	Pass	2NT	All Pass	
1♣	2+♣, (11)12-14/18-19 bal w/o 5M or natural unbalanced with (4)5+♣			

Not much to say about that, except that when you know where most of the missing high cards are located you can frequently bring home a low point count 3NT. When East's lead of the ♠7 went to the ten and ace declarer was in a position to score nine tricks, but she had no need to go flat out and finished with eight, +120.

Closed Room

	West	North	East	South
	<i>Žmuda</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>	<i>Dufrat</i>	<i>Ahlesved</i>
	Pass	1♦*	Pass	1♠
	Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT
	All Pass			
1♦	11-13 BAL w/o 5-c M or 11-16 HCP NAT, longer ♣ possible or 11-16 HCP any 4441			

Here East started with the ♠6 and West took dummy's ten with the ace and returned the eight, declarer winning with dummy's jack and playing a club for the king and ace. Dummy's king took the spade return, West pitching the ♥3 (suit preference/even) and declarer played two rounds of clubs, East winning, cashing her master spade (East throwing the ♦3, declarer the ♦2) and exiting with the ♦6. Declarer won with the jack and cashed the ♣8 East pitching the ♥2, West the ♥5.

Where was the ♥Q?

If declarer believed the discards, West had started with a 2-4-4-3. She had thrown two hearts, which was unlikely if she had started with the ♥Q. Had she discarded a second diamond declarer would have had the same information but could then consider playing East for the queen in an attempt to create a swing.

When declarer played a heart to the king and then finessed on the next round she played West for five hearts and went down.

A few boards later Poland misjudged who could make what and a phantom cost 9 IMPs.

If Poland had done the right thing on the deals I have mentioned they would have been only 21 down with eight deals to play – and perhaps their opponents would have been a little nervous.


Poland became the 2019 IMSA World Masters Women's champions by beating Sweden by 106-68, also leading throughout. The Polish team is Cathy Baldysz and Sophia Baldysz, Justyna Żmuda and Katarzyna Dufurat, and Anna Sarniak and Danuta Kazmucha. England defeated China in the third-place match by 91-76.

The Netherlands won the right to call themselves 2019 IMSA World Masters Open champions when they led throughout in defeating France by 94-56 in Thursday's final. The Dutch team comprised Bart Nab and Bob Drijver, Sjoert Brink and Bas Drijver, and Simon de Wijs and Bauke Muller. China defeated Norway by 121-78 in the third-place play-off.

Vive la Différence

A top is 10, so results are expressed as 10.00-0.00, 0.00-10.00 etc.
The opening deal illustrated the difference between IMPs and Pairs:

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ K8 ♥ QJ106 ♦ 10542 ♣ 1063		♠ Q104 ♥ AK9872 ♦ A3 ♣ 85
♠ J9653 ♥ — ♦ KQJ76 ♣ AK7		♠ A72 ♥ 543 ♦ 98 ♣ QJ942

Both 4♠ and 3NT are easy contracts, but unless North leads an unlikely top heart or even better a small club, you will make eleven tricks in both contracts.

This was a common sequence:

West	North	East	South
<i>Baldysz</i>	<i>Rimstedt</i>	<i>Baldysz</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>
–	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Worth 3.00-7.00


And this the unlucky one:

West	North	East	South
<i>Dhondy</i>	<i>Zuo</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Wang</i>
–	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Scoring 9.00-1.00

It was Terence Reese who pointed out that playing Pairs you must attempt to get involved in the auction if possible.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.


♠ 87 ♥ AKQ95 ♦ Q1087 ♣ 87		♠ K10 ♥ 8763 ♦ A93 ♣ K652
♠ AJ2 ♥ J2 ♦ 542 ♣ AJ1093		♠ Q96543 ♥ 104 ♦ KJ6 ♣ Q4

West	North	East	South
<i>Wiseman</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Smith</i>	<i>Dhondy</i>
–	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
All Pass			

At the other tables, West overcalled 2♣ and E/W played in 3♣. It was not obvious to East that she needed to double, despite her heart length – West might easily have been 5-2 in the majors. With both contracts making E/W scored only one point.

Mind you, this can lead to the odd disaster:

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ 76 ♥ Q10 ♦ AQ1043 ♣ KQ102		♠ AKJ98 ♥ 96 ♦ K98 ♣ 764
♠ 104 ♥ 8432 ♦ J652 ♣ AJ8		♠ Q532 ♥ AKJ75 ♦ 7 ♣ 953

West	North	East	South
Wang	Lu	Zuo	Liu
-	-	-	1♥
Pass	2♦	2♠	Double
All Pass			

South led the ♥K and switched to the ♦7, North taking the ace and playing the ♣K. Declarer won in dummy and ran the ♠10. South won with the queen and played the ♣9. North won, returned the ♦3 ruffed, won the next club and played a third diamond, ruffed. The ♥K meant the penalty was -800 and 10.00-0.00.

Declarer would have done better to reject the spade finesse and play three rounds of the suit. That way she escapes for -500 and scores some points if N/S bid and make a game.

On Board 9 E/W are vulnerable with North the dealer holding ♠83 ♥A83 ♦Q10874 ♣A92. Most of the players in the Open could start with 1NT or 1♦. None of the women opened and only Lu and Wang overcalled West's opening bid of 1♥ with 2♦. In practice it was the winning move as partner has enough to compete: ♠Q52 ♥J106 ♦A952 ♣Q64.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ 76 ♥ 10752 ♦ K9752 ♣ J8		♠ AQ84 ♥ AK84 ♦ QJ63 ♣ 10
♠ J3 ♥ J96 ♦ A1084 ♣ KQ52		♠ K10952 ♥ Q3 ♦ - ♣ A97643

♠ 104 ♥ 8432 ♦ J652 ♣ AJ8		♠ AKJ98 ♥ 96 ♦ K98 ♣ 764
♠ Q532 ♥ AKJ75 ♦ 7 ♣ 953		

West	North	East	South
Baldysz	Żmuda	Baldysz	Dufrat
-	-	1♦	1♠
3♦	Pass	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	5♣
All Pass			

It seems to me you have three possibilities with the South hand – to overcall 2♣ planning to bid spades later if required; to make a two suited overcall; to overcall 1♠.

Such is the attraction of the spade suit that everyone was starting with 1♠.

When West led the ♦5 a losing heart went away and declarer could draw trumps with dummy's ♣KQ and play a spade for 10.00-0.00.

After 10 boards, Wang and Shen were on 67% – a mere 10% ahead of Żmuda and Dufrat.

Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ Q975 ♥ - ♦ AQ9743 ♣ 652		♠ K82 ♥ K9876 ♦ KJ108 ♣ A
♠ AJ64 ♥ A105432 ♦ 5 ♣ KJ		♠ 103 ♥ QJ ♦ 62 ♣ Q1098743

West	North	East	South
Smith	Wang	Wiseman	Shen
-	1♥	Pass	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Double
2♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass

A club lead would have demolished 3NT, but naturally South led the ♥Q. It was impossible for North to win and switch to a club, so declarer

won with the king, played the $\spadesuit 10$ to dummy's queen and the $\spadesuit 5$. North shot up with the ace and returned the $\heartsuit 3$, South winning with the jack. North must have been disappointed when South could not produce a third heart, returning a diamond. Declarer cashed her tricks in that suit and came to hand with the club, squeezing North in the majors for 11 tricks and 0.00-10.00.

Board 16. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

\spadesuit Q 108764 \heartsuit AJ6 \diamondsuit Q9 \clubsuit K6	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	\spadesuit K9 \heartsuit Q75 \diamondsuit J87 \clubsuit J10852	\spadesuit J53 \heartsuit 9432 \diamondsuit AK542 \clubsuit 9
\spadesuit A2 \heartsuit K108 \diamondsuit 1063 \clubsuit AQ743			

West	North	East	South
<i>Shen</i>	<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Larsson</i>
Pass	1 \spadesuit	Pass	2 \clubsuit
Pass	2 \spadesuit	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West led the $\diamondsuit 4$ and when dummy's queen held declarer played three rounds of clubs, West pitching a heart and a spade. Now declarer did something very sneaky – she exited with the $\diamondsuit 6$! West won with the king and assuming declarer still had the $\diamondsuit 10$ (East had played the seven followed by the eight) she switched to the $\spadesuit 2$. Declarer played dummy's ten and when it held she played a spade to the ace, a heart to the ace and cashed her spades. The last of these caught East, down to $\heartsuit Q7 \clubsuit 8$ in show-up squeeze. If you haven't been counting that's 12 tricks! Not surprisingly it was 10.00-0.00.

That might have been my play of the day, were it not for this deal!

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

\spadesuit 97 \heartsuit 97 \diamondsuit AQ10853 \clubsuit Q73	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	\spadesuit KQ10853 \heartsuit K106 \diamondsuit J6 \clubsuit 82	\spadesuit J2 \heartsuit AQ5432 \diamondsuit 74 \clubsuit K96
\spadesuit A64 \heartsuit J8 \diamondsuit K92 \clubsuit AJ1054			

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>Wiseman</i>	<i>Zuo</i>	<i>Smith</i>
–	–	–	1 \clubsuit *
1 \diamondsuit	1 \heartsuit	1 \spadesuit	Pass
2 \diamondsuit	2 \heartsuit	2 \spadesuit	Pass
Pass	3 \heartsuit	All Pass	

East led the $\diamondsuit J$ for the king and ace and West cashed the queen. If she plays a third diamond declarer can ruff with dummy's $\heartsuit Q$ and play a low heart, which will put her in line for an overtrick if she gets the clubs right.

West found the stronger defence of switching to a spade, covered by the jack, queen and ace. If declarer now runs the $\heartsuit J$ East wins, cashes the spade king and plays a third spade, promoting a trump trick.

Declarer found the only way to get home when she played dummy's $\diamondsuit 9$. West covered but declarer pitched a spade – a scissors coup. Declarer ruffed the spade return and played a low heart, winning with dummy's jack. A heart to the ace was followed by a third heart, and East won and played a spade. Declarer ruffed and played a low club to the ace and then ran the jack – East had already pitched a club on the third round of diamonds so was known to be 6-3-2-2. A splendid 10.00-0.00.


At the end of the session, Wiseman and Smith had climbed from last to second, just behind Senior and Dhondy.

Quality Street

Having to come up with hundreds of headlines every year is never easy – and some inevitably get repeated. However, if you get an idea you sometimes discover all sorts of useless information. As a child, I recall the box of chocolates that would appear every Christmas, to be passed around whenever visitors dropped in. Still produced today, everyone had a favourite ‘quality street’. (Mine was the ‘green triangle’.) What I only discovered many years later was that the name came from a play by J.M.Barrie (slightly less well known than another of his works).

In the second session of the Women’s final, we were treated to an exciting set of deals.

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ AK6 ♥ AK8 ♦ K4 ♣ AQ762		♠ 94 ♥ 10764 ♦ 8 ♣ KJ10543	♠ Q10532 ♥ J93 ♦ A10952 ♣ —
♠ J87 ♥ Q52 ♦ QJ763 ♣ 98			

Three pairs tried 6♣ (8.00-2.00), the other three 3NT, usually reached via 3♣-3NT.

At one table, North led a diamond and declarer had eleven tricks.


When North led a spade declarer had to work much harder.

One way to get up to eleven tricks is to cash six rounds of clubs, pitching a heart from hand. If South pitches a spade early on North will be forced down to two spades, two hearts and two diamonds and declarer can cash the top hearts and then play two rounds of spades to endplay North. If South does not discard a spade on the first four rounds of clubs declarer can change tack and play a heart, putting in the eight if South plays low. The 3-3 break will give her 11 tricks.

Żmuda did even better!

At trick two, she crossed to dummy with a club and played a heart to the eight. North won and innocently returned a low diamond, handing declarer her twelfth trick! A full 0.00-10.00.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ J104 ♥ KQ98742 ♦ J ♣ 102		♠ Q53 ♥ A653 ♦ 873 ♣ 853	♠ K9 ♥ — ♦ KQ9654 ♣ AKJ96
			♠ A8762 ♥ J10 ♦ A102 ♣ Q74

Four pairs reached 7♦ for 7.00-3.00, the other two collecting only 1.00-9.00 for stopping short. Here is one of the successful auctions:

West	North	East	South
Żmuda	Wang	Dufprat	Shen
–	–	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦
Pass	4NT*	Pass	5♥*
Double	Pass	Pass	6♦
Pass	7♦	All Pass	
4NT	RKCB		
5♥	2 key cards, no ♦Q		

Blackwood with a void is generally frowned upon, but when West doubled the response of 5♥ North could pass and await developments. When her partner could not redouble, North knew that the two key cards must be the pointed suit aces.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ 8 ♥ J73 ♦ K105 ♣ KQ10853	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 4 ♥ K6 ♦ QJ432 ♣ AJ762	♠ AQJ1097 ♥ AQ9542 ♦ 9 ♣ —
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West	North	East	South
<i>Ahlesved</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>	<i>Shen</i>
Pass	Pass	2NT*	3♦*
Double	3♥	Pass	4♣*
Pass	4♥	5♦	5♥
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

- 2NT Minors
- 3♦ Takeout, emphasis on spades
- 4♣ Cue-bid

East led the ♦Q and West won with the ace.

At this point West needs to keep declarer out of dummy and the way to do that is to switch to a club. (The Rueful Rabbit would pull out the ♠K – it was next to the trump he intended to play!)

When West elected to play a trump declarer took East's king, crossed to the ♥J and played a spade to the ace followed by the queen, +1430 via the ruffing finesse. Unsurprisingly that was a top – 10.00-0.00.

Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ 8 ♥ Q843 ♦ AK2 ♣ QJ1085	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 10753 ♥ K95 ♦ J985 ♣ K4	♠ 942 ♥ J2 ♦ Q10764 ♣ 976
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West	North	East	South
<i>Žmuda</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>	<i>Durfrat</i>	<i>Ahlesved</i>
–	–	Pass	1♣*
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦*	Pass	4NT*
Pass	5♣*	Pass	5♦*
Pass	5NT	Pass	6NT

All Pass

- 1♣ 17+
- 2♣ 8-11, (54)+ minors with shs or 6+minor
- 4♦ Cue-bid
- 4NT RKCB
- 5♣ 1 key card
- 5♦ ♣Q?
- 5NT Yes

North could have responded 1♥ to show any 12+ – but maybe the system has changed a little.


The club position meant there were 13 tricks, which was worth 9.00-1.00.

The pairs who played in hearts all followed the percentage line in the suit of low to the ace and the low towards the queen, which works

61.60% of the time.

One way to make the twelfth trick is by ruffing a club in dummy!

Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 52 ♥ K98642 ♦ — ♣ J9753		♠ Q73 ♥ J7 ♦ KQ10843 ♣ A6	♠ A964 ♥ Q53 ♦ 975 ♣ 1042
		♠ KJ108 ♥ A10 ♦ AJ62 ♣ KQ8	

West	North	East	South
<i>Shen</i>	<i>Rimstedt</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Grönkvist</i>
2♦*	3♦	Pass	6NT

All Pass

2♦ Multi

West led the ♣5 and declarer claimed, +1440.

Is there any case for East to bid a pass or correct 3♥?

Mind you, that might nor have helped:

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Baldysz</i>	<i>Larsson</i>	<i>Baldysz</i>
2♦*	Pass	3♥*	3NT
Pass	6NT	All Pass	

2♦ Multi
3♥ Pass or correct

If East is prepared to play in three of a major then maybe West should lead a heart?


It does conform to the Garozzo rule – it requires partner to have the ♥Q and another trick.

6NT was bid three times, 8.00-2.00.

Jockeying for Position

With two sessions to go the leading pairs were looking to consolidate, while the chasers were hoping to have the sort of session that would get them back into the medal race.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ QJ10752 ♥ KQ6 ♦ KQ106 ♣ —		♠ K64 ♥ 10853 ♦ 2 ♣ J8743	♠ 3 ♥ AJ2 ♦ AJ975 ♣ A1052
		♠ A98 ♥ 974 ♦ 843 ♣ KQ96	

West	North	East	South
<i>Wiseman</i>	<i>Draper</i>	<i>Smith</i>	<i>Fawcett</i>
–	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥*	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣*	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠*	Pass
6♦	All Pass		


2♥ Fourth-suit forcing

4♣ Cue-bid

4♠ Cue-bid

South led the ♣K and declarer won with the ace pitching a spade and played to establish the spades for a comfortable +920 – not a bad way to start the session and 3.00-7.00.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 83 ♥ 9654 ♦ A97 ♣ AKQ7		♠ QJ ♥ A732 ♦ 54 ♣ J10985	♠ K107654 ♥ KJ8 ♦ KJ2 ♣ 3
		♠ A92 ♥ Q10 ♦ Q10863 ♣ 642	

West	North	East	South
<i>Dhondy</i>	<i>Zuo</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Wang</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣*	Pass
2♦*	Pass	2♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♠	All Pass

South led the ♦3 and declarer won with dummy's seven and played three rounds of clubs ditching two hearts from her hand. A spade for the queen, king and ace saw South play a second diamond and declarer won with dummy's ace and played a spade. North won and played the ♣J, promoting South's ♠9 into the setting trick.


There is a way to make 4♠ after the diamond lead, but it's not obvious; declarer must play a spade at trick two and duck North's card. If North switches to a heart declarer must rise with the king and then pitch two hearts on dummy's clubs before playing a second spade – that's eleven tricks.

If North returns a diamond at trick three declarer wins in dummy and plays a spade. South wins and must now play a heart or a club, otherwise North will be squeezed for an eleventh trick.

An initial heart lead beats 4♠ as long as North wins and returns a heart, setting up the trump promotion.

N/S collected 8.00-2.00


Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 42 ♥ Q1074 ♦ J4 ♣ K9643		♠ K765 ♥ K8 ♦ A75 ♣ AQ85	♠ QJ1093 ♥ J962 ♦ Q8 ♣ 102
		♠ A8 ♥ A53 ♦ K109632 ♣ J7	

The popular contract was 3NT, usually reached via 1NT-3NT.

With diamonds 2-2 and the ♣K inside you would hope there was a way to take all the tricks via squeeze, but not everyone managed it.

After a spade lead one way to do it is to win in dummy, cash a couple of diamonds and play the ♣J covered by the king and ace. Declarer then plays to reach this position:

♠ – ♥ Q107 ♦ – ♣ 96		♠ 7 ♥ K8 ♦ – ♣ Q8	♠ J ♥ J96 ♦ – ♣ 10
		♠ – ♥ A53 ♦ 3 ♣ 7	

The last diamond forces West to part with a heart. The ♣8 is discarded having done its work and East throws a club. When declarer crosses to dummy with the ♣Q East is the victim of a non-simultaneous double squeeze.

Wang Nan was the only declarer to record 12 tricks, scoring 10.00-0.00.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ J9 ♥ A98 ♦ 1096 ♣ AKJ85	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ AK106 ♥ K7 ♦ KQ7 ♣ Q763	♠ 542 ♥ QJ543 ♦ J52 ♣ 102
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West	North	East	South
<i>Žmuda</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Dufrat</i>	<i>Shen</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1NT*	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♥	Double	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

1NT 15-17, can include 5M, 6m

With the rest of the room opening 1♣/1♦ and East's 1NT overcall ending proceedings North's tactical move unluckily backfired, as East (although she could have doubled to show a strong hand) decided to wait and was able to come in on the second round which resulted in the spade fit being located for a humungous +170 and 1.00-9.00.

Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ 32 ♥ QJ64 ♦ J8762 ♣ Q4	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ AK109754 ♥ 103 ♦ AK ♣ J8	♠ 8 ♥ K8 ♦ Q954 ♣ K109752
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West	North	East	South
–	–	1♠	3♣
4♣*	Pass	4♦*	Pass
4♥*	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♣*	Pass	5NT*	Pass
6♣*	Pass	6♠	All Pass

- 4♣ Cue-bid
- 4♦ Cue-bid
- 4NT RKCB
- 5♣ 3 key cards
- 5NT Kings?
- 6♣ No

When North decided against doubling 4♣ or 5♣ there was no reason for South to lead a club and declarer was able to establish a long heart and discard a losing club.

Four pairs reached 6♠ scoring 3.00-7.00. Kudos to Lu and Liu who held 4♠ to eleven tricks by leading a club for a maximum 10.00-0.00.

Headliner

Some players always seem to make the news, none more so in recent years than Boye Brogeland. Along with his partner Christian Bakke, he was at it again on this deal from the third session of the Open Pairs at the 2019 IMSA World Masters:

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 42 ♥ Q1074 ♦ J4 ♣ K9643	♠ K765 ♥ K8 ♦ A75 ♣ AQ85 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ QJ1093 ♥ J962 ♦ Q8 ♣ 102	♠ A8 ♥ A53 ♦ K109632 ♣ J7
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The popular contract was 3NT, usually reached via 1NT-3NT.

With diamonds 2-2 and the ♣K onside you would hope there was a way to take all the tricks via squeeze, but not everyone managed it.

However, it is clear that 6♦ is a good spot for N/S – even if there is a diamond loser the club finesse will be enough to see you home as you can ruff a heart. However only one player considered introducing the diamond suit:


	West	North	East	South
	<i>Mauberquez</i>	<i>Bakke</i>	<i>Oursel</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
	–	1NT	Pass	3♣
	Pass	3♦*	Pass	4♦*
	Pass	4♥*	Pass	4♠*
	Pass	4NT*	Pass	5♣*
	Pass	5♥*	Pass	6♦*
	All Pass			
3♣	Puppet Stayman			
3♦	No five-card major			
4♦	5+♦			
4♥	Cue-bid			
4♠	Cue-bid			
4NT	RKCB			
5♣	3 key cards			
5♥	♦Q?			
6♦	Yes			

The critical decision was to bid 4♦, risking that N/S might have to play in 5♦ when a higher scoring 3NT was available. North's 4♥ cue-bid inferentially promised fair support for diamonds. Naturally declarer took all the tricks, +1390.

Last Call

With 5 four board rounds still to play it was anybody's guess as to who might win the Women's Pairs. It could easily go down to the last board.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.


♠ AK743 ♥ 6 ♦ K9852 ♣ 106		♠ 8 ♥ 532 ♦ 7643 ♣ KJ832	♠ J109 ♥ Q98 ♦ AQ ♣ Q9754
		♠ Q652 ♥ AKJ1074 ♦ J10 ♣ A	

West	North	East	South
<i>Smith</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Wiseman</i>	<i>Shen</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	1♥
1♠	2♥	Pass	Pass
3♦	Pass	Pass	3♥
Double	All Pass		

Discussing this deal with a colleague he pointed out that West has a six-loser hand using some obscure (or do I mean obsolete) method of evaluation. Whatever, it was quite a surprise when West did not open 1♠, which might well have seen E/W reach 4♠, which happens to make. Why East passed 3♦ is another question.


There is no way to defeat 3♥ and -730 did not trouble the scorers, 10.00-0.00.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

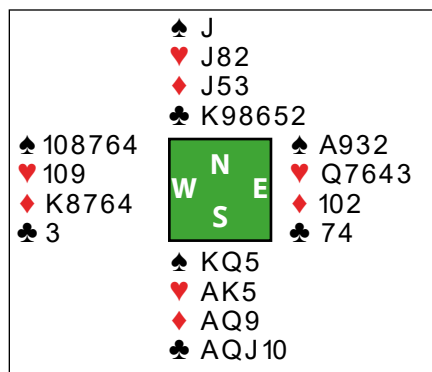
♠ 95 ♥ 8764 ♦ AJ2 ♣ AJ43		♠ AKQ6432 ♥ Q3 ♦ 643 ♣ 7	♠ J10 ♥ K10 ♦ KQ1085 ♣ K865
		♠ 87 ♥ AJ952 ♦ 97 ♣ Q1092	

This was a simple looking deal – for example Senior and Zuo opened 4♠ taking ten tricks and 9.00-1.00. Elsewhere a couple opened 2♥ promising a weak hand with hearts and a minor. What do you bid now with the North hand? One player bid 2♠ and played there, another 3♠, also ending the auction.

Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ 108764 ♥ 109 ♦ K8764 ♣ 3		♠ J ♥ J82 ♦ J53 ♣ K98652	♠ A932 ♥ Q7643 ♦ 102 ♣ 74
		♠ KQ5 ♥ AK5 ♦ AQ9 ♣ AQJ10	

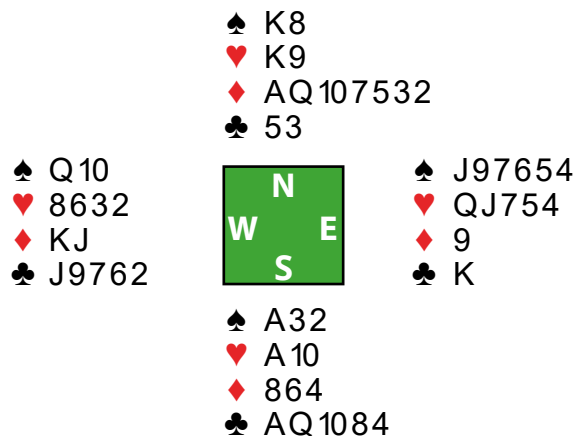
West	North	East	South
Žmuda	Senior	Dufpat	Dhondy
-	Pass	Pass	2♣*
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣*	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠*	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♣
All Pass			



West led the ♠8 and East won and switched to the ♦10.

Declarer went up with the ace, drew trumps, pitched two diamonds on the top spades and tabled the ♦Q – a very nice +1370, worth 8.00-2.00. This was the final deal – not a bad one with which to conclude:

Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.



West	North	East	South
Dhondy	Baldysz	Senior	Baldysz
Pass	1♦	2♦*	2♠*
3♥	3NT	All Pass	
2♦	Majors		

West	North	East	South
Dufpat	Rimstedt	Žmuda	Grönkvist
Pass	1♦	2♦*	2♥*
3♥	4♦	Pass	4♥*
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT*
Pass	5♣*	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

The only other pair to reach 6♦ were Draper & Fawcett – both pairs collecting 9.00-1.00.

The new IMSA World Masters Women's Pairs champions represented the host nation, China. They are Zuo Xiaoxue and Nan Wang, who scored 56.59%. The English pairing of Nevena Senior and Heather Dhondy, on 54.77% followed them home, with the bronze going to Anna Sarniak and Danuta Kazmucha of Poland, very close behind on 54.66%.

As had looked likely from very early in the competition, the Dutch pair of Bauke Muller and Simon de Wijs became the 2019 IMSA World Masters Open Pairs champions, leading virtually throughout and ending with a score of 56.59%. Second were their compatriots, Sjoert Brink and Bas Drijver, with a score of 54.43%, while the bronze medallists were Norway's Boye Brogeland and Christian Bakke.


Letter from Germany

The Bundesliga Promotion Playoff (North) by Martin Cantor

Having won the Westfalen Regional League our Bielefeld team travelled to Hanover in early July seeking promotion back to the third division of the Bundesliga. Over a single weekend we would play against seven other regional winners, short matches of twelve boards, the top three securing promotion.

We were hoping for a big win in our first match, against BC Göslar 1936, and we hoped for a big swing from this early board:


Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ 84 ♥ Q108 ♦ Q75 ♣ Q9764		♠ 1065 ♥ J753 ♦ AK942 ♣ 3	♠ Q32 ♥ A964 ♦ J10863 ♣ 2 ♠ AKJ97 ♥ K2 ♦ — ♣ AKJ1085
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At both tables South declared 6♣. Silvia Klasberg-Brawanski got a friendly trump lead, and made in comfort. Our teammate in the West seat found the more challenging opening lead of a diamond. Since 4-1 spades is more likely than 5-1 clubs, the right line on a diamond lead is to cash the ♣A and ruff one low, which leads to defeat. Declarer chose to draw trumps, trusting them to break and clubs to come in for one loser, and so should have gone down, but our (deliberately nameless) West discarded a club so the board was flat.

We did get a big swing from the next board, partly due to different bidding systems, but also partly to judgement.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ AQJ105 ♥ A4 ♦ 953 ♣ 1082		♠ 4 ♥ K973 ♦ 842 ♣ AKQ94	♠ 76 ♥ 1085 ♦ AKJ106 ♣ J76 ♠ K9832 ♥ QJ62 ♦ Q7 ♣ 53
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West	North	East	South
-	Martin	-	Silvia
2♠	All Pass	-	2♥*
2♥	♠ and ♥ at least 4-4, 5-11 HCP		

There is no way to beat 2♠ by West and opponents chalked up 110. At the other table South opened 2♠, a weak two-suiter, passed round to East who doubled, ending the auction. Correct defence saw our side take nine tricks and 800 for 10 IMPs. We won the match 34-20, for 14.22 VPs, a satisfactory if not great start.

Match 2 was against Dortmund 2 and proved to be a high-scoring affair. We gained 10 IMPs on board 17, when Silvia and my 2♥ opening drove opponents to an unmakeable 5♣ while in the other room it was opponents this time who erred with their discards, allowing teammates to make 3NT with an overtrick.

At our table the very next board was a comedy - or maybe a tragedy - of errors, involving a cast of five with a starring role for the TD.

Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ J7 ♥ AKQJ952 ♦ A53 ♣ A	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A1094 ♥ 1083 ♦ K ♣ Q10964
♠ 62 ♥ 76 ♦ 842 ♣ KJ8752		♠ KQ853 ♥ 4 ♦ QJ10976 ♣ 3

West	North	East	South
	<i>Martin</i>		<i>Silvia</i>
–	–	Pass	2♠*
Pass	2NT*	Pass	3♠*
Pass	6♥	All Pass	
2♠ 5♠s & 4+ minor 5-11 HCP 3♠ maximum with ♦s			

I couldn't think of any scientific way to find out how good slam might be, but it would surely have some play so I decided to leave the defence in the dark and just bid it. East led the ♣9 to my ace. I drew the trumps, West discarding a diamond, dummy a spade and two diamonds. Then I led the spade jack, intending to overtake it for an entry to take the diamond finesse. East thought for a while but then took his ace, and continued with a club which I ruffed. When I played the ♠7 there was a slight hesitation from East before he played the four. I thought about putting the eight in, but couldn't find the courage, and called for the king. Now I said "queen", meaning, of course, and as the rules say, the queen of spades. However Silvia thought I had been looking the whole time at the diamond suit, so played the DIAMOND queen. West apparently didn't notice this, and assumed it was the spade queen that had been played, so discarded a club. I also hadn't noticed that Silvia had pulled the wrong card, so I 'discarded' a small diamond. East pounced with the diamond king, and promptly played a club back, at which point

I said it was my lead. Well the director had some fun trying to sort the whole thing out. He determined that the rule 'queen means of the last played suit' was overridden by the fact that dummy had clearly played a different queen, and so that lead stood. But then he had to consider West's club discard, which was a revoke. And since East had led a card after taking his diamond king, the revoke was established, and so in the end the slam had made and we gained 12 IMPs against the 13 we would have lost for one off against the 710 from the other room. I spent some time that night wondering whether I might have found the singleton ♦K without all this farrago. With East's hesitations in the spade suit and his tension at the table, and with West's diamond discard, I think I might. But then again I might not.

On the next board we lost 11 IMPs when the choice of opening lead led to a four trick difference.


Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 75 ♥ AKQ10 ♦ 94 ♣ 108632	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ Q9 ♥ 7643 ♦ AQ5 ♣ AQ74
♠ 864 ♥ J9852 ♦ 1076 ♣ K9		♠ AKJ1032 ♥ – ♦ KJ832 ♣ J5

At both tables South played 4♠. Silvia got the ♣K lead and had a hopeless task, ending 2 down. When the ♥9 was led at the other table declarer made two overtricks. Sigh. But then on the next we got 9 IMPs back when our 2♥ opener for both majors weak worked for us again. A match score of 45-23 was worth 15.99 VPs and we were not unhappy with how things were going. Silvia and I sat out the third match against BC Erkrath-Hochdahl II who were also going well. Teammates delivered a 37-17 win worth a further 15.58 VPs.

The final match on Saturday was against BC Berlin IV, who had not been doing as well as expected. Two early boards proved costly for us.


Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ AK854 ♥ AQ93 ♦ K10 ♣ J9		♠ 9 ♥ K106 ♦ Q32 ♣ KQ8754	♠ QJ10732 ♥ 542 ♦ J6 ♣ A2
		♠ 6 ♥ J87 ♦ A98754 ♣ 1063	

West	North	East	South
-	<i>Martin</i>	-	<i>Silvia</i>
1♠	3♣	4♠	All Pass

I made the natural lead of a top club. Declarer won, drew the trumps, played a club to my other club honour, and I was at the crossroads. Silvia had followed to the clubs with the six then the three, playing upside down count, so which red suit should I play? The only clue one way or the other that I could see was that I needed less in partner's hand in hearts (ace or queen) than in diamonds (ace or king), so a small heart it was, and contract made. There is an interesting technical point here about signalling, that you might want to discuss with your regular partner, as we did that night over a glass of wine. Silvia thought that playing the six then three, rather than the ten then three, was a suit preference signal for diamonds. My view was that the way to signal for diamonds is to play the ten then the three, or for hearts the ten then the six. We have now agreed on this method. A parallel case, about signalling in the trump suit, is discussed on page 9 of the August 2019 issue of NBM. At the other table teammates took the push to 5♠ and went two down, so we lost 13 IMPs. As it happens 4♠ can always make, but declarer has to play a diamond from dummy at trick three, and can then always end-play North.

Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.


♠ K3 ♥ 63 ♦ AK108763 ♣ A6		♠ QJ97 ♥ KQ754 ♦ 9 ♣ 1094	♠ 654 ♥ J108 ♦ 5 ♣ KQ8532
		♠ A1082 ♥ A92 ♦ QJ42 ♣ J7	

West	North	East	South
1♦	<i>Martin</i>	1NT	<i>Silvia</i>
3NT	All Pass	Pass	Pass

What would you lead from the South hand? Be honest, would you have found a heart lead? I wouldn't, and Silvia didn't, leading instead the obvious spade. Declarer, happy to see the king hold and the clubs break, quickly claimed nine tricks. And yes, of course I'm wishing now that I had overcalled a heart. Our pair at the other table were doubled in 3♦ and went one off, so we lost another 13 IMPs. The final match score was 18-36, 4.85 VPs and a dampener for the remainder of the evening. We were still in third place, but only 0.25 VPs ahead of Hamburg in fourth.

And so of course the first match on Sunday was against Hamburg. It did not go well. A combination of teammates stopping in a part-score, and opponents at our table playing an odd but making game contract after a bidding error, cost us 10 IMPs.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ J764 ♥ J854 ♦ 9732 ♣ J		♠ 9 ♥ AK2 ♦ J86 ♣ Q108542	♠ Q8 ♥ 10973 ♦ AQ54 ♣ K73
-----------------------------------	---	------------------------------------	------------------------------------

West	North	East	South
–	<i>Martin</i>	–	<i>Silvia</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♣*	Pass	2♦*	Pass
2♥*	Pass	3♦*	Pass
3♥*	Pass	4♣*	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT	All Pass


Silvia didn't get much help in picking an opening lead from the explanation of the bidding, which was

- 1♣ strong
- 2♦ positive with clubs
- 2♥ relay
- 3♦ 3=3=1=6 but something has obviously gone wrong since 4♠ is to play
- 3♥ relay
- 4♣ 3 controls
- 4♠ to play
- 4NT to play.

She picked the diamond ace, and after considerable thought declarer played the king from dummy. Puzzled what the opening lead was from, but sure from the unblock that declarer wasn't worried about diamonds, I followed with a discouraging seven, and Silvia switched to a club, and declarer took ten tricks, which he always can if he gets clubs right, which was surely his plan when he unblocked diamonds. Of course, if you're

going to get clubs right, you should play in the small slam in that suit. Teammates letting a no-play vulnerable game through on another board was another 11 IMPs out, and 1-33 gave us just 2.29 VPs and plenty to do in our last two matches, almost 14 VPs behind third, and the runaway leaders Bridge am Grün Heikendorf to play next. Silvia and I sat that one out, and were happy to see teammates win, but disappointed it was only be 18-14, 11.38 VPs. This was the hand of the set.

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ 4 ♥ KJ94 ♦ 109 ♣ AKQ1032		♠ 8 ♥ Q875 ♦ J8743 ♣ 954	♠ AJ10952 ♥ 62 ♦ A52 ♣ 86
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♠ KQ763 ♥ A103 ♦ KQ6 ♣ J7

Only one table played the par contract of 3♣ E/W which they just made, though an overtrick is possible. Five tables played in spades E/W, once making in two, once making in two doubled, once a trick short in two, once three tricks short in three and once two tricks short in four doubled. The other two tables played in 3NT and both made, once with an overtrick. So where is the interest? It is in the defence to 3NT. N/S have to lead diamonds, and declarer has to duck twice, else he only has eight tricks before they get in with the ace of hearts to cash the remaining diamonds. Now South has to switch to the spade king. If declarer ducks this the East hand is dead. If he takes it he still cannot afford to cash the ace of diamonds, but then he never gets it. Anyone finding that defence at the table would deserve whatever IMPs they won, especially if East is the hidden hand.

And so to the last match, where we were still in with a chance, the gap to third now being just 5.39 VPs, and both of us playing teams out of contention.

We were lucky to lose only 7 IMPs on this board when I went off in a 4♠ that you can make with an overtrick.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 972 ♥ A1063 ♦ Q9763 ♣ Q		♠ AJ85 ♥ K ♦ KJ842 ♣ KJ2	♠ KQ1063 ♥ QJ84 ♦ A10 ♣ A3
♠ 4 ♥ 9752 ♦ 5 ♣ 10987654			


West	North	East	South
<i>Silvia</i>		<i>Martin</i>	
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	1♦	1♠	Pass
2♥*	3♦	3♥*	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

- 2♥ value raise in spades
- 3♥ long suit game try

South led the singleton in his partner's suit, I won, cashed the club ace and ruffed a club to dummy. Now I erred by playing a spade to the king, when the winning play was to run the nine. Is it an error single dummy? At the time I was concerned about a diamond ruff, being almost entirely sure that North had the ace of spades. On further reflection, when he doesn't play it on the first spade it must be because he knows partner can't ruff, and so the spades are 4-1. Playing the nine instead of a small one is at no cost, and running it only loses if South's singleton is the jack. Why were we lucky? Because opponents stopped in two hearts, making ten tricks.

Luck played its part too on this one:

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ AQ1063 ♥ QJ9 ♦ 10 ♣ K974		♠ 92 ♥ 8753 ♦ KQ984 ♣ 102	♠ J8 ♥ AK42 ♦ A63 ♣ Q653
♠ K754 ♥ 106 ♦ J752 ♣ AJ8			

West	North	East	South
<i>Silvia</i>		<i>Martin</i>	
-	-	-	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣*	Pass
2♠*	Pass	3NT*	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

- 2♣ GF unless next bid 3♣, also can be 2 card suit if 3=4=4=2
- 2♠ 11-14 HCP
- 3NT to play, confirms ♣s as 4+

Lucky at our table because 5♣ needs the spade finesse, or finding the club ace doubleton, whereas 4♠ or 4♥ have much better chances. Luckier still because the other table played 3NT on the lead of the two of diamonds, and in trying to make the contract dropped a second undertrick. Thirteen IMPs for us. Which we promptly gave back on the next board when Silvia and I failed to find a sacrifice, and teammates at the other table let the sacrifice make.

In the end we won that last match 23-21, 10.71 VPs. But since our rivals for the final promotion spot won 18.54-1.46, even a 20-0 victory wouldn't have helped our cause. Congratulations to the promoted teams BTC Hamburg, Bridge am Grün Heikendorf, and BC Erkrath-Hochdahl II. For us a disappointing end result and so an even more disappointing further year in the regional league, where we expect the opposition to be tougher than last year with the arrival of another Westfalen team relegated from last year's Bundesliga. Watch this space.

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The team is not new to this game. They are also behind the Funbridge app with a community of 400,000 players worldwide

Corrections to your bidding

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The app tells you which card you should play to take as many tricks as possible on the deal.

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Ask the computer for advice and it will tell you what it would play if it were in your shoes.

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Play all players’ hands at the table.

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GOTO Bridge 19 shows you the cards held by the other players sitting at the table.

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- Par score and contracts most often played on the deal.
- Bidding and card play lessons with exercises.
- Practise bidding and card play in the sequence and contract of your choice.



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- Save a deal and play it again later.

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- The ideal game mode for a quick game.

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- This game mode allows you to play an unlimited number of deals, one after the other.

At the end of the deal, you are compared to the software which has played the same deal as you in the same conditions.

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- Lessons and exercises
- Enrich your knowledge thanks to GOTO Bridge lessons.

“Lessons and exercises” game mode

GOTO Bridge lessons and exercises are an excellent source of learning and progress.

In this game mode, you will take lessons on:

- Bidding: 19 topics (major two-suiters after 1NT, natural responses after an overcall, etc. with corrected exercises).
- Card play: 17 topics (defence in a trump contract, squeeze*, etc.

with corrected exercises).

*This lesson is based on the book entitled “Le Squeeze au bridge” (“The squeeze in bridge”) by Romanet, available at lebridgeur.com.

- Practice
- Improve your skills in different game areas.

“Practice” game mode

This game mode allows you to practice the different areas of the game. It includes the following features:

- The “correction” mode behind the success of the previous versions of GOTO Bridge. Its principle is simple. During card play, GOTO Bridge will show you the best card to play to take the highest number of tricks on the deal. During the bidding phase, it will correct your bidding cards and will explain your mistakes to you. At the end of the deal, you will have the possibility to replay your deal from the moment when you made a mistake.

- Easy deals to take up bridge or have fun: excellent practice without any constraints.
- Card play practice: GOTO Bridge makes bids on your behalf in the type of contract that you want to play.
- Bidding practice in the auction of your choice.
- Random deals requiring special attention as when playing in a club.
- Save your deals while playing tournaments and replay them.

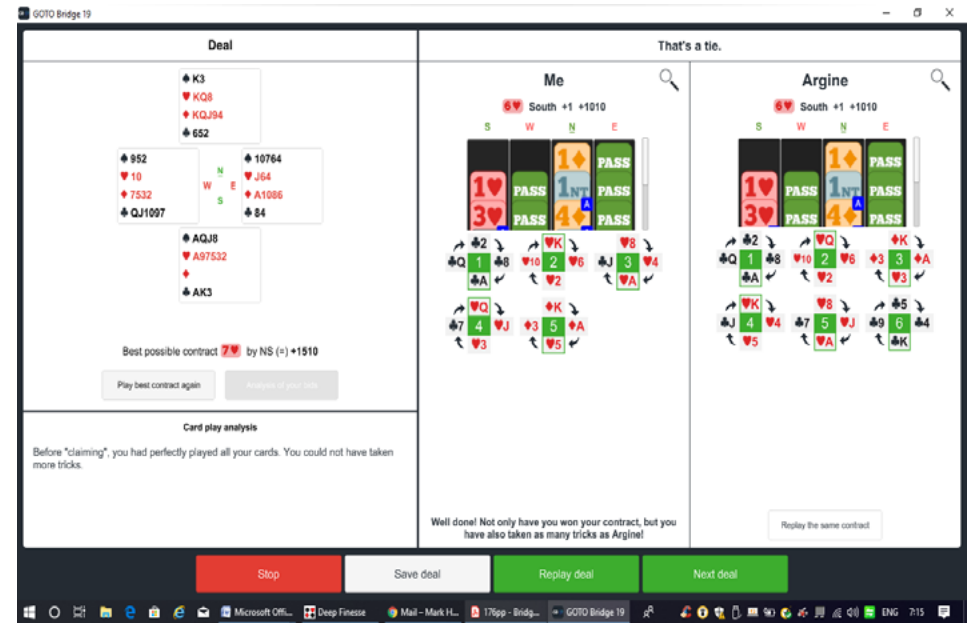
Tournaments

- Compare yourself to other players and challenge champions.

“Tournaments” game mode

This game mode allows you to compare yourself to other players and to be ranked among the best ones: this is the competition part of GOTO Bridge.

- Assessment of the way you play on thousands of deals and for 10 game levels
- Statistics per game area (bidding, card play, attack or defence)



- Head-to-head comparison with the best international and Funbridge players
- Card play tournaments: you are compared (card play only) to other players who have played the same contract
- Challenge “Argine”: pit yourself against the latest version of GOTO Bridge game engine (i.e. the artificial intelligence playing with you) in a 5-deal tournament in IMP scoring. Win 10 tournaments in a row and get a 1-year subscription to the online bridge game Funbridge!

Set your own conventions

Select your bidding system in “Settings” among the SAYC (Standard American Yellow Card), the English ACOL system, the French 5-card major system, the Polish system, the Nordic system, the NBB Standard system and the 2/1 system. A free profile also allows you to set your own conventions.

Bidding systems and conventions

GOTO Bridge allows you to play several bidding systems:

- SAYC system.

- English ACOL system.
- French 5-card major system.
- Polish system.
- Nordic system.
- NBB Standard system.
- 2/1 system.
- Forum D system.

Several profiles are available for each system: beginner, intermediate, competition and strong 2.

You also have the possibility to create a free profile with your own conventions to play GOTO Bridge as you wish.

But since a picture is worth a thousand words, the opposite screen shot should speak for itself.

Deal manager

Sort, prepare, view and print your deals thanks to the brand-new deal manager.

“Deal manager” game mode

Useful resource for your bridge lessons. Thanks to this tool, you can:

- Prepare your deals as you want: set distribution, vulnerability, dealer, bidding sequence and lead.
- Import your deals, edit them and play them from any hand.
- Sort, view and save the deals you have created or imported.
- Print your deals thanks to the customised printing module: print all or part of the deal (i.e. bidding, card play or players’ hands) and add your own commentary.

New « Goulash » game mode

Challenge GOTO Bridge 19 artificial intelligence “Argine” on deals with freak distributions (also called “Goulash deals”)!

Goulash mode

It consists of a challenge against Argine on 8 deals.

What makes it special is that some deals are “Goulash”, i.e. with freak distributions.

You play the first deal as usual:

- If the contract bid is at least a game, a slam or if it is doubled or redoubled, you play the deal.
- If the contract is a part-score or the deal is passed out, the pair who has bid the contract gets the score that goes with it.

If the contract is a part-score, on the next deal, each player sorts his 13 cards by suits. All four hands are stacked back in the deck which is cut once. Cards are then dealt in groups of 5-3-5 for instance instead of one at a time as usual. It allows to create deals where the suits are more unevenly distributed between the players. On this deal, you follow the same rules as above and so on.

Once the 8 deals are played, the winner is the one who has scored the highest number of points: Argine (E/O) or the player in South. So this is not duplicate.

15,000 new deals

- 5,000 new easy deals for practice
- Challenge Argine on 5,000 new deals
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- 1,000 new deals in card play tournaments
- Latest version of the game engine Argine
- Accurately mimicking human behaviour

Same robot as in the Funbridge app

- Win a 10-year subscription to Funbridge
- All you have to do is challenge Argine



Misplay These Hands With Me

No Pressure

During an invitation Pairs event I pick up this hand:

- ♠ AJ
- ♥ A1076
- ♦ 1052
- ♣ KJ96

With no one vulnerable, I deal and open 1♣. West overcalls 1♦ and when partner bids 1♠ I am stuck for a bid. With some misgivings, I try 1NT, which at least gets over the strength and balanced nature of my hand and partner raises me to 3NT. This has been our auction:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
1♦	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West leads the three of diamonds (third and fifth) and I anxiously await the dummy.

- ♠ K764
- ♥ Q4
- ♦ KQ8
- ♣ Q1085



- ♠ AJ
- ♥ A1076
- ♦ 1052
- ♣ KJ96

I am relieved to see partner's diamonds, but even with two diamond stoppers I am going to be short of a trick after the ace of clubs is disclosed. When I play dummy's king of diamonds East produces the ace. That's a blow, but when he continues with the nine of diamonds I have a second stopper after all. It means West has overcalled on ♦J7643, so I am inclined to place him with most of the missing high cards.

The nine of diamonds is covered in turn by the ten, jack and queen and when I play a club to the king West wins and returns the four of diamonds to dummy's eight.

It is clear that West has the king of hearts, so I cannot afford to come to hand and play a heart towards the queen. As I am in dummy I decide to play spade to the jack, but West produces the queen and cashes three diamonds, so I am one down.

This was the layout:

♠ K764		♠ 1095									
♥ Q4		♥ 9852									
♦ KQ8		♦ A9									
♣ Q1085		♣ 7432									
♠ Q832	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 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		♠ AJ
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ KJ3		♥ A1076									
♦ J7643		♦ 1052									
♣ A		♣ KJ96									

Post mortem

I should have recalled a Bols Bridge Tip by Patrick Jourdain and played some clubs. On the first of these West can discard the three of hearts, but must then throw a spade (pitching a diamond allows declarer to play a heart towards the queen). Now declarer can play the ace of spades followed by the jack. If West covers declarer wins in dummy and plays a third spade. East wins, but the fourth round of clubs provides an entry to the established spade.

If East is alert enough to unblock the ♠109 on the first two rounds of the suit declarer can still prevail by cashing the fourth club, forcing West to pitch a diamond. Then declarer exits with a spade and West has to win with the eight and after cashing a diamond is endplayed.

Walls have Ears

During an early round of a major knock out event, I pick up a promising collection:

♠ AKJ8432
♥ A8
♦ K105
♣ 4

Only the opponents are vulnerable and partner deals and opens 1♥. With such a powerful suit I jump to 2♠ and when partner rebids 3♣ I continue with 3♠, indicating that my force was based primarily on a single suited hand. When partner bids 3NT I decide to abandon my slam ambitions and I close the auction with 4♠, leaving us with this sequence:

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

West leads the jack of diamonds and I get a modest dummy:

♠ 7
♥ KJ642
♦ A76
♣ K1053

♠ AKJ8432
♥ A8
♦ K105
♣ 4

I win with dummy's ace and lead a spade to the jack, which at 33.91% offers the best chance of avoiding a loser in the suit. West wins with the queen and returns the ten of hearts. When East ruffs it I get a sinking feeling. Back comes the two of diamonds and West ruffs and returns the two of clubs. East wins and a third diamond completes my discomfiture, leaving me two down.

This was the full deal:

♠ Q106 ♥ Q109753 ♦ J ♣ 762	<div style="background-color: #008000; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> N W E S </div> </div>	♠ 7 ♥ KJ642 ♦ A76 ♣ K1053	♠ 95 ♥ – ♦ Q98432 ♣ AQJ98
♠ AKJ8432 ♥ A8 ♦ K105 ♣ 4			

Post mortem

It was unlucky to encounter such fiendish distribution, but had declarer cashed the top spades it would have been impossible to go down.

At the other table East tipped off his hand by overcalling 2NT and South finished in 6♠. When West led the jack of diamonds declarer won in dummy, cashed the top spades, played three rounds of hearts (finessing the jack) pitching a club and then took the diamond finesse for +980.



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Deals that Caught My Eye

David Bird looks at the final in the 2019 USA Grand National Teams

GRUE faced WINESTOCK in a final that would consist of four 15-board sets. We will, as usual, focus on the boards that produced big swings.

Seg 1, Board 7 Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ 97652 ♥ A ♦ KJ9543 ♣ 2		♠ 84 ♥ 986532 ♦ A76 ♣ KJ
♠ AQJ10 ♥ K10 ♦ 82 ♣ Q9865		♠ K3 ♥ QJ74 ♦ Q10 ♣ A10743

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Grue</i>	<i>R. Lee</i>	<i>Minitier</i>	<i>Korbel</i>
–	–	–	1♣
1♦	1♠	Dble *	Pass
2♦	Double	Pass	2♥
3♦	4♣	All Pass	


East's first double showed 3+ diamonds and 4+ hearts. No-one pushed unduly and South landed in 4♣. West led the ♥A and, with no further heart tricks available, you would expect East to give a suit preference signal. He followed with the ♥9, perhaps playing upside-down SP. West crossed to the ♦A and received a heart ruff (East leading the ♥2). West cashed the ♦K and a subsequent trump loser meant two down for minus 200.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hampson</i>	<i>Wooldridge</i>	<i>Tchamitch</i>	<i>Hurd</i>
–	–	–	1♣
1♦	1♠	2♦	Pass
4♦	Double	Pass	4♥
Pass	5♣	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

Here East/West raised a more troublesome pre-emptive barrier. South might have gained 9 IMPs by passing 4♦ doubled for one down. (This was a difficult action to find, because East had not advertised heart length at this table.) He chose to bid 4♥ instead, and Hampson did well to double North's conversion to 5♣. The defence followed the same accurate line as at the other table, collecting 800 for three down. That was 12 IMPs to WINESTOCK.

Seg 1, Board 13 Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ K1097 ♥ 2 ♦ K98 ♣ AK762		♠ A3 ♥ K103 ♦ A107542 ♣ J3
♠ 86 ♥ J9654 ♦ QJ3 ♣ 1098		♠ QJ542 ♥ AQ87 ♦ 6 ♣ Q54

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Grue</i>	<i>R. Lee</i>	<i>Minitier</i>	<i>Korbel</i>
-	Pass	1♦	1♠
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

That was nicely judged by Grue, South led the ♥A and the diamond game was easily made.

♠ 86	♥ J9654	♦ QJ3	♣ 1098
♠ K1097	♥ 2	♦ K98	♣ AK762
♠ QJ542	♥ AQ87	♦ 6	♣ Q54
♠ A3	♥ K103	♦ A107542	♣ J3

	N	
W		E
	S	

Seg 2, Board 29 Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ J 1075	♥ J7	♦ KQ84	♣ 1065
♠ A42	♥ AK10942	♦ 95	♣ A7
♠ KQ983	♥ -	♦ 732	♣ KQJ42
♠ 6	♥ Q8653	♦ AJ106	♣ 983

	N	
W		E
	S	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Grue</i>	<i>R. Lee</i>	<i>Minitier</i>	<i>Korbel</i>
-	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♦	Double	6♠	All Pass

Both sides were playing two-over-one, with 3♣ not showing any extra values. West had only 3-card spade support and partner had not cue-bid in diamonds at his third turn. He surely would have done when holding the ♦A, and might have done with the ♦K. It was ambitious for West to advance beyond 4♠ and, indeed, even 5♠ would be in jeopardy on this layout.

Grue continued with 4NT, hearing of one key-card. He decided to check on the ♠Q and cannot have been delighted when his 5♦ enquiry was doubled by North. A top-level international partnership might attach special meaning to Pass and Redouble by East in such a situation. No, East jumped to 6♠, their normal response when holding the ♠Q. Two rounds of diamonds, followed by a further loser in trumps, meant two down.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hampson</i>	<i>Wooldridge</i>	<i>Tchamitch</i>	<i>Hurd</i>
-	Pass	1♦	1♠
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♥*	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Hampson's 3♥ was a splinter bid, agreeing diamonds. Whether he should then have passed 3NT was questionable. I leave it for you to judge. Only one lead would beat 3NT and Hurd found it, reaching for the ♥7. Tchamitch won North's ♥J with the king and played a low diamond to the king. He continued with ace and another diamond, the defenders then collecting four heart tricks for one down. That was 12 IMPs to GRUE, who led by 32-31 at the end of the first set.

In the second set, Minitier misplayed a seemingly straightforward 3NT for 12 IMPs away. His partnership suffered a further loss on our next board, which they viewed as a slam deal:

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Hampson	Wooldridge	Tchamitch	Hurd
-	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Hampson let 4♠ stand, an accurate evaluation that was rewarded with 13 IMPs. WINESTOCK led by 64-56 at the end of the second set.

The third set contained five double-figure swings, three to GRUE and two to WINESTOCK. Which one shall I pick? None were spectacular but this was rather unusual:

♠ J1075			
♥ J7			
♦ KQ84			
♣ 1065			
♠ A42	W	N	E
♥ AK10942			
♦ 95			
♣ A7			
♠ 6			
♥ Q8653			
♦ AJ106			
♣ 983			

king and led low to partner's ♥K. She ruffed the ♦J, from the 3-card trump holding, and returned another club. Hurd ruffed, drew the outstanding trumps in two rounds and was able to ruff his two remaining hearts in the dummy. His efforts were worth a fine +420.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Hampson	Wooldridge	Tchamitch	Hurd
1NT	All Pass		

The off-beat 1NT opening was not a success. After a heart lead declarer went two down at the one-level, where a spade game had been bid and made at the other table. That was 11 IMPs to GRUE, who ended the third set back in the lead by 101-93.

The last set started well for WINESTOCK:

Seg 3, Board 38 Dealer West. Neither Vul.

♠ J9			
♥ KJ876			
♦ J82			
♣ KQJ			
♠ AK105	W	N	E
♥ Q32			
♦ Q10976			
♣ A			
♠ 7643			
♥ 10			
♦ A54			
♣ 86532			
♠ Q82			
♥ A954			
♦ K3			
♣ 10974			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hurd	Gitelman	Grue	Winestock
1♦	1♥	Double	3♦
4♠	All Pass		

Placing partner with at most one heart, after the North/South bidding, Hurd leapt to 4♠. He won the ♣K lead and turned immediately to his main side suit, playing ace and another diamond. South won with the

Seg 4, Board 48 Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ K2			
♥ A1087432			
♦ -			
♣ AJ63			
♠ AQJ876	W	N	E
♥ 5			
♦ A73			
♣ K72			
♠ 1093			
♥ KJ			
♦ KJ1096			
♣ 854			
♠ 54			
♥ Q96			
♦ Q8542			
♣ Q109			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Mignocchi	Korbel	Wooldridge	R.Lee
-	-	Pass	Pass
1♠	2♥	2♠	Pass
3♣	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

Wooldridge led the ♠10, Mignocchi winning with the ace and returning the ♠Q. Korbelt won with the king, continuing with ace and another heart. The ♥Q was an entry to pick up the clubs, and that was a doubled overtrick for +990.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Hampson	Grue	Tchamitch	Hurd
-	-	2♦	Pass
2♠	4♥	4♠	All Pass

It was difficult for N/S to bid any differently. Grue led the ♥A and needed to find a double-dummy club switch to beat the game for sure. Very reasonably, he continued with a second heart to the king, declarer ditching a club. Ace and another spade works well now, but Hampson ran the ♠10 to North's king. A trump return then meant one down, still a bountiful 14 IMPs for WINESTOCK.

On the very next board, more IMPs flowed in the same direction:

Seg 4, Board 50 Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ Q853 ♥ AQ3 ♦ 87 ♣ QJ94	♠ 7 ♥ KJ7652 ♦ 64 ♣ K762 <div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A10942 ♥ 984 ♦ 1032 ♣ 105 ♠ KJ6 ♥ 10 ♦ AKQJ95 ♣ A83
-----------------------------------	---	--

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Mignocchi	Korbelt	Wooldridge	R. Lee
-	-	-	1♦
Double	1♥	1♠	3NT
All Pass			

West led the ♣Q, Lee winning with the ace and playing the ♥10 to dummy's king. He had nine tricks and was soon writing +400 in his card.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Hampson	Grue	Tchamitch	Hurd
-	-	-	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♣*
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♠
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♦
Pass	5♠	Double	6♦
All Pass			

System guru, Al Hollander, suggested that 3♣ might be a multi-purpose jump shift. The BBO VuGraph operator informed us that questions were being asked by Hampson and by Tchamitch. North/South were in agreement on only one thing – that they were both unsure! Whatever their agreement was on 3♣, could North not have bid 3♥ over it?

Hampson led a trump against the awful slam, grabbed his ♥A on the next trick and played a second trump. Declarer drew the last trump and ducked a club, East overtaking partner's ♣9 with the ♣10 to cash the ♠A. Hurd won the spade return with the king and ran his diamonds, squeezing West in the black suits to escape for two down. Not the most triumphant squeeze of his career, I dare say.

WINESTOCK won the first four boards of the set by 30-7. GRUE then fought back and... the match ended in a tie: 136-136.

As in the 4th set, WINESTOCK scored two double-figure swings early in the tie-break.

Tiebreak, Board 3 Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ A75 ♥ KQ87 ♦ — ♣ QJ10943		♠ KJ1086 ♥ 3 ♦ K10975 ♣ K5	♠ 942 ♥ 52 ♦ AQ6432 ♣ 82
♠ Q3 ♥ AJ10964 ♦ J8 ♣ A76			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wooldridge</i>	<i>R.Lee</i>	<i>Mignocchi</i>	<i>Korbel</i>
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	2NT*	Pass	3♣*
Pass	3♥*	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

Lee used the Jacoby 2NT, agreeing hearts. Korbel's 3♣ showed a minimum and, unusually, 3♥ then announced 'any void'. When North's void transpired to be in diamonds, South liked his hand and bid 5♥ rather than 4♥. The slam was duly reached.

Wooldridge led the ♠2 to partner's king. Declarer won the spade return, drew trumps and claimed five or six depending on the position of the ♣K. The Great Dealer's decision was that +980 should be the result.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hampson</i>	<i>Grue</i>	<i>Tchamitch</i>	<i>Hurd</i>
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

If 4♦ was a normal splinter bid (rather than void-showing), it was an inadequate description of the North hand. Grue's playing strength was well beyond that associated with a splinter-bid response. Thirteen tricks were claimed on a club lead and that was 10 IMPs to WINESTOCK.

The next board decided the match:

Tiebreak, Board 4 Dealer West. Both Vul.

♠ — ♥ 8643 ♦ AQ7 ♣ AJ9853		♠ A75 ♥ Q972 ♦ 953 ♣ Q64	♠ KQJ3 ♥ AJ5 ♦ KJ1064 ♣ 7
♠ 1098642 ♥ K10 ♦ 82 ♣ K102			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wooldridge</i>	<i>R.Lee</i>	<i>Mignocchi</i>	<i>Korbel</i>
1♦	2♣	Double	2♠
Double	3♣	Pass	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♦	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	

East/West did a lot of bidding on their limited values. Who was to blame, do you think? West would get my vote. When East had nothing to say over North's 3♣, is 3♦ not enough on those West cards?

The eventual result was catastrophic for the GRUE team. North cashed the ♣A, after which declarer had some chance of escaping for one down. Clubs were continued and dummy's ♣Q was covered and ruffed. Declarer must now lead trumps from his hand to go only one down. Wooldridge reached expensively for the ♥5, at a stroke increasing the deficit to four down. Korbel won dummy's ♥Q with the king and delivered a spade ruff.

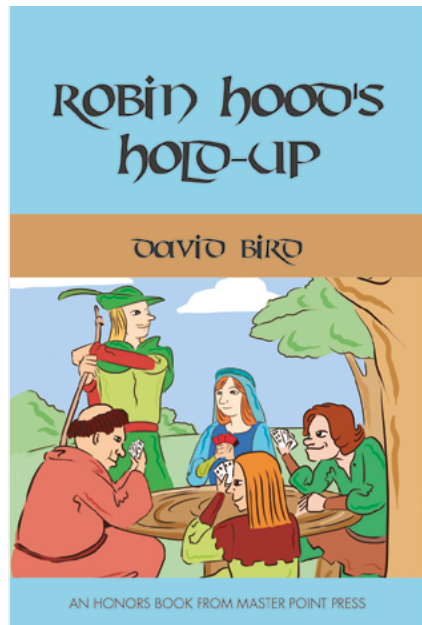
Lee's heart return was optimal, won with the ace.

Too late, declarer led the ♦K from his hand. Lee won and gave partner a heart ruff. A further losing trick to the ♦Q awaited declarer, and that was a full 1100 away. The stuff of nightmares.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hampson	Grue	Gitelman	Hurd
1♦*	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

West's 1♦ bid might have been based on only two diamonds. East/West under-competed, selling out to 3♣, but it was another 14 IMPs into the WINESTOCK coffers. They won the play-off by 29-14 to emerge as Grand National Champions.



MASTER POINT PRESS
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ROBIN HOOD'S HOLD-UP

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David Bird

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'Malahide regional bridge club has announced the revival of Malahide bridge congress. First organised in 1965 the congress was subsequently discontinued. The renewal of the festival will take place at the home of the original event, the Grand hotel over the weekend of March 6th to 8th, 2020.'

Irish Times
Seamus Dowling Bridge
Notes March 9th.

The Programme will have Gala Open Pairs, Mixed Pairs and Novice Pairs on its Opening night of Friday March 6th. Saturday is a Pairs day of 2 sessional Congress, Intermediate A and B categories and these categories will be repeated for 2 sessional Teams on Sunday 8th finishing around 5.30pm. These competitions are all pre entry and alongside them will be one sessional Open Pairs with No pre entry required.

The Grand Hotel Malahide is an excellent Congress venue with superb facilities and it has much more to offer with its gorgeous view of Dublin bay and being situated in the historic and homely village of Malahide.

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MALAHIDE BRIDGE CONGRESS March 6th to 8th 2020 GRAND HOTEL MALAHIDE
will be run under the auspices of the Contract Bridge Association of Ireland (CBAI)

Book Reviews

Martin Cantor

Bridge and the Romantics

Nick Smith

An Honors eBook from Master Point Press

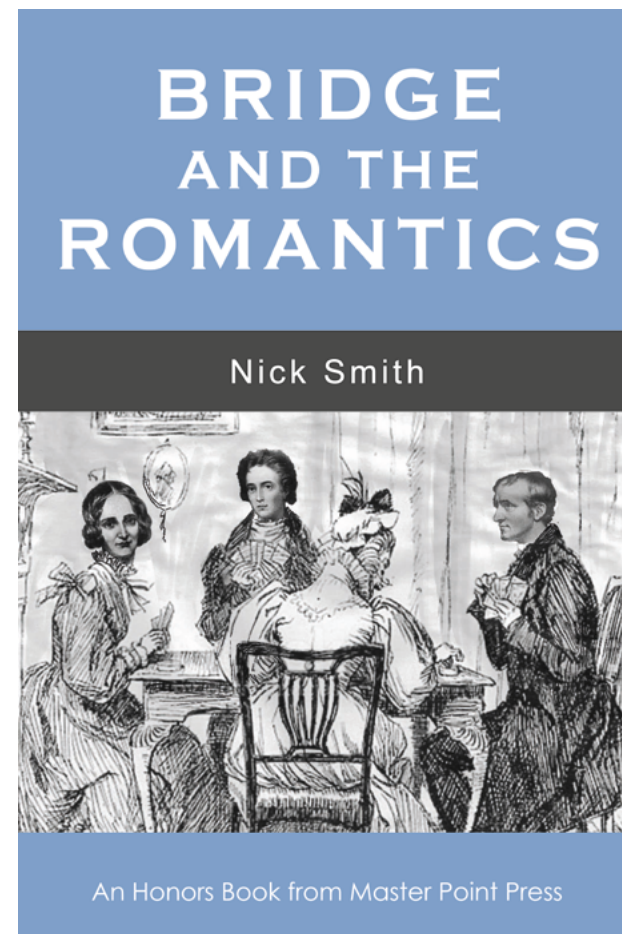
250pp. £14.95 US\$19.95 CD\$24.95

Many authors have followed in the footsteps of the great Skid Simon and Victor Mollo in describing fascinating bridge hands in the context of fictional characters to produce a mixture of humour, enlightenment and instruction. This magazine alone carries regular tales of the Abbot, the Land of Oz, and the Enterprise. Rather fewer authors have emulated the formula using real people in place of fictional ones, and for good reason – you can bend fictional characters any way you want to fit your bridge story, but with real people you are far more constrained by historical truths. Nick Smith has made a valiant effort to overcome the problem in this account of Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Wordsworth and their entourage, and while he has by no means failed, it remains the case that the balance between the story and the bridge is less comfortable than in the pure fiction works.

There are two reasons. Firstly the suspension of disbelief, so easily granted in a purely fictional setting, does not come so easily here. Secondly, I was left with the impression that the author was torn between his desire to tell a story about the poets and their lives, and the desire to present intriguing bridge hands. And intriguing they certainly are, especially in the format where they are presented separately as puzzles, before the solutions are presented later within the body of the story. It is also the case that the bridge problems are more difficult than is usually the case in the fictional counterparts, indeed they come closer to the kind of esoteric manoeuvres you can find in Ottlik and Kelsey's *Adventures in Card Play*.

It is inevitable, if you set bridge in an early nineteenth century context, that there will be anachronisms, and while we will readily forgive most of them, a few of them grated on me. Having said that, as a fan

of the English romantic poets I very much enjoyed reading more about their lives and loves than I previously knew. As a final word of praise, I have to commend the author for his decision to donate profits from the book to the *Keep Bridge Alive* campaign, so if you buy it you will be doing a favour to bridge as well as yourself.



Robin Hood's Hold-Up

David Bird

An Honors e-Book from Master Point Press

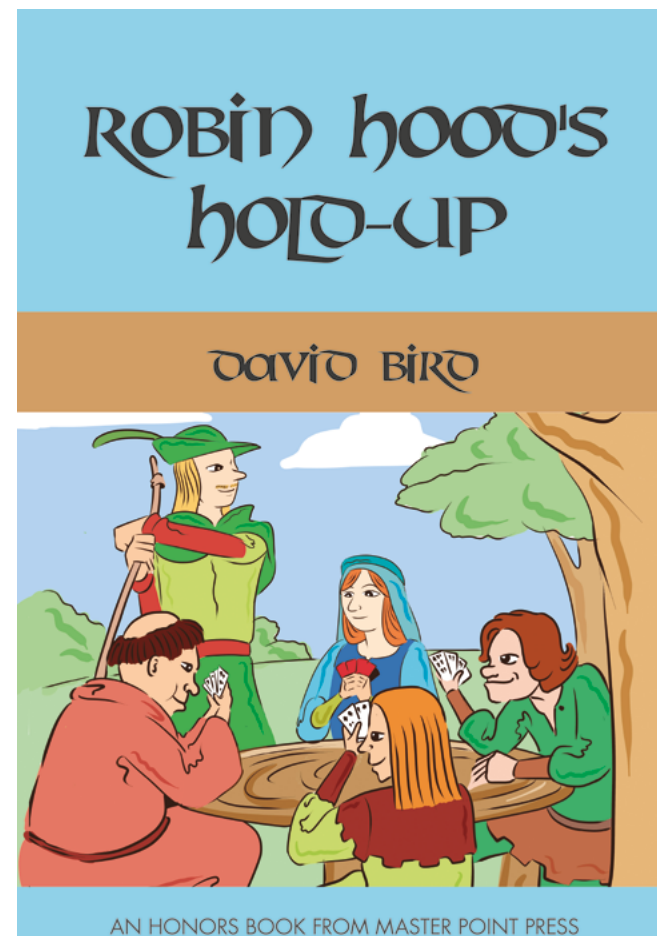
180pp. £14.95 US\$18.95 CD\$22.95

Readers of this magazine are familiar with David Bird's regular stories about the Abbot, his monks, and his opponents. They may be less familiar with this other series of stories, written in very much the same vein, about Robin Hood, his band of Merry Men, and their friends and, more often, their opponents both in bridge and in life. In particular of course the Sheriff of Nottingham and his hapless henchman Sir Guy of Gisborne.

This is the fourth collection of stories about the outlaws, but there is no shortage of originality in the thirty-two tales. The cast of characters is extensive, and while you would expect decent (if predictable) characterisation of the foibles of the main protagonists, like Friar Tuck, Little John, Maid Marian, the Sheriff et al, it is good to see that the same is true of many of the more incidental people who make an appearance, such as Wise Wynfryth, Ester Roake, or Lady Flowynn. It is these personalities, and their verbal exchanges, that bring much of the humour to the tales, although the author's attempts to convey north/midlands English accents are not entirely convincing. The Sheriff shares with the Abbot a high estimation of his own abilities, as well as a predilection for abusing his partners and anyone else he does not feel the need to fawn upon.

As we have come to expect, the bridge hands are interesting and instructive in equal measure. They deploy well-known manoeuvres such as throw-ins, trump elopements, fairly simple squeezes and so on, but in ways that retain freshness without straying into anything too esoteric or over-complex.

These two aspects together – the humour and the well-pitched hands – mean that this and its companion books appeal to a wide range of bridge players, from beginner plus to world class. I look forward to the next collection but in the meantime, if you haven't already done so, I recommend you to turn to page 87 for this month's account of the Abbot's doings.



XXII MADEIRA INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE OPEN

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PRE - TOURNAMENT EVENTS:
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(1) Travel insurance includes cover for personal accidents, travel assistance, cancellation cover up to €2000, natural disasters up to €2000, post-departure assistance (accommodation expenses up to €100 per night).

Further details and table of benefits at

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Pre- and post-tournament side events

31st Oct - 8.30pm | National Simultaneous Pairs
01st - 02nd Nov - 4.00pm | IMP Pairs
03rd Nov - 4.00pm | Charity Tournament
04th Nov - 8.30pm | Warm-up Pairs
11th Nov - 8.30pm | Cool - down Pairs

Main tournament programme

04th Nov - 6.00pm | Welcome Cocktail
05th - 06th - 07th Nov - 4.00pm | Open Pairs
08th Nov - 8.30pm | Open Teams
09th Nov - 11.00am - 2.30pm | Open Teams
10th Nov - 2.30pm | Open Teams

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IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul.

- ♠ K754
- ♥ AJ
- ♦ A852
- ♣ KQ7

West	North	East	South
-	-	2♦*	You
Pass	3♥*	Pass	2NT
			?

- 2♦ weak two in diamonds
- 3♥ transfer to Spades

Sally Brock (European and World Champion)

4♠. I guess I could cue 4♣ or something, but I don't have a source of tricks or anything that special. Also I have all round strength and don't want to imply I need any particular suit controlled.

Tim Verbeek (European and Junior World Champion)

4♠. Give partner something like ♠QJxxx ♥xxx ♦x ♣Jxxx and 4♠ is great. No chance he would bid that himself when you don't break the transfer.

Simon de Wijs (European Champion and Bermuda Bowl Winner)

4♣. My hand seems good enough to force game and try for slam on the way. If partner cooperates, I'll keycard.

Mark Horton (Editor A New Bridge Magazine and prolific author)

4♣. I have never been a fan of breaking transfers – with monotonous

regularity it seems to result in finishing one level too high. However, it is easy to see how it will lead to a reasonable game (or more) on this deal, as partner has many modest hands where they have no intention of bidding on over 3♠. Something like a 5-3-1-4 with say just the ♠A and ♣J or even a 5-2-2-4, where we might need a 2-2 trump break.

David Bakhshi (multiple Gold Cup winner and several US Championships)

4♣. It feels like I have a pretty good hand opposite 5+ spades, so I am prepared to play game even opposite a hand that would pass 3♠. Given that partner may have slam interest, I would break the transfer to 4♣ to show my cheapest control.

Marshall Lewis (represented Croatia internationally, as a player and coach)

4♣. If partner bids 4♦, it is easy to continue with 4♥. It is obvious to pass a 4♠ sign-off, but if partner bids 4♥ things will be “iffy-er” – slam is a huge favourite facing ♠AQJxx ♥Kxx ♦xx ♣Ax, but odds-against facing as much as ♠AQJxx ♥KQxx ♦Jx ♣xx. Still, the fact that the foes are red is good for our slam chances because if partner has no diamond control opening leader will have diamond shortage and East will likely have no entry to cash a diamond – in that case, slam WILL make if partner has as little as: ♠Axxxxx ♥Kxx ♦xx ♣Jx. So this is a “bull-market” hand.

Jan van Cleeff (multiple National Champion and co-founder bid72)

4♥. A retransfer, just to right-side 4♠ in case partner has ♦Qx. This approach would have worked here:

♠ A	♠ Q1098632	♠ J8
♥ KQ10762	♥ 942	♥ 853
♦ 7	♦ Q6	♦ KJ10943
♣ 98632	♣ J4	♣ A103

♠ K754	♠ N	
♥ AJ	W	E
♦ A852	S	
♣ KQ7		



For more interesting boards, download bid72, educational bridge software – bidding on an app (iOS and Android). Check our [SPECIAL OFFER](#) for readers of A New Bridge Magazine.



Highlights and New Features

The Funbridge team is about to launch a new game mode: easy tournaments.

Easy tournaments will allow you to rank yourself against beginners on Funbridge by replaying series 11 tournaments from the last period (a period lasts from the 1st to the 15th and from the 16th to the last day of the month).

As for all series tournaments, the scoring method used is MPs.

You are not familiar with series tournaments? Don't worry, all you need to know is that easy tournaments are perfect to see how you compare with players taking up bridge. So spread the word! ☒

Other players can't see your results in these tournaments.

Please also note that if you were in series 11 in the last period, in this game mode, you will be able to play only the series 11 tournaments in which you have not participated during that period.

You will soon be invited to update your app. Stay tuned!





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DEFEND WITH JULIAN POTTAGE

The Questions

1

♠ A985
♥ KQ
♦ Q9753
♣ J10

♠ Q72
♥ 1072
♦ A6
♣ A6532

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
All Pass			

You lead the three of clubs, on which go the jack, four and eight. On a low diamond lead at trick two, partner plays the ten, declarer the jack and you the ace. How do you continue?

2

♠ Q
♥ AK104
♦ QJ94
♣ KJ87

♠ AKJ1074
♥ 6
♦ K7
♣ AQ105

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	-	3♥
4♠	5♥	All Pass	

You cash the king of spades, on which go the queen, six and three. How do you continue?



Dealer South. Game All. IMPs.

♠ J95
 ♥ J9
 ♦ A76
 ♣ QJ1093

 ♠ Q10876432
 ♥ K4
 ♦ K
 ♣ A2

Here is the auction at my table:

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♠
2♥	2♠	4♥	4♠
Double	All Pass		

West leads the spade ace and continues with the king, East discarding the heart 3 and 2. West now makes the most inconvenient return: a low diamond to East's 10. What to do next?

West leads the spade ace and continues with the king, East discarding the heart 3 and 2. West now makes the most inconvenient return: a low diamond to East's 10. What to do next?

Solution

At this stage, at first sight, you have two possibilities to win: either you find where the heart ace is or you find where the club king is.

Given the discards, it seems that the heart ace (and even probably the heart queen) is with West. It is also confirmed by the double.

But what about the club king? As East showed nothing, you could be tempted to think that he has it but would West have played diamonds without any holding in clubs?

Not obvious! In doubt, I preferred to pitch a heart on the diamond ace and try the club finesse. It failed... It would have been better to get over to dummy with a trump to play the diamond ace discarding a heart, then ruff a diamond and play all the remaining trumps to reach this ending:

♠ –	♠ –	♠ –									
♥ AQ	♥ J9	♥ 87									
♦ –	♦ –	♦ –									
♣ K7	♣ QJ	♣ 84									
	<table border="1" style="background-color: green; color: white; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 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		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 2										
	♥ K										
	♦ –										
	♣ A2										

When the last trump is played, West, squeezed, is defenceless. Either he throws a heart and can be endplayed with a heart, obliging him to give his club king away, or he throws a club and his king will fall under the ace.

Is a simple finesse enough to win the contract or should you play for a squeeze? This is a recurring dilemma at the table.

The Road to Hell

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

The beginners' classes had been running for nearly three months and Aunty Em could not help but feel a deep yet familiar sense of self-satisfaction. Her changes were working out even better than she had anticipated.

It had been a shaky start, but the horror of what the Wicked Witch of the West and Munchkin Meg had perpetrated at the Open Night in August was starting to fade. Indeed, she reflected, that loathsome pair seemed to be having tremendous success running the new Tuesday evening event for graduates from the classes. It was wonderful to see the club full of happy, interested, new faces. And some of them were under fifty years old! Wicked and Meg had managed to tempt back a number of people who had never made the jump from the classes to becoming full members, and had been thought lost to the Over the Rainbow Bridge Club. The Happy Friends Club, across town, was no doubt feeling less pleased, but that was not her concern.

As yet, none of the Tuesday night players had ventured even as far as the woefully weak Thursday game but it was still early days. Certainly, people seemed to be seeing a different side of the Wicked Witch, one never previously suspected. But despite all the positive signs, Aunty Em could not banish a sense that something was wrong. The world seemed an unfamiliar and unsettling place when she heard people describing the Wicked Witch of the West as 'so helpful', 'kind and welcoming' or 'fun to be around'. Fun to be around! That woman! How? There must be another explanation, but she couldn't think of anything plausible.

Contact of any form with the Wicked Witch was something she avoided whenever possible. Just being near her was enough to make her skin feel prickly. But she couldn't put it off any longer. Aunty Em steeled herself and approached Wicked in the club social area. 'I wanted to ask your advice about the Christmas Party,' she said.

Wicked was instantly on her guard. It was unheard of for Em to seek advice from her. 'What about it?'

Aunty Em looked the Wicked Witch squarely in the eye. 'I've noticed how well your Tuesday tournaments are going, which is excellent. I'd like to use the Christmas Party as a vehicle for introducing some of the

players into the body of club. It's a friendly evening and should be very suitable.'

Wicked considered this for a second. 'I don't think you realise how scarred some of them have been by their previous brushes with our regulars.'

Em blinked. Was this a moment of self-awareness?

'People such as the Gulch woman are appalling,' the Wicked Witch continued. 'Then there's the Tin Man; rude to everyone. And I'm forgiving enough to expect that you don't mean to be so abrasive but...'

Aunty Em cut her off mid-sentence with a glare that would have made Medusa recoil. 'I think we could agree that there is scope for improvement from many members,' she started frostily. 'I suggest you promote the party to your Tuesday evening players, and I will speak to the regular players to make sure that they get a friendly welcome.' She saw the Wicked Witch giving a nod of agreement, but sensed there was something else going on in her brain. 'And I will come and speak to your group to give them a personal invitation and run through tournament etiquette,' Em continued apprehensively.

The Wicked Witch of the West puffed herself up. 'Are you suggesting that I am not capable of passing on the basics of proper behaviour? Really, that is outrageous. By all means come and give an invitation, but this is my group. Give me a list of the points you want covered and I shall be the one to teach it to them. They will be far more willing to listen to me than to one of your hectoring lectures.' With a final exchange of glares, they parted.

The Wicked Witch was as good as her word and a healthy number of tickets were sold to Tuesday night players. Aunty Em worked tirelessly, talking to regular players individually and collectively, determined to make the party a success. She was particularly proud of the list of dos and don'ts she passed to Wicked. She was determined that the new players would be made fully aware, not just of how to conduct themselves, but also of the main ethical principles that make the difference between right and wrong at the bridge table. She had shown it to Dorothy who

had thought it would be a superb teaching aid, and was the best summary of bridge etiquette, she had ever seen. Aunty Em had decided that once New Year was out of the way she would edit it into a form suitable for submission to the national Bridge Magazine of Oz.'

Aunty Em and Dorothy thought long and hard about how to conduct the evening. Neither trusted the Wicked Witch or Munchkin Meg, and they were determined to avoid any repetition of the problems of the August Open Night. The first part of their plan was to have a trusted person at as many tables as possible, keeping a close eye on any antics of Wicked or Meg. That was the easy bit. The second part would involve a contest of wits. Aunty Em backed herself to be able to overcome her adversaries, at least with the help of her allies.

On the Friday night of the party The Wicked Witch and Munchkin Meg turned up early to help set up the event. At the August Open night it seemed that they had considered that checking the hand records formed part of these duties. They were to find that the Chairman of the Lollipop Guild was already on the premises.

'Good evening, ladies. Good evening!' he greeted them cheerfully. 'How considerate of you to give your time. Em told me that you might appear early and wanted me to tell you that it would be most helpful if you could put up the decorations.' Wicked scowled and stomped off.

'We were going to help with the boards,' said Meg. 'And why are you dealing them now? I thought we had a set ready?'

'Ah yes. Ah yes indeed. Unfortunately, that set was played by the Thursday afternoon tournament by mistake. So I am putting a fresh set through the dealing machine. It would not do, most definitely not do, for people's enjoyment to be spoilt by playing boards that they had already seen!'

'What about the hand records?' Meg gasped.

'I'll print them off before the tournament finishes. Don't worry, I've arranged things so that I'll be sitting out for the last round.' He smiled gently at Munchkin Meg. 'It's kind of you to think of it, but it really won't be a bother to me!'

Munchkin Meg stifled a squawk and turned on her heel. The Chairman was amused to see her crumple up a sheet of paper and throw it into a bin, then quickly turn back to retrieve it.

There had been much discussion as to the number of boards to be played, and whether the play should be before or after the buffet meal

that Aunty Em had planned in detail. As so many inexperienced players were involved, it was resolved that the event should be limited to sixteen boards, and a discussion session would be held, while everyone was enjoying the meal.

As people settled down having stripped the extensive buffet, Aunty Em took the computer sheet, and announced the results. Meg and the wispy Mrs Yoop were the clear winners, with 72%, followed by the Wicked Witch and the tall, thickset Mr Yoop on 68%. No one else was above 55%. Aunty Em swallowed hard, and led the applause for the beaming winners. 'It's time for some discussion about the hands,' she started. With a frozen smile she continued, 'In particular, I'm sure that our winners will have a lot of interesting things to tell us about how they achieved their outstanding scores!'

The Wicked Witch twitched. Munchkin Meg's face was expressionless.

Aunty Em's helpers had managed to keep the Wicked Witch and Munchkin Meg under supervision for the sixteen boards of play, and Dorothy had been going around chatting to them during the meal. As her aunt was about to stand up to start the discussion session, she went over and had a few quiet words with her.

Aunty Em nodded and then used a spoon to hit the table three times to attract everyone's attention. 'We have been looking at the results and would like to highlight a few of them.' She paused and glanced down at the hand record. 'Board five was quite flat, I imagine. Everyone in Four Hearts?'

Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ K 10 7 5 ♥ Q 5 ♦ K 8 6 ♣ K 10 9 5	<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	♠ 9 8 6 ♥ 8 7 ♦ Q 10 7 3 ♣ 8 7 4 2	♠ A Q J ♥ A 10 9 6 3 ♦ 5 4 2 ♣ A J ♠ 4 3 2 ♥ K J 4 2 ♦ A J 9 ♣ Q 6 3
N						
W E						
S						

A member of Dorothy's class, the short and hairy Tony Tobias (known to all as Toto), put his hand up. 'We played it in the third round. Munchkin Meg and Mrs Yoop bid to Six Hearts against us. There didn't seem to be anything that we could do.'

'Six Hearts! Goodness me!' Aunty Em feigned surprise and turned to Munchkin Meg. 'Please tell us how you bid it?'

Meg nodded. 'Yes, I have to admit that I was very lucky on this one. I must have counted one of my aces twice. I opened the North hand Two Notrump.' There were loud gasps from several of the tables. 'My partner bid Stayman and once we had found the heart fit then we couldn't stop short of slam. I got the three of diamonds lead.'

Locating a table of the Tuesday night group, she continued in her best teacher voice. 'The correct play is the nine,' she announced looking at her protégés, 'as you can be sure East wouldn't lead a small card from a suit headed by the king and queen against a slam.' She paused for effect. 'West won the trick with the king and returned a spade. I took the finesse, played the ace of hearts and another heart to the king, and then a second spade finesse. Now I can finesse the queen of diamonds, and use that entry to dummy to take the club finesse.'

Munchkin Meg paused for breath, checked that the table of beginners were looking at her admiringly, and turned a twinkling eye on her partner, Mrs Yoop. 'So yes, I have to confess it was a very poor contract,' she admitted, 'and the fault for that lies entirely with me. However,' as she turned once again to the beginners, 'sometimes good card play and a dash of good luck can rescue a poor contract.'

'The lesson here is that when dummy comes down and you see that you are too high then you must keep focussed and try your best. Find a lie of the cards that will allow the contract to make and then play for it. You won't make if you give up!'

Aunty Em turned to Dorothy with a fixed smile on her face. There was a hint of menace in her voice. 'Dorothy, I think you played it in the second round. What happened to you?'

'We were against two of the Tuesday night players. I'm sorry, ladies, I don't think I know your names, but it was very pleasant to play you.' The two ladies smiled and nodded at Dorothy. 'There was just one thing that I was wondering about. After the other hands you were very keen to talk about them. I might even say it was pretty animated! After this hand all I said was 'plus two' and you were very quick to hush me.'

The ladies giggled. 'Oh yes,' said one of them, 'and by the way I'm Grace and my partner is Denise. 'We really like to find out about what we should have done,' Grace said very firmly. 'But we are trying hard to follow the advice on ethics. We know how important it is.'

Aunty Em smelt a rat. 'That is most admirable of you, and very good to hear. But I don't quite understand how you see ethics applying in this situation?'

'Well we know that it ruins the hand for the next people if they overhear that a slam has been made. Our tutors, the Wicked Witch and Munchkin Meg, have made it very clear to us not to say a word if someone makes twelve or thirteen tricks. That is right, isn't it?'

Aunty Em nodded sagely. She made sure that the internal tension she felt building up inside her did not come across in her voice. 'Yes, that's a good point. I think the best thing is to try to keep the talk down at ALL times – that reduces the risk of passing information as much as possible.' With a fixed broad smile she looked towards Munchkin Meg. 'It is all the more important when you are at the adjacent table to a good player to whom you are passing the boards!'

She stifled any further comments as she consulted her notes. She had never heard anything like this before. Munchkin Meg had actually made silence communicate information just as much as speech.

Dorothy saw how choked up her aunt was, and stepped in. 'I think board eleven may have had some interest.' Everyone checked the hand records.

Dealer South. None Vul

♠ 963	♠ J54	♠ 1087									
♥ 75	♥ Q1082	♥ AKJ94									
♦ AQ1072	♦ K83	♦ 964									
♣ 985	♣ 1063	♣ 42									
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	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AKQ2										
	♥ 63										
	♦ J5										
	♣ AKQJ7										

‘3NT all round the room, I imagine.’ Auntie Em surveyed a sea of nodding faces. ‘South players, put up your hand if you opened One Club? And 2NT? Mostly for the former, I see. Yes, you can show this hand pretty well by rebidding Two Spades, and North’s One Heart response stops East bidding. It may be that North ends up declaring, in which case the contract is impregnable. If South declares then West will probably lead a diamond against 3NT and declarer will get ten tricks. Chairman of the Lollipop Guild, I see that you were one of the 2NT openers. What happened at your table?’

♠ 963 ♥ 75 ♦ AQ1072 ♣ 985	♠ J54 ♥ Q1082 ♦ K83 ♣ 1063	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> W N S E </div> ♠ AKQ2 ♥ 63 ♦ J5 ♣ AKQJ7	♠ 1087 ♥ AKJ94 ♦ 964 ♣ 42
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‘2NT, yes indeed, I opened 2NT,’ the Chairman began. ‘I felt that with eight likely tricks in my hand I should encourage my partner to respond. It so happens that we were playing Mrs Yoop and Munchkin Meg and I think that there may be an interesting point here for our less experienced players.’

He described the auction:

West	North	East	South
<i>Mrs Yoop</i>	<i>Mayor</i>	<i>Meg</i>	<i>Chairman</i>
–	–	–	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

He went on, ‘I could say that they passed throughout, but not that they took no part in the auction!’ His voice was light, but his eyes were very serious.

‘I really can’t think what you mean!’ Meg went on the offensive. ‘It really is not fair when you play a complicated system in an event like this!’

‘Please tell us all what happened,’ Auntie Em politely instructed the Chairman. Talking over the interventions of Munchkin Meg, this was the gist of his account.

All were quiet until it came to Meg’s second turn to call. ‘You alerted Three Clubs?’

‘Five card Stayman.’ He turned to Mrs Yoop. ‘Five card. That means

that he is asking me if I have a five card major, rather than the more common four card variety.’

‘And your partner alerted Three Diamonds?’

The Mayor nodded. ‘That tells me that he does not have a five card major, but he has at least one four card major.’

Meg turned back to the Chairman. ‘Then you alerted Three Spades. Does that ask if you have spades?’

‘No, no. That shows that he has four hea...’ Meg broke in, ‘I didn’t ask you what it shows, I wanted to know if he was asking you about spades?’

‘I’m not sure, very much not sure, that you can enquire what a bid is asking for when it is not an asking bid!’ the Chairman protested.

‘Has he shown spades?’

‘No.’

Munchkin Meg passed and the Chairman’s 3NT ended the auction.

Mrs Yoop considered her hand and led a card face down. Her partner gave her a sweet smile and said, ‘Now then, Mrs Yoop. I don’t expect that you have seen bidding like that before. I just wanted to make sure that you understood it all before we start the defence. Did you understand the Three Club bid?’

Mrs Yoop nodded. ‘Like Stayman but looking for a five card major.’

‘And what about the Three Diamond bid?’

Mrs Yoop coloured. ‘No, I don’t want to talk about that.’

Munchkin Meg nodded. ‘Well if you don’t have any more questions then please make your lead.’

Mrs Yoop turned over the seven of hearts. The Chairman tried the ten, Meg won the jack and unerringly played a diamond back to her partner’s ace. A second heart allowed Meg to take the next four tricks for two down.

Auntie Em stood up and took a couple of steps forward. ‘Tell me, Mrs Yoop, how you came to find that lead. Not an obvious choice.’

The soft voiced Mrs Yoop almost whispered, ‘It seemed the only ethical thing to do.’

Auntie Em gave her a quizzical look. ‘How so?’

‘You see my partner had asked questions about clubs, diamonds and spades so I thought it would have been wrong for me to lead one. All I had left was my heart suit.’

‘I am most distressed!’ squeaked Munchkin Meg. ‘I asked about all of the alerted bids in order to avoid putting my partner under any pressure.’

I'm sure that is what your guidance said people should do!

'Do be quiet,' Aunty Em snapped. 'And then, Mrs Yoop, you were asked by your partner about the Three Clubs and Three Diamonds bids.'


'Yes,' she nodded. 'I felt awkward about Three Diamonds. I didn't want to let my partner know that was my suit.' She looked round, bewildered. 'Have I done something wrong?'

'No, not at all. I think YOU have behaved admirably.'

Meg decided to ignore the implications. Aunty Em's glare suggested further discussion might prove very difficult.

'There is one more hand that I'd like to talk about. You had a lot of good hands, Meg, but if it hadn't been for this one you would have come second to the Wicked Witch of the West and Mr Yoop, who also seemed to have come out on the right side of a lot of hands. I'm talking about board fifteen.'

Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ KJ1032 ♥ 10 ♦ 10872 ♣ 985		♠ 86 ♥ 62 ♦ K94 ♣ AJ10762	♠ A97 ♥ KQJ973 ♦ QJ5 ♣ 3
	♠ Q54 ♥ A854 ♦ A63 ♣ KQ4		

'All those playing a fifteen to seventeen no-trump will have opened the South hand 1NT. What did the North players do?'

Some people answered that they had jumped to 3NT, while others had shown an invitational hand with clubs.

'I agree with 3NT,' said Aunty Em, surprising no-one who had ever shared a table with her. Your playing strength is far greater than eight points and there is every chance that your partner will be able to run nine tricks.

Meg, I see that you were sitting East and got yet another top on this

board. Do tell.'

Meg seemed somewhat relieved to be talking about this hand. 'A straightforward deal at our table,' she announced. 'After 1NT by South and Two Spades by North, transfer to clubs, I came in with Three Hearts. South doubled me and that was passed out. She led out two high clubs. I ruffed the second round and played the king of hearts. She took the ace and forced me again. I drew trumps and played South for the queen of spades. I made five heart tricks and five spades for a doubled overtrick. My advice to South would be not to double on a suit like that.'

'Mmm,' said Aunty Em, clearly disappointed. 'Dorothy, what happened at your table?'

'I was West and my opponents bid 1NT, 3NT. My partner took a long time to pass, leaving me on lead with an ethical problem. Can you see what it is?' she asked the room. 'I now knew that my partner had a long suit that she wanted to bid, and that it was almost certainly hearts since the opponents had not investigated for a fit. Given my weak hand it might be tempting, under normal circumstances, to try to set up tricks in partner's hand rather than my own, but after partner's tip-off there was no way that I could do that. I made the normal lead of a spade and was very pleased when partner won the ace and lead the nine back. We got it a quick one off.'

'Well, done. Virtue rewarded,' Aunty Em beamed. 'And what about your table, Wicked?'

The Wicked Witch of the West sniffed loudly. 'Virtue rewarded at our table too. That Scarecrow was in the North seat, and put the board on the table the wrong way up, so Mr Yoop sat West and I held the East hand. The opponents bid the normal 1NT, 3NT and I passed smoothly, of course. My partner was therefore free to make his choice of leads. He happened to try a heart and declarer took his nine tricks.'

Aunty Em, turned to Mr Yoop. 'Tell us your thoughts about that lead choice.'

Mr Yoop considered for a few seconds then answered in his deep voice. 'I have tried hard to understand the sheet on ethics that you sent out, and the explanations we were given by the Wicked Witch and Munchkin Meg. I was aware that this was a situation where the inconsiderate partner might give one a problem through the conveyance of unauthorised information. Indeed, my partner brought up this very situation with us as a group. From that I knew that the last thing that she would do with a

good long suit would be to hesitate then pass. That would be unethical! Her quick pass was therefore just the sort of thing that an ethical player would do if she had a good suit like this. As such, it seemed entirely logical to lead a heart.'

The Wicked Witch of the West was quick to respond. 'Oh, Mr Yoop. I can see how hard you are trying to do the right thing. Bridge ethics can be so hard, and it is most unfortunate when through trying not to convey information it might look as if one has. It was sheer good fortune that you hit my heart suit, but justice that the contract made.'

Aunty Em was momentarily dumbstruck. The enormity of the manipulation that Munchkin Meg and the Wicked Witch of the West appeared to be performing on the Tuesday night players was staggering. They were managing to turn convention on its head. To gain information not by overhearing a comment, but by its absence; not by asking a question about a suit, but by asking about the others; and not by a hesitation, but by failing to hesitate! She gathered her composure, thanked everyone for attending, wished them a Merry Christmas, and sent them on their way.

She intercepted Meg and Wicked. 'Could you stay behind for a minute?' The Chairman of the Lollipop Guild materialised at her side and ushered them into the committee room.

Aunty Em spoke directly, and forcefully. 'You always have an answer, you always find a way to make things sound plausible, but there are far too many coincidences here. Meg, I know that you were banned from a number of clubs in Emerald City, and I don't intend to find out why. We have welcomed you into the Over the Rainbow Bridge Club, but your stay will be short if your ethics are suspect. Wicked, we go back a long way, too long, and we have had our differences, but until this year I have never thought that you would stoop so low as to win at the table through turning new and inexperienced members into unwitting tools for your own gain. You can both anticipate a written warning from the Ethics Committee before the end of the year.'


The Wicked Witch's face seethed with anger. Munchkin Meg's broke into a sickly smile. 'Strong words. Serious accusations. And you are going to need to find serious evidence to back them up or it might be that you are the one who finds herself in trouble. You tried to convict us in public tonight and all you were able to achieve was insult and inuendo. Is that the best you can do?'

The Wicked Witch was now grinning too. 'Just because you are the club president this year you think that you can swing your weight around, but one day, perhaps after the next AGM, you'll come to regret what you have said tonight.' Munchkin Meg swung her bag up over her shoulder and the pair of them marched out of the club.

As the door slammed, the Chairman of the Lollipop Guild held up a plastic bag to Aunty Em. It had a crumpled piece of paper in it.

'What's that? I already have a hand record.' Aunty Em sounded irritated, her thoughts still on that last clear threat from the Wicked Witch.

'Yes indeed, yes indeed,' said the Chairman. 'You have one for the hands that we played, but you don't have one for the set of boards that we had originally intended to use tonight. This one fell out of Meg's bag just now, and from what I can see it has some pretty detailed notes on double dummy play and defence. I think that we might file this under Serious Evidence!'



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Answers to “Defend With Julian Pottage”

1

♠ Q72 ♥ 1072 ♦ A6 ♣ A6532	♠ A985 ♥ KQ ♦ Q9753 ♣ J10	♠ K1043 ♥ J843 ♦ K10 ♣ 974	<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
N						
W E						
S						
♠ J6 ♥ A965 ♦ J842 ♣ KQ8						

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
–	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
All Pass			

You lead the three of clubs, on which go the jack, four and eight. On a low diamond lead at trick two, partner plays the ten, declarer the jack and you the ace. How do you continue?

The play to the first trick suggests that declarer began with king-queen and a low club – partner was unable to beat the jack and so would have given a count signal.

You can set up the clubs by continuing with a low club. This will give you three club tricks and a diamond. If partner gains the lead, with the king of diamonds or perhaps the ace of hearts, this will give you five tricks. Alas, as the contract is 2NT, five tricks are not enough.

You need to switch to a spade, hoping that partner has four cards in the suit headed by the king-ten or king-jack. If declarer calls for dummy’s ace, your side can make three spade tricks to go with your minor-suit aces and partner’s entry card. If dummy plays low on the spade, the king wins. Then, with a spade trick in the bag, setting up the clubs will be good enough. Since you want partner to revert to clubs after winning the first spade, the seven is probably the best spade to lead.

2

♠ AKJ1074 ♥ 6 ♦ K7 ♣ AQ105	♠ Q ♥ AK104 ♦ QJ94 ♣ KJ87	♠ 9652 ♥ 7 ♦ 10853 ♣ 9432	<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
N						
W E						
S						
♠ 83 ♥ QJ98532 ♦ A62 ♣ 6						

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
–	–	–	3♥
4♠	5♥	All Pass	

You cash the king of spades, on which go the queen, six and three. How do you continue?

You might have doubled 5♥ – but the bidding is not the issue here.

Firstly, with the singleton spade in dummy, you would expect partner to give a suit-preference signal at trick one. If holding the ace of diamonds, you would expect to have seen a rather bigger spade played.

Assuming that you are defending almost solo, you can still see a decent chance of making a diamond and a club to go with the spade. This will not happen if declarer is 3-7-2-1 because a diamond will go away on the king of clubs. It might not happen either if declarer is 2-7-2-2 and guesses the club suit correctly. Can you see how to beat the contract if declarer’s shape is 2-7-3-1?

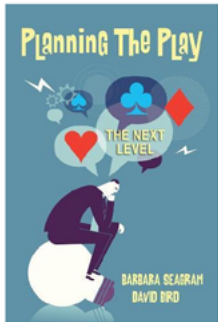
If you passively exit with a trump, you will find yourself in trouble when you get in with the ace of clubs, forced to give a free finesse in a minor or a ruff and discard. The solution is to cash the ace of clubs right now.



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Keep Bridge Alive

The Sociology of Bridge is a research project and an emerging academic field exploring interactions within the mind sport, well-being, healthy ageing and social connection as experienced in the bridge world.



Professor Samantha Punch,
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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).

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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.

In the semi-finals of the open trials, you must decide which opening bid will work better with a medium hand.

As North, you hold:

Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ A10976
♥ AK75
♦ 72
♣ A8

Your opening 1NT range in 3rd and 4th seat is 15-17, and opposite that you play Puppet Stayman. Otherwise, you could open a limited 1♠, 11-15, or a strong 1♣, 16+.

Your call?

West	North	East	South
-	-	Pass	Pass
Pass	?		

While the strength is right in your 1NT range, the hand is not right for this. 5-4 in the majors, all primes, and a worthless doubleton. Also, if you open 1NT and partner bids Puppet Stayman, you will be forced to bury either the 5-card spade holding or the 4-card heart suit – you can't show both.

You have only 15 HCP. But what a 15! 3 aces and a king. 5-4 shape, and nice intermediates in the 5-card suit. This hand evaluates to well over 15 points. (*18.35 on the K&R Hand Evaluator. Editor*) If you open 1♠, you may well miss a good game.

Opening 1♣ may get you too high when partner has a minimum positive response, since you will then be forced to game. But sometimes thin games make. It has to be right to open 1♣.

You open 1♣. The bidding continues:

West	North	East	South
-	-	Pass	Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	?		

2♦: 5+ diamonds, 8+ points, game-forcing

Your call?

If you have a 4-4 heart fit, 4♥ figures to be better than 3NT. But with 4 hearts partner could have bid 3♥, bidding out his shape, rather than 2NT. Would he always do so? Not clear. With a good club stopper he might think it more important to make the cheaper 2NT call, showing the stopper, and leaving you room to bid 3♥ if you had 4 hearts. If he bids 3♥ and you don't have a club stopper, you will be in trouble.

Another argument for bidding 3♥ is that partner may have been forced into bidding 2NT on xxx in clubs simply because he couldn't do anything else. If that is the case, either 4♠ in a 5-2 fit or 4♥ in a 4-3 fit will probably be better than 3NT.

The argument for bidding 3NT is that it doesn't tell the opening leader anything about your hand. If the opening leader has a choice between hearts and clubs, you would much prefer a heart lead. However, most of the time, the opening leader will just lead his longest suit. It looks better to try to bid accurately to get to the best strain and not worry about giving the opponents information.

You choose to bid 3NT, ending the auction.

West	North	East	South
-	-	Pass	Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Over you go to partner's seat to play it.

West leads the ♥Q (standard honour leads, UDCA).

♠ A10976
♥ AK75
♦ 72
♣ A8

♠ K2
♥ 1043
♦ QJ864
♣ K109



Do you win this or duck?

Going after diamonds for the bulk of your tricks will be fine if it works, since you will have 3 diamonds, 2 clubs, 2 spades, and 2 hearts. You won't need anything else. However, that needs diamonds 3-3 with at least one of the honours onside. If you go after diamonds and that fails, you aren't going to have time to recover.

It looks better to plan on taking the bulk of your tricks in spades. Assuming you play spades from the top, probably best, you will need to find the suit 3-3 or catch honour doubleton. Getting 4 spade tricks only gets you up to 8, but there are chances in the heart suit. The suit might be 3-3, or East might have ♥9x or ♥8x and you will be able to finesse the ♥7 on the third round. Also, the opponents might break clubs or diamonds and allow you to score your ninth trick there before they get 5.

Now, should you win the first trick or not? The big advantage to playing the waiting game and ducking is that West might not read the position and wrongly continue hearts. He probably shouldn't get it wrong. He heard you rebid 2NT, and with a worthless doubleton in hearts you would have found some other call – either 3♦ with a 6-card diamond suit or 3♣ with a 4-card club suit or 3♠ with 3 spades. So, you can't really expect West to make this mistake.

The real problem with ducking the first trick is that you don't want the club shift through dummy's ace-doubleton. If the opponents are shifting to clubs, you would rather it were East who is breaking the suit. Of course East can lead his honour from something like ♣Qxxx or ♣Jxxx, but that might not be too obvious.

It might not make a difference. But, it is probably better to win the first trick and go after spades.

You choose to duck. East plays the ♥6. West shifts to the ♣5. Now what?

♠ A10976
♥ AK7
♦ 72
♣ A8

♠ K2
♥ 104
♦ QJ864
♣ K109



If you are going to pin East's hoped-for 9x or 8x of hearts, you will need to lead hearts twice from your hand. You have only two hand entries. Thus, the best plan looks to be to win the club shift in your hand and lead the ♥10. West will have to cover, and you can take it from there.

You play low from dummy, and win East's jack with your king. As planned you led the ♥10. It goes jack, king, 9. Where to from here?

♠ A10976
♥ A7
♦ 72
♣ A

♠ K2
♥ 4
♦ QJ864
♣ 109



If you are going to hook the ♥7, you must cross to the king of spades and do so. The spade suit will just have to take care of itself.

The question is whether to hook the ♥7 or just play for the hearts to be 3-3 if West follows small on the third round of hearts. There are several reasons to take the finesse. West might not have led from a 3-card suit. If East had 986 of hearts he could have played either the 8 or the 9 on the second round, so restricted choice argues for the finesse. Finally, if East started with 98x of hearts he probably would have played the 9 on the first round to clarify the position to his partner.

You cross to the ♠K, and lead a heart. West follows small, and you finesse the ♥7. It wins. You try ace and a spade. The spades split 3-3, and you have 9 tricks. The full hand is:

♠ A 10976		♠ Q54
♥ AK75		♥ 96
♦ 72		♦ A10953
♣ A8		♣ QJ6
♠ J83		♠ K2
♥ QJ82		♥ 1043
♦ K		♦ QJ864
♣ 75432		♣ K109

and he would know that there is no game opposite the limited opening bid. It is true that 3NT is no bargain. However, this is the type of game you must bid if you are going to win IMP matches. You can't afford to come back to the comparison with +150, lose 10.

What do you think of West's opening lead?

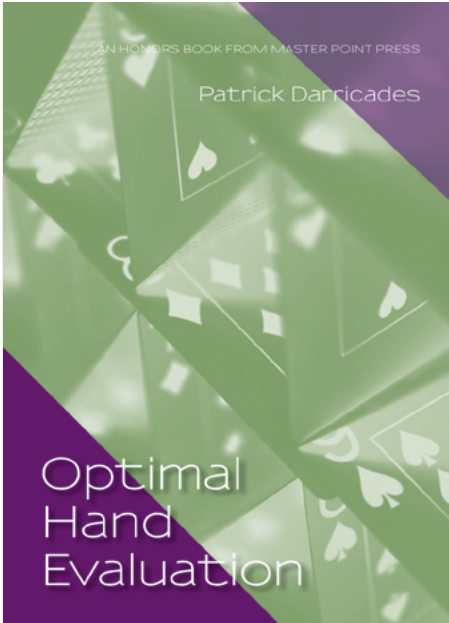
West's hearts are a lot stronger than his clubs. Still, it is only a 4-card suit, while clubs are a 5-card suit. On the auction, it is hard to imagine that the opponents could hold only 4 hearts between them if they are bidding sensibly, so West isn't going to be hitting 5 hearts in the East hand. In addition, any lead from an honour holding which isn't a solid sequence risks blowing a trick in the suit, as it did here. These factors indicate that West may be better off leading a club.

It should be noted that while North's 3NT call probably wasn't a good idea, it was successful this time. Had North bid 3♥ West certainly would have led a club, and 3NT probably would not have made.

South had the option of responding 1NT, which by a passed hand shows 8-10 balanced. Should he have done that instead of 2♦?

If South's diamonds weren't so strong in the intermediate department, a 1NT response would probably be better as that tends to lead to more accurate auctions. Here, however, the diamond suit is the real emphasis of the South hand. North has most of the high cards and is in control of the auction. Focusing on the strong diamond suit is more likely to help North evaluate than focusing on the balanced nature of the hand. Furthermore, South will probably be able to show that he is balanced later on if he bids 2♦, but he might never get to show the diamond suit if he bids 1NT.

The importance of opening the North hand 1♣ instead of 1♠ is well illustrated by the result. If North had opened 1♠, the partnership wouldn't have come close to getting to game. South would be in the driver's seat,



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Forcing or Non-Forcing?

Due to (constant) requests, I have given in and written about this annoyingly tricky topic.

How hard can it be? “Just tell us Larry, which bids are forcing and which are not.”

It is very hard. It requires study, memory and sometimes partnership agreement (PA).

Forcing versus Game Forcing

In this series, it is important to recognize the difference between Forcing (F) and Game Forcing (GF). “Forcing” (F) means your partner “cannot” pass the bid. If he does pass, he does so at his own peril. I might pass a forcing bid once a decade. Suppose my partner opens 1♣ and I dredge up a response with a very weak shapely hand. Partner (opener) now makes a forcing rebid (like a jumpshift) but I decide to bail out with a pass. I’d better be right!

“Game Forcing” (GF) means neither partner can pass below game.

In this article, we address:

Auctions with Doubles

The Opponents Double

If we open and the opponents make a takeout double, it is a matter of PA. Most common is to play a new suit on the 1-level as forcing (not to game, of course), but a new 2-level suit as NF.

Examples:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	1♥	

Typically (by partnership agreement) should be forcing (as if there were no double

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	2♥	

Typically (by partnership agreement) should be non-forcing (weak) with usually 6+ hearts. (Redouble with 10+). The partner of the opener can redouble with 10+ points. Jumps (after the double) are typically treated as weak.

If we open and respond and then they double, opener’s new suits have the same meaning with or without the double (so you can refer back to part 1 of this series). Be aware, however, of the potential to use Support Redoubles.

In general, bids after the opponent’s doubles are not forcing (unless we were already in a GF).

Example:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	Double
2♣			

2♣ is NF.

We Double

After our takeout double:

Jumps are not forcing. The only way for the partner of the doubler to force is to cue-bid the opponent’s suit.

Example:

West	North	East	South
1♠	Double	Pass	3♥

3♥=NF

2♠=Forcing cue-bid (I suggest GF - says nothing about spades)

If our takeout doubler voluntarily bids a second time, it shows a good hand, but it isn’t forcing.

Example:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♥		

2♥ shows about 17/18+ but is NF

Even a double and then a jump is not forcing.

Example:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♥		

Example:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♠		

In both cases, North is showing a huge hand - begging South to go on with just a crumb or two. But, North's action is NF.

The only way for the takeout doubler to force is to cue-bid the opponent's suit.

Example:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦*		

2♦ is artificial and Forcing (but not GF). It doesn't promise (nor deny) spade support.

If the partner of the takeout doubler jumps, and opener then bids a new suit, he is showing extras, so it is forcing. Example:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠		

2♠ is Forcing, since if South had a so-so hand he would have just overcalled 1♠. Now that South has shown 9+ and North has about 17/18+, the 2♠ bid should actually be GF.

After our negative double:

If responder makes a negative double and later bids a suit, it is NF.

Example:

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Double	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	

If East had a good hand with hearts, he would have bid 2♥ the first time. Here, he has something like: ♠Jxx ♥AQ10xxx ♦-♣Jxxx There will be many other auctions which are hard to define here. One good general rule is: "Once the opponents have been doubled for penalty, we are in a forcing auction." In other words, they can't play undoubled - we either double or bid on.

Quiz

In each auction below, is the final bid shown F or NF?

1.

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	1♠	

2.

West	North	East	South
1♥	Double	2♣	

3.

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♠	Double
2♦			

4.

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	Pass	2♠

5.

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	Pass	2NT

6.

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	Pass	2♦

7.

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♥		

8.

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♥		

9.

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Double	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♣	

Answers (which can be explained by studying the article above).

- 1.F (but PA)
- 2.NF (but PA)
- 3.NF
- 4.NF
- 5.NF
- 6.F
- 7.NF (but a good hand)
- 8.F
- 9.NF



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.”

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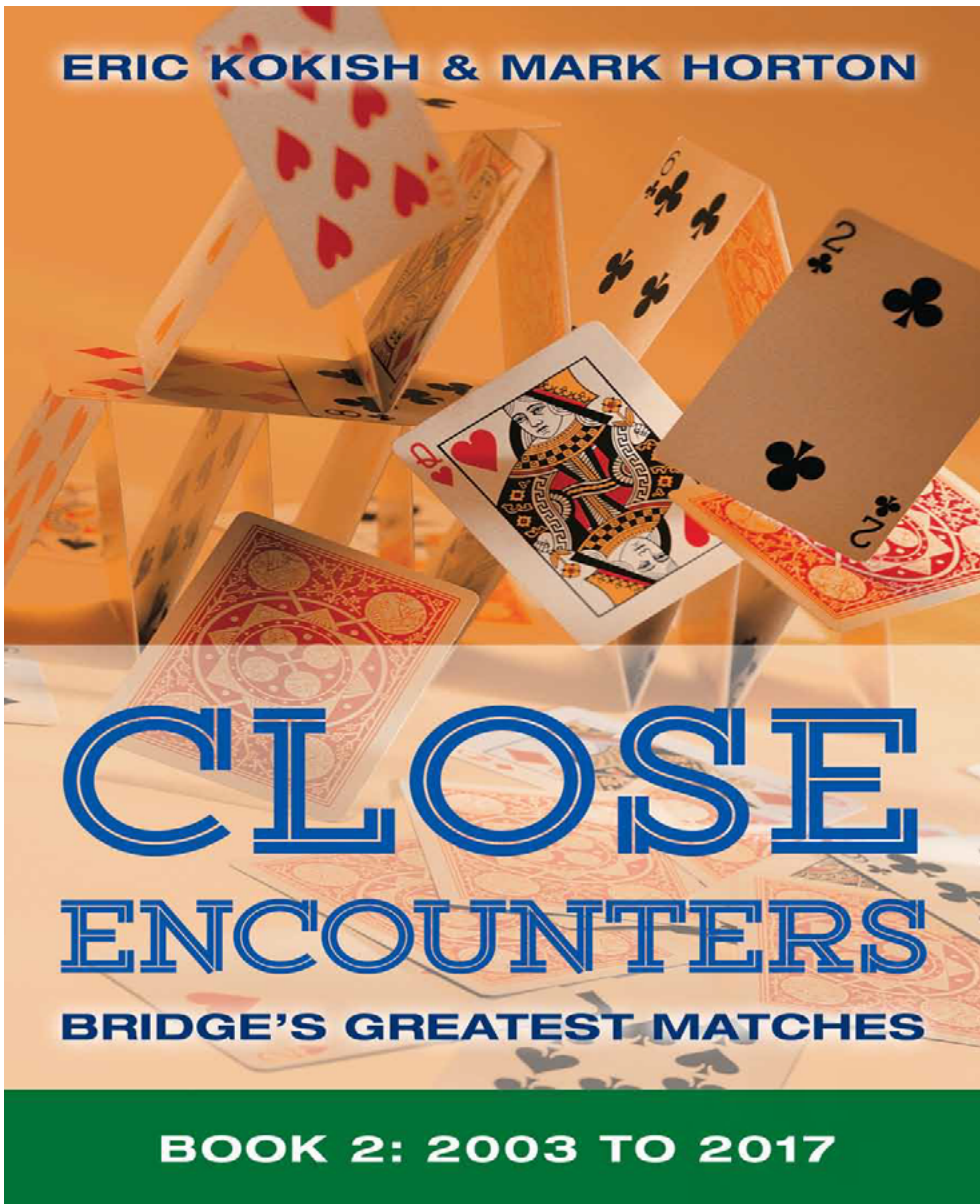
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Close Encounters: Book 2

by Eric Kokish and Mark Horton

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In the annals of bridge there is nothing more thrilling than a comeback where the trailing team overturns a huge deficit. It doesn't happen very often, since many teams, faced with a mountain of IMPs to climb, adopt a very aggressive strategy that includes psychic bids, undisciplined preempts, speculative penalty doubles and so-called 'tactical' openings and overcalls. While these wild actions often generate swings, at least some of those go to the team enjoying the big lead. Of course no one ever won a match by conceding, but big comebacks require a lively set of deals that offer some opportunities — for sensible swing actions, for the momentum to turn, and for the trailing team to outplay its opponent.

In the semifinal of the 2004 Spingold in New York, NICKELL (Nick Nickell-Dick Freeman, Jeff Meckstroth-Eric Rodwell, Bob Hamman-Paul Soloway) found themselves trailing by 71 IMPs against JACOBS (George Jacobs-Ralph Katz, Steve Garner-Howard Weinstein, Lorenzo Lauria-Alfredo Versace) with one 16-deal segment left to play. If that weren't bad enough for NICKELL, there was also a pending JACOBS appeal that might substantially increase that deficit.

George Jacobs, who made his fortune in the limousine business in Chicago, was the first American sponsor to build his teams for the North American Championships around the strongest Italian pairs, and his teams had won three majors since 1999. In this Spingold semifinal, NICKELL waived its seeding rights, so JACOBS chose to sit their pairs second in the first quarter. When NICKELL took quarters two and three, JACOBS was left with the fourth. Wanting to avoid having to face Meckwell — a growing objective of many pairs in that era — Jacobs and Katz seemed to have done the right thing by opting to play in the sets where they had the right to be seated after their opponents announced their positions; they could play the final set with a huge lead, and under very little pressure. Meanwhile, Lauria and Versace, who had played the first three quarters, were pleased to get some rest before the next day's final.

It's surprising to note that it's become much more common in recent years for teams with significant but theoretically not insurmountable deficits to concede defeat. Whether that is because players simply have less stamina than they used to and prefer to conserve their energy for the next event on the tournament schedule, or because they believe they are not playing well enough to muster a late challenge to opponents in good form, the effect is that a concession gives the winners an unexpected opportunity to relax and get a good night's sleep.

Not that the team with the best-ever record in the Spingold was going to wave the white flag when trailing by fewer than 100 IMPs: NICKELL's front-line pairs took their seats to deal with the grim situation. As the other semifinal was closer and there were few experienced VuGraph operators on site, this set would not be covered on BBO, although both these teams would normally attract large online audiences.

In my early days[†] as coach of the NICKELL team, most of my time was devoted to Bob and Paul, with whom I shared a week in 1998 developing and organizing an initial set of system notes for their new partnership. Since then it had been my normal *modus operandi* to take a seat on Soloway's side of the screen in the second half of matches when we were not on BBO, and this was no exception, the lopsided score notwithstanding.

Sitting on a 141-70 lead, JACOBS was hoping for a run of dull boards, and Board 49, an open-and-shut 3NT+1, filled that prescription.

The next board offered a subtle opportunity to create a swing. It's the sort of deal that is often overlooked in a comeback strategy, but rejecting a seemingly attractive 'normal' opening lead is a gambit far more likely to work than a wildly undisciplined or random bid.

Board 50. N-S Vul.

♠ A K 2 ♥ 10 8 7 ♦ Q 5 ♣ Q 9 5 4 3	<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		♠ 9 8 7 6 ♥ J 6 4 ♦ A 6 4 2 ♣ A K	♠ Q J 3 ♥ A K Q 9 5 ♦ 9 7 3 ♣ J 10
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ 10 5 4 ♥ 3 2 ♦ K J 10 8 ♣ 8 7 6 2												

[†] Primary author Eric Kokish.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Garner</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>
1♥	pass	1♦ ¹	pass
2♣ ²	pass	2♥	pass
4♥	all pass		

1. Precision, 2+ diamonds.
2. Fourth suit forcing.

Garner led the 'textbook' ♠K and switched accurately to the ♦Q. Rodwell ducked, won the diamond continuation, drew trumps ending in dummy, and reverted to spades, eventually discarding his losing diamond on dummy's long spade for +420.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Katz</i>	<i>Soloway</i>
1♥	pass	1♦	pass
2♣ ¹	pass	2♥	pass
4♥	all pass		

1. Fourth suit forcing.

Same auction, but here East was known to have at least four diamonds. With spades bid on his left, Hamman did not want to help declarer develop tricks in dummy's suit when there was no chance of giving Soloway a third-round spade ruff, and so he led the ♣4. Jacobs won with the king, drew trumps ending in dummy (a bit hastily, as dummy was running out of entries) and led a spade to the jack and king. Hamman exited with a club, and declarer played a second spade, realizing now that he needed to find someone with a doubleton ten to make the contract legitimately. When Jacobs' ♠Q lost to the ace, Hamman switched to the ♦Q, and the contract was two down, -100; 11 IMPs to NICKELL, 81-141.

If Jacobs plays low on the second spade, finessing against the ten, he saves a spade trick but can't make the contract, as Hamman will win and shift to diamonds, removing the final (and vital) entry to dummy while spades are still blocked. If Soloway started with ace-third of spades he could defeat the contract simply by rising with the ace and leading a diamond with the same effect — the long spade cannot be cashed.

In theory, declarer's best line of play is to lead spades at Trick 2, playing for 3-3 spades and no diamond shift, or for one defender to hold the ace-king-third and a doubleton diamond (as here). We can imagine that Hamman's not leading a spade from this holding was a strong influence in dissuading declarer from adopting this line.

As the defense does not have a clear read on declarer's shape or diamond holding, perhaps there is more to gain than to lose by starting spades at Trick 2, retaining enough entries in dummy to handle 3-3 spades and enjoy the long card. It may not be clear to shift to diamonds: imagine declarer with 2=5=3=3 and jack-ten-third of diamonds, when a diamond shift from honor-third is disastrous.

Board 51. E-W Vul.

♠ 7 ♥ A Q 7 5 2 ♦ Q J 9 2 ♣ 6 5 3	<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		♠ Q 6 ♥ 10 3 ♦ A 10 7 5 4 ♣ K 10 9 2	♠ A J 10 9 5 ♥ K J 8 6 4 ♦ 3 ♣ A 8
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ K 8 4 3 2 ♥ 9 ♦ K 8 6 ♣ Q J 7 4											

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Katz</i>	<i>Soloway</i>
pass	1♦	2♦	pass
4♥	all pass		

1. Majors.

Hamman was not willing to pass in third seat at favorable vulnerability though he would be awkwardly placed over a major-suit response. East and West took normal actions and reached the par contract. North's club lead held declarer to eleven tricks, +650.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Garner</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>
pass	pass	1♠	pass
2♥	pass	6♥	all pass

After Garner passed, preferring to take no needless risks, the auction was of a completely different species. Rodwell stretched to respond 2♥, and Meckstroth, seeing an opportunity to perhaps steal a slam, bounced to 6♥, giving away no information. As it's so often best to lead an ace on this type of unscientific auction rather than try to build a trick, Garner duly led the ♦A, then switched to a trump (boldly choosing the potentially-valuable ten, trying to create the impression that he did not have a second trump in case declarer were to consider a ruffing finesse in spades without drawing a second trump).

Declarer, with two possible ways to avoid a club loser (one additional diamond trick or two additional spade tricks), won in hand and played a spade. Garner played the queen, a lovely card as he knew Rodwell would not play him for the king-queen if he followed low and a second-round ruff brought the queen (he'd have split his honors on the first round). Rodwell took the ace and ruffed a spade safely with the five, ruffed a diamond and had reached the critical point, with the three of trumps still at large.

Rodwell was not planning a ruffing finesse in diamonds, so to build a second trick in that suit he needed to ruff out the king on the third round, after which he could establish spades without a guess, provided North did not start with king-queen-fifth. In that scenario he could draw the second round of trumps in dummy and ruff another spade to clarify the position, then ruff a diamond to build his winner there and finish establishing spades, with his communications intact.

However, if the ♦K was *not* going to ruff out tripleton, he would require *two* more spade tricks to discard clubs from hand, and that would require his guessing whether Garner had been dealt queen doubleton or king-queen third. In the first case he could not afford to take a second ruff as he would be able to establish only one more spade winner with a late ruffing finesse.

By drawing the last trump in hand, Rodwell could delay his choice of plays in spades until he knew what was going on in diamonds, although he could not cater to both winning layouts.

When Rodwell led the ♥K from dummy, Weinstein teased him with a spade discard, trying to look like a man who had started with four low spades resigned to having declarer ruff out North's king-queen third. It was still open to Rodwell to overtake the ♥K with the ace to take his diamond ruff before deciding what to do on the third round of spades, but he elected

to remain in dummy and ruffed another spade, now reduced to his diamond play. The appearance of South's king was a great relief. Now the ♠K ruffed out, and he discarded dummy's ♣8 on his high diamond for +1430. That was 13 IMPs to NICKELL, 94-141, reducing the deficit to 47.

Rodwell revealed later that he was more confident of the spade position than the diamond layout, but his line of play suggests that he had not formed that picture of the distribution until he saw the spade discard from Weinstein, who ironically had been trying to paint a rather different picture of the spade suit for declarer.

Meckstroth's gambit was more typical of the popular swing strategy, and it should go without saying that it could have lost 13 IMPs on a normal game deal. However, 6♥ might be a normal contract, in which case a more careful auction might tip off the best opening lead; now we must consider the possibility of gaining 17 when bashing the slam gains. That type of opportunity is difficult to resist when you're miles behind.



Steve Garner and Howard Weinstein

Board 52. Both Vul.

♠ 10 9 6 2	♥ J 10 7 2	♦ Q 8 5	♣ Q 9	♠ 4 3	♥ Q 8 6 5 3	♦ 7 6 2	♣ A J 8	♠ J 8	♥ K 9	♦ A K J 10 9 3	♣ K 7 5						
				<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S					
	N																
W		E															
	S																
				♠ A K Q 7 5	♥ A 4	♦ 4	♣ 10 6 4 3 2										

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Katz</i>	<i>Soloway</i>
pass	pass	1NT	2♣ ¹
pass	2♦ ²	dbl	2♠
all pass			

1. Spades and a minor.
2. Prefers diamonds to spades if South has diamonds.

Opening 1NT in third seat with the East hand, apart from tactical obstruction, has the more subtle appeal of precluding a second-round rebid decision between two and three diamonds; indeed, 1NT would probably be a majority expert choice today. However, one of the downsides, at least in theory, is not being able to compete cooperatively in diamonds. That is what happened to Katz, despite enjoying a serendipitous opportunity to show some diamonds by doubling North's pass-or-correct 2♦. As Soloway's 2♠ did not guarantee a fifth club, Hamman passed, settling for the known 5-2 fit and expecting his strong clubs to facilitate the play. Soloway ruffed the second diamond, and led a club to the nine, jack and king. On a third round of diamonds, Soloway discarded his heart loser, maintaining control. He lost a spade, two diamonds and a club for +140.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Rodwell	Garner	Meckstroth	Weinstein
pass	pass	1♣ ¹	2♠ ²
pass	3♣	3♦	all pass

1. Strong.
2. 5+ spades and 5+ clubs.

At this table, Meckstroth adopted a different tactical approach by opening a mildly shaded strong 1♣. North-South had the right method to locate their eight-card fit, but when Meckstroth volunteered 3♦, Weinstein, whose initial action was not defined as particularly constructive, was unwilling to bid again with only modest extra values and fair defense. Rodwell gave his partner plenty of leeway by passing 3♦, and tabled a rather spectacular dummy. When Meckstroth led a heart to the nine he held his losers to four, for +110 and a 6-IMP pickup for NICKELL, 100-141. In just four boards, 30 IMPs of the 71-IMP JACOBS lead had disappeared.

Board 53 brought a bidding challenge for North-South, whose mission was to reach an excellent 28-point 6♦ with two balanced hands:

Board 53. N-S Vul.

♠ 9 5 3	♠ K Q 4	♠ 10 8 7 6 2
♥ Q 10 7 3	♥ A 9 6	♥ K J 5 4
♦ 9 8	♦ J 7 6 3 2	♦ 5 4
♣ K J 4 2	♣ 10 8	♣ Q 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A J	♠ A J
♥ 8 2	♥ 8 2
♦ A K Q 10	♦ A K Q 10
♣ A 9 7 6 5	♣ A 9 7 6 5

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Jacobs	Hamman	Katz	Soloway
pass	pass	pass	1♣ ¹
pass	1♠ ²	pass	2♣
pass	2♦	pass	3♦
pass	4♦	pass	4♠ ³
pass	4NT ⁴	pass	5♦ ⁵
pass	6♦	all pass	

1. 17+.
2. 8-11 balanced.
3. Control bid denying a heart control.
4. RKCB for diamonds.
5. 1 or 4.

The 5♦ reply to Blackwood left no room to check for the ♦Q without committing to slam, but as long as South had four diamonds slam would still be worth bidding, especially for the trailing team.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Rodwell	Garner	Meckstroth	Weinstein
pass	pass	pass	1♣ ¹
pass	1♠ ²	pass	2♦
pass	4♦	pass	4♠ ³
pass	5♥ ⁴	pass	5♠ ⁵
pass	6♦	all pass	

1. Natural or 2+ clubs balanced (11-13 or 17-19).
2. Artificial, no four-card major unless game-forcing with 5+ diamonds.
3. Control bid denying a heart control.
- 4-5. Ace, grand slam possible.

Garner's 4♦ was a crucial bid. Although the deal proved to be an honorable push at +1370, both North-South pairs could realistically hope they had gained 12 or 13 IMPs.

Board 54. E-W Vul.

♠ A 8 ♥ KJ 8 3 2 ♦ K Q J 5 ♣ A 5	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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	♠ K 9 2 ♥ 10 9 4 ♦ 9 6 3 2 ♣ J 4 3
N					
W E					
S					
♠ 10 6 5 4 ♥ Q 6 ♦ A 10 7 ♣ 9 7 6 2	♠ Q J 7 3 ♥ A 7 5 ♦ 8 4 ♣ K Q 10 8				

On these cards, 4♥ is no bargain for East-West, given that East has only one entry and there is danger of a diamond ruff, but given the state of the match it would not have been surprising for one or both pairs to push to game. However, East was dealer and South had a normal opening bid in second chair, which slowed down the East-West steam engine.

Competing against a 1♣ opening promising 2+ clubs, Meckstroth and Rodwell reached an awkward 2NT, which was due to fail against straight-forward defense. Mercifully for NICKELL, that was not forthcoming: +120.

Competing against a 1♠ opening that promised only four spades, Jacobs and Katz understandably reached 3♥, which succeeded against normal defense: +140. That was the first gain (1 IMP) to JACOBS, ahead by 42, 142-100. Of greater importance to JACOBS was that there was one fewer board available to NICKELL to eat into the lead.

Board 55. Both Vul.

♠ A Q 2 ♥ K Q 9 5 4 ♦ A 7 6 2 ♣ 6	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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	♠ K 10 ♥ A 8 6 3 ♦ Q 3 ♣ Q J 10 4 3
N					
W E					
S					
♠ J 7 6 4 3 ♥ 10 7 ♦ K 10 9 8 5 ♣ 9	♠ 9 8 5 ♥ J 2 ♦ J 4 ♣ A K 8 7 5 2				

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Katz</i>	<i>Soloway</i>
1♥	pass	1NT	pass
2♦	pass	2♥	all pass

In 2♥, Jacobs took the ♣Q with the ace and tried to cash the ♣K. Soloway ruffed with the ♥10, killing one of declarer's eight 'sure' winners. Declarer overruffed with the ♥Q and played the ♦A and another diamond. Soloway overtook the ♦Q to lead the ♥7 through, ducked to the jack. Jacobs ruffed a club and led a diamond loser, but Hamman ruffed with the six in front of dummy, cashed the ♥A, and exited with a club to force declarer's last trump. Jacobs could take only the ♠A for one down, -100.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Garner</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>
1♥	pass	1NT	pass
2♦	pass	2♥	pass
2♠	pass	2NT	all pass

Where Jacobs disliked his intermediates enough to stop at 2♥, Rodwell, with a maximum for a non-1♣ opening, tried for the vulnerable game bonus with a shape-showing 2♠. When Meckstroth, whose maximum for 2♥ facing a limited opening bid was a bit higher than Katz's, could not jump to 3NT, Rodwell had reason to believe he had done the wrong thing by moving forward.

With the hearts coming in, 2NT could not be defeated: four hearts, two clubs and two aces, +120, 6 IMPs to NICKELL, 106-142.

JACOBS was pleased to learn that Board 56 was a dull 3NT; another board gone and another IMP scored for a more successful queen guess. JACOBS led by 37, 143-106, halfway through the set.

Board 57. E-W Vul.

♠ K Q 2	♠ J 8 7 6 5 3	♠ A 10 9
♥ K J 6 4	♥ 10 8 7	♥ A 2
♦ 5 4	♦ A 2	♦ K Q 10 9 8
♣ A K Q 2	♣ J 3	♣ 10 7 6

♠ 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; 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>		N		W		E		S		♠ 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 9 5 3		♥ A 2									
♦ J 7 6 3		♦ K Q 10 9 8									
♣ 9 8 5 4		♣ 10 7 6									

Board 57 had significant swing potential. 6NT is a respectable contract for East-West, normally turning on North holding the ♦J (first-round finesse) less than five-long, and there are extra chances if diamonds are 5-1.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Katz</i>	<i>Soloway</i>
1♥	pass	1♦	pass
3NT	pass	1NT	pass
	all pass		

Without opposition, Katz and Jacobs stopped safely in 3NT without sniffing at slam. Katz, making sure of his contract after a heart lead through dummy's king-jack, made five by leading the first diamond to his king, +660.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Garner</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>
3NT	2♠	3♦	pass
	all pass		

Garner picked a good moment for an atypical (for the times) weak two-bid on a poor suit, which gave his opponents a less-than-smooth ride. A 3♦ overcall on a five-card suit, even a chunky one, with a high-card near-minimum may seem straightforward, but I consider it closer to a necessary battlefield choice. Rodwell, who later confessed that he felt the match could not be won if he went minus on this deal, settled for a gentle 3NT. Although Meckstroth would have passed a natural 4NT invitation, it was quietly courageous of

Rodwell to back his judgment and 'swing low' by giving up on what might have been an easy slam at a crucial stage of the match. He made six on a spade lead by playing diamonds to best advantage, scoring +690, so 1 IMP to NICKELL, 107-143.

Board 58 slipped by for JACOBS without incident, NICKELL gaining a further overtrick IMP to make it 108-143, now a 35-IMP difference.

Then, on Board 59, some early good news for JACOBS. Weinstein got to open a weak 2♦ with:

♠ 6 3 ♥ A 6 2 ♦ K 10 9 8 7 2 ♣ 4 3

Although he caught Garner with a decent 4=4=0=5 15-count, he managed to stop safely right there. On a normal line of play, Weinstein finished +90 in 2♦, a good-looking result that looked even better when Soloway opened 3♦, which appeared due to fail as the play developed. The defense missed its chance, however, and Soloway scrambled home with +110, so that was another IMP to NICKELL where it might well have been 4 IMPs to JACOBS. With five deals remaining, JACOBS' lead was 34 IMPs, 143-109.



Paul Soloway

If the four-board run of 1-IMP swings continued a bit longer JACOBS would be able to exhale, home and dry in the bar, with nothing worse than a good scare to carry into the final the next morning.

But Board 60 was not the sort of deal JACOBS was hoping for.

Board 60. N-S Vul.

<p>♠ K J 8 5 4 3 ♥ 8 4 3 ♦ 10 9 5 2 ♣ —</p>	<p>♠ 2 ♥ K Q J 9 6 5 2 ♦ 8 ♣ Q 10 9 6</p>	<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		<p>♠ A Q 9 ♥ — ♦ A Q 3 ♣ A K J 7 5 4 3</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	<p>♠ 10 7 6 ♥ A 10 7 ♦ K J 7 6 4 ♣ 8 2</p>											

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Rodwell	Garner	Meckstroth	Weinstein
3♠	4♥	4NT ¹	dbl
pass ²	pass	7♠	all pass

1. RKCB for spades.
2. One keycard.

Meckstroth could have taken a practical shot at 7♠ over Garner's hopeful 4♥, but thought he could afford to check on the ♠K (he would assume that a one-keycard response would deliver the ♠K rather than the ♥A). Weinstein, concerned that at the prevailing vulnerability Meckstroth might be taking liberties with a weak hand and a fit, thought it best to show values by doubling 4NT, a seemingly innocent action whose disastrous consequences could not easily be foreseen. As his partner had advertised high-card values, Garner understandably placed dummy with a long *diamond* suit that might need a ruff or two to establish. Trying to kill dummy's side entry, he made the well-reasoned lead of a club. Rodwell could establish that suit painlessly now, and use the ♦A as the late entry, for +1510.

With trumps 3-1, a diamond lead would have removed the vital timely entry to East's hand and left declarer a trick short, as he could not use dummy's trumps to ruff even one heart. We can see that a 5♦ bid by Weinstein would have worked brilliantly, but as he was an unpassed hand and this was a jammed auction there was no reason to think that 5♦ would not have been interpreted as natural, or that a diamond lead had to be best. And besides, Garner might have had an attractive diamond lead without being prompted.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Jacobs	Hamman	Katz	Soloway
2♠	3♥	4NT ¹	dbl
pass ²	pass	5♥	dbl
pass	pass	6♠	all pass

1. RKCB for spades.
2. Intended as 1 keycard; interpreted as 0.

Katz, not keen to tip off the heart void when the opening lead might matter, also launched into Blackwood at his earliest opportunity. Here too, South preferred to double 4NT rather than bid 5♦ or 5♥.

After Soloway doubled 4NT, he excused himself, found the Director, and left the table. When he had not returned after about ten minutes, Hamman summoned the Director, and they left to check on Soloway, whose health had been an issue for the past five years. Five minutes later, everyone returned, and the bidding resumed, but the interruption and concern for Soloway's well-being may have affected the players' concentration.

It was soon evident that East-West were not in sync about West's pass over the double of 4NT: although undiscussed and not on their convention card, Jacobs assumed that ROPI (redouble = 0; pass = 1) applied as the standard treatment, but Katz, who 'knew' there was no such agreement in place, thought pass — the cheapest bid — was the weakest response.

Although it was certainly possible that Jacobs had opened a weak two-bid at favorable vulnerability with a topless suit, Katz was aware that there might have been a misunderstanding in an auction (Blackwood doubled) that had never occurred before for their partnership. Indeed, Katz knew it was even possible that Jacobs had interpreted 4NT as simple Blackwood rather than Keycard. In a last-ditch effort to resolve the critical spade-king issue, Katz continued with a 5♥ cuebid, an imaginative 'safety play' of sorts in the auction.

When Soloway doubled 5♥ and Jacobs neither redoubled nor took any other positive action, Katz decided he could not hold the ♠K, and so settled for six. North led the ♥K, so declarer ruffed in dummy, and played to establish the clubs for a less-than-gratifying overtrick, +1010. Had Katz bid seven, there would have been no obvious reason for Hamman to find the killing diamond lead after Soloway had doubled 5♥. NICKELL gained 11 IMPs, and with four deals to play, now trailed by only 23, 120-143.

If you were North-South, would you consider your -1010 a plus position, given that the more likely 7♠ could be defeated? As the number of boards left to play counts down in a one-sided 'comeback' session, it's human nature to

estimate the score and what might be needed to win, but this is where one of Hamman's great strengths comes into play — the ability to focus only on the deal at hand. Regardless of how well they had done so far in this set, there was almost certainly still plenty of work to be done, and this was no time to waste energy on earlier deals.

Board 61. Both Vul.

<p>♠ 2 ♥ K Q 8 5 3 ♦ Q J 6 ♣ Q J 10 7</p>	<p>♠ A 10 9 8 4 ♥ A 10 6 ♦ 9 7 ♣ A 8 4</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; 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		<p>♠ K Q J 7 3 ♥ 9 ♦ K 8 2 ♣ K 9 6 2</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	<p>♠ 6 5 ♥ J 7 4 2 ♦ A 10 5 4 3 ♣ 5 3</p>											

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Garner</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>
	1♠	pass	1NT
dbl	pass	pass	rdbl ¹
pass	2♣	dbl	2♦ ²
pass	2♥	dbl	all pass

1. Scrambling.
2. Four hearts, five diamonds (else redouble).

Knowing that partner is 4-5 in the red suits, which contract would you choose on the auction as North — 2♦ or 2♥?

On this layout, 2♦ would have been the safer option, as declarer should be able to piece together at least seven tricks — for example, on a spade lead declarer wins with dummy's ace and ducks a diamond to West. He wins the club switch with dummy's ace and plays two more rounds of trumps, and can develop at least one additional trick in hearts.

Despite the bad trump break, 2♥ would have been relatively inexpensive had East failed to find a trump lead, but Meckstroth had doubled with a singleton trump with the intention of protecting his side's wealth of high cards, so he followed through on his plan by leading the ♥9. Declarer took West's queen with the ace and ducked a diamond to Rodwell, who played two more

rounds of hearts. Deprived of a diamond ruff in hand, Garner could amass only six tricks for two down, -500.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Katz</i>	<i>Soloway</i>
	1♠	pass	1NT
dbl	pass	pass	2♦
pass	pass	dbl	all pass

As Soloway did not expect Hamman to have six spades or a second four-card suit when he passed over the double of 1NT, he ran to 2♦, and was mildly disappointed not to buy a third trump in dummy's expected balanced hand. Jacobs led the ♣Q rather than a trump, and when it was allowed to hold, switched to his singleton spade. Declarer won with dummy's ace and ran the ♦9 to the jack. West switched to the ♥K. Soloway won with dummy's ace and played two rounds of trumps, craftily discarding a spade from dummy. Katz won, cashed a spade (heart from West) and led a third round of the suit, West parting with another heart as declarer ruffed the third spade. Now Soloway could play a heart to establish two more winners in that suit for +180.

By escaping directly to his long suit, Soloway had left Jacobs in the dark about his fourth heart; but even if West had discarded a club to keep a third heart, declarer would surely have finessed the ♥6 after ruffing the third spade, West following low to the second heart. The winning defense is for East to switch back to clubs after taking his spade trick. Declarer wins with dummy's ace, and needing to play hearts towards dummy's ten, ruffs a club and plays a heart; now West can rise with the queen, blocking the suit, and exit with a club. One way or another, the defenders will come to a sixth trick.

NICKELL had gained another 12 IMPs. The JACOBS lead had been reduced to 11 IMPs, 143-132, and there were still three deals remaining. Would anyone bet against NICKELL at that point?

Board 62. Neither Vul.

♠ Q 9 7 5 3 2 ♥ 9 6 ♦ Q 6 5 ♣ A 7	♠ A J 8 4 ♥ K Q 10 ♦ A 10 2 ♣ K 8 2	<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		♠ — ♥ A 8 5 3 2 ♦ 8 3 ♣ Q J 10 9 5 3
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ K 10 6 ♥ J 7 4 ♦ K J 9 7 4 ♣ 6 4											

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Garner</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>
2♣ ²	2NT	2♣ ¹	pass
		all pass	

1. 6+ clubs, 10-15.
2. Nonforcing.

Meckstroth was not willing to pass as dealer with so much playing strength, and borrowed a point or two from a kibitzer to introduce his chunky club suit, known to be at least six cards long. It's difficult to imagine passing the somewhat wide-ranging natural 2NT with the South hand unless desperate to try for a 'swing low' result while trying to wipe out a big deficit, but that is the action Weinstein chose! 'I probably should have raised to 3NT,' said Weinstein after the match, 'but I was not vulnerable and had some bad vibes about the hand, with the ♠K possibly not pulling its full weight, and presuming things weren't splitting too well.'

The defenders cleared clubs. Garner won the third round, cashed the ♦A and ran the ♦10 (the technical play to cater to queen-fourth in the East hand as the extra chance), losing a diamond, a heart and five clubs for two down, -100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Katz</i>	<i>Soloway</i>
2♣	2NT	pass	pass
all pass		pass	3NT

Although Katz, who did not have the luxury of a natural, limited 2♣ available, did not open, Jacobs' third-seat weak 2♣ led to a scenario not unlike the one in the Open Room. Soloway, who earlier in the session might have been able to justify passing 2NT to create a swing position, was looking for normal upside actions at this stage, and so raised to 3NT.

Here too, the defenders started clubs, declarer winning the third round with the king. Although there had been only one bid by East-West, Hamman had a fair amount of information. The club position had been revealed and he could expect the spade layout to be as it was. As West might well have opened 1♠ if he owned the ♥A, Hamman was inclined to play East for the ♥A; and if that were so, might not East have opened if he also held the ♦Q? While neither of these inferences could be taken to the bank, there were certainly some bridge reasons to go against the percentages in diamonds by playing West for the ♦Q.

Tactically, it was not obvious whether most of the huge deficit had been wiped out, especially when that -1010 on Board 60 could be an 11-IMP gain, a push or a 17-IMP loss. If NICKELL was still behind in the match, there was another reason for Hamman to make a different play than his counterpart next door in what seemed to him the normal contract; he crossed to the ♦K and led the ♦J, passing it successfully when it was not covered. He could not arrange a fourth spade trick now but he had five diamonds, three spades and a club for +400, and 11 IMPs to NICKELL.

If you've been keeping track of the score, you will know that both teams were sitting on 143 IMPs now, with two deals remaining.

Board 63. N-S Vul.

♠ A Q 10 ♥ Q J ♦ K Q J 9 8 7 ♣ Q J	♠ 3 2 ♥ K 10 9 7 6 3 ♦ 4 3 2 ♣ A 6	<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		♠ K 9 7 6 4 ♥ A 5 2 ♦ 6 ♣ K 8 4 3
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ J 8 5 ♥ 8 4 ♦ A 10 5 ♣ 10 9 7 5 2											

With nothing bad happening, East-West can take eleven tricks in spades. What a peculiar hand West was dealt in this tense situation. If you open 1♦, what can you rebid after a 1♠ response? A 2NT call is misdirected with those

red suits, but 3♠ is a trump short, so you're left with 3♦, heavy on high cards but not on playing strength if the quacks are not working, and with the opportunity to show spade support looming elusive.

Fortunately for Jacobs and Katz in the Closed Room, Hamman overcalled 1♦ with 1♥, so East's spade bid showed at least five, and West had a comfortable target to aim for. Still, they climbed to 5♠ on their own power and were mildly lucky to chalk up +450.

Meanwhile, after a strong club by Rodwell, and natural positive response by Meckstroth, East-West had no difficulty reaching 4♠ in the Open Room for +450 and a push. Not quite a routine flat game, but there we were, still tied at 143.

This was the last board:

Board 64. E-W Vul.

♠ A K J 9 ♥ 10 6 ♦ J 9 4 2 ♣ 10 7 5	<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		♠ 7 6 5 4 3 ♥ K 9 5 4 ♦ 6 5 ♣ Q 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ Q 2 ♥ 8 3 ♦ A Q 8 ♣ A K J 6 3 2										

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Garner</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>
pass	1♥	pass	2♣
pass	2♦	pass	3♣ ¹
pass	3♥	pass	4♥
all pass			

1. Forcing.

With 26 combined high-card points it was inevitable that North-South would bid game, left to themselves. With no spade guard in a 2-2 fit, 3NT is best avoided; meanwhile 5♣ needs the ♣Q onside with a 3-2 break, and, even with all that, if West cashes two spades and switches to a heart, declarer is forced to guess which red suit is coming in.

Garner and Weinstein did very well to reach 4♥, which needed considerably less than the other games to succeed, but Meckstroth had an easy spade lead and declarer lost two spades and two trumps, -50.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Katz</i>	<i>Soloway</i>
pass	1♥	pass	2♣ ¹
pass	2♦ ²	pass	2NT ³
pass	3♦	pass	3♠ ⁴
pass	3NT	all pass	

1. Natural, or an artificial three-card limit raise in hearts.
2. Artificial, minimum.
3. Natural game force with clubs.
4. Uncertainty about strain.

Despite declarer's 2NT bid that suggested a spade guard, 3NT was not much of a contract, not nearly as good as the 4♥ reached at the other table. However, the relative quality of the two contracts was not the yardstick for measuring success, and a close look at the blocked spade suit will reveal that the Great Shuffler had decided that 3NT *could* be made on this momentous day.

Jacobs cashed the ♠K, looking for an attitude signal, and when Katz discouraged, switched to a heart. The heart finesse was not relevant to the success of 3NT if declarer was going to play on clubs, so Soloway called for the ♥A, played a club to the jack, and soon claimed eleven tricks (Jacobs eventually revealing himself in the pointed suits), +460. Those 11 IMPs were the difference in the match. NICKELL had won the fourth quarter 84-2, and won the match, 154-143.



"I'm sorry, Ralph, I couldn't beat that disgusting 3NT"

When we emerged to compare I thought we had a legitimate chance to win, and Meckwell said they were good too. It was simply amazing. Meck was keeping a running score, and as we wrote +11 on the last deal he screamed, ‘Win by 11’ — he and Rodwell were extremely excited, as if it was their first big win. It was truly great drama.

As nearly always, the secret to erasing a large deficit is to avoid going crazy while playing an enterprising and thoughtful game, avoiding unforced errors, and looking for opportunities to do something reasonable that would probably not be duplicated at the other table. It is remarkable that of the 16 deals, eight were pushes or one-IMP swings, and two of Hamway’s strong results were duplicated by Garner and Weinstein. NICKELL won anyway!

George Jacobs: ‘All we ever wanted was a flat board.’

Paul Soloway: ‘Luck best describes what happened.’



Team NICKELL

(l-r) Eric Rodwell, Jeff Meckstroth, Nick Nickell, Eric Kokish, Bob Hamman, Dick Freeman, Paul Soloway

However, that’s not quite the end of the story.

Writing in *The Bridge World*, David Berkowitz reported on a JACOBS appeal from an earlier session that had to be resolved before the result could be confirmed:

N-S Vul.

♠ Q 3	♥ K 9 8 7 5	♦ 10	♣ A J 10 9 3	♠ A 5 2	♥ A Q 6 4	♦ 8 6 4 3 2	♣ 7	♠ J 10 7 6	♥ J 3 2	♦ K 9 5	♣ K 6 2
-------	-------------	------	--------------	---------	-----------	-------------	-----	------------	---------	---------	---------

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 9 8 4

♥ 10

♦ A Q J 7

♣ Q 8 5 4

West	North	East	South
Lauria	Meckstroth	Versace	Rodwell
	pass	pass	1♦ ¹
2NT ²	3♣ ³	3♥	3♠
pass	3NT	pass	4♦
pass	5♦	all pass	

1. 2+ diamonds, 10-15.
2. Hearts and clubs.
3. Strong diamond raise.

With considerable luck and skillful play by declarer (aided substantially by clues from the bidding), the contract made: heart lead to dummy’s queen, diamond to the jack, club lost, heart to the ace (club discard), two more rounds of trumps, then (counting West for 2=5=1=5) the ♠8 passed to East. In the fullness of time, declarer picked up the rest of the spade suit with a late finesse of the nine for +600.

But there had been some irregular table action. West and South were screenmates. The director was called after the 4♦ bid; East-West claimed that the 3NT bid had taken between one and five minutes (the BBO operator estimated it at three minutes), and the hesitation might have stimulated the 4♦ takeout.

The director let the result stand. East-West appealed; they contended there were many North hands where 3NT would be the best North-South contract — indeed, they provided quite a few such hands. North-South argued that passing was not an alternative, as North, a passed hand, could have at most 10 HCP and would normally open with that strength and a six-card suit.

The excitement of the match was subdued, as the Appeals Committee took several hours to determine which team had won. The committee concluded that there had been a temporary break, not an exceptionally long one. With this premise, and the possibility that either hidden player had done all or most of the lengthy thinking, it was deemed that there had been no unauthorized information, so no adjustment would be applied. (Whether the committee would have decided that passing 3NT was a reasonable alternative, and what the result at that contract might have been, remains cloudy).

At about 3:30 AM, the comeback was officially complete.

Although it's unlikely that the NICKELL team members got much sleep after the emotional experience of that remarkable set and the long wait for a decision on the appeal, there would be no anticlimax. NICKELL went on to record yet another Spingold victory later that day by defeating the SPECTOR team (Warren Spector-Mark Feldman, Billy Cohen-Ron Smith, Gavin Wolpert-Vincent Demuy), 150-106. It was Bob Hamman's twelfth Spingold win, his first having come twenty-five years earlier, in 1979.

MASTER POINT PRESS

THE BRIDGE PUBLISHER



DON'T BE FOOLED!

COUNTERING DECEPTION AT BRIDGE

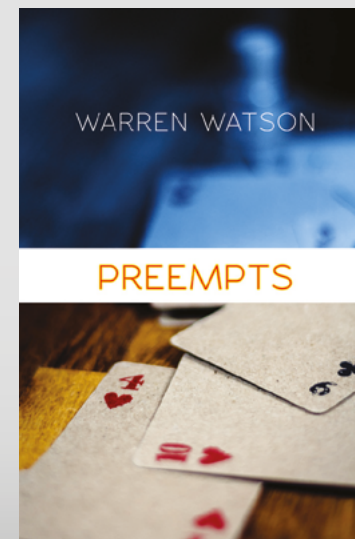
Danny Roth

Many books have been written on falsecards and other deceptive plays at the bridge table. However, few help the player recognize these deceptions and show how best to counter them. This book fills that gap – readers will learn the most common situations where deceptive play by the opposition may occur, and the most effective ways to nullify the threat.

PREEMPTS

Warren Watson

It has been many years since any bridge author attempted a comprehensive description of preemptive bidding, and much has changed in the interim. This is a complete treatment of preemptive bidding – not just when to open and with what, but the issues surrounding constructive and obstructive bidding in the subsequent auction.



AVAILABLE FROM A BRIDGE RETAILER NEAR YOU



Brother Hubert's Misfortune

by David Bird

For a change, the Abbot was enjoying a successful session. Brother Xavier had played only one contract and, largely due to this stroke of good fortune, the Abbot estimated their score at well over 60%. He was hoping to edge this number further upwards as they faced two novices on this deal:

Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ 43 ♥ KQ52 ♦ J10762 ♣ 94	<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	♠ 6 ♥ A6 ♦ AQ53 ♣ Q108762
N					
W E					
S					
♠ KQJ10972 ♥ 983 ♦ 8 ♣ A5	♠ A85 ♥ J1074 ♦ K94 ♣ KJ3				

West	North	East	South
Brother Jake	Brother Xavier	Brother Simon	The Abbot
-	-	1♣	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Aware that the Abbot held rather old-fashioned views on vulnerable three-level bids, Brother Xavier raised to game. Brother Jake led the ♣9 and raised an eyebrow as the dummy was displayed. ‘Do you play 3♠ as strong?’ he enquired.

‘Well, nominally it’s pre-emptive,’ Brother Xavier replied, ‘but it shows good values when we’re vulnerable.’

The Abbot nodded his agreement. Surely every sensible player followed this method. ‘Ten, please,’ he said.

The ten was covered with the jack and won with the ace. Now, what

was the best plan? The king of diamonds was likely to be offside, and the defenders would not allow him to take a heart ruff. It seemed that he would have to set up dummy’s club suit.

The Abbot led a second round of clubs, West following and East winning with the king. When the jack of hearts was returned, the Abbot allowed this to win. After this accurate start, the defenders had no way to turn. If East switched to a trump, the Abbot would draw trumps and enjoy the club suit. Brother Simon played another heart to dummy’s ace. The Abbot then played the ace of diamonds, ruffed a diamond in his hand and ruffed his remaining heart. A trick had to be lost to the trump ace but the game was his.

The Abbot glanced across the table. Would Brother Xavier break the habit of a lifetime and congratulate the hard-working declarer?

‘I was wondering if a diamond lead would break it,’ said Brother Xavier.

The Abbot waved this pointless observation aside, beckoning for the next board to be positioned.

‘Suppose you win with the ace and duck a heart,’ continued Brother Xavier. ‘They can win and switch to trumps. No hope is there?’

The Abbot ignored the question. There was certainly no hope of Brother Xavier ever uttering a traditional ‘Well played, partner’. Had he not noted the thoughtful play of a club at trick two and the essential duck when the heart switch came?

On the next round, the Abbot faced sterner opposition:

Dealer South. Neither Vul.

♠ J764 ♥ 6 ♦ KQ8 ♣ AQ862	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K1095 ♥ 3 ♦ 7643 ♣ K1093	♠ A2 ♥ AK94 ♦ J10952 ♣ J7
-----------------------------------	--	-------------------------------------	------------------------------------

West	North	East	South
<i>The Abbot</i>	<i>Brother Paulo</i>	<i>Brother Xavier</i>	<i>Brother Lucius</i>
–	–	–	1♦
2♥	Double	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

The Abbot led the ♥Q, noting his partner's ♥3 as declarer won with the ace. Brother Lucius continued with a low diamond. When the ace appeared from West, he unblocked dummy's queen.

The Abbot could see little future in the heart suit, particularly if the discouraging ♥3 was a singleton. He switched to the ♠3 and Brother Xavier contributed the ♠9.

Brother Lucius paused to consider the situation. The ♠3 suggested that the Abbot held an honour in the suit. Suppose he won this trick with the spade ace and ran the ♣J, losing to East's king. There was every chance that the defenders might then defeat him by taking three spade tricks. Yes, it seemed right to duck the first round of spades, allowing the ♠9 to win.

Brother Xavier continued with the ♠5, won with the ace. The Abbot saw that unblocking the ♠Q could serve no purpose, since he would never regain the lead. He followed low and Lucius then ran the ♣J. The finesse lost and a third round of spades went to the bare queen. Brother Lucius then claimed nine tricks when the Abbot reverted to hearts.

It occurred to the Abbot that an initial spade lead would have allowed

the defenders to untangle three winners in that suit before the ace of diamonds was removed. He sneaked a glance across the table. If Brother Xavier muttered one word about 'spade opening lead', he could find a new partner next week.

'Interesting spade position,' declared Brother Xavier. 'Even though Lucius held only ace-doubleton and our spades were 4-3, holding up the ace was the winning play.'

'If you held KQ109, it would be better to win immediately,' Lucius replied. 'Then dummy's jack comes to my rescue.'

No further words were said on the matter and the Abbot entered the score on his card. Perhaps Xavier was not feeling well. It was unlike him not to spot a double-dummy lead that would have worked luckily.

Soon afterwards, the Abbot's mood improved. The monastery's two most profligate top scatterers had arrived at his table.

Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ A976 ♥ J8 ♦ K97 ♣ 9876	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 3 ♥ 1073 ♦ 10865 ♣ KQ532	♠ J108542 ♥ A ♦ QJ32 ♣ 104
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West	North	East	South
<i>Brother Aelred</i>	<i>Brother Xavier</i>	<i>Brother Michael</i>	<i>The Abbot</i>
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Brother Aelred led the ♣8 and down went the dummy. The Abbot surveyed the scene with a disappointed air. Average expectations when

facing Brother Aelred and his partner were around 70%. This board had all the appearances of being the flattest of the evening. What use was a 50% score against one of the weakest pairs known to mankind? If trumps were 3-2 and the ♦K was onside, the whole room would make +450. If trumps were 4-1 and the ♦K was offside, it would be a column of 50s for East/West.

‘It’s dummy to play,’ said Brother Aelred.

‘I’m fully aware of that,’ grunted the Abbot. ‘Foreign as such a concept may be to you, some of us like to plan the play.’

East produced the ♣Q and the Abbot won with the ace. After crossing to dummy’s ace of trumps, he ran the ♦Q. Brother Aelred won with the king and returned the ♣6 to his partner’s king.

‘Was that the jack from you, Abbot?’ queried Brother Michael.

The Abbot nodded and Brother Michael paused to consider his next move. No more club tricks were available. That much was obvious. The Abbot was a strong favourite to hold the ♦A; otherwise he wouldn’t have crossed to dummy to take the diamond finesse. Defending was the hardest part of the game, or so everyone said. Still, it was beginning to look as if he should switch to the ♠3.

The Abbot exhaled audibly. What was the point of stopping to think when you had no idea about the game? Play a card, for heaven’s sake!

With a shrug of the shoulders, Brother Michael placed the ♠3 on the table. Brother Aelred won with the ace and a spade ruff then put the contract one down.

‘It’s there if you draw trumps,’ observed Brother Xavier. He scanned the result sheet. ‘Yes, two pairs were actually favoured with a diamond lead and made an overtrick.’

The Abbot beckoned for the next board to be brought into place. ‘Of course I’m taking the diamond finesse at match-points,’ he declared. ‘Trumps might have been 4-1. If they have a spade ruff to take, they could have beaten it anyway with a spade lead.’

Two rounds later, Brother Hubert took his seat at the Abbot’s table. He bore the air of a guest of honour arriving at a grand dinner. ‘Did you hear my piece of good news, Abbot?’ he enquired.

‘No,’ the Abbot replied. ‘Good news is always welcome in these troubled times. What was it?’

‘My book on trump leads has been published!’ declared Brother Hubert.

‘I spent ages looking for a commercial title. In the end I decided on “Become a Bridge Champion with Trump Leads”. What do you think of that?’

The Abbot managed to keep a straight face. He was tempted to ask Brother Hubert why he was usually below average in the monastery pairs, despite his near-100% record of leading a trump against a suit contract. ‘Which lucky publisher has managed to grab this potential best-seller?’ he enquired.

‘One of the biggest companies in the world,’ Brother Hubert replied proudly. ‘I published it on Amazon. It’s very easy. They have an application where you can design a front cover. You then just send them the cover and the PDF file to go inside.’

The Abbot was enjoying himself. ‘Do you have to supply text for the back cover?’ he persisted. ‘You know, extolling the virtues of the author and his qualifications for writing such a tome.’

‘Well, I’m not a national champion, as you know,’ replied Brother Hubert. ‘On the back cover I mention the records I’ve been keeping on trump leads, and how often they had proved successful. After 9 years of analysing the deals, I proved that trump leads are 84.5% successful.’

Brother Xavier leaned forwards. ‘That can’t be right, surely?’ he said.

‘Well, it’s an adjusted figure,’ replied Brother Hubert, reaching for his cards. ‘I had to exclude some freak deals where a trump lead was eminently correct but failed very unluckily.’

This was the board before them:

Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ 5 ♥ Q1063 ♦ QJ10 ♣ KJ976	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 1043 ♥ 74 ♦ K96543 ♣ 52	♠ 862 ♥ J9 ♦ A872 ♣ 10843
♠ AKQJ97 ♥ AK852 ♦ — ♣ AQ			

West	North	East	South
The Abbot	Brother Hubert	Brother Xavier	Brother Richard
-	-	-	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

♠ 1043		♠ 862
♥ 74		♥ J9
♦ K96543		♦ A872
♣ 52		♣ 10843
♠ 5		
♥ Q1063		
♦ QJ10		
♣ KJ976		
	♠ AKQJ97	
	♥ AK852	
	♦ —	
	♣ AQ	

The Abbot was not overjoyed when Brother Richard arrived in a slam. Brother Hubert, despite being a published bridge author, was one of the least accomplished declarers in the monastery. By comparison, his moderate partner was a genius in that department.

The Abbot led the ♦Q, declarer playing low from dummy and ruffing in his hand. All followed to the ace and king of hearts, the jack dropping from East on the second round. When a third round of hearts was led, the Abbot followed with a mildly deceptive queen.

‘Ruff with the ten,’ said Brother Richard. When East showed out, discarding a club, declarer returned to his hand with a diamond ruff and led a fourth round of hearts. Ruffing in dummy would now be a hopeless prospect. East would surely overruff and there would then be an avoidable club loser. ‘Throw a club,’ said Brother Richard.

Declarer could not be deprived of a subsequent club ruff in dummy and the slam was made. The Abbot, who could recognise a bad board when he saw one, thrust his cards back into the board.

‘That was a clever move, discarding a club,’ observed Brother Xavier. ‘I was wondering if a trump lead might have prevented it.’

Brother Hubert, who had paid little attention to the play, twitched in his seat.

‘Yes,’ continued Brother Xavier. ‘If declarer attempts the same line, discarding a club from dummy on the fourth round of hearts, I can ruff your winning heart and remove dummy’s last trump.’

‘That’s extremely bad timing,’ exclaimed Brother Hubert. ‘The moment my book is published, a very instructive trump-lead deal arrives. Had it happened just two weeks earlier, Abbot, you would have been mentioned in my book!’



Final Peebles SBU Congress 6th to 8th December 2019



The last SBU Congress after 46 years at the Peebles Hotel Hydro, and the only one in 2019, will take place in December this year. The format is shown below, but we aim to have a truly special event with some additional features:

- ‘Play through the ages’ with Liz McGowan. We have a special set of boards for you with a booklet providing analysis and entertaining stories from the history of the SBU congress
- A ‘nightcap with the experts’ late on Friday evening, hosted in the hotel’s brand new gin lounge. This will give you a chance to ask the experts about the hands played that day in a seminar format
- A celebratory Gala Dinner on Saturday, followed by a speedball pairs event.

To mark this final congress, participants will be encouraged to follow the evening dress code which was once the standard at Peebles congresses – strictly black tie, lounge suit or equivalents.

Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
14:00	Play through the ages	10:45	Swiss Pairs session 1	13:40	Swiss Teams session 2
19:45	Swiss Teams session 1	15:00	Swiss Pairs session 2		
23:00	Nightcap with the experts	18:45	Gala Dinner	19:45	Swiss Teams session 3
		22:00	Speedball pairs		

Join us in marking the end of an era and saying goodbye in style.

See over for costs and entry details.

Congress fees:

Full congress (includes Friday afternoon and the speedball)	£75
Congress Swiss Teams only (three sessions)	£45
Congress Swiss Pairs only (two sessions)	£30

Hotel prices:

We have worked hard to agree value-for-money rates with the hotel. Resident prices cover all meals including buffet lunches and the Gala Dinner.

Accommodation	Three nights (Friday lunch to Monday breakfast)
Single room	£340 pp
Double room used as a single	£395 pp
Double room	£315 pp

The Gala Dinner is available to non-residents for £45 pp.

Note that spaces are limited and there is much enthusiasm for the event. Residency for the whole weekend will secure a space – after that non-resident places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Entries:

Visit www.sbu.org.uk or contact Hasan or Julie at sbucongressdesk@gmail.com or on 0131 343 3838.

The uBid Auction Room

Marc Smith

Marc Smith follows the winners of the 2019 Spingold

The 2019 Spingold was held during the Summer Nationals in Las Vegas in July. A total of 98 teams lined up for Round 1 and, as usual, it was not long before some big names were eliminated. In the Round of 64, #9 WOLFSON (Jeff Wolfson, Steve Garner, Mike Kamil, Mike Becker and our own Alex Hydes and Peter Crouch), winners of the Vanderbilt at the Spring Nationals earlier this year, fell to the #73 seeds led by Walter Lee. In the Round of 32, we lost #5 ROBINSON and #10 CAYNE, and #2 NICKELL only survived by single figures after coming back from a big deficit over the final half dozen boards. Indeed, the NICKELL comeback in the Round of 16 then fell a few IMPs short, so only five of the original top eight seeds reached the quarter-final stage.

The big story in one half of the draw was the original #15 seeds, SPECTOR (Warren Spector/Gavin Wolpert, Joel Wooldridge/John Hurd and Vincent Demuy/John Kranyak), who had beaten first #2 NICKELL and then #7 LAVAZZA on their way to the semi-final. They would be up against the Dutch/Polish combination #3 TEAM BLASS (Sjoert Brink/Bas Drijver, Jacek Pszczola/Jacek Kalita/Michal Nowosadzki).

The other semi-final was #1 ZIMMERMAN (Pierre Zimmerman/Frank Multon, Piotr Gawrys/Michal Klukowski and Krzysztof Martens/Tor Helness) against the original #37 seeds from France, GAUTRET (Eric Gautret, Pierre Franceschetti, Jerome Rombaut, Michel Abercassis, Marc and Catherine Mus). It had taken victory over four higher-seeded teams, #27 O'ROURKE, #5 ROBINSON, #12 BRAMLEY and #4 MELTZER for them to get this far.

We will be following the eventual winners, TEAM BLASS, through their final two matches in the competition. Readers can bid the deals with their regular partner (using the bidding slips provided elsewhere in the magazine) and then compare their contracts with those reached at the table by the Spingold winners. We begin with the very first deal of the semi-final:

Hand 1

Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ Q754
♥ AK82
♦ A
♣ AK52



♠ AJ10932
♥ Q10753
♦ 2
♣ 7

(North opens a natural 4♦)

West	North	East	South
Brink	Kranyak	Drijver	Demuy
-	4♦	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♦	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

Do you overcall at the four-level with this shapely seven-count? Bas Drijver did, and Brink quickly launched into Blackwood. When the one key-card response came back through the screen, Brink shook his head with disbelief and laughed with his screenmate, Demuy, about the one key-card response. Of course, Demuy already knew where the other one was. There was nothing to the play: E/W +980

In the replay, East did not overcall and South increased the pre-empt:

West	North	East	South
Spector	Pepsi	Wolpert	Kalita
-	4♦	Pass	5♦
Double	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

There was some discussion amongst the BBO VuGraph commentators about how many diamonds South should bid. The general agreement was that 5♦ was right as you expect the opponents to be able to make slam, and raising to Six Diamonds is only likely to push them into it. Raising only to game leaves them the option of stopping in five of a major.

Indeed, Wolpert decided that he could do no more than make a minimum response to his partner's double. With such a monster hand, Spector was never likely to pass Five Spades although, of course, doing so might have been right. N/S +980 and an honourable push to start the match.

Recommended auction: There is no guesswork for West in the Dutch auction above. Not that East's overcall is without risk, but I'm inclined to think it is the right thing to do.

MARKS: Six Spades/Six Hearts 10, Five Spades/Five Hearts 4

Running Score: 2019 Spingold Winners 10

The first major swing of the match came on the very next deal:

Hand 2.

Dealer East. N/S Game.

♠ 10 ♥ AK ♦ AK2 ♣ KQ109743		♠ Q92 ♥ Q10942 ♦ Q983 ♣ J
-------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------

West	North	East	South
<i>Spector</i>	<i>Pepsi</i>	<i>Wolpert</i>	<i>Kalita</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
3♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

At the table where SPECTOR sat East/West, South was able to overcall cheaply in spades having previously passed. Spector's jump to Three Diamonds showed a hand too strong for a jump rebid in clubs. Wolpert now took a shot at game, hoping that ♠Qxx would be enough of a spade stop – it wasn't! South led from ♠AJxxxx and the defenders took the first seven tricks. E/W -300.

South was not given a chance to bid in the other room:

West	North	East	South
<i>Brink</i>	<i>Kranyak</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Demuy</i>
–	–	2♥	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♦*	Pass	3♥*	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Bas Drijver opened with a natural weak two, described on their convention card as 3-9 HCP and often a five-card suit non-vulnerable in first seat. Brink asked with 2NT and was told that his partner held a shortage somewhere. He asked where, found out it was in clubs, and settled for game in his partner's major.

Of course, with East's club being the jack, Five Clubs is easily the best game. Four Hearts was okay too, though. North held ♥J-x-x-x but the defence can only force dummy once unless South finds an unlikely low spade lead – okay against notrumps, but far less obvious against a suit contract.

Recommended auction: Of course, I agree completely with opening a natural Two Hearts on this East hand, so I'd be happy to duplicate the Dutch auction above. If you do pass, you will be faced with the same problem that Spector was at the first table – not an easy bid at all. Bidding at the two-level will allow North to bid Two Spades, which should at least keep you out of the 3NT. Getting to Five Clubs, though, is not so easy unless West simply punts it.

MARKS: Five Clubs 10, Four Hearts 8, Four Clubs 6, Three Hearts 5, 3NT 2

Running Score: 2019 Spingold Winners 18

Hand 3.

Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ 872 ♥ K ♦ KQ64 ♣ AQ875		♠ KJ963 ♥ A3 ♦ AJ1097 ♣ J
-----------------------------------	--	------------------------------------

West	North	East	South
<i>Brink</i>	<i>Kranyak</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Demuy</i>
–	–	1♠	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♠*	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♥*	Pass
3♠*	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass
6♦	Pass	Pass	Double
6NT	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			

Two Clubs was an artificial game force and Two Spades showed 14+ HCP with at least 5-4 in spades and diamonds. Brink then relayed to find out that his partner was exactly 5-2-5-1 before setting diamonds as trumps. Drijver cue-bid in hearts and Brink advanced with a Blackwood variation, with the Five Diamonds response showing either zero key-cards or an unsuitable minimum.

They would have stopped in a good contract (albeit played from the wrong side), had Brink passed Five Diamonds, but he thought he had enough for slam despite his partner's warning. Demuy's double disillusioned Brink of that idea, and the conversion to notrumps actually saved a few IMPs, although it need not have done so.

As instructed, North led the ♠10. Demuy won with the ♠Q and, unsure how good declarer's clubs were, cashed the ♠A to ensure beating the contract. Of course, as the cards lie switching to a club at trick two would have produced an extra trick for the defence. E/W -100.

West	North	East	South
<i>Spector</i>	<i>Pepsi</i>	<i>Wolpert</i>	<i>Kalita</i>
-	-	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
5♦	Pass	6♦	All Pass

Here, Spector forced to game with Two Clubs, showed a three-card spade fit, then supported diamonds once his partner had rebid them. Wolpert cue-bid in hearts and Spector declined to show his club control, but Wolpert carried on to slam anyway.

Declarer won the heart lead with dummy's king and immediately played a spade. The defence played three rounds of the suit, North ruffing, to beat the contract by two. N/S -100 for a push.

Recommended auction: The Spector-Wolpert auction seems quite reasonable, perhaps up until the final raise to slam. Not that Six Diamonds from the East seat is such a bad spot. You can win the heart lead, cross to hand in trumps and pitch a spade on the ♥A. A trump to dummy and a spade up gives you 11 tricks whenever spades break 3-2 and essentially allows you to make slam if you guess the ♠K-J combination correctly. Of course, on the actual layout, there is no winning guess.

MARKS: 3NT/Four Spades/Five Diamonds (E) 10, Six Diamonds (E) 8, Six Diamonds (W) 7, Five Diamonds(W) 6, Six Spades/Six Notrump 2

Running Score: 2019 Spingold Winners 20

TEAM BLASS led by 19 after the first set but SPECTOR closed the gap to 4 IMPs at halftime and took the lead by 9 after three sets. TEAM BLASS won the final set 34-5, though, to claim victory by 20 IMPs (108-88). In the other semi-final, GAUTRET led by 8 IMPs at the midpoint, but a 28-0 whitewash in the third set put ZIMMERMANN ahead, and they ran out winners by 24 IMPs (110-86).

After the first set of the final, TEAM BLASS led by 4 IMPs, but ZIMMERMANN had turned that around early in the second quarter. Sometimes, the most innocuous-looking deal can swing a significant number of IMPs. Witness...

Hand 4.

Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ 10753	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> </table> </div>	N	W	S	E	♠ QJ8
N						
W						
S						
E						
♥ AJ4	♥ 1032					
♦ Q	♦ KJ84					
♣ AKQ73	♣ J84					

West	North	East	South
<i>Brink</i>	<i>Martens</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Helness</i>
-	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	All Pass

The natural auction stalled at the two-level, and it is hard to see that either player has done anything out of the ordinary. Indeed, you would expect this to be a flattish board. Whether the opponents play in Two Clubs, Two Spades or 1NT at the other table, you are only arguing over the odd IMP. E/W +110.

West	North	East	South
<i>Multon</i>	<i>Kalita</i>	<i>Zimmermann</i>	<i>Pepsi</i>
-	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Pierre Zimmermann decided to treat his hand as 3-3-3-4 shape and respond 1NT rather than bidding his diamonds. Whilst I would certainly agree if you switched the red-suit honours, I am not sure why this hand justifies doing anything other than making the standard bid. On the other side of the table, rather than downgrading his 16-count because of the singleton diamond honour, Franck Multon seems to have re-evaluated things in the opposite direction.

You can decide for yourself whether this auction displayed excellent judgement or blind luck. Perhaps it's just a French thing, but whatever you call it there's no doubt it worked a treat here.

You can hardly blame Pepsi for leading the ♦10 from ♠Ax ♥Qxx ♦A109xx ♣9xx. (To have a chance of beating 3NT you have to lead either a heart or a low diamond.) Declarer won with dummy's singleton ♦Q and led a spade. After the lead of the ten, it does not help for North to rise with the ♠K and return a diamond, since declarer's ♦8 provides him with a third stopper in the suit. E/W +600 and another 10 IMPs to ZIMMERMANN, pushing their lead into double figures midway through the second set.

Recommended auction: I really cannot argue with the Dutch auction above, however unsuccessful it may have been.

MARKS: 3NT 10, Three Clubs, Two Spades/2NT 7

Running Score: 2019 Spingold Winners 27

On our next exhibit, you could be forgiven for thinking the players were bidding different boards at the two tables:

Hand 5.

Dealer West. N/S Game.

♠ J5	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 0 10px;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A7
♥ AJ542		♥ K987
♦ K		♦ 10954
♣ AJ732		♣ KQ6

(North overcalls 1♠. South raises to 2♠ if able or doubles a 2♠ cue-bid. North then competes to 3♠ if he can)

West	North	East	South
Kalita	Zimmermann	Pepsi	Multon
1♥	1♠	2♦*	2♠
3♥	3♠	4♥	All Pass

At this table, it was all very sedate. Zimmermann overcalled One Spades and Pepsi advanced with a Two Diamond transfer, showing an undefined heart raise. Multon raised to Two Spades and Kalita showed some extra shape but a minimum hand with a non-forcing Three Hearts.

Zimmermann competed to the three-level but, by now, Pepsi knew he had plenty for game but not enough to look for a slam. E/W +420.

At the other table, it was the same auction on steroids:

West	North	East	South
Martens	Drijver	Helness	Brink
1♥	2♠	2NT*	4♠
5♣	5♠	6♥	Double
All Pass			

Drijver began the acceleration of the auction with a vul-vs-not weak jump overcall of Two Spades, perhaps not everyone's choice on three queens and a side-suit jack! Helness showed an invitational or better four-card heart raise and Multon put the cat amongst the pigeons with a full-blooded leap to game. Martens had numerous choices here, and Five Clubs was probably the most aggressive of them.

Having already apparently limited his hand, Drijver now bid a fifth spade. Although an unconventional action, Five Spades was not going to be a disaster (declarer is just one down for -200 if he gets the diamonds right) against -420 scored at the other table. Whether the Dutchmen would have found the winning defence against Five Hearts is, of course, something we shall never know.

Influenced, no doubt, by the excellent holding in his partner's second suit, the Norwegian took the push and bid the slam. Brink immediately let him know that this was not the winning action. The play was brisk, Drijver leading a diamond to the ace and Brink returning a club for his partner to ruff. Since he held ♥Q10x behind declarer, though, Drijver didn't need the ruff and a spade return would have netted a second undertrick for the defence. E/W -100 and 11 IMPs to TEAM BLASS, nosing ahead by 6 IMPs with the midway point of the match fast approaching.

Recommended auction: After a One Spade overcall, a 2NT limit-raise or better heart raise would have cut out South and ended North/South's interference. Perhaps If West then introduces his clubs at the three-level, he might encourage his partner to carry the partnership beyond the safety level but, with an effective 10-count, I think the hand is not worth more

than a jump to game despite the good shape. Thus 1♥-(1♠)-2NT*-4♥-Pass seems eminently sensible.

MARKS: Four Hearts 10, Five Hearts 7, Six Hearts 4.

Running Score: 2019 Spingold Winners 37

Hand 6.

Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ 10973
♥ AKQJ
♦ K653
♣ 9



♠ KJ
♥ 8543
♦ A4
♣ A7654

(North overcalls 2♣)

West	North	East	South
Nowosadzki	Gawrys	Kalita	Klukowski
1♦	2♣	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

With marginal game values, choosing to defend is not an unreasonable option on this East hand. If you are wrong, after all, you rate to get something like +300 against +400/420 for a small loss, but you will score well if game is failing. Indeed, that is exactly the case here: if you opt, say, for 2NT, then partner will raise to 3NT which has only eight tricks. If, instead, you start with a negative double, you will get to Four Hearts and, in theory at least (although see below) make +420.

Declarer managed to make six tricks in Two Clubs Doubled: E/W +300.

West	North	East	South
Helness	Drijver	Martens	Brink
1♦	2♣	Double	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♥	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			

Krytztof Martens is a wonderful bridge player but I suspect I would not be alone in thinking that his mind was momentarily taken over by mad

aliens during this auction. As mentioned above, the negative double of Two Clubs is an eminently reasonable option, but when partner bids only Two Spades he shows a minimum opening bid. Indeed, you quite reasonably now continue with a non-forcing 2NT. Partner now comes alive and jumps to Four Hearts. Most of us would think “Oh, well, let’s hope his big trumps don’t get forced too often,” and put down dummy.

Martens not only soldiered on with Five Clubs but, when partner failed to cue-bid in diamonds, he then forced to slam with a Five Spade cue-bid. South’s double of the final contract is no big surprise. Credit to Tor Helness, who played the hand well to make eleven tricks in hearts: E/W -100 and 9 IMPs to TEAM BLASS.

Recommended auction: I cannot argue much with either of the auctions above, assuming that you pass Four Hearts in the second one.

MARKS: Four Hearts 10, Two Clubs-Doubled (S) 7, 3NT/Five Hearts 3

Running Score: 2019 Spingold Winners 44

TEAM BLASS won the third set 58-25 to take a 37-IMP lead into the final 14 boards. Zimmermann was still in the match, but only just...

Hand 7.

Dealer East. N/S Game.

♠ K63
♥ K8
♦ AKJ872
♣ 96



♠ 8
♥ Q10653
♦ Q5
♣ AK1085

West	North	East	South
Nowosadzki	Gawrys	Kalita	Klukowski
-	-	1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Although playing 2/1, the Poles still play that a reverse would show some extra values, so Kalita was forced to rebid his hearts on this minimum opening. Stuck for a bid now, Michal Nowosadzki temporized with Two Spades, which meant that the notrumps would be played from the East seat. TEAM BLASS had, therefore, reached the best spot, but from the

wrong side of the table.

South held ♠J10xxx but, perhaps put off by West's spade bid, opted to lead a club from two small. That was all declarer needed and he eventually scored up ten tricks: E/W +430.

West	North	East	South
<i>Helness</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Martens</i>	<i>Brink</i>
-	-	1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♦	All Pass

Krysztof Martens was able to bid clubs at his second turn. Helness rebid his good diamonds and now Martens had to decide whether to try for 3NT via a fourth-suit Three Spades or raise diamonds, He chose the latter option and once Blackwood discovered two aces missing Helness stopped safely in game.

The play here was not easy, though, even after what looked like a favourable lead of the ♣J (Roman style leads). Helness won in dummy and led the singleton spade, but thereafter could no longer make the contract. E/W -50.

Having come into the final 14-board set trailing by 37, ZIMMERMANN needed big swings, and fairly quickly, Was this the big chance? Curiously, they bid to a game that could be made in one room, but went down whilst, at the other table their opponents bid a game that could be beaten, but wasn't. That all meant it was 10 IMPs to TEAM BLASS when it could easily have been the same number in the other direction.

Recommended auction: I am also a believer that a reverse should show extras, even playing 2/1, so I agree with Kalita's Two Heart bid in the first auction above. Something like 1♥-2♦-2♥-3♦-3♠-3NT gets you to the top spot, assuming that you play Three Spades as asking for a spade stop rather than showing one (which is, I think, a better method).

MARKS: 3NT (W), Five Diamonds 8, 3NT (E) 6, Four Diamonds 5, Four Hearts 4

Running Score: 2019 Spingold Winners 50

If that board bard was the final nail in the ZIMMERMANN coffin, our last one was surely the cherry on the TEAM BLASS cake.

Hand 8.

Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ Q7	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S		♠ A53
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ K7	♥ A5										
♦ QJ96532	♦ A8										
♣ 32	♣ AKQ1096										

(South opens a natural weak 2♥. North bids a non-forcing 2♠)

At the table where ZIMMERMANN was East/West, South passed and North opened a weak-only Multi in third seat, showing 5-11 HCP and a six-card major:

West	North	East	South
<i>Klukowski</i>	<i>Nowosadzki</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Kalita</i>
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	2♦	Double	3♥
5♦	Pass	7♦	All Pass

East started with a double of the Multi and South jumped to Three Hearts, described as pass or correct. This is itself is a rather strange choice: holding two spades and six hearts it would seem more normal to bid Three Spades, giving the defenders only one chance.

Not that Klukowski had any interest in defending. He jumped to Five Diamonds and Piotr Gawrys, no doubt with one eye on his side's desperate need to generate a swing at this stage, jumped all the way to the grand slam. Indeed, he could have been right, since both defenders held a weak two in one of the majors and diamonds were 2-2. Unluckily for the Poles, though, the ♦K was with the weak two in the South seat: E/W -50.

At the other table, South opened his weak two:

West	North	East	South
<i>Brink</i>	<i>Helness</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Martens</i>
-	-	-	2♥
Pass	2♠	3NT	All Pass

With the opponents having already bid both majors before the auction got to Drijver's 21-count, the Dutchman made the practical bid that would no doubt be the choice of many in this situation. Perhaps Brink drew the inference that his partner was likely to hold a good club suit

from his failure to start with a double, as he surely would were he interested in an alternative denomination. Having decided to settle for game, it seems to be a close choice between 3NT and Five Diamonds. E/W +460 and another 11 IMPs to TEAM BLASS, padding the final margin.

MARKS: Six Diamonds (W) 10, Five Diamonds 7, 3NT 6, Five Clubs 3, 6NT 2, Six Clubs 1

Final Score: 2019 Spingold Winners 56

TEAM BLASS won the final set 36-20 and the match by 57 IMPs (152-95).

Congratulations to TEAM BLASS on their victory in one of the strongest events in the world bridge calendar. As we see almost every year, even those teams with large seeding numbers are quite capable of causing an upset. The TEAM BLASS score of just 56/80 on this month's deals gives readers who bid well a chance to outscore the experts. Mark Horton will be back in this chair next month, but I will return in the November issue with another set of deals that challenged the experts at a major event somewhere in the world.





The Master Point Press Bidding Battle Set 20

Moderated by Brian Senior

Some pretty big votes, including one unanimous panel, this month. We'll see if the readership gives the same sort of results. I suspect that they will not always do so.

PROBLEM 1

Pairs. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ KQJ7
♥ 5
♦ 98764
♣ AK8

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	Pass	1NT*
Pass	2♠*	Pass	3♣*
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass

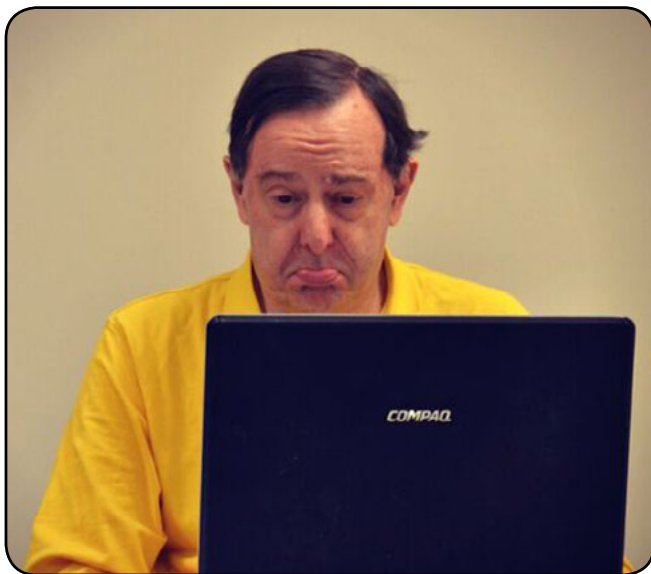
?
1NT 15-17
2♠ Clubs
3♣ Likes clubs

Bid	Votes	Marks
Pass	7	10
4♠	4	6
3♠	3	7
3♦	2	5

The opposition have a club fit and half our high-card strength is in clubs. Partner, a passed hand, has made a take-out double which commits us to the three level – of course partner knows that we have good strength once the opposition stop in 3♣. So, do we bid game, settle for a part-score, or go for the 'magic' +200 on a Pairs part-score deal?

THE BIDS & MARKS

	Bid	No. of Votes	Marks		Bid	No. of Votes	Marks
1.	Pass	7	10	5.	Pass	10	10
	4♠	4	6		5NT	3	8
	3♠	3	7		5♥	1	6
	3♦	2	5		5♣	1	5
2.	Redouble	9	10	4NT	1	4	
	2♥	6	8	6. 4NT	10	10	
	2♠	1	6	4♦	4	7	
3.	Pass	15	10	4♥	2	6	
	Double	1	3	7. Pass	12	10	
	3♦	0	2	3♣	3	6	
	3♠	0	2	2NT	1	3	
4.	2♦	16	10	8. 3♦	8	10	
	4♥	0	3	2♦	5	8	
	3♣	0	2	3♠	2	5	
	3♥	0	2	4♠	1	4	
	3NT	0	2				



**Brian Senior—your Moderator—
universally and affectionately known as
Mr. Grumpy**

Rosen: 3♦. Pass could work here – but I like to take out take-out doubles. 3♠ could be weird.
Sandsmark: 3♦. Partner’s double is a T/O, probably without a spade suit, but he should have a spade fit and the two other suits. It seems somewhat naïve to believe in 3NT, because you know that partner doesn’t have an opening and that you hold a maximum of 23 HCP together. He must have all the remaining HCP, and as good as all of his honours will probably be, but unfortunately placed in front of the NT opener. You also know that whatever you bid now, will become the final contract. This is probably the best hand partner can have:

♠ KQJ7	♠ 954
♥ 5	♥ KQ87
♦ 98764	♦ KQ532
♣ AK8	♣ 52

Even with this lay-out you will probably have to surrender at least one trick in each of the four suits, it seems difficult to win 3NT. Even if you alter partner’s hand a little, 3NT will be a futile venture:

♠ KQJ7	♠ 9542
♥ 5	♥ KQ87
♦ 98764	♦ KQ532
♣ AK8	♣ 5

3NT (and 4♠ or 5♦) is a complete shot in the dark, especially if South holds:

♠ A1083
♥ A10
♦ AJ10
♣ QJ105

Therefore I rule out any game and think it would be wise to cool it and only bid a contract that may have a chance to make. Since I am famous for my unsuccessful predictions, my best guess would be that most of the jurors will pass the double “in order to make the points go our way” or venture 3NT. In my view, there is nothing safe at all in passing, since we know for sure that the responder will probably have no points but probably a good distribution.

They bid their longest suit – hardly a crime when facing a take-out double – but the majority of bidders prefer to bid the chunky four-card major.

Teramoto: 3♠. This is Pairs and it is fine to play in a Spade contract. There look to be diamond losers, and they may get a ruff a also.

Rigal: 3♠. Not an easy call. Do I punish partner and jump to 4♠ or do I go low and encourage him to balance next time? I just don’t know but I’m going to protect my partner and encourage him to balance next time. Yes passing might work

but I really want partner to act the next time he has ♠10xxx♥Qxxxx♦KQxx♣-. Wouldn’t you?
Robson: 3♠. Could gamble out a pass with a very promising defence. But why punish partner’s enterprise with a weak 5530 shape? I’ll take a bottom-avoiding route, so often best at Pairs.

Very reasonable. Partner will not be impressed if we go all optimistic and get our side a minus after he has shown some enterprise by balancing. But there were also votes for a jump to game.

Leufkens: 4♠. I know: partner can be weak, and diamonds are over partner. But still, why can’t this be a good game? Even vs. a bad dummy like ♠Axxx♥KJxx♦Qxxx♣x or ♠Axx♥KJxx♦Qxxxx♣x. If partner is weaker, then he’s likely to have two Aces, even in Pairs! I don’t pass, with opponents having a possible nine-card fit and possibly a second fit, with partner to be finessed.

Cannell: 4♠. Partner has made a take-out double vulnerable. I expect just the right dummy to garner ten tricks.

Mould: 4♠. Yes, OK, I know pard has protected and I know that this is Pairs, but I just have SOOO much. The oppo clearly have 9 or 10 clubs between them and pard is going to be shape suitable. ♠Axxx♥xxxx♦xxxx♣x gives me play for the contact for Gawd’s sake. If I am driving game, I see no point in Four Clubs since surely I am going to play this hand in spades come what may. I suppose Pass could be right but only if game is not on as I cannot see it getting us 800.

Stabell: 4♠. This could be punishing partner for balancing, but there are too many hands opposite where +170 would not be enough and might not even outscore defending 3♣ undoubled. As

little as ♠Axxx ♥xxxxx ♦xxxx gives some play for 4♠ and partner will hopefully have better than that.

Plus 170 will not, of course, be good enough, if other pairs are collecting +200 by passing the double, and Pass is indeed the plurality choice.

Lambardi: Pass. Tempting to bid 4♠ but + 200 in 3♣ doubled should get us a very good score (and it could easily be more than that). While prospects of making 4♠ are good , trumps may not be enough to cross-ruff or set up the diamonds. Partner is likely to have four spades – but not sure. Tougher at teams.

Sime: Pass. Perhaps not as clearcut as some may believe... “a refugee from a lead problem competition?” I would prefer QJ9x of trump and my Ace-King elsewhere. However, I am seduced by plus 200 on a hand where a lot of the field will be in partials.

Good point – holding slower club winners plus outside winners would make our decision much easier.

Apteker: Pass. Rates to fetch the magical 200 at pairs!

Green: Pass. Playing for the magic 200 at pairs. Having trump control means that I am highly likely to obtain a heart ruff and who knows I may make a spade trick too some of the time.

Bird: Pass. Give partner only the ♠A and we could take two spades, one heart ruff and the ♣AK in defence. I might even risk the same action at IMPs. I will steel myself for your ‘North had a singleton spade and...’ sob story at the end.

Smith: Pass. Partner is a passed hand so game is unlikely, but I can probably get the magic

matchpoint +200 if partner has a little as an ace. I lead my heart and have time to test both spades and diamonds before declarer can draw my trumps.

Alder: Pass. It seems to be this; or 4♣, planning to convert 4♥ to 4♠ to show four spades and four-plus diamonds; or 4♠ immediately. For South to like clubs missing the ace and king, he surely has four-card support and probably a maximum no trump. So partner, with a club void, might well have stretched to double. I will go for 500 (or 800!) this way. Maybe partner has already won the board for us by doubling.

Indeed, maybe partner has already won us the board by finding a balance that others have not? In that case 3♠ or 3♦ could be sufficient to get us a very good score.



Alon Apteker

I’m not sure about opener needing a maximum to show a liking for clubs but, unless he has queen-to-three, I agree that he is likely to have four-card support. Our clubs will be of limited value on offence if partner is void in the suit.

I’m not sure that the panel has convinced me one way or another. Just under half vote for Pass, while of those who bid there is a narrow majority for settling for part-score. If I remember correctly, passing was the big winner at the table.

PROBLEM 2

Pairs. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ AK954
♥ Q87
♦ 74
♣ J105

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥*	Pass
1♠	Pass	Pass	Double
?			

1♥ Playing four-card majors and weak no-trump

Bid	Votes	Marks
Redouble	9	10
2♥	6	8
2♠	1	6

This one is much more straightforward than the previous problem. A small majority choose to show their strength as the first priority:

Sime: Redouble. I won’t reveal my three hearts at this juncture, only that it is probably our hand.

Rosen: Redouble. Then 2♥ or 2♠ next maybe.

Sandsmark: Redouble. I have a solid maximum



Drew Cannell

for my initial pass, and even though I know that partner has a weak opening, my redouble will make him better equipped for a good decision. If he pulls in a minor, I will support his ♥, and he can repeat his ♥ with five cards or support my ♠ with a four-card support. In my book a redouble is the most flexible bid on this hand!

I'd be surprised if partner has passed 1♠ holding four-card support.

Teramoto: Redouble. Show a good hand first, it is about 10 points plus. Later, I will support 2♥ if possible.

Cannell: Redouble. I will announce my maximum first round Pass with redouble. My next bid might be the heart support which may help partner assess the level and strain.

Robson: Redouble. Show strength, planning to follow with 2♥.

Rigal: Redouble. Plenty of time to raise hearts the next time. If I don't redouble partner won't know which major to play. I don't think game is likely to make but I would like to get hearts in to help with a three-level decision.

Smith: Redouble. Let's start by showing some extra strength and, I think, decent spades in what would otherwise be a dangerous position. It's not clear from my side whether spades or diamonds will play better – does partner have three spades when he passes One Spade, or can he be 2533? It is also not guaranteed that partner has five hearts, as he would surely open One Heart in third seat with something like ♠xxx ♥AKJx ♦Jxxx ♣xx. If it goes 2♣/♦ on my left back to me, I'll bid Two Hearts myself.

Green: Redouble. I would rather show my strength to start with and can always bid 2♠ later if need be. Redoubling may also slow the auction down, so I may be able to play in 2♠ and convince the opponents not to compete to the three level.

Like me, Ben is assuming that partner will have three-card spade support to pass 1♠ – I'm certain that it is losing bridge to pass with only a doubleton. In that case, there is a certain eight-card spade fit and only a potential eight-card heart fit. Even if there are two five-three fits, how are we to guess which one will play better?

There is one vote for bidding 2♠ immediately, obviously based on the same assumption:

Stabell: 2♠. Hope to buy the contract and let North guess at the three-level. Could I not have bid 2♠ last time?

2♠ as a fit jump? If that promised only three-card heart support then yes you could. Some,

however, would want four-card support for what might be only a four-card major.

Making an opponent have the last guess is a sound approach, of course, but what if partner could still contribute to a competitive auction? Then perhaps it will help him to know about our heart support?

Lambardi: 2♥. Strength is irrelevant by now as partner has stated we are not going to game. The issue seems to be what to do over the opponent's minor-suit contract. I show my 3-card support now and may (or may not !) T/O double if they continue on to the 3-level. Partner seems to have a spade tolerance so 2♠ is also possible, but I prefer 2♥ as it helps partner evaluate.

Apteker: 2♥. If partner has 3♠s, which is likely, and only 4♥s, then I expect a preference back to 2♠. Given that partner has passed my 1♠ bid, I do not expect to make game so will do no more than a simple raise.

Leufkens: 2♥. Partner can pass 1♠ with less than 3 spades, so no 2♠ for me (with a possible singleton in front of me). Partner will correct to 2♠ with 3-4 (I don't bid 1♠ with 4-card support).

Alder: 2♥. What else? Three Hearts will be passed out, and maybe we can buy it here. Redouble ought to indicate a defensive hand; this one is offensive.

Mould: 2♥. There is no point in redouble as we will never be doubling them at the two level. I will thus show some values and heart support. Seems sensible to me...

Bird: 2♥. I would have bid 2♥ in the first place with four spades and three hearts, so this gives a picture of my 5-3 shape. A redouble seems a waste of time when we have no game and no

intention of defending.

I think the redoublers are more expressing our ownership of the hand than looking to take a penalty.

I don't feel very strongly about this one. All three calls appear to have their merits.

PROBLEM 3

Pairs. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ AKQ10
♥ Q4
♦ Q9754
♣ 84

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	Pass	3♣
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
Pass	15	10
Dble	1	3
3♦	0	2
3♠	0	2

I only tempted one panellist with this one. I wonder if the readers will have less willpower?

Sandsmark: Double. Vulnerable it is a bit risky, but on the other hand you just hate to pass with such a good distribution. Partner will need very little more than spade support for 4♠ to be a good contract. If partner pulls in 3♥, I will bid 3♠, and he will know that I have both the pointed suits. This time I believe that I will be a proud member of the majority in the panel.

I'm so sorry Tommy, but the panel has let you down once again.

For the rest it was a simple matter – there was

no good action available so they all passed, though Phillip came up with another poor prediction.

Alder: Pass. Since partner is a passed hand, we probably do not have a game, and doubling (which is probably the majority choice) risks ending in a silly 4-2 heart fit.

Green: Pass. Double is dangerous because I can't stomach a 3♥ response. Obviously partner might bid a pointed suit but when vulnerable I think this is a significant risk so I opt to go quietly.

Bird: Pass. It's a tricky one. Shall I vote for 'wild' or 'sensible'? Despite the rest of the panel's testosterone levels hovering at 160%, I will be sensible.

Rosen: Pass. Anything else too weird

Cannell: Pass – Pre-empts work. A little dangerous to wander in at the three-level on this collection.

Mould: Pass. You might tempt me when pard was not a passed hand, but here I have a minimum opening bid, a terrible club holding, both vulnerable, a passed partner, and no way into the auction that is not seriously flawed. If pard cannot compete let them get on with it. Doubtless Brian will tell me this is losing Pairs tactics.

Leufkens: Pass. No suitable bid, so stick with it in Pairs.

Teramoto: Pass. This hand is not too strong to Pass opposite passed hand. Partner will Pass often if he has 3+ Clubs and it is OK for us. We are fine to defend at the 3-level when we have less than a nine-card fit. They are Vulnerable, it may be good if they down.

Apteker: Pass. No bid is satisfactory on marginal values and partner is still there to balance

so no need to take any unnecessary risks. If partner has some ♣s and passes, defending is probably best.

Yes, if partner has some clubs defending is very likely to be the right thing to do.

Lambardi: Pass. A non-problem opposite a passed hand. 3♠ is more tempting than 3♦ on several accounts but it is too likely to drive us overboard in the best of scenarios.

Smith: Pass. The only alternative seems to be Three Spades, which would be more attractive if either East or South had been the dealer. Here, with both North and East already passed hands, 3♣ is likely to end the auction, so I am not tempted to bid in order to deter a 3NT bid from North. Surely a big majority here.

Interesting that two panellists would rather bid the strong four-card major than the much weaker five-card minor. At the table, West bid 3♦ and found a perfect dummy, which allowed that contract to make while partner was not tempted to bid on. It is, as they say, better to be lucky than to be good.

Robson: Pass. Partner's still there. If I do act (double I presume) lots of bad things can happen.

Stabell: Pass. Pre-empts work. I have no good alternative and will only take my 7-8 seconds. Partner is still there.

Rigal: Pass and fast, to let partner balance if he wants to, with no UI. Frankly I don't think this one is close to a bid and you could beef up my diamonds with the J10 and still leave me inclined to stay out of things.

Sime: Pass. In tempo, allowing partner (who is also aware that they are a passed hand and a pre-empt) to balance with short clubs.

Yes, partner is still there and if he has a maximum pass with short clubs may reopen. Then we can decide what to do. For now, surely the panel has the right of it in passing.

PROBLEM 4

Pairs. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ A
♥ AK9
♦ A62
♣ KJ9654

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
2♦	16	10
4♥	0	3
3♣	0	2
3♥	0	2
3NT	0	2

From an almost unanimous panel to a completely unanimous panel. As I have already said, let's see if the readers find the problem as straightforward.

Sime: 2♦. The original old chestnut? A popular solution was the three-card reverse. Serious partnerships should have discussed. Our “pick-up expert partnership” should be aware of the possibility.

Rosen: 2♦. Old chestnut, too good for 3♣ and in the absence of any methods to show a strong hand with 6 clubs and 3 hearts settle on a forcing reverse.

Lambardi: 2♦. No other way to force with long

clubs. Keeping as many options open as possible. 3♣ would be non-forcing and, even if not passed out, would leave me guessing after a 3NT response.

Leufkens: 2♦. Minor lie. Next round I've described most of my hand

Stabell: 2♦. Not really a satisfactory solution since I would like to show 3-card hearts and long clubs, not diamonds. But 3♣ is not quite enough with this hand and any number of hearts will be misleading.

Cannell: Two Diamonds – Fairly normal to reverse on this pattern. The heart support will likely be next.

Sandsmark: 2♦. RF. You need more info from partner, and believe in a game, but which? 2♦ is normally a natural reverse, but in the hour of need you must make a bid that can't be passed by partner. Partner's next bid will be decisive for your choice of contract. Strangely enough, I believe to be on the safe side also on this board. It must be emphasized that my overall bidding is not tainted by my lust for getting a good sum on the panel board, but I try to set focus on bids I believe to be good. Therefore, I am not at all disappointed for scoring lowest in the jury each and every time. Brian knows he is free to throw me out if he thinks my bidding is ridiculous, but so far, for some funny reason, I have survived! Thank you, Brian!

Teramoto: 2♦. Reverse bid shows about 17+points. I would like to find a Heart fit if we have one. Partner will bid 2♥ if he has 5 cards in many cases. If I bid 3♣, it may make it difficult to find Heart fit. Also, a good 18HCP is a little underbid for 3♣.

Mould: 2♦. Sorry I do not understand this one. Two Diamonds just looks completely normal to me in the modern game (indeed for the last 20 years). I am not foolish enough to predict a unanimous panel, but I bet you will get a healthy majority for this.

Typical – when we finally have a unanimous panel nobody predicts it, though a couple are willing to say ‘close to unanimous’.

Bird: 2♦. Since I am too strong for 3♣, it looks like a near unanimous vote for the obvious 2♦ reverse. Please give one of your notorious 2-point awards for any other answer, also to the setter of this problem.

Smith: 2♦. Another close to unanimous panel, I would think. I cannot raise hearts to game with only three and Three Clubs is wrong on multiple fronts. What else?

Apteker: 2♦. I am a ♦ short but will be well placed for my next bid if partner does not raise or rather insist on ♦s.

Green: 2♦. Too strong for 3♣, only three trumps so I can't bid 3♥ so I'll reverse and bid hearts later. This seems like the smallest lie.

Alder: Two diamonds. Vieux chapeau.

Robson: 2♦. The dreaded phoney reverse as the only way to develop the hand.

Rigal: 2♦. Fake reverses do not attract unanimous panels normally, so if I want to parley my bet from last month and call not just for a majority for 2♦ but a plurality vote, won't you give me 3-to-1? Here it seems to me that you are prepared to force to game and show three hearts in the process. 2♦ may not work but nothing else will come close to getting the story across as much as this.

A force to game may prove to be slightly too much, but any delicate auction which allows us to stop in part-score risks missing some good games also. I'm sure I would force to game in real life, as appears to be the intention of the panel. Once we have made that decision, 2♦ is the stand-out action to set the ball rolling.

PROBLEM 5

Pairs. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ KJ
♥ AKQ86
♦ 2
♣ AQ954

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	3♦
Double	4♦	4♠	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
Pass	10	10
5NT	3	8
5♥	1	6
5♣	1	5
4NT	1	4

Another clear majority vote, but four different minority actions. Let's start with the one-vote answers:

Stabell: 5♥. I was presumably planning to bid hearts next when I doubled, so I can't really pass 4♠ since that could be a silly 4-2 fit. Wouldn't partner bid 4♠ with ♠Axxx ♥Jxx ♦xx ♣KJxx? His alternative would be double then pass 4♥, which could easily be a 4-3 fit.

As you say, you were surely intending to show

the hearts at some point, but no doubt expecting to be able to do so at the four level. So why not do so on this hand of great potential?

Sandsmark: 5♣. This situation resembles earlier bidding in this set. You just cannot leave your partner in 4♠, and have to make him aware of your holding in the rounded suits. You simply cannot say 4NT, as partner is bound to take that for RKCB with ♠. 4♠ may be a disaster, while there may be a possible slam here in both your suits.

So long as it is clear that 5♣ shows hearts and clubs, it cannot be far from the mark. But could it show just a big hand with clubs and secondary hearts? After all, genuine two-suiters are usually shown immediately. I understand that we do not play Non-Leaping Michaels in NBM Standard, but did we have the option of cue-bidding 4♦, initially suggesting the majors, then converting a 4♠ response to 5♣ to show this hand-type?

Pablo agrees regarding the meaning of 4NT:

Lambardi: 4NT. Keycard. Spades rate to be good enough as trumps, either a 6-carder or very good 5 (AQxxx) since he is bidding on slender values. Of course, any of the other suits could work better, e.g. partner could be 5-5 in the blacks; if so, spades might be not that good. But how to keep all options open? 4NT will get us to slam on an Ace + ♠Q – partner will show the queen with 7 cards. To the grand in the unlikely case of a 5♠ response

The majority opt to pass, seeing no clear way forward if they bid, and trusting partner to hold at least five spades given that he could otherwise have made a responsive double.

Sime: Pass. We may have a better spot than

Four Spades, but it is not clear how to safely find it. Hands like this are why many of us play Non-Leaping Michaels (4 Clubs would have shown clubs and hearts).

Rosen: Pass. Self-created problem- I would have bid 4♣ showing Clubs and a major rather than double.

But, much as we may wish to the contrary, we do not play Non-Leaping Michaels. Last month we were glad of that fact, this month it would have been very helpful to have it in our armoury.

Leufkens: Pass. Sure, it can be 7♣, but partner might stretch with long spades. He can double if he's not sure about suit. So no heroics. By the way, I'm not sure 5NT is pick a slam. But even if it is, partner will bid 6♠ with 5332, won't he?

Cannell: Pass. Good luck partner. An "Albert Hall" hole filling hand.

Teramoto: Pass. 6♠ is dangerous for losing Diamond and Spade tricks. Also it is hard to find another fit from now.

Mould: Pass. Oh to be playing NLM (which I don't!). Yes, I have a very good hand, but I have fewer spades than pard will expect and I will be ruffing with these high ones. It is Pairs so I will go quietly. If pard turns up with ♠AQ109xx ♥xx ♦xxx ♣Kx so be it!

Green: Pass. If ever there was an advert for playing Non-leaping Michaels this is it! I'm just guessing now and I opt to take the low road. I don't think the five level will always be safe (there may be a ruff) so I'm going low again.

Bird: Pass. The fact that East has bid 4♠ over 4♦ greatly increases the chance that he has 5 or more spades. I'll be interested to count the number of complaints you get about blackballing

non-leaping Michaels. My guess is around 7.

I didn't exactly blackball NLM, I merely didn't change the system from the preference of the previous conductor.

Rigal: Pass. Not the way I wanted the auction to go but bidding on rates only to make things worse. This time 4♣ non-leaping Michaels (again my preferred methods as indicated last month) would save the day.

Smith: Pass. Well, last month we had a hand on which we wanted to overcall a natural Four Diamonds, and this month we have to pay the piper for not playing Non-Leaping Michaels, which is obviously designed to solve the problem on just this type of hand. If I cannot bid Four Clubs to show clubs and a major here, I'd



Phillip Alder

rather overcall Four Hearts than start with a double. Now we have to pass and watch partner struggle in his 4-2 fit. What's worse, now that he knows he cannot rely on you to have a shape-suitable hand for a take-out double, partner will be wary of bidding up in future.

Nobody is really thrilled by the position we find ourselves in. Slam could easily be on if we can find the right trump suit, so how about:

Apteker: 5NT. My option is to take the low road and pass, hoping partner stretched and can make either by having enough spades or on strength. I prefer to take the high road as a two-way shot – either by improving the strain or hopefully partner has extra strength and hence reaching the right level.

Alder: 5NT (or 5♥). Have we discussed this position? If so, did we agree that 5NT is pick-a-slam, not the Grand Slam Force? If so, fine, If not, then 5♥ ought to show five hearts and secondary clubs with, presumably, some spade tolerance. (Partner ought not to be 4333, because he should have doubled, I feel.)

Robson: 5NT. Pick a slam. At least we'll probably play the right strain.

Partner needs the ♠A and ♣K for slam to have play, and ♠Axxxx, ♥xx, ♦xx, ♣Kxxx is hardly too much to ask. He did, after all, bid 4♠ freely when he had the option of passing. 5NT gets us to 6♣, which is almost cold on a non-four-zero trump split. Is pick-a-slam what 5NT means here? I would say, yes. There are other routes to explore Six versus Seven Spades, but no other good way to explore different denominations – as the panel's comments above make clear.

PROBLEM 6

Pais. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ KJ976
♥ AK
♦ 5
♣ KQJ53

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
1♠	Pass	4♣*	Pass
?			
4♣	Splinter		

Bid	Votes	Marks
4NT	10	10
4♦	4	7
4♥	2	6

We have a powerful hand, albeit a lot of strength opposite partner's shortage. The majority therefore simply asked for key-cards.

Sime: 4NT. This looks like an Ace-count hand to me. Therefore, I won't disclose anything which will help them lead or defend.

Cannell: 4NT. RKCB for spades. The key-card content needs to be assessed.

Leufkens: 4NT. I know where to go, just checking for Aces. You're not serious to stop in 4♠ with this hand?

Alder: 4NT. RKCB. Self-explanatory.

Apteker: 4NT. I have too much to merely sign out notwithstanding my hand being less than ideal opposite partner's shortage. I realise that opposite one key-card and no Q of trumps I might go down at the 5 level but I probably should be OK. Key-card simplifies the auction and allows me to place the contract opposite

the right stuff. Not sure I will learn much by control bidding.

Green: 4NT. If partner has three aces and the queen of trumps (or a fifth trump) then I want to be in grand, if he/she has two then I want to be in small, therefore I ask for key-cards. I can see the argument for 4♦ hoping that if partner does not hold the Ace that the opponents lead a heart and the diamond goes away, but bidding 4NT may also give them a guess on lead.

Mould: 4NT. Yes, I have the worst duplication in the Western world but I also have a good hand. And the clubs will actually be tricks which means I will not have to ruff so many of them. OK I need two key cards from partner (plus the ♠Q or a fifth one) but is it likely we are going off in Five Spades? I suppose pard could have ♠Qxxx ♥QJxx ♦KQJx ♣x. Oh well another stupid result if that is the case.

Smith: 4NT. Four Clubs shows a limited hand in the range of about 9-12, but he could still hold A-Q of spades and the ♦A, so I am clearly too good just to sign off. Cue-bidding in diamonds is completely pointless, since you know partner has no heart control, so you can be sure his next bid will be Four Spades. Another big majority, perhaps?

Rigal: 4NT. OK now we have a unanimous panel don't we? The words. 'why' 'not' and 'pray', go together almost as well as 'eat' 'pray' and 'love'.

Well, 10 out of 16 – so not unanimous, I'm afraid.

Bird: 4NT. If the red suits were the other way round, I might be tempted to cue-bid 4♦.

Yes, 4♦ would make much more sense if we swapped the red suits around. On the actual hand,



Alan Mould

as Marc says, we know that partner will almost always bid 4♠ over 4♦.

Lambardi: 4♦. Can I risk the (easier) 4NT? Can partner hold ♠Qxxxx ♥xx ♦KQJxx x♣ – , when the 5- level is already too high? (Do we have any minimum requirements as to Key Cards for a splinter response?). Over 4♦ partner will surely know to bid 4♥(last train) with 2 Aces and no ♥ control.

Well, if he is convinced that this is a last train situation he might. For a lot of people it is a cue-bidding situation, as evidenced by the lack of supporting comments for your interpretation.

Rosen: 4♦. Strange no extra information on 4♣, range etc. Might just bid Blackwood but very messy if facing a void club.

It's normal to limit a splinter to 12 or 13 HCP, while if 4♣ showed specifically a void or specifically a singleton there would have been a note to that effect.

Sandsmark: 4♦. CUE with either 1st or 2nd CTR, accepting the slam invitation for now. I think it is too early to throw in the towel at this stage. If partner only bids 4♠, I think I have too much wasted in clubs to go on. If he makes another CUE or applies good, old "Blackie", we are in business!

Teramoto: 4♦. This hand will try for Slam even if partner continues with 4♠. Avoiding a Diamond lead may give us a chance to discard Diamond on Hearts.

Yes, it might. There were also two votes for the heart cue-bid. Leif-Erik intends to go on with 5♦ at his next turn, making it clear, in traditional style, that he has first-round heart but only second-round diamond, control, while Andrew does not make it clear what he plans to do over a 4♠ sign-off.

Stabell: 4♥. Followed by 5♦ over the expected 4♠ sign-off. I hope he will take this as showing first- and second-round control in hearts and second-round control in diamonds. I can't really drive to slam since I don't know how many playing tricks we have – particularly if partner is void in clubs. ♠AQxx ♥QJxxx ♦Axxx ♣ – would be ideal, but partner will have to take charge here in order for us to get to the good (but not completely laydown) grand.

Robson: 4♥. Must make a try as ♠AQxx and ♦A make a slam.

I cannot see how we can comfortably stop at the four level with this hand – unless perhaps we

accept Pablo's definition of a 4♥ response to our 4♦ being Last Train, such that we can pass if partner instead bids 4♠. 4NT is the simple route and, for those of us who play pro, is undoubtedly the practical approach facing a client. Once we decide to commit to the five level, I prefer 4♠ followed by 5♦ rather than an initial 4♦ cue-bid, which will leave partner in the dark as to exactly what kind of red controls we have. But, of course, it is a matter of style, and in some of my partnerships I would not be allowed to bid that way.

PROBLEM 7

Pairs. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 6
♥ AQ732
♦ AKJ8
♣ Q52

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
Pass	12	10
3♣	3	6
2NT	1	3

We might get a very different vote at IMPs, but the bulk of the panel are content to pass, many commenting that at matchpoints the key is to go plus and not strain for thin games.

Sime: Pass. At teams bidding again is attractive as game is possible. At matchpoints we may turn plus into minus, plus 140 into 130, or tip off our extra strength and shape to help the defenders.

Rosen: Pass. Easy at Pairs surely

Lambardi: Pass. We have 21-25 HCP and no fit. No special bonus for the vulnerable game at Pairs. Would try 2NT at Teams.

Mould: Pass. Not close at Pairs IMHO. You just might tempt me at IMPs (though I still probably Pass), but it is not a decision at Pairs.

Teramoto: Pass. 16HCP may have Game but little chance. It is fine to play 2♥ with a 5-2 fit.

Leufkens: Pass. In Pairs easy: borderline game invitation, with better chances that 3 in a suit will fail.

Green: Pass. Better to try and go plus at pairs and so I opt to stay low. 2NT might be a better spot but with a singleton spade I would rather be able to score my trumps via ruffs.

Apteker: Pass. Will protect my positive score. Easy at Pairs.

Bird: Pass. Partner has only two hearts and 5-10 points. Since my singleton in his suit is no bonus and it is matchpoints, I will pass.

Robson: Pass. It's Pairs, isn't it? For me this is clear.

Stabell: Pass. With no safe continuation, it is probably best to settle for the plus score in pairs

Smith: Pass. I can see no reason to bid again. Sure, partner might hold a 10-count with something like J-x or K-x of hearts, but even then 3NT comes with no guarantees. He could also have a 5-7 count with two small hearts, and even Two Hearts may be too high. Bidding again, particularly at Pairs, with its emphasis on plus scores, seems just wrong on all fronts.

Yes, even 2♥ could be hard work on a bad day. I'm firmly with the majority here, but there were some optimists:

Cannell: 3♣. A patterning out process to allow partner a picture of my hand. Partner will then have a better idea on our potential.

Alder: 3♣. Over to you, Mr Partner. But, as it is pairs, maybe I should pass.

Sandsmark: 3♣. Trial Bid for 4♥. Undoubtedly the best bid on this hand. The cowards among us will probably pass.

I think it's called cowardice when it doesn't work out well, but sensible, practical or well-judged when it is the winning choice.

Rigal: 2NT. Yes you'd rather have the club jack or ten to add to your assets but why not bid the cards you have – or at least make the best pass at so doing?

Well, the bidders could be right today, but I think they'll be wrong tomorrow and the next day.

PROBLEM 8

Pairs. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ KQJ642
♥ 6
♦ AK532
♣ K

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1NT	Double
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
3♦	8	10
2♦	5	8
3♠	2	5
4♠	1	4

This one is perhaps as much a matter of tactics as of judgement. At the table, this effort would have

been worth +590:

Teramoto: 4♠. I would like to take away space for them. 4♠ is usually fine in Pairs. It is rare case to have Slam.

But, while there were other spade bidders, Tadashi was on his own in jumping to the four-level.

Bird: 3♠. I am not going to mention the diamonds at matchpoints, not with such a great spade suit. The choice is between 3♠ and 4♠. Since partner is unlikely to hold three spades and South is also short in the suit, there may be a spade stack on my left. I will go for the lower bid.

Smith: 3♠. Second choice is Four Spades, but that seems to be too much with the suit quite likely to be splitting 6-4-2-1 around the table. Any number of spades seems better than introducing this diamond suit, particularly at pairs.

As we have already seen, bidding spades was a big winner, but the majority prefer to offer partner a choice of trump suits and bring him into the discussion of how high to go also.

First, a man with a plan:

Sime: 2♦. Obviously this can be wrong if there are now three passes. That would be unusual Love All at matchpoints. When I bid Four Spades, partner can correct to diamonds with four-plus diamonds and short spades.

And another:

Robson: 2♦. Then jump to 3♠. Don't want to commit to spades as the suit may be 6-5-1-1 round the table.

Mould: 2♦. I see no reason not to bid this naturally. If you tell me that Three Diamonds now after the double is distributional and NF I will tell you that it is probably a very sensible

idea but we should have agreed that before we started play...

Rigal: 2♦. I've decided to go slow; that double may not be trustworthy but I'm falling for it. Time to act again at the next turn, probably. And if we play 2♦ we surely won't be making game? **Apteker:** 2♦. Clearly an underbid as game in ♠ should make opposite any Ace in partner's hand and a doubleton ♣ or ♠ honour. I do not expect to hear the bidding go all pass, however, and plan to bid ♠ again next time round.

However, the biggest vote went to a jump in diamonds.

Rosen: 3♦. Second choice 4♠.

Alder: 3♦. South, what South? I didn't hear him say anything.

Sandsmark: 3♦. I don't want the enemy to find their ♥ fit, which they will surely do if I redouble. I believe in a game our way, and want to prevent the opposition from sacrificing in hearts. If partner bids 3♥ or 4♣, I will pull in 4♦, showing a two-suiter. If he says 3♠, I will bid the game. **Leufkens:** 3♦. Powerhouse, I assume? Not fooling around with two singletons; many ways to go wrong. 3♦ might even be pre-empting, even if meant as strong.

3♦ would certainly show a powerhouse in an uncontested auction, and for many will continue to do so after the double, but a number of panelists suggest that the double makes a difference and that it is no longer the traditional game-force.

Lambardi: 3♦. Double suggests shortness in ♠ (or a decent hand) so spades may be stacked behind me. Unclear if the jump shift is forcing after the double but, should he pass, he would probably be at most 2-3 in ♠ and ♦, with soft

values in the other suits.

Stabell: 3♦. Weaker than without interference, since I now have 2NT and redouble available for really strong hands. Will not bid again unless partner bids spades voluntarily. A direct jump to 4♠ might work on a good day, but on most days North will be ready with the axe, since both East and South tend to be short in spades **Cannell:** 3♦. I believe this jump is more distributional than strength-showing after South's double. Redouble would be the strength showing advance. I need to show these diamonds before North bids one of the rounded suits and cramps the auction.

Green: 3♦. This should show at least 5-5 and invitational values (with a true game force start with a redouble). I plan to compete over 3♥ with 3♠ to confirm 6-5. If I redouble I may lose the diamonds and if I bid 2♦ and the opponents jump in hearts I will have lost the fifth diamond. Although I have a good hand I would never redouble with 6-5 shape (though it could be right if partner is 5-5 in the other two suits).

4♠ is the most fun of the options as we wait to see if we get doubled and what dummy offers in the way of help – and it could be a big winner. But it could also be a big loser, so the majority choice to bid diamonds looks right in the long term. I agree with those who claim that 3♦ is no longer game-forcing and, if that is the case, it is the ideal bid to get across this shapely hand.

With several big votes, the scores are generally quite high this month, topped by Ben Green, with a perfect 80.



Ben Green

SET 20 – THE PANEL’S BIDS & MARKS

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Ben Green	England	Pass	Rdbl	Pass	2♦	Pass	4NT	Pass	3♦	80
Iain Sime	Scotland	Pass	Rdbl	Pass	2♦	Pass	4NT	Pass	2♦	78
Marc Smith	England	Pass	Rdbl	Pass	2♦	Pass	4NT	Pass	3♠	75
Alon Apteker	South Africa	Pass	2♥	Pass	2♦	5NT	4NT	Pass	2♦	74
Enri Leufkens	Netherlands	4♠	2♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	4NT	Pass	3♦	74
David Bird	England	Pass	2♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	4NT	Pass	3♠	73
Neil Rosen	England	3♦	Rdbl	Pass	2♦	Pass	4♦	Pass	3♦	72
Alan Mould	England	4♠	2♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	4NT	Pass	2♦	72
Drew Cannell	Canada	4♠	Rdbl	Pass	2♦	Pass	4NT	3♣	3♦	72
Phillip Alder	USA	Pass	2♥	Pass	2♦	5NT	4NT	3♣	3♦	72
Pablo Lambardi	Argentina	Pass	2♥	Pass	2♦	4NT	4♦	Pass	3♦	69
Andrew Robson	England	3♠	Rdbl	Pass	2♦	5NT	4♥	Pass	2♦	69
Tadashi Teramoto	Japan	3♠	Rdbl	Pass	2♦	Pass	4♦	Pass	4♠	68
Barry Rigal	USA	3♠	Rdbl	Pass	2♦	Pass	4NT	2NT	2♦	68
Leif-Erik Stabell	Zimbabwe	4♠	2♠	Pass	2♦	5♥	4♥	Pass	3♦	64
Tommy Sandsmark	Norway	3♦	Rdbl	Dble	2♦	5♣	4♦	3♣	3♦	56



Master Point Bidding Battle Competition – Set 21

Open to All – Free Entry

PROBLEM 1

Pairs. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ A84
♥ AQ1064
♦ 7
♣ 10853

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣*	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			
1♣	3+ Clubs		

PROBLEM 2

IMPs. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ AQ42
♥ AQJ653
♦ K8
♣ 9

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
1♥	Pass	3♣*	Pass
?			
3♣	Natural and invitational		

PROBLEM 3

IMPs. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ Q75
♥ 9876
♦ 10962
♣ AK

West	North	East	South
–	1♣*	1♦	1♥
2♣	2♥	2♠	3♥
Pass	Pass	3♠	Pass
?			
1♣	3+ Clubs		

PROBLEM 4

IMPs. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ A852
♥ AK1082
♦ A5
♣ Q6

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♣
1♥	Pass	2♦*	2♠
?			
2♦	Constructive, NF		

PROBLEM 5

IMPs. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ A93
♥ 932
♦ A10
♣ AK1093

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
?			

PROBLEM 6

IMPs. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ –
♥ AK32
♦ K2
♣ AKJ10862

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♠	Pass	2♣*
?			
2♣	Constructive spade raise		

PROBLEM 7

IMPs. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ Q8652
♥ –
♦ AK10
♣ KQ432

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
1♠	3♥	4♥*	Pass
?			
4♥	Too good to bid 4♠		

PROBLEM 8

IMPs. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AQ9
♥ KJ97543
♦ Q3
♣ 7

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

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 will be modified – It will be updated next month as per Brian's comments in his recent moderations.

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.



WEST

Hands for the
September 2019 The uBid Auction Room

MASTER POINT BIDDING BATTLE



Bid these hands with those on the last 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. None Vul.

♠ Q754
♥ AK82
♦ A
♣ AK52

North opens a natural 4♦

Hand 2. Dealer East. N/S Game.

♠ 10
♥ AK
♦ AK2
♣ KQ109743

Hand 3. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ 872
♥ K
♦ KQ64
♣ AQ875

Hand 4. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ 10753
♥ AJ4
♦ Q
♣ AKQ73

Hand 5. Dealer West. N/S Game.

♠ J5
♥ AJ542
♦ K
♣ AJ732

North overcalls 1♠. South raises to 2♠ if able or doubles a 2♣ cue-bid. North then competes to 3♣ if he can

Hand 6. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ 109743
♥ AKQJ
♦ K653
♣ 9

North overcalls 2♣

Hand 7. Dealer East. N/S Game.

♠ K63
♥ K8
♦ AKJ872
♣ 96

Hand 8. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ Q7
♥ K7
♦ QJ96532
♣ 32

South opens a natural weak 2♥. North bids a non-forcing 2♠

Results – Set 19

Alex Athanasiadis missed out on just one maximum this month, scoring 72 to win the session. **Dean Pokorny** and **Peter Barker** were close behind on 70 and 69, with the rest of the field way behind

Jeff Callaghan was drawn out of a proverbial hat, receiving the fourth prize that is awarded each month.

Other Good Scores

64 *Mark Bartusek*

63 *George Willett*

61 *Todd Holes, Mike Perkins*

60 *Dominic Connolly*

58 *Martin Turner, Bill March*

57 *Jeff Callaghan*

The Yearly Standings:

Bill March could not add to his total so far, allowing the others to catch up slightly with him, but not enough to supplant him in first place of the leaderboard:

345 *Bill March*

339 *Mark Bartusek*

333 *Dean Pokorny*

330 *Alex Athanasiadis*

327 *Mike Perkins*

325 *Dominic Connolly*

324 *Rodney Lighton*

314 *Todd Holes*

312 *Bazil Caygill*

311 *Mike Ralph*

304 *Colin Brown*

303 *Nigel Guthrie*

303 *David Barnes*

Comments on Bidding Battle Set 19

Brian Senior examines the responses of the readers and compares them against those of the panel.

PROBLEM 1

IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul.

- ♠ J104
- ♥ AKQJ85
- ♦ AJ92
- ♣ –

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Double	Pass	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
4♥	15	10	14
5♥	1	3	0
4NT	0	0	6
5♦	0	0	2
5NT	0	2	2
6♦	0	2	3

Well, when only one panellist chose anything other than 4♥, it looked as though this problem had been a bit of a damp squib, but fully half of the readers chose a different call, and they managed to find four different ones between them, so perhaps it was a better problem than had appeared to be the case.

Firstly, let's dismiss 4NT as an option. We have a void, so how will we know how many working key-cards partner holds? The ♦K is likely to be worth a lot more than the ♣A, for example. For this reason I don't feel inclined to award anything for 4NT – sorry.

Likewise, nothing for a sign-off in 5♦. None of the panel sign off, with

most making a heart cue-bid and the one exception showing solid hearts while committing to the five level.

That leaves 5NT and 6♦. Both these calls are plausible if we assume that 3♠ promised a spade control and, as that is a reasonable agreement to have, I'll award 2 points to each bid. But the panel is of the view that 3♠ does not guarantee a control. It might be bid with a 3-1-5-4 hand with no spade stopper to see if we can bid 3NT, for example, so this is very much a matter of style and agreements.

PROBLEM 2

IMPs. Dealer North. All Vul.

- ♠ K10985
- ♥ J
- ♦ Q754
- ♣ A97

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
2NT	13	10	12
2♠	1	3	6
3♣	1	3	1
Pass	1	2	5
2♦	0	0	2
4♠	0	0	1

I'm assuming that the reader who answered 4♠ misread the question as otherwise the bid is clearly bonkers. The only other reader-answer was 2♦. This is fourth-suit, of course. While it may get us to the right denomination, it will also get us to game facing a minimum hand as we play FSF as GF. That can't be right on a misfit, so no points to 2♦, I'm afraid.

2♦ would be a plausible option for any partnership that can use FSF and stop out of game, passing a 2NT response, for example.

PROBLEM 5

IMPs. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ AK5
♥ KJ
♦ 98
♣ AKJ962

West	North	East	South
–	–	4♥	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
Pass	6	10	6
4♠	5	10	4
4NT	2	8	3
5♣	1	8	4
5♦	1	6	0
6♥	1	6	9
Double	0	0	1

Again, I fear that someone has misread the question. Much as we might be worth a double, the fact that it is partner whose bid we would be doubling rather puts a dampener on that option.

PROBLEM 6

IMPs. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ 87
♥ 8
♦ AKQJ107
♣ A1097

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	3♠
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
4♦	15	10	18
3NT	1	5	0
5♦	0	2	3
Double	0	2	1
4♠	0	0	1
Pass	0	2	4

We can't bid 4♠, as one reader wishes as that would show a two-suiter, probably including hearts. Again, I wonder if a reader has misread the question and is attempting to raise partner's 3♠ to game?

Pass doesn't look right with 7+ playing tricks and a solid suit. It could be the only way to go plus so, since I have been quite mean with the extra points this month, I'll award 2 points to Pass on this one, but I don't think that Pass deserves to be successful.

PROBLEM 7

IMPs. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ Q9854
♥ 9
♦ AKQ2
♣ KJ9

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♥	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
3NT	7	10	9
4♥	4	8	1
4♣	2	5	2
4NT	2	4	0
4♦	1	3	12
3♠	0	1	1
5♥	0	2	2

There were two reader-answers that were not found by any of the panel – nor indeed were they mentioned as options by any of the panel. 3♠ seems to run the risk of seeing partner raise with a doubleton because his hearts are OK but not huge and he is weak in one of the unbid suits. 4♠ will not be the best spot unless partner has honour-to-three in support. While I would be very happy to rebid a strong five-card spade suit here, repeating a weak suit will not help us to decide whether to play game or slam, or usually which game to play – it’s just misdirected. I’ll give it a consolation point.

The other answer is a jump to 5♥. That gets over the problem that even if a 4♣/♦ bid was clearly a cue-bid for hearts it might endplay partner if he lacked control in the other minor, and it could reasonably be played as asking for good hearts. I prefer it to a 3♠ bid, but 5♥ could well see us go minus even if partner understands our intention. As it does resolve some issues, and at least is clear that hearts are trumps, I’ll award 2 points.

Two reader-answers. The first is 4♠. I am quite sure that when we are in a GF position 4♠ should show a control. Meanwhile, we have ♦AQJ4, so why not say so? I would say “What part of, We play 2/1 GF don’t you understand?”, given that a number of panellists also seemed to be in doubt about the forcing nature of various bids. But I go back to what I said in the original article that, even if we didn’t play 2/1 GF after a 1♦ opening, surely the only time that we would not support diamonds immediately when holding primary support would be when we had enough to force to game. Two Clubs followed by 4♦ surely shows primary diamond support and a below GF hand would have raised diamonds immediately.

So, no points to a 4♠ cue-bid, but the other reader-answer of 4♣ is fair enough with a good six-card suit, albeit inferior to bidding 4♦ as it could lose a possible diamond fit forever, so I’m happy to award a couple of points to that.

PROBLEM 8

IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ J6
♥ 7
♦ AQJ4
♣ KQ10864

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♦	Pass
2♣	3♠	Pass	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
4♦	9	10	12
Double	3	6	3
4NT	2	4	0
5♦	1	3	10
4♥	1	2	0
4♣	0	2	1
4♠	0	0	1

EAST

Hands for the
September 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. None Vul.

♠ AJ10932
♥ Q10753
♦ 2
♣ 7

North opens a natural 4♦

Hand 2. Dealer East. N/S Game.

♠ Q92
♥ Q10942
♦ Q983
♣ J

Hand 3. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ KJ963
♥ A3
♦ AJ1097
♣ J

Hand 4. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ QJ8
♥ 1032
♦ KJ84
♣ J84

Hand 5. Dealer West. N/S Game.

♠ A7
♥ K987
♦ 10954
♣ KQ6

North overcalls 1♠. South raises to 2♠ if able or doubles a 2♠ cue-bid. North then competes to 3♠ if he can

Hand 6. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ KJ
♥ 8543
♦ A4
♣ A7654

North overcalls 2♣

Hand 7. Dealer East. N/S Game.

♠ 8
♥ Q10653
♦ Q5
♣ AK1085

Hand 8. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ A53
♥ A5
♦ A8
♣ AKQ1096

South opens a natural weak 2♥. North bids a non-forcing 2♠

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