



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.

Should you double or overcall? Endplayed at trick 1!

#72106 BBO – Saturday 4th June 2022

<p>12</p> <p>♠ AQ8532 ♥ Q2 ♦ K8 ♣ K83</p> <p>♠ K74 ♥ 873 ♦ T95 ♣ J652</p> <p>14 ♠ T6 4 14 ♥ A9654 8 ♦ Q42 ♣ Q94</p>	<p>Dir: W Vul: N-S</p> <p>♠ J9 ♥ KJT ♦ AJ763 ♣ AT7</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	1	1	3	3	2	S	1	-	2	3	1	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-
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Board 12 last week contained a reasonably common “double or overcall” decision.

After the obvious start to the auction of Pass 1♠, it’s up to East. There are three possible actions he could consider - pass, 2♦ or double. Pass feels pretty wet with 14 points so it’s between 2♦ and double. Many players would overcall 2♦ but I prefer double. Yes there is the obvious downside that you only have 3 hearts when partner will expect 4 but you do have some support for all the other suits and there are plenty of problems with 2♦:

- Your diamond suit is only a 5 card suit
- You don’t have very good intermediate cards in diamonds
- Your hand is balanced
- You have a fair bit of defence
- Partner is a passed hand

All these points make 2♦ risky - you could easily go for a large penalty if the cards sit badly for you and at the same time you might have enough to prevent the opponents making too much. Double is far less committal - it gives partner more options.

If East does double, South should basically ignore it and bid exactly what he would have done anyway - i.e. 1NT here (5-9 without a spade fit). West will be happy not to be forced to respond to the double with what is effectively a balanced 1 count (his ♠K could easily be worthless as it’s sitting under the suit bid on his left).

North has a normal 2♠ rebid and that should end matters. East should certainly not bid again, he has more than shown his hand when he doubled. South has nothing to add and West should be even happier to get out after spades are bid a 2nd time on his left!

If East does decide to overcall 2♦, South does not have enough to bid 2♥ (that would show at least 10 points) but he might consider double. This would ideally have clubs as well as hearts but it at least shows some values and a willingness to compete. Once again he should then pass North’s 2♠ rebid.

Even though West does have 3 card diamond support I still wouldn’t raise to 3♦. However, one table did and it proved to be the winning decision today because it went 2 off for a score of -100 (undoubled) which was less than the -140 other East West pairs conceded defending spade contracts. This is a function of vulnerability and pairs scoring - see advanced section.

If we turn now to the play in spades, East has a revolting hand to lead from and in fact is in the unusual position of being endplayed at trick 1! That means whatever he chooses to lead will give up a trick. North - South should end up making 9 tricks in spades. On the face of it they have 5 losers (1 spade, 1 heart, 1 diamond and 2 clubs) but one of those losers will disappear after East’s initial lead - see advanced section for more details.

Most Easts tried the ♠J. This is reasonable as it's probably the least likely to cost a trick. The only other card I'd consider is ♦A which at least is likely to hold the trick and let me see dummy to work out what I might need to do next. But that doesn't work here either.

Key points to note

- Don't automatically overcall a 5 card suit, especially a relatively bad one, at the 2 level. Double (even on an imperfect shape) is often better.
- If the opponents make a takeout double of partner's opening bid, it's usually best to just ignore it and bid what you would have done anyway.
- Opening leads from some hands are revolting - in such a case all you can do is pick what you think might be the least bad option.
- When the opponents are not vulnerable and you think you were making your contract you often need to either bid on or double at matchpoints to have a chance of a good score (see advanced section).

More advanced

The approach to overcalling on hands like East's is interesting. I think the more experienced the player the more likely they would be to prefer double or pass ahead of 2♦. Perhaps they have been burnt more by going for large penalties when the opponents are not making much!

East really has a choice of poisons when on opening lead. Although a trump might seem safe, look what happens when he leads the ♠J. It runs to the ♠Q and when declarer next leads the ♠10 from dummy it pins the ♠9 and allows declarer to avoid a spade loser. If declarer had to play the spades himself he could not avoid losing one.

But leads in other suits are no better. A heart runs to declarer's Q avoiding that loser. Either minor allows declarer to score the K and Q separately (if diamonds are led that means declarer's 2nd club loser can be discarded on ♦Q). It's quite rare to be endplayed at trick 1 but it is the case here!

If I was forced to lead a minor I'd certainly lead one of the aces to try and retain the lead to see dummy and help decide what to play at trick 2. I'd choose the ♦A ahead of the ♣A because the suit is longer so there's more chance I might hit a singleton honour in dummy or declarer's hand (and thus not cost an obvious trick).

The other key point on this hand is the unique scoring method of pairs. The one table that East West did push on to 3♦, they went 2 off for -100 and scored a top. Although North-South can take this 3 off for +150 it's not that easy. Better would be to double 3♦ or bid on to 3♠. Neither might look obvious but it's South that should be making the decision. His reasoning should be that he expects their spade contract to be making (South has 2 card spade support for a suit partner has freely rebid and he also has 8 points). That's going to score +110 or +140. Defending 3♦ undoubled when the opponents are not vulnerable is unlikely to beat that. So it cannot be the right decision to pass. South should either bid 3♠ to try for +140 or double 3♦ hoping for +300. I'd try the latter as I have reasonable defence and the upside of +300 is much higher than +140.

Note this reasoning is unique to matchpoint pairs - at any other form of scoring you would probably be happy to defend 3♦ expecting to score +100 or +150 and basically a flat board. You wouldn't risk doubling 3♦ because if it did happen to make it would be a calamity (-470). At pairs -470 would certainly be a terrible score but the point is -110 would have been as well. The double hasn't really made the score any worse.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

SBC Christmas in July – Pairs and Teams



Let's celebrate Christmas in winter! Sydney Bridge Centre is going to run a Christmas in July Congress on 16th – 17th July 2022 at the NSWBA clubrooms on Level 1, 162 Goulburn Street, Sydney – a one-day Pairs event on Saturday 16th and a one-day Teams event on Sunday 17th. 10am start for both days.

The SBC Congresses are well known for its great atmosphere and good food! A delicious Christmas themed morning tea, snacks and lunch will be included.

Attractive prizes. \$50 per player (lunch included). **RED** masterpoints.

The Program Brochure will be published soon. Please enter via the [NSWBA website](#). Please contact Wing if you need a partner and/or teammates!

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 1st July:** The 2NT Jacoby Raise
- **Friday 29th July:** Defence

\$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 -

We have been running Monday and Thursday Morning sessions in Canada Bay Club, 10.00am for 10.15am start. Starting from 1st June, there will be **NEW session on Wednesday afternoon for Supervised players**. A theme for each month, and different topics for each lesson. Please find [the topics](#) on our website.

Member's rate for both Sydney Bridge Centre and Strathfield Bridge Club players in any session and events run by either club in either venue.

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 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.