



Weekly Wisdom

The Sydney Bridge Centre mini lesson

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative) will be analysing an interesting hand from each Saturday ARVO BBO session. His column is updated weekly and published on the Sydney Bridge Centre website, under “Learn Bridge”.

You are also welcome to [send questions](#) about hands that you have played. Please use “Weekly Wisdom” as email subject. We will collate them and let our panellists leading by Julian Foster to answer them.

The warning signs for misfits.

Matchpoint v Imp scoring - understanding the difference.

#32667 BBO – Saturday 19th March 2022

16 ♠ AT9752 ♥ A3 ♦ QJT ♣ JT	♠ J4 ♥ K9875 ♦ 75 ♣ AQ93	Dir: W																									
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Last week board 16 saw several pairs get into trouble as the hands don't fit well for either side. But there were warning signs in most of the auctions. Let's have a look.

(This column may be a little longer than usual because I have time to kill - I'm writing it while on a plane to Europe! I'm captaining the Australian mixed team at the world bridge championships in Italy, postponed from 2 years ago.)

West opened 1♠ at every table but from there the auctions varied a lot with North choosing 2♠ (5 tables), double (2 tables), pass (2 tables) and 2♥ (1 table). I would definitely choose 2♠, a Michaels cue bid showing at least 55 in hearts and a minor. North has an ideal hand for this. The shape and favourable vulnerability

also make it attractive to bid - either to make a contract or as a possible cheap sacrifice against the opponents' contract. None of the other actions really start to describe my hand.

East now has a first clue that the hand could be misfitting as he also has 5 hearts. I would double 2♠ which is usually played as a hand interested in penalising at least one of the opponents' suits (imagine the carnage if North happens to have hearts and clubs!). South also has a clue things might be ugly. He knows there are at least 5 spades on his left, he has a singleton in partner's hearts and, most likely, partner has diamonds. He should bid 3♣ (pass or correct) but definitely no more. At most tables West now bid 3♠. After partner has doubled this is wrong in my opinion. Partner has not raised spades and if he doubles he is warning you he might like to penalise the opponents so, unless you have extreme extra shape (a 6th spade and a relatively balanced hand definitely does NOT qualify) you should give him the chance and just pass. North corrects to 3♦ and has now shown his hand well. East can't double that so just passes (he's already shown some values and denied a prime spade fit with his first double so he doesn't have anything more to say). South also passes and I think West should too! If partner doesn't want to double he probably shouldn't either. He also has a defensive diamond trick.

When West did bid 3♠ East not unreasonably raised to 4♠ but South could now come to life with a double.

Where North chose to pass over 1♠, East responds 2♥ (North may now be happy they didn't bid!). Now South, holding 5 spades, should again be wary and keep quiet. West will rebid 2♠ and East may now try 3♠ (he is not strong enough to game force with 3♣ but 2NT also isn't appealing with no diamond stopper). This should probably end matters but that's already too high for East West. South should probably not double this although it will be tempting (see advanced section for more on doubles).

What about the play? Against a spade contract I'd be leading the ♥Q. It's safe and might start setting up the chance to force declarer to trump (North already knows trumps are splitting badly for declarer). West wins the A and probably starts with a club finesse. After winning, South can play ♦A, ♦ to K. Now North can either give South a heart ruff (see advanced section

for why he knows a heart ruff will be available) or play another diamond to give South an overruff. The end result should be 2 off doubled for -500.

If the players do recognise the misfit in time they may give up at the 3♦ level. North South make this but +110 wouldn't have scored that well because so many North South pairs were taking a big penalty. East West do well to remain disciplined and go quietly!

Key points to note

- Michaels bids showing 55 in two suits are often effective at describing your hand quickly and finding good sacrifices, especially at favourable vulnerability.
- Be very wary in any auction where the opponents show at least 5 in a suit where you also have 5. It often points to a misfit hand where bidding on too much can be very painful. The key is to get out of the auction!
- If your partner expresses an interest in penalising the opponents you should generally pass on the next round to give him the chance to do so. Only bid immediately if you would not be prepared to defend a doubled contract (e.g. if you have lots of distribution).
- Be aware of whether you or your partner knows more about the hand at any point in time (this can change frequently). When it's partner try and leave decisions to him.

More advanced

Notice the need for both sides to show discipline in the auction. There is a great art to "smelling out" a misfit and getting out of the auction before things get ugly for your side. The only winning moves on misfit hands are to stay low, or to defend - both often go against the instincts of many players! South has the first clue when West opens his 5 card spade suit. If North does bid 2♠ (Michaels) East gets a similar clue in hearts. At the same time South knows his side is either in danger (if partner has 5 diamonds) or has a big fit in clubs. He needs to be wary until he knows which (hence the 3♣ bid). Of course, it's more likely partner has diamonds simply because you don't!

After the 1st round of the auction, East and South know a lot more than West and North. That's why West shouldn't voluntarily wade back in with 3♠. He has opened a normal 1♠ and he doesn't have anything special beyond that - at this point his partner knows much more about the hand than he does. North should show which his minor is but after that should also leave things to his partner.

It's frequently the case in bridge that one partner knows more than the other. Bridge is not a "perfect information game" because some cards are hidden to each player. Contrast this with a game like chess where the position is openly visible at all times. Pairs should always try to keep this in mind - the partner with more information should be trying to take control and his partner should defer to him. Of course that position can change with every bid in the auction and every trick in the play.

What about the heart suit? After the ♥Q lead, trick one will go 5,6,A. Now when North gets in with ♦K the only heart he hasn't seen is the 3. Who has it? So the question becomes what would South play holding 63 doubleton? This depends on your agreed signalling methods but, if playing reverse count, South would definitely play the 3 from that holding and hence can't hold it here. Note that this analysis only works with this holding. If South had held singleton 3 and West A6 then North couldn't be certain where the 6 is.

There is another possible clue though. If declarer did have singleton Ace, there's at least a chance he may have tried to take an immediate discard on the ♥K. The fact he didn't do that might imply he has the doubleton. As you get more experienced, examining the way declarer does or doesn't play the hand is a good clue.

Lastly what about doubling? If East West do get too high South knows they are in trouble and can consider doubling. Playing matchpoint pairs you are just hoping for a decent penalty and, if the contract does happen to make, it will

likely score you a bottom. Playing imps (i.e. teams or butler pairs) though things are different. Here it's a lot more dangerous to double part scores because you give opponents a game if they make. For example if 3♠ was making here doubling converts -140 to -730 which is a big difference and 11 imps. Once the opponents have bid game though things change. Now if the contract is making double will convert -620 to -790 which is only 5 imps. Hence you have less to lose (but the same to gain) by doubling games. You want to be almost certain part scores are going off before doubling them at imps.

The key to the difference between matchpoints and imps is that every board is worth the same at matchpoints. The size of the difference in score doesn't matter - it's just how many other pairs you beat. If every pair your way scores +90 then scoring +110 or +1700 will give you exactly the same score - a top!

Totally different at imps where the size of the difference is what drives the score. In the above example +110 would net you 1 imp, +1700 would net you 17!

Another way to think about this is it will usually take you more hands to win back 11 imps than 5 imps - and several hands can be flat in between. At pairs you can cancel a disaster on one board on the very next hand perhaps by holding a partscore to -90 when everyone else is scoring -110!

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

F2F Easter Monday Matchpointed Pairs Congress



Let's have some real cards in hand and play in a F2F congress with real people!

The Sydney Bridge Centre is running a F2F Matchpointed Swiss Pairs Congress on Easter Monday 18th April at Level 1, 162 Goulburn Street, Sydney. It is a one-day congress with 24 boards in the morning, lunch break, then another 24 boards in the afternoon. A delicious light lunch is included.

An invaluable and meaningful prize for Overall Novice & Restricted winners and the Best Novice (or Restricted) Pairs will receive a meaningful prize – Over the Shoulder Mentoring by an advanced player in one complimentary SBC session (either online on BBO or F2F in club). To support our fellow clubs, the Open Winners will receive a Complimentary Entry to any one-day local congress in New South Wales in 2022.

RED masterpoints awarded. \$50 per person (a delicious lunch and snacks included)

[Enter in advance](#) required on the NSWBA website. We intend to run separate fields for Open and Restricted & Novice players, if number allows. Please nominate the field you would like to compete in.

F2F Friday Workshop is back!

We are as pleased as you are that Will is running his Workshops again. The Friday Workshops are filling up! Please book in early to avoid disappointment. The next two workshops will be held in the City on:

- **Friday 8th April:** Play and Defend
- **More are under schedule**

\$50 for member (both Sydney Bridge Centre and Strathfield Bridge Club members can enjoy the special rate) / \$55 for visitors. Please find the [details](#) on our website. [Booking](#) essential for catering purpose.

Regular F2F and Online sessions at 3 venues

- F2F @ CITY -

There will be sessions every day from Monday to Thursday at City, with a separated field for Supervised players on Wednesday morning. All morning sessions start at 10.00am. We have two evening sessions – the Tuesday night is for Open (7.15pm start), please contact office for pre-arrangement if you are not a regular of this session. The Wednesday night is a study group for Supervised players, 6.30pm start and aim to finish at 9.00pm.

- F2F @ CANADA BAY -

To start with, we will have two morning sessions in Canada Bay Club. We co-host the Monday morning session with Strathfield Bridge Club and add an extra Thursday morning session to the week. Both club members will enjoy member's rate for the table money fee. Cash only for the moment, we intend to extend the usage of PP over there.

Please find the details of [the session timetables](#) and find out [more about our venues](#) on our website.

- ONLINE @ BBO -

If you prefer to play online, there are regular club sessions on Monday morning (10.15am), Thursday afternoon (1.45pm) and Saturday afternoon (1.45pm) on BBO. To join our online game, please follow this [step by step guidelines](#). BB\$4 for 24 boards.