

# Bidding in Bridge for Complete Beginners Lesson 4 Notes

## Basic Principles of Bidding in the Contested Auction.

So far, we have looked at how you can best bid your bridge hands whether they be balanced or distributional. And apart from meeting them in example hands from my club, the opponents have been politely silent. They merely watched you and your partner exchange bids and information to pick your way delicately to the best contract.

In real life your opponents are not like that. They feel they should have their slice of the action, and often some of your slice too. Even though you feel that they shouldn't have any of the action at all.

To diverge for a moment from our bidding theme. One could say, "All's fair in love, war and bridge." Well, it is, almost! Bridge players strive to maintain ethical principles. There's no cheating with special signals, foot tapping and so on. Your conventional bids, leads and signals have to be disclosed fully to the opponents, if they want to know.

Hesitations in bidding or play are an area where beginners may unintentionally transgress. If you hesitate to think, then pass or then play a small card it suggests to your partner (and the opponents) that you had something to think about. You were thinking of bidding, perhaps raising partner's suit or were wondering about playing a high card which you hold. This is "unauthorized information" for your partner – but not for the opponents. If your partner makes use of this, the Director may be summoned to sort out the problem.

If it happens too often your bridge reputation will become sullied. Something to watch. If you were just daydreaming – apologise and say so, then pass or play the small card.

Now back to the contested auction and the slices of action. In essence there are three cases to consider: -

- 1) You open with a pre-emptive bid
- 2) Your RHO opens the bidding. (*Occasionally it can be your LHO.*)
- 3) Partner opens the bidding and your right-hand opponent (RHO) rudely butts in.

Occasionally, it is your LHO opens or butts in and the next two seats pass, for simplicity, then we will keep our reactions the same as far as possible.

### 1) You Open Pre-emptively

As usual you pick up another weak hand as dealer and you know that the opponents will start bidding when you pass. You have only a few high cards but you do have a very long suit of 7 or 8 cards, let's say in hearts - ♥AK109532. You cannot open 1H you would mislead partner, nor 2H that's for a strong hand.

Then you remember the abused Shakespearean quote, "*Thrice is he armed whose cause is just, but four times he who gets his blow in fust.*" And you open 3H. This is a pre-emptive bid. It tells partner that your hand is weak, less, than 13 points, that you have a fair 7+card heart suit but the rest of your hand is almost worthless.

With this bid you have swept away nearly 3 levels of bidding that your opponents could have used to explore and find their best contract. You don't really expect to make 9 tricks but may do so with some help from partner. You've made life difficult for the opponents, if you go down, you hope the loss would be less than the score they might have made given space to find their best contract.

Disruption is the name of your game. Partner **must not** try to play in any other suit. You could hold ♥KQJ87532, which as trumps will win 6 tricks. But in any other denomination may not win a trick at all, if he has only a singleton or void in hearts. He can only raise your suit either to increase the disruption or, occasionally, in the hope of making game.

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The opponents know your pre-emptive bid shows a weak hand and that they may have some difficulty in finding their best contract and consequently may be able to double for penalties. When vulnerable against non-vulnerable, your pre-emptive bids should be more circumspect than when non-vulnerable.

### 2) The opponents open the bidding

You pick up and sort your cards, you decide your hand is good enough to open the bidding. However, your RHO inconsiderately opens. He might bid 1 of a suit or 1NT. You know that EW 2-level bids are strong and you wouldn't really want to be bidding over these.

#### i. Opponent Opens 1 of a Suit

Possible Action	Requirement
Overcall 1 or 2 of a Suit	Good 5+card suit
Overcall 1NT	16+ and stopper
Double	12+ for take-out to any other suit or 16+ and then bid own suit

Let's say your RHO opens 1D. As a beginner, you have three bids to describe your hand. You can i) Overcall in a suit, ii) Overcall with 1NT or iii) Double

- a) **Overcall in a suit:** This is your most common means of dealing with the RHO's audacity. RHO opens 1D and now an overcall of say, 1H, tells your partner you have a hand of around opening strength (12-15 points) and you have a good 5+card heart suit. If your side ends up defending you will be happy for partner to lead that suit.

With a stronger hand and suit (16-18) and 6+card suit you may make a jump overcall. 1D - 2H.

- b) **Overcall with 1NT:** This overcall shows a fairly balanced hand, 16-18 points and importantly better than a single stopper in opener's suit. Something like ♠AJ87 should provide a second stopper over RHO's 1D opening.

- c) **Double:** The fact that your opponent has opened gives you another very useful bid. Double which we have met as a bid to double penalties – its original purpose.

It is more efficient to use this bid for take-out. You have no long suit of your own to overcall, you don't have a stopper so can't bid 1NT but you have values in the other three suits. Now your double, effectively, asks partner to show his best suit.

Partner **must** bid and if he bids at the minimum level (1H, 1S or 2C) he makes no promise of any strength – he had to bid. You can only raise partner's suit with a fit and 16+points. If partner is stronger, 10+ he will jump a level to 2H, 2S or 3C. If partner responds with a no-trump bid, he will be showing good stoppers in opener's suit.

We'll swap you to the other seat for a moment. Your LHO opened 1D and partner doubled. For take-out, you must bid. There is one and only one exception to bidding your best suit. If you pass, you convert the double to a penalty one. You show you have a **very** good holding in trumps. You now expect partner to lead a trump and you will draw opener's trumps, so that for your partner's high cards in the side suits can win tricks.

This is extremely rare. If partner doubles for take-out, be very, very sure it is right to pass before you do. If you are wrong, it is costly and destroys partner's confidence. Don't **ever** pass because you have a very weak hand. Bid your best suit at the 1-level.

#### ii. Opponent Opens 1 No Trump

Possible Action	Requirement
Overcall 2 of a Suit	Good 6+card suit
Overcall 2NT	Not used
Double	16+ for penalty

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When your RHO opens 1NT for now, you have similar three bids available to describe your hand. You can i) Overcall in a suit, ii) Overcall with 2NT or iii) Double. In the next stage we'll look at "conventional" means of intervening over this opening.

- a) **Overcall in a suit:** Immediately you can see the problem, you have to overcall at the 2-level. This may put you in an exposed position. After the 1NT opening your LHO knows the combined point count for her side, and she knows too, that the opener has at least 2 cards in your suit. With a decent trump holding sitting over you she can double for penalties. Not the most comfortable position. Your 2-level overcall needs a good 6+card or solid 5-card suit.
- b) **Overcall with 2NT:** This is meaningless as a natural bid. Ignore.
- c) **Double:** Again, a clear and useful bid. (*To the extent that it will also be used in the next stage too.*) With a strong hand 16+ points, you know that your hand is stronger than opener's. Just check they are using a weak NT opening!

With your 16+point hand you reckon to win more tricks than the opener. And already she has contracted to win 7 tricks to your 6. Now a double for penalties makes sense. Note this is the opposite use of 'double' from that over a suit opening which is always for take-out.

With a fair share of the remaining points (*a maximum of 12*) partner will be happy to pass and play for the penalty score. Only with a very weak hand may he rescue to a 5+card suit.

If your LHO tries an escape into a suit, your partner can double for take-out. Or he can bid his own suit as a suggestion that your side may hold values for game and implying that he thinks the escape would succeed

While on the topic of penalty doubles it is worthwhile clearing the air as to which doubles are such. It's easiest to say a double of a suit contract is for take-out below game level and the double is made at the first opportunity. We put doubles of 1NT into the penalty basket and can add doubles of a suit at a second opportunity, doubles at game level, and sacrifice bids at slam level (*but not freely bid slams*).

### 2) Partner opens the bidding

Partner opens the bidding with 1C. And just as you are ready to respond 1D, your RHO bids 1H. That's your response disrupted. Time for a re-think.

#### i. Partner Opens 1 of a suit

RHO Bid	Action	Requirement
Suit Overcall	Raise	6+points and 4+fit
	New Suit	6+ponts at 1level, 10+ at 2-level
	NT	About 10+points and good stopper
	Double	About 10+points and other 2 suits
	Cue Bid	Good raise 10+ points
1NT Overcall	Raise	6+points and 4+fit
	New Suit	10+points and fair suit
	Double	Penalty so 10+
Double	Raise	6+points and 4+fit pre-emptive
	New Suit	Good suit
	1NT	10+ no fit, no good suit
	Redouble	10+ and looking for penalty

A first thought is that, as far as possible, we want to retain our bidding system as much as possible. But a response of 1D shows 6-9 points while bids at 2-level show 10+ points. If we decide to keep the 2-level responses more or less up to value. We will have to look for an alternative for our intended 1D response.

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A second thought is that a new bid has been presented and that is 'double'. If we assume overcaller has taken the risk of a penalty double into account, there may be little value in it, so, it will be better used for take-out. We'll come back to this shortly.

A third and more radical thought strikes you. Your RHO overcalled 1H promising a pretty good suit, so, if you bid 2H that is not going to be natural – you both can't have good heart suits! We call this a cue bid and can ascribe some agreed meaning to it.

It is worth noting our auction is only 2 bids old and on the above summary table we have a dozen possible responses. One of the fascinations and sometimes frustrations of bridge.

Let's check the bids available and what each might mean. We have 5 available bids. These are: - i) You can raise partner's suit to 2C, ii) You can bid your own suit 1S or 2D, iii) You can bid No-trump, 1NT or 2NT, iv) You can double and v) You can make a cue bid in the enemy suit – 2H. The scope for complications gets greater all the time.

**After your RHO makes a suit overcall** you have a variety of possible actions.

- a) **Raises:** When you have a fit for partner's suit there is little to prevent you making the same call that you would have done without intervention by your RHO. In fact, we'll see shortly the scope of these bids can be easily and usefully expanded.
- b) **Bid in new suit:** When you are intending a response in a new suit many of these calls can be made exactly as planned. Though, as we have seen, some will be disrupted – just what the overcall was intended to do. If you are weak 6-9 points you will not be able to bid your suit at the 2-level.
- c) **Bid No-trump:** With 6-9 points and no fit, you would normally respond 1NT simply to allow partner a second call. You hope that if he can re-bid a second suit you may have a better fit than for his first.

You have no need to 'keep the bidding open' as the overcall gives your partner a second chance to call. Now your 1NT response becomes a positive statement that you have fair values and a good stop in the overcall suit.

Ideally that stop should be better than a single stop. After RHO overcalls 1H then ♥KJ102 should provide 2 stops. Of course, you don't always get dealt the ideal. Not long ago my partner and I held the top 4 hearts, but unfortunately, they were split ♥AK and ♥QJ.

- d) **Double:** We have discussed briefly whether this should be for a penalty or take out. In terms of frequency, the latter will win. Basically, when you double the overcall, you will suggest values and interest in either of the unbid suits. You didn't raise so you don't have a fit, and you won't want to play in your opponent's suit. You have no clear bid and ask opener to choose one of the other suits if he has 4 cards in it. If he is unable to pick one, he will revert to his own suit.
- e) **Cue bid:** We have said there is a dearth of bids to deal with the variety of hands that can be dealt. It is a pity to waste any spare one that comes along. After RHO overcalls with 1H, you can use 2H as a cue bid. Your opponent has a good hearts suit, so there is no way you can have one too. The bid can be used to show a strong raise in partner's suit. This allows any direct raises of his suit to 3C or higher to be pre-emptive bids with a fit; while the cue bid of 2H indicates a full value raise to 3C or more.

**After your RHO makes 1NT overcall** you have a similar range of possible actions. We'll look at them again but only in detail where they are different. Your RHO now has a fairly strong hand and should have a trick or two in partner's suit. You may need to proceed with caution.

- a) **Raises:** As above but keep full values any top cards in the suit may be well placed.
- b) **Bid in new suit:** You can only bid at 2-level and your bid will be forcing.
- c) **Bid No-trump:** Again, meaningless in a natural sense

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d) **Double:** this is for penalties but only if you are strong enough at least 10-12 points.

**After your RHO doubles** you have a similar range of possible actions. The double will be for take-out but check if in any doubt. This means you do not need to rush into foolish action. Your RHO hand may have a fairly strong hand and his own suit or he have around a minimum opening and interest in playing in any of the other 3 suits.

With nothing useful to say just pass. Also, if you think your partner can make the contract comfortably, you will be content to score doubled overtricks – unless you are sure game will make and score better, just pass.

- a) **Raises:** As above but keep full values any top cards in the trump suit may be well placed.
- b) **Bid in new suit:** Bearing in mind that the double is possibly suggesting some interest in the suit, bid a good suit as natural and forcing.
- c) **Bid No-trump:** Again, you can keep your normal positive meaning to this bid.
- d) **Redouble:** A new bid becomes available. As we know it doubles the score or penalty. The obvious use is to confirm strength to opener. But, and rather strangely, it may best be used as a cry for help asking partner to pick any other suit. Make sure both you and your partner are on the same wavelength if you adopt this use here as any error could be very expensive.

### ii. Partner Opens 1NT

RHO Bid	Action	Requirement
Suit Overcall	Raise	10+ and stoppers
	New Suit	Natural
	Double	Penalty
Double	New Suit	Rescue to 5+card suit
	Pass	10+ expect to make
	Redouble	This can be for opener to rescue SOS <sup>1</sup>

Partner's 1NT is a limit bid and you have a fair picture of his hand. But so do your opponents! Nonetheless you are totally in charge of the auction.

**After your RHO makes a suit overcall** you are even relieved of the onus of trying to rescue with a weak hand. If you have nothing constructive to say you pass. All your suit bids or NT raises can be as normal but any in NT raise will guarantee stoppers in the overcall suit.

**After your RHO doubles** it is only enemy action that will cause you concern. This double will be for penalties' and we have already met its effect in an example hand. If you think partner has a chance of making the contract, just pass.

Your problems arise when you know 1NTX is doomed. Escape to any 5-card suit to play and cross fingers that you aren't doubled. If you don't have a 5-card suit, you either have to pass and let partner suffer or redouble (*SOS as d) above*) for partner to take out to his best suit. The snag with this is that partner may have 4-4-3-2 shape and end up in a poor fit with an opponent already swinging his sharpened axe.

### Examples of Competitive Auctions

I have selected some hands that were or might have been competitively bid in my local club. The hands are perfectly normal and if they do nothing more, they illustrate the variety of ideas of their worth that club players have. There was at least one hand that night where all agreed on the best action. Every single player passed; the board was passed out at every table. Most unusual.

<sup>1</sup> If you use this make sure it is agreed with partner

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I've tried to look at how the contracts work out for each side. Sometimes the play or defence is not simple. Do the best you can and don't worry if you don't see or understand all the suggested plays. I wouldn't either without looking at all four hands. *You may also find it useful to skim through the next section on 'defence' to get some idea of leads and signals.*

Again, you may find it useful to set out the hands with real cards to follow the play. If you keep the cards for each hand separate you can easily re-play the whole hand. Anyway, you will usually have to do it once for the contract for one side and then again in another contract for the other.

Either side can win a contested auction.

Dir: South		♠J95			
Vul: All		♥K43			
		♦AQ109			
		♣QJ10			
♠A43		W North E		♠108	
♥AJ1062		e 7 a		♥Q987	
♦8		s s		♦KJ542	
♣A652		t South t		♣84	
				♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N	
13		♠KQ762		N 1 - - 2 -	
13		♥5		S 1 - - 2 -	
6		♦763		E - 1 2 - -	
8		♣K973		W - 1 3 - -	

South passes and West opens 1H with 13 HCPs and a 5-card suit. North has opening values and will want to compete. He has no 5-card suit to overcall and he is not strong enough to bid 1NT. His choice is between pass and double. It normally pays to get into the auction, so double. East with a fit and 8 points (*count support*) will raise to 2H.

South has 8 points and a 5-card major should get into the action too. 2S is his bid. This gives West a problem but his overcall was on minimum values, so he passes. East has the key decision pass or bid 3H.

Now to look at the play. West might toss-up as to whether to lead ♥A or ♦8. If he leads ♥A he can then switch to ♦8. If declarer tries finessing ♦Q it loses and then ♦2 gains a ruff for West. Declarer loses S-1, H-1, D-2 and C-1.

Does ♦8 smack of a singleton? Declarer can win ♦A in dummy and lead ♠J West can win but she has no route to East's hand. South can draw trumps set up 3 clubs and when a second diamond is played West shows out and ♦9 loses to ♦J. East can cash her ♦K but then has to play either ♦4 to ♦Q or lead towards ♥K. And declarer wins S-4, C-3 and either D-2 or D-1 and H-1.

If East decides to bid 3H. North too has a choice of leads, ♣Q (*top of sequence*) or a spade (*partner's suit*). So, he chooses ♠5. West may duck and win the second round. Whatever, she can arrange to win S-1, H-4, D-1 as ♦K is favourably placed in relation to ♦A, C-1 and two ruffs (*spade and club*) in dummy. Play though both lines to check NS can make 8 tricks in 2S and EW 9 tricks with West in 3H. These contracts score 110 for NS or 140 for EW a difference of 250. Over the night's play small gains like these can make a big difference – especially with the normal match point scoring system (*later*).

*In the club most EW pairs played in 2H, some in 2H or the over-optimistic in 4H. Most made 9 tricks, others 7. 2S was also played but went 1 down.*

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		♠KJ742	
Dir: West		♥108	
Vul: None		♦K874	
		♣105	
♠85	W	North	E
♥AJ9	e	8	a
♦AQ95	s		s
♣Q764	t	South	t
		♠AQ1063	♣♦♥♠ N
7		♥Q32	N - - - 3-
13	7	♦J	S - - - 3-
13		♣KJ98	E 2 3 3 - 1
			W 2 3 3 - 1

West with 13HCPs will open 1NT, North passes and East may pass or opt to take out to 2H. The singleton spade could make 2H more the likely call.

Either way South has the critical decision, to pass or bid 2S.

Note 'double' is not feasible to just show values, as a response of 3D would mean a rebid of 3S, regardless of whether North has none or 4.

If South bids 2S NS are likely to win the auction at 3S. In hearts we'll see the limit can be 9 tricks on tight defence.

Against 2H South may decide to attack with ♦J. If declarer finesses ♦Q, she loses and South obtains a ruff. And worse still, a spade to ♠K would gain a second ruff! Then NS win S-1, H-2 (*the ruffs*), D-1 and C-1 holding declarer to 8 tricks. But.....

Instead of finessing, declarer rises with ♦A, crosses to ♥K and now she can finesse ♥J which wins. Then ♥A clears the suit and the ♦K is conceded and with the favourably placed ♣Q. Declare should lose just S-1, D-1 and C-1. This line wins 10 tricks.

A third line is interesting too. South leads ♠A and continues the suit, forcing East to ruff. Declarer can play the trumps (*as above*) without loss. Now when ♦K is lost, a further spade takes declarer's last trump restricting her to H-5, D-3 and C-1.

The other contract is 3S by South and it is fairly obvious that the losers are H-2, D-1 and C-1. 9 tricks. This is the last highest making contract and scores 140. EW might sacrifice in 4H and make 9 tricks losing 50 (or 100 if doubled). [Note a double of a contract at game level will be for penalties.]

Note how these scores can influence the bidding, EW can score +140 in 3H, NS can make the same score in 3S and EW can bid 4H for -50 or -100. Again, these scores, relatively minor, can give top or bottom scores in a club situation.

*At the table most NS pairs played in 3S making 9 tricks others in 2S. The ambitious in 4S going down 1.*

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Dlr: South		♠75			
Vul: N/S		♥98532			
		♦AQJ			
		♣543			
♠AJ9		W North E	♠Q42		
♥AKJ764		e 15 a	♥10		
♦10872		s s	♦653		
♣--		t South t	♣KQ10762		
				♣♦♥♠N	
	7	♠K10863		N	- - - 1-
	13 7	♥Q		S	- - - 1-
	13	♦K94		E	1 1 1 - 1
		♣AJ98		W	1 1 1 - -

On this hand, coincidentally, the HCP distribution is the same on hand 8 (*above*). South has a doubtful count of 14, his ♥Q, may be worthless. He may opt to open 1S.

West's hand has the same HCP count but has far greater playing strength, perhaps a reasonable chance of 6 tricks on its own. She will overcall 2H.

North and East seem to have missed out in the invitations to the parties. East has to trust that her partner's overcall is sound - not liking 2H is not a reason to bid 3C.

It looks as if North leading ♠7 (*top of doubleton in partner's suit*) will cost a trick as West lets it run to ♠AJ9. But with no entry to the table, she can only win two. Declarer cashes ♥A and fells ♥Q but discovers 2 losers in the suit. However, the diamonds come to the rescue and with the 3-3 split the long diamond provides a 7<sup>th</sup> trick. Note that NS can't play on clubs without establishing a trick in dummy. 1 down for -50 is better than NS making 1S for +110.

Though South's spade suit is ragged to say the least, and he will lose 3 trumps. He can win S-2, D-3 and C-2. East is likely to lead ♥A and then can count the whole suit and switch to a diamond as safe. Once the trumps are out South can play ♣8 East wins but then South will win 2 tricks in the suit. This may not be too easy to find and South may go down in club play. Any attempt to cash ♣A early, will be costly as West can ruff. A very awkward contract to play or defend.

*In club play most EW pairs reached 3H, some 2H and an odd 3NT (East bid clubs) which only made 7 tricks. No NS pair called 2S and the contract is lucky to make.*



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Dir: West Vul: E/W		♠QJ74 ♥KQ74 ♦J94 ♣A5												
♠A109 ♥A9 ♦Q1072 ♣9632	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>North</td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e</td> <td>16</td> <td>a</td> </tr> <tr> <td>s</td> <td></td> <td>s</td> </tr> <tr> <td>t</td> <td>South</td> <td>t</td> </tr> </table>	W	North	E	e	16	a	s		s	t	South	t	♠K853 ♥J108 ♦5 ♣QJ1074
W	North	E												
e	16	a												
s		s												
t	South	t												
13 10 7 10	♠62 ♥6532 ♦AK863 ♣K8	♣♦♥♠N N - 22 - 1 S - 22 - 1 E 2 - - - - W 2 - - 1 -												

West will pass and North can open 1NT and this is likely to be passed out.

Though the computer analysis shows EW can make 2C there is no practical way for them to get into the auction.

If we agree to use a 'weak' NT opening it is not possible for North to open 1H though it is a better scoring contract this time. Both partners need to be consistent as to what their bids mean.

Swap South's spades and hearts and if North hopes for a major fit and tries 1H South responds 2D and it's a mess. 2NT shows 15-16, 2S is a reverse and 16+ and 5 hearts.

Against 1NT West has no attractive lead and may well settle for ♦2. It doesn't look great and may not cost a trick in the suit, but it misses the best attack. This would be ♣6 (*high from poor suit*). On ♦2 lead, declarer can win in hand. He can count D-3, C-2 and when he plays on hearts dummy's ♥KQ being favourably placed win 2 tricks and a long heart will take the total to 8 tricks.

On ♣6 lead declarer is under pressure immediately, one stopper will go and someone has at least 5 clubs. If declarer establishes his hearts, he can win H-3, D-2 and C-2 to scrape home. If he tries to establish the diamonds West wins ♦Q and knocks out the second club. But then when a heart is played, she wins ♥A immediately and the defence win S-2, H-1, D-1 and C-3, putting declarer down one.

Such are the struggles for +90 for NS or +50 for EW, the tops or bottoms in club bridge.

*Most EWs in 1NT, going down. 2C for EW and 2D for NS made.*

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		♠AK975		
		♥95		
		♦74		
		♣Q943		
♠8432	W	North	E	♠QJ6
♥J73	e	21	a	♥A6
♦A98	s		s	♦K652
♣AJ7	t	South	t	♣K865
		♠10	♣♦♥♠N	
9		♥KQ10842	N - - 1 - -	
10 13		♦QJ103	S - - 1 - -	
8		♣102	E 1 1 - 1 1	
			W 1 1 - 1 1	

North passes, East opens 1NT. South may decide that his 6-card major and chunky minor is an excuse to try 2H even at adverse vulnerability.

Note computer analysis shows 1NT makes and 2H goes off. This means (*next section of notes*) +90 for EW in 1NT and +100 for defeating 2H, provided they do so at the table.

In 1NT East can see H-1, D-2 and C-2 as top tricks. There are some extra chances. In spades there will be a trick if North has either of ♠AK (*or both*), in diamonds there may be a 3<sup>rd</sup> trick if the suit splits 3-3, and in clubs there may be a 3<sup>rd</sup> trick if ♣J is favourably placed or the suit splits 3-3. Four possible chances of an extra trick.

Now interestingly, by looking at all four hands we can see that the spade chance will work but all of the other 3 fail, yet there is some sure route to 7 tricks for East.

I rather think declarer will play on clubs first – either chance gives 3 tricks. The natural way to play the suit seems to be cash ♣K then finesse ♣J. This should be slightly better than 50% as it catches singleton ♣Q (*very unlikely*) or doubleton (*possible*) with South. That line loses both ♣Q and later ♣9. But if ♣J is led from dummy North has to cover and ♣K wins and ♣A is cashed and then East is left with ♣86 against North's ♣94. The route to winning 3 clubs and 7 tricks. Not easy and I would expect most Easts to go down.

If South risks the overcall of 2H he can see a possible 8 tricks as S-2, H-5 (*with luck*) and D-1 (*with time*). He has H-1, D-2 and C-2 as losing top cards. He needs to lead a trump from dummy to finesse ♥K, then when both follow, he knows East holds ♥A. Unfortunately, there is no second entry to repeat the finesse. He has to hope the suit was split 3-2 and then has to guess whether it is ♥J or ♥A is now single. If the former he must lead ♥Q to trap ♥J; if the latter he can lead ♥2 to drop ♥A and pick up ♥J later. Not really beginner's play.

Even before that, West has the problem of leading. Not a spade - dummy wins ♠A cashes ♠K and discarding ♣2 to get rid of a loser. Not a trump that simply solves declarer trump problem. The minor suit aces don't seem attractive either. It's not really beginner defence either.

It turns out the defence is based on the computer knowing that West has ♥J as opposed to ♥10. EW cash ♠AK and ♦AK in any order and then play a third round of either suit. When a trump is led from dummy East wins ♥A and leads the fourth round of the minor and this promotes West's ♥J. South can ruff with ♥K but that leaves West's ♥J7 sitting over South's ♥Q1084.

*In club play NS pairs played in 2H which was usually made, 1NT made but 2NT failed.*

## Bidding in Bridge for Complete Beginners Lesson 4 Notes

Dlr: North		♠QJ4			
Vul: E/W		♥K105			
		♦92			
		♣J10865			
♠97632		W	North	E	♠K5
♥A43		e	25	a	♥J76
♦3		s		s	♦AQ8754
♣AK73		t	South	t	♣Q4
					♣♦♥♠N
	7		♠A108		N 1 - 1 - 1
	11	12	♥Q982		S 1 - 1 - 1
	10		♦KJ106		E - 1 - 1 -
			♣92		W - 1 - 1 -

North will pass and East open 1D. South with strength in diamonds should pass. West is sure to bid 1S and East can only re-bid 2D to end the auction.

Note the computer analysis suggests this is already passed the last makeable contract! This will not be uncommon with human players and these hands.

A glance at the 4 hands shows that in 2D, nothing is in declarer's favour; his ♠K is unfavourably placed and South has 3 trump winners. East's losers S-2, H-2 and D-3 are obvious.

South leads ♣9 (*top of doubleton*) declarer may win ♣A and try finessing ♦Q, it loses. ♣2 to ♣Q, ♦A and hoping for 3-3 split ♦8 to ♦J. South has to exit with a heart (a spade promotes declarer's ♠K). So, ♥2 to ♥3 ♥K and ♥6. North returns ♥10 which traps ♥J, ♥Q and ♥A. ♣A is ruffed with South's last trump. He exits with the last heart and as East has to lead spades the king is lost. Declarer wins H-1, D-4 and C-2. 2D down 1 scores -100 for EW

*In club play EW pairs in 2D succeeded, while others tried and failed in 2 or 3NT and 3S. Not liking diamonds, and pushing on in spades is disastrous.*

## Bidding in Bridge for Complete Beginners Lesson 4 Notes

Dir: East		♠AQ863			
Vu		♥Q3			
		♦A8742			
		♣9			
♠K		W North E		♠J954	
♥AK854		e 26 a		♥76	
♦95		s s		♦Q10	
♣AKJ105		t South t		♣Q7632	
				♣♦♥♠N	
12		♠1072		N - 3- 2-	
18 5		♥J1092		S - 3- 2-	
5		♦KJ63		E 4- 2- -	
		♣84		W4- 2- -	

Two passes and West with a nice hand opens 1H. North may decide his shapely hand is worth an overcall so 1S. (*In the next stage we'll look at a convention to show 2-suited hands.*)

Poor hearts and 4 spades will keep East silent and South passes. West can now show her second suit with 2C. Not to be outdone North can stretch with 2D.

A great fit for East, so 3C and South too comes alive knowing of the fit and so 3D.

West may decide to defend or with the good hand carry on to 4C. Close.

It is simplest to look at the losers for each side. In 3D by North, he must lose ♠A, ♥AK and though ♠K falls, the ♠J will win the 3<sup>rd</sup> round. 9 tricks. You can play through the hand and should win D-5 and S-4 for the same 9 tricks.

It is the same for West in 4C; she must lose ♠A and ♦AK for 10 tricks. All other losers can be ruffed in one hand or another. Two rounds of trumps, draws them all and East's 3 losing spades are ruffed in hand. Effectively 8 trump tricks and ♥AK for 10 tricks.

*In club play contracts for EW ranged from 3C to 5C and 9 or 10 tricks was the norm. NS pairs played in 2S or 3S and surely a misunderstanding in 4H. In spades 9 tricks emerged – defence is difficult.*

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*Let me know of any errors or ambiguities – I'll try to have them corrected for future readers. I hope you find Bridge as interesting as I do and that you get even a fraction of the pleasure I've had from the game over a long, long number of years.*