

A NEW BRIDGE MAGAZINE

The Rabbit's Sticky Wicket
Test Your Technique
Educating Toto

EDITION 22
October 2019



A NEW BRIDGE MAGAZINE

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A NEW BRIDGE Magazine is published monthly.

Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor. Editorial contributions will be published at the Editor's discretion and may be shortened if space is limited.

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The State of the Union

Writing on its web site, the Chairman of the English Bridge Union rightly pays tribute to the performance of the English teams in the recently concluded World Championships in Wuhan. He concludes with the sentence: *All in all an excellent performance and one I think the membership will join with me in saying well done to our teams.*

If the EBU believe the membership takes pride in the performance of its teams at international level it is difficult to understand the decision to withdraw financial support for English teams hoping to compete in the World Bridge Games in 2020. (They will still pay the entry fees). They will continue to support some of the teams competing in the European Championships in Madeira in 2020, but because it will now be easier for sponsored teams to compete for places in the former event. The EBU will be holding two sets of trials. That will mean significant additional expenses for players hoping to play in both events.

Could it be that the decision reflects the fact that the EBU spent a great deal of money pursuing the court case they eventually lost, and that revenue from tournaments is falling? Allied to a significant wage bill for the staff at headquarters, is there any cause for concern about the financial well being of the EBU?

I put this question to EBU Chairman Jeremy Dhondy and he was kind enough to reply in detail:

“Demands for funding for international competition have increased markedly over the years. We have had new junior series at U16 age, talk of a further series at U13 level and a WBF

announcement of the start of an U31 series as from next year. Funding these brings a greater burden on the membership and the current desire of the WBF to hold many events in China means

that travel costs are high. The EBU expects to support international teams but not without limit. That is, after all, one reason for its existence. We expect to continue to support junior events into the future. We also expect to support all our teams to at least some extent. Sometimes that is entry fee and uniform costs only. That is true, for example of the Mixed series introduced last year. It is also true of the Seniors competitions. I expect the selection committee will have a discussion as to whether we have the distribution of available funds right. If not they can be redistributed but not substantially increased. Lest anyone think that is nothing at all it should be noted that entry fees for an individual team in a European or World Championship are usually €3500+.

“We are holding two sets of trials for each event because the same players don't necessarily wish to play in the same teams in both events.

“As to where the money comes from it is true that there were expenses related to the court cases but they were one off costs and have little or no bearing on any decisions as to what to fund internationally going forward. There has been a drop in competition revenue in recent years and although no tournaments make a loss they don't make the contribution to the coffers that



they used to. That does have an effect and we need to cut our cloth more appropriately. More of our members perhaps prefer to play locally and travel less. One indication of this was the change in format of the Masters Pairs which changed from being a one day event at a central venue to a multi venue event held at a number of clubs. Entries went from 60 to 240 as a result. The National Pairs will also move to this format in 2020 and it will be cheaper for the competitors and provide income for clubs. It may be a model for several events going forward.

“A look at the figures published each year at the AGM and on our website will show there is certainly no cause for concern about our financial wellbeing and that trend will be continued when this year’s figures are published. Keeping our expenditure under control, and this includes our international expenditure is the job of the EBU Board. If your correspondent would like more detail or has something more specific to ask he can ask his county shareholder to ask the relevant questions at our meeting at the end of November.”

Where in the World

One of the highlights of any World Championship is the closing Press Conference when the President of the World Bridge Federation reveals the possible locations of upcoming World Championships. Gianarrigo Rona announced the following possibilities:

- 2020 China or Turkey (Istanbul)
- 2021 Morocco (Marrakesh)
- 2022 Poland
- 2023 China Hong Kong
- 2025 Bermuda

These are such an attractive series of venues that Tacchi and I have put our plans to retire on hold.

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Test Your Technique

with Marc Smith see Page 52

This month's deal comes from the recent World Championship, played in Wuhan in central China. See if you can find a better line of play than at least one player who reached one of the major finals.

Dealer South. Both Vul

♠ 42
 ♥ J93
 ♦ AJ98652
 ♣ 8

♠ KQ109763
 ♥ A104
 ♦ 7
 ♣ A3

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	4♠

West leads the ♣J. How would you play?

Jai Ho!

The Editor was a guest reporter at one of the most exciting events in the calendar, the HCL Bridge Championships.

How best to mark the start of one of the most exciting events in the calendar, the 2019 HCL Bridge Championships? Now in its 17th incarnation, this year's event was staged at the JW Marriott Hotel, Aerocity, New Delhi.

Anyone who was fortunate enough to be at the World Championships in Chennai in 2015 will know what to expect at a tournament in India, – a fantastic welcome, flawless organisation and fierce competition.

Everyone will be hoping to be at the top of his or her game, but sometimes, when things go wrong, the bridge gods will smile on you. Let's look at a deal where destiny played a part:

With neither side vulnerable, you pick up a modest looking hand:

♠ 986532
♥ KJ1054
♦ –
♣ 73

The player on your right opens 2♣, promising a weak hand with diamonds or a strong hand. When West responds 2♦ your partner doubles. Not sure how to get both majors into the picture, you jump to 4♠ and your partner continues with 4NT. When you show your lack of key cards partner's jump to 6♠ leaves you with this auction:

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

West leads the ♣J and you see why partner was so enthusiastic:

♠ KQ10
♥ A63
♦ AKJ10
♣ A64

♠ 986532
♥ KJ1054
♦ –
♣ 73

You win with dummy's ♣A, East following with the ♣5 and dispose of your second club on the ♦A. If you can avoid losing two trumps you will have to locate the ♥Q.

To guard against the possibility that West holds a singleton ♠A you want to start trumps from hand, so you ruff a club, on which East follows with the queen and play a spade, for the seven, king and four. Now you can guard against West having started with ♠AJ7, so you ruff a club and play a spade – at least that was your intention, but East ruffs the third club with the ♠J and you are one down.

This was the full deal:

Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ KQ10
♥ A63
♦ AKJ10
♣ A64

♠ A7
♥ 82
♦ 863
♣ KJ10982



♠ J4
♥ Q97
♦ Q97542
♣ Q5

♠ 986532
♥ KJ1054
♦ –
♣ 73

Post Mortem

Once the ♠K held declarer could have ruffed a diamond and played a second spade. West wins and exits in a minor, but declarer will now get a count and know that East started with three hearts, indicating which way to take the heart finesse.

That is not the end of the matter – as you will have spotted, West should have taken the first spade and played a third club – this time destiny took a hand in proceedings.

If declarer assumes the diamonds are 6-3 it is safe to ruff a diamond at trick three and play a spade. Then a club can be ruffed for another spade play and declarer will again get a count of the defenders hands.

In the other room, they stopped in 4♠.

When the trophies, are raised, who would be singing *Jai Ho!*

Omens

I sometimes look for some sign from the Gods that rule over bridge as to how events might unfold. Looking at the BBO offerings for Round 1 noticed that Magic Eyes included Virat in their squad. If you happen to be a cricket fan, (you live in India and you don't watch cricket?) then that name might just ring a bell. Matching that with the fact that here in England the Ashes series is under way, I concluded that we might just get an interesting series of deals in the first round of the Championships.

I decided to follow the encounter between South Sweden and Maya Meera – Gower was opening the batting – sorry, bidding in the Open Room and his partner is a member of the bidding panel in *A New Bridge Magazine*.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ J954 ♥ AJ8 ♦ A2 ♣ KQ86		♠ A ♥ Q93 ♦ 10953 ♣ A10943	♠ — ♥ K107652 ♦ QJ76 ♣ 752
♠ KQ1087632 ♥ 4 ♦ K84 ♣ J			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Da</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Roy</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
–	2♦*	Pass	4♠
Double	Pass	5♣	All Pass
2♦ Multi			

The immediate jump to game put the pressure on and when East bid 5♣ South was rewarded. He led the ♥4 and declarer let that run to North's king. Back came the ♥10 and South ruffed and returned the ♠K. North ruffed and with a diamond to come that was two down, -100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Mukarji</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Abhijit</i>
–	2♥	Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	4♠
Double	All Pass		

The trouble with South's delayed entry into the auction was that it gave the opponents 'fielder's choice'.

West led the ♣K and continued with the six, declarer ruffing and making the natural play of the ♠K. That meant he had to lose three trumps as well as the two red aces so that was three down, -500 and a 12 IMP swing.

On Board 3 the West players were looking at ♠Q98642 ♥Q10764 ♦3 ♣J. After South dealt and passed, no doubt deterred by the vulnerability, neither saw fit to open and N/S had an easy time in 3NT. This was the layout:

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ Q98642 ♥ Q10764 ♦ 3 ♣ J		♠ KJ5 ♥ K98 ♦ K1082 ♣ 762	♠ A7 ♥ 52 ♦ J9764 ♣ A1085
------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	------------------------------------

If you knew your partner held a weak hand with the majors (or a spade suit) then you might lead a spade against 3NT, but if you opt for the ♠5 the defence has to be exceptional. Assuming declarer ducks, West wins with the queen and must switch to a heart. If East is allowed to win with the eight it must be followed by the ♥K and if that holds East must now go back to spades.

Of course, if N/S were to reach the panacea of 5♣ this would all be academic.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ QJ1043 ♥ A ♦ 43 ♣ K8742		♠ 986 ♥ K542 ♦ AQ765 ♣ 9	♠ 52 ♥ Q876 ♦ KJ108 ♣ A53
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♠ AK7
 ♥ J1093
 ♦ 92
 ♣ QJ106

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Da</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Roy</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
-	-	Pass	1♣
2♠	Double*	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Given that East did not double 4♥ West went for a tactical overcall and it and it resulted in a slight misfield, as N/S got too high.

West led the ♠Q and declarer won with the ace and played the ♦2 for the four, queen and king. Declarer won the spade return, played a diamond to the ace and a club. East went up with the ace and played the ♦J. When declarer ruffed with the ♥3 West pitched a spade (ruffing is best). Now declarer played the ♣Q and when West did not cover he pitched dummy's remaining spade. (If West covers the ♣Q declarer ruffs and then pitches a spade on a losing diamond, after which he should collect eight tricks). Now declarer could ruff a club and was soon claiming two down, -200.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Mukarji</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Abhijit</i>
-	-	Pass	1♣
1♠	Double*	Redouble	2♥
All Pass			

What do you think is the best way to play East's redouble? Another approach is to use it to show a high spade honour, the idea being to help partner with the lead.

Declarer won the spade lead and played a club for the nine and ace. He won the spade return and tried the ♣10 but West covered and declarer ruffed and played a heart for the six, jack and ace. West cashed the ♠J, East pitching a club, and exited with the ♦4.

If declarer ducks this he is in control, but he put in the queen and East won with the king and returned the jack to dummy's queen. If declarer continues with a diamond he is only one down, but he tried the ♥K and that meant he was two down, so no swing.

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ AQ92 ♥ 932 ♦ AK973 ♣ 7		♠ 74 ♥ A75 ♦ QJ1062 ♣ 862	♠ K86 ♥ Q64 ♦ 85 ♣ QJ953
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Da</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Roy</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
-	-	-	Pass
1♣	Double	1♦	1NT
All Pass			

West led the ♦4 and declarer let that run to East's ten. Back came the ♣8, covered by the queen and ace and West exited with the ♠3. Declarer won with the eight and cashed his spades, but instead of settling for one down, he tried exiting with a heart. West won with the eight, and returned the ten and when East won and returned a club the defenders had eight tricks, -200.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Mukarji</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Abhijit</i>
-	-	-	Pass
2♦*	Double	2♥	All Pass
2♦	Three suited		

The traditional lead against a three-suited hand is a trump, and South went with the ♥4, declarer winning with dummy's ten and ducking a club, South winning with a deceptive queen. The ♥6 was taken by dummy's

eight and when declarer tried to cash the ♣A North ruffed and played two rounds of spades, South winning and exiting with the ♥Q. That was one down, -100 and 7 IMPs for Maya Meera, which left them just two adrift at 10-12.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ — ♥ A108 ♦ KJ953 ♣ AQ542		♠ J72 ♥ Q9765 ♦ Q1082 ♣ 9	♠ K ♥ KJ432 ♦ 74 ♣ J10876
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Da</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Roy</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
1♦	1♥	2♦	4♠
5♦	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			

If North leads a heart the defenders will take three tricks, but naturally he went with the ♠K. Declarer ruffed and played the ♦J and South won and tried the ♠A. Declarer ruffed, drew the outstanding trumps with the ♦9 and played the ♥10. North went up with the king and declarer had the rest, +550.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Mukarji</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Abhijit</i>
1♦	1♥	2♦	4♠
5♣	Double	5♦	Double
All Pass			

Here North led a red suit -but it was a diamond and the play followed a similar course, declarer ruffing the spade return at trick two, drawing trumps and advancing the ♥10 to flatten the board.

By the way, if you offer this as a lead problem to your friends I promise you they will start with a heart – the game is sometimes so much easier when presented to you on a piece of paper.

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ KQ765 ♥ Q10942 ♦ 7 ♣ K5	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ – ♥ 863 ♦ Q432 ♣ QJ10982	♠ AJ1098 ♥ AJ5 ♦ 85 ♣ 763
			♠ 432 ♥ K7 ♦ AKJ1096 ♣ A4

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Da</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Roy</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
–	Pass	Pass	1NT
2♣*	Double	2♥	3♦
3♥	Double	All Pass	

2♣ Majors

You can see why East bid 2♥, but it would have been better to pass the double, showing a club suit. West's 3♥ was unsound.

South led the ♥K and the defenders played three rounds of the suit, North switching to the ♦8. When declarer played low from dummy South does best to overtake and switch to a spade, but he followed with the six and declarer ruffed the next diamond and played the ♣K. South won the second club and played the ♦A. If declarer ruffs this and exits with a low spade he saves a trick, but that is not an easy play to find and he pitched a spade, ruffed the next diamond and exited with the ♠K for -1400.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Mukarji</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Abhijit</i>
–	Pass	Pass	1NT
2♣*	2♥*	Pass	2♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♠
All Pass			
2♣	Majors		
2♥	Transfer		

West led the ♥2 and declarer put in dummy's jack, played a heart to the ace and tried to cash two rounds of diamonds. West ruffed and exited with a heart. Declarer won the trick with dummy's ace, pitching a club, came to hand with the ♣A and played a spade for the queen and ace. A club ruff now ensured ten tricks, +420, but at 14 IMPs it was an expensive over.

Having ruffed the second diamond West should exit with a top spade. Declarer wins in dummy, pitches a club on the ♥A, crosses to the club ace and plays a diamond but now West throws the ♣K. He will then be able to overruff in clubs and play two rounds of trumps, leaving declarer a trick short.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ QJ ♥ KQ10 ♦ Q9754 ♣ J92	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A73 ♥ 8532 ♦ AKJ ♣ Q43	♠ 9854 ♥ AJ9 ♦ 102 ♣ AK85
			♠ K1062 ♥ 764 ♦ 863 ♣ 1076

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Da</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Roy</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
-	-	1♣	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

North led the ♠4 and South won with the king and returned the two. Declarer won with dummy's queen, went to dummy with a diamond and played a heart to the king and ace. Declarer won the spade exit, cashed two diamonds and tried a heart to the ten, so that was two down, -200.

If declarer resists the temptation to play for the ♥J to be onside and cashes four rounds of diamonds, the last of these will be too much for North, who will be down to ♠8 ♥J9 ♣AK. Not easy, but not impossible.

It might be more difficult if North were to duck the first heart.

♠ 9854		♠ A73
♥ AJ9		♥ 8532
♦ 102		♦ AKJ
♣ AK85		♣ Q43
♠ QJ	W N E	♠ K1062
♥ KQ10	W S E	♥ 764
♦ Q9754	W S E	♦ 863
♣ J92	W S E	♣ 1076

so much easier for the writer if the deals are exciting – in principle it is much easier to analyze a game or slam contract than a modest part score. However, a part-score can be instructive from time to time.

Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ Q832		♠ A654
♥ 1085		♥ Q72
♦ 652		♦ Q8
♣ 1097		♣ KJ42
♠ KJ7	W N E	♠ 109
♥ K963	W S E	♥ AJ4
♦ J103	W S E	♦ AK974
♣ Q85	W S E	♣ A63

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Desai</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Anand</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
-	Pass	1♦*	1NT
Double	Pass	Pass	2♦
Pass	Pass	2♠	All Pass

That 1♦ looks Precision like. There is an old Russian proverb that says, 'having said A you have to say B' but West was unwilling to double 2♦ (on a trump lead the defenders have a shot at +500) and when East also avoided it N/S were out of danger.

South led the ♦K and switched to the ♥J! Declarer put up dummy's king and then played two rounds of spades, finessing dummy's jack. North won an exited with a spade and declarer won in dummy and played a club to the king. When it held he tried the ♦Q, but South won and exited with a diamond. Declarer won in dummy and played the ♣Q. South won and now does best to exit with a club for two down. When he played a diamond declarer ruffed and played a club and although North ruffed and played the ♥8 declarer could duck and score a seventh trick with the ♥Q for one down.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Mukarji</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Abhijit</i>
-	-	1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Here South led the ♠2 and declarer won with dummy's queen, came to hand with a diamond and played a heart to the queen in dummy. North did duck (here it does not matter, as there is no squeeze) and declarer returned to hand with a diamond and played a heart to the ten. North won and exited with a spade and declarer claimed just eight tricks to lose 3 IMPs, making the final score 29-10 in favour of South Sweden.

Little Fish are Sweet

My instructions from the Bulletin Editor, my good friend Subir Roy, were to cover the match between Team Russia and Texan Aces. The first thing I spotted was that the player sitting in the East seat has a household name in India, although I suspect that this might not be the former World Chess Champion!

Waiting for the first deal to appear on screen I reflected that life is

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Dubin	Venkatesh	Rogov	Podhye
-	Pass	1♣	1NT
Double	Pass	Pass	2♦
All Pass			

West led the ♦3 and declarer won and ducked a club, East winning and returning a club. Declarer won and played a third club, East taking that and exiting with a diamond. Declarer won and continued the game of ping-pong by playing back a diamond as East discarded the ♠5. Now the spotlight was on West. To get the maximum he needs to play the ♠K and then continue with the jack. East will win and can exit with a club after which the defenders must score two hearts tricks for +200. West did play a spade, but he started with the jack. East took dummy's queen with the ace and exited with a club, but declarer could ruff and play a spade and was sure to escape for one down, holding the swing to 4 IMPs.

Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ KJ5		♠ 1062
♥ 63		♥ 542
♦ 10763		♦ QJ9
♣ K762		♣ QJ103
♠ A983		
♥ AQ98		
♦ K42		
♣ 95		
	♠ Q74	
	♥ KJ107	
	♦ A85	
	♣ A84	

♠ Q832		♠ A654
♥ 1085		♥ Q72
♦ 652		♦ Q8
♣ 1097		♣ KJ42
♠ KJ7		
♥ K963		
♦ J103		
♣ Q85		
	♠ 109	
	♥ AJ4	
	♦ AK974	
	♣ A63	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Desai	Khiuppenen	Anand	Kholomeev
-	-	Pass	1♣
Double	1♠*	Pass	1NT

Looking at an old convention card I suspect North's 1♠ was the equivalent of a 1NT response.

West led the ♠3 and declarer won with dummy's jack and ducked a diamond, East switching to the ♥5 for the jack and queen. The ♠9 went to dummy's king and declarer played two rounds of diamonds. West won, and cashed two spade but declarer claimed his contract – he could win a club exit in dummy, cash a diamond and play a heart, setting up a seventh trick.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Dubin	Venkatesh	Rogov	Podhye
-	-	Pass	1♣
Double	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	2♣	All Pass	

2♣ was a miserable spot – West led the ♣5 and the defenders were not hard pressed to collect their tricks for an easy +100 and 5 more IMPs.

Board 23. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ 86		♠ A
♥ 9763		♥ AQ852
♦ A8		♦ KQ975
♣ KQ973		♣ 104
♠ K1072		
♥ J104		
♦ 1032		
♣ AJ6		
	♠ QJ9543	
	♥ K	
	♦ J64	
	♣ 852	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Desai</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Anand</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
-	-	-	2♠
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
2NT	Lebensohl		

♠ K1072	♠ 86	♠ A
♥ J104	♥ 9763	♥ AQ852
♦ 1032	♦ A8	♦ KQ975
♣ AJ6	♣ KQ973	♣ 104
	♠ QJ9543	
	♥ K	
	♦ J64	
	♣ 852	

Defending 2♠ doubled was an option, but it takes a diamond lead to put the defenders on track for +500.

North led the ♠8 and declarer won performe with dummy's ace and played the ♦K, North winning and returning a spade for the jack and king as declarer pitched a diamond from dummy. Declarer ran the ♥10 and South won and switched to the ♣8, North winning with the queen and exiting with a diamond. Declarer won with dummy's queen and cashed his winners for one down, -100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Venkateash</i>	<i>Rogov</i>	<i>Podhye</i>
-	-	-	2♦*
Pass	2♥*	Double	2♠
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		
2♦	Multi		
2♥	Pass or correct		

South led the ♠Q and declarer won in hand, crossed to the ♣A, pitched a club on the ♠K and ran the heart jack. South won and played a club and declarer ruffed in dummy and cashed the ♥A getting the bad news. The hand was out of control now and when declarer crossed to dummy with trump and played a diamond North won and played a winning club ensuring two down, +200 and 3 IMPs.

Having pitched a club on a second spade, suppose declarer plays a diamond to the king. If declarer then guesses to duck a diamond he should be in no danger – even if North holds ♥K9xx. On the actual layout suppose North plays a club after winning with the ♦A and declarer ruffs and plays

a winning diamond. North can ruff, but is then helpless – he must play a trump to stop a high cross-ruff, but then declarer has the rest on top.

I suspect the best line is to play the ♦K at trick two. If North wins and plays a top club declarer wins with dummy's ace, pitches a club on the ♠A and plays two rounds of diamonds, South winning and returning a club. Declarer ruffs and cashes the ♥A. Here the king falls, but suppose North has the ♥K9xx? Declarer now ruffs a diamond and if North discards, declarer can ruff a club and then ruff the last diamond.

Declarer will need to decide how the trump suit is divided, but he may get a count on the South hand. The key point is to follow the principle expounded by Terence Reese and develop the side suit first.

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ J95	♠ KQ742
♥ Q107543	♥ A
♦ J53	♦ KQ9
♣ 8	♣ A976
♠ -	♠ A10863
♥ KJ862	♥ 9
♦ A10874	♦ 62
♣ Q102	♣ KJ543

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Desai</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Anand</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
2♥*	Pass	2NT*	3♥*
4♦	Pass	5♦	All Pass
2♥	Hearts and a minor		
2NT	Relay		
3♥	Spades and another		

When South intervened West elected to introduce his minor and with so much in spades East made no move towards slam. The alternative for West was to pass and await developments – 3♠ doubled would not have

been a bargain for declarer.

North led the ♣8 and South won with the king and switched to the ♦2. Declarer won with dummy's nine, unblocked the ♥A and played ♠K, ruffing South's ace. He ruffed a heart, cashed the ♦K, pitched a heart on the ♠Q, ruffed a spade, drew the outstanding trump and claimed, +400.

♠ — ♥ KJ862 ♦ A10874 ♣ Q102	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> W N E S </div>	♠ J95 ♥ Q107543 ♦ J53 ♣ 8 ♠ KQ742 ♥ A ♦ KQ9 ♣ A976 ♠ A10863 ♥ 9 ♦ 62 ♣ KJ543
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Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Venkateash</i>	<i>Rogov</i>	<i>Podh</i>
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣*	Double
3♦	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥*	Pass	6♦	All Pass
3♣ Fourth suit forcing			

North led the ♣8 and declarer put up dummy's ace, unblocked the ♥A and played the ♠K, covered and ruffed. He tried to cash the ♥K but South ruffed, cashed the ♣K and exited with a club, North ruffing and playing a diamond. That led to three down, -150 and 11 IMPs that gave the Aces the lead.

Board 27. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ A108752 ♥ AJ865 ♦ — ♣ J6	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> W N E S </div>	♠ K63 ♥ Q432 ♦ K74 ♣ A52	♠ QJ94 ♥ 9 ♦ 10865 ♣ 10973
♠ — ♥ K107 ♦ AQJ932 ♣ KQ84			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Desai</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Anand</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
–	–	–	1♦
Double	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠*	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

I am not a fan of West's double. 2♠ was alerted, but not explained. Although the heart fit never came to light a playable contract was reached.

East led the ♠Q and when West followed with the three he switched to the ♥9 for the ten, queen and ace. Now declarer could play on clubs establishing the tricks he needed, +400.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Venkateash</i>	<i>Rogov</i>	<i>Podh</i>
–	–	–	1♦
Double	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Here too, West saw fit to double. I wonder in which doubled contract E/W would have played if North had redoubled?

I'm guessing that 2♦ promised hearts, but maybe not.

East led a club and declarer had to lose four tricks, so one down and 10 IMPs that saw the lead change hands once more.

Board 29. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ 86 ♥ AK42 ♦ 543 ♣ AK72		♠ A10 ♥ Q3 ♦ KQ862 ♣ 10843	♠ K7543 ♥ 865 ♦ 10 ♣ QJ95
	♠ QJ92 ♥ J1097 ♦ AJ97 ♣ 6		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Desai</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Anand</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
-	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠*
Pass	2♥	All Pass	

East led the ♦K and declarer won with dummy's ace and cashed the top hearts. When the queen fell he drew the outstanding trump and having seen West's ♦10 continued with the ♦J for an effortless ten tricks, +170.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Venkateash</i>	<i>Rogov</i>	<i>Podhye</i>
-	1♣	1♦	Double*
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

East led the ♦K and declarer won in dummy and played the ♥J. When he let it run East won, cashed the ♦Q and the ♠A and then gave West a diamond ruff, the ♠K representing the second undertrick, -200 and a comfortable win for Team Russia, 28-17.

All India

Most players will tell you that they hope to avoid anything too challenging at the start of a match, preferring something straightforward that will allow them to settle down. A simple 3NT is always welcome. Without further ado, here is the opening deal of the quarter-finals:

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ Q2 ♥ 8763 ♦ 5 ♣ KQ10975		♠ 103 ♥ 954 ♦ 1087632 ♣ J6	♠ K9754 ♥ KQJ10 ♦ K9 ♣ 83
	♠ AJ86 ♥ A2 ♦ AQJ4 ♣ A42		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mukherjee</i>	<i>Basak</i>	<i>Majunder</i>	<i>Roy</i>
-	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣*	Pass	3♦*
Pass	3♠*	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

North looked for a heart fit before settling for the nine-trick game. West led the ♥K and declarer ducked, took the next heart and cashed six clubs, coming down to ♠AJ ♦AQJ. West had blanked his diamond king, but declarer finessed in that suit so just +400.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bhattacharya</i>	<i>Anklesaria</i>	<i>Jajoo</i>	<i>Tewari</i>
-	1♣	Pass	4♦*
Pass	4♥	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

I'm not sure what to make of the auction – the standards for an opening bid have been falling steadily, but North's hand looks more like a 3♣ bid to me. 4♦ may have been asking for something, but North had little to offer and South settled for the small slam.

East led the ♦3 and declarer put up dummy's ace and exited with the ♥2. West won with the king and tried to cash the ♦K, which declarer ruffed. He played the ♠Q, overtaking it with the ace and tried the ♦J, but West ruffed and declarer overruffed, cashed the ♣K and came to hand with a club to cash the ♦Q. West, down to ♠K97 ♥QJ10, was caught in a trump squeeze. Discarding from either major would allow declarer to set up a long card in that suit. West went with a spade so declarer ruffed a spade, came to hand with a heart, ruffed a spade and ruffed a heart to take trick thirteen with the ♠J and collect 11 IMPs.

Suppose after winning a heart trick West exits with a trump, covered by the ten, jack and ace. Declarer cashes the ♥A and can obviously get home easily by ruffing dummy's low diamond. However, suppose declarer plays a diamond honour, covered by the king and ruffed. Now declarer cashes a top trump, ruffs a heart, pitches the ♠Q on the ♦J, ruffs a diamond and cashes two trumps. At this point East is known to have started with three hearts, six diamonds and two clubs, so the odds favour West having the ♠K. Realising that declarer plays for the squeeze to have operated and a spade to the ace brings unbounded joy, not to mention the IMPs.

Meanwhile, in Hemant Jalan v Poddar Housing:

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Shah</i>	<i>Kushari</i>	<i>Dhakras</i>	<i>Roy</i>
-	3♣	Pass	4NT*
Pass	5♦*	Pass	5NT*
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

Having established that North's only king was in the trump suit South settled for 6♣.

♠ K9754	♠ Q2	♠ 103
♥ KQJ10	♥ 8763	♥ 954
♦ K9	♦ 5	♦ 1087632
♣ 83	♣ KQ10975	♣ J6
		♠ AJ86
		♥ A2
		♦ AQJ4
		♣ A42

East led the ♥4 and declarer won with dummy's ace and returned the two, West winning with the king and exiting with the ♣3. Declarer put in dummy's ten, took East's jack with the ace, cashed the ♦A and continued with the queen, covered and ruffed. Now declarer fatally ruffed a heart and tried to cash the ♦J. West ruffed and declarer overruffed and played dummy's last heart. East could ruff that and there was still a spade to lose, so that was -100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nandi</i>	<i>Poddar</i>	<i>Bendre</i>	<i>Solani</i>
-	Pass	Pass	1♣
Double	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

After West had doubled 1♣, disclosing the whereabouts of the missing high cards, 6♣ would have been a heavy favourite to make, but it was no surprise to see N/S stop in game. Declarer won the heart lead and cashed six clubs. West blanked the ♦K and declarer played a diamond to the ace, securing 12 tricks, as West was now squeezed and could be thrown in to lead away from the ♠K. So, in both these matches 11 IMPs changed hands. Remarkably they were the only IMPs Hemant Jalan gave up in the set.

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ K86532	♠ 974
♥ 7	♥ QJ2
♦ J9754	♦ AQ1032
♣ 3	♣ AK
♠ A10	♠ QJ
♥ K853	♥ A10964
♦ K86	♦ -
♣ J965	♣ Q108742

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Mukherjee	Basak	Majunder	Roy
-	-	1NT	2♣*
Double	Pass	2♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

I can't tell you what 2♣ meant – maybe hearts and another suit?

South led the ♠Q and declarer won with dummy's ace and played a diamond to the ace, South parting with the ♣2. After taking three diamonds via a finesse against North declarer played the ♥J and with the spades blocked he had nine tricks, +400.

♠ K86532	♥ 7	♦ J9754	♣ 3
♠ A10	♥ K853	♦ K86	♣ J965
♠ 974	♥ QJ2	♦ AQ1032	♣ AK
♠ QJ	♥ A10964	♦ —	♣ Q108742

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Shah	Kushari	Dhakras	Roy
-	-	1♣*	1♥
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

North led the ♠5 and declarer took the second round of the suit and cashed the ♣AK before broaching the diamonds. He then knocked out the ♥A for +400.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Nandi	Poddar	Bendre	Solani
-	-	1NT	2♥
All Pass			

When I was a lad West would have happily doubled 2♥ for penalties when North would be well advised to bid 2♠, which in this case would prove not to be a case of jumping out of the frying pan into the fire. However, in the modern era the penalty double is gradually disappearing. West led the ♠A and switched to a trump, when according to the scoreboard declarer went four down for an unusual flat board.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Bhattacharya	Anklesaria	Jajoo	Tewari
-	-	1NT	2♣
Double	Pass	2♦	3♣
Double	All Pass		

Here too the meaning of 2♣ is unknown, but I wonder why South did not bid 2♥ along the way? If that was doubled it was always possible to bid 3♣.

When you have the balance of power and are defending, (especially a doubled contract) it is generally a good idea to lead a trump. Here that would have led to +500, but West went with the ♦6 and declarer ruffed, cashed the ♥A, ruffed a heart, ruffed a diamond and played the ♠Q. West won, cashed the ♥K and now does best to play the ♦K. When he exited with a heart declarer was allowed to win with the ten and he cashed the ♠J. Exiting with a low trump at this point allows declarer to escape for one down, but he played a heart. West should pitch the ♦K on that when East will ruff and play a diamond for +300, but he ruffed and that allowed declarer to emerge unscathed, just one down, -100 and 5 IMPs the richer.

Back to Hemant Jalan v Poddar Housing:

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ A10975	♥ A	♦ 96542	♣ AK
♠ J864	♥ 9	♦ KJ10	♣ J9653
♠ KQ32	♥ KQ1064	♦ Q	♣ Q84
♠ —	♥ J87532	♦ A873	♣ 1072

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Mukherjee	Basak	Majunder	Roy
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	1♠	2♥	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	

Wild horses would not get me to overcall at the two level with the East hand. South led the ♣7 and North won with the king, cashed the ace and then tabled the ♠A (doing that at trick two should lead to +1100). South pitched the ♦8, ruffed the ♠5 and returned the ♣2, North ruffing with the ♥A and giving South another spade ruff, to make the score 6-0. North had played the ♠10 on the previous trick and South decided to underlead his ♦A which meant the penalty was only -500.

♠ A 10975			
♥ A			
♦ 96542			
♣ AK			
♠ J864		♠ KQ32	
♥ 9		♥ KQ1064	
♦ KJ10		♦ Q	
♣ J9653		♣ Q84	
♠ —			
♥ J87532			
♦ A873			
♣ 1072			

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

		♠ Q	
		♥ A9872	
		♦ A7543	
		♣ 109	
♠ AKJ10			♠ 87654
♥ KQ4			♥ J63
♦ Q109			♦ J8
♣ AJ2			♣ 765
		♠ 932	
		♥ 105	
		♦ K62	
		♣ KQ843	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Mukherjee	Basak	Majunder	Roy
-	-	Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥*	Pass
4♠	All Pass		
3♥	Transfer		

I confess I have never been a fan of breaking transfers – whenever I do it I end up exactly one trick too high. That was exactly what happened here, declarer losing the obvious four tricks for -100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Bhattacharya	Anklesaria	Jajoo	Tewari
-	-	Pass	Pass
2NT	All Pass		

North led the ♥7 and declarer won with the king and cashed four rounds of spades before exiting with the ♦9. North took the ace and played the ♥2 (nothing works) and declarer won with dummy's jack, cashed a spade and then played a diamond for +150 and 6 IMPs.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Bhattacharya	Anklesaria	Jajoo	Tewari
-	-	-	2♦*
Pass	2♥*	All Pass	
2♦	Multi		
2♥	Pass or correct		

East led the ♠K and declarer won with dummy's ace, pitching the ♣2 from dummy, unblocked the ♥A, played a diamond to the ace and exited with the ♥3. That did not prove to a triumph and the contract was one down for the loss of 11 IMPs.

Obviously declarer could have done better (playing as the defenders did at the other table, using dummy's ♥A to ruff a club is one way to get eight tricks).

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 64 ♥ 42 ♦ KJ9865 ♣ Q93		♠ KJ95 ♥ KJ1086 ♦ A4 ♣ J7	♠ A1073 ♥ 973 ♦ 73 ♣ A1054
	♠ Q82 ♥ AQ5 ♦ Q102 ♣ K862		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mukherjee</i>	<i>Basak</i>	<i>Majunder</i>	<i>Roy</i>
-	-	-	1♣
1♦	1♥	Double*	Redouble*
2♦	4♥	All Pass	
Double Spades and diamond tolerance			
Redouble	♥ support		

East led the ♦7 and declarer put in dummy's ten, taking West's jack with the ace and returning a diamond. West won and played a third diamond and declarer ruffed with the ten, cashed the ♥AQ and then played a spade to the king and ace. East exited with a heart and declarer won, played a club to the king and exited with a club, West putting up the queen and exiting with a diamond. Declarer ruffed, but East discarded the ♣A and the defenders had to get one more trick, -50.

As the cards lie declarer should draw the outstanding trump and then play a spade to dummy's eight, not unreasonable if my interpretation of the bidding is accurate.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bhattacharya</i>	<i>Anklesaria</i>	<i>Jajoo</i>	<i>Tewari</i>
-	-	-	1♣
1♦	Double*	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

West led the ♠6 and that essentially solved declarer's problem. With the ♣A onside declarer was soon inscribing +420 onto the scorecard which was worth 10 IMPs.

Formidables were ahead 51-17, while Hemant Jalan led 33-11.

La Belle Alliance

My featured match was between two cosmopolitan teams, South Sweden and FII (Indo French + Italy) and provides the inspiration for my title. You will all be familiar with the fact that is usually associated with an Inn near Brussels that played a role in the Battle of Waterloo. It is less well known that the Prussian commander, Blücher, suggested the battle be named after the inn, as a tribute to the countries that had joined forces to defeat the French. Although Wellington got his way with Waterloo, Berlin's Rondell plaza was renamed Belle-Alliance Platz.

Turning reluctantly to the bridge, at the behest of my publisher I am working on a new book – *Misdefend these Hands with Me* – and it is not proving difficult to find candidates for inclusion. Let's see what happened on the opening deal of the match:

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ J10986 ♥ 82 ♦ A10953 ♣ 10	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 7542 ♥ AQ75 ♦ QJ6 ♣ J7	♠ AQ ♥ J1094 ♦ 872 ♣ K863 ♠ K3 ♥ K63 ♦ K4 ♣ AQ9542
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Choksi</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Gupta</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
-	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♦*
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West led the ♠J and declarer won with dummy's queen and advanced the ♥J. East went up with the ace and played a second spade. Declarer took no chances, cashing his winners for +400.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Cronier</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Duboin</i>
-	Pass	Pass	1NT
2♦*	Double	3♠	3NT
All Pass			
2♦	Multilandy		
3♠	Pass or correct		

The first two tricks were identical, but here East switched to the ♦J at trick three and the defenders took five tricks in the suit for +100 and an 11 IMP pick-up.

Board 13. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ KJ9652 ♥ A9632 ♦ 92 ♣ -	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 843 ♥ J ♦ AQ653 ♣ J962	♠ Q7 ♥ 1074 ♦ 1087 ♣ AQ743 ♠ A10 ♥ KQ85 ♦ KJ4 ♣ K1085
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Choksi</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Gupta</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
-	-	-	1NT
2♣*	3NT	All Pass	
2♣	Majors		

West led the ♠6 and when dummy's queen held declarer cashed the ♣A and took four more tricks in the suit before playing a heart. East's ♥J was a welcome sight and dummy's ♥10 was soon taking the game going trick, +400.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Cronier</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Duboin</i>
-	-	-	1NT
2♣*	Double	Pass	Pass
2♠	2NT	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

North led the ♦7 and declarer put in dummy's queen, South winning with the king and playing two rounds of spades. Declarer won with the king, played a diamond to the ace, ruffed a diamond claimed ten tricks when the suit divided, +620 adding 14 IMPs to South Sweden's tally.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ KJ932 ♥ K10 ♦ 103 ♣ J873	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A75 ♥ A6532 ♦ AJ2 ♣ 52	♠ 864 ♥ QJ4 ♦ Q94 ♣ K1094
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Choksi</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Gupta</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
-	-	1♥	Pass
2♣*	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

South led the ♠4 and declarer tried dummy's queen, ducking when North produced the king. The switch to the ♣7 was taken by dummy queen and when declarer played a heart North played a second king, which was also allowed to hold. The ♣3 went to dummy's ace and declarer played a heart to the ace, eliminated the black suits and exited with a trump. South won, and had he started with four diamonds declarer's fine play would have been rewarded. When he was able to exit with the ♣4 declarer ruffed, played a diamond to the king and took the diamond finesse, -100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Cronier</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Duboin</i>
-	-	1♥	Pass
3♦*	Pass	3♥	All Pass

3♦ Heart support

Taking nine tricks was easy – and another 6 IMPs went South.

Board 7. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ — ♥ A109 ♦ K6543 ♣ QJ1042	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A98763 ♥ 76 ♦ AJ9 ♣ 73	♠ 54 ♥ KQJ842 ♦ 1072 ♣ AK
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Choksi</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Gupta</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
-	-	-	1♥
1♠	3♠*	4♠	5♥
Pass	Pass	5♠	Double
All Pass			

3♠ Shortage with heart support

Ignoring the Bols Bridge Tip – *The Five Level belongs to the Opponents* – East took a second bite of the cherry. North led the ♣Q and the defenders collected the first four tricks, +500.

We will never know if West would have found the killing lead against 5♥.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Cronier</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Duboin</i>
-	-	-	1♥
1♠	2NT*	4♠	Pass
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♥
All Pass			

2NT Heart support

West led the ♠K and declarer ruffed in dummy, came to hand with a club,

ruffed a spade with the ♥A and drew trumps. There was no way to avoid the loss of three diamond tricks, so that was one down.

You see how careful you have to be when talking about a bridge deal. To be sure of defeating 5♥ West has to lead the ♦Q – easy to see when all four hands are on view. However, with the bidding hinting that suits would not break declarer was unwilling to follow what would have been the winning line. Unlucky – and another big swing leaving South Sweden ahead 44-4.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ J 10 ♥ J ♦ A 10654 ♣ AK864	<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	♠ KQ94 ♥ 1096 ♦ 982 ♣ Q73
N					
W E					
S					
♠ 873 ♥ 8543 ♦ K73 ♣ 952		♠ A652 ♥ AKQ72 ♦ QJ ♣ J10			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Choksi</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Gupta</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠*
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
All Pass			

2♠ Fourth suit forcing

NS flirted with a slam, but with no eight-card fit they called a halt. East led ♠K and when it held he continued with the queen. That also scored, but declarer took the ♠4 with dummy's ace and ran the ♦J. That was followed by the ♦Q, covered by the king and ace and when the suit broke

declarer claimed eleven tricks, +460.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Cronier</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Duboin</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠*
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Double	Redouble*
Pass	3NT	Pass	5NT*
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

2♠ Fourth suit forcing
 Redouble Spade control
 5NT Pick a slam

Declarer took the ♠K with dummy's ace, cashed two hearts pitching a spade and played the ♦Q, covered by the king and ace. A diamond to the jack was followed by a spade ruff, a diamond ruff, the ♥Q pitching a diamond, a spade ruff and the ♦10, ruffed by the ♣J. When that passed off peacefully declarer claimed, +920 and 10 welcome IMPs.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ KJ86 ♥ A2 ♦ A7542 ♣ Q4	<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	♠ 94 ♥ KQJ853 ♦ 109 ♣ A75	♠ AQ1052 ♥ — ♦ KQJ3 ♣ J632
N						
W E						
S						
♠ 73 ♥ 109764 ♦ 86 ♣ K1098						

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Choksi</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Gupta</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
1♦	1♥	Double*	3♥
3♠	Pass	4♥*	Pass
4NT*	Pass	6♦*	Pass
6♠	All Pass		
	4♥ Cue-bid		
	4NT RKCB		

♠ 94			
♥ KQJ853			
♦ 109			
♣ A75			
♠ KJ86			♠ AQ1052
♥ A2			♥ —
♦ A7542			♦ KQJ3
♣ Q4			♣ J632
♠ 73			
♥ 109764			
♦ 86			
♣ K1098			

The traditional way to show an odd number of keycards and a void would be to bid 6♦ with the East hand. (If East is known to hold a heart void then a response of 5NT shows 1 key card plus the known void.) Although North led the ♥K declarer could not avoid the loss of two clubs, -50.

Here's something to ponder: if East had held a club control and the heart void he would have had bid 4♣ over 3♠, intending to continue with 4♥ over a possible 4♦ from West.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Cronier</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Duboin</i>
1♦	2♥	2♠	3♥
4♠	Pass	5♦*	Pass
5♠	All Pass		

Knowing that East did not have a club control West signed off and pocketed 11 IMPs.

Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

		♠ Q87432	
		♥ 96	
		♦ 73	
		♣ J53	
♠ K			♠ AJ65
♥ 108			♥ AJ53
♦ AKJ64			♦ 109
♣ A10974			♣ KQ8
		♠ 109	
		♥ KQ742	
		♦ Q852	
		♣ 62	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Choksi</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Gupta</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
-	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♠*	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Whatever the meaning of 2♠ it did not get the job done. On the lead of the ♥4 declarer took all the tricks, +720.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Cronier</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Duboin</i>
-	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦*	Pass	2♥	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♠	Pass	6♣	All Pass

An old convention card suggests that 2♦ was a puppet to 2♥, and I'm guessing that 3NT then showed slam interest with the minors. It got the job done.

Declarer won the lead of the ♥K with the ace, unblocked dummy's ♠K, cashed the ♣KQ, pitched a heart on the spade ace, drew the outstanding trump and played a diamond to the nine, claiming +1370 and 12 IMPs to leave South Sweden cruising at 82-20.

Double Duty

The semi-finals featured Team Russia v South Sweden and KI Plus against Don Julio. I was planning to cover both matches, but a computer glitch meant I had to wait to get all the details.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ A75 ♥ A87432 ♦ A108 ♣ 5		♠ J964 ♥ Q1065 ♦ J3 ♣ A97	♠ K832 ♥ K ♦ Q942 ♣ K1064
	♠ Q10 ♥ J9 ♦ K765 ♣ QJ832		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sigurjonsson</i>	<i>Stefanov</i>	<i>Krantz</i>	<i>Gunev</i>
–	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

North led the ♠4 and declarer took South's queen with the ace and played a club. When the king held he unblocked the ♥K and played the ♦Q, covered by the king and ace. He continued with two rounds of hearts, throwing clubs from dummy, and North won, cashed the ♥Q and exited with the ♣A. Declarer ruffed and played the ♦10, North winning with the jack. When North played a third club declarer ruffed, pitched a spade from dummy, cashed the ♦8 and could cross to the ♠K to cash the ♦9.

As you will have spotted, North must exit with a spade, removing the vital entry to dummy. Put that down to South's play at trick one.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mihov</i>	<i>Rotaru</i>	<i>Nanev</i>	<i>Nistor</i>
–	Pass	1♦*	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦*	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass

South led the ♣3 and when North put in the nine East decided to duck – both strange looking plays. North continued with the ♣7 and declarer put up the king, unblocked the ♥K, played a spade to the ace and two rounds of hearts. North won and exited with a spade and declarer won with the king and exited with a spade, North winning, cashing his tricks and exiting with a diamond. Declarer might have got that wrong to go two down which cost 11 IMPs.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Gulevich</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
–	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

North led the ♠6 and declarer took South's ten with the ace and played a club, North going up with the ace and returning the ♣9. Declarer won with dummy's king, pitching a spade, unblocked the ♥K and played the ♦Q, covered by the king and ace. Two rounds of hearts confirmed that there were three red suit losers, -50.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
–	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Double
2♠	All Pass		

South led the ♣Q and North took the ace and returned the nine. Declarer ruffed in dummy, played a heart to the king, and advanced the ♦Q. When that held he played a diamond to the ace, cashed the ♠A, the ♥A and then played a spade, emerging with nine tricks, +140 and 5 IMPs.

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ AJ4 ♥ QJ983 ♦ K4 ♣ 1075		♠ K2 ♥ 764 ♦ A1092 ♣ AQ96	♠ Q10976 ♥ 5 ♦ QJ865 ♣ K2
♠ 853 ♥ AK102 ♦ 73 ♣ J843			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Gulevich</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
-	-	1NT*	Pass
2♥*	Double	2♠*	3♥
4♦	Pass	5♦	All Pass
1NT	12-15		
2♥	Transfer		

East's 2♠ was alerted – perhaps because it did not guarantee three spades. When West introduced his second suit East did not hesitate to bid game – despite her near minimum she held great cards for partner. On this layout declarer was not hard pressed to secure eleven tricks, +400.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
-	-	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

Diamonds were never in the picture at this table.

North led the ♥Q and continued the suit and declarer ruffed, played the ♦Q covered and taken by dummy's ace. When both defenders followed

to the diamond ten declarer left trumps alone, cashing three clubs, ruffing a heart and exiting with a diamond. That ensured nine tricks, +140, but 6 IMPs were lost.

On Board 3 the South players were looking at ♠Q10932 ♥84 ♦A932 ♣86. All of them opened, either 2♠ or 2♦. Partner held ♠AKJ764 ♥AJ10 ♦- ♣AKQJ and they all reached 7♠ – Rotaru and Gower simply jumping there immediately.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 876 ♥ QJ1073 ♦ A7 ♣ Q74		♠ Q1094 ♥ K5 ♦ QJ109 ♣ K86	♠ KJ2 ♥ 64 ♦ 542 ♣ A9532
		♠ A53 ♥ A982 ♦ K863 ♣ J10	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sigurjonsson</i>	<i>Stefanov</i>	<i>Krantz</i>	<i>Gunev</i>
-	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣*
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

West led the ♥Q and declarer won with dummy's king and played the ♦9, West winning and exiting with the ♦7. Declarer won with dummy's ten and played the ♠Q for the king and ace. A spade to the nine saw East win and play a heart and when declarer put in the eight West won with the ten and exited with the ♣4. When declarer played dummy's six he was home, +600.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mihov</i>	<i>Rotaru</i>	<i>Nanev</i>	<i>Nistor</i>
-	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣*
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
All Pass			

♠ Q1094		♠ KJ2
♥ K5		♥ 64
♦ QJ109		♦ 542
♣ K86		♣ A9532
♠ 876	W N E	♠ A53
♥ QJ1073	W N E	♥ A982
♦ A7	W N E	♦ K863
♣ Q74	W N E	♣ J10

West led the ♥J, taken by dummy's king and the ♠Q was covered by the king and ace. East won the next spade and played a heart and West won with the ten and switched to the ♣4. When declarer played dummy's six East followed with the five. When declarer played a diamond West went in with the ace and tabled the ♣Q and that was two down, -100 and 13 IMPs.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Gulevich</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
-	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass
2♥	3♦	All Pass	

Declarer won the heart lead with dummy's king and played the ♠Q covered by the king and ace. A diamond to the nine was followed by the ♠10 and when that held declarer played a third spade, East winning and exiting with a heart. Declarer won and played the ♣J covered all round and East played back a trump, declarer claiming ten tricks, +130.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
-	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

South followed the principle that an opening bid facing an opening bid should ensure that game is reached. West led the ♥Q and declarer won with dummy's king and ran the ♦9 to West's ace. To be sure of defeating

the game West needs to switch to a club, but if you can find that you a better man than I am! West exited with a diamond and declarer won with dummy's ten and played the ♠Q, covered by the king and ace and played two more rounds of spades, East winning and exiting with a diamond. Declarer won with the king and played the ♣J. When West followed with the seven declarer went up with dummy's king – and down went the contract. East won, and returned a club and the defenders cashed their club tricks. That looks like three down and 10 IMPs to me, but the BBO record showed it as -400 and 11 IMPs.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ Q763		♠ K984
♥ 108		♥ 962
♦ AQ54		♦ 1083
♣ Q92		♣ 1074
♠ J5	W N E	♠ A102
♥ AJ4	W N E	♥ KQ753
♦ 9762	W N E	♦ KJ
♣ KJ63	W N E	♣ A85

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Gulevich</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West led the ♦7 and declarer took East's ten with the jack and played a spade for the five, queen and king. He won the diamond return with the king and played the ♥3, West going in with the jack and exiting with the ♣J. When dummy's queen held declarer cashed dummy's diamonds and played a heart to the king, emerging with ten tricks, +430.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West led the ♣6 and declarer played low from dummy's taking East's ten with the ace and unblocking the diamonds before playing a spade to the queen and king. West took the club return with the king and exited with the three, declarer winning with dummy's queen and cashing two diamonds pitching hearts. When a spade to the ten lost to the jack West cashed his winners for +50 and 10 IMPs.

♠ Q763	♥ 108	♦ AQ54	♣ Q92
♠ J5	♥ AJ4	♦ 9762	♣ KJ63
♠ K984	♥ 962	♦ 1083	♣ 1074
♠ A102	♥ KQ753	♦ KJ	♣ A85

Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ Q1095	♥ K3	♦ AQJ54	♣ 97
♠ K863	♥ Q8	♦ 98	♣ QJ1054
♠ AJ74	♥ 7542	♦ K63	♣ 32
♠ 2	♥ AJ1096	♦ 1072	♣ AK86

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Gower</i>	<i>Gulevich</i>	<i>Apteker</i>
-	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			
2♦ xyz -game forcing			

West led the ♣Q and declarer won with the ace and played a diamond to the queen. When it held he ducked a spade and West won with the six and returned the ♦9. Naturally declarer played low from dummy and East won and gave her partner a diamond ruff. Declarer ruffed the spade return, cashed the ♣K and ruffed a club with the ♥3. East could overruff that and exit with a trump ensuring two down and -200.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregaard</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
-	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣*
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

After an identical start East won trick two with the ♦K and switched to the ♠4, West winning and returning the ♣10. Declarer won and ran the ♥J. When it held he crossed to the ♥K, ruffed a spade, drew trumps and claimed, +650 and 13 IMPs.

KI Plus led 21-15, while South Sweden were ahead 38-24.

Gold & Silver Waltz

If there is no Test Match or football to listen to, my radio is frequently tuned to *Classic FM*. One of yesterday's offerings was the overture to Franz Lehár's *The Merry Widow*. I couldn't see how that might be the title for this piece, but then I recalled another of the composer's best known pieces, the *Gold and Silver Waltz* – perfect as Team Russia and KI Plus began the final.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 4 ♥ AJ85 ♦ A87 ♣ AJ842		♠ Q876532 ♥ 2 ♦ 6542 ♣ 7	♠ J109 ♥ KQ10973 ♦ 3 ♣ KQ6
♠ AK ♥ 64 ♦ KQJ109 ♣ 10953			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Stefanov</i>	<i>Rogov</i>	<i>Gunev</i>
-	-	-	1NT
Pass	2♥*	Double	Pass
4♥	4♠	Pass	Pass
5♥	All Pass		

Not an easy hand for E/W, especially if West cannot come in over 1NT. Would it have helped if West had bid 3♠ over his partner's double? East could then bid 4♣, which might encourage West. After the continuation 4♦-4♥ West might risk 4♠ and if East then bids 5♣ the excellent slam will be reached. It always looks so easy on paper, don't you agree? Declarer claimed 12 tricks at trick one, +680.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mihov</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Nanev</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
-	-	-	1♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	4♥	4♠
Double	All Pass		

It was even harder after the 1♦ opening and preemptive response. East led his diamond and West won and returned the eight, East ruffing

and playing the ♥9. West won, gave his partner another ruff and the ♣K was the defenders fifth trick, -300, but a 9 IMP loss.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 83 ♥ Q42 ♦ K642 ♣ 10972		♠ K1096 ♥ 1098 ♦ A8 ♣ A643	♠ A2 ♥ KJ73 ♦ QJ93 ♣ J85
♠ QJ754 ♥ A65 ♦ 1075 ♣ KQ			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Stefanov</i>	<i>Rogov</i>	<i>Gunev</i>
-	-	-	1♠
Pass	3♣*	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

3♣ Spade support

If West had found a heart lead declarer would have been forced to play to pitch a heart on the third round of clubs, which works on this layout. After the lead of a spade to the ace declarer shortened the play by claiming, +420.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mihov</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Nanev</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
-	-	-	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	3♠
All Pass			

The old convention card I can see does not mention the 1NT response West led the ♣10, and +170 cost 6 IMPs.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ 3 ♥ J1063 ♦ KQ1042 ♣ A32	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 976 ♥ 8752 ♦ 765 ♣ 1086	♠ K4 ♥ Q94 ♦ AJ9 ♣ KQJ54
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Stefanov</i>	<i>Rogov</i>	<i>Gunev</i>
1♦	4♠	Pass	5♦*
Pass	5♥	Double	Pass
Pass	Redouble*	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

Holding the sort of hand I usually associate with the rubber bridge table, East ignored the dictum of Terence Reese 'I can only pass and hope to be on the winning side' and doubled 5♥. When North confirmed that he held a first round control in hearts South was happy to bid the slam. East led a diamond and declarer won with dummy's ace, played a spade to the ace, unblocked the hearts, went to dummy with a spade, pitched a diamond on the ♥Q, ruffed a diamond high, drew the outstanding trump and claimed, +1430.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mihov</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Nanev</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
1♦	4♠	All Pass	

An identical line of play gave the same number of tricks, but resulted in the loss of 13 IMPs.

Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ 87 ♥ QJ5 ♦ KQJ7 ♣ J753	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A9532 ♥ 64 ♦ 8 ♣ A10864	♠ KQJ ♥ A103 ♦ A10965 ♣ KQ
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Stefanov</i>	<i>Rogov</i>	<i>Gunev</i>
-	Pass	2♠*	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

It looks as if East showed spades and clubs and West decided there should be a play for a slam.

South led the ♥7 and declarer ducked, won the next heart with dummy's ace, cashed two spades, unblocked the clubs, ruffed a heart, ruffed a club, cashed dummy's diamond ace, ruffed a diamond and drew the last trump, +1430.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mihov</i>	<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Nanev</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>
-	Pass	2♠*	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♥*	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣*	Pass
4♦*	Pass	4♠	All Pass
2♠	5+♠ and a minor, 3-10		
2NT	Asking for the minor		
3♥	5♣		
4♣	Cue-bid		
4♦	Cue-bid		

E/W appeared to be on their way, when West suddenly called a halt to proceedings. Holding two aces perhaps East should have bid a Last Train 4♥ over 4♦? The 13 IMPs that Team Russia had given up on the previous deal had been recovered and although they trailed 24-29 there was a long way to go.

Extra Boards

When the first session of the final did not deliver much in the way of excitement I decided keep an eye on Boards 15-28.

Board 16 Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ 53 ♥ 95 ♦ Q1075 ♣ AQ753		♠ J1084 ♥ Q843 ♦ 8432 ♣ K	♠ AK72 ♥ K102 ♦ AJ ♣ 10964
	♠ Q96 ♥ AJ76 ♦ K96 ♣ J82		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Stefanov</i>	<i>Rogov</i>	<i>Gunev</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	All Pass

North led the ♠10 and declarer won with dummy's ace, South following with the six, and played the ♣4 for the queen (not a play the Rabbi would have approved of) and king. Now playing either major leaves the defenders in charge, but North switched to the ♦4 and South took declarer's jack with the king and returned the ♦9. Declarer won with dummy's ace and advanced the ♣10, going up with dummy's ace. When North discarded it was all over as South won the next club and played the ♠Q,

one down, -100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mihov</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Nanev</i>	<i>Gulevich</i>
Pass	Pass	1NT	All Pass

South led the ♠9 and declarer won with the ace and played a club to the queen and king. North switched to the ♥3 and South won with the jack and played the ♠Q. Declarer won and advanced the ♣10, running it when South followed with the eight. That was good enough for seven tricks, +90 and 5 IMPs were tacked on to the lead.

Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ KJ1094 ♥ K104 ♦ 104 ♣ AKJ		♠ A82 ♥ AJ8653 ♦ 92 ♣ Q4	♠ Q76 ♥ Q92 ♦ KQ7 ♣ 10763
	♠ 53 ♥ 7 ♦ AJ8653 ♣ 9852		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Stefanov</i>	<i>Rogov</i>	<i>Gunev</i>
1♠	2♥	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

North led the ♥6 and declarer won with the ten, cashed the ♣K and then played the ♠J. When it held he continued with the ♠10 and North won and exited with the ♦2. Declarer played dummy's seven and South won with the jack and switched to the ♣5. When declarer finessed North won, cashed the ♥A and played a diamond, -100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mihov</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Nanev</i>	<i>Gulevich</i>
1NT	Double*	2♠*	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	All Pass
Double One suiter			

North led the ♥6 and declarer won with the ten and played on spades, North winning the third round as South pitched the ♦3. When North played the ♦9 declarer put up dummy's king and when it held he continued with a club to the ace and cashed two spades. When the ♣Q fell under the king there were nine tricks and a dozen IMPs.

♠ A82	♥ AJ8653	♦ 92	♣ Q4
♠ KJ1094	♥ K104	♦ 104	♣ AKJ
♠ 53	♥ 7	♦ AJ8653	♣ 9852

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q76	♥ Q92	♦ KQ7	♣ 10763
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declarer winning, cashing the ♠Q and ruffing a spade. At this point playing a heart to the nine ensures ten tricks, but declarer played a heart to the ace and followed it with the ♠10. When that held he continued with the ♥3 and North took the jack. With the club suit frozen North can hold declarer to nine tricks by cashing the ♥K and exiting with a heart, but he went with the ♣7. When declarer put up dummy's queen he was back to nine tricks, +140.

If East had raised to 4♥ North would have needed to start with two rounds of diamonds to be sure of defeating it.

Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ 63	♥ KJ87	♦ A4	♣ J8765
♠ AQ105	♥ AQ963	♦ KQ	♣ A2
♠ K9842	♥ 5	♦ J10632	♣ K9

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J7	♥ 1042	♦ 9875	♣ Q1043
------	--------	--------	---------

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mihov</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Nanev</i>	<i>Gulevich</i>
-	-	Pass	2♦*
Double	Redouble*	Pass	2♠
3NT	All Pass		
2♦	Multi, 3-7, (5nv) 6+ Major		
Redouble	Bid your suit		

North's lead of the ♠6 was covered all round and declarer continued with the ♥A followed by the queen. North won and played a second spade and declarer won and played a heart. North took the jack and played two rounds of diamonds. Declarer won and cashed his winning hearts, pitching a club and a diamond from dummy. That was too much for South, who elected to throw a club. Declarer cashed the ♣A, followed it with the ♠10 and then played a club to the ten for +630 and 10 IMPs.

To defeat 3NT North must switch to a club after getting in with the ♥K. If declarer plays dummy's ten and takes the king with the ace to play a heart North can win and play the ♣J.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Stefanov</i>	<i>Rogov</i>	<i>Gunev</i>
-	-	Pass	2♠
Double	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥	All Pass		

Against 3♥ North led the ♠6 and that was covered by the jack, king and ace. Declarer's ♦K was taken by the ace and North returned a diamond,

Board 26. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ 853 ♥ J73 ♦ 104 ♣ K9543		♠ A4 ♥ 10952 ♦ AKQJ87 ♣ 6	♠ KQJ10962 ♥ 64 ♦ 2 ♣ A107
------------------------------------	---	------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Stefanov</i>	<i>Rogov</i>	<i>Gunev</i>
-	-	1♥	1♠
Pass	1NT	3♦	3♠
4♥	Double	All Pass	

4♥ looks a trifle optimistic.

South led the ♠K and declarer won with the ace and played a diamond to the ten followed by a second diamond. South ruffed and continued with two rounds of spades, declarer ruffing and playing the ♦A. North had pitched two diamonds on the spades and he ruffed and could have collected 2000 by drawing trumps and playing a club, but switched to a club and South won and returned a club, so declarer ‘escaped’ for a mere -1400.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mihov</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Nanev</i>	<i>Gulevich</i>
-	-	1♣	3♠
All Pass			

West led the ♦10 and East overtook it with the jack and switched to the ♣6. West won with the king and gave his partner a ruff so that was +140 and 15 IMPs.

Incredibly, KI Plus had won the set 59-0 to lead 95-23. You could hear the fat lady clearing her throat. When KI Plus edged the third set 36-32 to advance the score to 129-56 Team Russia bowed out.

I’ll leave you with this beautifully played deal:

No Lack of Finesse

One of the first techniques that you study as declarer is the finesse. As you gain in experience, you discover that sometimes you will have an alternative option.

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ AQ93 ♥ KQ6 ♦ 732 ♣ J97		♠ 84 ♥ AJ1053 ♦ KQ9 ♣ A106	♠ J1072 ♥ 742 ♦ 1065 ♣ 543
-----------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Khiuppenen</i>	<i>Stefanov</i>	<i>Kholomeev</i>	<i>Gunev</i>
-	-	1NT	Pass
3♣*	Pass	3♥*	Pass
4♥	All Pass		
3♣ Puppet Stayman			

South led the ♥8 and declarer won with the ten and immediately ran the ♠8, North winning with the ten and returning the ♦6. Declarer played the king and when South followed with the four he took dummy’s top hearts and played the ♣7 for the ten and queen. When South exited with the ♠5 declarer put in the queen and cashed dummy’s ace, pitching a club from hand. When South turned up with the ♦A the contract was one down.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Mihov	Gromov	Nanev	Gulevich
–	–	1NT	Pass
2♣*	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♦*	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		
3♣	A five-card major		
3♦	Where?		

South led the ♥8 and declarer won with the ten, crossed to dummy with a heart and ran the ♣J, South winning with the queen and exiting with the ♦4. Declarer won with the king, played a spade to the queen, cashed the ♠A, ruffed a spade and drew the outstanding trump with dummy's ♥K.

This was the position:

♠ 9	♠ J	♠ —									
♥ —	♥ —	♥ A									
♦ 73	♦ 65	♦ Q9									
♣ 97	♣ 54	♣ A10									
<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30px; height: 30px;"></td> <td style="width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 30px; height: 30px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="width: 30px; height: 30px;"></td> <td style="width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 30px; height: 30px;"></td> <td style="width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="width: 30px; height: 30px;"></td> </tr> </table>				N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ —	♠ —	♠ —									
♥ —	♥ —	♥ —									
♦ AJ8	♦ —	♦ —									
♣ K8	♣ —	♣ —									

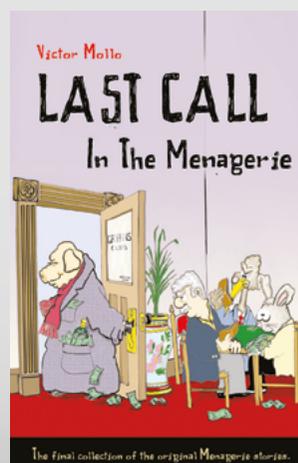
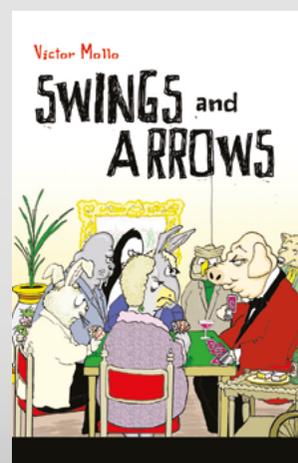
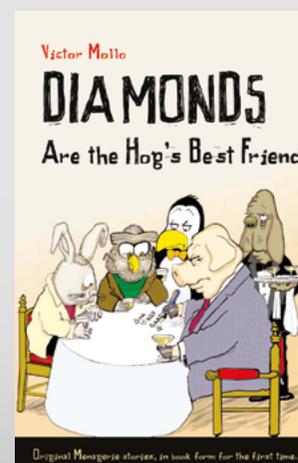
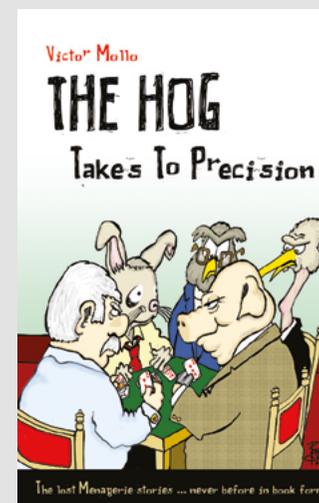
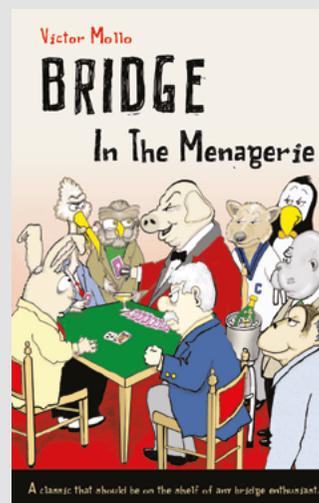
Declarer could be sure the ♦A was offside, but the club finesse was a possibility. However, he could infer that South held only five cards in the major suits and he rejected the club finesse, preferring to ruff dummy's remaining spade. That made life impossible for South, who tried pitching a club. However it was to no avail, as declarer cashed the ♣A and claimed a tenth trick with the ten.

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The Rabbit's Sticky Wicket

Mark Horton

Victor Mollo's *Menagerie* series of books remains paramount in the field of bridge humour. As a new generation prepares to sweep away what is left of the old guard it seems appropriate to remind you of some of Mollo's characters. Who would not wish to be able to match the genius of the Hideous Hog? Failing that, who would not settle for being as lucky as the Rueful Rabbit, whose guardian angel is always on hand.

The members of the Griffin's Club were enjoying the latest meeting of the Fine Bottle Club, where a light lunch of Crab & Linguine Risotto, Chateaubriand, Summer Pudding and Monsiuer Merle's delightful selection of cheeses, was followed by a few gentle rubbers.

The Hog had graciously agreed to sit opposite R.R. while Papa partnered Karapet. The Hog, still savouring the delights of the 1950 Chateau Coutet that accompanied the desert, and the Sandeman's 1927 that drew out the best of the cheese, enjoyed this deal:

	♠ Q 10 9 5 ♥ K 3 ♦ A Q J 5 4 ♣ 9 7					
♠ K 8 6 3 ♥ Q 8 ♦ 9 8 ♣ Q J 10 5 4	<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	♠ A J 7 4 ♥ 7 5 4 2 ♦ K 6 3 ♣ 3 2	
N						
W E						
S						
	♠ 2 ♥ A J 10 9 6 ♦ 10 7 2 ♣ A K 8 6					
West	North	East	South			
<i>H.H.</i>	<i>Karapet</i>	<i>R.R.</i>	<i>Papa</i>			
–	1♦	Pass	1♥			
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣*			
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥			
All Pass						

Rather than jump to 3NT, Papa marked time with 2♣. When Karapet supported his hearts, the Greek jumped to game.

The Hog led the ♣Q and Papa won with the ace and played a diamond to the queen, the Hog following with the nine and R.R. the three. When it held he ducked a spade and the Hog won with the six and returned the ♦8. When Papa played dummy's four R.R. was about to contribute the six when he discovered that another card, with a small coating from a chocolate almond biscuit that the Rabbit had been enjoying with his coffee, was sticking to it. Upon inspection it proved to be the ♦K and R.R. won and without knowing why returned his remaining diamond. H.H. ruffed and exited with a spade. Papa ruffed, cashed the ♣K and ruffed a club with the ♥3. R.R. overruff that and exited with a trump ensuring two down.

Shortly after Karapet had conceded -2000 in an attempt to prolong the rubber, along came:

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

West	North	East	South
H.H.	Karapet	R.R.	Papa
1♥	Double	2♥	Pass
Pass	Double	3♥	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	3♠
All Pass			

H.H. cashed the ♥AK, and switched to the ♦2. Papa played dummy's 9, and R.R. won with the singleton king and recalling a piece of advice he had read in *Better Signalling* Now he returned the ♣2, making it clear that he wanted a diamond back. H.H. ruffed and played the ♦6. Papa played dummy's ten and R.R. was on the point of ruffing, when he discovered that the ♦J was sitting next to the ♥Q. After collecting the trick the Rabbit returned the ♣7 and the Hog ruffed and played a third diamond. R.R., having double checked that he was out of diamonds, ruffed and played a third club, the Hog ruffing and playing a fourth diamond. R.R. ruffed with his last trump and played a fourth club, which allowed H.H. to score his ♠J and inscribe +600 above the line.

When he recounted the tale at the club's bar that evening Colin the Corgi suggested that Papa had been unlucky, but H.H. would have none of it; he pointed out that if Papa had won the second diamond with dummy's queen and played the top trumps then he would have been only one down.

The Rabbit's guardian angel put in an appearance on this deal:

Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ 4		♠ K6532
♥ K6		♥ 108
♦ QJ432		♦ A876
♣ AJ762		♣ 94
♠ 8		
♥ J73		
♦ K105		
♣ KQ10853		

♠ AK3	♠ Q10
♥ 63	♥ Q942
♦ AQ109	♦ KJ
♣ AK64	♣ J10972
♠ J542	
♥ AKJ87	
♦ 8762	
♣ —	
♠ 9876	
♥ 105	
♦ 543	
♣ Q853	

West	North	East	South
H.H.	Karapet	R.R.	Papa
–	–	Pass	Pass
2NT*	3♦*	Double	3♥
Pass	4♣*	Pass	4♥
5♦	5♥	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

Pausing only to pick up a glass of the Sandeman 1927 that the Walrus had left *en prise* the Hog explained what had happened: 'R.R. had persuaded me to use 2NT to show a weak hand with the minors. Karapet's 3♦ was for takeout with emphasis on spades and the Rabbit doubled to show diamond support. Karapet's 4♣ was a cue-bid and when they reached game I decided to try and prolong the rubber by sacrificing. When Karapet went on to 5♥ Papa, no doubt placing him with a better hand, went for the slam bonus.

'I led the ♦Q and R.R. won with the ace and pondered. As you can see, a club lead will keep declarer out of dummy and ensure we get another trick, but the Rabbit decided it would be a good idea to cut down dummy's ruffs and switch to a trump, which would have been fatal, as it would have collected my ♥K and allowed declarer to get home via the ruffing spade finesse. However, the ♥8 that R.R. intended to play was adjacent to the ♠K and that is the card that settled on the table. Karapet won with the ace and ruffed a spade, but I overruffed and congratulated R.R. on his brilliant defence'.

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GOTO Bridge 19

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The software makes bids on your behalf for the contract you want to play.

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The game mode “Challenge the best international players” will even give you the opportunity to compare yourself to world champions.

The deal manager is made for you. This tool can be used as teaching material for your bridge lessons since it allows you to prepare and import your own deals, save them and sort them as you see fit. Besides, thanks to the printing module included, you can print your deals, bidding boards, tricks and commentary.

Developed by bridge experts

Among them is Jérôme Rombaut, 2017 Vice World Bridge Champion.

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

GOTO Bridge 19 suggests corrections to your bidding and explains why.

Corrections to your card play

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

Tips given by the computer

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

Play all hands

Play all players’ hands at the table.

“Show cards” feature

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

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.

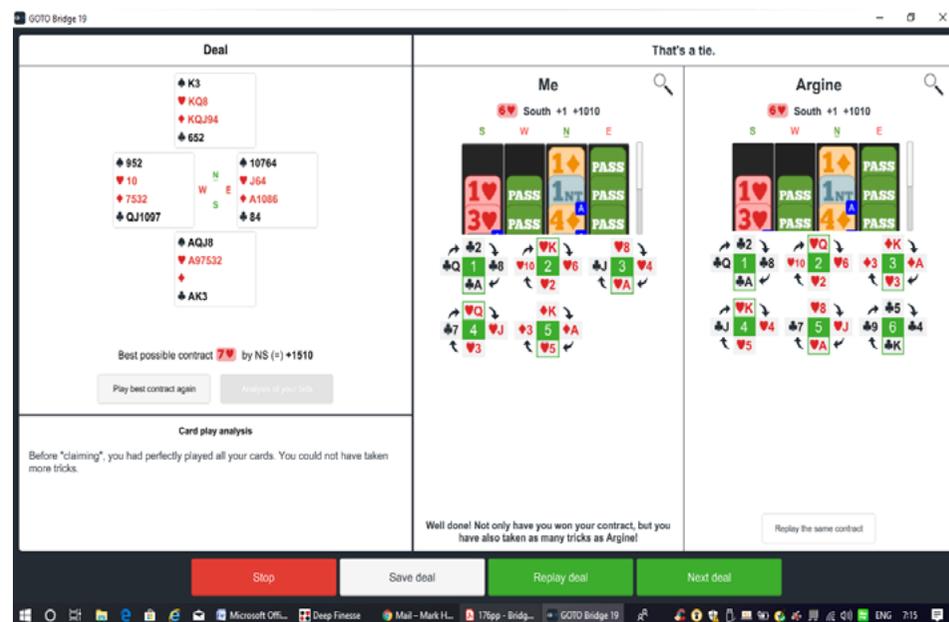
Tournaments

- 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
- 2,000 new deals in series tournaments
- Challenge elites on 2,00 new deals
- 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

All's Well that Ends Well

During the qualifying rounds of a prestigious Asian invitational event I pick up:

♠ J108643
♥ 106
♦ 985
♣ A10

With only our side vulnerable my partner deals and opens 1♣. When East overcalls 1NT I feel entitled to show my suit and bid 2♠. West bids 3♦ which is alerted and upon enquiry it proves to be a transfer to hearts. When partner jumps to 4♠ that ends the dialogue, leaving us with this auction:

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

West leads the seven of diamonds and dummy proves to be a bit of a mixed bag.

♠ A97
♥ A
♦ AJ10
♣ 876542

♠ J108643
♥ 106
♦ 985
♣ A10

It's possible that's a singleton, but nothing will be gained by putting up dummy's ace and when I play the ten East wins with the queen and switches to the two of hearts.

I must hope to avoid the loss of two trump tricks and at the same time develop dummy's clubs. Following the well-known principle of developing

the side suit first, I play a club and when East follows with the jack, I withhold the ace. East continues the attack on dummy's entries by playing the king of hearts and I ruff and play a club to the ace followed by a spade to the ace. East, who is no doubt considering an unblock, gives this a look, but eventually follows with the two. When I play a second spade, she wins with the king and produces a third heart. I ruff, but when the diamond finesse fails I am one down.

This was the layout:

♠ A97		♠ K2
♥ A		♥ K72
♦ AJ10		♦ KQ642
♣ 876542		♣ KQJ
♠ Q5		♠ J108643
♥ QJ98543	♥ 106	
♦ 73	♦ 985	
♣ 93	♣ A10	

Post mortem

If East had unblocked the king of spades, declarer ruffs a club and the queen of spades will be the last trick for the defence.

Declarer can improve on this line by cashing the ace of spades before touching clubs. If East unblocks the king of spades declarer can play two rounds of clubs, ruff the heart return and ruff a club, but if East retains the ♠K declarer plays another trump, ruffs the heart return, plays a club to the ace and runs the trumps, discarding clubs from dummy. The last of them will see East, down to ♦K6 ♣KQ, forced to pitch a club. Then declarer exits with a club to force a return into the ♦AJ.

Imprecision

Playing in an interclub match, I pick up a promising hand:

♠ AKQ752
♥ 964
♦ AQ
♣ A6

With nether side vulnerable I am the dealer and I am about to open 1♠ when just in time I remember we are playing Precision and start with 1♣. My partner bids 2♣, a natural positive and I bid 2♠. When partner continues with 3♦ I repeat my suit with 3♠ and partner raises to 4♠. Although it is not risk free I decide to cue-bid 5♣ and when partner bids 5♥ I settle for 6♠.

This has been our lengthy sequence:

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

West leads the king of hearts I see we may have missed the boat:

♠ 64
♥ A
♦ J8764
♣ KQJ103

♠ AKQ752
♥ 964
♦ AQ
♣ A6

As long as trumps behave there are 13 tricks. Perhaps I should have bid 6♦ over 5♥ when partner might have gone on to 7♠ on the strength of the clubs.

Having won the trick in dummy I come to hand with a club and ruff a heart. A diamond to the ace allows me to ruff my remaining heart and I

continue with the king of clubs, intending to pitch my losing diamond on the third round of the suit. Disaster strikes when East ruffs the second club and plays a diamond, West's king being the setting trick.

This was the unlucky layout:

♠ 8		♠ J1093
♥ KQJ5		♥ 108732
♦ K95		♦ 1032
♣ 87542		♣ 9
♠ 64		♠ AKQ752
♥ A		♥ 964
♦ J8764		♦ AQ
♣ KQJ103		♣ A6

Post mortem

Declarer overlooked a common strategic move - at trick two, he should duck a round of spades.

East wins and plays a heart but declarer ruffs, comes to hand with an ace and draws trumps, after which dummy's clubs take care of the red suit losers.



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Deals that Caught My Eye

David Bird looks at an exciting quarter-final in the 2019 USA Spingold

With one set of 15 boards to play in their Spingold quarter-final clash, LAVAZZA led SPECTOR by 118-107. Would we have a series of drab partscores to watch? No, 8 out of 15 boards resulted in double-digit IMP swings. Let's enjoy the best of them.

Seg 4, Board 16. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ AQ432 ♥ J10 ♦ A82 ♣ 652		♠ 9 ♥ Q97654 ♦ J643 ♣ 97
♠ J65 ♥ K82 ♦ KQ109 ♣ AQJ	♠ K1087 ♥ A3 ♦ 75 ♣ K10843	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Wooldridge</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Hurd</i>
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	Double
Redouble	3♠	All Pass	

An unexceptional auction ended with North in 3♠. Bilde had to go one down, after a ♣9 lead to the queen and a ♦K switch.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Demuy</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>Kranyak</i>	<i>Madala</i>
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	2♠	3♥	Pass
Pass	3♠	Pass	Pass
4♥	Double	All Pass	

Several decades ago, I coined the term 'Biltcliffe Coup'. Unlike most coups, this one usually results in losing IMPs. To achieve it, you must fulfil four conditions. (1) The opponents must stop in a part-score, (2) you protect and push them into game, (3) you double the game, and (4) it is then made.

If the doubled heart game succeeded here, North/South could claim extra Biltcliffe credit because they had spurned two chances to allow their opponents to stop in a part-score.

Bilde led the ♠A, and then had to find the near impossible continuation of a low diamond to beat the game. When he reached for the ♣6 instead, South playing the ♣K, Demuy won and ruffed a spade in dummy. South rose with the ace on the first round of trumps and switched to a diamond. North won with the ace, and declarer claimed the contract when South could not ruff the next diamond. That was +790 for E/W and 12 IMPs to SPECTOR, giving them the lead by 119-118. More importantly, it was a memorable Biltcliffe Coup by N/S. Well bid, indeed!

Board 18 was another battle between the major suits:

Seg 4, Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ 4 ♥ QJ972 ♦ AKJ74 ♣ 105		♠ K98 ♥ 10 ♦ Q1065 ♣ AKJ97	♠ A106 ♥ K864 ♦ 98 ♣ Q432
		♠ QJ7532 ♥ A53 ♦ 32 ♣ 86	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Wooldridge</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Hurd</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♥	2♣	2NT*	3♠
4♦	4♠	All Pass	

Sementa bid 4♦ to assist his partner in any subsequent decision over a black-suit game. Bocchi had short diamonds and seemingly no reason to bid again over 4♠. The defence began with the ♦AK and a switch to the ♥Q. Ten tricks were easily made, for +420.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Demuy</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>Kranyak</i>	<i>Madala</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♥	Double	2NT*	4♠
5♥	Double	All Pass	

Demuy made a great decision to bid 5♥, doubled by North. Bilde cashed two clubs and switched to the ♠8 won with dummy's ace. A trump to declarer's queen dropped the 10 from North. Two top diamonds and a

diamond ruff with the king were followed by a spade ruff to hand and a claim of 10 tricks for one down. It was another 11 IMPs to SPECTOR.

On Board 19, a somewhat fortunate 3NT on 24 points gave SPECTOR another 10 IMPs. Would the Great Dealer ensure that the good fortune was shared equally between the two teams? No, he would not. Look at the very next board:

Seg 4, Board 20. Dealer West. Both Vul.

♠ J104 ♥ AKQ2 ♦ AKQ3 ♣ K6		♠ Q82 ♥ J8 ♦ 9852 ♣ 7542	♠ AK653 ♥ 1064 ♦ J107 ♣ AJ
		♠ 97 ♥ 9753 ♦ 64 ♣ Q10983	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Wooldridge</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Hurd</i>
2NT	Pass	3♥*	Pass
4♣	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♦	Pass	5♠	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♠	Pass
6NT	All Pass		

The VG operator informed us that 5♦ was 'probably RKCB'. Maybe 5NT then asked about the ♠Q. Anyway, they stopped in 6NT, which was fine on their cards (marginally better than 6♠). North led the ♦9 and Sementa then showed Hurd his hand before any further card was played. Thirteen tricks were agreed.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Demuy</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>Kranyak</i>	<i>Madala</i>
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥*	Pass
3♠	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♦	Pass	5♥	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♣	Pass
7♠	All Pass		

♠ Q82		♠ AK653									
♥ J8		♥ 1064									
♦ 9852		♦ J107									
♣ 7542		♣ AJ									
	<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										
♠ J104		♠ 97									
♥ AKQ2		♥ 9753									
♦ AKQ3		♦ 64									
♣ K6		♣ Q10983									

2NT shows 20-21 for most players in the USA. Demuy opened 2♣ and it seems from their auction that 3♠ agreed spades. (No explanation is given on their convention card.) Despite meandering through the five-level subsequently, they ended in a grand slam with a less-than-watertight trump suit.

Demuy won the diamond lead with the jack and played the ♠A. He then crossed to his ♣K and ran the ♠J. When this won, his side had +12 IMPs instead of -17 IMPs. This further piece of good fortune meant they had won the first five boards by 45-0 and now led by 152-118.

On Board 23, the Great Dealer showed he was not totally averse to fairness, when Kranyak and Demuy went down in 6♣. They were missing an ace, and the defenders' ♣QJ9 opposite ♣7 meant there was a trump loser too. LAVAZZA regained 12 IMPs.

Seg 4, Board 24. Dealer West. Neither Vul.

♠ 96		♠ QJ10854									
♥ AJ2		♥ —									
♦ AJ10764		♦ 52									
♣ 72		♣ KQ1084									
	<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										
♠ K7		♠ A32									
♥ Q10873		♥ K9654									
♦ Q93		♦ K8									
♣ AJ3		♣ 965									

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Wooldridge</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Hurd</i>
1♦	3♠	3NT	All Pass

If Hurd had bid 4♠, this would have failed by one trick. As it was, Hurd passed and led the ♠2. Declarer pocketed his spade trick and now needed the diamond finesse to work. It did and that was +400. After an unlikely club lead, with the spades lying as they did, he would have needed both red-suit finesses to succeed.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Demuy</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>Kranyak</i>	<i>Madala</i>
1♦	3♦*	Double	Redouble
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

Bilde's 3♦ showed spades and clubs. Whether Kranyak regarded his pass on the second round as forcing, I couldn't tell you. Anyway N/S picked up +140 and LAVAZZA reclaimed another 11 IMPs. SPECTOR now led by 152-142.

Unwilling to accept any further dents in their lead, Wooldridge played well on this deal:

Seg 4, Board 26. Dealer East. Both Vul.

♠ 95		♠ AJ6									
♥ KQ102		♥ A764									
♦ Q1054		♦ K862									
♣ 965		♣ QJ									
	<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										
♠ KQ1082		♠ 743									
♥ 8		♥ J953									
♦ J7		♦ A92									
♣ K8742		♣ A103									

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa Wooldridge</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Hurd</i>	
-	-	Pass	Pass
Pass	1NT	2♠*	Double
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Bocchi passed initially, then showed spades and a minor with his 2♠ overcall. His lead of the ♠Q against 3NT was allowed to win. He then switched to the ♥8, drawing the 9, 10 and declarer's ace.

A diamond to the 9 lost to West's 10 and back came a spade, won with the ace. The ♥6 dislodged West's queen, and declarer won the ♣6 switch with his ♣Q. The ♣J won the next trick, and declarer continued with the ♥7, establishing a second heart trick for himself. Sementa returned the ♦5 to East's jack and dummy's ace. Declarer then cashed the ♣A and the artistic ♥5, drawing West's ♥2. He completed this cardplay extravaganza with a successful finesse of the ♦8. It was a well-earned +600.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Demuy</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>Kranyak</i>	<i>Madala</i>
-	-	Pass	Pass
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

The ♠Q lead was ducked again, Kranyak switching to the ♣2. Bilde won with the ♣Q and led the ♥6 to the 8, 9 and 10. Now came the ♠9 from West. Declarer needs to win this with the ace, which was indicated by the bidding at the other table. Bilde judged to play the ♠J and the defenders were then in control.

A club to declarer's jack, followed by the ♥4 to the jack and queen, allowed Demuy to clear the club suit. Declarer took the marked finesse of the ♥7, cashed the major-suit aces and conceded one down. It was 12 IMPs to SPECTOR, who now led 164-142 with only four boards left.

It was Sementa's turn to play well on this board:

♠ AJ6		♠ KQ1082
♥ A764		♥ 8
♦ K862		♦ J7
♣ QJ		♣ K8742
♠ 95	♠ N	
♥ KQ102	W	♥
♦ Q1054	W	♦
♣ 965	S	♣
	E	
♠ 743		
♥ J953		
♦ A92		
♣ A103		

Seg 4, Board 28. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ 75		♠ AQJ963
♥ 1053		♥ A64
♦ A9		♦ 7532
♣ AK8543		♣ -
♠ K	♠ N	
♥ KQ872	W	♥
♦ K106	W	♦
♣ J962	S	♣
	E	
♠ 10842		
♥ J9		
♦ QJ84		
♣ Q107		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Wooldridge</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Hurd</i>
1♥	2♣	3♣*	Pass
4♥*	All Pass		

Sementa's 4♥ was annotated by the VG operator as 'showing a bad hand'. This implies that East's 3♣ had not carried the standard meaning of at least a sound raise to 3♥.

Wooldridge led the ♣K, which shortened dummy's trumps and prevented declarer from scoring five trumps and six spades. Sementa ruffed in the dummy and drew trumps in three rounds. He then overtook the ♠K and played two more rounds of spades, throwing two clubs.

When a diamond was led from dummy, South played low. Declarer could have inserted the ♦10, but he chose the ♦6, losing to North's ♦9. King and another club forced declarer to ruff with his penultimate trump. He then ducked out the ♦A to set up the ♦K as his tenth trick. North was known to hold two spades and three hearts. If he held six clubs for his overcall, he was likely to hold a doubleton ♦A. Declarer's line would succeed also against ♦QJ doubleton with North.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Demuy	Bilde	Kranyak	Madala
1♥	2♣	2♠	3♣
Pass	Pass	4♥	All Pass

The first seven tricks were the same: club ruffed, three trumps and three spades. Demuy then played a diamond to the king (South again not splitting his honours). He was one down. and Lavazza picked up 10 IMPs. Another 5 IMPs on the penultimate board made it 165-157 to SPECTOR. What would happen on the very last board?

Both teams stopped successfully in 5♥, discovering in good time that two aces were missing. 97 IMPs had changed hands in 15 boards and SPECTOR lived to fight another day.

♠ 75	♥ 1053	♦ A9	♣ AK8543
♠ K	♥ KQ872	♦ K106	♣ J962
♠ AQJ963	♥ A64	♦ 7532	♣ —
♠ 10842	♥ J9	♦ QJ84	♣ Q107



'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.

Visit <http://www.visitmalahide.ie/> to know more about Malahide and all it has to offer from Medieval Castle to beaches with coastal walks and it is a 10-minute drive from Dublin Airport.

You might consider adding Malahide Bridge Congress to your diary for 2020!

For more information:

Malahide Regional Bridge Club email: malahidebridgecongress@mrbc.ie

Brochure will be found on

...when ready....

<http://malahideregionalbridgeclub.com/>

The Grand Hotel Malahide

email: info@the.grand.ie

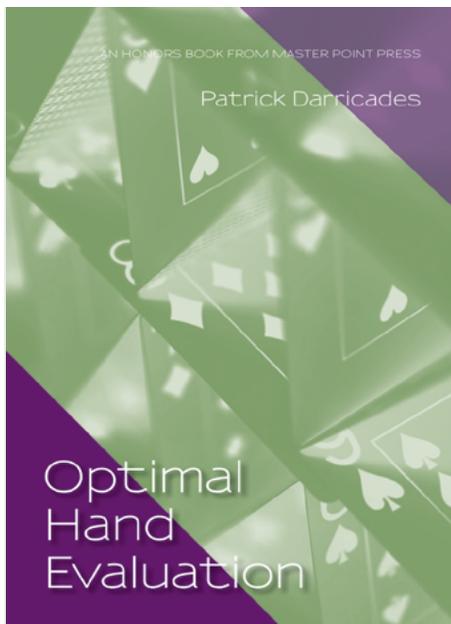
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Patrick Darricades

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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).

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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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(2) Minimum occupancy 2 persons

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Bridge Educational Software

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This series is offered by bid72, educational bridge software – bidding on an app. Check our [SPECIAL OFFER](#) for readers of A New Bridge Magazine.

You are West with:

IMPs. Dealer South. East-West Vul.

- ♠ J954
- ♥ A83
- ♦ Q3
- ♣ A753

West	North	East	South
You			
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	2♦*	Double	Pass
?			

2♦ weak two in diamonds

Your bid please.

Sally Brock (European and World Champion)

2NT. I would bid 2NT (Lebensohl for me), and then over the expected 3♣, 3♠ to be invitational with only 4 spades. Good to get in it first so we can play in 3NT when partner has, e.g. Ax.

Tim Verbeek (European and Junior World Champion)

2NT. Playing Lebensohl I would start with 2NT and repeat 3♠ over partners bid. That shows an invitational hand with 4 spades. With 5 spades and an invitational hand, I would jump to to 3♠ right away.

David Bakhshi (multiple Gold Cup winner and winner of several North American Bridge Championships)

2♠. It can be hard to evaluate a holding such as Qx in a suit in which the opponents have preempted, but we tend to assume it has decreased

in value, so I would bid 2♠ – the same bid that I would make if I held ♦ xx. Likely alternatives would be to bid 3♠ directly, or to bid 3♠ via 2NT, if we agree to use 2NT as some form of artificial response (Lebensohl style).

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

3NT. Terence Reese reckoned that Qx was a good holding for no-trumps – and here it might right side the contract, especially against a third in hand opener. Suppose you don't like the idea of bidding 3NT without a stopper? Then you have to consider bidding say 3♠ or 3♦.

Simon de Wijs (European and World Champion, Bermuda Bowl Winner)

3♦. I would bid 3♦ followed by 3♠. By bidding this way I hope to show an invitational hand with other possibilities (3NT) besides playing in spades. With a more spade oriented hand I would jump to 3♠ over the double.

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

3♦. This hand was just a hair short of an opening, so must be bid strongly now. If partner bids spades we will play game there; If he bids 3♥ instead, I will bid 3N – this sequence will reflect some doubt about that contract and imply both four spades and a flexible hand.

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

2NT. Natural and constructive. In spite of my 4 spades I like to play in NoTrump. I hate Lebensohl because often 2NT is the place to be. I came across this hand in bid72. Here are both East and West hands:

♠ J954	N W E S	♠ AKQ87
♥ A83		♥ K765
♦ Q3		♦ 965
♣ A753		♣ 6

Post Mortem

Obviously introducing spades as West would lead to an easy road to 4♠, and 2NT natural not. Still, in stead of doubling, East may have considered to overcall with 2♠.

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

App update: discover the Easy Tournaments game mode!

Team Funbridge is pleased to present New Bridge Magazine readers with the latest version of the Funbridge app that includes the brand new **Easy Tournaments** game mode!

Don't wait any longer, come try this new feature! Easy Tournaments are available in the game mode "**Get started/Practise**".

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Everything has been said about these new tournaments, or almost. Because if you are not familiar with series tournaments (also available on Funbridge), further details may be useful. Click [this link](#) to find out more about series tournaments.



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Now that you know how series work, please note that when you will play Easy Tournaments, you will in fact play **Series 11 tournaments from the last period**.

You were in Series 11 during the last period? No worry, you will only be invited to participate in tournaments that you have not played yet.



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DEFEND WITH JULIAN POTTAGE

The Questions

1

♠ 96
♥ Q92
♦ J97542
♣ A6

N	♠ 108
W	♥ A106
E	♦ AQ3
S	♣ K10985

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣*	Double
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

1♣ Better minor

Partner leads the jack of clubs, won by the ace. A club comes back, which you win with the king, the unseen hands following low. What is your plan?

2

♠ A5
♥ J8762
♦ A102
♣ 874

N	♠ K9843
W	♥ KQ10
E	♦ Q9
S	♣ QJ5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
	3♦*	4♥	All Pass
3♦	Weak		

Partner leads the ten of spades and dummy plays low. What do you do?



This month's deal comes from the recent World Championship, played in Wuhan in central China. See if you can find a better line of play than at least one player who reached one of the major finals.

Dealer South. Both Vul

♠ 42 ♥ J93 ♦ AJ98652 ♣ 8	♠ 5 ♥ K852 ♦ Q103 ♣ KQ764	<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	♠ KQ109763 ♥ A104 ♦ 7 ♣ A3
N						
W E						
S						
♠ AJ8 ♥ Q76 ♦ K4 ♣ J10952						

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	4♠

West leads the ♣J. How would you play?

Solution

You have two potential losers in each major. You have two entries to dummy, a club ruff and the ♦A. How are you going to use those entries to maximize the chance of reducing your losers to three?

After winning with the ♣A and ruffing your club loser, you are only going to be able to lead spades once from dummy. In what circumstances does playing a spade from dummy improve your chances over playing that suit from hand? Only if East holds the singleton ace. In all

other cases, you will lose either one or two tricks whether you lead the suit from dummy or from your hand.

Playing hearts twice from dummy gives you a 75% chance of avoiding two losers in that suit.

The best line of play is to win the ♣A, ruff a club, and run the ♥J. “Suppose West wins with the ♥Q and switches to a diamond. You can win with the ace and repeat the heart finesse. When the ♥10 wins, you begin playing trumps from the top. As it turns out, you have to lose two trump tricks to West, but that is okay.

You will also have played the hand better than at least one declarer who played in a world championship final in China. He won the ♣A, ruffed a club and played a trump to the king. In the fullness of time, he then had to lose two trumps and two hearts: one down.

Educating Toto

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

‘I can’t help feeling that this is just the typical iceberg,’ said the Lion, sagely.

The Tin Man, who had been giving the Lion an insight into the underhand activities of the Wicked Witch of the West and Munchkin Meg at the Christmas Party, paused in his tirade, and took stock before replying.

‘The tip of, Lion. The bulk of an iceberg is underwater so what is visible is the tip.’

‘Indeed,’ said the Lion. ‘I think you will find that you have just described a typical iceberg.’

The Tin Man was prevented from further exploration of the subject by the approach of Tony Tobias, commonly known as Toto, looking eagerly around him.

‘Venturing into the Wednesday night game?’ the Lion asked him as he was passing.

‘No, I was hoping to catch a few minutes with Dorothy before play started.’ Toto was a member of Dorothy’s Intermediate Class, and always keen to seek her out for advice.

‘No, she’s not playing tonight,’ the Tin Man replied. ‘We usually play together but I am practicing with my other partner ahead of the semi-final of the Ozian Cup.’ He looked Toto in the eye, expecting to see his glory reflected in there.

‘Oh, yes. Good luck in that. I had heard that Dorothy’s team was doing very well!’

The Lion decided to change the subject. ‘Is there anything that we can help you with? I am teaching card play to the Advanced Class this term, you know.’

‘Oh, yes. I had heard that. Munchkin Meg told me that you are trying to help them to make the contracts that the Tin Man told them to bid in the Autumn!’ Blithely unaware that Meg’s disparaging comments were not intended to be received well, he continued. ‘It so happens that I have a couple of interesting play hands that I was looking for Dorothy’s opinion on. I’m sure that you gentlemen will be able to tell me what I should have done.’

He took a notepad from his pocket and opened it to show the following hand diagram:

Dealer East. None vul.

♠ 63
♥ 9642
♦ KQ7
♣ A1065

♠ AK5
♥ K875
♦ A984
♣ K4

‘It was a match-pointed pairs event, and we were playing against Munchkin Meg and Mrs Yoop. Knowing Meg’s reputation, I was ready for anything, but on this hand they just seemed to find a good defence. Meg opened the East hand One Spade, and I was sitting South and overcalled One Notrump. After a straightforward Stayman sequence, I ended up in a contract of Four Hearts.’

He scribbled the full auction below the hand diagram:

West	North	East	South
Mrs Yoop	A Munchkin	Meg	Toto
-	-	1♠	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

‘The bidding seemed pretty normal.’ He checked their faces for agreement. ‘West led the seven of spades to the ten and my ace. I could see that I had plenty of tricks once I got the trumps out. How should I have continued?’

The Lion smiled benignly at Toto. It was good to see these young cubs looking for advice from their elders and betters. He enjoyed playing the

role of the benevolent expert to the munchkins and beginners of the club. ‘Good bidding. Your partner is just about worth the jump to game. An invitational raise would have been my choice but no doubt you would have accepted and ended in the same sound contract.’

The Tin Man was starting to hiss like a kettle. It pained him to see anyone treating the Lion with respect and he was determined to have the better of this discussion. The Lion’s cautious bidding was always an easy target. ‘Not even close,’ he grated. ‘Failure to raise to game would be criminal.’

The Lion decided to ignore this, and continued in the condescending voice he reserved for beginners and the Scarecrow. ‘You are missing fourteen points and East opened. You can therefore place the ace of hearts on your right with some confidence. You want to avoid running into a ruff so the safest suit to play is clubs. Cross to the dummy with the ace and lead a heart up. What happens next?’

Toto nodded enthusiastically. ‘Yes, that’s what I did. East played the ten of hearts and I won the king. West played the three.’

‘Good. It looks as if hearts are lying well. There seems to be a clear path to eleven tricks now. Play the king of spades, ruff a spade as it hardly matters if West ruffs in with his trump trick, and play a second round of trumps.’

Toto nodded vigorously. ‘Yes, yes, that’s what I did – and I went two down! East played the ace of hearts and West showed out. East played the queen and jack of hearts, drawing all the trumps, and then took two spade tricks!’

He filled in the East and West hands:

Dealer East. None vul.

♠ 972 ♥ 3 ♦ 10653 ♣ J8732	♠ 63 ♥ 9642 ♦ KQ7 ♣ A1065	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="background-color: #008000; color: white;"></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		♠ QJ1084 ♥ AQJ10 ♦ J2 ♣ Q9
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ AK5 ♥ K875 ♦ A984 ♣ K4											

The Lion looked aghast. The Tin Man gave a grating chuckle. ‘Is that the best you can do, Lion? Two off in a cold contract? What is the point of playing a second round of trumps once the king has gone? Your hand has no losers in it apart from the outstanding ace, queen and jack of hearts. You can afford to lose three trumps and still make the contract. Start cashing diamonds. East can ruff in whenever she wants but you will retain trump control and ruff the spade at the time of your choosing.’

‘Oh, yes, I see!’ Toto looked delighted. ‘I thought that might be the right way to make ten tricks. But do remember I was playing pairs and I was worried that I might get a poor score for ten tricks. If I don’t play more trumps then I’m almost sure to lose three tricks.’

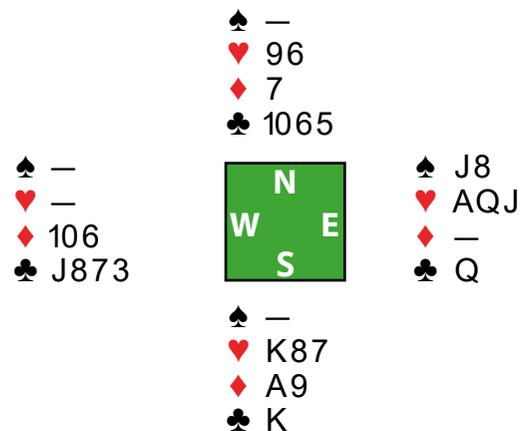
‘Indeed, that is the case,’ the Tin Man conceded, ‘but once you have played the king of hearts you are at risk of losing control. Sometimes you cannot cover all eventualities.’

‘Yes, yes, I see that,’ Toto persisted. ‘but I thought that maybe my mistake was in taking the king of hearts?’

The Tin Man’s jaw dropped. The Lion smirked. ‘Quite right, young man. Ducking the heart keeps you in control. Suppose East plays a second spade. You can win in hand, ruff to the dummy and play a second round of trumps. That gives you chances of making eleven when trumps are three-two without risking going down when they are four-one.’

‘I like to keep things simple for my pupils and teach them how to make contracts,’ the Tin Man snapped. ‘Complications come later. Match-pointed pairs is the devil’s own creation,’ he continued, clearly rattled

at missing this point in his analysis. ‘Teaching you how to fail in a cast-iron contract is not what I include in my lessons. And in any case, you are quite wrong. Ducking the heart only gives you the illusion of control. You will in fact need to play it carefully to avoid going down if you allow the ten of hearts to win. Suppose East does continue a spade, and you follow your stated line. That is, you win in hand, ruff in the dummy and then play in diamonds. Let us assume that you have taken the king and queen. You will reach this position, with the lead in dummy.’



‘And now there is no line to make the contract. If you lead a diamond then East will trump and put you in hand. There is no way that you can prevent her from making her ace and queen of trumps, to go along with the jack and ten that she has already scored. Yes, it could have been made if you had cashed the king of clubs earlier, but why make yourself walk a tightrope to make a contract that you had on top simply by winning the king of hearts and playing winners? Match points is the excuse for more bad bridge than anything else in the game.’

‘What was the second hand, Toto?’ The Lion changed tack hastily. He could see the Tin Man was about to go into overdrive on one of his favourite subjects.

The hirsute young man turned the page of his notepad and showed them the following pair of hands.



‘I was South again, but this time it was a teams event, I’m pleased to say,’ Toto started. The Tin Man made a noise, which Toto later described to Dorothy as something between a knife being sharpened and a rusty gate creaking. ‘My right hand opponent opened a five-card major One Heart, and, as I wasn’t quite good enough to overcall One No-trump, I made a Two Clubs overcall. When partner now bid Two Diamonds, I showed my heart stoppers with Two No-trumps, and he raised me to game.’ He took out his pen and wrote out the full auction.

West	North	East	South
-	-	1♥	Toto 2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

‘I think the auction was normal,’ Toto continued eagerly. The Tin Man and the Lion nodded affirmatively.

‘West led the three of hearts to East’s king. How should I play the hand?’

‘Well, Lion. What is the opinion of the master teacher of card play?’ The Tin Man asked with a contemptuous smile.

The Lion took a few moments. ‘You have eight top tricks.’ He paused again. ‘It does look as if that lead is from three to the queen. When the opponents get in they are going to have four hearts and the ace of spades to cash. Indeed, when West gets in and plays a spade through, you could end up losing a lot more.’ He looked quizzically at the hand diagram. ‘You could let East win the first trick, though it is hardly likely to matter, and then win the next round of hearts. That will block the suit, which you may be able to use to your advantage. Next, cash a top diamond, hoping to see an honour played from the East hand. Then, using the Law of

Restricted Choice,' the Lion put on his most learned voice, 'you would have your nine tricks. Even if an honour doesn't fall, you can still cash the eight tricks available, and hope that the defence get their wires crossed.'

The Tin Man shook his head violently. 'Oh, Lion. There's a difference between keeping things simple, as I recommended, and giving up. Let us peel back a few more layers. We are missing fifteen points. East opened. West, as you correctly deduced, has the queen of hearts. It is therefore extremely likely that East has practically all of the remaining high cards. Once we get in, we are going to run the clubs and East is going to have to make some discards. If he is guarding spades and diamonds then will he be able to hold onto his heart winners? The hand seems ripe for a strip squeeze, or throw in. Let us assume that we win the second heart with the ace and play a top diamond. Do both follow low?' Toto nodded. 'Then we run the clubs. Dummy can easily afford a couple of diamonds. How many clubs does East turn up with?'

'Clubs? Oh, yes. Two.'

'So now it looks as if East is 3-5-3-2 or very close to it.'

'Yes, yes, that's exactly right!' Toto was impressed. He turned the page and showed them the full deal.

♠ K9 ♥ 62 ♦ AK10986 ♣ J103		♠ AQ10 ♥ K10954 ♦ QJ2 ♣ 85
♠ J6542 ♥ Q73 ♦ 43 ♣ 942		♠ 873 ♥ AJ8 ♦ 75 ♣ AKQ76

The Tin Man looked smug. 'So, East can discard a spade but then needs to throw two of his heart winners. Everyone will be down to the following.' He quickly scribbled the five-card ending in Toto's pad:

♠ J654 ♥ Q ♦ — ♣ —		♠ K9 ♥ — ♦ K109 ♣ —
♠ 873 ♥ J ♦ 5 ♣ —		♠ AQ ♥ 9 ♦ QJ ♣ —

The smug look was fading from the Tin Man's face. 'So it looks as if the defence should always prevail,' he said falteringly. 'That is, of course, assuming they discard sensibly,' he added to try to restore some credibility. 'There appears to be no way in this position to stop the defence scoring two spades, a heart and a diamond. East cannot be endplayed in diamonds because he can put West in with the queen of hearts to play a spade through the ace. If you went one down then you have no need to fear, young man.'

'Oh, no,' said Toto. 'I made the contract alright. I just wasn't sure if I had played the right line.'

'Some grotesque misdefence, I imagine,' the Tin Man said dismissively.

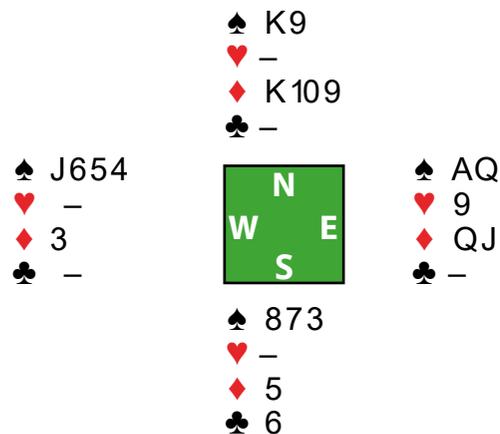
'What was your line?' the Lion asked in a more moderate tone.

'Yes, well, I see your point that finessing the jack of hearts at trick two was going to lose, and unblock the suit. But I thought it might be the best thing to do.'

'Utter nonsense!' protested the Tin Man. 'Why now you have handed them the chance to take the first seven tricks! Surely West returned a spade?'

'Oh dear me, Tin Man,' the Lion purred. 'West does not have your advantage of seeing all the hands. Indeed he has only seen the first three tricks. Is it so unlikely that he will play a third heart, knowing that he is setting up his partner's suit? It's such a shame – you almost managed to get the ending right.'

He rewrote the Tin Man's diagram.



‘One more round of hearts has been played and this will be the position when declarer is about to take his last club winner. West does whatever he likes. A diamond goes from dummy. What is East to do? If he discards a diamond then dummy’s ten becomes the ninth trick. If he discards the queen of spades then a spade is ducked to him, establishing dummy’s king. If he throws a heart then he is put in with two rounds of diamonds and forced to give up a spade trick. Three different flavours of poison – all fatal. Well done, Toto. The key was to knock out the entry from the danger hand before he knew what to do with it!’

Toto looked less than satisfied, but produced a third hand for their consideration:



‘This time I was defending,’ he told them. I overcalled One Spade after my right hand opponent started the auction with One Diamond. His partner supported him with Two Diamonds and my partner jumped to Three Spades. We were silent after that, but they went on to game after what looked like a Four Club trial bid. He wrote down the full auction below the hand diagram.

West	North	East	South
<i>Toto</i>			
–	–	–	1♦
1♠	2♦	3♠	4♣
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

‘I was on lead, as West. What are your thoughts?’

‘Did you check what Four Clubs meant?’ the Lion asked.

‘Oh, yes. I was told that they normally play long suit game tries, but since there was very little room it might just be more of a general try.’

‘Well it looks to me as if we should start with the queen of spades. That seems safe and sensible,’ the Lion concluded, nodding to the approaching Scarecrow.

The Tin Man raised his eyes to the heavens, or at least the ceiling. ‘Safe – safe you call it not to think about the hand.’ The Lion was sure he could detect a distinct rattle in the Tin Man’s voice. ‘You need three tricks to defeat this contract. Where are they coming from?’ He paused for effect, but it was quite clear he intended to answer his own question. ‘It is possible that you have one in spades, but by no means certain. The opponents seem likely to be bidding on shape. Clubs do not look fruitful. North may well have bid game in the hope of a double fit so this seems like a dangerous suit to attack.’

He paused again, to allow the wisdom of his words to sink in to his impressionable young pupil. ‘Our best bet of creating defensive tricks would seem to be hearts. I would lead a small heart with a view to setting something up while I still have some control over trumps. Two hearts, or one and a spade, will give us a chance to beat the contract along with my king of diamonds.’

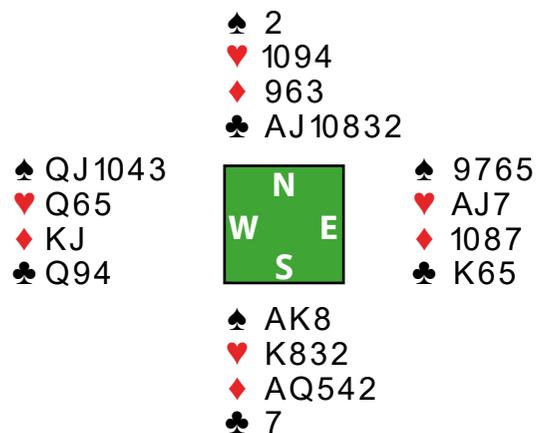
Toto turned to the Scarecrow, who had been staring vacantly into space, trying to remember where he had parked his car. ‘What would you lead?’

The Scarecrow was taken aback on being asked for his opinion, and, trying to recall what he had heard seconds earlier, stammered, ‘Oh, well, yes, I’m sure the Tin Man’s analysis is right. Definitely the king of diamonds.’

The Tin Man exploded. ‘The king of diamonds! Have you finally gone completely mad!’

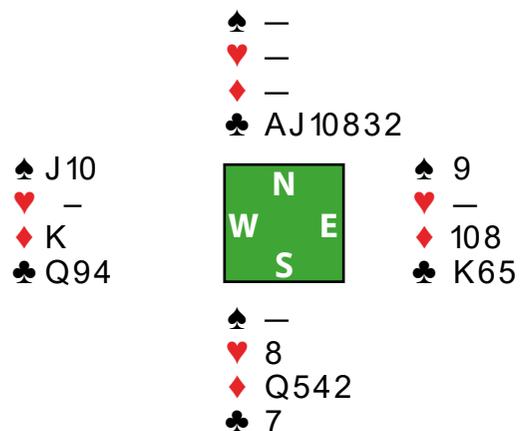
‘I, I, er, you just said the king of diamonds. I was just agreeing with you,’ the blushing Scarecrow looked even more lost than usual.

‘There you are. Ask a fool a question and you will get a foolish answer,’ the Tin Man snapped. ‘Now, Toto. Show us the full deal.’



‘Perhaps I didn’t think enough about it, but the queen of spades just seemed so obvious,’ Toto told them. ‘Declarer won, cashed a second spade, discarding a heart from dummy, and ruffed his last spade. Then he led a heart. East went in with the ace and switched to a trump. Declarer won with the ace and played the king and another heart, which he ruffed in the dummy. Now, with the suit splitting, his fourth heart was a master.’

Toto took out his pen and ticked off the cards played to reveal the situation with six cards left in each hand:



Toto pointed his pen at the diagram. ‘Dummy had nothing but clubs by this stage. Declarer played the ace and ruffed one. He was now down to queen and two small diamonds and the heart. He played a low trump and I won my king. There was nothing I could lead that my partner could ruff. I played a spade. Declarer trumped and drew the last trump with

the queen and claimed the rest.’

‘That was very unlucky for you. The hand lay extremely well for declarer,’ the Lion consoled him. ‘I see that the Tin Man’s heart lead would only have made things easier for him.’ There was clear evidence of a smile on the Lion’s face. It might even be described as a smirk!

‘How would the Scarecrow’s lead have worked out?’ Toto asked.

The Tin Man’s demeanour was moving from irritated to outright annoyed. ‘I thought you were asking serious questions. What does it matter what the man with straw for brains suggests?’

He stopped for a moment to look at the hand diagram. ‘Miraculously, it doesn’t cost a trump trick since partner’s three to the ten comes to the rescue. You do realise that now he’ll be tempted to keep leading from the doubleton king of trumps,’ he sneered.

He was about to develop the theme of the Scarecrow’s inadequacies, potentially taking up the rest of the evening, when the Lion interrupted him. ‘Actually, it cuts down a ruff in dummy. Yes, I see it. Declarer can still play three rounds of spades, pitching a heart on the second and ruffing the third, and he can still lead a heart toward the king, but East can take the ace and play a second trump. That leaves declarer with a second heart loser.’

The Tin Man’s jaw had fallen at least two inches. He straightened himself up. ‘Yes, of course, it seems my underlying analysis was sound as the only way to defeat the contract is to take tricks in hearts. Only a player with a brain as twisted as the Scarecrow’s would have thought of that way to do it!’

They heard the voice of the tournament director, the Mayor of Munchkinland calling on the players to take their places. The Tin Man dropped Toto’s pad on a coffee table and stomped off. The Lion mumbled something to the effect of ‘well I hope that was helpful.’

‘Yes, thanks for your advice,’ Toto tried to sound grateful as they left him in the social area. He took out his phone and dialled. ‘Hello, Dorothy. I’ve got a few hands that I’d really like to talk to you about. I tried the Lion and the Tin Man but to be honest they weren’t much help. They seemed more interested in arguing with each other. The only one who seemed to be able to get to grips with them at all was the Scarecrow. Do you think he might be willing to give me a game sometime?’

Answers to “Defend With Julian Pottage”

1

♠ 96
 ♥ Q92
 ♦ J97542
 ♣ A6

♠ 752
 ♥ J8543
 ♦ 1086
 ♣ J4

N	E
W	S

♠ 108
 ♥ A106
 ♦ AQ3
 ♣ K10985

♠ AKQJ43
 ♥ K7
 ♦ K
 ♣ Q732

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣*	Double
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

1♣ Better minor

Partner leads the jack of clubs, won by the ace. A club comes back, which you win with the king, the unseen hands following low. What is your plan?

You might wish to start by working out your objective. Are you trying to give partner a ruff or are you trying to stop dummy from scoring a ruff? Once you have worked that out, you need to figure out the means to achieve your goal.

If partner has the jack of spades, ruffing higher than dummy will be an option – but as declarer seems to be attacking clubs you do not need to do so. It is usually a mistake for both sides to attack the same suit.

If all of partner’s trumps are low cards, which is a distinct possibility, a ruff for your side is only possible once dummy’s trumps have gone. You need to lead a trump at trick three. Then if declarer wins in hand, ruffs a club and leads a red card, you will go smartly in with the relevant ace. At that point, with dummy having run out of trumps, you can play a fourth round of clubs, allowing partner to ruff declarer’s queen.

2

♠ A5
 ♥ J8762
 ♦ A102
 ♣ 874

♠ 106
 ♥ –
 ♦ K876543
 ♣ K932

N	E
W	S

♠ K9843
 ♥ KQ10
 ♦ Q9
 ♣ QJ5

♠ QJ72
 ♥ A9543
 ♦ J
 ♣ A106

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
3♦*	4♥	All Pass	
3♦ Weak			

Partner leads the ten of spades and dummy plays low. What do you do?

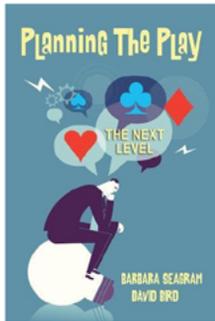
At the table East won the first trick with the king of spades and, knowing that a spade ruff was impossible, switched to the queen of clubs. Declarer took the ace at once, cashed the ace of hearts, crossed to the ace of spades, cashed the ace of diamonds and ruffed a diamond. It was then possible to discard dummy’s two remaining clubs on the queen-jack of spades while East helplessly followed suit. Declarer could then proceed to ruff two clubs in dummy, losing just two trump tricks and a spade.

While it seems strongly counter-intuitive, this is a situation in which a sacrifice could come back with interest. What happens if East ducks the first trick? Declarer now has no spade loser but also no way to dispose of dummy’s clubs and so ends up losing two clubs and two trumps. Because East holds the nine of spades, it is possible to be sure that the lead is not from queen-ten-nine and so appreciate the position. Given the bidding, it is hard to see how ducking can lose.



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Keep Bridge Alive

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Professor Samantha Punch,
UK Bridge Player

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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 finals of the open trials, you have an interesting choice of games decision to make.

As North, you hold:

Dealer East. Both Vul.

♠ K9
♥ Q864
♦ AK94
♣ Q65

West	North	East	South
-	-	Pass	1♠
Pass	?		

1NT would be semi-forcing - partner can pass with a balanced minimum. 2 of a minor is natural, game-forcing, expected to be 4+ cards. 2NT would be a spade raise.

Your call?

There doesn't appear to be any reason to be tricky here. The normal 2♦ response seems fine. If that guaranteed a 5-card suit then you would have to respond 2♣, but 2♦ can be a 4-card suit.

You respond 2♦. The bidding continues:

West	North	East	South
-	-	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass			

2♠: Shows at least 6 spades. 3♠ would show a semi-solid suit, not necessarily any extra strength.

Your call?

You know that you have an 8-card spade fit. But that doesn't necessarily make 4♠ the right contract. You are in a game force and have plenty

of room to probe for a superior contract if there is one.

First of all, might there be a slam? Suppose partner has a nice fitting hand with a singleton in one of the rounded suits. For example, ♠AQJxxx ♥x ♦xx ♣AKxx. That is a perfect hand with everything working which is nearly a 1♣ opening, yet slam still takes a 3-3 club split. This example hand indicates that slam isn't in the picture. It might be possible to construct a completely perfect hand which makes slam good, but you aren't going to be able to determine if partner has that hand.

Does that mean it is right to just jump to 4♠? Not necessarily. Just because you have an 8-card major-suit fit doesn't mean you belong in 4 of the major. 3NT could easily be better. For 4♠ to be meaningfully superior it is necessary for spades to take 2 more tricks than notrump (10 vs. 8), while if both contracts take the same number of tricks (9 vs. 9) then 3NT is superior. This hand with the queens in the rounded suits might well take that same number of tricks in notrump. For example, picture partner with something like ♠AQJxxx ♥Jx ♦Qx ♣Jxx. The question is how to best determine if partner has a hand like this.

One possibility would be to bid 3♠. This would establish spades as trumps, while giving partner the opportunity to suggest 3NT as a final contract. The problem with this is that partner would need a full stopper in both hearts and clubs to bid 3NT, and 3NT could easily be right when partner doesn't have those stoppers.

A better idea is to bid 2NT. Partner won't know about the spade support, but that might not matter. Partner has heard you bid diamonds, so with 3-card diamond support he will bid 3♦. If partner has other extra distribution such as a 4-card club suit, he will show it. But if partner is balanced or is 6-3-1-3 he will bid 3NT, and that figures to be the best contract.

You bid 2NT. The bidding continues:

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

Partner has 3-card diamond support, so it looks like 4♠ will be better than 3NT. But 3NT could still be right. You might try 3♠ planning on passing if partner bids 3NT. Partner will be bidding 3NT only if he is 6-2-3-2 with a singleton he will certainly bid 4♠ since he won't know how strong your stopper is in his singleton. With the 6-2-3-2 shape he will tend to pick 4♠ if he has nothing in the rounded suits. So, the hand where partner will bid 3NT is a 6-2-3-2 hand with something in one or both of the rounded suits. On balance, 3NT probably figures to come out better if he has that hand. So, the percentage action is to bid 3♠, planning on passing 3NT but bidding 4♠ over anything else.

It should be noted that at no point will these sequences be construed as showing slam interest. While partner may Q-bid something on the way to 4♠ if he has a decent hand, when you then bid 4♠ without having made a 4-level slam move of your own the auction is over.

You choose to bid 4♠, ending the auction.

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

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

West leads the ♥7 (3rd and 5th leads).

♠ K9
♥ Q864
♦ AK94
♣ Q65

██████████

♠ AJ10876
♥ J
♦ 1086
♣ AJ10

You cover with the ♥8 (why not?). East wins the ace, and returns the ♥3. Do you ruff this or take a discard?

You have 5 spade tricks, 2 club tricks, and 2 diamond tricks for sure. If the club finesse is onside you will always have 10 winners, so while you will be taking the club finesse, you should plan your play on the

assumption that the club finesse will lose.

It looks likely that the heart honours are split. East won't be under-leading the king of hearts here, since he can't be sure that you won't have a break-even or better discard on the heart return. You know that East has a safe club return on the assumption that the king of clubs is off-side. From the spots you have seen, it looks likely that the hearts are 4-4.

Discarding will set up dummy's queen of hearts, giving you yet another discard. But this doesn't help you at all. You will still be left with a potential minor-suit loser, so you would still need the club finesse if you fail to pick up the queen of trumps. What is happening is that you would essentially be discarding a winning club on the queen of hearts, so discarding now doesn't really increase your winner count. It is clearly better to ruff and retain more options.

You trump the heart return. West follows with the ♥2. What do you do now?

♠ K9
♥ Q6
♦ AK94
♣ Q65

██████████

♠ AJ1087
♥ –
♦ 1086
♣ AJ10

The straightforward approach is to draw trumps with a spade finesse. If you do this, it is clear to play East for the ♠Q for several reasons. You pick up the suit when West has the stiff queen. You don't have to worry about being forced if you lose the spade finesse to West, but if you lose to East, a heart return could end your chances if the spades are 4-1. Most importantly, if East has queen-fourth of spades you might be able to survive via a trump coup.

Can you do better in the spade suit? Perhaps you can avoid the guess entirely. If you can score 6 spade tricks along with 2 clubs and 2 diamonds, that's 10 tricks. The idea is to take the losing club finesse, and then arrange to ruff 2 more hearts in your hand and cash your minor-suit winners. In the end position you will have AJ10 of spades and a losing diamond in your hand, and K9 doubleton of spades in dummy. You exit

with a diamond, and the opponents may have to give you the last 3 tricks so you avoid the spade guess.

If you take this approach, what is the proper order? Best looks like crossing to dummy with the ace of diamonds and leading a club to the jack. If the club finesse wins, there will be no problems. If it loses, you will have the queen of clubs and the king of diamonds as entries for the two heart ruffs which will result in the desired ending.

Is there any danger that West will foil your plans by cleverly ducking the first round of clubs, thus depriving you of an entry for the needed heart ruffs? In theory, this is a danger. In practice, it isn't going to happen. While West should know your distribution, he can't know what your trump holding is, what your diamond holding is, or even if you have the potential to repeat the club finesse, since he doesn't know about the ♣10. If the jack of clubs holds, you can be confident that the king is onside.

So, which is the percentage play? The spade finesse is basically 50%, plus some small extra chances of not losing a diamond trick, which will happen when West has QJ of diamonds. The endplay needs the clubs to be 4-3 and the diamonds no worse than 4-2, which is more likely than usual since the hearts appear to be 4-4. The endplay also needs for East to not hold 4 diamonds for it to be a sure thing, as otherwise East will be able to lead the fourth round of diamonds and you will be back to the spade guess. If that happens, you will have a good count on the hand (West probably having started with 4 hearts, 2 diamonds, and at most 4 clubs, giving him at least 3 spades), so you will have a better than even chance of guessing the spades. It looks like going for the end-play is better.

You choose to lead a spade to the king and then the ♠9. Both opponents follow small to the first round, and East follows small on the second. Do you overtake or not?

♠ 9
♥ Q6
♦ AK94
♣ Q65



♠ AJ108
♥ —
♦ 1086
♣ AJ10

If the spade finesse is off, it won't matter. If it is on, you want to be in dummy so you can take the club finesse immediately. This may be important if the spades are 4-1, since you will need all your entries to ruff hearts for an eventual trump coup.

You play small. West also plays small. What do you do now?

♠ —
♥ Q6
♦ AK94
♣ Q65



♠ AJ10
♥ —
♦ 1086
♣ AJ10

The contract is now assured, but you want to take as many overtricks as possible. This means taking the club finesse, and then hoping to avoid a diamond loser via a double finesse or a squeeze.

In theory taking the club finesse now could risk the contract if East has a singleton club. In practice, this can't be the case. East would definitely have returned a club if he had a singleton club. Your best play is a club to the jack. You want to keep hearts in dummy for squeeze potential.

You choose the super-safe play of ruffing a heart to your hand. Both opponents follow small, as expected. You cash the ♠A, West discarding the ♣2. What do you discard from dummy?

♠ —
♥ Q6
♦ AK94
♣ Q65



♠ AJ
♥ —
♦ 1086
♣ AJ10

The squeeze potential on West is still there if the king of clubs is onside. You need to keep the queen of hearts in dummy. Either a small club or a small diamond can easily be spared. The plan is to cross to a high

diamond and run the ♣Q. If the club finesse wins, West will be squeezed if he has QJ of diamonds or any 4 diamonds.

You choose to discard the ♥Q. Now all that is left is the double diamond finesse. You lead the ♦10, covered. The club finesse wins, and both diamond honours are onside, so you make 12 tricks. The full hand is:

♠ K9 ♥ Q864 ♦ AK94 ♣ Q65	♠ 42 ♥ K972 ♦ QJ73 ♣ 982		♠ Q53 ♥ A1053 ♦ 52 ♣ K743
♠ AJ10876 ♥ J ♦ 1086 ♣ AJ10			

Do you agree with East's heart continuation at trick 2?

From the bidding and opening lead East can place declarer with exactly 6-1-3-3 distribution. It looks unlikely that the contract can be defeated looking at that dummy and East's hand. But with some effort it might be possible to construct a layout where the defense has a chance.

One possibility is to take 3 club tricks. That would give declarer ♠AJ10xxx ♥J ♦QJx ♣xxx. Even against a pair who opens light, that is too light for a second-seat opening bid. Declarer has to have the ace of clubs. But, there still might be a chance.

The club suit is key. West doesn't have the ace, but he might hold ♣J9x. That means that declarer could have 2 club losers. He might have a spade loser if West has jack-doubleton or if declarer misguesses the spades. There is danger of a discard on dummy's diamonds. Declarer figures to have the queen for his opening bid, but West might have J10xx. That would make declarer's hand ♠A10xxxx ♥J ♦Qxx ♣A10x. That is a full opening bid, but so far declarer has only 9 tricks.

The problem with the heart return is that it allows declarer to discard a club, setting up the ♥Q for declarer's tenth trick. A club return clearly doesn't work. The choice is between a diamond and a spade.

A diamond return is temporarily safe, since it doesn't necessarily give

away a trick in the suit. However, when declarer leads trumps and gives the defense a trump trick, whichever defender (probably West) wins the trick will not be able to avoid giving declarer his tenth trick.

A better shot is a trump. Partner could have J10 doubleton. Or partner might have 10-doubleton, and declarer might decide not to finesse the second round - reasonable since East might not be willing to lead away from the queen of trumps and if West has Q10x of trumps any lead from West will be helpful. This will give the defence a later diamond exit, and if declarer misguesses everything he could go down.

Do you agree with the heart opening lead?

Any time you lead away from an honour you are risking blowing a trick in the suit. The reason for an aggressive lead from an honour is that tricks in the suit might run away if you don't cash or establish tricks in the suit quickly.

On this deal, South can be assumed to have 6 spades and 3 diamonds. The diamond suit doesn't represent a major threat for discards, since West has that suit under control. The club suit, however, poses a serious threat. South might have 3 hearts and a singleton club, and if West doesn't lead a heart, losing hearts might go on the clubs. This danger appears to outweigh the danger of the heart lead blowing a trick, so the aggressive heart lead looks right.

How much effort should one put into overtricks? Obviously they aren't important in the big scheme of things, but every IMP counts. One shouldn't take a serious risk of the contract in order to get an overtrick, but when there is virtually no risk, it is worth going after every overtrick you can get.

This deal is another example of the value of having the 2 of a major rebid showing a 6-card suit in a 2-over-1 auction. On this deal it wouldn't make any difference. The first 5 bids would be the same. North would then bid 3♠, as he should have done here, and South will bid 4♠. The difference would be when South has the 6-2-3-2 hand where 3NT is better. If South hasn't already shown a 6-card spade suit he is pretty much forced to bid 4♠ once he gets delayed support, since he can't know North is interested in 3NT even if there is a 6-2 spade fit. But when South has already shown his 6-card suit, he is free to make the decision to play 3NT if he has the appropriate hand.

Bridge with Larry Cohen

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The brilliant American player, writer and teacher reveals how big numbers can be recorded at the table.

Telephone Numbers

In the 2001 U.S. Team Trials I held this ordinary-looking hand:

♠ QJ4
♥ AJ987
♦ 1098
♣ 53

Vulnerable against not, my partner, David Berkowitz opened 1NT. Our range is 14-16. My first move was easy, I bid 2♦ which we play as a “relay” to 2♥. Partner was forced to bid 2♥ and I had a decision. Should I invite game (via 2NT)? My spots were excellent, and vulnerable at IMPs it pays to bid aggressive games. But, as we accept with most 15’s, I didn’t want to reach game with two balanced hands totalling only 23 HCP. So, I passed.

My expert LHO balanced with 3♦. I was planning on doubling this, but David continued with 3♥. Now, I knew he had a good hand for hearts (after all, he bid 3♥ vulnerable when I could have had five small hearts and nothing else). There was also a good chance he had only a doubleton diamond, which would fit well with my hand. (Picture, for example: ♠Kxxx ♥KQxx ♦xx ♣AKx, and game is superb).

So, I raised to 4♥. The opponents had “balanced us into game.” This isn’t a normal occurrence in expert circles. The auction wasn’t over. My LHO doubled 4♥, and my partner redoubled!

This was the full deal:

Dealer South. N/S Vul

♠ 8752 ♥ K53 ♦ 2 ♣ KJ875	<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		♠ A10 ♥ 4 ♦ QJ7654 ♣ Q1092
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ K963 ♥ Q1062 ♦ AK3 ♣ A4											

West	North	East	South
-	Larry	David	
-	-	-	1NT*
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	3♦	3♥
Pass	4♥	Double	Redouble
All Pass			
1NT	14-16		

Notice that East-West would have done well to sacrifice in 5♣x, which probably goes down only 2 (-300). Against 4♥xx, West led his singleton diamond, to dummy’s 10, East’s jack and David’s ace. With the aid of the heart finesse, David drew trumps and knocked out the ♠A. He threw one of dummy’s clubs on his spades and eventually picked up the diamonds to make 12 tricks! What’s the score for 4♥xx vulnerable with 2 overtricks? An astounding +1880. Our teammates were -680, and we won 15 unusual (undeserved?) IMPs.

One of my favourite stories in bridge was when a player replied “Lose ‘em all” during a score comparison. Here was a recurrence from the 2007

National Open Swiss Teams. Kit Woolsey held:

♠ 3
♥ AQJ1065
♦ —
♣ A10765

With both sides vulnerable, RHO opened 1♠, and Kit tried 2♠, Michaels. LHO bid 3♦ (natural) and RHO bid 3♠. Kit now bid 4♥, which was doubled. His partner, Fred Stewart, redoubled. This was supposedly for rescue*, but Kit stuck it out. This was the full deal:

Dealer East. Both Vul.

♠ J53 ♥ 4 ♦ 7652 ♣ KQJ82	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ AK109864 ♥ 2 ♦ K93 ♣ 93	♠ 2 ♥ AQJ1065 ♦ — ♣ A107654
-----------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

West	North	East	South
-	<i>Fred</i>	-	<i>Kit</i>
3♦	Pass	1♠	2♠*
Double	Redouble	3♠	4♥
		All Pass	

West led the ♠Q and continued the suit. Declarer played the ♥A and the ♥Q in an attempt to make his contract (on 4-2 or 3-3 hearts). Disaster! West was in control. He played diamonds every time he was in and declarer was held to only his 5 natural trump tricks. Down 2800!

At the other table, East opened 4♠, South bid 4NT, takeout, West raised to 5♠. North bid 6♣ and East doubled. Declarer had no trouble making this for +1540 to go with 2800 from his teammates.

Kit was ready for the score comparison. When his teammates read off

“minus 1540,” the reply was “lose ‘em all.”

* No, I don’t understand why North wouldn’t bid 4NT to ask partner to choose a minor, and no, I don’t understand why the partnership wouldn’t presume South held clubs (since West bid diamonds).

This is a wild deal from the 2007 New Orleans Regional. With both vulnerable, I held:

♠ KJ9764
♥ Q5
♦ K64
♣ 96

I opened 2♠ which was passed around to RHO. He balanced with 2NT. This should show a no-trump hand, spades stopped, and about a king less than a direct notrump overcall (so, maybe 13-15). If you’ve ever taught bridge, you have to make sure your students know all the meanings of 2NT in competition (it is easy to confuse natural with takeout and to have general confusion over the ranges).

After the 2NT call, my LHO bid 3♦ to transfer to hearts. RHO rejected and bid 3NT (probably never such a good idea on this auction). This was passed around to my partner, Steve Weinstein. He doubled and everyone passed. What should I lead?

Such doubles typically show dummy’s suit, so I led the ♥Q. This was the full deal:

Dealer South. E/W Vul

♠ 102 ♥ K9763 ♦ 1073 ♣ QJ2	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 85 ♥ A10842 ♦ 82 ♣ AK108	♠ KJ9764 ♥ Q5 ♦ K64 ♣ 96
-------------------------------------	--	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

♠ AQ3
♥ J
♦ AQJ95
♣ 7543

West	North	East	South
Larry		Steve	
2♠	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♦*	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

As you can see, declarer did a lot of bidding. I can live with 2NT (yes, I see the singleton, but it was an honour). After the transfer, I think I might have tried passing! How bad could it be to play in 3♦? Anyway, back to the carnage. The ♥Q held and I played another heart to partner. He played the ♠8 through declarer. Possibly shocked by the events so far, declarer made the poor play of the ♠A. He tried to cross to dummy to take a diamond finesse. His play of a club was not a success. Steve won and played his other spade. I took five spade tricks and played another club. In all, we took 9 black winners and 3 heart tricks for down 8, plus 2300!

Could declarer have done better? Of course. But not much better. Even on best play, all he can get is his two aces! Say he plays low on the spade return at trick 3. Now, I cross in clubs for another spade play. My spades are set up and I have the ♦K as an entry. We can take 11 tricks on defence for +2000. After the hand, declarer apologized, but his best technical comment would have been, "Sorry pard, I could have held it to down 7."

At the other table it went 2♠-Pass-Pass-Pass, making 4 and we won 19 IMPs. Although this wasn't the maximum swing (24), it certainly reminded me of Lose 'Em All.

♠ 102	♠ 85
♥ K9763	♥ A10842
♦ 1073	♦ 82
♣ QJ2	♣ AK108
♠ KJ9764	♠ AQ3
♥ Q5	♥ J
♦ K64	♦ AQJ95
♣ 96	♣ 7543



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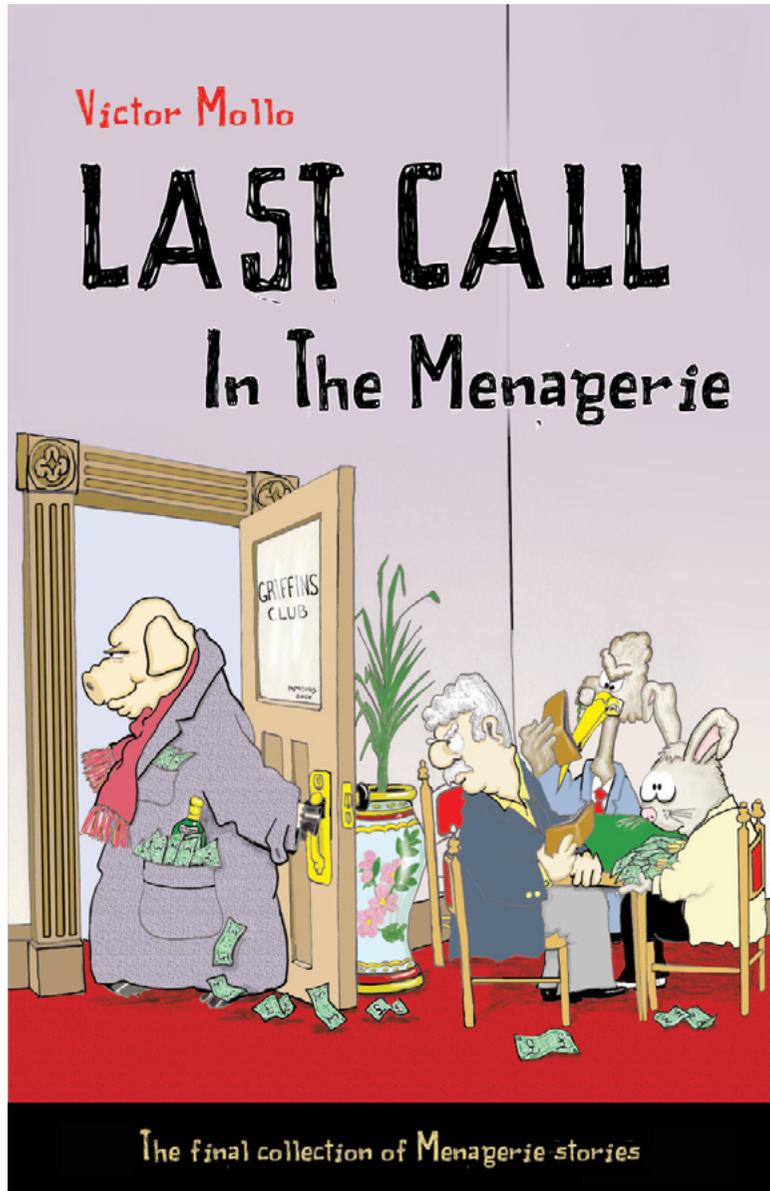
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Success Crowned with Failure



'I am beginning to think,' the Owl said, 'that there's a method in his madness.'

'You surely don't mean that he knows what he's doing?' asked the Penguin in surprise.

'No, no, of course not,' O.O. hastened to reassure him. 'He has no idea, but he knows that he hasn't, so he doesn't allow his judgment to cloud his play. And that,' added the Owl, 'can be a source of strength. Now take that hand of Papa's...'

The hand, which so impressed our Senior Kibitzer, came up in the afternoon session, and Papa was still aglow with his brilliance when he told us about it over a preprandial glass at the bar.

'As you know,' he began, 'I'm no result merchant. True artistry is in itself a pleasure and needs no tangible reward to crown it. I invite you,' he went on, passing the familiar diagram, 'to make four spades.'

EW vul.
Dealer North

♠ A K Q J 4
♥ A 4
♦ A 7 2
♣ A 9 4



♠ 10 9 7 6 5
♥ K 3
♦ 10 8 3
♣ 10 5 2

West	North	East	South
	4♥	pass	pass
4♠	all pass		

'North leads the knave of clubs.'

'Clearly a singleton,' said O.O.

'There's no hanky-panky, I suppose?' enquired P.P. suspiciously.

‘None,’ Papa assured him, ‘and you may certainly treat that knave of clubs as a singleton. Over to you, Oscar.’

‘I go up with the ace of clubs and draw trumps. What happens?’

‘Showing out, South echoes in clubs, then signals high-low in diamonds,’ replied the Greek.

‘There appear to be four inescapable losers,’ conceded the Penguin grudgingly. Presumably one of them would make a spectacular escape, but he couldn’t see how.

The Owl hooted softly. He didn’t like to commit himself.

Trying unsuccessfully not to look superior, the Greek’s features relaxed into a smile. ‘Only my dislike of the flamboyant,’ he said, ‘stopped me from laying down my hand and claiming right there and then. Yes, just like that!’

No one spoke. We all tried to look as if it was just what we had expected.

‘I thought that would stun you,’ went on Papa, ‘and since you can’t see it, I’d better explain. Consider: North has shown a club and three spades and surely he wouldn’t have opened four hearts, missing the ace and king, without a rag outside, unless he had eight hearts, possibly nine. To make sure, cash the ace of diamonds. Does he follow? It’s immaterial whether he does or doesn’t; you know that all his remaining cards must be hearts. Now you see it? No? You amaze me.’ Giving up any further attempt not to appear condescending, Papa continued:

‘At Trick Five, after a club, three rounds of trumps and a diamond, you lay down the ace of hearts — and jettison dummy’s king!’

The Owl frowned. The Penguin pursed his lips.

‘Next,’ resumed the Greek, ‘you lead your baby heart and throw West in. Having nothing else, he leads another heart, whereupon you throw a club from one hand and a diamond from the other. Another heart follows and you discard as before. West perforce plays a third heart, but now you have a void in one minor in your hand and a void in the other in dummy, so you simply crossruff, and though you have turned a heart winner into a loser, you have gained two winners in return.’ Papa beamed. ‘How do you like it?’

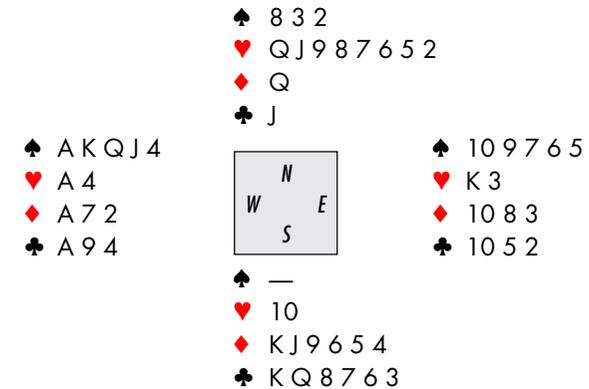
‘A very pretty play. I congratulate you,’ said the Owl, ‘but though it may be purely incidental, your artistry didn’t go unrewarded, did it? Winning the rubber must have been satisfying.’

‘No, no,’ broke in the Greek, ‘they held every card in the pack and won the rubber, but that, of course, has nothing to do with it, nothing at all. It’s the play...’

‘But surely,’ interrupted the Penguin, ‘you were vulnerable, so making four spades...’

‘As it happens, I didn’t make four spades,’ retorted Papa irritably, ‘but how can that detract from my play?’

O.O. and P.P. looked bemused and made noises accordingly. With an air of resignation, the Greek filled in the diagram.



‘Unfortunately,’ he explained, ‘though it is totally irrelevant, the Rabbit happened to have the two of hearts and instead of playing any of his other six hearts, he followed with the two, leaving me on play.’

‘Do you mean that he pulled the wrong card?’ asked the Owl.

‘No, not even that,’ replied Papa. ‘He detached the two at once, with malice aforethought, and placed it face downwards on the table. For a minute or more he remained in a trance before turning it over, but it was no accident and thereafter I couldn’t avoid losing two diamonds and two clubs.’

‘But what made him do it?’ asked O.O. and P.P. in unison. ‘Surely he couldn’t envisage what you had in mind?’

‘Of course not,’ said the Greek contemptuously. ‘He couldn’t envisage anything, but as he explained in the post-mortem, it was crystal clear that I wanted him to take the trick; why else would I throw dummy’s king on my ace? So it was in my interest to lose the trick, and therefore in his not to win it. All quite straightforward.’

‘Then, if it was quite straightforward, what was he trancing about?’ asked the Penguin.

‘He was trying to think of some coherent reason for playing as he did. It made no sense and eventually he gave up. Trusting me implicitly,

he obeyed in reverse. “Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die,” quoted Papa with a mirthless smile. ‘But I can’t understand why you should be so concerned about that crazy Rabbit. My play...’²

BRILLIANT PLAY VERSUS PRAGMATIC BIDDING

Another good example of the Rabbit’s philosophy had come up a couple of days earlier in the weekly duplicate at the Unicorn.

Two pairs, Papa and Karapet and the Hog and the Rabbit, were running neck and neck, well ahead of the rest. To heighten the drama of the photo finish, the movement called for the last set of boards to be played simultaneously, relayed between their two tables. This was the hand fated to decide the issue.

Both vul.
Dealer South

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

North	South
	1♥
3♦	3♥
4♥	4♠
6♥	all pass

2. Papa could have made the contract by drawing trumps, cashing a heart and exiting with a low card in either minor. — Ed.

Such was the bidding at Papa’s table. Pessimistic as always, Karapet, sitting North, made no attempt to reach the grand slam, and as dummy went down, the Greek frowned disapprovingly. A few minutes later, opening the traveling scoresheet, he gave the thumbs-up sign.

‘A cold, undisputed top,’ he announced triumphantly.

Most pairs had bid a slam and one had made six diamonds, but six hearts had failed every time. On the first round of trumps, East signaled loudly in clubs, and though the diamonds could be set up, after a ruff and an overruff, dummy was forced by a club return, proving fatal and leaving declarer with a spade to lose.

Papa alone had found the solution to a seemingly insoluble problem. After the first round of trumps had brought to light the four-nil break, he threw three clubs on the top diamonds and ruffed a diamond with the king of hearts. Back to dummy with a trump, he discarded his last club on a diamond. West duly ruffed, but the club return could now be ruffed in the closed hand, and it remained only to cross to dummy, extracting West’s last trump in the process, to score the sixth diamond and discard the spade loser. Papa was jubilant.

‘They may tie the board,’ warned Karapet gloomily.

The Greek quickly dismissed the idea. ‘At his best,’ he conceded, ‘the Hog might play as I did, but he is sitting North, you will observe, and the Rabbit would doubtless find some way of going two down. For once, Karapet, you can shed your pessimism. Keep it for a rainy day.’

Events at the Hog’s table, however, took an unexpected turn. This was the auction:

West	North	East	South
W.W.	H.H.	Chimp	R.R.
			1♥
pass	3♦	pass	3♥
pass	4♥	pass	4♠
pass	5♣	dbl	redbl
pass	6♥	pass	6NT
all pass			

When questioned later, the Rabbit described his bidding as pragmatic. The redouble of five clubs was two-way. Either the Hog had clubs, in which case all would be well, or he didn’t, and if so, he would bid something else. Maybe he was showing the ace, and the Chimp was



trying to confuse the issue, or it could be the other way round. The redouble catered for everything.

Similarly, six notrump allowed the Hog to decide whether or not to bid the grand slam. Admittedly, a void is no great asset in notrump, but there was so little room for maneuver.

‘What else could I say over six hearts in this ongoing situation?’ pleaded R.R.

Fortunately for his side, Walter the Walrus was too confused by the bidding to lead a club, which would have presented R.R. at once with his twelfth trick. He chose a heart. The Rabbit discarded three clubs on the three top diamonds, cashed the two remaining heart honors, crossed to his hand in spades and reeled off three more hearts.

Having to find six discards, the Chimp parted with the seven of spades and the eight and ten of clubs, and then, when no entry remained in dummy, with his last diamond. Two more hearts came at him.

In the three-card ending, the Rabbit remained with king doubleton in spades and the king of clubs.

‘All set for the endplay,’ said a knowledgeable kibitzer to a junior. ‘He will exit with the king of clubs, forcing a lead away from the queen of spades.’

Without pausing for breath, however, the Rabbit laid down the king of spades, bringing down the queen.

‘A splendid guess, R.R.,’ said Oscar the Owl. ‘Weren’t you tempted to throw Charlie in with the ace of clubs?’

The Rabbit shook his head. ‘Didn’t you see him throw the queen of clubs the trick before? They never do that without keeping a small one hidden away. It’s routine.’

‘But he threw the ten of spades, as well. Couldn’t he be keeping a little spade somewhere?’

‘It’s not the same thing,’ rejoined the Rabbit. ‘He couldn’t be thrown in with a spade. It’s being endplayed that’s so undignified. Charlie wouldn’t like that to be done to him, by me of all people. He doesn’t think much of my game, you know,’ confided the Rabbit, dropping his voice.

Recalling these two hands, the Owl came back to his theme. ‘Having no confidence in himself, the Rabbit relies on his opponents, and so long as they know what they are doing, he has nothing to worry about.’

‘What would happen, I wonder,’ mused the Penguin, ‘if he came across another Rabbit.’

‘That’s a highly controversial cliché,’ the Hog was saying as we sat sipping Bollinger in the Griffins bar. ‘If it’s difficult, it shall be done at once. If it’s impossible, it may take a little longer. Why should it?’

‘If it’s impossible —’ began Oscar the Owl.

‘Then,’ broke in H.H., ‘it must be done at once before anyone realizes the impossibility. Afterwards, it will be too late.’

‘Surely it’s always too late for the impossible?’ objected Peregrine the Penguin, who had inherited a streak of Gallic logic from his French grandmother.

As if in answer, the Hog jotted down a hand:

♠ — ♥ 4 ♦ Q 10 7 6 5 4 2 ♣ J 8 6 5 2

It’s your lead against six spades, the bidding having gone: 1♠-3♠-4NT-5♦-6♠-all pass.

‘Well, Peregrine?’

Looking more than ever like a Penguin, his dark gray tie with orange markings standing out against a snow-white shirt, Peregrine screwed his eyes and thought deeply.

‘An ace is missing — that’s clear,’ he mused aloud. ‘Our other trick can only come from declarer’s side suit, which must be hearts, or from a wrong guess in trumps. My void in trumps points to the latter as the best bet. So I lead one of my twos, implying a four-card suit and ruling out, by inference, a void in any other.’ He sat back with the air of a company director expecting a vote of thanks.

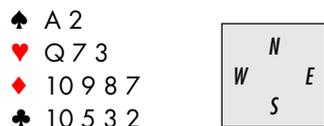
‘If you know anyone who applies the Rule of Eleven to opening leads against slams,’ rejoined the Hog, ‘I should be grateful for an introduction — if he is a man of means,’ he added hastily. ‘For all that, you are on the right track, Peregrine. You should make the most of your void and the one way to do it is to lead your little heart — yes, right into the jaws of declarer’s side suit, which, as you have rightly assumed,

he must have to justify his bidding. If he needs a heart finesse it will be right for him anyway, so your lead won't cost a thing, but once he has diagnosed it as a singleton, as a desire to ruff, he will certainly rule out a void in trumps, for a ruff without a trump would be impossible. And contrary to that silly cliché, it takes no time at all to find a singleton.'

The Hog filled in the diagram showing South with ♠AJ987 opposite ♠K10642 in dummy. Drawing the inference implicit in the lead, declarer laid down the ace first.

'Falsecarding with a singleton,' observed the Owl.

The Hog scribbled again.



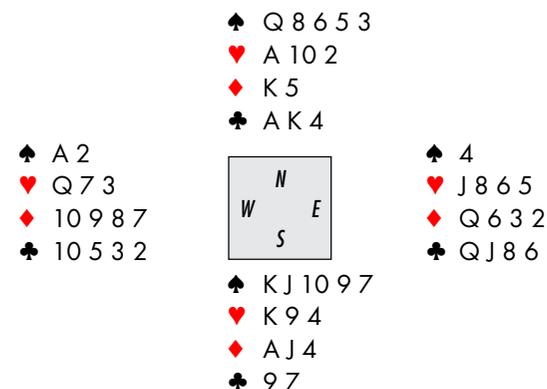
	North	South
		1♠
	3♣	3♠
	4NT	5♦
	6♠	all pass

'What do you lead this time?' he asked O.O.

'Not the ten of diamonds,' said O.O. confidently, 'that's obvious, so it can't be the right answer. The textbook lead is surely the three of hearts.'

The Penguin nodded approvingly. 'I concur,' he said. 'Had the bidding gone something like 2NT-6NT, then the right lead, to give nothing away, would have been the ten of diamonds. Here, we hope to have a trick to cash when we come in with the ace of trumps, and our best chance is to find partner with the king of hearts.'

'Again,' rejoined the Hog, 'you are on the right track but facing the wrong way. An attacking lead involves a risk and you are right to take it, but see the reasoning through. If partner has the king, it will make no difference which heart you lead, but if he has the knave, it may well do, so why not lead the queen? Should partner hold the knave, he won't be deceived, but declarer will be, for he will regard the lead of an unsupported honor as "impossible." This was the deal when I made this lead against the Chimp.



'As you can see, the book lead of a low heart would have been fatal. The Chimp would have captured the knave with the king and played me for the queen. Alternatively, and this is what would have happened on any other lead, he would have taken the diamond finesse and brought the slam home that way. My lead of the queen of hearts, which was so unlikely to cost a trick, projected the picture of the knave behind her, just as the impossible lead of a singleton on that other hand created the illusion of a trump. Of course, the Chimp took the "marked" finesse against my supposed knave of hearts and paid the penalty. No one can blame him.'

The Hog did not dwell on that success. He picked up an old book someone had left lying around and scribbled another deal on the title page. He folded up the corner so that we could see only this:

NS vul.
Dealer West

♠ 10 9 8	N W E S
♥ Q J 9 5	
♦ A Q J 5	
♣ J 3	

♠ Q J 7 2
♥ 10 7 6 3
♦ 10
♣ Q 9 7 5

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	pass	1♣
dbl	1♦	pass	3NT
pass	pass	dbl	all pass

‘Who’s who?’ asked the Owl.

‘The Chimp is North, the Walrus is East, and you are West. “’Tis all we know and all we need to know,” as someone once said,’ replied the Hog. ‘That one diamond is, of course, a routine baby psyche, a mild irritant. Anyway, you lead the queen of hearts. The Walrus plays the eight and declarer wins with the king. He continues with the ace of clubs and a club to dummy’s queen, on which the Walrus plays the nine of diamonds. You’ll have to find four discards on those clubs. Which should they be?’

As the Hog stirred the Bollinger in the ice bucket, the Owl mused aloud, ‘What has he doubled on? His nine of diamonds indicates the king and presumably he has one of the top spades...’

‘So?’ prompted H.H.

‘If I throw a spade while there’s still a club entry in dummy,’ resumed O.O., ‘declarer can go over and, if he has the ace of spades, can take the finesse, scooping my ten and nine of spades. Besides, the eight of spades might look like a signal. One must think of the Walrus. No, I’ll keep the spades intact.’

‘We certainly can’t afford to shed any hearts,’ broke in the Penguin, suddenly coming to life. ‘That eight of hearts at Trick One looks very much like a high-low signal to show a doubleton, leaving ♥AKx for declarer.’

The Owl nodded. ‘That means that only the diamonds are expendable. Fortunately,’ he added, hooting softly, ‘we don’t need them. The Walrus can look after that suit. What does he discard?’

‘The four, three, and two of diamonds,’ said the Hog.

The Owl nodded approvingly. The Penguin concurred.

‘In that case,’ went on O.O., ‘after the queen and knave of diamonds, throw the ace of diamonds, unblocking, as a precaution against being thrown in.’

‘And on the sixth club?’ asked H.H.

‘Now I can afford a spade,’ rejoined the Owl, ‘with no entry in dummy...’

With a loud guffaw the Hog uncovered the rest of the hand.

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

♠ Q J 7 2
♥ 10 7 6 3
♦ 10
♣ Q 9 7 5

♠ A 6 4
♥ K 4
♦ K 6
♣ A K 10 8 6 4

‘I must admit,’ he chortled, ‘that Papa’s discomfiture was a joy to see. Oh yes, he was West and I was South. When I crossed to the ten of diamonds and it held the trick, his sallow complexion turned to chrome. He drew his breath and held it while I took the spade finesse, scooping his ten — the nine went on the previous trick — and cashed the king of diamonds. There was a loud hiss, so I suppose he was breathing again when I went back to dummy for the last three tricks.’

‘Why...’ began O.O.

‘How...’ cried P.P.

‘That nine of diamonds, as on another historic occasion, proved to be the curse,’ explained the Hog. ‘Like you, Papa assumed that the Walrus was advertising the king of diamonds. In fact, he was trying to tell Papa that he had length but no tops. “Would I discard four diamonds

from a suit headed by the king?” he spluttered indignantly while Papa threw dark imprecations at him in several languages, including English.

‘That poor Walrus!’ the Hog said, chuckling. ‘With those hearts in dummy, he didn’t like to play the ace on the queen at Trick One. A diamond back would have kept me to six tricks. So, you see, once again the impossible came to pass, but it took no extra time at all, I assure you. A few seconds, at most, to work out the score.’

More Things in Heaven and Earth



‘...mathematicians, statisticians, all those pests...’ The Hog’s resonant tones carried from inside as I opened the door to the Griffins bar.

Waving aloft a hefty book to drive home the argument, he pursued his theme: ‘They live in a fancy world of dehydrated figures, sterile statistics —’

‘But surely,’ broke in Oscar the Owl, ‘statistics have a place.’

‘I dare say,’ agreed the Hog, ‘but a very lowly one. They’re useful, no doubt, in controlling plagues of locusts or planning the artificial insemination of fish, but that’s only because all locusts and all fish of the same species are alike. Humans, however, are not.’

‘Here,’ went on the Hog, putting down the hefty book and pointing an accusing finger at it, ‘you will find in a welter of statistics: that the average Frenchman consumes one hundred and twenty-seven litres of wine a year, reads fourteen books, and is unfaithful forty-three point seven times. And how, you may well ask, do the pundits arrive at these figures? Why, by lumping together drunks and total abstainers, bookworms and illiterates, virgins, eunuchs, and Don Juans, and dividing the totals by the number of Frenchmen or, worse still, by monkeying about with some arbitrarily selected sample. That fatuous quest for a will-o’-the-wisp, the average man!’ Seeing me pick up his book, the Hog broke off to warn me. ‘Don’t lose my place.’

Embossed in gold letters on green Morocco leather, the title proclaimed, *A Study in Sociology*, by Feodor Sanchez FitzCohen, Galapagos University Press.

‘In this very club,’ pursued H.H., ‘a microcosm of the universe, we see every day the folly of trusting bloodless, boneless figures, so often misleading, so often irrelevant, and forever a lure to the unwary.’

‘Is it worth paying 1100 to stop a vulnerable grand slam? Every computer and every professor will tell you that it is. But how do you know that it won’t be a phantom sacrifice? Suppose, to take an extreme case, that the Toucan is declarer. Whether they are there or not, how

often does he make thirteen tricks? That's what you want to know and there's no table, no formula, to tell you.

'Is it more profitable at equal vulnerability to take an 800 penalty than to make game? If I am your partner, certainly. But what if it's that same Toucan and he has a key role to play in defense? How do you assess the risk that the estimated 800 won't shrink to 500 or 200? Isn't it far better to take the rubber and cut some other partner? Divorced from humans, figures are a snare and a delusion,' concluded the Hog.

'I have just the hand for you,' he resumed later. With that he picked up the leather-bound book, opened it where he had inserted the red silk marker, and neatly tore out the page. It was the last one in Chapter XVIII, with barely six lines of print at the top, summing up French habits with wine, women, and books. In the virgin space below the text, H.H. had set out the familiar diagram. Covering the other three hands with ashtrays, he invited us to study East's:

♠ K Q J ♥ K Q 9 7 3 ♦ A 9 7 ♣ J 7

'It came up this afternoon,' the Hog explained, 'and I jotted it down just as you came in. South, the dealer, at equal vulnerability, bids one heart, partner passes, and North raises to two hearts. You pass hoping to collect 100, maybe 200, when lo and behold, South calls four hearts. Two passes follow. Your turn.'

'Presumably you double,' ventured O.O. without much conviction.

'No, that's too obvious, so it can't be the answer,' objected the Penguin, 'and yet, for the life of me, I can't see what's wrong with it.'

The Hog removed the ashtrays, exposing the full deal:

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

'East duly doubled and West led a spade. What's the prognosis?'

The Owl blinked. The Penguin nodded.

'You win with the ace of spades,' went on the Hog, 'cash the king of clubs, and ruff a spade. Next you play the ace of clubs and throw a diamond, then the queen of clubs, which East ruffs with the nine of hearts.' The Hog paused, but no one had anything to say, so he went on. 'You can't afford to give up the trick, so you overruff with the ace of hearts, ruff your third spade, and lead a diamond. The seven-card ending is:

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

'East wins with the ace and returns another diamond. Let's say you cash your other diamond and lead a trump to dummy's knave. East wins, that's the second trick for the defense, and exits with the three of hearts. Having to lead away from ♥85, how can you avoid losing two more tricks?' The Hog sat back, doodling contentedly on the title page of the sociology book.

'Clearly, the impossible came to pass, so tell us what happened,' prompted the Owl.

'You must go back a trick,' replied H.H. 'On the ace of diamonds, declarer jettisoned the queen. West dropped the knave of diamonds on the king and now the ten became an entry to dummy. A club followed and East was in dire trouble. He couldn't afford to ruff high, so he tried the seven of hearts. Declarer overruffed with the eight and continued with the two of hearts to dummy's knave and East's queen, leaving himself with the ♥54 over East's ♥K3. Naturally, had East ruffed with the three of hearts, South would now be sitting with the ♥85 over his ♥K7. It would have made no difference. The key to the play,' concluded

the Hog, ‘was to jettison the queen of diamonds, creating an all-important entry to dummy.’

‘Very lucky dropping that knave of diamonds,’ broke in the Penguin. ‘The odds against it are —’

‘I was waiting for that,’ rejoined the Hog with a pitying smile. ‘That’s just what Papa said. Oh, yes, he was East and I was South, but of course luck didn’t come into it. Had I not dropped the knave, I would have exited with the six of diamonds, and though I would have lost two diamonds instead of one, I would have lost two trumps instead of three, for whichever black card West returned, I would ruff with the two of hearts or overruff Papa with the four or eight, and still score another trump trick.’

‘East might have the ♦AJx,’ objected P.P.

The Hog snorted contemptuously. ‘No sane East — and it wasn’t the Rabbit, you know — would play the ace from that holding, especially since dummy has no visible entry. No, Peregrine, it was simply a case of “heads I win, tails I don’t lose,” and what could be fairer than that?’

‘Brr —’ began the Owl.

‘Not at all,’ retorted the Hog. ‘Even I wouldn’t have made the contract without that revealing double, while most declarers would have gone down anyway, doubled or not. Of course I played well, but Papa should have allowed for it before doubling me. The moral is that you double shaky declarers, rather than shaky contracts. As with sacrificing, so with doubling: play the players. Few will be as bad as the Toucan, and none, that is, only a few, will be as good as I am. But all are different, unlike locusts, fish, and those abstract Frenchmen. So I learn to treat each player on his demerits.’

‘How odd,’ observed Colin the Corgi, who had joined us at the beginning of the hand, ‘that so many examples of your brilliance feature poor Papa as the victim³. Has he never had the better of you? Or would the very idea of it be too great an affront to your sensitive ego?’

THE RABBIT FACTOR

‘You want a story with an unhappy ending? But of course, my dear Colin. I can deny you nothing.’ As he spoke, the Hog began leafing

3. Papa could have defeated the contract! After taking the ace of diamonds he cashes a top heart and only then exits with a diamond. Now it is the Hog who will be endplayed in trumps. — Ed.

through the book, evidently looking for a space. The Owl quickly snatched it from him, offering a notebook in its place.

The Hog scribbled. ‘Colin will remember the hand, for he had it as South at the Unicorn’s weekly duplicate on Thursday.’

Neither vul.
Dealer West

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

West	North	East	South
1♣	pass	1♦	2♠
pass	3♦	pass	3♠
pass	4♣	pass	4♦
pass	4♠	pass	pass
dbl	all pass		

‘West leads the two of diamonds. How do you fancy your chances? Not much? Quite right. You have two aces and two trumps to lose. No hope — unless you are doubled, as Colin was and likewise six other Souths who ended up in four spades. All the Wests led a diamond to East’s ace and whether the return was a club or a heart, the good players made the contract. Even the Chimp managed it, for after that all-revealing double, declarer can play double-dummy. Say that a club comes back at Trick Two. Declarer wins, ruffs a club, and crossing to dummy twice with diamond ruffs, ruffs two more. Next, he plays the king of hearts, and if it holds, another heart. West can’t help himself. With only spades and hearts left, he returns a heart, ruffed by South, who has now reduced his trumps to West’s level. In the three-card ending, he exits with the eight from ♠AQ8, forcing West to lead into the ace-queen.’

‘Let’s have the unhappy ending,’ urged C.C.

The Hog bowed. ‘I readily admit,’ he went on, ‘that Papa, who was West and had the temerity to double me, scored an undeserved success. Against the defense at my table, however, there was no way of making the contract. But then,’ the Hog paused for effect, ‘I was playing against the Rabbit.’

‘Papa and the Rabbit — what an unusual partnership,’ exclaimed O.O.

‘I can give you the answer to that,’ explained the Penguin, who organizes the duplicates at the Unicorn. ‘Karapet, who was to play with Papa, was in Brussels and should have been back in good time. As you probably know, he is bilingual in French and Belgian, and when he heard passengers for London directed to Channel Seven — *porte sept* — he mistook it for *septante*, the Belgian for seventy. Most unfortunate, for that was the plane to Kinshasa. So, at the last moment, I had to rearrange the partnerships. The Rabbit and the Toucan split up and Papa and H.H. drew lots for them.’

‘And both lost,’ chipped in the Corgi.

The Hog unfolded the rest of the sad story. ‘Unlike other defenders, at Trick Two that crazy Rabbit returned not a heart or a club but another diamond, robbing me of a vital entry to dummy, a second diamond ruff, before I was ready to use it, the ace of clubs having yet to be played. Now I could no longer shorten my trumps four times and I had to endure a lecture from Themistocles on the folly of overbidding.’

‘But what made the Rabbit hit upon so inspired a defense?’ asked the Penguin, completely bemused. ‘Did he —’

‘Of course not,’ interrupted the Hog scornfully. ‘Both the Toucan and I had cuebid diamonds, so he decided that one of us, if not both, had diamonds and that Papa’s two was a singleton. He wanted to give him a ruff and so, without malice aforethought, he broke an unbreakable contract.’

‘But surely,’ protested O.O., ‘the Rabbit is unpredictable and that doesn’t fit in with any theory.’

‘On the contrary,’ rejoined the Hog with spirit. ‘It bears out precisely what I was telling you. Looking at the North-South hands, the mathematician will tell you that it’s nearly nine-to-one on four spades being a make. Bad luck. West turns up with three spades, an eleven percent chance, according to the book, and the contract should go down. This, however, is where the human takes over from the mathematician. A double from West transforms the situation. The

contract is now unbeatable, until the Rabbit factor comes into play, and as so often in life, the unpredictable wins the day.’ Disdainfully the Hog tapped the book. ‘Nothing about it here. On the contrary, every calculation is eminently predictable. Percentage mongers and all that brood ignore luck, good or bad. What they do not understand, they do not recognize. There are more things in heaven and earth, dear Oscar,’ concluded H.H., ‘than are dreamed of in your philosophy, as Chaucer put it. Or was it Spenser?’

There was a hiss behind him. ‘Did I leave a book just now?’ enquired the Emeritus Professor of Bio-Sophistry in rasping tones. ‘A green book —’

‘All a lot of nonsense,’ said the Hog handing it to him. ‘You’d do better to borrow a bridge book. Buy one, if need be. You’ll learn something about the facts of life, about the unpredictable.’

The Secretary Bird’s wiry hair bristled with anger. His eyes were glued on the page torn out of chapter XVIII lying crumpled and stained in Madeira by the Hog’s empty glass.





Brother Jasper's Last Session

by David Bird

Brother Jasper was the oldest monk at St. Titus. Nearly 89 years of age, he had not played bridge for a long while. He slept most of the day and was not expected to reach his next birthday.

'Guess who will be joining us for tonight's session, Abbot?' asked Brother Xavier, taking his seat at the breakfast table.

The Abbot reached for the marmalade, showing no interest in the matter. 'His Holiness the Pope?' he queried.

'A good guess,' Brother Xavier replied. 'In fact, it's old Brother Jasper. He decided to play one last session of bridge, while he still has the faculties for it. He's asked Brother Lucius to partner him.'

The Abbot could not believe what he was hearing. Would it not have made more sense to partner the best player in the monastery?

That evening, the Abbot entered the senior cardroom and noted that Brother Jasper, who was well wrapped up in a wheelchair, had been given the South seat at Table 8. All the contestants had been primed to hold back a bit when facing him. Wherever his destination in the next world, how good it would be if he could take a final happy memory from the bridge table with him.

The Abbot's first opponents were Brother Paulo and Brother Richard. 'Has your normal partner lost patience with you?' queried the Abbot.

Brother Paulo laughed. 'No, no,' he replied. 'He is partnering Brother Jasper for his last game. If anyone can carry poor Jasper above the half-way line, it's Lucius.'

The Abbot raised an eyebrow at this assessment. Was unrestrained overbidding a sound tactic when partnering someone who dropped a trick or two whenever he became declarer? Brother Jasper should have chosen a totally reliable player. One whose mistakes were few and far between.

This was the deal before them:

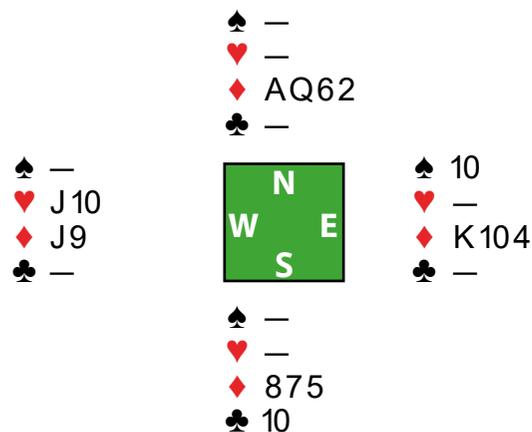
Dealer West. Neither Vul.

♠ 32 ♥ AKJ1032 ♦ J9 ♣ 742	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 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		♠ K86 ♥ 964 ♦ AQ62 ♣ AKJ	♠ 10954 ♥ Q87 ♦ K104 ♣ 865
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ AQJ7 ♥ 5 ♦ 8753 ♣ Q1093												

West	North	East	South
<i>The Abbot</i>	<i>Brother Richard</i>	<i>Brother Xavier</i>	<i>Brother Paulo</i>
2♥	Double	3♥	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

The Abbot led the king of hearts and continued with the ace, hoping that declarer held only four trumps and would lose control. Brother Paulo ruffed and drew two rounds of trumps with the ace and queen. He then crossed to the king of clubs and ruffed dummy's last heart in his hand. Returning to dummy with the ace of clubs he drew another round of trumps with the king, throwing a diamond. The trumps failed to divide 3-3 and Brother Xavier now held the sole remaining trump.

Brother Paulo overtook the jack of clubs with the queen, leaving these cards still out:



When the ♣10 was played, Brother Xavier had no answer in the East seat. If he ruffed, he would have to lead into dummy's diamond tenace. Without much hope, he tried the effect of discarding the ♦4.

It was clear to Brother Paulo that the ♦K was offside; otherwise the Abbot would have too much for a weak-two opening. He played a diamond to the ace and claimed his ten tricks.

Brother Xavier reached for his scorecard with a rueful air. 'Were you practising your opening leads for when we face Brother Jasper?' he enquired.

The Abbot looked uncomprehendingly across the table.

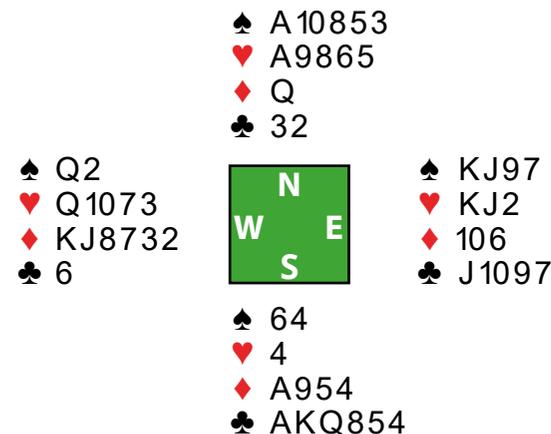
'Start with a diamond and we can set up three side-suit tricks,' continued Brother Xavier. 'He can't come to ten tricks then. I have to make a trump trick.'

The Abbot sighed. 'Helpful as always,' he declared. 'I must have failed to look closely at my diamond holding. A doubleton jack is always so tempting.'

The sarcasm passed over Brother Xavier's head. 'Others will let it through, I expect,' he said. 'Don't worry about it.'

Not long afterwards, the Abbot faced Brother Cameron and his partner. The Abbot had long since given up trying to work out why the novice usually did well against him. It wasn't as if he played a strong game. Fortune just seemed to run his way. The players drew these cards:

Dealer North. N/S Vul.



West	North	East	South
<i>The Abbot</i>	<i>Brother Damien</i>	<i>Brother Xavier</i>	<i>Brother Cameron</i>
-	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

The Abbot led the ♦7 against 3NT and closed his eyes for a moment when the singleton ♦Q appeared in the dummy. Exactly the sort of good luck that seemed to follow this pair, however moderately they played. Was that North hand worth a one-level opening bid? Not as he saw it. Despite how it had turned out here, the ♦Q was almost certainly a worthless card. Brother Damien had opened on an virtual 8-count!

When the ♦Q won the first trick, Brother Cameron called for a club. The ♣9 was inserted on his right, and he ducked in his hand. He won the diamond return and scored five club tricks, happy to see the 4-1 break. Dummy's two aces brought the total to nine and a useful +600 was his.

'Nice safety play, ducking that club,' congratulated Brother Damien.

The Abbot's mouth fell open. 'Nice play, you say?' he exclaimed. 'It was a thoroughly second-rate play at match-points! A 3-2 break is hugely odds-on. You risked a complete bottom if everyone else played clubs from the top and they broke 3-2.'

'I would normally play for the drop,' Brother Cameron replied.

'Are you going to favour us with an explanation?' persisted the Abbot.

‘Well, some players wouldn’t open on Damien’s cards,’ the novice replied. ‘You know how cautious some of the older brothers are. They might stop in a part-score.’

‘In a part-score?’ exclaimed the Abbot. ‘You must be joking.’

‘Also, I didn’t want to throw away the advantage of the diamond lead,’ continued Brother Cameron. ‘On any other lead, 3NT would probably go down.’

Brother Damien proffered the traveller for the Abbot’s inspection, but he waved it aside. ‘You’re more likely to throw any advantage away by misplaying the club suit,’ he declared.

Over the next hour or so, the Abbot and Brother Xavier restored a degree of respectability to their score-card. On the last round of the evening, they moved to Table 8, where they would face Brother Jasper and his partner. Brother Xavier caught the Abbot’s eye, as if to remind him what was expected of them. Surely even the Abbot would enter into the spirit of the occasion, facing someone who would not be with them for much longer.

The Abbot peered down at Brother Jasper, whose rather small wheelchair left his head not much higher than the table edge. ‘Have you enjoyed playing bridge again?’ he enquired.

‘You’ll have to speak up,’ Brother Lucius informed the Abbot. ‘His hearing isn’t too good.’

‘I won’t bother,’ replied the Abbot. ‘I don’t want to embarrass him by shouting.’

This was the first board of the round:

Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ 86 ♥ J973 ♦ 10653 ♣ A93	♠ K1053 ♥ K8 ♦ K7 ♣ KJ842		♠ 42 ♥ 1084 ♦ 9842 ♣ Q104
♠ AQJ97 ♥ AQ5 ♦ AQJ ♣ 76			

West	North	East	South
<i>The Abbot</i>	<i>Brother Lucius</i>	<i>Brother Xavier</i>	<i>Brother Jasper</i>
–	–	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

The Abbot led the ♠8 against the slam and had his other trump ready to play at trick two. Brother Jasper won the first trick with the ♠9 and quickly led the ♣7. The Abbot withdrew the ♠6 from his hand, then peered closely at the card the declarer had just led. Good gracious, it was a club, not a trump.

Brother Jasper chuckled to himself. ‘I think you’ve given the game away,’ he informed the Abbot. ‘I thought I might catch you unawares. One trump and then lead the key suit. It’s a clever trick I learnt when I was a student, more than 70 years ago.’

The Abbot followed with the ♣3, as quickly as he could. ‘King, please,’ said Brother Jasper. Not looking at all surprised when the king won, he drew trumps and claimed his slam.

‘Your hesitation told me all I needed to know,’ continued Brother Jasper. ‘It was a good slam, partner. A full 75% chance, if you use my clever trick.’

You played it well,’ observed Brother Lucius.

The Abbot looked up at the other players, noting that Lucius and Xavier were smiling happily at him. Good God, did they think he had hesitated deliberately, to hand old Jasper his slam on a plate?

‘It’s a good one for us,’ said Brother Lucius, filling in the scoresheet. ‘You old-time players have a lot to teach us younger brethren.’

The last board of the evening was placed onto the table:

Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ KJ1083 ♥ 65 ♦ 10873 ♣ 109		♠ 65 ♥ A74 ♦ KJ94 ♣ K642	♠ Q72 ♥ KJ82 ♦ 52 ♣ A753
	♠ A94 ♥ Q1093 ♦ AQ6 ♣ QJ8		

West	North	East	South
<i>The Abbot</i>	<i>Brother Lucius</i>	<i>Brother Xavier</i>	<i>Brother Jasper</i>
–	–	–	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

The Abbot led the ♣10 and Brother Jasper screwed up his eyes, trying to bring the dummy into focus.

‘Did you forget your glasses?’ asked Brother Xavier, raising his voice somewhat louder than was necessary.

‘I can’t see very well without them,’ Brother Jasper replied. ‘I couldn’t find my glasses with my poor eyesight.’

‘You should have asked someone to help you,’ continued Brother Xavier. ‘Would you like me have a quick look round the infirmary?’

‘I’ll manage,’ said Brother Jasper. ‘Play the ace.’

The old-timer’s next move was a successful finesse of the ♦Q, followed by the ace of diamonds and a diamond ruff. ‘I’m doing all right so far, partner,’ he said.

Brother Lucius nodded encouragingly. ‘So I can see,’ he replied.

‘Play the top trump,’ said Brother Jasper. ‘What is it, the king?’

‘Yes, you have king-jack-eight-two in the dummy,’ Lucius replied.

Brother Xavier won with the ace of trumps, cashed the ♣K and led a third round of clubs.

The Abbot ruffed, somewhat apologetically. Was it his fault if Xavier chose to defend so sharply, at such an inappropriate moment? He could hardly fail to ruff the third club, could he? It would then be entirely obvious that he was trying to hand declarer an extra trick.

The Abbot surveyed this end position:

♠ KJ1083 ♥ – ♦ 10 ♣ –		♠ 65 ♥ 74 ♦ K ♣ 6	♠ Q72 ♥ J8 ♦ – ♣ 7
	♠ A94 ♥ Q109 ♦ – ♣ –		

The Abbot did not like what he saw. Whether he wished it not, it seemed that he might have to give Brother Jasper an extra trick anyway. Leading from the ♠K was unattractive, so he reached for the ♦10.

‘You’ve made a mistake there,’ observed Brother Jasper. ‘Ruff with the lower trump, will you. The six, is it?’

Brother Lucius reached for dummy’s ♥8 and declarer discarded a spade. ‘Play the low club,’ he said.

‘Dummy’s club is the seven and Brother Xavier has just played the six,’ Brother Lucius advised his partner.

‘There’s only one chance, in that case,’ observed Brother Jasper, discarding the ♠9. When the Abbot was unable to ruff, declarer played his three trumps and faced the ace of spades as his tenth trick.

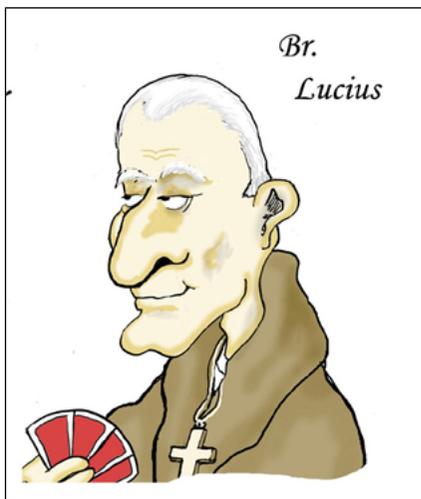
‘Beautifully played, partner!’ exclaimed Brother Lucius. ‘Don’t you agree, Abbot?’

The Abbot was trying to work out if the defence could have done anything about it. Perhaps Xavier would have done better to switch to a spade, instead of playing the king of clubs. If Jasper played low from his hand, the spade king would be made and he could cross for a club ruff then. ‘Yes, yes, he played it well,’ said the Abbot.

‘Tell him, then,’ said Brother Xavier. ‘It will mean so much to him.’

The Abbot turned to his right, observing that Brother Jasper was sitting back in the wheelchair with his eyes closed.

‘I don’t want to disturb him,’ said the Abbot. ‘He’s gone to sleep; the session must have exhausted him.’ The Abbot peered more closely at the motionless figure. ‘At least... well, I hope he’s just asleep.’



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

Mark Horton

This month we pay a visit to Coventry for the final of Crockfords Cup, the English Teams Championship. 88 teams entered. I went to the EBU web site to see how that compares with previous years, but they only publish the winner's names.

What the entry lacked in quantity, it more than made up for in quality, as you see from the list of teams that reached the all-play-all final:

Allfrey	Alexander Allfrey, Andrew Robson, Ed Jones, Tom Paske, Graham Osborne, Tony Forrester
Mossop	Alex Hydes, David Mossop, Justin Hackett, Jason Hackett, Diego Brenner, Paul Hackett
Black	Andrew Black, David Gold, Andrew McIntosh, Phil King, Gunnar Hallberg, Derek Patterson
Jagger	Jon Cooke, Paul Barden, Jonathan Mestel, Chris Jagger, Ian Pagan, Julian Wightwick
Senior	Brian Senior, Sandra Penfold, John Holland, Alan Mould, Nevena Senior
Green	Alan Wilson, Nick Smith, Graham Link, Stephen Green, Roger Bryant
Burgess	Gary Hyett, Dan Crofts, Fiona Brown, Ollie Burgess
Shelley	Peter Shelley, Trevor Ward, Chris Dixon, David Jones, Andrew Urbanski, Mike Huggins

On paper Allfrey might be reckoned the favourites, but they had one pair missing and the inform Mossop and the powerful Black could not be discounted.

The Hands

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

Hand 1. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ 943		♠ AK85
♥ 87		♥ KQ93
♦ 104		♦ AKQ65
♣ AQJ743		♣ —

West	East
<i>McIntosh</i>	<i>King</i>
Pass	1♦
1NT	2♥
3♣*	3NT
Pass	

3♣ Very weak

North held ♠Q10 ♥AJ65 ♦8732 ♣1052 and led the ♠Q. Declarer won with the ace and played four rounds of diamonds pitching two clubs as South parted with a heart and a club. North continued with the ♠10 and declarer won, cashed a diamond, everyone throwing clubs and exited with the ♠5. South ducked (it does not help to win) and dummy's nine was followed by the ♣A pitching a spade. A heart now ensured a ninth trick.

If you accept that a 3♠ bid by East should show a 4-4-5-0 then that might locate a 4-3 spade fit – if you wanted to play there.

West	East
<i>Paske</i>	<i>Jones</i>
Pass	1♦
2♣	2♠
3♣	3♥
3♠	4♦
5♣	Pass

North led the ♥A and continued with the five, declarer losing two trump tricks for one down.

Probably West should have preferred 4♠ to 5♣ – on this layout there should always be at least ten tricks.

Recommended auction: The first point to consider is East's rebid. I slightly prefer 2♠ followed by 3♥. Had Paske bid 4♠ that would have been a good auction, whatever the merits of the 2♣ response – as a passed hand it looks sensible to show where your values are.

There is not a lot to choose between 3NT and 4♠, and both are easy to play.

Marks: 3NT/4♠10, 3♣/3♦/3♠ 5.

Running score: Crockfordians 10/20

Hand 2. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ AQJ63		♠ K10
♥ A109		♥ KJ743
♦ 10		♦ A7
♣ KQ92		♣ AJ105

North overcalls 3♦ and South raises to 4♦

West	East
<i>Hackett Ja</i>	<i>Hackett Ju</i>
1♠	2♥
3♥	3♠
4NT*	5♦*
5♥	5NT
7♥	Pass
4NT RKCB	
5♦ 0-3 key cards	

Here's a simple question for you? Which suit had been agreed for the purposes of RKCB? The general rule is that it is the last bid suit, so West was asking in spades. He could not be sure East held any key-cards, so marked time with 5♥.

If 5NT was 'pick-a-slam' should West have jumped to 7♣? That would have been very easy to play.

South led the ♦K from ♠874 ♥Q86 ♦KQ6 ♣8743 and declarer won and played a heart to the ace. In the days when you were supposed to lead a trump against a grand slam he might have taken a different line.

West	North	East	South
<i>Black</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Mossop</i>
1♠	3♦	3♥	4♦
4♥	All Pass		

Top class defensive bidding by N/S put East on the spot – no doubt he had his reasons for not bidding on. This time declarer played South for the ♥Q and took all the tricks – *it's a funny old game Saint*.

Recommended auction: The Hackett sequence is fine as long as West bids 7♣. Where N/S intervene then the East hand looks strong enough for further action. Is it too far-fetched to suggest that if East bids 5♦ West can continue with 6♣ which East can raise to seven? Perhaps, but this particular East knows all about bidding last-gasp grand slams as on this celebrated deal from Lyon 2017:

The last board of the bronze medal playoff in the Funbridge Transnational Teams produced a deal designed to test the bidding methods of the very best:

Board 32. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ 965		♠ KQ1082
♥ KQJ10		♥ 9
♦ 1032		♦ A76
♣ 1062		♣ AK87
♠ AJ43		
♥ A2		
♦ KQJ9		
♣ J95		
♠ 7		
♥ 876543		
♦ 854		
♣ Q43		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Multon</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Helgemo</i>
1NT	Pass	2♥*	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣*	Pass
4♦*	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♥*	Pass	6♣	Pass
7♦	All Pass		

2♥	Transfer
4♣	Cue-bid
4♦	Cue-bid
4NT	RKCB
5♥	2 key cards
6♣	Grand slam try

When East made a grand slam try with 6♣ West knew that the queen of clubs would be a great card, but although he didn't have it his diamonds were so strong that if they were trumps there was sure to be a discard available on the fifth round of spades. Hence his majestic leap to 7♦.

North led a spade and declarer won, cashed the ace of hearts, ruffed a heart, drew trumps and claimed, a well deserved 19 IMPs against the failing 7♠ reached by Versace and Lauria.

Marks: 7♦ 10, 7NT 8, 7♥ 7, 6♣/6NT/6♥/6♠ 6, Games 5.

Running score: Crockfordians 22/40

Hand 3. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ AKQ9753	<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		♠ 62
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ —	♥ KJ9763										
♦ Q102	♦ A4										
♣ AK6	♣ Q109										

South opens 2♦ weak

West	East
<i>King</i>	<i>McIntosh</i>
2♣*	2♥
3♠*	4♦*
4NT*	5♣*
6♠	Pass

3♠	Solid suit
4♦	Cue-bid
4NT	RKCB
5♣	1 key card

I'm not sure 4NT achieved much – suppose partner had shown two key cards – was West then going to make a grand slam try – perhaps bidding 6♣?

North led the ♥5 and declarer tried dummy's king, covered by the ace and ruffed and declarer continued with a diamond to the ace and a diamond, South taking the king and exiting with a diamond.

North's hand was ♠J ♥Q8542 ♦76 ♣J8542 so that was one down.

You can understand why declarer tried dummy's ♥K. The diamond position was unlucky. Declarer might have crossed to the ♣Q at trick two and played a low diamond. Even if there was a losing view available declarer can still play to ruff a diamond and will get in a round of trumps.

West	North	East	South
<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Mossop</i>	<i>Black</i>
–	–	–	2♦
Double	Pass	3♥	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

North led the ♦6 and declarer won with dummy's ace, drew trumps and claimed.

6♠ may appear slightly cavalier, but is certainly practical. 3♠ is the more cautious approach, but finding a convincing route to 6♠ after that is not easy.

Recommended auction: If you start 2♣-2♥-3♠-4♦ then why not continue 5♣-5♦-6♣, when partner would be entitled to bid 7♠ looking at ♦AK and the ♣Q. Rebidding 3♠ simplifies matters, although after 2♣-2♥-2♠-3♥-3♠ East can bid 4♦ and 6♠ is sure to be reached.

Marks: 6♦ 10, 5♦ 6.

Running score: Crockfordians 42/60

Hand 4. Dealer East. None Vul

♠ AK865	N	♠ J9432
♥ 854	W	♥ —
♦ K2	E	♦ AJ103
♣ 962	S	♣ AQJ8

North bids hearts at the cheapest level (5♥ if required)

West	North	East	South
Barden	Penfold	Cooke	Senior B
–	–	1♠	Pass
4♠	5♥	6♠	All Pass

North's 5♥ helped a lot – it removed the possibility that West might hold wasted values in hearts.

Looking at ♠Q10 ♥1096 ♦98765 ♣543 South tried the ♦8 to no avail.

West	North	East	South
Holland	Wightwick	Mould	Pagan
–	–	1♠	Pass
3♠	4♥	4♠	All Pass

Oops.

Is there any case for East to bid 5♣ over 4♥? If partner then bid 5♦ and East bids 5♥ West has enough to bid 6♠.

Recommended auction: I think most partnerships would expect a response of 4♠ to show a relatively weak hand, although Crowhurst describes it as 'at least four-card support, seven losers and normally 9-12 points'. Facing a five-card major the West hand is very good – perhaps worth a 2NT response? If North then bids hearts East's controls justify looking for a slam.

Marks: 6♠ 10, 4♠ 5.

Running score: Crockfordians 57/80

Hand 5. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ 9	N	♠ 65
♥ A643	W	♥ KQ9872
♦ AK108	E	♦ QJ72
♣ AJ102	S	♣ 7

North overcalls 1♠ and South jumps to 4♠

West	North	East	South
Paske	Pagan	Jones	Wightwick
1♦	1♠	3♥*	4♠
5♥	All Pass		
3♥			

Fit jump

The choice of opening bid is a matter of style. With every suit under control West might have done more, but is probably going to have to take a unilateral decision about bidding a slam.

South held ♠KJ1073 ♥- ♦543 ♣Q8543 and led the ♣4.

West	North	East	South
Cooke	Forrester	Barden	Osborne
1♣*	Pass	1♥	1♠
3♠*	4♠	5♣*	5♦*
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

- 1♣ Strong
- 3♠ Splinter
- 5♣ Cue-bid
- 5♦ Cue-bid

The vulnerability deterred North from entering the auction, but South had no reservations. Here the intervention proved to be too late to inconvenience E/W.

Recommended auction: After 1♦-(1♠) if your fit jump shows a good suit then West ought to at least make a move towards slam.

Marks: 6♥ 10, 6♦ 8, 5♥/5♦ 6.

Running score: Crockfordians 73/100

Hand 6. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ K9
♥ A987654
♦ QJ98
♣ —



♠ A7
♥ K3
♦ K1073
♣ AK765

West	East
Barden	Cooke
1♥	2♣
2♥	2NT
3♥	4♣
4♦	4♥
Pass	
2♣	Artificial, game forcing

If 4♣ was a cue-bid agreeing hearts then 4♦ looks like ‘Last Train’ with East unwilling to move past game.

North held ♠Q1086 ♥J2 ♦42 ♣J10932 so 2-2 trumps and no diamond ruff meant twelve tricks.

West	East
Forrester	Osborne
1♥	2♣
2♥	2NT
3♦	3♥
4♥	4NT*
5♣*	5♦*
6♥	Pass
4NT	RKCB
5♣	1 key card
5♦	♥Q
6♥	Yes, sort of

Having bid hearts twice West introduced his diamonds.

With a seven-card suit West felt entitled to show the ♥Q.

Recommended auction: If you are happy to bid this type of slam then Forrester-Osborne is pretty good.

Marks: 5♥ 10, 6♥/6♦ 9.

Running score: Crockfordians 92/120

Hand 7. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ A108
♥ AK10743
♦ —
♣ AJ65



♠ J4
♥ QJ982
♦ A53
♣ K72

If West opens 1♥ North overcalls 2♥ and South bids 4♠

West	North	East	South
Forrester	Penfold	Osborne	Senior B
–	–	Pass	2♦
Double	4♠	Double	Pass
4NT*	Pass	5♥	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	6♠
Pass*	Pass	7♥	All Pass

4NT was looking for a fit. When South decided to save, West, with every suit controlled made a forcing pass and East went on.

South held ♠732 ♥65 ♦KJ762 ♣Q103 so the 17.76% chance that the club suit would play for four tricks delivered the contract.

Anyone for 7♠ (probably costing -1700)?

West	North	East	South
Holland	Jones	Mould	Paske
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♥	2♥*	2NT*	4♠
6♥	All Pass		
2♥	Michaels		
2NT	4-card limit raise		

North led the ♠K and declarer was soon claiming – there is a simple elimination that virtually ensures the contract.

Recommended auction: Holland-Mould is a perfecto.

Marks: 6♥ 10, 5♥ 5, 7♥ 2.

Running score: Crockfordians 104/140

Hand 8. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ K7
♥ K2
♦ A8742
♣ KQ65



♠ 10
♥ AQJ1087
♦ K1065
♣ AJ

North opens 4♠

West	North	East	South
Senior N	Jones	Penfold	Paske
-	4♠	5♥	All Pass

That's an awful lot facing a five-level overcall, but not enough to persuade West to make a move.

West	North	East	South
Osborne	Mould	Forrester	Holland
-	3♠	4♥	Pass
4♠*	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♥*	Pass	6♥	All Pass

4♠ Cue-bid
4NT RKCB
5♥ 2 key cards

More breathing space meant there was room for a cue-bid and that was all the encouragement East needed. North's preempt was on ♠AQJ9643♥64♦3♣1043.

Recommended auction: Easy enough after 3♠, but what to do after 4♠? Asking for key cards and then bidding 6NT is one option – if you think the West hand is good enough.

Marks: 6♥/6NT(W) 10, 5♥ 5.

Running score: Crockfordians 119/160

You can play through the deals mentioned in this article.

Just follow the links:

Hand 1

https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?bbo=y&li-nurl=https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/vugraph_linfetch.php?id=65162

Hands 2 & 3

https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?bbo=y&li-nurl=https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/vugraph_linfetch.php?id=65172

Hand 4

https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?bbo=y&li-nurl=https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/vugraph_linfetch.php?id=65183

Hand 5

https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?bbo=y&li-nurl=https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/vugraph_linfetch.php?id=65202

Hand 6

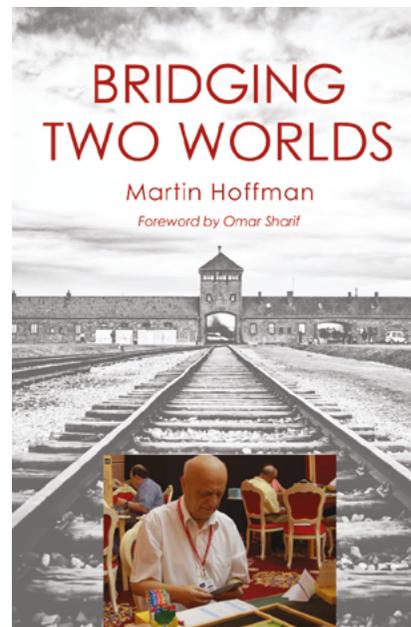
https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?bbo=y&li-nurl=https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/vugraph_linfetch.php?id=65204

Hand 7

https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?bbo=y&li-nurl=https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/vugraph_linfetch.php?id=65208

Hand 8

https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?bbo=y&li-nurl=https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/vugraph_linfetch.php?id=65209



MASTER POINT PRESS
THE BRIDGE PUBLISHER

BRIDGING TWO WORLDS

Martin Hoffman

Foreword by Omar Sharif

Czech-born bridge player and writer, Martin Hoffman, recounts the horrors of the WW2 death camps and how he managed to survive Auschwitz. He shares his struggles to establish a normal life after relocation to post-war England, and the important part the game of bridge played in his recovery.

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The Master Point Press Bidding Battle Set 21

Moderated by Brian Senior

Several of the panel will be off to Wuhan in the next few days to play in the World Championships. I too will be going, but just as a journalist. No doubt that will give me an opportunity to collect fresh torture for the panel and readers.

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		

Bid	Votes	Marks
Pass	8	10
1NT	5	8
2♠	2	5

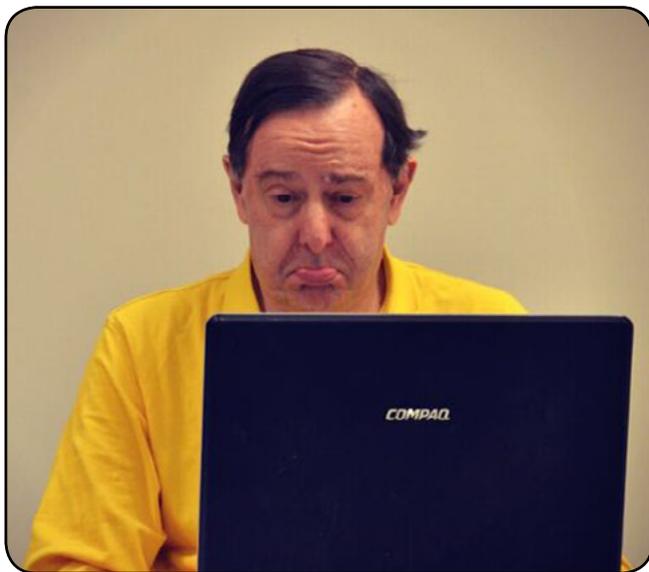
I suspect that we would have had a different top choice had the scoring being IMPs, as people would have wanted to give partner one more chance in case game was on. At matchpoints, however, there was a slight majority in favour of passing, looking at the possibility of extra tricks through ruffing.

Apteker: Pass. Feels like our likely best contract and the major should score well in pairs.

Sime: Pass. Misfit, so stay low. I expect to score a trick more in spades than in 1NT. Defending

THE BIDS & MARKS

	Bid	No. of Votes	Marks		Bid	No. of Votes	Marks
1,	Pass	8	10	5.	4♣	7	10
	1NT	5	8		4♦	4	9
	2♠	2	5		3♥	2	6
2.	3♥	6	10	3♦	1	5	
	3NT	3	8	4♥	1	2	
	3♠	3	8	6.	2♥	8	10
	3♦	1	3	2♠	3	7	
	4♥	1	3	Double	2	7	
	Pass	1	2	4♣	1	5	
3.	4♣	8	10	3♣	1	3	
	4♠	5	8	7.	5♥	8	10
	5♦	1	6	5♣	2	6	
	Pass	1	2	5♦	2	6	
4.	Double	9	10	4NT	1	5	
	3♠	3	7	5♠	1	5	
	3♣	1	5	6♥	1	4	
	3NT	1	3	8.	2♥	10	10
	3♦	1	2	3♥	3	6	
				2♠	1	3	
				4♥	1	3	



**Brian Senior—your Moderator—
universally and affectionately known as
Mr. Grumpy**

One Spade might be tricky. Should they force and risk a crossruff, or stop the ruffs and watch a red-suit run?

Brock: Pass. First thoughts were to bid 1NT, but actually my hand feels suitable for a suit contract and I fancy his chances of making more tricks in 1♠ than I will make in 1NT. Unlikely game is on our way.

Robson: Pass. I don't see why partner has to have more than, say ♠10xxx ♥x ♦KQ10xx ♣xxx. Spades rates to play better than anything else, so I'm expecting 70%...

Your ambitions are set far too low, Andrew – 100% this time.

Stabell: Pass. Taking the plus score and perhaps tempting North to balance? Easier in pairs.

Smith: Pass. Game seems unlikely, so the only

question is which part-score rates to be better, spades or no-trump. This hand seems ideally suited for a spade contract facing a 4-2-5-2 or 4-2-5-3 shape, so I pass and expect partner to make +110 or +140.

Alder: Pass. It is pairs, so pushing for thin games isn't recommended. Also, it seems that spades will play at least as well as no-trump, and potentially much better.

Bird: Pass. I am not going to stretch to 1NT or 2♠, particularly at matchpoints. My 1♥ was constructive, so partner had a chance to be more enthusiastic.

Yes he did, so many of the possible hands with which game would be good would have jumped or cue-bid at their second turn.

As we would expect, there was a significant minority in favour of bidding 1NT:

Leufkens: 1NT. 1♠ might play well, but in pairs I try for the highest scoring contract.

Rigal: 1NT. I'd say duck soup but I suppose spades might play better than no trump. I'm still hoping partner will produce delayed support for hearts though and passing will surely end this particular auction.

Cannell: 1NT. It's pairs. N/S are not competing in clubs, so I may as well portray a club stopper and some values with 1NT.

Byrne: 1NT. I don't see why 1♠ should play that well and there is still the possibility of game. The club holding will be of little use in spades but should combine well with ♥ in partners hand to give two stoppers.

Sandsmark: 1NT. The best bid at this stage, in my humble opinion. Particularly in pairs! If partner has some juice, he will surely come

back with another bid. But that's another story. *The other minority vote was for a spade raise.*

Teramoto: 2♠. It looks OK to play in the 4-3 fit and 2♠ looks better than 1NT. This is too good to pass, we may have game.

Green: 2♠. This problem looks awfully familiar to me but I don't know why (is it a repeat?). I think I'm too strong to pass (partner could be 5-6 for example) as we may miss a game. So for me the choices are between 1NT and 2♠. My club stopper is tenuous to put it mildly and with a singleton in partner's suit my small trumps may prove useful. Partner might expect four trumps but he'll also know that some of the time I will be stuck for a bid. I'm hoping spades will score one more trick than NT and we will scoop up all of the matchpoints.

I can see very easily how spades could provide more tricks than no trump, but I would be concerned that partner will assume four-card support and will go on with hands that would pass 1NT, seeing us get too high. I don't know where the hand comes from, but I do know what partner held:

♠ KQJ10
♥ xx
♦ KQJxx
♣ Kx

It looks as though a spade contract should out-score NT, but I'll let you decide whether you would want to get to game — partner will presumably bid on facing a spade raise. I think I would go for the majority choice of Pass.

PROBLEM 2

IMPs. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ AQ42
♥ AQJ653
♦ K8
♣ 9

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
1♥	Pass	3♣*	Pass

?
3♣ Natural and invitational

Bid	Votes	Marks
3♥	6	10
3♠	3	8
3NT	3	8
3♦	1	3
4♥	1	3
Pass	1	2

I remember this one, which came from a KO match; get to the right spot and win the match, get to the wrong one and declarer will have to take a good view in the play or you lose. My partnership failed on both counts.

Smith: Pass. I have never abstained on a problem in this feature, but this is close. I simply fail to understand the attraction of pre-empting when it is partner who has opened the bidding. Pre-empts make the player with the good hand guess, which is exactly what we have to do here. Sure, this method allows us to play 3♣ rather than 1NT when opener has a weak no-trump, but it means that we have no idea where to go when partner is stronger than that and we waste what is a very useful bid when responder has a

good hand with clubs and hearts or solid clubs. Call me old-fashioned, but weak jump shifts are just another stupid American idea to go along with Flannery, Smolen, Cappelletti and Drury. Here, anything from 3♣, 3♥, 3NT, 4♥ or 5♣ could be the right contract. I guess 3♣.

While I agree that these invitational jumps do pre-empt our own auction, they are not weak, they are just what it says on the tin – invitational – so around 10-11 HCP or so and a six-card suit. That is not to say that I like invitational jumps, though without them you can be a bit stuck when playing 2-over-1.

The rest of the panel all bid on.

Teramoto: 3♦. It shows suit or stopper and is GF. I would like to get preference to 3♥, then bid 4♥. Also, if partner continues with 3♠, I will bid 3NT by the better side. I understand that 3♣ response should not have four cards in spades, of course.

That could work in getting heart preference, but maybe it has its dangers?

Apteker: 3♥. Should be natural and forcing. The alternative to ensure no mishap of partner passing is to bid 3♦ allowing responder to show the delayed doubleton support while still keeping 3NT in the picture. The negative to this bid is that one wants to be declarer to protect the diamond holding and it is also possible, although unlikely, that responder has four or more diamonds and raises beyond 3NT.

Yes, a diamond raise would give us a serious problem and is far from an impossibility.

Leufkens: 3♥. Anything should be forcing, as you would pass with any minimum (I hope). As I want to keep both 4♥ and 3NT in the picture,

this is most flexible. Partner can bid 3♠ if he doesn't like hearts but can't bid 3NT himself. 3♦ is risky, as partner will bid 3NT with a spade stopper (even with two hearts) and the diamond lead will be through our King.

Green: 3♥. For me 3♥ is clearly forcing here as partner has promised a decent suit as well as invitational values and therefore we don't just correct because we have a singleton club. This will allow partner to raise with a doubleton heart or angle towards 3NT.

But not everyone is convinced that 3♥ is forcing.

Rigal: 3♠. Enough to drive to game and while partner may be endplayed to bid 3NT with an unsuitable hand how likely are we to make nine tricks if he has nothing in diamonds? Very unlikely. PS, please let us know if 3♥ by me would be forcing.

Love to, but...

Alder: 3♥. Even though pass could be the winner, it seems too cautious, especially vulnerable at IMPs. If partner passes, he will probably be right – misfits are miserable. If partner assumes my bid is forcing (understandable), maybe we will survive.

Cannell: 3♥. I would think this bid has invitational overtones. Otherwise, I would simply pass Three Clubs.

It may make constructive bidding easier if 3♥ is agreed as forcing, but it would be more than flesh and blood could stand to pass with short clubs and six solid hearts for most people.

Bird: 3♥. Partner shows around 9+ to 11. It might be right to pass, of course, but that could be IMPs down the drain when he has a doubleton heart. It's a mistake to automatically picture a

useless collection based on ♣KQJxxx(x). Playing two-over-one will force him into this sequence on many hands that would be much more helpful to me.

David is exactly right – if you play this method you have to bid 3♣ on hands with only moderate club suits and therefore good cards outside clubs.

Brock: 3NT. Maybe 4♥ will be better but how can I tell? I could bid 3♠ but that might just pinpoint the lead.

Stabell: 3NT. I think we resolved (in May) that 3♣ should be 9-11 or thereabout, so I can't leave partner there. 4♥ could be better than 3NT, but I risk wrong-siding 3NT if I try for that with 3♠ or 3♦.

Robson: 3NT. I'm afraid, vulnerable at Teams, the odds probably favour this punt. I presume partner will rarely have ♥xx and never ♥Kx.

I don't see how we can restrict the use of these bids to hands with a singleton or void in partner's suit. What are we supposed to do with ♣KQJxxx and an outside ace with a doubleton heart?

Sime: 3♠. Which is the better game; 3NT or Four Hearts? Or perhaps Five Clubs? Or even Four Spades? I haven't a clue, so maybe partner can help.

Byrne: 3♠. Obvious to bid on and the choice is between 3♥ and 3♠. I think I am implying 6/4 although 5-4-2-2 with no diamond stopper is possible I suppose. If partner bids 3NT I will pass, since something like ♠Jx ♥xx ♦Q10x ♣AKJxxx (not unlikely) will mean we are in the better game. The 3rd and 4th spades will be liabilities in a heart contract but assets in no trumps, since they will stop the opponents leading or cashing the suit.



Andrew Robson

And finally, not for the first time in his career as a panellist, Tommy is on his own with:

Sandsmark: 4♥. It will probably be tempting for a number of experts to land in 3NT, but there is no evidence that indicates any fit anywhere, and with a diamond lead, 3NT may be too risky. I prefer to play game in my long suit, and since the contract will be in my hand, I am well prepared for any likely lead in diamonds or spades.

4♥ certainly has the merit of getting the lead round to our tenaces, and in a situation where not everyone is confident what to expect from partner or how to proceed, it does have the merit of simplicity.

In real life, I bid 3♠ and found partner with:

♠ 1086
♥ 7
♦ 63
♣ AKQ10865

He bid the inevitable 5♣ and, of course, 3NT by me was where we needed to be. I could have bid 3NT over 3♣, but on another day the 3♣ bid would have been made on a weaker club suit with more useful outside honours for a different game.

I'd bid 3♥ if I were sure it was forcing, but otherwise it has to be between 3♠ and 3NT for me.

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	
Bid	Votes	Marks
4♣	8	10
4♠	5	8
5♦	1	6
Pass	1	2

Stabell: Pass. The reflex bid is 4♠, but can partner really be 6-5 on this bidding? I think 5-5 with good diamonds and weak spades is much more likely, and 3♠ is probably the limit opposite:

♠ 10xxxx
♥ x
♦ AKQxx
♣ xx

I have the utmost respect for Leif-Erik, but this is not a style I can live with. For me, there should be no argument about what partner has shown — he is at least six-five, as he would have started with 1♠ had he been five-five, and would not have rebid spades holding fewer than five. Which means that the hand is simply a matter of hand-evaluation. The rest of the panel appear to agree, though the evaluation from one to the next.

Teramoto: 4♠. I trust that partner has 5-6.

Leufkens: 4♠. I was a little weak for 2♣, but the way it has developed I can hardly do less than raise. I expect partner to have 6-5 with weak spades. Something like ♠Jxxxx ♥x ♦AKxxxx ♣x. By the way, I assume 2♠ was forcing for one round. So, can he also have ♠KQxx ♥x ♦AKJxx ♣Qxx? I assume he would double after 3♥.

I agree that 2♠ was F1, and also that the second example hand would double.

Rigal: 4♠. I'm not looking for anything higher when partner could still have a singleton heart and could have jumped to 4♠. I suspect game is more likely to be in jeopardy than slam to have play and while we might be in a 4-3 fit partner won't sit for it if we are. He knows we have three spades.

Brock: 4♠. It looks as if all I have is working overtime.

Smith: 4♠. Partner should be 5-1-6-1 or 5-0-6-2, so the only question seems to be whether I am worth a 4♣ cue-bid or not. With the ♣K often going to waste and the chance of a diamond

ruff fairly high, I just raise to game.

Cannell: 4♠. Partner should have five spades and six-plus diamonds for the auction. I hope ten tricks will be easier than eleven tricks in Five Diamonds. I am a little worried that heart taps may prove unwieldy if spades break 4-1, but there is no reason to expect that since South may have used a Negative Double on some hands. Though, North could hold 4=4=1=4 or the like.

There is a way to avoid both a diamond ruff, as feared by Marc, and a force, as feared by Drew:

Alder: 5♦. Partner seems to be 5=0=6=2, and diamonds will stand the tap better. If I were stronger (king-to-four diamonds and the ace of clubs), I would make a 4♥ Bluhmer bid.



Ben Green

I have no idea what a Bluhmer bid might be.

The rest of the panel feel that they are too good to merely bid game.

Robson: 4♣. Jeez — I suddenly have a mousse. This is my first of at least two moves to convey the mousse-like nature of my hand.

Apteker: 4♣. Seems like partner has 6-5 shape otherwise might have taken a different action at third turn. My hand has gone up enormously especially if partner is 5-0-6-2. I would have bid over 3♥ given all my working cards and fourth diamond but I now definitely need to convey that my hand has improved in light of the bidding on my way to accepting game.

Sime: 4♣. This looks closer to a slam try than the three-level sell out on the last round. I will make my slam try belatedly. And accept if partner comes back with Four Hearts.

Green: 4♣. I have a big hand now, with all my values working we might even make a slam. Could partner not have ♠AJ10xx ♥— ♦AKxxxx ♣xx or ♠AKxxx ♥— ♦Axxxx ♣xx? I know partner didn't bid 3♠ over 2♥ but maybe that would show slightly better spades than in my first example (one to ask Eric)?

Where is Eric when you need him?

Bird: 4♣. If partner has a void heart, we might have a slam on. I don't see how this can be wrong, since I limited my hand with the previous pass.

Byrne: 4♣. Partner appears to be 5-0-6-2 in which case happy days are here to stay. As little as ♠KJxxx ♥— ♦AKxxxx ♣xx gives us a decent slam. 4♣ might be taken as choice of games if so that's perfect, if partner instead issues a slam try I shall accept one. Incidentally, why on earth

did I pass 3♥? I have an extra diamond, which passing surely denies.

Sandsmark: 4♣. In this setting my hand grows through the roof! I just have to cue-bid to show partner that a slam may be possible and available. It may even be a very good 7♦/♠ if partner holds:

♠AKJ64
♥—
♦AK7543
♣53

If you are a coward and only bid 4♠ or 5♦, I'm afraid you will deserve all the negative IMPs you can get!

OK, you can put me with the cue-bidders, but I do think that Tommy's example might have jumped to 3♠ at its second turn. If not, then what DO we need to make the bid?

Partner held:

♠ KJ1062
♥ —
♦ AKJ754
♣ J5

PROBLEM 4

IMPs. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ A852
♥ AK1082
♦ A5
♣ Q6

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♣
1♥	Pass	2♦*	2♠
?			
2♦	Constructive, NF		

Bid	Votes	Marks
Double	9	10
3♠	3	7
3♣	1	5
3NT	1	3
3♦	1	2

There was a clear majority for double, though not everyone was clear as to its meaning:

Byrne: Double. I am not sure what this means but it seems the best way to wend the auction to 3NT. I hope partner will have KQJxxx and something in clubs (10xxx is enough!) which gives us nine cashers. Double here is extras without a big fit, which seems a perfect description of my hand. I am reluctant to bid 2NT since that implies a club stopper and I have too many points really.

Robson: Double. Not 100% sure what this means but it seems a decent call at this juncture to show a good hand.

Teramoto: Double. It shows a good hand usually without a diamond fit. This is not Penalty but partner can Pass. If the bidding goes Double – 3♣ – Pass – Pass, I will bid 3♦.

Rigal: Double. Let's flush them out to 3♣ and hope partner can double. If he can't we can bid 3♦.

Does this mean that for Barry double shows spades, or he is just assuming club preference from North?

Cannell: Double. Seems to be a 50-point deck! This double should show values and be punitive in nature. I hope partner does the right thing – whatever that is.

So Drew considers double to be interested in taking a penalty.

Apteker: Double. I need to do something given my extra values and our side owning a significant majority of the HCP's. I realise that opponents don't bid frivolously VUL so I expect at least 10 black cards, possibly 11, in South's hand and the possibility of either 2♠ or 3♣ making. If North preferences to 3♣ and partner does not double, I will then bid 3♦. The alternatives to doubling are the misguided 3♦ underbid or 3♠ showing spade values angling for 3NT but, given that we both lack primary support for each other's suit, I do not want to miss out on the possibility of catching the opponents.

Sime: Double. A rare opportunity to use the DSI double. Good hand, no clear direction, and a notional partner who is notionally capable of Doing Something Intelligent

Brock: Double. Presumably a general competitive noise. If West bids 3♣ (likely) I will bid 3♦ next time.

Green: Double. I have what looks like a game force but I don't know which game to play in so I'll double to ask partner to describe (not penalty for me). A cue would set diamonds I think so if I double I'm denying good support for partner.

Yes, if double is the way forward on good hands without genuine diamond support, then a cue-bid could indeed be played as promising support. Or maybe a cue-bid should be a NT probe?

Smith: 3♠. This should show a spade stop and ask for a club stop for no trumps. With South having shown at least five clubs, ♠xxx ♥x ♦KQJxxx ♣xxx is not quite enough.

Bird: 3♠. I am good in support of partner's long diamond suit. There's no point in keeping this

a secret, is there?

Leufkens: 3♠. Asking for a club stopper. Double makes it more complicated.

Sandsmark: 3♣. I must show strength and invite to 3NT. If partner says 3NT, That's OK with me. If he bids 3♦, I will say 3♥ to show my length and I will raise his possible 3♥ to game. Or, we can just bid 3NT, which is by far and away the most likely game, and hope that they don't cash out the clubs. This would not have worked at the table, and I would prefer to see North fail to show club preference before I took this gamble.

Stabell: 3NT. Hamman's rule. With no quick entry, South will duck the first club, won't he? Or – more likely – sacrifice in 4♣, which I will leave to partner.



Phillip Alder

And, finally, Phillip seems to me to be underbidding quite significantly, even allowing for the fact that the ♣Q may prove to be wastepaper. Would not we bid 3♦ with almost any hand with genuine diamond support, even with far fewer high cards, just to compete?

Alder: 3♦. I hope partner knows what to do next.

Partner held:

♠ K97
♥ 73
♦ KQ9874
♣ 93

3♦ was the limit, with the red suits both breaking badly, while the opposition could make 3♣. You can put me with the doublers.

PROBLEM 5

IMPs. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ A93
♥ 932
♦ A10
♣ AK1093

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
4♣	7	10
4♦	4	9
3♥	2	6
3♦	1	5
4♥	1	2

We have three low in partner's major, which is nothing about which to get excited, but fantastic

support for his second suit and great controls. So, what to do?

Some support hearts:

Sime: 3♥. At present we are only forcing to game, and Four Hearts may be safer than Five Clubs. If partner makes a noise en route, I will attempt to revert to clubs.

Teramoto: 3♥. Shows support with a non-minimum. A jump to 4♥ should be a bad hand. Also, I would like to use RKCB for Hearts, not for Clubs.

Cannell: 4♥. My hand grew and grew. I believe that Three Diamonds or Three Spades would accept clubs and deny a third heart here. If we had an agreement that accepts both of partner's suits I would do that.

Now there is a surprise, because clearly Drew doesn't believe that 3♥ would be forcing. I'm sure there must be someone who plays that way in the UK, but I can't think who that might be – everyone plays 3♥ as forcing and more encouraging than a jump to 4♥. Obviously, this makes slam bidding much easier.

Alder: 4♣. In my book, this is easy. Four Clubs shows primary support and three hearts. If partner is just trying to find the right game, he can sign off in 4♥. But if he is thinking about a slam, knowing about the double fit should help.

But three low is not exactly a fit in the side-suit is it – at least not for slam purposes, when you might rather have a doubleton?

Barry has a different agreement to show the double fit:

Rigal: 4♦ shows 3-4(5) in partner's suits and lets him decide whether he has slam interest. This is a conventional agreement I've had for 35+ years.

Leufkens: 4♣. Hopefully a double fit as I pass 3NT. I assume 3♦ would indicate a club fit.

Brock: 4♣. People usually have methods for showing fits in both suits, don't they? I can bid 4♣ which promises three hearts. Without such methods I would still bid 4♣ as my hand looks good for slam.

Yes it does, and that seriously excites some panel members.

Robson: 4♣. Wow, you bid THREE CLUBS, partner?

Apteker: 4♣. I want to get across unambiguously my strong support and interest in exploring slam. If I prefer 3♥, partner may merely raise to 4♥ with hands that are suitable for slam exploration e.g. ♠x ♥AKQxx ♦xx ♣xxxxx. Slam in clubs will probably also be better than 6♥.

Bird: 4♣. This is clearer than a nebulous 3♦ or 3♠. I show good club support by going past 3NT. Also, as I play it, partner has shown interest in a high club contract by even bidding the suit. If he merely wanted me to choose between 3NT and 4♥, he would rebid 3NT.

Byrne: 4♣. If not playing these fancy double agreement things then a slight risk that partner won't know I have three hearts, but in my view partner should only introduce clubs if he is either making a slam try or has a shapely hand with some serious doubt about 3NT (i.e. a singleton). My hand has grown in power and value and I had better show the fit.

I agree. Partner should not introduce clubs unless willing to play in a club contract. If we cannot make 5♣ when I hold this hand then something is wrong.

Green: 4♦. I would like this to be a cue-bid agreeing both clubs and hearts but I suspect it just shows club support. Since my support is so prime I think it's worth bypassing hearts for now, opposite as little as x AKQxx xx xxxxx the grand slam in clubs is reasonable. If I start with 3♥ is partner ever making a slam try with that?

We do not have any special agreement so far as I am aware, so 4♣/♦ both just agree clubs. Assuming the lack of any agreement, I think 4♦ is spot on – we can't afford to bid 3♠ as, for me, that would be natural.

Smith: 4♦. I started by raising to 4♣, but it costs nothing to show my diamond control at the same time. I bid 4♠ over 4♥ and hope partner can Blackwood.

But now another surprise:

Stabell: 4♦. I presume that 3♣ is not necessarily GF, so I can't temporise with 3♥ or 4♣. I hope that this shows a good hand with clubs, since I have other options with hearts (an initial break of the transfer or 3♦/♠ followed by 4♥). Can I pass 4♥ from partner now, or would that be a cue with clubs? I hope I can pass, since partner could be as weak as

♠ xx
♥ KQJxx
♦ xx
♣ QJxx

4♥ would be the place to play opposite that example, but not all my partners would bid clubs with that hand. For me, 4♥ now would be a cue-bid, with the partnership committed to clubs – I have shown VERY good support – and we certainly need to be able to cue-bid in the key side-suit.

Sandsmark: 3♦. 3♣ is invitational and should be an at least three-card suit. And this suits me well, so I go for game even with my minimum opening bid. I start with a Cue in diamonds, and over partner's 3♥ I say 3♠ (new Cue). Even with only an invitational hand with partner, there might be a heart slam to catch:

♠ 4
♥ AKJ654
♦ 53
♣ Q542

It now depends upon partner. If he bids weakly, I only go for the game. If he Cue-bids, I will investigate closer.

3♣ shows four-plus clubs, never three cards, for me. However, I don't have a problem with 3♦ followed by 3♠ being club slam tries. But I'm a 4♦ bidder, whether it means Barry's double fit agreement or is just a cue-bid for clubs.

It isn't easy to score a problem on which some panellists have unexpected agreements. I can live with 4♣/♦ showing the double fit, but I really detest the idea that 3♣ is not GF and of jumping to 4♥ with this hand merely to assure that we get to game. So, please forgive me, Drew, for your 2 points.

Partner held:

♠ Q2
♥ AKQ104
♦ 43
♣ QJ72

And slam was making in either hearts or clubs – 6♣ being the superior contract, of course.

PROBLEM 6

IMPs. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ —
♥ AK32
♦ K2
♣ AKJ10862

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

2♣ Constructive spade raise

Bid	Votes	Marks
2♥	8	10
2♠	3	7
Double	2	7
4♣	1	5
3♣	1	3

Introduce the hearts, concentrate on the powerful club suit, or double?

Hearts say:

Teramoto: 2♥. Shows Hearts, and later I will bid more. I expect 2♥ will not go All Pass.

Robson: 2♥. Shows an unbalanced hand with long clubs. I may try to jump in spades at some point.

Sime: 2♥. In case partner has four hearts and one club, which is all that we need for a playable Four Hearts.

Cannell: 2♥. A natural reverse in preparation for the ensuing competitive auction.

Bird: 2♥. I intend to rebid strongly in clubs, even over their 4♠. No immediate rebid of the club suit seems remotely accurate

Alder: 2♥. Then more clubs.

Brock: 2♥. Preparatory to bidding a large

number of clubs.

Apteker: 2♥. As the opponents are forced to 2♠, this cannot be passed out so I may as well use the space intending to bid 5♣ next time. Opposite Qxxxx in hearts and nothing else, 6♥ should make.

That's right – we don't need to worry about being passed out when the opposition have committed to at least 2♠.

Rigal: 2♠. Should be strong 1/2 suited and I plan to do more even over 4♠.

Stabell: 2♠. Strong take-out of spades. Will probably have to press on with 5♣ if North jumps to 4♠ and partner passes.

Yes, I agree – 2♠ is a strong take-out. Is it better than a natural 2♥ bid? I'm not sure.

Green: 2♠. I disagree with 1♣ would have opened 2♣ instead, can you imagine partner passing 1♣ with ♠xxxxx ♥xx ♦QJx ♣xxx? 'Sorry partner I didn't realise we were making a slam when I passed 1♣'. I think the auction 2♣ – 2♦ – 3♣ – 3♦ (3♣ being Staymanic) – 3♥ shows the hand quite nicely. If one held the same hand with the minors reversed then there is more of a case to open 1♦ as there is less room after opening 2♣. Anyway, rant over. Having opened my game-forcing hand with 1♣ I now need to make a forcing bid as game could easily be cold. So I'll bid 2♠, I don't see what choice I have. As a side point a lot of people seem to play that a double of 2♣ here shows a hand that wants to compete in clubs. I strongly feel that double is better employed as take-out of the suit that has been bid and raised.

Partner might pass with your example slam hand, but how likely is it that both opponents will

also pass when they have half the deck and only three clubs between them?

There are a couple of votes for just rebidding clubs:

Sandsmark: 3♣. I am planning to bid on to game here, but I don't want partner to get the wrong impression of my hand. My bid is probably the only one of its kind, and it is admittedly a little bit risky, but it is kind of cunning! I have been out on a winter's day before, and I feel confident that the enemy will bid up to 3♠. And if so, I will bid 4♥, and have shown a hand in which the clubs are considerably longer than the hearts. By bidding this hand cleverly I think partner will know what to do when it is his turn to bid!

Well, you probably will not be left to play in 3♣, but it is not impossible.

Smith: 4♣. I would bid 3♣ without the A-K of hearts, so that doesn't seem right. I could just bid 5♣, but partner rates to have some spade length and perhaps he has enough to want to defend, so I jump to 4♣ intending to double 4♠ if that's what happens next. Second choice, a Three Spade auto-splinter, but I don't want to stop them bidding Four Spades.

Wow! A 1♣ opening followed by a GF auto-splinter. You'd don't see many of that combination.

Byrne: Double. I better see what's going on before I leap back into the fray. I am never sure on these auctions if partner has five trumps or if he has the right balanced two-count to give me a lay down slam (♠xxxx ♥xx ♦Qxx ♣xxxx). I can't guess how many clubs to bid so I had better indicate a decent hand (take out of spade I normally play) and see what happens.

Leufkens: Double. Usually, I'm a blaster. So, for example, 5♣ on this hand. But chances are they let me play it anyway, so why not listen to what's going to happen and see whether I can involve partner. For example if he's got QJ10x in spades?

So, double rather than 2♠ as the take-out bid, and make a take-out bid rather than describe by bidding 2♥. OK. I must admit that I'd prefer to show my hearts, which also shows a good hand, after all, but double should be OK.

Partner held:

♠ Q8643
♥ 75
♦ J1073
♣ 97

You can make 5♣, but may not do so as you have to play for ♣Qxx and ♦A onside.



Barry Rigal

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♠		

Bid	Votes	Marks
5♥	8	10
5♣	2	6
5♦	2	6
4NT	1	5
5♠	1	5
6♥	1	4

Nobody is willing to settle for 4♠, with half the panel opting for the heart cue-bid:

Teramoto: 5♥. Cue-bid and slam try. I will bid 6♠ anyway.

The rest, however, are willing to trust partner if 5♥ gets 5♠ in reply and pass.

Leufkens: 5♥. I'm too good to bid 4♠, so let's see where this is going, at the same time indicating my void.

Rigal: 5♥. Focuses on key suit for partner to evaluate their hand. Not exclusion though I suppose it wouldn't be absurd to play that here.

Robson: 5♥ Must make some move and bidding Five of a Minor may convey concern about the other minor. If over 5♥, partner is looking at the ace-king of spades, I will be very disappointed

if partner signs off.

Sime: 5♥. It is inconceivable that I would have bid Five Hearts without both minors covered, so partner should work out that I have poor trumps.

Well, if you did have a problem in one minor, you would surely bid the other one to point to the need for a help elsewhere.

Brock: 5♥. In my view this shows a void and asks for general suitability. I could also bid 4♣ and over 4♠ bid 5♥, but I think this shows a stronger hand. I am a bit worried that he has only three trumps.

5♥ showing a void is very plausible. As for the sequence where we might have bid 4♣, as we tell exam candidates – 'read the question' – we can't bid 4♣ over 4♥.

Cannell: 5♥. I would love it if this was Exclusion RKCB. However, I imagine that it is a 'sweep' cue-bid slam try, i.e. showing controls in all three of the non-trump suits.

You are not the only one who would like 5♥ to be EKCB, but I doubt that it is.

Green: 5♥. This is a bit tricky as I have a great hand and would like to ask for key cards outside of hearts but I suspect 5♥ here would not ask for that, instead it probably just shows a void (a matter for a partnership to discuss). For those that say a 5♥ bid would deny a control in either minor, that's not possible on this auction. I do play that after a partnership has bypassed 4NT then 5NT is RKCB so that might be helpful over 5♥. Bidding 4NT would gamble on partner showing four key cards, as opposite three I would have to guess which aces partner holds. Maybe I should bid 5♠ but would that ask for good trumps or would it ask for a heart control?

Or would I start with a cue-bid with that? Lots of questions, not many answers. I'm going to drive to slam I think but since seven could be cold I need to co-operate and not simply bounce to six (which I am tempted to do).

I agree — it is impossible that we don't have either minor-suit controlled. And I like the idea of 5NT being RKCB where we bypassed 4NT.

If we are going to go to slam anyway, why not make it even clearer what we intend with our heart cue-bid by bidding 6♥?

Smith: 6♥. I was going to bid 6♠, but there seems no harm in confirming the heart void on the way. If partner has AK A in the black suits, he will surely realize he has enough to bid a grand. I don't see how starting with 5♣, 5♦ or 5♥ is going to get across quite how good my hand is.

Others are happy to start with a minor-suit cue-bid:

Apteker: 5♣. I have too much to not make a move and not enough to take over and drive to slam with RKCB. If partner bids 5♦ or 5♥, I will obviously follow that up with 5♠ but if partner bids 5♠ showing no wastage in hearts, I will raise to 6♠. I considered bidding 5♥ thinking that this must imply controls in the minor suits as well but you could have something like ♠AQJxxxx ♥Ax ♦Qx ♣xx.

Byrne: 5♣. I have a great hand with a wealth of controls and I want to try and bring my second suit into the game. This initially is a cue-bid but when I follow it up with 6♣ I hope it is an offer to play (any reason why partner can't have ♠Kxx ♥Kxxx ♦Qx ♣Axxx where 6♣ is cold and 6♠ almost no play?).

OK.

Alder: 5♦. Then a grand-slam try on the next round.

Bird: 5♦. I don't like to bid 5♣ when I know partner has no diamond control. I leave open the possibility of bidding 6♣ next time round.

Yes, that would be traditional cue-bidding sequence to show first-round diamond and second-round club control. Partner should probably infer first-round heart control for our sequence if he has signed off over 5♦.

Stabell: 5♠. Control in all suits but worry about spades. Not two heart losers – then I would just have kept on cue-bidding. With AK/A in the black suits, partner will hopefully try 6♣, and I will gamble out the grand slam.

Perfectly playable method, but some will surely think that 5♠ asks for a heart control – also a perfectly playable agreement. Which is better? Depends on your hand and therefore what you want to know. I can't tell you which will have the greater frequency.

Sandsmark: 4NT. OMG! You have a talent for finding difficult situations, Brian! All books say that you shouldn't go to Blackwood with a void, but if you don't, you will guess instead of feel what is the right contract. If he shows any aces, I will take it for granted that it is not the ♥A. It is difficult to start a Cue series here, since 4♠ will be for play, 5♦ will deny a club Cue and partner cannot have a diamond Cue. Maybe one should throw all consideration aside and just go straight into 6♣? That would surely save a lot of otherwise wasted brain power!

That could work, but it is a gamble, and would not be successful on the actual deal as partner

held:

♠ AJ1074
♥ A64
♦ QJ6
♣ 98

The spade was offside, as it rated to be. Put me in with the 5♥ cue-bidders.

PROBLEM 8

IMPs. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AQ9
♥ KJ97543
♦ Q3
♣ 7

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
2♥	10	10
3♥	3	6
2♠	1	3
4♥	1	3

A simple question, you would think – how many hearts to rebid?

Rigal: 2♥. What a wimp!! No idea whether to go high or low but this doesn't feel right for a simple spade raise despite the weak hearts and good spades. The seventh heart persuades me.

Smith: 2♥. Close to 2♠, but the seventh heart tips the balance for me. Yes, I am good for 2♥, but anything more would be a gross overstatement of either my hearts or my spade support.

Bird: 2♥. Anyone choosing to rebid 2♠ should

regard themselves very fortunate to receive a trademark award of 2 points. To rebid 3♥ is surely too flamboyant. I am entirely happy with my rebid of 2♥ – even if I end up displeased with the mark I get from the sometimes eccentric new director.

If you didn't make eccentric bids, the director would be less likely to displease you with the awards he makes you.

Byrne: 2♥. Years of bitter disappointment have led me to realise that when you bid 3♥ on these hands partner always bids 3NT and you just get to choose a minus score. If we survive this round we will be well placed for later, and if 2♥ is passed out it is only a non-vul game which is not life and death.

Stabell: 2♥. We might miss a game if everyone passes, but partner will expect a bit more than 12 HCP for a jump to 3♥. And I can't really support spades when my hand might easily be cut off in a spade contract. Hope to be able to bid 3♠ next time.

Sime: 2♥. No opposition bidding, so there is a good chance of being able to bid Three Spades on the next round.

Yes, there is affair chance that you will get that opportunity.

Apteker: 2♥. Not quite enough for 3♥.

Teramoto: 2♥. This hand may have Game opposite 7 to 9 points. But still, 3♥ is an overbid.

Green: 2♥. Of course I could raise spades and might miss a spade game in rebidding my hearts. But with a decent seven-card suit I would rather they be trumps and not be cut off after two rounds of clubs tap the dummy.

Alder: 2♥. As Al Roth liked to say, if I can just

get past this round. Three Hearts could box in partner.

A wise man, was Al, but there was a minority vote for the invitational jump to 3♥.

Leufkens: 3♥. Seventh heart and spade fit makes this the value bid I assume. Chances that we have to play in spades are remote, as partner needs a very strong hand if he does not need the heart suit.

Robson: 3♥. It's what the hand is now worth. The only problem is partner now bidding 3NT, but I'm pulling to 4♥.

Cannell: 3♥. I upgraded the great spade support and the seventh heart. Still, a close run thing for a Two Heart bid nonetheless.

And there was one vote for an even bigger jump:

Sandsmark: 4♥. Probably not perfect, but hopefully, my contribution to partner's suit will make the game attainable. Yes, I know I have a minimum opening, but the spade fit and the long heart suit makes it difficult to find any safe way into heaven. From time to time you just have to take a chance, and this is one of these times. If you jump to 3♥, you risk pass from partner, and if you support the spades, you risk playing on a 4-3 fit. Nothing is perfect here, and the only bid in which you are in any kind of control is a jump to 4♥.

Well, in old-fashioned Acol 4♥ would show a partial spade fit, but I don't think this hand is worth it.

Brock: 2♠. A difficult one. If there is a next time I will bid 4♥ and hope partner works out more or less what I have. Obviously either 2♥ or 2♠ is an underbid and we might miss game but we are non-vulnerable. I choose 2♠ rather than 2♥

for several reasons: (1) partner is usually more turned on by support of his suit than a rebid of mine; (2) it makes it easier for me to make a big jump (or maybe bid 4♥ over 3NT); and (3) to opponents are more likely to balance if I show them a fit auction, than a non-fit.

With six-three and these high cards I'd have sympathy with the spade raise, but if we survive this round I think it will be easier to get to spades after rebidding hearts, than back to heart after raising spades.

Partner held:

♠ K875

♥ AQ8

♦ K9

♣ A532

Six Hearts is cold, and on the actual deal so was 6♠, though one would like to think that we should be able to get back to hearts even if we raise spades now.

Alon Apteker has the top score this month, with 76 points out of a possible 80.

SET 21 – THE PANEL’S BIDS & MARKS



Alon Apteker

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Alon Apteker	South Africa	Pass	3♥	4♣	Dble	4♣	2♥	5♣	2♥	76
Andrew Robson	England	Pass	3NT	4♣	Dble	4♣	2♥	5♥	3♥	74
Iain Sime	Scotland	Pass	3♠	4♣	Dble	3♥	2♥	5♥	2♥	74
David Bird	England	Pass	3♥	4♣	3♠	4♣	2♥	5♦	2♥	73
Sally Brock	England	Pass	3NT	4♣	Dble	4♣	2♥	5♥	2♠	71
Ben Green	England	2♠	3♥	4♣	Dble	4♦	2♠	5♥	2♥	71
Barry Rigal	USA	1NT	3♠	4♠	Dble	4♦	2♠	5♥	2♥	70
Michael Byrne	England	1NT	3♠	4♣	Dble	4♣	Dble	5♣	2♥	69
Enri Leufkens	Netherlands	1NT	3♥	4♠	3♠	4♣	Dble	5♥	3♥	66
Phillip Alder	USA	Pass	3♥	5♦	3♦	4♣	2♥	5♦	2♥	64
Drew Cannell	Canada	1NT	3♥	4♠	Dble	4♥	2♥	5♥	3♥	64
Tadashi Teramoto	Japan	2♠	3♦	4♠	Dble	3♥	2♥	5♥	2♥	62
Marc Smith	England	Pass	Pass	4♠	3♠	4♦	4♣	6♥	2♥	55
Leif-Erik Stabell	Zimbabwe	Pass	3NT	Pass	3NT	4♦	2♠	5♠	2♥	54
Tommy Sandsmark	Norway	1NT	4♥	4♣	3♣	3♦	3♣	4NT	4♥	42



Master Point Bidding Battle Competition – Set 22

Open to All – Free Entry

PROBLEM 1

IMPs. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ QJ104
♥ QJ73
♦ KQ75
♣ Q

West	North	East	South
–	3♥	Double	Pass
?			

PROBLEM 2

IMPs. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ AK109765
♥ 83
♦ –
♣ K1094

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	1♦
?			

PROBLEM 3

IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ K10764
♥ 8
♦ 653
♣ A942

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
?			

PROBLEM 4

IMPs. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ A86
♥ Q754
♦ 973
♣ Q82

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♦	2♣
?			

PROBLEM 5

IMPs. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ K
♥ Q74
♦ AK
♣ QJ108654

West	North	East	South
–	2♠	Pass	3♥*
4♣	Pass	4♥	4♠
?			

3♥ Artificial game try in spades

PROBLEM 6

IMPs. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ KJ
♥ 8642
♦ A2
♣ A7543

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♦	2♣
?			

PROBLEM 7

IMPs. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ 10
♥ AK
♦ AK8
♣ KQ109653

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
?			

PROBLEM 8

IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ KJ
♥ KQ3
♦ AKQ874
♣ 86

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	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

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 West. E/W Vul.

♠ 943
♥ 87
♦ 104
♣ AQJ743

Hand 2. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ AQJ63
♥ A109
♦ 10
♣ KQ92

North overcalls 3♦ and South raises to 4♦

Hand 3. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ AKQ9753
♥ —
♦ Q102
♣ AK6

South opens 2♦ weak

Hand 4. Dealer East. None Vul

♠ AK865
♥ 854
♦ K2
♣ 962

North bids hearts at the cheapest level (5♥ if required)

Hand 5. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ 9
♥ A643
♦ AK108
♣ AJ102

North overcalls 1♠ and South jumps to 4♠

Hand 6. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ K9
♥ A987654
♦ QJ98
♣ —

Hand 7. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ A7
♥ AJ4
♦ AQ97654
♣ 4

North overcalls 1♠ and South raises to 2♠

Hand 8. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ K7
♥ K2
♦ A8742
♣ KQ65

North opens 4♠

MASTER POINT BIDDING BATTLE



Results – Set 19

There was one clear-cut winner this month: **Dudley Leigh** with 76 points. Behind him, we had a tie for second, with 71 points, between **Dominic Connolly**, **Girish Bijoor** and **Steve Handley**.

Rather than have a draw for fourth prize, the organizers have decided to award all three runners-up a prize.

Other Good Scores

69 *Mike Ralph, Peter Becker*

67 *Carles Acero, Mike Perkins*

65 *Rodney Lighton, Lars Erik Bergerud*

62 *Bazil Caygill, Alex Athanasiadis*

61 *Tony Burt*

60 *Martin Turner, Derek Markham, George Willett, Bill Linton*

The Yearly Standings:

In the year's standings, the following readers have scored 60 on average or more:

345 *Bill March*

341 *Dean Pokorny*

339 *Mark Bartusek*

336 *Mike Perkins*

332 *Alex Athanasiadis*

328 *Rodney Lighton*

323 *Mike Ralph*

318 *Bazil Caygill*

314 *Todd Holes*

304 *Colin Brown*

303 *David Barnes*

303 *Nigel Guthrie*

302 *Bill Linton*

300 *Martin Turner*

Comments on Bidding Battle Set 20

Brian Senior examines the responses of the readers and compares them against those of the panel.

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	Readers
Pass	7	10	10
4♠	4	6	0
3♠	3	7	11
3♦	2	5	10

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	Readers
Redouble	9	10	12
2♥	6	8	10
2♠	1	6	6
3♥	0	4	3

The only bid chosen by readers that was not also a panel selection is a jump to 3♥. I think this is well worth an award. Its downside is that it takes us to the three level when we might be able to buy the hand a level lower – I am assuming that getting to game is not a consideration given partner's pass over 1♠. Against that, 3♥ is very descriptive of our five-three shape and concentrated values. I prefer a lower-level bid, but 3♥ is OK, so award 4 points.

PROBLEM 3

Pairs. Dealer North. All Vul.

- ♠ AKQ10
- ♥ Q4
- ♦ Q9754
- ♣ 84

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	Pass	3♣
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
Pass	15	10	19
Double	1	3	3
3♦	0	2	8
3♠	0	2	1

I had already awarded points to the two calls chosen by readers but not by any of the panel. Honestly, though 3♦ worked well at the table, it is a pretty poor call on such a weak suit, vulnerable and facing a passed partner. Usually, we only want to be involved in this auction if partner is

short enough in clubs to be able to act when 3♣ comes around. I'm sure that the panel got it right so won't increase the award for 3♦ despite the significant reader vote in its favour.

PROBLEM 4

Pairs. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ A
♥ AK9
♦ A62
♣ KJ9654

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
2♦	16	10	22
4♥	0	3	1
3♣	0	2	5
3♥	0	2	0
3NT	0	2	0
2NT	0	2	3

We had a unanimous panel – something of a rarity. In the face of that, I can't award much to any other call. Three readers voted for 2NT. Honestly, it is no worse than a number of other calls to which I did give a modest award, so I'll add 2NT to the list of calls that score 2 points, but 2NT is too little, as well as misdescribing a hand containing a six-card suit, strong three-card support for partner, and a singleton in an unbid suit..

PROBLEM 5

Pairs. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ KJ
♥ AKQ86
♦ 2
♣ AQ954

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	3♦
Double	4♦	4♠	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
Pass	10	10	9
5NT	3	8	3
5♥	1	6	6
5♣	1	5	6
4NT	1	4	5
5♦	0	0	1
6♣	0	0	1

We have a single reader vote for a jump to 6♣. I don't believe that the bid shows this hand – more likely it is a big single-suiter (not that I've ever seen the combination of calls made in anger) – so I'm not inclined to give any award.

PROBLEM 6

Pairs. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ KJ976
♥ AK
♦ 5
♣ KQJ53

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
1♠	Pass	4♣*	Pass
?			
4♣	Splinter		

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
4NT	10	10	15
4♦	4	7	7
4♥	2	6	7
4♠	0	0	2

The idea behind splinter-bids is that they help partner to judge how well the hands fit together, how well our high cards are working together. It is true that on this hand we have a lot of stuff in clubs, but the suit has an internal

solidity once the ace is out of the way that means that the high cards are not really wasted. Two aces and the trump queen make slam basically lay-down, and partner can certainly hold those three cards for the splinter. If our only options were to commit to the five level or to sign off, I would have some sympathy with the notion that 5♠ could be too high and that therefore signing off in 4♠ could be the winning action, hence was worthy of an award. But that is not the case here. If we do not fancy the majority's committal 4NT we can always make a non-committal cue-bid and let partner tell us whether he likes his hand or not. 4♠ is hugely committal and completely unnecessary, so no award, I'm afraid. Yes, partner could hold:

♠ Qxxx
♥ QJxx
♦ KQJx
♣ x

but signing off in 4♠ is not the only way we can stop at the four-level, while it is the only way to miss a slam facing:

♠ AQxx
♥ Jxxx
♦ Axxx
♣ x

PROBLEM 7

Pairs. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ 6
♥ AQ732
♦ AKJ8
♣ Q52

	West	North	East	South
	–	–	–	1♥
	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦
	Pass	2♥	Pass	?
Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers	
Pass	12	10	15	
3♣	3	6	7	
2NT	1	4	6	
3♥	0	2	2	
Double	0	0	1	

We are not allowed to double partner's bid, however often we may be confident that it will fail, so I can safely dismiss that possibility with zero points. What about a raise to 3♥? A minority of the panel judged the hand to be worth a game invitation. Three Hearts does invite game, but it mis-describes the hand in that it greatly overstates the heart suit. Partner will frequently have only doubleton support – the majority of the time when playing a five-card major system, when many hands that would respond 1♠ playing Acol would instead have raised to 2♥ with three-card support. Our reraise to 3♥ should therefore be based on a suit that is prepared to be trumps facing a moderate doubleton. That is why either 2NT or 3♣ is a superior choice of invitation. I will award 2 points to 3♥ as a quarter of the panel did choose to invite game, and I also increase the award for 2NT to 4 points, just to keep the gap between it and 3♥.

PROBLEM 8

Pairs. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ KQJ642
♥ 6
♦ AK532
♣ K

	West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	1NT	Double
	?			

Bid	Votes	Marks	Readers
3♦	8	10	20
2♦	5	8	7
3♠	2	5	1
4♠	1	4	0
Redouble	0	2	3

OK, we have a good hand and it can be argued that any good hand could begin with a redouble to show its strength. But such a shapely hand will not be as easily described if we start with a non-descriptive call and find that the opposition jump to 4♥. We will then wish that we had introduced our diamonds while we had the chance as to commit to 5♦ could now be very unsuccessful. Simply because we do have a strong hand and redouble says that we have a strong hand, I will award 2 points, but I think it is a poor option.

EAST

Hands for the
September 2019 The uBid Auction Room

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Hand 1. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ AK85
♥ KQ93
♦ AKQ65
♣ —

Hand 2. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ K10
♥ KJ743
♦ A7
♣ AJ105

North overcalls 3♦ and South raises to 4♦

Hand 3. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ 62
♥ KJ9763
♦ A4
♣ Q109

South opens 2♦ weak

Hand 4. Dealer East. None Vul

♠ J9432
♥ —
♦ AJ103
♣ AQJ8

North bids hearts at the cheapest level (5♥ if required)

Hand 5. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ 65
♥ KQ9872
♦ QJ72
♣ 7

North overcalls 1♠ and South jumps to 4♠

Hand 6. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ A7
♥ K3
♦ K1073
♣ AK765

Hand 7. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ 108
♥ KQ1097
♦ K8
♣ KJ106

North overcalls 1♠ and South raises to 2sx

Hand 8. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ 10
♥ AQJ1087
♦ K1065
♣ AJ

North opens 4♠

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