



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. To subscribe, please email your name and email address to office@sydneybridgecentre.com.

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.

#85889 BBO – Saturday ARVO session 28th August 2021

24	♠ KQ7642	<i>Dir: W</i>					
	♥ J	<i>Vul: None</i>					
	♦ 864						
	♣ K53						
♠ JT3	♠ A85						
♥ 64	♥ KT983						
♦ AQJT9	♦ 75						
♣ Q87	♣ AJ9						
9	♠ 9	<table border="1"> <tr><td>♣♦♥♠NT</td></tr> <tr><td>N - - - -</td></tr> <tr><td>S - - - -</td></tr> <tr><td>E 2 4 3 2 4</td></tr> <tr><td>W 2 4 3 1 4</td></tr> </table>	♣♦♥♠NT	N - - - -	S - - - -	E 2 4 3 2 4	W 2 4 3 1 4
♣♦♥♠NT							
N - - - -							
S - - - -							
E 2 4 3 2 4							
W 2 4 3 1 4							
10 12	♥ AQ752						
	♦ K32						
9	♣ T642						

Last week board 24 saw many East Wests faced with defending over either a multi or a weak two. Let's see what happened.

One West opened 1♦. This is close but I think, despite the nice suit, the fact I only have a 10 count AND a balanced hand with only a Q and J outside would swing me to passing. If I was in 3rd seat I would definitely open 1♦ as I want to indicate a diamond lead and it makes it a lot harder for the opponents if we start bidding. The difference in 3rd seat is I know partner is a passed hand so is not going to go overboard. In 1st seat partner can still have a big hand and we are just misleading them by opening so light.

After a pass from West, a big majority of Norths (14 tables) opened 2♠, 6 tables opened a 2♦ multi and one each opened 1♠ and 3♠. It certainly seems a perfect weak 2♠ hand to me.

What should East do over 2♠? 7 tables overcalled 3♥. Although today it worked (and in fact one table got to play there doubled making for +730!) I wouldn't have done it for several reasons:

- We have a balanced hand with quite a lot of losers
- We only have 5 hearts
- Partner is a passed hand
- We are having to bid at the 3 level

East was very lucky today that West was close to an opening bid. Move some of West's points to the South hand and 3♥ could be a bloodbath!

Where a multi 2♦ was opened, most Easts overcalled 2♥. Even this is risky but it's a level lower so not nearly as dangerous. This is one reason why playing simple weak twos is often more effective than the multi – when the opponents have hearts it allows them to get into the auction at a level lower.

Returning to what to do over 2♠, I would have simply passed. 2♠ may not be playing well for them (there is no guarantee of a fit) and anything we bid could be a disaster! Double is not appealing either because what will we do if partner bids diamonds?

South passes too and when it returns to West they might be tempted to re-open with something but what? Double will surely hear partner bidding hearts, 3♦ is also risky because this time plenty of East's points could be with South! So I'd have just left them in 2♠.

What might happen defending 2♠? East probably leads the ♦7. This is another case of process of elimination (as discussed last week). Leading from any of the other 3 suits does not seem appealing, South is more likely to have diamond honours than North so we may be leading through something, and we have trump control so there is

chance we may be able to engineer a diamond ruff.

This lead works pretty well – West wins and, at most tables, next cashed the ♦A and duly gave East their ruff. As long as East doesn't give a trick away by next leading a black suit, there are still 2 club losers (the 3rd club will be discarded on the ♥A if declarer takes the finesse) and also 2 trump losers which will be 7 tricks for the defence and 2 off. Perfect defence, however, takes it 3 off – see advanced section.

For those that were playing in 3♥ by East the play started with ♠9 to the 10 Q and A. A diamond finesse followed by a heart to the J, K and A now saw South with a problem. Most actually switched to a club and, whatever North does, this gives declarer 3 club tricks. Many declarers therefore ended up with 10 tricks – which was no doubt a great disappointment to South! (South just gets 3 trump tricks and ends up having to trump partner's winning ♠K at the end!) The best defence at that point is actually another diamond (see advanced section).

Lastly, it is worth discussing what to do over a multi 2♦ bid. It can be quite confusing as you don't know what declarer's suit is. There are various schemes in use (see advanced section) but keeping things natural tends to work best (yes you MIGHT be unlucky and find yourself overcalling a suit which is in fact declarer's weak two(!) but that's actually very rare). Remember you can also afford to pass as the other hand will almost always bid 2♥ at least. So you will have a 2nd chance to bid once you know what their suit is (another reason why weak twos are more effective than the multi – you may not get a 2nd chance to bid over a weak two).

Key points to note

- Opening balanced 10 counts in 1st seat is usually not wise (but in 3rd seat is fine especially if it's a good suit you want partner to lead).
- Over a weak 2, overcalling at the 3 level is very risky – especially if partner is a passed hand, you could be walking into a bloodbath! You need a good hand.
- There are assorted bidding methods over a multi 2♦ and it is worth a bit of discussion. But remember you usually have two chances to bid so you can often wait to see what their suit is and then continue as you would have done had they opened that weak two.
- Natural weak twos can often be harder to defend against than the multi.
- When defending, it's often right not to break a new suit and just go passive.

More advanced

So what is the best defence to 2♠? After the diamond lead, there is no rush for West to cash the ♦A, they should instead return a club. Now East wins the ♣J and (this is the hard bit to visualise) cashes the ♣A. THEN they play another diamond which allows West to cash 2 more diamonds, giving East the chance to discard his ♣9 whereupon West gives him a club ruff! Now if the defence go passive they will still come to 2 more trump tricks however declarer plays the spade suit (West covers the 9 from dummy and after 9 10 Q A, East is left with singleton 8 and West with Jx – enough to be worth one more trick). East can find this defence too – firstly West might have the ♣K anyway but, even if they don't, they are more likely to only have 5 diamonds than 6 (with 6 they might have opened the bidding or come back in with 3♦).

I mentioned that if playing in 3♥ South should continue diamonds after winning the ♥A. Why? First because doing anything else is dangerous (both clubs and hearts give tricks away). Going passive in defence is often right! Second because it cuts declarer off from dummy so they have to take their discard on the 3rd diamond right now – at a time when they don't yet know what black suit they want to discard. If North has ♣Kx they don't need to discard a club as they will have 3 club tricks anyway. But if North has ♣Kxx they do want to discard their 3rd club; however that leaves them with two spades in each hand and at risk of conceding ♠K and a spade ruff (remember from declarer's point of view after the 1st round of hearts, North might have started with QJ doubleton and be about to get in to play 2 more rounds of spades). On this hand discarding the 3rd club is best because it's a loser and a spade ruff from South is with one of their trump tricks anyway.

Defence to the multi 2♦ is an area that can often cause chaos amongst inexperienced players (one reason why people play it!) However, with a bit of practice, the multi is actually easier to defend against than a simple weak two. I've already mentioned the fact that you can bid at the 2 level over it and you have two chances as 2♦ is virtually never passed out.

I have seen assorted schemes in use over the opening 2♦. Here are three:

1. 2NT is 16-18 balanced, suit bids are natural, X is 16+ (typically unbalanced 16+ or balanced 19+).
2. 2NT is 16-18 balanced, 2♥ is takeout of hearts, X is takeout of spades. Other bids are natural. Don't play this if you are likely to forget what 2♥ means!
3. 2NT is 16-18 balanced, suit bids are natural, X is 12-15 balanced OR any big hand.

In all cases passing and then doubling is takeout (by then you know what their suit is).

After 2♦ P 2♥ (which is what happens the vast majority of the time) X by the other hand should either be any really big hand or, more commonly, takeout of hearts (at that point 2♥ might be about to get passed and partner may not be able to bid). Remember if you have hearts you can wait because opener is likely to correct to 2♠ and if that comes back to you, you can NOW double for takeout. If they do happen to have hearts – you were probably better off not wading in anyway!

The 3rd scheme listed above is my favourite method – primarily because it caters for the difficult situation where you both might have balanced 13 counts with no obvious bid. It's quite embarrassing to pass out their weak two and find you have a cold game on!

So what do you do after the double? Firstly you always assume it's the 12-15 balanced hand as that's by far the most common (the doubler jumps or bids no-trumps themselves on the next round if they do have the big hand). What usually happens is it goes 2♦ X 2♥. Now what I do is treat the auction as if partner has opened 1NT (12-15) and they have overcalled 2♥! Yes I realise it's not exactly the same because it's actually the hand on your left that has the long suit, and also it might not even be hearts! But the scheme does actually work because you are back in a bidding situation you generally know what you are doing over (2NT can be Lebensohl for example). Once again, if you actually have hearts you can usually afford to just pass and wait for 2♠ to come back to you. For those keen it is worth writing out some bidding sequences and possible hands you might have to see what you would do.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

Repeat on Demand - The SBC Encore! Mid-Week Swiss Pairs



A lot of players really like the idea of a weekday congress and asked us to run it again. If you didn't manage to join our last time, here comes the opportunity!

The [SBC Encore! Mid-Week Swiss Pairs](#) is a one-day congress to be held on Wednesday 29th September, 10am start. We will play six 8 boards round with a lunch break in the middle.

RED masterpoints awarded. BB\$12 per player. Winners (of 3 categories) will receive FREE entry to the NSWBA Online Teams of Three, details will be announced very soon!

[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.

The Sydney Bridge Centre online sessions on BBO

Our clubroom on Goulburn Street is temporary closed under the current restriction. We are running regular club session online on BBO for the moment and will resume our F2F sessions once we can. Please keep an eye on our [website](#) for the latest announcement.

For BBO sessions:

All are welcome. No need to book. Please find us on BBO / Featured Areas / Virtual Clubs / ABF-Australia. Tournament title "Sydney Bridge Centre & Friends". Tournament will open only 2 hours before the game starts.

24 boards, BB\$4 per person per game.