

BRIDGE

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February 2017

Bernard Magee's Acol Bidding Quiz

This month we are dealing with the 1NT response. You are West in the auctions below, playing 'Standard Acol' with a weak no-trump (12-14 points) and four-card majors.

1. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ A K 8 7
♥ 9 7 4
♦ J 9 3 2
♣ 7 6



West	North	East	South
?		1♣	Pass

2. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ 8 7 6
♥ 4
♦ A J 3 2
♣ Q 8 7 6 5



West	North	East	South
?		1♠	Pass

3. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ J 7 6
♥ Q 9 4
♦ A 9 3 2
♣ K 7 6



West	North	East	South
?		1♠	Pass

Answers on page 29

4. Dealer West. Love All.

♠ A K 10 9 2
♥ A Q 3
♦ 7 4
♣ J 10 2



West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
?			

5. Dealer West. Love All.

♠ K Q 3 2
♥ A K
♦ K Q 6 4 3
♣ 7 3



West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1NT	Pass
?			

6. Dealer West. Love All.

♠ 7
♥ A K 8 7
♦ A 2
♣ A K 8 6 3 2



West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1NT	Pass
?			

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7. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ 2
♥ J 9 7 6
♦ 9 6 2
♣ A Q J 7 6



West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	1♠	Pass
?		2♦	Pass

8. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ 6 3 2
♥ Q 8 5
♦ 3 2
♣ A J 7 3 2



West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	1♦	Pass
?		2♥	Pass

9. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ 5
♥ Q 8 4 3 2
♦ A J 6 5 3
♣ J 2



West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	1♠	Pass
?		2♠	Pass

Answers on page 33

10. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ 9 8 6
♥ Q 7 2
♦ Q 5 4
♣ A J 7 6



West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	1♥	Pass
?		2NT	Pass

11. Dealer West. Love All.

♠ A 9 8 7 3
♥ K Q 7 5 3
♦ A 2
♣ 3



West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
?		2♥	Pass
		3♣	Pass

12. Dealer West. Love All.

♠ A Q 8 7 6
♥ 4
♦ K 5
♣ K Q 8 7 5



West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
?		2♣	Pass

Answers on page 35



Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines

2017/18 Mr Bridge cruises

Cruise ID	Date	Nights	Departure Port	Prices from
Islands of the Mediterranean (hosted by Bernard Magee) Sold out for bridge				
Cities & Waterways of Europe				
L1706	22 nd Apr 2017	8	Dover	£719pp
Fjords, Mountains & Glaciers				
L1707	30 th Apr 2017	7	Dover	£759pp
Espana Verde				
L1708	7 th May 2017	8	Dover	£859pp
Scenic Norway & Celebrations				
L1709	15 th May 2017	9	Dover	£949pp
Fred's Favourite Fjords				
L1716	30 th Jul 2017	7	Newcastle	£999pp
UK Scenes from the Silver Screen				
L1717	6 th Aug 2017	8	Newcastle	£1,049pp

Cruise ID	Date	Nights	Departure Port	Prices from
German Waterways				
L1718	14 th Aug 2017	9	Newcastle	£1,139pp
Scandinavian Waterways				
L1722	17 th Sept 2017	11	Newcastle	£1,169pp
River Seine Sojourn				
L1723	29 th Sept 2017	3	Southampton	£359pp
Discover the Baltic				
L1724	2 nd Oct 2017	13	Southampton	£1,259pp
Canaries Christmas & New Year				
L1728	21 st Dec 2017	16	Southampton	£1,999pp
Rio Carnival & River Plate				
L1803	23 rd Jan 2018	46	Southampton	£4,179pp
In Search of the Northern Lights				
L1804	10 th Mar 2018	14	Southampton	£1,429pp

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Features this month include:

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For the last 30 years I have described myself as a publisher and promoter.

At the turn of this year, I metamorphosed into a Travel Consultant. This is because nowadays this is what I do, and expect to be doing until I retire.

I completed my first forms using my new trade description and the very next day learned that All Leisure Group had ceased to trade.

The group was made up of Page & Moy, Just You, Swan Hellenic, Voyages of Discovery and other brands, all well known to readers of these pages over the years, almost from its inception in 1994. However, I believe in capitalism, even when it is inconvenient

If there are not enough customers for small ship cruising, the assets of the unsuccessful should be sold off and the customer base redistributed.

Small ship cruising is the new posh. Larger ships are an entirely different market.

As a newly designated, self-appointed travel consultant, I will continue to focus on putting bridge parties on small ships.

CELEBRATIONS

Be assured I will be on board each of the three Aegean Odyssey cruises this coming autumn. Each

cruise has a full page advertisement in this issue, one each for September, October and November. I will limit the size of the bridge party on each cruise to keep it friendly.

I am really looking forward to seeing a lot of old faces.

MORE CELBATIONS

I am also looking to be on board Serenity to celebrate my 30 years as Mr Bridge, on a river cruise down the Danube, see centrefold of BRIDGE 168. It will be a real festival of bridge organised by Sandy Bell, supported by an experienced team. There will be time during your week on-board for lectures, supervised play, duplicates and speed ball. River cruises work best if the entire ship is devoted to bridge players' needs and requirements. Don't allow yourself to be put off by my telling you that. Just play as much or as little as you wish.

VALENTINE



This being the February issue some of you will need to be reminded that the 14th is Valentines Day. If you haven't time to make a card and you're too mean to slip out to the shop and buy one, do what I used to do and adapt an ace of hearts from an old pack of cards which I display for your convenience. ►

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SICILY: Palermo, Catania, Trapani, Valletta
MALTA: Valletta

DEPARTS UK APRIL 17, 2017

APR 17	Fly to ATHENS Greece Embark Aegean Odyssey in nearby Piraeus
APR 18	SANTORINI Greek Islands (Akrotiri)
APR 19	HERAKLION Crete (Knossos)
APR 20	SOUDA Crete (Chania)
APR 21	At Sea
APR 22	VALLETTA Malta
APR 23	CATANIA Sicily (Syracuse)
APR 24	PALERMO Sicily (Monreale)
APR 25	TRAPANI Sicily (Segesta)
APR 26	At Sea
APR 27	At Sea
APR 28	MALAGA Spain
APR 29	CADIZ Spain (Jerez)
APR 30	PORTIMAO Portugal
MAY 1	At Sea
MAY 2	FUNCHAL Madeira overnight
MAY 3	FUNCHAL Madeira Disembark and transfer to Funchal Airport for flight home

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CALLING ALL SPIES

Well not spies really but decoders. Shireen Mohandes is looking out for bridge players who worked at Bletchley Park during or just after the war. Not just them but their descendants. No need to tell her about Stuart Stavely however, as this is included on the EBU website which also tells us that Stuart was interviewed for the job by none other than Ian Fleming himself.

GROUP AWARD WINNERS



Congratulations to Aegean Odyssey on winning this prestigious award. My apologies, as in the last issue I had Fred.Olsen cruise lines as the winners. Oh dear!

CHARITY BRIDGE

Fund raisers still use bridge events to raise money. These still work but they need to provide bolt-on services. Lunch, tea or supper and be priced accordingly.

The best game for fund-raising is rubber or rubber/Chicago, so those designing a new event are advised to use these and not duplicates, as those playing duplicate belong to a different demographic.

See the Charity Events list on page 44.

RESOLUTIONS 2017

You can see I am still working on these. Way over half a page and not one new venue in sight. I am open to suggestions. There be must be some hoteliers out there who would welcome quiet parties of well-behaved bridge players.

FILMING 2018



Denham Grove 12-15 January 2018

The 2017 filming took place in the middle of last month. The 2018 headings are listed below and those wanting to book may now do so.

Teams of Four
Game Tries
Disrupting Declarer
Defending against High Level Contracts
Overcalling
Pressing the Defence

Book now to secure the same price as this year. £399 for three nights full board with no single supplement, including all filmed sessions and six sessions of supervised play. Enjoy the atmosphere. Feel the buzz.

BRIDGE WEEKENDS

Apart from new venues, I am putting together a program of weekend bridge events. These will be advertised in the next issue of BRIDGE. Watch this space.

All good wishes,

Mr Bridge

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Is Dummy Allowed to Tidy the Cards?

Q I find it distracting when people touch dummy to 'tidy up', by moving adjacent suits into the gaps created during play. Is this allowed?

Vivienne Mugford by email.

A Yes, it is allowed. Of course, declarer should never touch dummy's cards, unless dummy is absent from the table or at rubber bridge, but dummy can certainly tidy dummy if he wants. So can declarer if declarer is playing the cards in dummy's absence or at rubber bridge.



Q Sitting third in hand, non-vulnerable against vulnerable opponents, I held a flat hand with 10 HCP. After two passes, I decided to open 1NT as a means of obstructing the opposition. My bid was passed out; my partner had 5 HCP and I made only four tricks. Our opponents felt they had been robbed of a game. They were unhappy about my bid which they

claimed was a psychic bid and said that if we were to use psychic bids, it should be declared as part of our bidding system. I feel that my bid was not a psychic bid, as my partner and I play a standard weak no-trump (12-14) and he had no more reason than our opponents to doubt that I had at least 12 HCP.

Our opponents also claimed that if psychic bids were declared as part of a system, only one such bid was allowed within a bridge session. Is this true?

Ken Brown,
Balerno, Edinburgh.

A Your opponents were talking utter rubbish. It is true that some people seem to have decided on some invented rules and they have a certain following, but they do not apply.

Psyches are legal and it is illegal to stop them (except in novice games). A psyche is a gross misdescription of your hand according to your system, with the intent to deceive the opponents. To be a legal psyche, it must also deceive partner. A deviation is a minor mis-description of your hand according

to your system and might either be with the intent to deceive the opponents or just a matter of judgement.

Since you were two high-card points out of range, it is arguable whether it is a psyche or a deviation, but it does not matter since both are completely legal.

Of course, your opponents have been 'robbed' of a game by your bid, but that is the intention of psyches, deviations, weak openings, weak overcalls, pre-emptive raises, pre-emptive opening bids and all the other calls that are made more with the intent of obstructing the opponents than getting to your own best spot. It is no more illegal than if you opened with a three-level pre-empt and they missed a game as a result: it is part of the game.

You cannot declare psyches as part of your system since psyches, to be legal, must come as much of a surprise to partner as to the opponents, so are not part of the bidding system. There is no rule limiting psyches to one per session or anything like that. The only worries are that if psyches are too frequent, partner might start to allow for them, and then they become part of

your system and are no longer psyches: also psyches should be made to gain an advantage: frivolous psyching by a pair no longer in contention and merely to upset opponents is not legal.



Q A pair reaches a 3NT contract after a negative reply to Stayman. The lead is ♠8. The pair play natural leads, confirmed by their convention card. Dummy holds ♠A-K-Q-4 and declarer holds ♠10-9-5. It transpires that the lead was from ♠J-8-7-6. Declarer takes the ace followed by the king and is now obliged to lose the fourth club. What action should be taken by the director if any and why?

Tim Howard by email.

A The director should investigate, and might adjust the score if he feels declarer has been misled, but it seems unlikely.

I have no idea what natural leads are, and the EBU has stated firmly that 'natural' leads is not an adequate description because different pairs have different ideas

of what natural leads are.

Nevertheless, it is usual to lead fourth highest from an honour when there is only one.

Over the years, I have had partners who have surprised me by leading the nine from J-9-8-x and the like, but since I have never understood it nor done it myself, we cannot be said to have an agreement to do so. Similarly, opponents have done so but on asking, it seems to be something they decided at the time rather than an agreement.

I imagine it is quite possible that this player did the same: led the eight from J-8-7-6 with no agreement to do so because it felt right. I find it merely confuses partner.

A second possibility is that they have agreed to lead second highest from a poor suit (a very common agreement these days) and led the eight tactically, not because of the seven and the six. In that case, your declarer has not been misled, he has merely misjudged, so long as second highest is on the system card.

If there is an agreement to lead the eight, and it is not on the system card, then there is misinformation. But the eight is highly likely to be from various other holdings, so I think the most your declarer could hope for is a weighted score of 75% or 80% of the actual score plus 25% or 20% of a better score.



Q This occurred twice recently at my local club. My partner and I were defending against a contract of 3NT and, during the course of play, declarer (who on both occasions was

the same person) has asked what our discards are. I am sure I have read somewhere that once play has begun, declarer is not allowed to ask about discards. Could you please let me know if this is so?

Shirley Rainbow, Cambridge.

A Declarer has a right to ask about your discards whenever it is his turn to play from either hand. Bridge is not a game of secret agreements, so it is important that players can always ask about bidding or carding agreements when it is their turn to play or call. The exception is that dummy may not.



Q Is dummy entitled to say to declarer, 'having none, partner,' when declarer trumps an opening lead?

Raymond Cook by email.

A Yes, one of dummy's specified rights is to ask declarer whether he has any cards of a suit led.



Q I have a couple of bidding queries. What should happen if:

1. Someone bids before dealer, both if the offender passes or makes a bid, eg 1♦?

2. In the course of the bidding, someone draws out the wrong card and then corrects it, virtually immediately? I understand that we all can be subject to mechanical error, but what if one of the opposing partnership

won't accept that explanation?

In both instances, I think the director should be called, but in each of the above instances this was brushed aside.

Lesley by email.

A It does not matter whether the idea of the director is brushed aside, he must be called. Not calling the director leads to wrong rulings at the table, bad feeling, an unfriendly atmosphere and unfairness to other competitors. Do not ask whether the director should be called: just call him yourself.

1. If there is an opening pass out of turn then the next player may accept it, which makes it legal and the bidding proceeds from there. If he does not accept it then the pass is cancelled, the bidding reverts to the correct dealer, and the player who passed must pass at his first turn to call.

If there is an opening bid out of turn then the next player may accept it, which makes it legal and the bidding proceeds from there. If he does not accept it then the bid is cancelled, the bidding reverts to the correct dealer, and the partner of the player who bid must pass for the rest of the auction and there may be lead penalties. One exception: if a player bid when his right hand opponent dealt, and it is not accepted, and dealer now passes, then the bid is repeated without penalty.

2. If a player makes an unintended call and corrects it or attempts to correct it without pause for thought, it may be corrected if his partner has not called subsequently. It is not up to the opponents to decide

whether it is in time or whether it is an unintended call: it is a matter for the director to decide.



Q I know that if my partner removes a card from his hand and places it face-down on the table and says, 'Any questions?' I can stop him from playing the card if it is, in fact, my turn to make the opening lead. In those circumstances, it is legal for me to prevent a lead out of turn.

What is the position, however, if I win a trick in defence, but my partner thinks that he has won and starts to withdraw a card from his hand. This happened, and I shouted, 'No!' to prevent him from making a lead out of turn. He did not get it more than halfway to the table, it was seen by both declarer and dummy, but not by me. The director ruled that it was a lead out of turn, told me that I had no right to try to stop partner from making such a mistake (ie I should not have shouted 'No!'), and gave declarer the various options.

As a defender, am I allowed to try to stop my partner from making a lead out of turn?

Tim Sharrock by email.

A Yes, the director was wrong. A card must be played by a defender if it is in a position for partner to see its face, and is not played and may be put back into the player's hand if it has not reached that position. Whether



declarer or dummy can see (or have seen) it is irrelevant.

The Law gives you the right to stop partner from committing an infraction (Law 9A3) so you were within your rights and there should have been no penalty.



Q I would like to know whether fourth suit forcing should be alerted? It is an unnatural bid.

Grace Stephens by email.

A Certainly, it is an artificial bid, and all artificial bids below 4♣ must be alerted (apart from those that are announced).



Q The following occurred at a bridge evening and I would appreciate your comments. West was in 3NT and had made seven tricks so far. South was on lead.

Before South made a lead, West claimed and faced his cards assuming South had to lead a spade – obviously West had miscounted. The director was called and said the natural play

was the ♥10 which would have given East two tricks. I contested saying South could have the knowledge that North held the ♥9, particularly as declarer exposed his hand. Both sides were given an average. Was this correct?

Ron Booth, Manchester.

A The idea of giving averages instead of proper rulings is fifty years out of date, illegal, and dreadfully unfair on the side who would have benefited from the ruling.

When a player makes a claim, the benefit of any doubt goes to the other side. South might have led the ♥10: he might have led the ♥4: since this is a matter of doubt the director must give the benefit of the doubt to the non-claiming side, ie he must assume the ♥4 is led and the defence gets the last trick.



Q My partner and I have always announced our 1NT openings as 12-14. With most 15-count balanced hands we open one of a suit.

However, we both know that with a poor 15-count (particularly 4333 hands with no more than one ten), partner will open 1NT, revaluing it as 14 points. Should we change our announcement?

Philip Baxter,
Southend-on-Sea.

A This is always tricky. If you say, 'twelve to fifteen,' opponents will assume that fifteen is as likely as fourteen, but if you say, 'twelve to fourteen,' some opponents will complain when you have

fifteen. Better players tend to realise that points are not everything and allow some leeway for judgement, but less experienced players tend to assume points are absolute. I think safest is to say, 'twelve to a bad fifteen.'



Q What should the director's ruling be when there is a dispute over the scoring after (a) one pair has picked up their cards and (b) both pairs have picked up their cards.

George Nicolls, Liverpool.

A When there is a dispute, the director should try and decide what happened by asking questions, going through the play, and looking at any cards that are still in order.

The only exception to this is if there is a dispute over the number of tricks and, after it is disputed a player then shuffles or mixes his cards, then the director will rule in favour of the other side unless he is absolutely certain that is wrong.



Q Is a forcing pass alertable?

Tim Friedman by email.

A Below 4♣, it is alertable in theory: above 3NT it is not.

In practice, this makes few forcing passes alertable: for example, if your partner opens 1♦, and you bid a game forcing 2♥, LHO overcalls 2♠ and partner passes, then there is no reason to alert it: since you have to reach game or double the opponents it will come as no surprise

that a pass is forcing.

So perhaps it is fairer to say that a forcing pass of a bid below 4♣ is alertable if your side has not previously forced to game.



Q Could you please tell me how to score passed out hands? We play duplicate, rate results by percentages and use Scorebridge for the scoring, but there is confusion about scoring a hand passed out for no bids and scoring hands passed out for lack of time to play. Should there be a difference?

Jonathan Dimsdale by email.

A A hand that is passed out is one where there have been four passes, scoring zero aggregate points and beating all the minus scores and losing to all the plus scores. Exceptionally, it could be a top or a bottom. It is scored as passed out. Scorebridge has a method of entering passed out, as do BridgeMates (use the PASS button).

A hand that is not played because of time is not passed out: it has not been played so the laws require averages to be given, normally average minus to both sides, unless only one side is at fault.

Scorebridge allows averages to be included, as do BridgeMates. However, if done via BridgeMates, the director has to do it via the PIN number and the menu which shows artificial scores.



Q In scoring at rubber bridge, do fifties go up

or down? I've always gone down, but recently fellow players want to go up. I asked a county player if he knew, but he said it's 'House Rules'. What is your view?

Lt Col WD Douglas,
Pickering.

A I have checked up and agree with you that it is not covered by the laws. When the laws were first promulgated, the norm was rubber bridge for money and perhaps it was included in the law books of the time, but not now.

Unlike you, I have always played fifties go up. I have checked with the most important bridge club that plays rubber bridge in my area and they say fifties go down but have no authority.

I think the county player was right: it is a matter of 'House Rules', ie any group should agree on this before play.



Q **Playing duplicate at my club, I played the wrong card by mistake and immediately said so. The director was called and ruled it had to be played as it was 'unauthorised information'. This resulted in the opponents making an impossible contract, giving them credit they had not earned either for bidding or play and therefore effectively penalising every other E/W pair which they did not deserve.**

I accept I have transgressed and a penalty is warranted, but suggest it would be fairer if it only affected my partner and myself, eg a deduction from our total score. I mean, of course, after allowing the played card to be changed if accepted that it was a genuine error and not a change of mind.

Bryan Leonard by email.

A Bridge is a game of judgement, good and bad, memory, both good and bad, and many, many mistakes. Whenever you or your opponents do something less than perfect at your table, it affects the scores around the room. If you bid a bad slam and make it, go off in a game you could have made, misdefend to give a trick away or lead or bid out of turn and it affects the result, then in each and every case, it affects the scores of every other pair: that is what the pairs game is all about and you have to accept it, or not play matchpoint pairs.

In this case, you have played a card which is a mistake, which probably happens to most players at least thirty times a session, whatever the reason for the mistake, whether forgetfulness, failure to count, playing the wrong card by accident, or any number of other happenings. Once a card is played, it may not be changed and the fact that it affects other players is just bridge. The laws agree with this and the game is played according to the laws. ■

E-mail your questions (including your postal address) on bridge laws to: davidstevenson@mrbridge.co.uk

DECLARER PLAY QUIZ



by David Huggett

(Answers on page 47)

You are South as declarer playing teams or rubber bridge. In each case, what is your play strategy?

1.

♠ K 7 6
♥ A 7 5 2
♦ A 8 4
♣ A K 3



♠ A Q 3
♥ K J
♦ K Q J 5
♣ 7 6 4 2

3.

♠ 6 5 4
♥ K 6
♦ A 7 5
♣ A K 6 4 2



♠ K J 2
♥ A J 5 4
♦ K 8 2
♣ 9 5 3

You are declarer in 6NT and West leads the ♠J. How do you plan the play?

You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♠7. East plays the ♠10. How do you plan the play?

2.

♠ A 10 9 2
♥ 8 6 4
♦ Q 7 6
♣ A 5 4



♠ K Q J 8 5 4 3
♥ A K 5 3
♦ K 4
♣ Void

4.

♠ 7
♥ A 10 7
♦ 8 7 6 4
♣ 8 7 5 4 2



♠ K 9 6
♥ K Q J 9 8
♦ A K 3
♣ A 3

You are declarer in 6♠ after West has opened a weak 2♦. West leads the ♣J. How do you plan the play?

You are declarer in 4♥ and West leads the ♦Q. How do you plan the play?

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Aggressive B

Generally players get taught to bid in the style of rubber bridge: particularly aiming to bid contracts you can make. It is hard to explain to beginners that going down is good. However, as you play more bridge and, particularly club bridge, learning the tactics that succeed at Duplicate Pairs (the normal club game) is important.

The DVD focuses on a number of areas: the partscore battle, penalty doubles, sacrificing and the choice of game. The general message is that bidding more tends to score better at this form of the game.

I start off by showing a travelling scoresheet, comparing the scores shown. It is important to understand that scoring ten points better than everybody else gets you a top score: it does not matter how much you beat people by, you just have to beat them. This makes the partscore battle crucial – so often, going down when your opponents can make a little contract will give you a profit. -100 outscores -110 for 2♠.

This is the hand that I use to demonstrate the ideas.

West opens 1♥ and North chooses to overcall 1♠ (a poor suit, but with opening strength, he is right to bid). East shows a weak hand but heart support by bidding 2♥ and South also shows his fit with North by competing to 2♠. West, with a flat hand and only four hearts, passes (sometimes East might have just three-card support) and the bidding goes round to East. One of the guidelines I go over is: *if both sides have a fit, it is always right to bid three-over-two*. East can be sure that both sides have a fit, so he bids on to 3♥: either 3♥ will make in which case it is right to bid it, or if it does go down, the likelihood is that 2♠ would have made, so again it is right to play 3♥.

Here, with best defence, both sides can make just eight tricks. Against 3♥, North-South can take ♦A-K, then ♣K, ♣A and a diamond ruff: one off. In spades, the defence should switch to trumps after leading hearts: by drawing South's trumps, the defence end up making ♠A-K and three heart tricks. The traveller shows 3♥ going one off (-50) was better than allowing North to play 2♠ (-110). However, it is not easy to judge because bidding three-over-three is not so good unless you have a bigger fit. If North pushes on to 3♠, he would lose out, going down himself instead of taking the opponents down. For the most part, on these types of hands, your ambition is to try to push your opponents from the comfort of the two-level up to the three-level.

We move on to sacrificing and doubling: it is important to get used to doubling more, particularly when your opponents overbid. Two off non-vulnerable is still a handy score, just -100 when your opponents can likely make more from a partscore. If your

Dealer West. Love All.

♠ J 9 4 3 2			
♥ 7 4 2			
♦ A K			
♣ K Q 4			
♠ A 6		♠ K 8 5	
♥ A K Q 9		♥ J 10 8 5	
♦ J 9 4		♦ Q 10 5 3	
♣ J 9 5 3		♣ 7 2	
♠ Q 10 7			
♥ 6 3			
♦ 8 7 6 2			
♣ A 10 8 6			

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♥	All Pass

Bidding at Pairs

opponents never double you, then it is right to overbid like this. However, if they learn to double then your -100 will become -300, which is not so nice. In fact, the more you double opponents, the more you will put them off bidding against you.

Another important element of doubling is when you are expecting to make a game contract and the opponents outbid you. Sacrificing is an important aspect of duplicate bridge: bidding over the opponents' game bid, hoping to give away fewer points than the worth of their game. As the strong side, it is important to do something – either double or bid on – you must not let them outbid you without doing something. Otherwise you will not have any chance of getting a good enough score to make up for your game contract.

As the sacrificing side, the vulnerability is key – if you are non-vulnerable and your opponents vulnerable, then it does not require much to find a good sacrifice. You hold:

Dealer North. N/S Game.

♠ Q 9 4	
♥ 2	
♦ 7 6 5 4	
♣ 8 7 6 4 2	

West	North	East	South
	1♥	1♠	4♥
?			

It might seem strange to contemplate a bid with such a weak hand, but feeling that 4♥ is sure to make (worth 620), how many tricks would your side need to make in 4♠ doubled to score a profit? Three off doubled and non-vulnerable is just -500, so you only

need to make seven tricks.

Give your partner just A-K-x-x-x in spades and you might make seven tricks with a couple of ruffs in your hand, but your partner might well have a high card outside. It is worth taking the gamble and bidding 4♠. Here is the full hand:

♠ 10 7 6		
♥ A K 9 5 3		
♦ A K 8		
♣ K 10		
♠ Q 9 4		♠ A K J 8 5
♥ 2		♥ 10 8
♦ 7 6 5 4		♦ J 10 9 3
♣ 8 7 6 4 2		♣ A 3
♠ 3 2		
♥ Q J 7 6 4		
♦ Q 2		
♣ Q J 9 5		

North doubles your 4♠ bid, but your partner makes eight tricks, so you have found an excellent sacrifice: giving just 300 points away, instead of allowing North to collect 620 points for making 4♥. However, North has done the best he can – 5♥ would go down, so it was no good bidding on, instead he maximised his score by making sure to double your 4♠ bid.

The DVD finishes with game bidding and, once again, a look at travellers comparing the scores for minor suit contracts and no-trump contracts. The emphasis is, of course, on no-trumps because you need only nine tricks, rather than 11 in a minor.

Finally the summary returns to the joys of -50 and -100: getting used to being happy when you get these scores will improve your scores and your mood.

Basically, bidding more tends to work out better. ■

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Gisborne's Foolish Lead

Once a year, the Feast of St Barnabas open pairs was held in Nottingham Castle. The Sheriff and Sir Guy of Gisborne had won the event on the previous two occasions.

Many thought that a third person had participated in these triumphs – Charles Hatcham, the official scorer. Anyone suggesting this openly would risk a long spell in some dank dungeon. It had to be admitted, however, that Hatcham's style of dress was remarkably smart for someone of such lowly status. His purple velvet jacket bore a remarkable resemblance to one that the Sheriff could no longer wear after putting on weight.

Play began at mid-day and this board saw the Sheriff facing two wenches from the Castle kitchens:

king of diamonds.

'Five trumps for you, my Lord,' Gisborne announced proudly.

The Sheriff surveyed the dummy with no great approval. What use were five trumps when the distribution of Gisborne's side suits matched that of his own? On the face of it, there were two hearts, a diamond and a club to lose. What could be done?

'Play the ten,' instructed the Sheriff.

Gisborne looked puzzled. 'The king is led, my Lord,' he replied.

'Do you think you're partnering a half-wit?' demanded the Sheriff. 'Anyone of my exalted station can recognise a king when he sees one.'

'Of course, my Lord,' said Gisborne, reaching quickly for the ♦10.

The Sheriff won with the diamond ace and drew trumps in two rounds. Now, if the Gods were kind, he would be able to remove West's cards in hearts and clubs.

The Sheriff played the ace and king of clubs, happy to see the unkempt kitchen maid follow both times. He continued with the ♥A and exited with a diamond to West's jack. With only diamonds remaining in her hand, Maysie Goult exited with the ♦Q. That was her intention, anyway, but to her amazement, the queen won the trick. The Sheriff discarded a heart from dummy and a club from his hand.

'Am I still on lead?' queried the kitchen maid.

The Sheriff peered at her disdainfully.

Dealer West. Love All.

♠ 10 9 7 3 2

♥ 9 6 5

♦ 10 3

♣ K 9 3

♠ 8 4

♥ 10

♦ K Q J 9 8 7 5 4

♣ Q 7

♠ 6

♥ K Q J 8 4 2

♦ 6

♣ J 10 8 6 4

♠ A K Q J 5

♥ A 7 3

♦ A 2

♣ A 5 2

West

Maysie

Goult

5♦

All Pass

North

Guy of

Gisborne

Pass

East

Loula

Beecham

Pass

South

The

Sheriff

5♠



Maysie Goult, whose straw-like hair was badly in need of a comb, led the

‘So it would seem,’ he replied.

When another diamond was led, the Sheriff threw dummy’s last heart and ruffed in his hand. The remaining tricks were his. What a play he had made!

‘Isn’t it better if you double 5♦, my Lord?’ Gisborne queried. ‘With my king of clubs we would have six top tricks. That’s four down.’

‘Be silent!’ cried the Sheriff, causing heads to turn at the adjacent tables. ‘No other player in the kingdom would find my ♦10 play.’

‘Er... yes, indeed, my Lord,’ stuttered Gisborne. He tried to recall the deal. What on earth difference had playing the ♦10 made?

‘If I leave it there, the wench can put me one down by refusing to win the trick,’ continued the Sheriff. ‘Not that there’s a chance in a million of her finding such a defence.’

Neither defender had followed a word of the Sheriff’s analysis. They appreciated their jobs in the warm kitchen, however, particularly during the winter months. ‘The ten of diamonds was a fine play, my Lord,’ Loula Beecham exclaimed.

A round or two later, the Sheriff faced Lady Dulcine du Bois, an elegant member of court known as a strong player of the cards. This was the deal before them:

Dealer West. Game All.

♠ 7 5 3 2
♥ Q J 4
♦ 9 7 3
♣ 8 6 5

♠ 9
♥ A K 10 9 5 2
♦ K J 2
♣ K 10 3

♠ J
♥ 8 7 6 3
♦ Q 10 8 6
♣ Q J 9 7

♠ A K Q 10 8 6 4
♥ Void
♦ A 5 4
♣ A 4 2

West	North	East	South
<i>Guy of</i>	<i>Carl</i>	<i>The</i>	<i>Lady</i>
<i>Gisborne</i>	<i>Blayke</i>	<i>Sheriff</i>	<i>du Bois</i>
1♥	Pass	2♥	4♠
All Pass			

Gisborne led the ♥A and the black-

bearded Carl Blayke laid out his dummy. ‘No need to thank me for this hopeless collection!’ he said, laughing at his own joke.

Lady du Bois was happy with the cards she saw. ‘Your cards could be quite useful, Carl,’ she replied.

Lady du Bois ruffed the first trick, selecting the ♠8 for this purpose. Her two lower trumps would then be available for reaching the dummy later. She drew the defenders’ trumps with the ♠A and led the ♠4 to dummy’s ♠5. ‘Queen of hearts, please,’ she said, throwing a diamond loser from her hand.

Gisborne won with the ♥K and switched to a diamond. Lady du Bois won with the ♦A and crossed to dummy by overtaking the ♠6 with the ♠7. She discarded her remaining diamond loser on the ♥J and claimed the contract.

‘What an appalling lead!’ exclaimed the Sheriff. ‘Can you not find a diamond lead? I have the queen over here.’

‘It makes no difference, my Lord,’ Gisborne replied. ‘She would throw clubs instead of diamonds.’

‘Heaven save me from such imbecility!’ exclaimed the Sheriff. ‘If you lead either minor, or a trump, declarer can’t set up a discard on the hearts.’

Play had paused at the adjoining tables, as the players lapped up every enjoyable word. Gisborne treated everyone below him in surly fashion. It made a fine spectacle when this situation was reversed.

‘If you intended to defend so feebly, you should have sacrificed in five hearts,’ persisted the Sheriff. ‘That’s only two down.’

Gisborne leaned forward to inspect the scoresheet. ‘But most players went down in 4♠, my Lord,’ he said. ‘Conceding 500 would be a near bottom.’

‘I’m not surprised they went down in 4♠,’ muttered the Sheriff. ‘Do you think anyone else would make such a bone-headed heart lead?’

Play proceeded and on the next round, the Sheriff faced the castle chaplain, Reverend Percy Plante. The cleric was popular on account of the merciful shortness of his sermons.

This was the first deal of the round.

Dealer South. N/S Game.

♠ 10 9 6 4
♥ K
♦ K Q J 6
♣ J 6 4 3

♠ Q
♥ 10 8 6 4 2
♦ 10 9 8 5 3
♣ 10 2

♠ A 7 3
♥ 9 7 5
♦ 7 4
♣ K Q 9 7 5

♠ K J 8 5 2
♥ A Q J 3
♦ A 2
♣ A 8

West	North	East	South
<i>Guy of</i>	<i>Rev.</i>	<i>The</i>	<i>Rev.</i>
<i>Gisborne</i>	<i>Blott</i>	<i>Sheriff</i>	<i>Plante</i>
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Dbl	6♣
All Pass			

Gisborne led the ♣10 in response to his partner’s lead-directing double of 5♣.

‘Not much there for a game raise,’ exclaimed Reverend Plante.

The Sheriff smirked. No indeed and what a foolish Blackwood bid by South. Without the lead-directing double of the 5♣ Blackwood response, Gisborne would surely have led something else.

Declarer won with the ♣A and played the ♦A-K-Q, hoping to discard a club. When the Sheriff ruffed the third diamond with the ♠3, he overruffed and crossed to the ♥K. The ♦J was ruffed with the ♠7 and overruffed. The Chaplain then turned to the heart suit. All followed to the ♥A-Q and two of dummy’s clubs were thrown. When the last club was ditched on the ♥J, the Sheriff ruffed with the ♠A.

Reverend Plante ruffed the club return and played the ♠K, drawing West’s ♠Q. The slam was home.

‘Without your double of 5♣, I would have led a diamond,’ Gisborne observed.

‘Obviously,’ retorted the Sheriff. ‘He gets the club loser away then.’

‘But perhaps we would make two trump tricks, my Lord,’ Gisborne continued. ‘With the ♠A-Q-x-x missing, surely declarer would run the ♠10!’ ■

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If you make a take-out double, most of the time partner will bid a suit. Sometimes responder will bid, relieving partner of the obligation to bid. Sometimes partner will bid no-trumps or, on rare occasions, leave your double in for penalties.

1. Partner has to bid

If partner has to bid and you plan to raise, you should bear in mind that partner might have no strength. You should raise to one level lower than you would have done if partner had made a one-over-one response to an opening bid. A simple raise thus suggests about 15-17 points or a six-loser hand; a jump raise indicates about 18-19 points or a five-loser hand; to jump all the way to game, you need an even better hand. Moreover, any sort of raise indicates four-card support – remember your take-out double has already implied support for the other suits, so anything less than four-card support would be a disappointment.

Hand 1	Hand 2
♠ A Q 9 4	♠ A Q 9 4
♥ K 10 3	♥ K 10 3
♦ 5 3	♦ 5 3
♣ A K 3 2	♣ A K Q 2

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
			1♦
Dbl	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

Hand 1 should raise to 2♠, Hand 2 to 3♠.

2. In Competition

In competition, in other words if

How do you after I

opener bids again, you might raise partner with a sound minimum take-out double. Again the raise indicates four-card support, so passing suggests a minimum and only three-card support.

Hand 3	Hand 4
♠ A Q 9 4	♠ Q 9 4
♥ K 9 6 3	♥ K 9 6 3
♦ 4	♦ 9 4
♣ K 7 4 3	♣ A K J 3

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
			1♦
Dbl	Pass	1♠	2♦
?			

Hand 3 should raise to 2♠; Hand 4, with only three spades, should pass – do not bid your hand twice.

3. With a strong hand and a suit

If you doubled initially because your hand was too strong to make a simple suit overcall, you will show your suit on the second round.

Hand 5	Hand 6
♠ K Q J 8 3	♠ A K Q 9 4 3
♥ A Q 6	♥ A Q 6
♦ 7 4	♦ K 4
♣ A K 3	♣ K 5

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
			1♣
Dbl	Pass	1♥	Pass
?			

Hand 5 should bid 1♠; Hand 6, which is a very strong hand with which you

You Continue Doubling?

would have opened at the two level, should jump to 2♠.


Remember, you are showing a good hand by bidding a new suit (except perhaps if you convert 2♣ to 2♦ after the opponents have opened in a major) and that partner might have nothing.

4. Rebid in no-trumps

If you double and then rebid in no-trumps at the minimum level, you are showing a hand too strong for a 1NT overcall.

Hand 7

♠ K 10 2
♥ A K 4 3
♦ K Q 4
♣ A 9 5



You would double any one level suit opening with this hand and, unless partner bids hearts, rebid 1NT if you can, 2NT if partner's reply puts you already at the two level.


5. With a strong hand and unable to raise

If you have a strong hand but do not wish to raise, you cue bid opener's suit (if opener passes) or double again (if opener bids on).

Typically, these actions deny four-card support if partner bids a major.

Hand 8

♠ A Q 2
♥ A Q 8
♦ 9 5 4
♣ A K J 4



You	LHO	Partner	RHO
			1♦
Dbl	Pass	1♥/♠	Pass
2♦			

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
			1♦
Dbl	Pass	1♥/♠	2♦
Dbl			

6. Partner bids freely

If partner bids freely (responder having bid) or jumps, this is a different situation altogether. Now you are entitled to place partner with some values. You should treat a free bid as showing the same values as a one-over-one response (6-9) and a jump bid the same values as a two-over-one response (10-12) and bid accordingly.

7. Partner cue-bids

Finally, if partner bids opener's suit, this creates a force (though not a game force). You treat this as passing the buck and asking you to bid a suit. The cue bid is forcing to suit agreement. Both of you keep bidding until someone raises (or you reach game).

Hand 9

♠ A Q 8 4
♥ Q 8 4
♦ 10 3
♣ K Q 8 4



♠ K J 9 3
♥ K J 10 3
♦ J 4 2
♣ J 3

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
			1♦
Dbl	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♣	All Pass

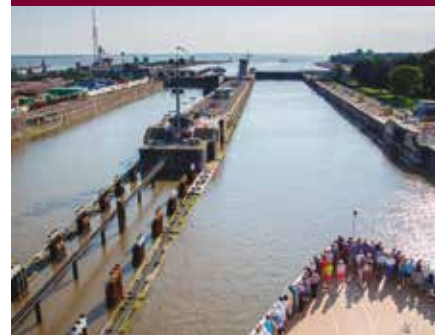
If partner held the ♣A instead of the ♣J, he would raise to 4♠.



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Missing the Jack

Often the difference between playing a hand the right way and the wrong way can be as little as a small pip card; the humblest 8 or 9 of trumps can make all the difference to a contract.

This is a normal looking 4♠ contract with no traps:

♠ A 7 5 4
♥ K 6 3
♦ Q 2
♣ A K 6 3

W E
N S

♠ K Q 10 3
♥ 5 4 2
♦ A K J 5
♣ J 5

You open a weak no-trump as South and after partner uses Stayman, you reach 4♠. The contract looks easy but the opening lead is the ♥Q and it is not long before the opponents have taken the first three tricks. East then switches to a diamond and you win with the ♦Q – how do you play the trump suit?

If trumps are 3-2 then the contract is simple. Can you cope with a 4-1 trump break?

The answer is yes and no – if East has four trumps to the jack you can pick the jack up, if West has four to the jack then you can't. Start by cashing the ♠K and then play low to the ♠A. If everyone follows you claim the rest, and if East shows out you must concede one down. However, if West shows out you are conveniently in dummy to take a trump finesse, with your ♠Q-10 poised like the sword of Damocles over East's ♠J-x.

The full hand might be this:

♠ A 7 5 4
♥ K 6 3
♦ Q 2
♣ A K 6 3

♠ 8
♥ Q J 9 7
♦ 10 4 3
♣ 10 8 7 4 2

W E
N S

♠ J 9 6 2
♥ A 10 8
♦ 9 8 7 6
♣ Q 9

♠ K Q 10 3
♥ 5 4 2
♦ A K J 5
♣ J 5

However, if we change the trump suit slightly, so too does the right way to play the contract change.

♠ A 9 5 4
♥ K 8 6 3
♦ Q
♣ A 8 6 3

W E
N S

♠ K Q 10 3
♥ 5 4 2
♦ A K J 10 3
♣ 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	4♣	3♣	Dbl
All Pass		Pass	4♠

Once more you are greeted with the ♥Q lead and the opponents quickly wrap up the first three tricks. East then switches to the ♣Q and the trick is completed by West's king and dummy's ace. What now?

Since East has turned up with three hearts and (presumably) seven clubs, we are worried he will be short in trumps, but fortunately the nine in dummy comes to our rescue.

Cash the king and queen of trumps, and if everyone follows, you can claim. If, instead, East shows out play a trump to the nine, and now it is West who has his ♠J-x crushed like a grape in a wine press. The full hand might be:

♠ A 9 5 4
♥ K 8 6 3
♦ Q
♣ A 8 6 3

♠ J 8 6 2
♥ Q J 10
♦ 9 8 6 5 2
♣ K

W E
N S

♠ 7
♥ A 9 7
♦ 7 4
♣ Q J 10 9 7 4 2

♠ K Q 10 3
♥ 5 4 2
♦ A K J 10 3
♣ 5

Of course, if there had been no revealing bidding, then you would have to guess which opponent you thought was more likely to have four trumps, but generally there is a clue from the auction, as bad breaks tend to encourage competitive bidding.

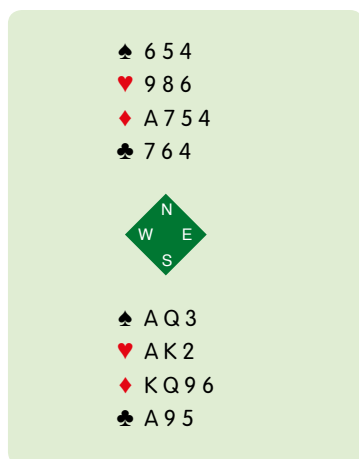
The presence of the nine of trumps means that you can pick up J-x-x-x in either hand, providing you guess correctly which opponent has it.

Let's try a slightly different suit and also make your entries more difficult.

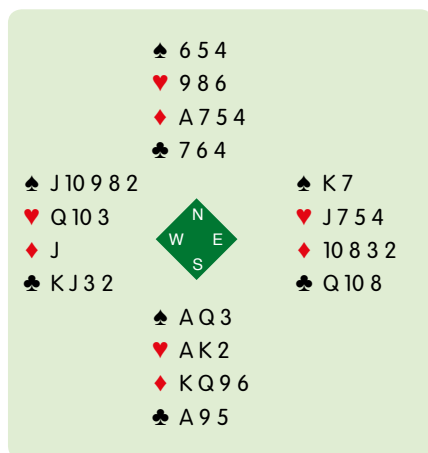
This time the bidding goes 2NT-P-3NT and you see dummy (see next column) is a little threadbare.

You get the ♠J lead to the king and ace which bumps you up to eight tricks; you need to develop a ninth in diamonds. Once more, if the suit

breaks 3-2 you are home and dry, so you worry about what can be done if the suit breaks badly.



The correct play is to cash the ♦K and then play a low one to the ♦A. If one hand has ♦J-10-x-x then you will go down since you can't pick it up, but if West has a singleton jack or ten, then when he shows out on the second round, you can finesse against East's four-card holding headed by the other honour. The full hand might be:



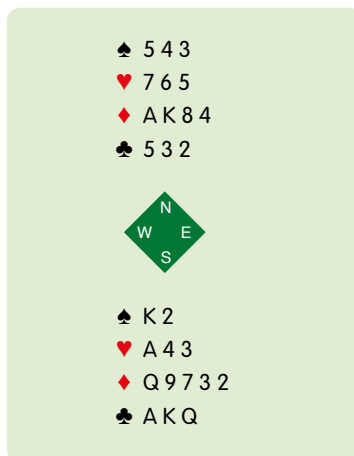
Note that you must cash a top diamond when you are in hand before you cross to dummy, because if you end up in your hand after cashing two rounds, you can't get back to dummy to take the finesse.

Now the final suit we will look at seems to defy the logic we have seen so far, but thinking about it critically it makes perfect sense.

How would you play this contract of 3NT after the ♠Q lead to your king?

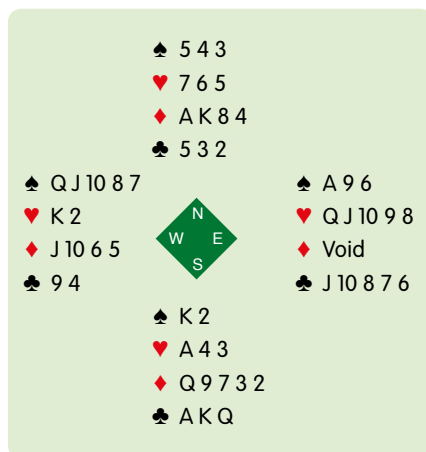
The contract looks very easy; assuming things break well you have ten top tricks. However, trained as you are to

look deeper into the hand, you pay close attention to the diamond spots.



Holding nine diamonds, it is true that if the suit is 2-2 or 3-1 you have five tricks, but what if they are 4-0?

The important thing to appreciate is that if East has the four missing diamonds (♦J-10-6-5) then you can't do anything and will have to lose a trick in the suit. If, instead, West has the four diamonds then they can be picked up, but only if you cash the queen of diamonds first. When East shows out you can play low to the ♦A-K-8, West will probably split his honours, so now you come back to the ♣Q and finesse in diamonds once more. The full hand might be this:



Note that even if the auction implied that East was the one with diamond length, we should still start by cashing the ♦Q, because we can do nothing to stop East making a diamond trick if he has ♦J-10-6-5. If West has that holding, he is doomed providing we play the suit correctly. ■



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What are the Best opening Leads?

Q Although I have played duplicate bridge for many a year, I still find a difficult part of the game is the opening lead. Please could you revisit the techniques for this defensive play, as it is the first shot at defeating declarer's contract and you often seem to be leading 'blind'?

Philip Watson by email.

A Attractive opening leads are generally as follows:

1. Partner's suit.
2. An ace-king combination.
3. Other sequential honour combinations.
4. Against a no-trump contract, a decent five-card or longer suit.
5. Against a suit contract, a singleton in a side suit, particularly an unbid suit or if you have a trump entry.
6. Against a suit contract, when holding strength in declarer's side suit, a trump lead.

Slightly less attractive opening leads include:

1. An interior sequence.
2. A long weak suit.
3. Against a suit contract, a broken suit not headed by the ace.

4. A trump lead when the bidding suggests the opponents have a 5-3 fit.
5. Against a suit contract, a doubleton in a side suit, particularly when holding a trump entry.

Leads generally to avoid:

1. Against a suit contract, suits with the ace but not the king.
2. Short suit leads against a suit contract when short in trumps or with trumps that would make anyway.
3. A singleton trump lead.
4. Suits the opponents have bid strongly.
5. A broken suit that partner has failed to support despite holding values.



Q Sitting North, I picked up the following hand with 19 points in it.

♠ A Q 7 5
♥ K Q 5
♦ K 3
♣ K Q 5 4

East was the dealer and opened 1NT (12-14), South passed and West bid 2♣ Stayman. What should

I have bid?

In the event I passed, East bid 2♦, South and West both passed. What should I have bid then? I actually doubled for take-out, but partner passed thinking it was a penalty double so disaster all round. West had a weak hand with six diamonds. What would you have expected my double to mean?

Mike Fairclough, Wirral.

A With your hand, I would have doubled 2♣ and doubled again when the opponents subsided in 2♦. While the initial double might show a weaker hand with clubs, doubling twice makes it clear that you have a strong hand.

On your actual sequence, your partner should have worked out that the double of 2♦ was for take-out. If you had six tricks in your hand with diamonds as trumps, you would have overcalled 2♦ on the previous round.



Q When faced with a weak hand and a double of partner's opening 1NT, is it always worth

using a wriggle?

Nick Goulder, Alresford, Hampshire.

A If the opponents double your weak 1NT, it is usual to have a way to show single-suited and two-suited hands.

One commonly played variation is that redouble shows a five-card suit somewhere while suit bids show the suit bid and a higher suit. After the redouble, opener bids 2♣ and then responder either passes (with clubs) or shows some other suit. If responder bids a suit initially, opener can pass with some sort of fit or move to the next suit up knowing that responder has another suit.

If you are of a gambling nature, you can play that a pass from responder forces opener to redouble. This way, responder has an extra way to get to two of a suit, which makes it possible to add definition to the two-suited hands. You could, for example, play that pass followed (after opener's forced redouble) by a suit says the second suit is spades, while bidding a suit directly after 1NT doubled says the other suit is not spades. I do not think

the compulsory redouble by opener is sound (and so do not play it with anyone), because often responder has something like a 4333 six-count that it is quite happy to be dummy in 1NT doubled, but not in 1NT redoubled.



Q An article in BRIDGE pointed out the benefits of playing weak and strong twos. The method which was suggested to achieve this was to play Benjaminised Acol.

We are trying a similar approach. We are playing precision club and multi coloured two diamonds.

Please compare and contrast the methods and give your views?

Alex Mathers, Northallerton.

A Some people like playing a strong club system while others do not. If you play a strong club system and are happy with it, then I would not want to suggest changing. When I was a junior, I played strong club systems, precision and blue club, with most of my partners. I only changed because my partners wanted to.

It is important when playing a strong club system that you have clear and effective agreements about what to do when the opponents come in over your 1♣ opening. If the opponents do not come in, a strong club system is superior.

The multi 2♦ increases the chance that the responding hand will become declarer (generally a good idea) and might enable you to cater for some awkward strong hands (4441 shapes perhaps). One downside to the

ambiguity of the multi is that responder cannot increase the pre-empt without support for both majors and sometimes has to guess what to lead. Another downside to the multi is that the opponent in second seat can choose whether to compete immediately or after opener's suit has become known. The fact that you can get to rebid 2NT/3NT either via a 1♣ opening or a multi 2♦ opening gives you very similar options to Benjamin for showing various strong point counts.



Q 1) Over 1NT, my wife and I play transfers (2♦, 2♥, 2♠ calling for the suit above to be bid, 2♣ being Stayman) and have always used 3♣ or 3♦ as a weak take-out. Could you please clarify what are the correct bids for transfers after a 1NT opening?

2) We have always bid on the basis that after a two level suit opening bid, the partnership needs to bid on until game is reached.

3) Also when one partner changes the suit at the two level or above, their partner needs to bid once more. Is this correct or if not what are the rules please?

David and Lorraine Mason by email.

A 1. Playing 2♠ as a transfer to clubs, as well as 3♣ to show a weak hand with clubs, does not sound entirely efficient. If you really like transfers, you could play 2♦, 2♥, 2♠ and 2NT all as transfers, with 2♠ showing clubs and 2NT showing diamonds.

Playing four-suit transfers is quite common in conjunction with a strong 1NT opening because the positional advantage of having the 1NT opener declare is higher the stronger the opener is. If you do that, you will need to use Stayman on hands that wish to invite 3NT even if you lack a four-card major.

If you wish to retain a natural 2NT, you could play the 2♠ response as asking opener to bid 3♣ but not promising clubs. Responder then passes 3♣ (when weak with clubs) or corrects to 3♦ (when weak with diamonds).

2. Only in the Culbertson system, which was popular from the 1930s through to the 1950s, are all two-level openings game forcing. In Acol and in most contemporary systems, only the system strong bid, 2♣ (or 2♦ playing Benjamin) creates a game force (when not followed by a 2NT rebid).

3. After an opening bid and a two-level change of suit response, it is usual these days to play that a lower suit by opener (eg 1♥-2♠-2♦) creates a one-round force while a higher suit, a reverse (eg 1♥-2♠-2♣), creates a game force.



Q Please could you advise me on the following: my partner opens the bidding with a major suit and rebids in a minor suit (eg 1♠ then 2♣) and I have a point count of, say, 6-8 HCP. On balance, what are the pros and cons on going for a 5/3 fit or a 4/4 fit?

W B Coffey, Birmingham.

A Playing matchpoints, you are going to go back to the major

regardless. For one thing, if both contracts make, the major scores more. For another, going back to the major makes it harder for the opponents to compete.

At teams, I suppose you might pass the minor with a lower strength hand (6 HCP) to keep the bidding low, especially if you are vulnerable. You are a bit less unlikely to pass after 1♥-1NT-2♦ than after 1♠-1NT-2♣ because going back to the higher suit to keep the opponents quiet is not a factor when partner's suits are touching.

Often the situation you postulate will not arise because you will have already raised the major. Generally, I would only respond 1NT to 1♥ or 1♠ when holding three-card support if the shape is 4333 or the hand is no-trump orientated (a lot of queens and jacks). You might respond 1♠ to 1♥ of course with four or five spades despite holding three hearts.

While it is true that a 4-4 fit can play better than a 5-3 fit – even if the suit breaks 4-1, you can take a ruff or two without losing control – this is unlikely to be the main factor in the particular circumstances you describe.



Q I was playing in a 3NT contract and had to tackle the diamonds for no loss with ♦Q-8-5 in dummy and ♦A-J-9-6-4 in hand. I finessed the jack and then re-entered dummy to run the queen hoping to pin the doubleton ♦10 in the West hand, but East had ♦K-10-2. How would you have played it?

Martin Epstein by email. ▶

A Since you have the spot cards to pick up not just K-10-x but also K-10-x-x inside, I would recommend taking two finesses, starting with the queen. By running the queen and then the eight, you will succeed roughly 25% of the time.

If the spot cards were weaker (Q-8-2 facing A-J-9-4-3) it would be a three-way guess whether to play for K-x, K-10-x or K-x-x inside.

♣♦♥♠

Q How do you judge whether a sacrifice

is worthwhile? Is there a set of criteria we can follow?

Ann O'Reilly by email.

A A sacrifice is usually only worthwhile if (i) the opposing contract would have made (ii) the penalty you concede is less than the value of their contract and (iii) the field or the other table has bid and made the contract.

If you can build in a safety margin, this helps a lot. If you get out for -100 when saving against a game, you are still beating pairs who have conceded a partscore.

If you can get out for -300 (or -500 if the opponents are vulnerable) when saving against a slam, you are beating the pairs whose opponents stopped in game.

At teams (or rubber bridge), you aim for a safety margin in a different way because you have at most one other table to consider.

You might save against a vulnerable game if you expect to get out for -300 or against a vulnerable slam if you expect to get out for -1,100. The fact that you

stand to gain 8 IMPs when you are right compensates for the occasional time when your sacrifice turns out to be a phantom.

The best sacrifices of all are those that push the opponents into a failing contract. This is most likely to happen if you bid as high as you are willing to go, before the opponents know too much about their hands.

If the bidding starts (1♠)-2♣-(2♥)-5♣, the opponents will feel under pressure to bid on if either has support for the other's major.

♣♦♥♠

Q At pairs, dealer (East) opened 3♣ –

Partner (South) overcalled 3♥ and I went on to game.

♠ AK 3
♥ K 5
♦ K Q 8 5 3
♣ 9 3 2



♠ 8 5 4
♥ A J 8 7 6 3 2
♦ 9 4
♣ J

Partner had a problem developing the diamonds and went one off. Were we just unlucky or is this bad pairs tactics?

Michael Hunt by email.

A Usual practice is that you need a good hand to bid over an opposing weak hand. Partner should not really have overcalled 3♥. If partner did pass, you would face a ticklish problem. You cannot really double with

a doubleton heart. You might try 3♦, I suppose. Partner would then bid 3♥, which you might raise.

4♥ seems a reasonable contract. You would expect to make it on a non-spade lead. On a spade lead I can see the problem. You win, cash the two top hearts (presumably finding the opener with a small singleton) and play a diamond to the king. You are then in the wrong hand for playing a second diamond towards dummy. If you give up a club, the opponents can play a second spade, giving them a spade to cash when in with the ♦A.

♣♦♥♠

Q Playing five-card majors, 15-17 no-trump and weak jump shifts, how should we bid?

♠ A J 5
♥ K 8
♦ K 10 7 5
♣ K 10 6 4



♠ K 2
♥ A Q 9 7 6 4 3
♦ Q J 8
♣ A

North	South
1♦	1♥
1NT	4♥
Pass	

North thought that, after 1NT, South should have bid 3♥ forcing.

South said that 3♥ was not forcing, only invitational.

How strong do you think a 2♥ and a 3♥ rebid should be?

Huw Jones, Swansea.

A You ask an interesting question. When playing five-card majors and a strong no-trump, it is usual for responder to have a conventional way to show game invitational hands after a 1NT rebid. For some, this is checkback; I usually play a convention known as XYZ. In either case, responder's failure to use this convention means that a simple repeat of the suit at the two level (2♥) is weak, the lack of an immediate weak jump shift notwithstanding. Responder might have a good five-card suit (and perhaps a singleton on the side) or have four cards in the other major, hence unsuitability for an immediate weak jump shift.

Whether a jump (3♥) should be invitational or forcing is debatable, perhaps a matter for partnership agreement. It sounds invitational since a forcing hand could surely go via checkback, though I would not risk passing it if my partner and I had not discussed the sequence.

♣♦♥♠

Q Standard American, Standard Acol, Benji Acol, Acol with three weak twos or Acol with five card majors. Statistically, which of the above is best / poorest for improvers to concentrate on?

Joan Bronkhurst by email.

A You ask a tricky question. Possibly the sensible thing to do is to visit some clubs in your area and see what methods are in use. Most players will not take part in tournaments, so what happens at club

level is the best guide.

In most parts of the UK, Benji is more common than Acol with a weak 2♦. I suspect that playing Acol with five-card majors is also a minority option in most places.

Standard American will increase the options for playing online, but might not be so good for local club bridge.



Q Bernard suggests playing weak twos in the majors. OK.

I play 2♣ as 23+ and 2NT as 20-22. What if I have strong spades or hearts, ie 19-20 points.

I do not like the idea of opening 2♦. What is a good alternative please?

Vibeke Englander by email.

A Playing either Benjamin or reverse Benjamin, 2♣ and 2♦ openings are both artificial. With standard Benjamin, 2♣ shows near game hands (those that would open a natural strong two) while 2♦ shows game forcing hands. With reverse Benjamin, which is what you seem to be asking about, a 2♣ opening is the same as in Acol while 2♦ includes the eight plus playing trick hands. In reply to the Benjamin 2♣ or reverse Benjamin 2♦, responder bids the next suit up on most hands, leaving opener space to continue naturally.

While, in the UK, we are used to having a specific way to show the near game hands, much of the world manages without. You could play 2♦ as a weak two as well. Most hands that would open an Acol two, you open at the one level. It is fairly rare

for a one level suit opening to get passed out these days.

A more complicated alternative to Benjamin is the multi. Weak hands with a long major (and some strong hands) open 2♦. This leaves 2♥ and 2♠ openings as free for whatever use you prefer, natural and strong if you like. You should be able to find something on the Multi in the Mr Bridge library if this interests you.



Q My partner and I came to grief over a misunderstanding of her bidding 2NT over my suit opening. Could you please give us your opinion on what I should expect her to hold, when she bids 2NT over a five-card 1♥ opening?

We know the point count should be 10-12 HCP for a response of 2NT after a partner's suit opening, but should she have some sort of stopper in the three unbid suits? Does it also mean she has little or no support in the suit opened?

I would be grateful for your comments.
Pamela Hayton, Midhurst.

A If you play a 2NT response as natural (not my recommendation – Jacoby is much better) then yes it should show some sort of stopper in the other suits. With a suit wide open, it is better to start with a suit response. With a four-card spade suit, showing that is better too. It is also normal for a natural 2NT response to deny support for the suit opened, which when playing five-card majors

means denying three-card support. In short, you are looking for a 3-2-4-4 shape with stoppers in all the suits. This is not going to come up very often – and when it does you will come to little harm starting with 2♣.



Q What do I do in fourth seat after (1♦)-Dbl-(Pass), when I have four plus diamonds and no major? Does 2NT promise 8-10 HCP and 1NT 0-7 HCP or is it best to pass with a bust, and use 1NT for 5-7 HCP?

Geoff Simpson,
Torphins, Aberdeenshire.

A This is a tough one. Although the generally accepted principle is that one should not lie about a major – here meaning you do not bid a three-card major – bidding 2♣ on a three-card suit is unattractive too, because these days the take-out doubler might not have support for the unbid minor.

Leaving 1♦ doubled in will get you a bad score if it makes, so you will only do that if you think you have a reasonable chance of defeating it. You might do so a bit more readily if 1♦ did not promise four diamonds (as would be the case if the opponents are playing precision or 'better minor') because then opener might retreat from 1♦ doubled.

While it is nice to have eight points or so to bid 1NT, sometimes the best option is to bid it with six or seven, but no fewer. Another possibility



Q I am responder with this hand. The bidding goes 1♦ – 1♠ – 2♥ – ?

♠ Q 4 3 2
♥ J 5 2
♦ 6
♣ K 7 6 3 2

Partner's rebid is a reverse, so forcing. I am too weak to bid a new suit at the three level. A rebid of 2NT looks like the least bad option, even though I only have 6 HCP instead of 10-12 HCP and an unbalanced hand.

Anticipating opener's possible rebid, with a hand like this, should I respond 1NT instead of 1♠?

Terry Gregory by email.

A In standard Acol, the 2NT rebid is non-forcing and hence, after a reverse, shows a minimum responding hand with a stopper in the unbid suit. This seems a reasonable description of your hand.

As responder with a four-card spade suit, you show that rather than responding 1NT. Finding a 4-4 spade fit if there is one is important. ■

E-mail your questions (including your postal address) for Julian to: julianpottage@mrbridge.co.uk

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The Origins of

Earliest Records

Questions are frequently asked about the origins of playing cards, such as, 'When did playing cards begin?' or 'Who invented playing cards?' or 'Where did playing cards originate?' These are questions of great importance to the subject and I am therefore pleased to be able to answer definitively, although the truth is quite embarrassing – no-one knows.

Let's begin with what we do know. In several European countries – Spain, Italy, France and Germany – the evidence is that playing cards were in use by around 1377. Before this time, there is no mention of cards in places where we might expect (alongside other gaming laws for dice, for example) and there is also no mention of cards in the down-to-earth tales of Boccaccio and Chaucer. From 1377, documents do mention playing cards – typically regulating their use.

As for what we do not know, there is speculation that cards arrived from China (purely because it is possible, with some credibility because they had paper before Europe). However, there are no surviving Chinese cards from before 1400 and their cards are quite different. It is also possible that they came from near Persia (now Iran). Here we do find cards a little like the European ones. However, once we bring trading routes into the argument, it is also possible that the idea spread through Europe by itself. A personal view is that their popularity grew quite explosively, like any new 'craze', which is why they are found in quite faraway places at almost the same time.

Earliest Surviving Cards

Playing cards tend not to survive. Early cards had plain backs, and this is unfortunate for their longevity – if one card gains any mark or smudge on the back, it can be identified and the deck cannot be used, especially if playing for money. Many of the packs that were once kept have since been lost, or ruined by moisture. Only a few very old packs have survived from the 1400s, such as those shown on the right. The horseman is from the Ambras Court hunting pack of around 1460. Ambras Palace near Innsbruck was



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of Playing Cards

home to Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, great-grandson of Emperor Maximilian I. Incredibly, 54 of the original 56 cards remain, now in the art history museum in Vienna. The illustration is from the excellent reproduction by Piatnik of Vienna made in 1995. The style suggests that these cards were handmade as a gift for the Court – the lavish production would not be typical of those used in play.

The Card on the right is from Toledo, Spain, and the date 1574 appears on one of the cards. The illustration is again a reproduction, this one by Comas as made in 1998. This is more typical of standard gaming cards – although the originals would have had square not rounded corners.

The English Standard



It is likely that the first playing cards used in Britain were imported from France. Our standard English pattern evolved from cards made in Rouen, and our suits (clubs, hearts, diamonds, spades) are correctly referred to as the French suit system. The Jack of Diamonds, illustrated, is French and dates

from around 1600. Card-makers were active in London around this time and they formed a company in 1628 with the express aim of countering imports. This company became the Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards, a City of London Livery Company, which continues to flourish in the present day.

The King of Spades shown is English, probably from around 1730. The cards shown were made with wooden blocks to stamp the outlines and stencils to aid the painting of colours. This continued to be the norm until the 1830s, when Thomas De La Rue brought in modern lithographic printing and card making began to move from small artisan workshops into large industrial factories. This, and the changes in card design that followed, will be the subject of another article. ■

The author is a Court Assistant in the Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards – see www.makersofplayingcards.co.uk. Many more sets of cards are illustrated on the author's website www.plainbacks.com

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The Diaries of Wendy Wensum

Episode 58:

The Alternative No-Trump

It is difficult to imagine that a few years ago, Spouse abandoned classes and vowed he would never play bridge again. Now he is addicted to the game, but unlike me he spends most of his spare time studying not only the Red Book *Laws of Duplicate Bridge*, but also the EBU Blue and White Books. He even logs into internet forums to discuss offbeat aspects of the game. It was duplicate pairs at the Riverside and Spouse was once again acting tournament director, a position he seems to relish. He efficiently organised the movement ensuring a prompt start and Millie and I set forth for battle on the first board.

trump support, I decided on a simple approach, namely RKCB. When Millie confirmed just one key card by responding five diamonds, I thought that it was probably the club ace and bid the slam in spades. Suddenly I realised that she might have held the ace of spades and a void club, and cue bidding would have been a superior line to investigate a possible grand.

West	North	East	South
	Wendy		Millie
Pass	2♣ ¹	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♣
Pass	4NT ²	Pass	5♦ ³
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

¹Artificial 25+OP ²RKCB ³1 or 4 key cards

hesitated before making the final double. Spouse asked the other players at the table and Kate and Wally both confirmed that Jo had not bid in tempo. Jo recognised that this was probably the case. Spouse explained that it was possible that unauthorised information had been exchanged between North and South. He asked for the hand to be played and asked Kate not to use any information she might have gathered from the hesitation during the defence. He announced he would return at the end of the board to make a final adjudication, if required. Jo led the heart king and when dummy went down she, Kate and declarer were all amazed at what they saw. When Sam recovered from the shock, he thanked his partner, but with no real enthusiasm. In all declarer made four tricks, namely the ace of spades, the last heart, a club ruff and a spade ruff. The contract failed by four doubled undertricks resulting in 1,100 to North-South. Sam was not impressed by his partner's opener and suggested kindly enough that he wasn't just an idiot but a champion idiot. At Kate's request, Spouse arrived to record the psyche. Sam wisely refrained from taking any further action over Jo's hesitation.

In the bar later, Spouse told us that there were several psyches recorded each season in the early years of the club, but recently psyching had become less popular and in most seasons there were no entries at all. He also noted that there were no previous mentions of either Wally or Sam. Kate and Jo seemed unfazed by the statistics and indeed the incident as a whole, after all it worked in their favour and gave them a top. As Millie noted with some accuracy, 'Wally by name, Wally by nature.' Of course, that does not apply to all Walters. ■

Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ K Q J 10 4		
♥ A 10		
♦ A Q		
♣ K J 6 4		
♠ 9		♠ A 5
♥ 8 6 4 3		♥ 9 7 5 2
♦ 10 8 6 5		♦ 9 4 3 2
♣ 9 5 3 2		♣ 10 8 7
♠ 8 7 6 3 2		
♥ K Q J		
♦ K J 7		
♣ A Q		

West and East passed throughout. With a twenty count and five losers, I, North, opened an artificial Benjamin-style two clubs, a strong hand showing at least 25 Opening Points or a no-trump hand of 21-22 HCP. Millie bid a positive two spades showing at least five cards in that suit. I went three spades and Millie cue bid four clubs to suggest a slam going hand. I was sure that further cue bids would be more rewarding, but as I had a flattish distribution and fantastic

However, all was well. West led a small diamond, won by Millie who removed trumps and brought home the contract for plus 980 and a reasonable score, although six no-trumps would have been even better. When Kate and Jo played the board later against Wally and Sam, the bidding was quite dramatic. Wally, West, opened one no-trump (yes, one no-trump) announced by his partner, Sam, as 12-14. With her 20 HCP hand, Kate doubled and Sam bid two diamonds announced by Wally as non-forcing with at least four diamonds and four cards in at least one major. After a moment for thought, Jo doubled and the auction ended.

West	North	East	South
Wally	Kate	Sam	Jo
1NT	Dbl	2♦ ¹	Dbl
All Pass			

¹At least four diamonds and at least one four card major

At this point Sam called the TD and Spouse duly arrived at the table. Sam explained that he thought Jo had



Autobridge

A friend recently offered to lend me his Autobridge. I said, 'Oh yes, I remember the small book-sized grey metallic thing, yes, my parents had one.' 'No,' he replied, 'it's big, wooden and from the 1930s, I think.' Well, as you might well imagine, that caught my attention. I would be delighted to share what I have learned about it with you.

Let's go back to 1937. American patent 2,096,672 lists Jack Goodson, from London, as the inventor. Yet the British one I am looking at in my office bears the inscription 'British Letters Patent No 453,406'. The helpful staff at the UK Intellectual Property Office don't have that number as the design of a patent. What is going on?

It is no surprise for me to see an advertisement in LIFE magazine, 1939, which asserts Ely Culbertson to be the producer of Autobridge. Curiously the actual ad is for 'Bromo-Seltzer' a headache cure. A few more hours of research on the internet led me to find Jack Goodson's great nephew, Scott.

I am slowly piecing together the information. It seems that Goodson invented a number of things, including an early type of gramophone record. Probably around the mid 1930s, when so many people were learning and playing bridge in London, he put his mind to inventing a bridge-

playing machine. For certain, he would have approached Ely Culbertson. Culbertson was a brilliant businessman, and no doubt would have leapt on any such idea. The earliest mention of it in print I have seen is in 1937, so it was probably designed a little earlier, and the period of manufacturing would have taken at least a few months.

Autobridge was manufactured in many countries, using various materials for the base, including Textolite. Textolite was a laminate manufactured by General Electric. How exciting it must have been to be able to get your hands on a solo bridge playing mechanical device, manufactured in such an appealing way.

The instructions and commentary were provided by well-known authors from around the world. You are informed that your phantom partner and opponents are great experts of the game, such as Ely and Josephine Culbertson, P Hal Sims, Waldemar K von Zedwitz, Alphonse Moyse, Charles Goren and Alfred Sheinwold.

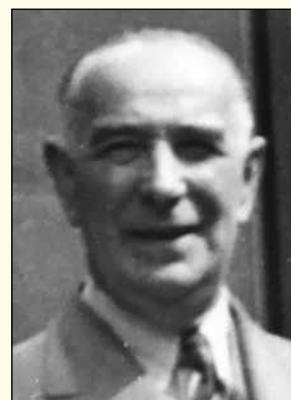
The instructions (pictured overleaf) are clear and detailed. I like the final statement in capital letters, warning you not to place more than one deal sheet in the playing board at any one time. What is the worst thing that could happen to me if I did that? ▶

From Scott Goodson: In the 1880s, Clara De Groot and Solomon Goudekot – a diamond merchant – moved from their native Amsterdam to London, settling in the east of the city, and changing their name to the English Goodson.

The couple had 11 children including Alfred, Ellis, Bessie, Harry, Jack, and my grandfather Joseph. Jack (pictured) was the founder of Autobridge, and in the 1920s Joseph and Jack also set up the Goodson Record Company of London and Montreal. This firm was one of the pioneers of the flat plastic record that we know today, superseding the old cylindrical format. Jack was based in London, but Joseph had emigrated to Montreal where he opened a publishing company, Victoria Press. Harry became an agent representing entertainers as diverse as Houdini and Johnny Cash.

My father, also named Jack, was born in 1920. After one year at New York University he enlisted into the Royal Canadian Air Force, moving to the Canadian airbase in Bournemouth, England, where he spent the war. His cousins – the three sons of Joseph's brothers – were all RAF Spitfire pilots and all were sadly killed when their respective planes were shot down as they defended London from the Luftwaffe. After the war, Dad returned to Canada where he married my mother Sylvia. They raised four children: Anna, Joelly, Tracy and me. He took over the family firm Victoria Press, in addition to helping build the Hilton Hotel brand. He was also instrumental in the marketing of Montreal's Expo 1963, using this knowledge to help the Japanese market their Expo 1970 in Osaka.

I started the world's first movement marketing firm, StrawberryFrog, which is based in New York City. I live just outside Manhattan with my Swedish wife, Karin, and our two sons, Jacoby and Ellis.



The 4♥ opening does pose a problem for South. Nowadays most players play double for take-out, even at the four-level. Others prefer to bid 4NT (but that is especially wasteful if the best contract for North-South is 4♠).

Let's look at Paul Stern's Comments on Play. 'The basic plan is good: aim to score two heart ruffs in hand, along with four clubs, one top diamond, and four trumps in dummy, bringing the tally to 11.'

Look at the digits under the South hand to follow the details of the play. So, for example, at trick four, South leads the ♠K.

Now consider a better sequence of plays.

At trick one, the player sitting East should be as helpful as possible and play the ♥A. This is a strong suit preference signal for diamonds. Whichever defender gets in next can play on diamonds to set the contract straight away.

Are we expecting too much of Stern? Suit preference signals were invented by Hy Lavinthal in 1934 (much publicised by William E. McKenney) but they were far from being in common use in that era.

Stern was perhaps suggesting that West thought that South had five spades for his overcall, and might play spades off the top. Thus, there would be three defensive tricks coming in a few minutes. Even if the defence are a bit snoozy at tricks one and two, as long as they don't play hearts at trick three, the contract will go down.

Let's say a club is returned. Declarer wins, plays a spade to the ten (finessing West for the ♠Q), ruffs a heart with the ♠J, and plays the ♠K. These are the remaining cards:

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

There is no entry to dummy to draw West's outstanding trump. Of course, a club can be ruffed, but that is giving up an established club. With the diamonds stacked on the left, there will be two diamond losers (as long as West is careful to duck the first diamond) to go with the already conceded early club trick.

So can the contract be made when East holds the actual hand?

The best line is to play along the same approximate lines as the Stern line, but timing it better, so that the club is lost **after** East is exhausted of trumps, in other words – neutralise the defensive ruff threat.

So, returning to trick one: win the heart by ruffing in hand. Immediately take a spade finesse, then ruff a heart. Now cash the ♠K (leaving one trump outstanding). Play ♣A-K and another club.

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

West is on lead. Any card results in declarer getting five tricks. If West plays a trump, then that provides declarer with the entry to draw trumps. Alternatively, ace and another diamond gives declarer an extra trick and means South can just play winners. Whenever West ruffs, overruff. The point is that West is endplayed to concede two tricks in diamonds, or to complete the drawing of trumps. So although with this ending declarer spends a winner, so to speak, to draw trumps, the endplay generated gives an extra trick to compensate.

It is very easy to buy a second hand Autobridge, for example, from eBay. For less than a tenner, you'll be ▶

BIDS

5 3
3 2
3

♠ 6 4
♥ A K Q 10 7
♦ 5 [6 4 2]
♣ 6 2

7 2

10 7
9 8 4

NORTH
Vulnerable

BIDS

9 8 4 K Q 10 7

9 10 2 11 13 12 6

Comment on Play

When the ♥J is led by West and dummy goes down, declarer sees that his contract can only be made if he does not lose a trump trick and if West holds the A♦. He produces a brilliant play. East's Q♥ is ruffed in declarer's own hand, a small Club (1) is led and won by West's J♣; West returns the 9♥, which declarer ruffs with J♠ (1); this unblocking makes the Spade finesse against West's Q♣ possible. After trick six declarer has no trump in his own hand and the 5♣ in dummy. To tricks seven to ten the four winning Clubs are played and West is reduced to A-J-9♦. To trick eleven declarer plays K♦ which West wins with the A♣. The last two tricks are won by declarer's Q♦ and dummy's 5♣.

EAST BIDS

4♥

NO BID

of the Austrian Team which defeated the American Team led by
World-Championship Finals at Budapest, 1937

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SEP 18	SORRENTO Italy Cruise past Capri and Amalfi Coast SALERNO Italy (Paestum)	
SEP 19	Cruise past Stromboli and through the Strait of Messina TAORMINA Sicily	
SEP 20	At Sea	
SEP 21	CORFU Greek Islands SARANDE Albania (Butrint)	
SEP 22	LECCE Italy	
SEP 23	DUBROVNIK Croatia	
SEP 24	SPLIT Croatia	
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guaranteed some entertainment, and you don't even need electricity or an internet connection.

Paul Stern (1892-1948)

was an Austrian international bridge player, lawyer and diplomat, who fled to London in 1938. He was a bidding theorist and administrator who contributed to the early growth of the game. He founded the Austrian Bridge Federation in 1929 and was its first president.

When Germany annexed Austria in 1938 (Anschluss), he returned his Iron Cross, awarded in World War I, to the Nazi authorities and included an insulting letter. As a result, he was placed at number eleven on their death list. He went into hiding and escaped to England in 1938. He was a major bridge figure in London for the next decade, founding a school of bridge which taught his bidding system, running a weekly duplicate in Hampstead during World War II and playing rubber bridge regularly at the Hamilton Club and Lederer's. Stern became a naturalised British citizen.

Source: Wikipedia

Rixi Markus, in her autobiography, *A Vulnerable Game*, describes Stern in relation to Edouard Frischauer who, in the 1930s, was the number one player in Austria.

...Even Edouard Frischauer made mistakes, however, as I brashly pointed out. He made a more famous error in the European Championships at Brussels in 1935. Through ignoring Blackwood he got himself in a grand slam contract in spades lacking the ace. He converted to 7NT, but still went one down. Paul Stern penalised him by banning him from the Austrian team for a year, so that he missed the 1936 Championships at Stockholm. This seemed unduly harsh, but Paul Stern was a tough disciplinarian, and would hit me on the hand if I made a mistake. During the ladies' training sessions his mildest rebuke was to yell at us, 'Cows!'. ■

Answers to Bernard Magee's Bidding Quizzes 1-3 on the Cover

1. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ A K 8 7		♠ 2
♥ 9 7 4		♥ A K 3
♦ J 9 3 2		♦ Q 10 6 4
♣ 7 6		♣ K 9 8 3 2



West	North	East	South
?		1♣	Pass

1♦.

You have 6-9 points and a balanced hand, but that does not mean you should respond 1NT. The rules for responding are that you should show a four-card suit if you can. Furthermore, if you have two or more suits to show, then bid the lowest suit because this will generally allow the partnership to find their best fit. It also allows the strong hand to rebid no-trumps if the opener has 15-19 points and a balanced hand.

Here, you respond 1♦ and your partner probably raises to 2♦ which finishes the auction. Had you responded 1♣, your partner would have rebid 2♣ to finish the auction in an ugly place.

2. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ 8 7 6		♠ A K 5 3 2
♥ 4		♥ Q 6 3
♦ A J 3 2		♦ K 5 4
♣ Q 8 7 6 5		♣ K 2



West	North	East	South
?		1♣	Pass

2♣.

You have only seven high card points, so you should not bid a new suit at the two-level, but you should certainly make some sort of positive response. That leaves two choices: 1NT or 2♠?

Both these bids show the same strength: 6-9 points. So it is just a question of choosing the call which best suits the hand. Would you prefer to play with spades as trumps or in 1NT?

You have only three-card spade support which is a card short, but your singleton should encourage you to go for the suit contract. Even if your partner turns out to have just four spades, you might find that you are able to generate a ruff or two from your hand in a spade contract and this will be all-important.

3. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ J 7 6		♠ A K Q 10
♥ Q 9 4		♥ J 10 2
♦ A 9 3 2		♦ K 8 4
♣ K 7 6		♣ Q 4 2



West	North	East	South
?		1♣	Pass

1NT.

I do not like 4-3-3-3 hands: I like to take a full point off when I evaluate them – they are bad in suit contracts because there is no ruffing potential and in no-trumps they offer little scope for suit development. Add to this the divided honours, which further devalue the hand (it is generally preferable to have honours together which tend to help the play of a contract). Altogether, your hand is balanced and worth a poor nine points, which means 1NT is a good description. Your partner passes 1NT and you finish at a comfortable level.

East also has a 4-3-3-3 hand, but with two tens the downgrade was balanced by an upgrade, so he was planning to show 15 points. Had you responded at the two-level, East would have had eyes on game, but your 1NT response stops him in his tracks. ■



Remember the Bidding

It is teams; dealer West. N/S Vulnerable. You are South, holding:

♠ K J 10 8
♥ J 2
♦ K 6 2
♣ A Q 7 5

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	Pass	?

What should South do?

♣♥♥♠

Answer: Bid 1NT. A protective 1NT overcall is wide-ranging (11-16).

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	?

What's going on? What should South call?

♣♥♥♠

Answer: North is making an enquiry for range and shape. It is rather like Stayman, except that partner should respond at the level of 2NT or higher with a maximum. This is because the point range is very wide in the protective seat, and partner will need to narrow down the possibilities in order to decide whether game is on.

In response, your hand is in the middle of the range, but it is worth being bold when the opposition have given you a clue as to where all the high cards are going to be. Jump to 3♠. Partner will raise you to game and this ends the auction.

West leads the ♥K and this is what you see:

♠ A Q 9 7
♥ 9 8 6 3
♦ A 3
♣ 8 3 2



♠ K J 10 8
♥ J 2
♦ K 6 2
♣ A Q 7 5

North's hand is also quite slender for the bidding, but far from disappointing with three great cards for you; however, there are issues in the play.

West continues with the ♥4. East wins with the ace and switches to the ♦10.

What do you do?

♣♥♥♠

Answer: Remember the bidding. West opened 1♦, and once East shows up with the ♥A, you know that all the remaining high cards must lie with West as you are only missing 16 points and four of them were in the East hand. Unfortunately, this means that the club finesse is doomed to failure.

It's time to count your winners and losers.

Starting with the losers, you appear to have four inescapable losers: two clubs and two hearts. What about your winners? The situation is even more bleak there. Four trumps, two diamonds and a club gets you to just seven.

What is your plan for further winners?

Answer: You must ruff two hearts in your hand, which will take you to nine. Clearly, in order to do this you will not be able to draw trumps straight away since, even if they break evenly, it will take three rounds to draw them. Instead, you should win this diamond in dummy and ruff a heart. Now return to dummy with a trump and ruff your fourth heart. You notice that West began with four hearts.

This is the position you have reached:

♠ A 9 7
♥ —
♦ 3
♣ 8 3 2



♠ K
♥ —
♦ K 6
♣ A Q 7 5

What now?

♣♥♥♠

Answer: It is now time to draw the remaining trumps, starting with the ♠A. Both opponents follow.

What do you discard from hand on the next round of trumps?

♣♥♥♠

Answer: You can discard a club without giving up on any chances. East follows and West discards a diamond. It's now time to consider your options.

Plan A: Throw West in with a diamond to lead away from the king

of clubs.

Plan B: Play West to have begun with no more than two clubs, in which case playing the ace and another club will fetch the king and establish the queen.

Which one takes your fancy?



Answer: West began with 11 or 12 points, depending on the location of the ♠J. You also know that West began with two spades and four hearts, and opened 1♦. Playing a weak no-trump, he would have opened 1NT if he held just four diamonds, therefore you can deduce that he began with five or more diamonds.

What does this tell you about the club length?



Answer: West holds at most two clubs. This makes Plan B certain to succeed, so you should choose that option and discard a diamond.

The problem with Plan A is if West began with a 2-4-6-1 shape and the singleton king of clubs. Now he will have sufficient diamonds remaining to take you off.

This was the full deal:

♠ A Q 9 7 ♥ 9 8 6 3 ♦ A 3 ♣ 8 3 2		♠ 6 5 3 ♥ A 10 5 ♦ 10 9 8 ♣ 10 9 6 4	
♠ 4 2 ♥ K Q 7 4 ♦ Q J 7 5 4 ♣ K J		♠ K J 10 8 ♥ J 2 ♦ K 6 2 ♣ A Q 7 5	

Knowing nothing about the opposing hands, you would almost certainly have gone down in the contract by taking a club finesse. However, the one simple opening bid by West told you everything you needed to know both about the distribution as well as the location of the high cards. ■

Answers to Bernard Magee's Bidding Quizzes 4-6 on the Cover

4. Dealer West. Love All.

♠ A K 10 9 2	♠ 3
♥ A Q 3	♥ 10 2
♦ 7 4	♦ A K 8 6 5 3
♣ J 10 2	♣ 9 8 6 5

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
?			

Pass. Your partner has shown 6-9 points, so there is no chance for game. It remains for you to pick the best partscore. You have a balanced hand and your partner has suggested a balanced hand, or a hand that is unsuitable for playing in spades. Bearing this in mind, you should look no further than 1NT.

Your partner's hand is certainly not balanced, but 1NT is a good contract – you might well make an overtrick for 120 points, which outscores a diamond contract. Of course, you must duck the first diamond in a no-trump contract to give yourself a chance to make the long suit.

6. Dealer West. Love All.

♠ 7	♠ J 5 4
♥ A K 8 7	♥ Q 6 2
♦ A 2	♦ K 9 8
♣ A K 8 6 3 2	♣ Q J 9 5

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1NT	Pass
?			

2♥. What does your partner's 1NT response show?

This is not as easy a question as you might think because of your 1♣ opening. Your partner has failed to respond in a suit, which means he should not hold four cards in any suit except clubs – it is part of your system that the responder should show a long suit, if he has one. Therefore, he must have four or more clubs. However, he might have responded 2♣ with four card club support. That is why the answer to the first question is not straightforward, because you only respond 1NT to 1♣ with a slightly stronger balanced hand (8-10 points), whilst with just 6-7 points you should simply bid 2♣.

Bearing in mind that your partner has 8-10 points and club support, you should be encouraged to try for more exciting things – particularly hoping for a high level club contract. The way to start that process is by rebidding a natural 2♥ – a strong reverse. East would rebid 3♣ (natural) and then you could cue bid 3♦. With little strength in spades, East would avoid 3NT and might cue bid 4♦, which should encourage you to go for the slam. ■

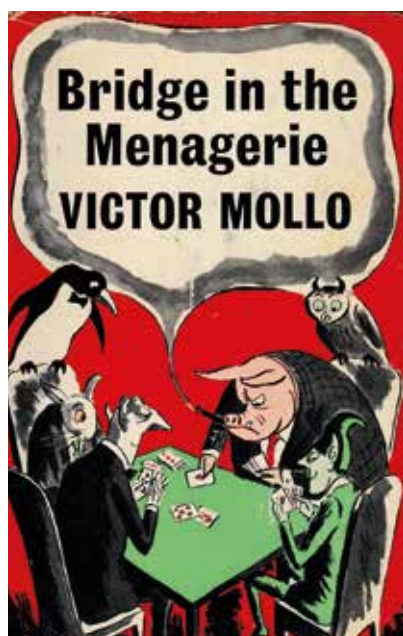
5. Dealer West. Love All.

♠ K Q 3 2	♠ J 5 4
♥ A K	♥ 5 2
♦ K Q 6 4 3	♦ A 9 2
♣ 7 3	♣ Q J 8 6 4

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1NT	Pass
?			

2NT. You have 17 HCP and your partner has shown 6-9, so there is certainly a chance for game, but you cannot be sure of it. So you would like to invite game, but are you sure of the best denomination?

The key, here, is to understand that your partner has denied having a four-card major because he would have responded in one-of-the-major rather than bidding 1NT. Your only weak suit is clubs, but surely, that is likely to be your partner's longest suit.



Learn from the Hog

by John Barr

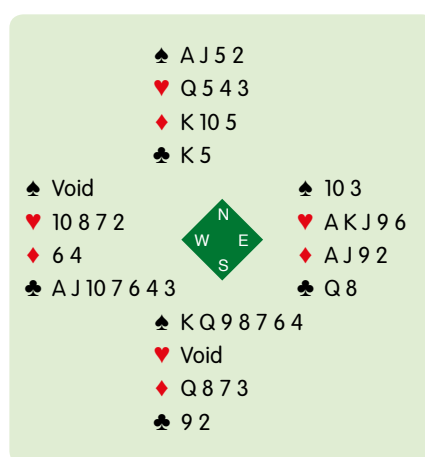
I read lots of bridge books. To be accurate, I re-read lots of bridge books. My favourite authors are Victor Mollo and David Bird, who both write amusing books that contain interesting and instructive bridge hands. My hope is that by regularly immersing myself in interesting hands, some of the skill of the characters in these books will rub off on me, and I might be able to work out how to play difficult hands at the table, instead of spotting the required brilliance a couple of days later.

I recently played a hand (see next column) that featured an endplay similar to one that I had seen the Hog execute – it's the first hand he plays in *Bridge in the Menagerie*, if you want to check it out. More than just recognising the potential for an endplay, it was important to see this at trick one so that preparations for the endplay could be made.

After a spirited auction during which East showed a good hand and West a long club suit, I (South) played in 5♠ doubled. West led a small heart. I needed the ace of clubs to be on my left to have any chance, which placed East with most – if not all – of the outstanding high cards.

Finessing the ♦10 was therefore likely to fail, so I had to engineer an endplay in diamonds, which would

require ruffing out the heart suit. I thought that if I started by drawing trumps and ruffing two hearts along the way, my intentions would be clear to everyone, so that when West won the club ace the obvious diamond switch could kill the contract.

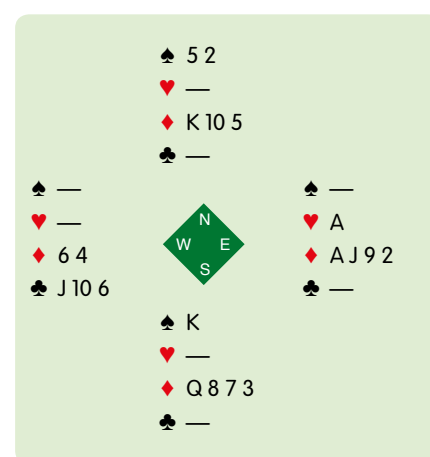


So, after ruffing the opening heart lead, I played a club towards the king. With nothing to guide him, West won the ace and played a second round of clubs.

Now I could ruff a heart, play a spade to the jack, ruff another heart, draw the last trump with the ace and ruff the last heart, which left this end position (see next column).

I now play a diamond to the king. If East ducks, I would only have one

diamond loser, and if he wins, he must concede a ruff and discard, or play another diamond, in which case I need to trust my analysis that East holds the ♦J and run this to dummy's ♦10. In the event, he played the ♥A, allowing me to throw dummy's diamond loser.



Would I have anticipated this end position if I hadn't previously seen something similar in print? No, I don't think so. And the preparation for the endplay by ruffing out the heart suit – as well as playing the club early before the opponents can work out your plan – are themes that come up again and again in the books by Mollo and Bird. In addition to these two authors, I need to thank the Hideous Hog for inspiring me to make my contract. ■

Answers to Bernard Magee's Bidding Quizzes 7-9 on the Cover

7. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ 2 ♠ A J 8 7 5
♥ J 9 7 6 ♥ A 5
♦ 9 6 2 ♦ K Q 8 7 4
♣ A Q J 7 6 ♣ 3

West	North	East	South
		1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
?			

Pass. You respond 1NT to limit your strength (6-9 points) and now your partner bids a second suit. Your partner is not showing any extra strength, but is simply suggesting that a suit contract might be better than a no-trump contract. You prefer diamonds, so you should settle for 2♦ and pass. When your partner shows two suits and you are weak, it is rarely right to introduce your own suit unless it is very long.

8. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ 6 3 2 ♠ 4
♥ Q 8 5 ♥ A K 9 2
♦ 3 2 ♦ A K J 6 5
♣ A J 7 3 2 ♣ K 9 5

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

3♣. This time over your 1NT response, your partner rebids in a higher suit than his first suit, which is a strong bid – a reverse – it demands a re-

sponse from you. Although you are weak, you should show something and the natural thing to do is to show your own suit. By bidding 3♣ you are showing where most of your strength lies, which leaves your partner in a good position.

Here, East may well settle for a club contract, perhaps going for 5♣.

9. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ 5 ♠ A Q J 8 7 3
♥ Q 8 4 3 2 ♥ 7 5
♦ A J 6 5 3 ♦ 9 4
♣ J 2 ♣ A 7 6

West	North	East	South
		1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♠	Pass
?			

Pass. Without the strength to show one of your suits over a 1♠ opening, you responded 1NT, but now your partner has annoyingly rebid 2♠. To repeat one's suit over a 1NT response promises at least a six-card suit. With a weak hand and expecting partner to have a minimum opening, it makes no sense to introduce a ropery suit at the three-level, nor would a no-trump contract be suitable. Therefore, you should leave your partner to play the contract, hopeful that his suit will be strong enough to give him a chance. 2♠ is the best of a bad lot. ■



DEFENCE QUIZ

by Julian Pottage

(Answers on page 37)

You are East in the defensive positions below playing matchpoint pairs with North-South vulnerable. Both sides are using Acoll with a 12-14 1NT and 2♣ Stayman.

1. ♠ K 10 9 7 6
♥ A J 10 7 3
♦ 4
♣ 10 4

♠ Q 4
♥ K Q 9 2
♦ J 10 5
♣ K Q 3 2

West	North	East	South
		1NT	2♠
4NT ¹	5♠	All Pass	

¹Both minors

Partner leads the ♣A. What do you do?

3. ♠ A Q J 8
♥ K 9 7 3
♦ 7 4
♣ 10 8 4

♠ 10 9 7 5
♥ 8 2
♦ Q J 5
♣ Q J 3 2

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥

All Pass

Partner leads the ♦A. What is your plan?

2. ♠ J 4 2
♥ Q 9
♦ K Q J 5
♣ K Q 9 4

♠ 10 6
♥ 8 5 4 3
♦ 10 9 8 7
♣ A 3 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦ ¹
2♠	Pass	Pass	4♥

All Pass

¹Transfer to hearts

Partner leads out the three top spades. What is your plan?

4. ♠ J 4
♥ K 7 3
♦ A K 7 4
♣ A K 8 4

♠ Void
♥ 8 6 2
♦ Q 10 6 5 3
♣ Q J 7 3 2

West	North	East	South
4♠	Dbl	Pass	5♥

All Pass

Partner cashes two top spades and continues with the ♠8, ruffed high. What is your plan?

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Catching Up

with Sally Brock

One of my fairly recent responsibilities is to take charge of our Under 26 women's team. Junior bridge is divided into four categories: Under 26 open, Under 21 open, Under 16 open and Under 26 women. As is often the case in general education, young women tend to thrive more in all-women groups. I have a squad to train, from which I will then pick a team for the European Championships in Slovakia in the summer.

One of my initiatives is to say that any of them who can get to the Young Chelsea Bridge Club for a duplicate on the first Monday of the month will get the chance to play with an expert female player. Obviously, only a few live in the London area, so we do not expect a huge turn-out, but the first time we did it we had two takers, and the second time four.

Obviously, there is a lot that they don't yet know, but we are looking for good instincts. I thought my partner, Helen Holmes, did well on this week's deal (see next column).

The double of 4♣ was a good effort, at match-points especially. The hand played terribly for declarer who could never get to his hand. When the smoke had cleared, we had an 800 penalty and a complete top.

Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ 2	
♥ A 6 3 2	
♦ A J 10 8	
♣ A K J 7	
♠ K Q 9 8 7 5	♠ A 10 3
♥ K J 10	♥ 9 5 4
♦ K 9 6	♦ Q 5 3
♣ 5	♣ Q 10 6 2
	♠ J 6 4
	♥ Q 8 7
	♦ 7 4 2
	♣ 9 8 4 3

West	North	East	South
1♠	Dbl	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	3♣
3♠	4♣	Dbl	All Pass

Things have quietened down somewhat after the hectic last couple of months. Weekends have been fairly quiet. We won a Hubert Phillips match against Irene Robinson's Bristol team. We felt a bit cocky when we were +1920 after ten boards, but not so good when we were only +70 after twenty boards. Then Barry and I missed a good slam and bid a bad one that went down on the first two boards in the final set. The final board was more or less the decider. The deal was:

♠ 9 7 3 2		♠ A K 4
♥ K J 5		♥ A 7 4
♦ 7		♦ A 6 5
♣ A Q J 5 4		♣ 10 9 7 2

Our pair opened a strong no-trump on the East hand, and West tried Stayman before jumping to 3NT. South was on lead with ♠J-10-8-6-5 and looked no further than that for his opening shot. Declarer won, took a losing club finesse but was soon claiming nine tricks.

In the other room, East/West were playing a weak no-trump, so the East hand started with 1♣. West responded 1♠ and East rebid 1NT. West checkbacked with 2♣ and rebid 3♣ over East's 2♠ response. What should East do now? In fact she chose 3NT, but at this table a spade lead looked very unattractive to South, who chose a diamond from K-Q-x instead. When declarer was not psychic and failed to drop the ♣K off-side, that was two down and 800 points to our team.

The moral of the tale is that if you are going to investigate alternative contracts, then you need to do it properly. The consensus was that East should rebid 3♠ over 3♣, to show fairly equal holdings in the red suits and a general preparedness to play in contracts other than 3NT. With West's actual hand, East must have both red-suit aces and good spades, so then it is clear to bid 5♣.

Otherwise, life just ticks on by

Answers to Bernard Magee's Bidding Quizzes 10-12 on the Cover

10. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ 9 8 6	♠ A K 4 2
♥ Q 7 2	♥ A K 5 4 3
♦ Q 5 4	♦ 8 2
♣ A J 7 6	♣ K 4



West	North	East	South
		1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
?			

3♥.

You have nine HCP, so you are maximum and therefore should go for game, but on the way, why not tell your partner what you hold, so that he can make an informed decision. Although you are balanced, you do have three-card support for his first suit and this is worth mentioning.

Your partner will not expect you to be particularly suitable for a heart contract, because with three-card support and a suitable hand, you might have raised 1♥ to 2♥. A bid of 3♥ here basically tells your partner to choose which game he prefers. East will probably choose 4♥ on this occasion.

You might wonder why he did not rebid 2♠ over 1NT, but his 2NT bid is better because he knows there is no spade fit (your 1NT response denies four spades). Instead, he was able to invite game and then of course you were able to show your delayed heart support.

11. Dealer West. Love All.

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



West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
?			

Pass.

You have shown your two suits and your partner appears to have ignored you. If he wanted to bid clubs, why did he not bid them on the first round?

Because he is weak – he bid 1NT to slow the auction down. But why bid clubs at the three-level now?

Because he has a very long suit and he thinks that 3♣ will be the best contract.

Trusting your partner, you pass and leave him to it.

3♣ is by far the best contract. Had your partner responded 2♣ on the first round you would have placed him with a stronger hand, but by bidding this way he made sure you knew he was weak.

12. Dealer West. Love All.

♠ A Q 8 7 6	♠ J 3
♥ 4	♥ Q J 8 6
♦ K 5	♦ Q 9 8 7 2
♣ K Q 8 7 5	♣ 9 2



West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
?			

Pass.

You have shown your two suits and your partner has preferred spades.

It is tempting to get excited; after all you have just four losers. However, how likely is it that you do actually have a spade fit?

With three-card support, your partner should often prefer to raise to 2♠ rather than respond 1NT, so much of the time he will have just two spades and, without a fit, your hand does not look so good. Remember, your maximum combined point count is 23 (your 14 and nine from your partner).

With game unlikely, you should pass 2♠ – eight tricks may well be the limit on this hand. ■

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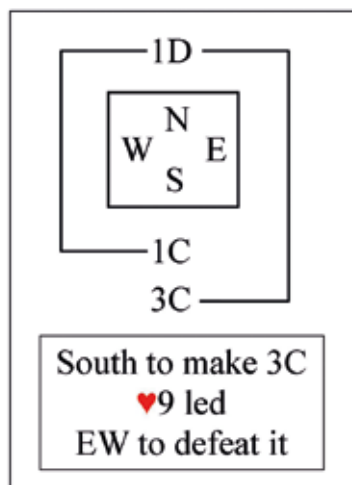
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Teaching Defence

It is generally agreed that defence is the most difficult part of bridge. Do you realise that you spend more time defending than you do on any other part of the game? Improving your defence will not only give you better results, but, as you increase your knowledge, the defence becomes more interesting. You have 'arrived' as a defender when someone says to you at the end of the session, 'Didn't we have rotten cards today?' and you reply, 'I honestly never noticed.'

Opening leads excepted, I would say defence is the hardest thing to teach. I find students learn much more from the prepared hands than from my spoken lessons, no matter how well I think I present the topic. Hence my spoken lessons on defence are usually quite short – 20 minutes at most.



The tricky bit is designing hands at the right level for the class. If they get most of the hands wrong, they become disillusioned – but if the hands are too easy, they don't learn much. I do emphasise that the prepared hands are not a test or an exam – just a method of learning, and they can learn as much by getting them wrong as right.

My prepared hands have a designated contract which is to be defeated. Unless the topic is opening leads, the

lead is specified too. They don't bid the hands as that takes far too long and they may not reach the desired contract. Of course, it is vital that defenders know how the contract was reached, so the bidding is shown in a large bidding spiral on the outside of my booklets (as shown). This makes the bidding easy to follow and it sits on the middle of the table during play. I know the bidding record should be withdrawn after the lead is made, but I make an exception.

Ruff 7.

♠ Axx	♥ 9xxx	♦ J9x	♣ QTx
♥ Jxxx	♦ AKTxx	♠ xxx	♥ AJT
♦ Jxxx	♠ xx	♥ AKTxx	♦ x
♠ Ax		♣ xx	♣ xxx

W N E S

♠ K

♥ KQx

♦ Qxx

♣ KQJTx

S to make 3C, ♥9 led, EW to defeat it.

East wins the first trick with ♥A.

The lead can't be a singleton or doubleton as that would give declarer ♥KQxxx or ♥KQxxx respectively and South didn't bid hearts.

East switches to his singleton diamond. West reads the switch as a singleton (why else would East lead to dummy's good diamonds?) and gives East a ruff when in with ♣A.

East gets a 2nd ruff by returning a spade, the only hope of getting West in. West can't have a heart honour as ♥9 must be top of nothing.

The inside of the booklet shows the four hands and how they should be played (also shown). Declarer must play correctly or the defenders are not properly tested. If the contract fails due to declarer error and not best defence, then the teaching point of the hand is missed. Declarer, therefore, is given instructions in a little tent, which can't be seen by the defenders, so the contract is only defeated if the defenders play correctly. Declarer isn't being tested in this exercise and is just making up the numbers.

They work in fours as dummy makes a record of the card which wins each trick on the yellow pages (see BRIDGE 154). After they finish the play, they

lay out the cards like four dummy hands and open the booklet which has the answer inside. If the contract is defeated, it should mean the defence was correct; if the contract made, the booklet should tell them where they went wrong. The teacher is available to explain if necessary and, with a glance at the card play record, can immediately see where they have gone wrong. These hands are designed as self teaching so one teacher can cope with a good number of tables.

To save time the hands are played to 'the point of no return'. They stop when the contract is defeated or made, or declarer can 'claim the contract'. South is always declarer so they take turns to be NSEW but stay in the same seats.

Not all aspects of defence can be taught by formal lessons and prepared hands. Random hands can throw up some great teaching points, but the play needs to be recorded (as above) to facilitate post mortems, as the players often won't remember how the play went. Players will keep learning for many years using random hands with bid and play post mortems – as a teacher you have a job for life.

I have designed 20 hands in booklet form on basic defence to no-trumps. These cover continuing the suit led, switching suit and unblocking. I also have another 20 hands on basic defence to suit contracts, which include ruffing (like the one shown), dummy's strength and weakness, forcing and passive defence. These are covered in several lessons and anyone who has a good grasp of the concepts in these wallets has made a good start on the journey to becoming a competent defender.

If you would like a free PDF and/or Publisher copy of the 40 booklets and associated lesson notes, then email ildalziel@talktalk.net



Answers to Julian Pottage's Defence Quiz on page 33

1. ♠ K 10 9 7 6
♥ A J 10 7 3
♦ 4
♣ 10 4

♠ Void
♥ 8 4
♦ Q 9 8 7 6 2
♣ A 9 8 7 6

♠ Q 4
♥ K Q 9 2
♦ J 10 5
♣ K Q 3 2

♠ A J 8 5 3 2
♥ 6 5
♦ A K 3
♣ J 5

West	North	East	South
		1NT	2♣
4NT ¹	5♣	All Pass	

¹Both minors

Partner leads the ♣A. What do you do?

Inwardly you can congratulate your partner on having found a club lead. What can you do to have the suit continued? The usual way to encourage a suit is to play a high spot card. Here, the ♣3 is in definite danger of not looking very high. A much clearer and safer way to show your strength is to drop the ♣K. This must show the ♣Q with it.

If you fail to signal emphatically for clubs, partner might switch to a diamond, playing you for the ♦A. The contract then makes.

2. ♠ J 4 2
♥ Q 9
♦ K Q J 5
♣ K Q 9 4

♠ A K Q 8 7
♥ 6
♦ 6 4 3
♣ 8 7 6 5

♠ 10 6
♥ 8 5 4 3
♦ 10 9 8 7
♣ A 3 2

♠ 9 5 3
♥ A K J 10 7 2
♦ A 2
♣ J 10

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦ ¹
2♣	Pass	Pass	4♥
All Pass		¹ Transfer to hearts	

Partner leads out the three top spades. What is your plan?

Given the bidding, and in partner's case the lack of an opening bid, you can place the rest of the high cards on your left. You also have a good idea that there will be six hearts there. On any switch other than to a club at trick four, declarer is likely to be able to make six tricks in hearts and four in diamonds for ten in all – you can wave goodbye to the ♣A.

Playing standard discards, high encouraging and low discouraging, you lack the ideal cards. Partner might read the ♦7 as low or the ♣3 as high – but you can hardly be sure.

Can you see the easy way to ensure your ♣A makes? Ruff the third round of spades, giving yourself the lead. Then you cannot go wrong.

3. ♠ A Q J 8
♥ K 9 7 3
♦ 7 4
♣ 10 8 4

♠ 4 3 2
♥ 6 4
♦ A K 8 2
♣ A 9 7 6

♠ 10 9 7 5
♥ 8 2
♦ Q J 5
♣ Q J 3 2

♠ K 6
♥ A Q J 10 5
♦ 10 9 6 3
♣ K 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Partner leads the ♦A. What is your plan?

At the four level, partner should have the ♦K with the ♦A. If the other high cards

are on your left, your side just makes two diamonds to hold declarer to one overtrick.

Even the ♠K in partner's hand might not help because you can envisage discards coming on the spades. What would help is the ♣A – just about possible on the bidding. In this case, you need to gain the lead to switch to the ♣Q. The way to persuade partner to give you the lead is to drop the ♦Q under the ♦A. This shows the ♦J (or possibly a singleton) and suggests you would like the lead.

4. ♠ J 4
♥ K 7 3
♦ A K 7 4
♣ A K 8 4

♠ A K Q 9 8 7 2
♥ 9 4
♦ 8 2
♣ 9 6

♠ Void
♥ 8 6 2
♦ Q 10 6 5 3
♣ Q J 7 3 2

♠ 10 6 5 3
♥ A Q J 10 5
♦ J 9
♣ 10 5

West	North	East	South
4♣	Dbl	Pass	5♥
All Pass			

Partner cashes two top spades and continues with the ♠8, ruffed high. What is your plan?

On the first and second rounds of spades, you can easily spare the fifth card from each minor. The crunch comes on the third round. If you reduce your holding to three cards in a minor, declarer may be able to play ace, king and then ruff to set up a long card in dummy.

Although declarer will not always read the position, especially if you discard smoothly, there is a better option. Underruff on the third spade. You still have the ♥8-x to prevent your opponent from ruffing another spade.

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More Tips from Bernard Magee

Open in your major with a strong five-card suit

A strong five-card major is powerful in the bidding, especially if the suit is spades. Spades win over other suits at any particular level (forcing the other side to bid higher to win the contract in a suit), so this means that finding a fit is imperative. When you have a strong five-card major, open the bidding in the major rather than opening 1NT.

There are two schools of thought when it comes to choosing whether to open 1NT or one-of-a-major holding a five-card major and the values for a weak no-trump. Some teachers advocate always opening 1NT, others suggest always opening the major.

My advice is that you should open the major when the suit is strong and dominates the hand, whilst you might consider opening 1NT if the suit is weak.

Some will ask what do you rebid?

The answer to that is simple – rebid your major – you are only promising five cards in the suit. The hand below demonstrates this:

♠ Q 7 6 5 3
♥ K 5 2
♦ 7
♣ A K 7 4



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

You open 1♠ and over partner's 2♦ reply have to rebid 2♠. (3♣ would be a high reverse, forcing to game). As you can see, your 2♠ rebid will sometimes be on quite a weak suit.

However let us return to more

balanced hands that contain a five-card major. Since you have a choice between two bids, use your judgement to decide which bid fits the hand better.

♠ A K 6 5 3
♥ K 5 2
♦ 7 2
♣ Q 7 4



I cringe when I see players open this 1NT – surely this has to be 1♠. It shows your partner where your strength is and will often be the best lead, it introduces the spade suit and it is just as pre-emptive as 1NT anyway.

♠ J 7 6 5 3
♥ K 5 2
♦ A K
♣ Q 7 4



This time, this is surely a 1NT opening. Your suit is weak and the points are spread throughout the hand.

So what do I mean by strong and what by weak?

Two of the top three honours is a good guideline, although with 3 of the top 5 cards I would still qualify the suit as strong (A-J-10-5-4 or K-J-10-6-5, for example).

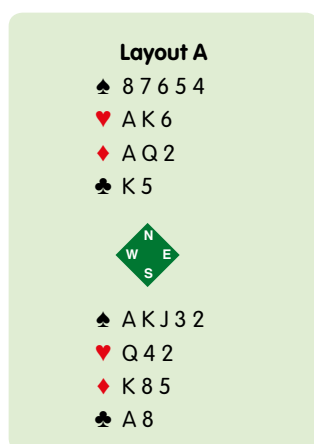
You do not have to be strict about your requirements, but should discuss with your partner what you prefer to do. The majors are powerful in bridge and you tend to gain more by finding fits in them, than by hiding them away. Therefore, you should tend to favour opening in a five-card major, rather than opening 1NT.



About Simple Finessing

If you take a finesse against a missing honour, you are hoping that one particular defender holds that honour.

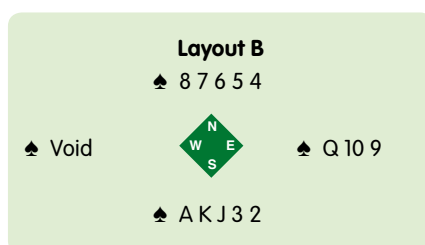
You have bid to 7♠ and when dummy goes down you see Layout A:



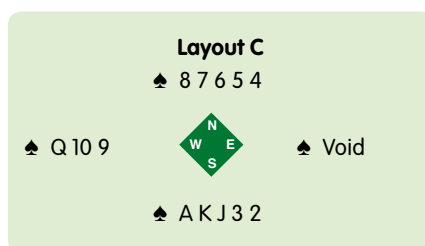
West has led the ♣Q, so you win with the ♣A and can be justifiably pleased with your partnership's bidding. The only danger is that you might lose a spade trick, but that is somewhat unlikely as you are only missing three spades. You cash the ♠A. Would it concern you if:

1. West discards a club?
2. East discards a club?

In both cases, we know the exact position of the missing spade honours, so it might help to write down the spade layouts.



In Layout B, West discards a club on the ♠A so you know that East started with ♠Q-10-9. If you enter dummy with the ♣K and lead a spade from dummy, then East has to decide whether to play his ♠Q before you commit yourself to playing from your hand. Of course, if East plays the ♠10 you will play your ♠J, knowing with 100% certainty that it will win the trick. On the other hand, if East rises with the ♠Q, then you will win with your ♠K and draw East's last trump with your ♠J.



The position is hopeless with Layout C. West will not decide whether to contribute his ♠Q until he has seen what you play from your hand. Here, the position of the missing cards determines the outcome.

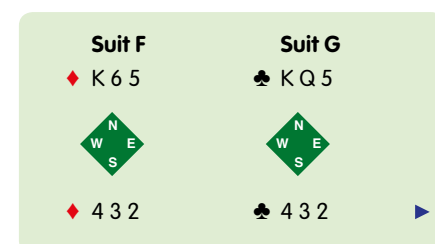
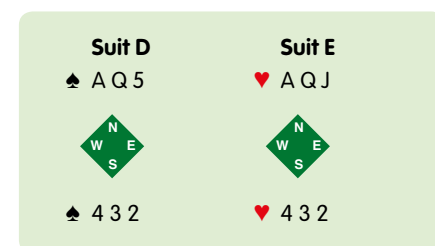
In Layout B, you were lucky as you

knew the finesse would win. It is called a marked finesse because the positions of the missing cards are known. Much more often, you take a finesse without knowing whether it will win or lose.



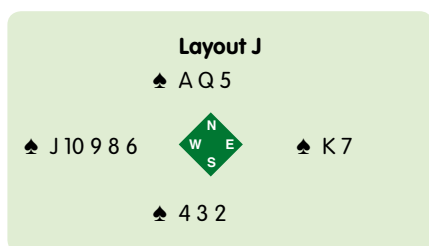
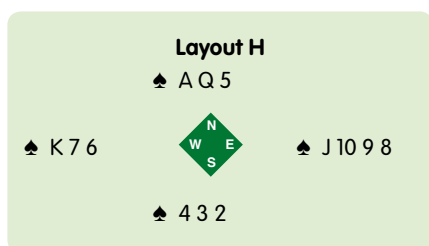
A simple finesse consists of leading from the weaker holding in a suit towards the stronger holding, hoping the defender in-between (ie playing second to the trick) holds the missing honour(s).

Try to work out how many tricks you might expect to make with these holdings. You are allowed to lead from either hand, so you must presume that the other suits (not shown) provide you with the necessary entries.



You certainly cannot expect to make any length tricks, so it is a question of trying to score tricks with honour cards that are not direct winners. **There is an important general principle that, if entries permit, it is almost always better to lead up to honours than just to lead out the honours, unless the honours are top tricks.** That has the effect of making a defender decide what to do before you commit yourself.

With Suit D, you are really asking, how can you try to make a trick with the ♠Q? The two layouts below will give you some ideas.



With Layout H, you can make a second spade trick, *provided you start by leading a low spade from the South hand*. The point is that West must then decide whether or not to play the ♠K before you commit yourself to dummy's card. If West plays his ♠K, you beat it with dummy's ♠A and the ♠Q is now a second winner. In the much more likely event of West following with the ♠6, you will try dummy's ♠Q. Of course, if East held the ♠K your finesse would fail, but your approach to bridge should contain a fair sprinkling of optimism and certainly should not be governed by fear. **If fulfilling your contract requires the spade finesse to work, you must assume it will work. There is no shame in going down in a contract when the missing cards conspire against you.** That way you win some and lose some. Accept the outcome with equanimity and conserve your mental energy for matters within your control.

Of course, the spades could be distributed as in Layout J. Then playing the ♠A followed by the ♠2 will establish the ♠Q as a winner by force. So why take the finesse? You don't want a lecture in advanced mathematics, but it is a fact that while the finesse will work roughly 50% of the time, a doubleton king will occur much less frequently. Usually the missing seven spades will break 4-3, and even if they do break 5-2 it is more likely that the hand with five spades will also have the ♠K.

This layout demonstrates a common theme in bridge. It is possible that you might unsuccessfully take one line of play only to find that another (inferior) line would have worked. This happens to experts. **The best play doesn't always work, but in the long run you will gain far more than you lose by adopting the 'percentage' play.**

One final thought on this combination. Just occasionally, it might become clear that West cannot hold the ♠K. Maybe East opened INT (showing 12-14 points) and you have bought the contract in 4♥. By counting your points and dummy's, you realise that you are only missing 14 points. The finesse is sure to lose. Maybe that is the time to play for Layout J.

If you have mastered that, try the suits E, F and G.

In Suit E, you can make three tricks if West has the ♥K. Following the general principle of leading from the weaker hand towards the stronger hand, you start with South's ♥2. If West plays low, try dummy's ♥J. If the ♥J wins, return to the South hand with another suit and try again, leading up to the ♥Q. West, holding the ♥K, is helpless.

In Suit F, you can make a trick with dummy's ♦K if West has the ♦A. Start with the ♦2 from South and force West into a premature decision.

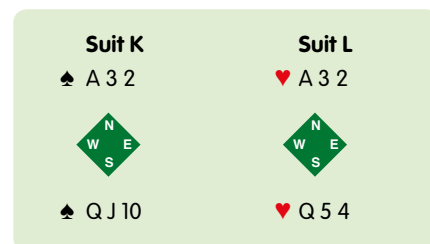
Finally, in Suit G, you can score two tricks if West has the ♣A. As with Suit E, you lead twice from the South hand through West up to dummy's ♣K-Q, using other suits as entries.



If your intermediate cards (jacks, tens, nines etc) are good, you can take a finesse by leading

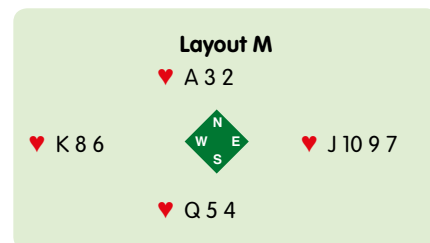
an honour through an opponent, towards a higher honour in dummy.

Consider Suits K and L:



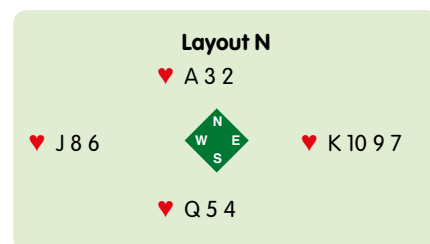
In Suit K, you should arrange for South to play first and lead the ♠Q. You are hoping that West has the missing ♠K. Will it help West to cover the ♠Q with the ♠K? In this case the answer is 'No' because you possess the ♠J and ♠10. West's ♠K would ensure that your ♠Q did not take the trick, thus promoting the ♠J and ♠10 into significant cards, but the cards it promotes all belong to you.

In Suit L, you don't have the ♥J or ♥10, so if you lead the ♥Q from your hand and West covers with the ♥K, the intermediate cards promoted belong to the defenders.



If you hold Suit L, it can never gain to lead the ♥Q from your hand. If the cards are as in Layout M, you are unlikely to make a second heart trick. **Leading the ♥Q from a hand when it can never gain is often called an imaginary finesse or a fairy finesse.**

With Suit L, it is far better to hope that East holds the ♥K, as shown in Layout N.



Now you can cash dummy's ♥A and lead the ♥2 towards your ♥Q. East can choose whether or not to take his ♥K but whatever he decides, your ♥Q will be a winner.



If you take a finesse by leading an honour, ask yourself whether you are any better off if the next hand covers it.

As you consider handling a suit, you can often combine setting up length winners with finessing.

Consider Suits P to U:

Suit P	Suit Q
♠ A 8 7 6	♥ A Q 7 6
♠ 5 4 3 2	♥ 5 4 3 2

Holding Suit P, you learned in my first article that if you concede two tricks, your fourth spade will become a length winner if the missing spades break 3-2. Suit Q is an improvement on Suit P. You can finesse the ♥Q as you try to set up the suit. If it wins, that increases your winners by one and decreases your losers by one. Therefore with Suit Q:

1. If the heart finesse wins and hearts break 3-2, you have three heart winners and only one loser.
2. If the heart finesse loses and hearts break 3-2, you have two heart winners and two heart losers.
3. If the heart finesse wins and hearts break 4-1, you have two heart winners and two heart losers.
4. If the heart finesse loses and hearts break 4-1, you have only one heart winner.

Please note that there are various ways that you can improve the odds still further (such as cashing the ♥A, returning to the South hand with another suit and leading towards the ♥Q). This will be examined in later articles, but would only be a distraction at this stage.

Suit R	Suit S
♦ A Q J 6	♣ A Q 7 6
♦ 5 4 3 2	♣ J 10 9 2

With Suit R, you should lead towards the ♦J, hoping West has the ♦K. If the ♦J wins, return to your hand in another suit and repeat the finesse. If the diamond finesse works and diamonds break 3-2, you can make four diamond tricks.

With Suit S, you have strong intermediate clubs, so you can lead the ♣J, intending to play low from dummy if West plays low. If West has the ♣K, you can make all four club tricks.

Suit T	Suit U
♠ A Q 7 4	♥ A K 7 6
♠ J 6 5 2	♥ J 4 3 2

How about Suit T? You should appreciate that leading the ♠J from your hand is a fairy finesse, as shown in Layout V.

Layout V		
♠ A Q 7 4		
♠ K 9		♠ 10 8 3
♠ J 6 5 2		

If you start with the ♠J, West covers with the ♠K. You take dummy's ♠A but all this has done is to promote a trick for East's ♠10. You have some chance of scoring four spade tricks, but you need West to hold precisely doubleton ♠K. Lead the ♠2 to dummy's ♠Q and cash the ♠A.

Finally, Suit U is another example where leading the ♥J is a fairy finesse. Correct play is to cash the ♥A-K, and if the ♥Q drops doubleton you have four heart tricks.

Now try the quiz on page 43. ■



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READERS' LETTERS

LITMUS TEST

Ian Dalziel's articles on the 'Teaching of Bridge' in this magazine have been inspirational. His ideas are not only innovative, but he has been generous in sharing his materials with others.

In last month's issue, he turned his attention to the importance of introducing learners to club duplicate sessions and the disincentive when they come across what Ian called 'table terrorists', (TTs). He rightly points out that most TTs are really nice people who often don't realise the effect they have on new members.

We would all deny that we are TTs, but try taking these two simple tests:

1. Do you talk about your hands with your partner at the table? If you do, then to a new member you are a TT. You are so keen to talk about your previous hand, that you forget to welcome and forget all the other courtesies you should be extending to them. Players who talk about their hands at the table are not welcoming to anyone and are positively hostile to newcomers.

2. Do you call the director for a judgment ruling when inexperienced players are

at your table? They will have no idea what you are talking about and certainly will feel very threatened. However, of course, you should always politely call the director over infringements for a book ruling, so that new members can learn the rules and overcome any fear of calling the director.

I look forward to BRIDGE each month for the quality of the articles and the quizzes. The glossy cover adds to the feeling of quality.

**Graham Baskerville,
Kington Langley, Wilts.**

FULL SET

Recently, I read in these pages that a club had bought a full set of your DVDs for a lending library and I thought it a brilliant idea. I am very keen to put something back into local clubs. There are at least four that have given me so much pleasure. I wondered what a full set would cost me? I feel that, once started, we might need two sets but my pocket is not really deep enough. I would offer them free, as a lending library would, for a limited time. I think the proposed service could be popular.

**Mrs Jane Keatley,
Barnstaple, North Devon.**

MEMORY LANE

I was so pleased to read Andrew Kambites' tribute to Tom Bradley in the December issue of BRIDGE.

I attended Tom's lessons in the late 70s, little thinking at that time what a friend and mentor he would become in my bridge playing life.

With his encouragement, I started teaching and used to accompany him to the EBUTA meetings. I kept in touch with Tom until he died – I saw him for the last time in Haywards Heath hospital. It was a sad day for me and I thanked him for all his help and support.

**Mrs V Chandler,
Nursling, Southampton.**

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I was thinking of writing a book about our bidding system for the Amazon Kindle. In the course of researching the existing market — which essentially involved downloading every free sample I could find — I was stunned by the poor quality of many of the transfers to the Kindle from books in print. In some books, the auctions and board layouts have been copied across as a microscopic image which cannot be enlarged. Sadly many of the illegible books are published by British companies for British authors.

It really is not good enough.

The eBook market does not want a straight copy of the book in print.

Publishers could do so much more to take advantage of the interactive nature of the eBook device. Here are just a few ideas:

1. Making images occupy the full width of the screen, to improve their legibility.

2. Designing exercises so that there is no more than one question per page, with the answer just a swipe away — not at the back of the book.

3. Making copious use of links within the book, so that the reader can very quickly refer to a specific learning point, glossary or notation reference and then easily return to where they left.

4. Giving the author's email address, so that, if the reader finds an error, he can notify the author and — if the author has the courtesy to reply — he can update the eBook on the same day (ideally). If the eBook publisher/seller is really switched on, this update to the book can also be electronically distributed to every customer who has already bought the book and wants to be kept up to date.

In many ways, the eBook is an ideal format for people to read about and learn bridge, but I have to say that many British publishers are delivering a poor product which could deter potential buyers for good.

**Gavin Wilson by email.
gavin@org2b.com**

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Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

About Simple Finessing Quiz

by Andrew Kambites

(Answers on page 45)

- 1 With each of the following suit combinations:
- Assuming you have plenty of entries to each hand and can afford to lose the lead a sufficient number of times, how many tricks do you hope to make?
 - Does your answer depend on the distribution of the missing cards?

Suit A

♠ A K 7



♠ J 5 4 2

Suit B

♥ A K 7



♥ J 10 4 3

Suit C

♦ A K J



♦ 6 5 4 2

Suit D

♣ A Q 3 2



♣ 6 5 4

Suit E

♠ K Q 8 3 2



♠ 6 5 4

Suit F

♥ Q J 3 2



♥ 6 5 4

In Layouts 2-7 you have insufficient top tricks to fulfil your contract. From where will you develop the necessary extra tricks?

Layout 2

♠ 5 3
♥ A 7 6 4
♦ A K J 7
♣ A 3 2



♠ A 4
♥ K 3 2
♦ Q 5 4 3
♣ Q J 5 4

3NT. Lead: ♠K.

Layout 3

♠ 6 5 3 2
♥ A 7 6
♦ A K 7
♣ A 3 2



♠ A K 4
♥ K 3 2
♦ 9 5 4
♣ Q J 5 4

3NT Lead: ♠Q.

Layout 4

♠ 5 4
♥ 6 4 2
♦ A Q 10
♣ K Q J 10 9



♠ A K
♥ K Q 7
♦ 7 5 4 3
♣ A 5 4 3

3NT. Lead: ♠Q.

Layout 5

♠ 5 4
♥ A Q J
♦ Q 6 2
♣ K Q J 10 9



♠ A 3
♥ 8 4 3
♦ A K J 10 3
♣ 7 4 3

3NT. Lead: ♠K.

Layout 6

♠ A K 2
♥ K 4
♦ A K 3 2
♣ K J 10 8



♠ J 8 6
♥ A 3 2
♦ J 6
♣ A Q 9 3 2

6NT. Lead: ♥J.

Layout 7

♠ 5 4 3
♥ A K 3 2
♦ A 9 6
♣ A 3 2



♠ K Q J 2
♥ 6 5 4
♦ K 4 3
♣ K 7 5

3NT. Lead: ♥Q.

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30 RNLI

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☎ 01234 870234

APRIL 2017

21 ST NEOTS MUSEUM

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Jean Searle ☎ 01480 212298

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16 GT STUKELEY CONSERVATIVE CLUB

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Answers to About Simple Finessing Quiz on page 43

1 With each of the following suit combinations:



(i) Assuming you have plenty of entries to each hand and can afford to lose the lead a sufficient number of times, how many tricks do you hope to make?

(ii) Does your answer depend on the distribution of the missing cards?

Suit A	Suit B
♠ A K 7	♥ A K 7
	
♠ J 5 4 2	♥ J 10 4 3



A Leading the ♠J cannot gain because you don't have good enough intermediate spades. You should cash the ♠A-K and lead towards the ♠J. You make three spade tricks if the ♠Q is singleton or doubleton, if East has the ♠Q, or if spades break 3-3.

B Any sensible play leads to three heart tricks. Your best chance of four heart tricks is to lead the ♥J for a finesse. Before trying that, it does no harm to cash the ♥A just in case the ♥Q is singleton.

Suit C	Suit D
♦ A K J	♣ A Q 3 2
	
♦ 6 5 4 2	♣ 6 5 4

C Cash the ♦A, then return to your hand and finesse the ♦J, hoping West has ♦Q-x-x so giving you four diamond tricks. Even if the ♦J loses to the ♦Q you can still make three tricks if the missing diamonds break 3-3.

D You are only guaranteed one club trick, the ♣A, but you will finesse the ♣Q (if this wins you have a second club trick) and concede a club (if they break 3-3 you have an extra club trick). If you are really lucky you might score three club tricks.

Suit E	Suit F
♠ K Q 8 3 2	♥ Q J 3 2
	
♠ 6 5 4	♥ 6 5 4



E With these spades, you can combine two principles. First, lead twice towards dummy's ♠K-Q, benefitting if West has the ♠A. Second, aim to play three rounds of spades, losing whatever tricks you must, in order hopefully, to establish two length winners.

If you are lucky, with West holding the ♠A and spades breaking 3-2, you can make four spade tricks. If you are unlucky, with East holding ♠A-J-10-9, you cannot make more than two spade tricks and will need to lose the lead three times to achieve even this modest outcome.

F We are now getting to the stage where it is hard to know how many heart tricks you will get, but on general principles,

you should be leading towards honours, not leading honours. Thus, lead the ♥4 towards dummy, playing the ♥J if West plays low. Subsequently, lead the ♥5 towards dummy's ♥Q. Finish by playing a third heart trick, hoping for a 3-3 break. There are many possible distributions of the hearts but you might make two tricks (eg If West has ♥A-10-6). Try it out with a pack of cards.

In Layouts 2-7 you have insufficient top tricks to fulfil your contract. From where will you develop the necessary extra tricks?

Layout 2	Layout 3
♠ 5 3	♠ 6 5 3 2
♥ A 7 6 4	♥ A 7 6
♦ A K J 7	♦ A K 7
♣ A 3 2	♣ A 3 2
	
♠ A 4	♠ A K 4
♥ K 3 2	♥ K 3 2
♦ Q 5 4 3	♦ 9 5 4
♣ Q J 5 4	♣ Q J 5 4
Contract 3NT.	Contract 3NT.
Lead: ♠K.	Lead: ♠Q.

2 You have eight top tricks, the ♠A, ♥A-K, ♦A-K-Q-J and the ♣A. You need a ninth trick and you cannot afford to lose the lead because the opponents have too many spades to cash. Win the ♠A and lead the ♣Q from your hand, hoping West has the ♣K. ▶

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3 This time you have seven top tricks, the ♠A-K, ♥A-K, ♦A-K and the ♣A. You require two extra club tricks, but this time you have a second spade guard so you don't fear losing the lead. Your club intermediates are not good, so it is best to hope that East has the ♣K. Cash the ♣A and lead towards your ♣Q-J. If that loses to West's ♣K, you will need the missing clubs to break 3-3. If the ♣Q wins, enter dummy again (with the ♦K) and lead another club towards your hand. You will make three club tricks if either East has the ♣K or clubs break 3-3.

Layouts 2 and 3 make an interesting contrast. The club suit is the same in both cases but the correct play is determined by an overall view of the hand.

working. Win the ♠A, finesse the ♥J, return to your hand with a diamond and take a second heart finesse.

Layout 6

♠ A K 2
♥ K 4
♦ A K 3 2
♣ K J 10 8



♠ J 8 6
♥ A 3 2
♦ J 6
♣ A Q 9 3 2

Contract 6NT.
Lead: ♥J.

Layout 7

♠ 5 4 3
♥ A K 3 2
♦ A 9 6
♣ A 3 2



♠ K Q J 2
♥ 6 5 4
♦ K 4 3
♣ K 7 5

Contract 3NT.
Lead: ♥Q.

Layout 4

♠ 5 4
♥ 6 4 2
♦ A Q 10
♣ K Q J 10 9



♠ A K
♥ K Q 7
♦ 7 5 4 3
♣ A 5 4 3

Contract 3NT.
Lead: ♠Q.

Layout 5

♠ 5 4
♥ A Q J
♦ Q 6 2
♣ K Q J 10 9



♠ A 3
♥ 8 4 3
♦ A K J 10 3
♣ 7 4 3

Contract 3NT.
Lead: ♠K.

4 You have eight top tricks, the ♠A-K, the ♦A and five clubs. You need a ninth trick. There is potential in the hearts or a finesse of the ♦10 or ♦Q, but the hearts offer a guaranteed trick so win the ♠A, enter dummy with the ♣K and lead a heart to your ♥K. If it wins, you might assume the heart finesse works for you and re-enter dummy with the ♣Q for another heart lead towards your ♥Q.

5 You have seven top tricks, the ♠A, ♥A and five diamonds. The clubs look very tempting but to develop any club tricks you will have to lose the lead, allowing the defenders to cash too many spade tricks, even if the missing nine spades break 5-4. You must stake everything on the heart finesse

6 You have 11 top tricks, the ♠A-K, ♥A-K, ♦A-K and five club tricks. To develop a twelfth, you must use either the ♠J or ♦J. Note that leading either jack won't help you, because if it is covered by the queen you still only have two tricks in the suit. Better to hope that East has a queen. It won't help you to lead a low spade from dummy towards your ♠J, because even if East has it he can take it: your ♠A-K-J are all winners, but they will be compressed into two tricks. Better play is to take the ♥K and lead a low diamond at trick two.

Squeeze experts will note that even if the ♦J loses to the ♦Q, you still have chances but that is beyond the scope of this article.

7 You have six top tricks, the ♥A-K, ♦A-K and ♣A-K. You need three tricks from the spade suit. Following general principles, you should aim to keep leading towards your spade honours. Win the ♥A, and lead a spade to your ♠K. If that wins, enter dummy with the ♦A and switch back to a low spade to your ♠Q. Finally, enter dummy with the ♣A and repeat the spade manoeuvre.

Of course, you make 3NT if the spades break 3-3, but you also succeed any time East has the ♠A, because you don't allow the ♠A to capture any of your spade honours. ■



Answers to David Huggett's Play Quiz on page 9

1.

♠ K 7 6		
♥ A 7 5 2		
♦ A 8 4		
♣ A K 3		
♠ J 10 9 5		♠ 8 4 2
♥ 10 8 4 3		♥ Q 9 6
♦ 10 6 2		♦ 9 7 3
♣ J 8		♣ Q 10 9 5
	♠ A Q 3	
	♥ K J	
	♦ K Q J 5	
	♣ 7 6 4 2	

You are declarer in 6NT and West leads the ♠J. How do you plan the play?

It is annoying that there are only eleven tricks immediately available, but both clubs and hearts offer hope of a twelfth. You have to be careful though in how you go about testing both options. It would be a mistake to take a heart finesse immediately, in case clubs break 3-3, and it would also be a mistake to play three rounds of clubs in case they break 4-2 with the heart finesse working. So simply duck a club at trick two, win the return and try for the club break. If that fails take the heart finesse.

2.

♠ A 10 9 2		
♥ 8 6 4		
♦ Q 7 6		
♣ A 5 4		
♠ 6		♠ 7
♥ Q 7		♥ J 10 9 2
♦ A J 10 9 5 2		♦ 8 3
♣ J 10 9 2		♣ K Q 8 7 6 3
	♠ K Q J 8 5 4 3	
	♥ A K 5 3	
	♦ K 4	
	♣ Void	

You are declarer in 6♠ after West has opened a weak 2♦. West leads the ♠J. How do you plan the play?

It does look as though you have an inescapable loser in both the red suits, but in fact the slam is more or less laydown after the weak two opening by West. Instead of winning the opening lead in dummy, ruff in hand, draw trumps and lead the ♦4. What can West do? If he plays the ace then declarer has twelve tricks via seven spades, two hearts, two diamonds and a club, while if he plays low you can win with the queen in dummy and play the club ace throwing your ♦K. All you then concede is a heart, ruffing the fourth round of hearts in dummy.

3.

♠ 6 5 4		
♥ K 6		
♦ A 7 5		
♣ A K 6 4 2		
♠ A Q 9 7 3		♠ 10 8
♥ Q 9 3		♥ 10 8 7 2
♦ J 9 3		♦ Q 10 6 4
♣ Q 7		♣ J 10 8
	♠ K J 2	
	♥ A J 5 4	
	♦ K 8 2	
	♣ 9 5 3	

You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♠7. East plays the ♠10. How do you plan the play?

Even if the heart finesse works, you still haven't got enough tricks without making an extra club and if you can make four club tricks then you need only two heart tricks, anyway. Chances are that the club suit will break 3-2, but if East wins the third round he can fire a spade through your remaining holding and that may not be good news. So play a club from

hand at trick two and if West plays low win in dummy. Return to hand with a diamond and lead another club, but this time if West plays the queen you duck, keeping East off lead. If West plays low you have to win and play a third round, hoping that West started with three or that spades break 4-3.

You must not play clubs from dummy because an astute West can throw the queen from queen doubleton to create an entry to his partner's hand.

4.

♠ 7		
♥ A 10 7		
♦ 8 7 6 4		
♣ 8 7 5 4 2		
♠ A Q 10 5 4		♠ J 8 3 2
♥ 6 5		♥ 4 3 2
♦ Q J 10 2		♦ 9 5
♣ K 6		♣ Q J 10 9
	♠ K 9 6	
	♥ K Q J 9 8	
	♦ A K 3	
	♣ A 3	

You are declarer in 4♥ and West leads the ♦Q. How do you plan the play?

The contract is a good one although, with only eight tricks on top, it looks as if you may need a bit of luck in finding two more. Maybe it looks obvious to cross to dummy with a trump in order to lead up to the spade king, but that would backfire horribly if West won and played a second trump. Now you would be unable to ruff two spades in dummy.

Of course, that South hand is too good and the spade king is a mirage. Just lead a spade from hand at trick two and, even if they switch to a trump, you can still take two spade ruffs in dummy and ten tricks in all.



This deal is one of the more talked-about:

low club immediately, putting pressure on East. Even if he plays low, he may give away the position of the ♣K. In order to make it on a straightforward line, you need to overtake your ♠Q to create a second entry to hand, so you can both ruff a heart in the dummy and take a diamond finesse. Surely better odds is simply to draw trumps ending in hand and take a club finesse. One down.

Afterwards, I dash off to the Young Chelsea for Simon Cocheme's 70th birthday party celebrations (though he looks more like 50). The party had started earlier and by the time I get there, most of the food has been eaten and put away (though they had saved some for me) and everyone is playing bridge – some of Simon's more memorable hands, so they are all interesting. There is a booklet available afterwards, in which there is a hand he apparently played with me (I feel guilty for not remembering) where I was very cross with him for doubling opponents in 4♠, as he had no defence to any other contract and they removed themselves to 5♦ which was cold.

As the evening goes on, everyone becomes merrier and merrier and a jolly good time is had by all.

Barry has to be up at six to catch his train to Leeds for the week. He was rather hoping that the judge would allow his submission for 'no case to answer', so he could come home, but it is not to be and he is likely to be there for at least another couple of weeks. I spend the morning working at the flat before meeting Toby for lunch at The Gay Hussar in Soho. It's lovely to meet up with him and hear all about his course at Imperial. Then I drive home and spend the evening with Briony.

Tuesday

After a bit of work in the morning, most of my day is taken up having lunch with Colin and Julianna. We go to the Alford Arms at Frithsden which I would recommend to anyone wanting a good lunch in the area (just outside Berkhamsted).


Afterwards, they take me home and we open another bottle – so most of the rest of the day is lost to posterity – though I am sober enough to have an online session with one of my Irish pairs.

Wednesday

I am up early and on the train to London to play with Allie at the Acol. It doesn't go as well as it usually does, but it is fun, as always.

Inexperienced players often get frightened to bid when an opponent opens with a strong bid – a strong 2♣, or Precision 1♠ opening, for example. However, this can often be the best time to bid because the opponent has not yet started to describe the hand in terms of suit lengths. If he has not yet shown a long suit, he is unlikely to stop off to double you. Taking their space away can work well – for example:

Dealer South. Game All.

♠ A Q 8		
♥ A		
♦ A K J 4		
♣ A Q 9 4 2		
♠ J 3		♠ 7 5 2
♥ J 10 9 3		♥ Q 8 7 4 2
♦ Q 10 6 3 2		♦ 8 5
♣ J 8		♣ K 10 6
♠ K 10 9 6 4		
♥ K 6 5		
♦ 9 7		
♣ 7 5 3		

I don't really think this is a slam you would want to be in. At most tables the bidding starts: Pass – 2♣ – 2♦ – 3♣ – 3♠ – 4♠. Now, is South worth a further move? And if he/she bids 5♥, should North bid slam? Close decisions in my view.

If you do end up in slam, how do you play it on a heart lead? I would be tempted to win in dummy and play a

Dealer East. Game All.

♠ K Q 10 5		
♥ 7		
♦ J 8 7 3 2		
♣ 10 9 8		
♠ 9 8 7		♠ 6 3 2
♥ Q J 10 8 6 2		♥ 9 5 3
♦ Void		♦ Q 9 5
♣ K J 6 2		♣ Q 7 5 3
♠ A J 4		
♥ A K 4		
♦ A K 10 6 4		
♣ A 4		

West	North	East	South
		Pass	2♣
2♥	Dbl	3♥	3NT
All Pass			

North shows a few values with his initial double (though some people play that a double in that situation shows a seriously poor hand). South has a balanced 23-count, minimum for his initial opening. And there they are in 3NT with 7♦ laydown.

I come straight back afterwards as there is no bridge in the evening. Briony is out, so I do a bit of bidding practice on BBO with Barry and some work, then try to watch TV. I don't know if I'm the only person in the world who has such trouble with actually turning the television on and getting it working. If Briony and I ever get around to living in separate houses, I am going to need a really good lesson or I will never be able to watch Casualty and Holby City.

Thursday

Just after nine, Briony and I set off for the Eurotunnel and our little shopping trip to France. We cross around lunchtime and go straight to Boulogne to check into our hotel in the old town. Then it's off to the shops. Later we go out for an excellent dinner before settling down for the night. All would be excellent were it not for the backache I've been suffering for the last couple of weeks. I have an osteopath appointment on Monday but at odd times today it seemed uncertain I would last that long.


Friday

Up early for breakfast, and then we drive to Calais. There is a Christmas market there that we are going to visit – but when we get there we find that it is open from 4.30pm to 9.30pm which isn't much good for us. Instead, we go to our favourite cheese shop, and then adjourn to Cité Europe. As we have plenty of time, we first stop off at the Designer Outlet and get some more Christmas presents. On the way back, Briony drops me at Ashford station and I get a train back to London while Briony drives on home. I hadn't

realised it would be quite so difficult carrying my bags with my poorly back and it is quite a relief to finally arrive at the flat. Barry gets back about 8.30 – it looks as if this trial in Leeds is going to last beyond Christmas.

Saturday

A nice lazy morning. We pop in to the training weekend at the Young Chelsea (I will be back for longer tomorrow) on our way to TGR's for our NICKO final match against Janet de Botton's team. We gain a few on the first two sets, lose a lot on the third and a few more on the fourth, leaving us 23 IMPs down when we break for some excellent food. We pick up a few on the last two sets but eventually lose by 9. They make life very difficult for us on this board:

Dealer East. N/S Vul.			
♠ A J 8 7			
♥ 5 4			
♦ K 8 7			
♣ A K 6 5			
♠ 10 2		♠ 5 4	
♥ Q 10 9 3 2		♥ A K J 7 6	
♦ A 10 9 6		♦ J 4	
♣ J 9		♣ 8 7 3 2	
		♠ K Q 9 6 3	
		♥ 8	
		♦ Q 5 3 2	
		♣ Q 10 4	

In the other room, East opens 2♥ and West raises to 4♥, rather remarkably silencing everyone. In our room, West is rather more imaginative.

West	North	East	South
		2♥	Pass
4NT	Dbl	5♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	5♠
All Pass			

I am South and know that West is mucking around. As it happens I should just have passed the double of 5♥, but I don't know that and it seems to me that I probably have enough for 5♠. As long as East is bright enough to unblock his ♦J when I lead towards the ♦K, I have to go down. And, yes, that one board, had I passed, would have been enough to win the match. ■


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Sally Brock Looks at Your Slam Bidding

Sally's Slam Clinic



Where did we go wrong?

This month's deal was sent in by Steve Lambert of St Albans. He and his partner nearly got it right but fell at the final hurdle ...

Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ K Q J 9 2 ♠ A 7 6
♥ A 5 4 3 ♥ K
♦ K ♦ A J 8 6 4
♣ A K 8 ♣ Q 7 5 3

West	East
1♠	1♦
2♥	2♣
4NT	5♥
5NT	6♥
6♠	Pass

West was worried that East might not hold the ♠Q, which is why he settled for the small slam.

There are several interesting issues here. The first is that West assumed that partner would be 3-1-5-4 distribution. I would have thought that East was 2-2-5-4. For me, a 3-1-5-4 minimum opening should raise 1♠ directly to 2♠, and with more than a minimum opening East would have bid 3♠ over the fourth-suit 2♥. Never mind, as soon as you discover that East has the ♥K it doesn't really matter whether he is 3-1 or 2-2 in the majors.

I think it is well within the odds to bid the grand slam.

At worst you might need to ruff a couple of hearts in the dummy, but even if partner does not have the ♠Q, he may have the ♦Q and it is easy to see thirteen tricks virtually on top. In my view, it is old-fashioned and not helpful to play fourth-suit forcing as anything other than game-forcing. Here, had West been able to raise 2♠ to 3♠, setting the suit and asking for cue-bids, East would sign off with a real minimum and co-operate with a decent hand. Then, after using RKCB, West would have had a better idea how high to go.

Slam of the Month

This month's excellent winner was sent in by Geoff Simpson of Banchory, Aberdeen. He was South and Joe Duxbury was North.

Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ A J 9 8 5 4 3
♥ 6 3
♦ A Q 8 2
♣ Void
♠ 10 7 6 ♠ Q 2
♥ 10 ♥ J 9 8 7
♦ J 10 7 6 3 ♦ 5
♣ 10 6 5 2 ♣ A Q J 9 4 3
♠ K
♥ A K Q 5 4 2
♦ K 9 4
♣ K 8 7

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

The bidding looks straightforward up to South's 3♥, then North has choices, but it surely can't be wrong to rebid his seven-card suit (forcing when partner has jumped the bidding). South's 3NT rebid is clearcut and then North did well to bid on to show his diamond values. South might have done more here with good trumps and a club control, but over his sign-off North bid 5♣ to show the shortage. A diamond cue-bid from South now was enough for North to bid the slam.

On a club lead there would have been no problems in the play, but West astutely led a trump instead. Declarer won in hand, ruffed a club, returned to hand with the ♠K, drew two more rounds of trumps, played a diamond to dummy and the ♠A, discarding a club. Had the ♠Q not fallen, he would have ruffed a spade and crossed again to a diamond, before playing an established spade to discard his last club loser as East ruffed with his trump trick. However, when the ♠Q dropped it was all over. Well bid and well played. ■

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OCT 24	PALERMO Sicily (<i>Monreale</i>)	
OCT 25	TRAPANI Sicily (<i>Segesta</i>)	
OCT 26	At Sea	
OCT 27	CARTAGENA Spain	
OCT 28	MALAGA Spain (<i>Granada</i>)	
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