

BRIDGE

Number One Hundred and Forty-Five

January 2015

Bernard Magee's Acol Bidding Quiz

You are West in the auctions below, playing 'Standard Acol' with a weak no-trump (12-14 points) and 4-card majors.

1. Dealer West. Love All.

♠ A 10 9
♥ A K 7 6
♦ Q J 4
♣ 10 9 8



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

2. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ 4 3
♥ A Q 5
♦ A K 7 6 5
♣ J 9 4



West	North	East	South
?		2♠	Pass

¹Weak. 6 spades. 6-10 HCP.

3. Dealer West. N/S Game.

♠ A K 3 2
♥ K 8 7 6 5
♦ 5
♣ Q 7 2



West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
?			

Answers on page 6

4. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ 5 3
♥ A K 4 2
♦ K Q J 2
♣ 10 8 3



West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♦	Pass
?		1♠	Pass

5. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ A 7 6 5
♥ Q 3 2
♦ 4 2
♣ K Q 3 2



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

6. Dealer North. Love All.

♠ 8
♥ A 7 6
♦ Q J 5 4 3 2
♣ J 3 2



West	North	East	South
?	1♥	1♠	2♣

Answers on page 8

7. Dealer East. N/S Game.

♠ 5 4
♥ Q 2
♦ 6 4 3
♣ A J 8 7 5 4



West	North	East	South
?		3♥	Pass

8. Dealer South. Love All.

♠ A K 7 6 5
♥ 9 6 4
♦ A K 6 3 2
♣ Void



West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
?			

9. Dealer North. N/S Game.

♠ A 8 7 6 5
♥ Q 3 2
♦ 9 8 4
♣ 7 6



West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

Answers on page 10

10. Dealer North. Love All.

♠ A 8 7 6
♥ 3
♦ K 8 7 2
♣ Q J 8 5



West	North	East	South
?	1NT	2♥	Pass

11. Dealer East. Love All.

♠ 8 7
♥ 5 4
♦ A K 8 7 6 2
♣ J 10 3



West	North	East	South
?		2♣	Dbl

12. Dealer South. Love All.

♠ A Q
♥ 7 6
♦ A K 9 3 2
♣ A 5 4 3



West	North	East	South
?			1♠

Answers on page 12

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DATE	PORT
JAN 16	Depart UK
JAN 17	Arrive CAPE TOWN South Africa Embark Aegean Odyssey overnight
JAN 18	CAPE TOWN South Africa overnight
JAN 19	CAPE TOWN South Africa
JAN 20	At Sea
JAN 21	PORT ELIZABETH South Africa (Addo Elephant Park)
JAN 22	At Sea
JAN 23	RICHARDS BAY South Africa (Hluhluwe Game Reserve) overnight
JAN 24	RICHARDS BAY South Africa (St Lucia Nature Reserve)
JAN 25-27	At Sea
JAN 28	MAYOTTE Comoros
JAN 29/30	At Sea
JAN 31	MAHE Seychelles overnight
FEB 1	MAHE Seychelles
FEB 2	PRASLIN/LA DIGUE Seychelles
FEB 3-5	At Sea – Crossing the Equator
FEB 6	KUDA BANDOS Maldives
FEB 7	At Sea
FEB 8	COLOMBO Sri Lanka Disembark and transfer to Colombo Airport for flight home

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ABTA No. Y2206

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FEB 28	Depart UK		
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MAR 2	SINGAPORE Embark Aegean Odyssey		6.00pm
MAR 3	PORT KELANG Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)	1.00pm	8.00pm
MAR 4	At Sea		
MAR 5	PHUKET Thailand (Phi Phi Islands)	7.00am	8.00pm
MAR 6	At Sea		
MAR 7	YANGON Burma	6.00pm	overnight
MAR 8	YANGON Burma		overnight
MAR 9	YANGON Burma		6.00pm
MAR 10/11	Cruise through the Nicobar Islands		
MAR 12	PENANG Malaysia	8.00am	6.00pm
MAR 13	MALACCA Malaysia	2.00pm	7.00pm
MAR 14	SINGAPORE Transfer to Singapore Airport for flight home	6.00am	

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VOYAGES TO ANTIQUITY

ABTA
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HAPPY NEW YEAR



Every year it happens and I should be used to it by now. It is always a strange sensation, but I will try and share it with you. I am writing my page for the January issue at the beginning of December with the office Christmas party still two weeks away.

Mrs Bridge and I are going to cruise on board Aegean Odyssey this coming February and the ship is fully booked. As people are still ringing to book a cabin, we must be doing something right. We have decided to stay on board for the following cruise and offer readers the opportunity of joining us to visit Yangon in ancient Burma, details of which you can read in the adjacent advertisement. I will enjoy the complimentary wine with my dinner and the all-pervading warmth of the climate of that region.

If readers, who are travelling on the earlier cruise, wish to stay on, they may do so and be entitled to a reduction of £1,000 for the air fare saving and a further 10% off as Odyssey Club members. Do telephone my office for a full glossy brochure if I have not already sent you one.

This should be when I tell you how comfortable Aegean Odyssey is. How well looked after we all are, how the excursions are all included in the price and the bottled water and the

table wine at dinner so I won't bother to do so again.

... AND FOR 2016

When I saw the schedule of Aegean Odyssey's voyages, I caught sight of one that satisfied most, if not all, my requirements of a cruise.

Just to refresh your memory. The weather should be warm, the ship should be comfortable and have a fair-sized bridge party onboard. There should also be some interesting ports to visit. So the voyage from Cape Town to Colombo ticks all the boxes and the single supplement is only £200.

FIRST TIME

This is the first time that BRIDGE is being sent just to the founder subscribers.

Hopefully, you will take a founder subscription for a friend or family member before the £20 initial subscription rate expires. Even at £45, it represents the very best in bridge publishing, with plenty for every sort of bridge taste. Use the online shop or ring the office. We can pack up the January issue before Christmas and post it with a 'do not open until Christmas Day' sticker on the outside and give the recipient a super surprise. End of plug.

RESOLUTIONS

As I have already said earlier, I haven't had the chance to put a list together yet but I will share this with you in the next issue as well as looking back at those I have told you about over the years.

Happy New Year,

Mr Bridge

Bernard Magee's Tips for Better Bridge

65 invaluable tips in 160 pages

Bidding Tips

- 1 Always consider bidding spades if you can
- 2 Bid more aggressively when non-vulnerable
- 3 Always double when the opponents steal your deal
- 4 A takeout double shows shortage in the suit doubled
- 5 'Borrow' a king to keep the auction open
- 6 After a penalty double, don't let the opponents escape
- 7 Halve the value of a singleton honour when opening
- 8 Only add length-points for a suit that might be useful
- 9 Isolated honours are bad except in partner's suit
- 10 Use the jump shift sparingly
- 11 Consider passing and letting partner decide
- 12 You need two top honours for a second-seat pre-empt
- 13 Put the brakes on if you have a misfit
- 14 Strong and long minors work well in no-trumps
- 15 One stop in the opponents' suit can be enough for no-trumps
- 16 Keep your two-level responses up to strength
- 17 Use your normal methods in response to a 1NT overcall
- 18 Don't overcall just because you have opening points
- 19 Overcalls can be quite weak, so be prudent when responding
- 20 Weak overcalls must be based on strong suits
- 21 6NT requires 33 points not 4 aces and 4 kings
- 22 Raise immediately, if weak with four-card support
- 23 In a competitive auction, show support immediately
- 24 Bid to the level of your fit quickly with weak hands
- 25 With strength and support, use the opponents' bid suit

Declarer Play Tips

- 26 When your contract depends on a finesse, think 'endplay'
- 27 Consider what a defender might be thinking about
- 28 Always take your time at trick one
- 29 Establish extra tricks before cashing your winners
- 30 Use your opponents' bidding to your advantage
- 31 Avoid the 'baddie' gaining the lead
- 32 Use the Rule of Seven when holding up in no-trumps

- 33 A low lead usually promises length and an honour
- 34 When declaring 1NT, try to be patient
- 35 Duck an early round when you are short of entries
- 36 Lead up to your two-honour holding
- 37 Do not always assume a suit will break well
- 38 Drop a high card to put off the defence
- 39 Play your highest card to tempt a defender to cover
- 40 Draw trumps first unless you have a good reason not to
- 41 Do not waste your trumps
- 42 Consider leaving a lone defensive trump winner out

Defence Tips

- 43 Keep four-card suits intact whenever possible
- 44 Give count on declarer's leads
- 45 Keep the right cards rather than signal
- 46 Take your time when dummy is put down
- 47 High cards are for killing other high cards
- 48 Do not waste intermediate cards
- 49 Pick two key suits to concentrate on during the play
- 50 If in doubt, cover an honour with an honour
- 51 If a lead is from two honours, it is best not to cover
- 52 Keep your honour to kill dummy's honour
- 53 Try to show partner your solid honour sequences
- 54 Lead the normal card when leading partner's suit
- 55 Never underlead an ace at trick one in a suit contract
- 56 Be wary of leading from four cards to only one honour
- 57 Lead a higher card from a suit without an honour
- 58 Lead through 'beatable' strength and up to weakness
- 59 Cash your winners before trying for a trump promotion
- 60 Be patient when defending 1NT
- 61 Trump leads can be safe throughout the play

General Tips

- 62 Do not put important cards at either end of your hand
- 63 Avoid being declarer when you are dummy
- 64 Before you lead, ask for a review of the auction
- 65 Enjoy the Game!

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

1. Dealer West. Love All.

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



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

3NT.

You opened a weak no-trump and your partner responded Stayman. You showed your four-card major as required and then your partner raised to 3♥. He is inviting you to game and showing that your side has at least an eight-card heart fit. You have a flat hand (4-3-3-3), which I like to downgrade by a full point, but put against that you have a ten-nine in spades and a ten-nine-eight in clubs, which would upgrade the hand by a point. So your hand is a healthy 14 points and should certainly accept the game invitation. However, why not describe your hand perfectly, by bidding 3NT. This says, 'Partner, I have the strength for game, but I am awfully flat. If you are flat too, 3NT might make a better game contract than 4♥.' East might well accept your suggestion and pass 3NT: whichever he chooses, at least you have given him the choice.

2. Dealer East. Love All.

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



West	North	East	South
?		2♣ ¹	Pass

¹Weak. 6 spades. 6-10 HCP.

Pass.

A nice and simple hand: your partner has shown 6-10 points and a six-card spade suit.

You have a fit in spades, so that denomination is fine and, with only 14 high card points, game is beyond you. Therefore, you pass. There is no need to show your suits because you have already found an eight-card major suit fit.

3. Dealer West. N/S Game.

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



West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
?			

3♣.

When you open one of a suit, you promise to make another bid, so you must not pass. However, a rebid of 2♣ would be a reverse (above your barrier of 2♥ and promising 16+ points), forcing the partnership to game. 2♥ is an inadequate description of the hand: it is not really a one-suited hand. Best of a bad lot is 3♣, supporting your partner and leaving him in control.

Your partner has a minimum 2♣ bid so may well choose to pass 3♣ which is likely to be the last making contract. ■

The European Union commissioners have announced that agreement has been reached to adopt English as the preferred language for communications, rather than German, which was the other possibility.

As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five-year phased plan for what will be known as EuroEnglish (Euro for short).

In the first year, "s" will be used instead of the soft "c". Certainly, sivil servants will reseive this news with joy. Also, the hard "c" will be replaced with "k". Not only will this klear up kufusion, but typewriters can have one less letter.

There will be growing public enthusiasm in the second year, when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced by "f". This will make words like "fotooraf" 20 per cent shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be ekspected to reach the stage where more komplikatated changes are possible. Governments will enkourage the removal of double letters, which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horrible mes of silent "e"s in the languag is disgrasful, and they would go.

By the fourth year, people will be receptive to steps such as replacing "th" and "w" by "v".

During the fifteenth year, the unnecessary "o" can be dropped from words containing "ou", and similar changes would of course be applied to other combinations of letters.

After zis fifz yer, ve vil hav a
reli sensibl riten styl. Zer wil
be no mor trubls or difikultis
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Answers to Bernard Magee's Bidding Quizzes 4-6 on the Cover

4. Dealer East. Love All.

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



West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♦	Pass
?		1♠	Pass

2♣. As soon as your partner opens the bidding, you expect to finish in a game contract, holding a good opening hand yourself. However, you are still unsure about what the best denomination is: you have a good fit in diamonds, but 3NT might be a better contract if your partner can stop the club suit.

When three suits have been bid and you are still unsure of the final contract, then you can use the fourth suit forcing to continue the auction: asking your partner to make one more descriptive bid to help you finalise the contract. There is rarely a reason to use the fourth suit naturally, it is much more useful as an artificial forcing bid. Here, your partner will show his club stop by bidding 2NT, which you will raise to 3NT.

A 3♦ rebid is no good – it suggests about 11 points and your partner would pass. 5♦ might make with these two hands, but 3NT may well make an over-trick for a better score.

5. Dealer East. Love All.

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



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

3♥. Your partner's 1NT rebid shows a balanced 15-17 HCP. Clearly, game is on because, with your 11 HCP, you have between 26 and 28 points. However, which will be the better game, 3NT or 4♥?

To show your strength, you must make a jump bid and, to give partner all the options, you should bid 3♥. You will not have four hearts because you would have supported straight away, so your partner can choose 4♥ if he has a five card suit, or he can bid 3♠ with three spades, or finally, he can bid 3NT with neither of the previous holdings. Giving your partner the choice of contracts means you are likely to find the best contract. Here, of course, you will finish in 4♥.

6. Dealer North. Love All.

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



West	North	East	South
	1♥	1♠	2♣
			?

Pass. Your partner has made a simple overcall of 1♠: he is not showing great strength, but he should have at least a five-card suit. This is a very simple hand: you are weak and have no fit for your partner so you should simply pass. Do not be tempted to show your suit: this would show strength and will succeed only in getting your side into trouble on this deal.



Attacking The Enemy Castle

When you are defending a contract, remember the obvious – you have a partner. You and your partner should be like two allied generals working together to attack declarer's castle. The castle has four walls – one for each suit. Particularly against a no-trump contract, only a full-on concerted attack by both of you against one wall may allow you to sack the castle.

The opening lead is your side's first point of attack. By choosing the opening lead, your partner is saying, 'This is where my forces are strongest and where I hope declarer is weakest.' It's as if partner has hit one wall of the castle with his biggest battering ram. Perhaps a great crack has appeared... If you, as your partner's co-general, use your forces now to attack a different wall of the castle, how co-operative is that? You should order your own men, siege engines, catapults and battering rams to reinforce partner's effort and you should continue the attack in the same place.

Here's a deal that shows what might happen if the partner generals don't co-operate:

South	West	North	East
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Dealer South. Game All.

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

South won cheaply with ♠10 and counted tricks. There were a possible four in diamonds if the opposing cards were 3-3 and a possible three in clubs if the finesse against the queen succeeded. With the spade already made that came to only eight tricks. At least one heart trick would be needed and there would be no avoiding the suit. So, at trick 2, declarer led a heart to the ♥Q. East won the ♥A and declarer's heart sank – the spade wall of his castle was about to come under renewed attack.

A few moments later South was able to jump for joy. East looked only at his own hand. Thinking that the diamond sequence looked attractive and that dummy was weak in diamonds, East forgot about his partner's suit and switched to diamonds. South won gratefully and soon had nine tricks. If only East had returned his remaining spade, then West would have had the next four tricks.

The moral of the tale is that defence is teamwork. If the partners work to different plans, then neither is likely to succeed.

Unless you have confirmed evidence that a switch will be better, always return partner's suit. ■



South reached a straightforward 3NT contract and West led her fourth-highest ♠5.

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

7. Dealer East. N/S Game.

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

West	North	East	South
?		3♥	Pass

4♥. Your partner has opened with a pre-emptive 3♥, which shows 6-9 points and a 7-card suit. With such a weak hand, you might think that pass is your only option. However, you have a 9-card heart fit, the vulnerability is in your favour and with the sure knowledge that your opponents should be in game, it makes sense to make life difficult for them. Raise to 4♥, hoping to make at least 7 tricks, which would be safe even if you were doubled: -500 is less than they make for a game. Of course, your opponents may still bid to 4♠, but you will have made it as difficult as possible for them.

8. Dealer South. Love All.

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

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
?			

3♦. You overcall 1♠, hear your partner raise to 2♠ and the auction comes back to you.

Only 14 HCP, but the fantastic distribution should make you look for game: your partner can be very weak so you cannot just go straight to game, but you can show your second suit to see what partner thinks: 3♦.

East has a fit with both your suits so he goes for game.

9. Dealer North. N/S Game.

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

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Dbl	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

3♥. Your partner has made a take-out double, then after you responded 1♠, he has re-bid 2♥. What kind of hand is he showing?

He is showing a very strong hand with a good heart suit. His 2♥ bid is not forcing, but it is very encouraging. You have good support for hearts and an ace outside, so it is worth raising partner's bid to invite game: 3♥.

Your partner raises to game: your 6 points are enough.

When your partner doubles and follows up by showing his suit, he is showing a very strong hand. ■

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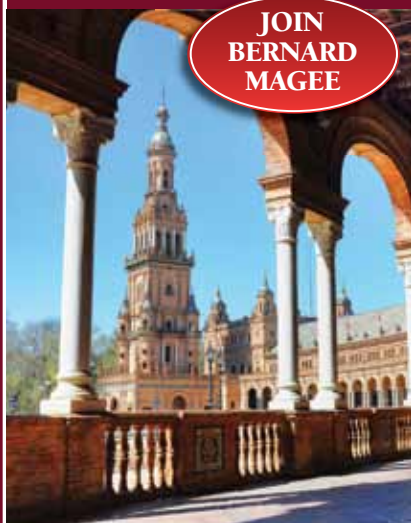


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Answers to Bernard Magee's Bidding Quizzes 10-12 on the Cover

10. Dealer North. Love All.

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



West	North	East	South
?	1NT	2♥	Pass

Pass. Your partner makes a 2♥ overcall over North's weak no-trump opening. With neither side vulnerable, your partner could have as little as 8-11 HCP and a 6-card suit. More important is the fact that, if he has a good 15 or better, then he would have started with a penalty double.

With 10 HCP and a misfitting hand, you should be wary of making a bid: you are very unlikely to have the strength for game and, without a fit, you should not want to play above the two-level.

2NT is not a sensible bid, because it is not clear where your tricks are going to come from: leave your partner in 2♥ and expect him to make the contract.

11. Dealer East. Love All.

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



West	North	East	South
?		2♣	Dbl

2♦. Your partner has opened 2♣, your strongest opening bid: showing 23+ points or a hand that can make game

by itself. To your surprise, South doubles, which changes your options. Weak hands pass and any other action shows a positive hand. This allows you to show your hand by bidding 2♦, rather than having to jump to 3♦, which keeps the auction low and should allow you to find the best contract of 6♦ without too much trouble.

When your opponents interfere over 2♣, the responder should pass when he is very weak: any bid would be natural and positive.

12. Dealer South. Love All.

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



West	North	East	South
?			1♠

1NT. South opens 1♠ and you have 17 HCP. You have a variety of choices: a simple overcall, a double or a 1NT overcall. When your opponents get in the way, you cannot always describe your hand perfectly: what you are looking for is the closest description.

Your hand is not perfectly balanced and you do not have a heart stop, but with the ♠A-Q sitting over South's bid, the hand looks suitable for a no-trump contract and a 1NT overcall defines the point count (15-18) neatly. A double is unlikely to work well because your partner will probably respond in hearts. A 2♦ overcall is likely to finish the auction, underselling your hand.

Here, your partner will raise your 1NT overcall to 3NT (after a Stayman enquiry).



Do Different Bidding Methods Help?

Those of you who watched the European Bridge championships on BBO cannot have helped but notice that hardly anyone, not even the British pairs, seemed to be playing Acol. Two of the three English open pairs were playing a strong no-trump and five-card majors, the third playing a variable no-trump again with five-card majors. All three of the Scottish open pairs were playing a strong no-trump and five-card majors, as were most of the Welsh line-ups. Even Standard American style seemed rare in the matches I watched. Teams from the Balkans seemed to be playing Precision (where a 1♣ opening is strong and artificial) while those from Poland and its neighbours were playing Polish Club (where a 1♣ opening is two- or three- way).

It is fair to say that bidding methods are partly a function of a country's history and partly a matter of following a fashion. In the UK, while four-card majors and a weak no-trump remain the norm, an increasing number of players are using five-card majors and a strong no-trump. The change has come about partly because people can see what our top players are playing and partly through global influence. So would you suddenly become a good player if you adopted the same methods as the top players?

Sadly, the answer is no. For one thing, many of the top players are professionals, willing to put in far more time than someone who plays the game just for enjoyment. For another, what makes players successful has far more to do with their skill as card players and their experience and judgement than with the precise methods they use. You have probably heard the expression 'a bad workman blames his tools.' The same applies

to bridge; an average player will not suddenly become a good player by changing to a different bidding or defensive system, just as a good player will not suddenly become a bad player.

Overall, the message is that the way to improve your game is to use the methods you have more efficiently. Trying to play something different to what you have played all your life and feel comfortable with is just not worth the effort for most. That said, in situations where all the top players do the same thing, it is worth paying attention to what they do. Some of the changes over the years in EBU alerting and announcing rules reflect the popularity of particular treatments. One change that came in a few years ago was on alerting low-level doubles. You now have to alert penalty doubles of low level suit contracts. So let us look at the area of competitive doubles because this is one area where average players could learn from the expert strategy.

Let us study a couple of auctions:

(a) West	North	East	South
	1♦	1♥	3♦
	Dbl		
(b) West	North	East	South
	1♣	1♠	2♥
	Dbl		

In Auction (a), where the opponents have bid and raised a suit, the chance that West has a good penalty double is just about zero. It is far more sensible to play the double as take-out, competitive, whatever you want to call it. West could easily hold too good a hand to pass but with too little shape to take unilateral action. A double then fits the bill. Since raising partner's suit takes priority, West will

typically have tolerance rather than support for hearts. It will be usual to have something in both unbid suits, especially in an unbid major. A possible hand is this:

♠ K 10 7 3
♥ J 4
♦ A 2
♣ K J 8 6 4

In Auction (b), where South's 2♥ is forcing, it makes no sense to play double as for penalty. Again West's double shows sufficient values to be wanting to compete, normally with something in partner's suit and in the unbid suit. A possible hand is this:

♠ Q 5
♥ 10 8 3 2
♦ A Q 10 7 3
♣ K 5

West hardly wants to bid 3♦ and risk finding East short in the suit. A raise with only a doubleton spade or a 2NT bid with these values could lead to trouble too.

What does the doubler's partner do? Continuations (unless in opposing suits) are natural. Partner tries to show undisclosed length or, lacking any, to keep the bidding low. Since these doubles are take-out in nature, partner does not leave in the double without a good trump holding.

You can play competitive doubles in other situations too. The above are just two of the most clear-cut for playing them. Once you have added these to your repertoire, you can investigate others.



Active and Passive Defence Against No-Trumps

Throughout my new series on defence, I aim to look at what you are trying to achieve and what alternatives you have.

You will see that opening leads are frequently not clearcut and that experts find them as difficult as you do.

Unless stated otherwise, I will assume you are playing teams-of-four or rubber bridge, where the emphasis is on beating the contract rather than saving overtricks.

At the end of the series, I will consider how your tactics might change playing duplicate pairs.

You are on lead against a no-trump contract. Do you automatically lead the fourth highest of your longest and strongest suit?

How about Hand A after this bidding?

South North
1NT 3NT

Hand A

♠ K J 6 3 2
♥ A 8
♦ 9 6 5
♣ 8 7 3

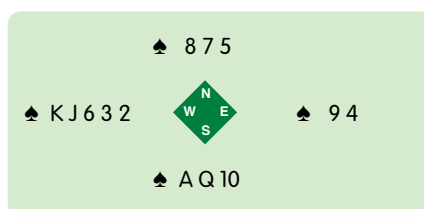


It is normal enough for you to lead the ♠3. You are hoping that the spade layout is something like:

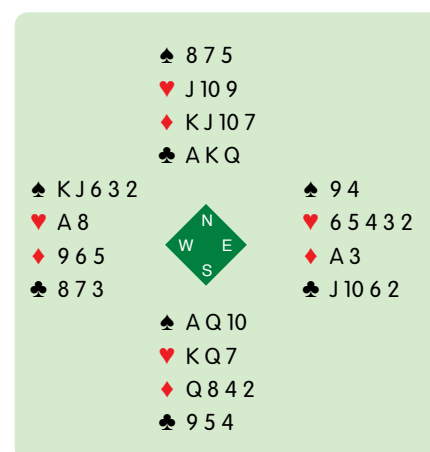


Trace the play through to its conclusion. Partner rises with the ♠Q (third hand plays high). If declarer allows the ♠Q to win trick 1, partner will return the ♠8 and you will have set up four spade tricks, which you can complete cashing when you regain the lead with the ♥A.

Your fourth highest spade lead works best if partner has a spade honour to fill the gaps in your suit. What if partner has no spade honour and the spades are distributed like this?



Left to his own devices, declarer might try taking two spade finesses, both of which would fail, so it seems that your fourth highest lead has just thrown a trick away. However, that might not necessarily be fatal. Look at the next layout.



Given time, declarer can easily develop three diamond tricks and two heart tricks to go with the ♣A-K-Q and ♠A, unless you can set up three spade tricks first. Ideally, you would like partner to come in twice to lead spades through declarer, but partner only has one entry, the ♦A. Therefore, you are going to have to lead spades once. Trace it through. Your opening spade lead loses cheaply to the ♠10. Hopefully, declarer will try to drive out the ♦A next. Your partner will win and return his last spade. Declarer still has only eight tricks and, when he tries to drive out the ♥A, you will have enough spades to defeat him.

The point of your fourth highest lead was to set up length winners. Sometimes, you will succeed: sometimes, you will fail. Nobody in the world is successful with all opening leads and ▶

that shouldn't particularly worry you. Against a nondescript bidding sequence such as 1NT-3NT, you have no reason to avoid a spade lead from Hand A.

However, suppose the bidding has been as in the sequence below.

Would you consider leading your ♠3 now?

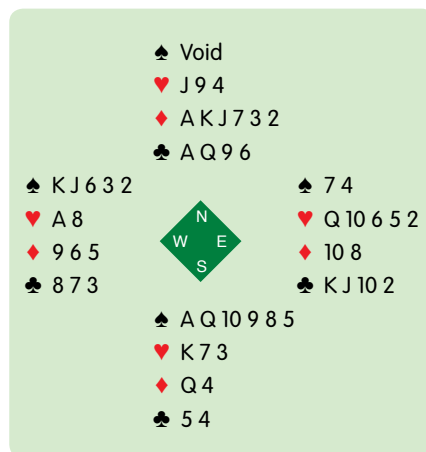
South	North
1♠	2♦
2♠	3♣
3NT	

The bidding has marked South with at least five spades. The likelihood of your lead giving away a cheap trick has increased dramatically and the chances of making any length tricks are close to zero. While it is just about possible that partner might have a helpful spade holding like ♠A-Q, the balance between the risk of leading a spade and the potential gain is heavily loaded against you.

However, there is some good news. If declarer tries to set up his suit by taking spade finesses, he will be disappointed because your ♠K and ♠J are sitting over his suit.

If you have a suit with scattered honours and an opponent has bid your suit, you should certainly think twice before leading it against no-trumps in an attempt to set up length tricks. So, if it is misguided to lead a spade from Hand A after the sequence above, what should you lead? You might consider leading the unbid suit, but even if partner has heart length, he is unlikely to have sufficient entries to set up and make heart tricks. An alternative is to attempt to go passive. I would try a club. Either a diamond or a club would probably give little away, but dummy bid diamonds before clubs, therefore his diamonds rate to be longer, so a club has a greater chance of finding a good holding in partner's hand.

The point is that leading away from honours is a risky strategy. Leading from rubbish rarely does anything for declarer that he could not do for himself. Suppose the layout is:



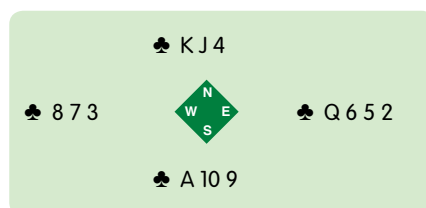
A spade immediately gives declarer his ninth trick, but suppose West leads a club. East wins and switches to a spade. Where is declarer's ninth trick coming from? Every finesse he tries will fail.

In the sequence above, spades have been bid loudly and clearly, but try to listen to hidden messages from the bidding. Look at this auction:

South	North
1NT	2♣
2♥	3NT

Without a 4-card major, North would not have tried Stayman. South has shown four hearts and North was not interested, so North must hold four spades. If North has four spades and South has at least two for his 1NT opening bid, partner is marked with at most two spades and it wouldn't surprise you to learn that he has just one tiny spade. Clearly, you have very little prospect of establishing spade length winners so why risk leading a spade and giving away a cheap trick?

How safe is it to lead passively from a suit with no honours? The most likely fallout is not that you give declarer a trick that he couldn't have taken himself, but that you save him a guess.



If West leads a club here, declarer has no need to guess who has the ♣Q.

Generally, the shorter the suit, the

more likely it is that you save declarer a guess. Leading from a holding such as ♣ 8-7-4-3-2 is pretty safe, but leading from a singleton or doubleton can easily give the game away. Suppose you decide to lead the ♦7 from ♦7-3 and the suit is distributed as here.



Declarer will play low from dummy and capture partner's ♦J with his ♦A, giving him four easy diamond tricks. Of course, declarer could have finessed the ♦10 himself, but left to his own devices, he would probably have followed the odds and played diamonds from the top, hoping for a 3-3 break or doubleton ♦J.

Summary

If you lead the fourth highest of your longest and strongest suit against a no-trump contract, you risk giving away a cheap trick, but you hope to establish length winners. If the bidding makes it clear that there is little prospect of establishing length tricks in your long suit, you should avoid leading away from a broken honour combination.

If you lead from a long suit in which you have no honour card, your main objective is to avoid conceding cheap tricks, though you might strike lucky and find it is your partner's suit. The longer the suit, the safer the lead.

It is not my intention to make a dramatic change to your leading habits, but I would comment that most club players are far too active in their defence. There is nothing reprehensible about defending passively. Just think how many contracts you play where, if you had to do all your own work, you would fail, but defenders help you out.

Next Time

In my next article, I will examine why you should lead the fourth highest card rather than a random small card and look at the use of the Rule of Eleven. ■



Is a Weak Jump Overcall Alertable?

Q My partner and I play a straight overcall as strong (at least an opening hand with a 5-card suit) and a jump overcall as weak. I would like to know if the weak overcall should be alerted.

Rodney Bennett,
West Wickham, Kent.

A No, jump overcalls are never alerted if natural. In fact, in many clubs, the methods you are using are fairly standard.



Q Whilst directing recently, I had a situation in which I wasn't quite sure of the correct solution.

A bid had been placed followed by partner's 'stop 3♦'. This was not alerted and when asked what it meant,

the answer was, 'I don't know.' Therefore, as director, I said it was a 'no partnership agreement' situation.

At the end of the bidding and before play started, the defenders asked me to send the 3♦ bidder's partner away from the table whilst they questioned the bidder. I wasn't sure if the person who bid 'stop 3♦' had to explain to the opposition what his bid meant.

Was I correct in allowing this to happen, or should I have refused the request?

Stan Babb, Basingstoke BC.

A The fact that a player does not remember the system does not mean they have no partnership agreement. Of course, it could mean that, but an obvious alternative is that there is

a partnership agreement which he cannot remember.

It is often the most practical solution to ask the player to leave the table so his partner can tell the opponents their agreement without his partner hearing. A director should allow this, or even suggest it.

However, there is a danger. Players will often think they are being asked to tell the opponents what they hold, but this is not the case. They are only being asked for a partnership agreement, so if there is none, they should say so. If a director does send a player away from the table, he should warn the partner only to tell the opponents of any actual agreements.

Remember to call the player back!



Q With reference to the question raised by Mike Clement in BRIDGE 143, when should the director be called after a long hesitation takes place?

From the article, it appears that the players are calling the director before play begins. I thought it was only necessary for the non-offending side to get confirmation that a hesitation took place

before play begins and call the director for a ruling at the end of play if they think they have been damaged.

Am I wrong in my thinking?

David Cree by email.

A If a hesitation is agreed, then there is really no need to call the director until the end of the hand. If it is not agreed, then the earlier the director is called the better and the more likely he is to decide there was a hesitation.

This has nothing to do with Mike Clement's question, which is what the director should do when called. Players often call the director at the wrong time and the director has to deal with this.



Q The bidding started as follows:

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♠	1NT	2♦
2♥*	Pass	2♣	Pass

*Alerted

After the alerted 2♥ bid, North asked West, 'What do you understand by your partner's 1NT bid?' ▶

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West replied, 'Partner is asking for my best suit.' North then asked East (who was still holding the alert card), 'What is the meaning of West's 2♥ bid?' East replied, 'A transfer to spades,' and East bid 2♠. West then said, 'No it's not a transfer,' and went to bid again. North said, 'We have to call the tournament director, I don't think you can bid again.' West then said, 'Of course I can bid again, my partner misunderstood my bid and my hand is not suitable to play in 2♠.' The tournament director was called. What should the ruling have been?
Name and address supplied.

A It is reasonably common for players to have misunderstandings over the meanings of bids, especially in certain circumstances. This position where both opponents bid then a player bids 1NT is one that often goes wrong. The position is called the 'Sandwich' position because the bid is like the meat between the opponents' bids. Some play it as natural and some play it as a take-out bid, often referred to as a 'Sandwich 1NT'.

It is important that players are taught that they may not use unauthorised information, especially anything partner says or does apart from the actual calls he makes. If the director was

called before West bid again, then she should explain to West that you are not allowed to use the information that partner has misunderstood, since this information comes from alerts, lack of alerts, or explanations, all of which are unauthorised. This is all in Law 16B, though it is rarely useful to read the unauthorised information law out.

Having done that, the director lets play continue: the director cannot forbid any call. The director then looks at the hand afterwards and decides to adjust if she thinks any of the calls were made because of the unauthorised information, such adjustment being based on Law 16B3 and Law 12C.

To make it worse, not only has West got unauthorised information because of East's explanation, but West's remarks are unauthorised information to East. If West bid 3♥ now, East might easily assume that West was showing a good hand with spades and hearts and the director might adjust if East passes 3♥. A final adjustment might be to 4♠ doubled, or perhaps 2♠, or 4♥ going off, or a combination of these: without seeing the hand, I could not tell you what such an adjustment might come to.

Many players do not understand how wrong it is to use unauthorised information. They get quite upset when their actions are adjusted by the director. We have to try to make people realise that using unauthorised information, even unintentionally, is illegal. ■

E-mail your questions 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.

♠ 7 5
♥ 9 8 2
♦ K 3 2
♣ K Q 7 5 4



♠ A K
♥ A 7 5 4
♦ A Q J 10 6
♣ A 2

You are declarer in 6♦ and West leads the ♥K. How do you plan the play?

3.

♠ 9 7
♥ 6 5 4 2
♦ K Q 2
♣ A 10 8 3



♠ A K 5 2
♥ A K
♦ J 10 9 5
♣ Q J 9

You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♥7. How do you plan the play?

2.

♠ K 7 3
♥ J 10 5
♦ K 8 4
♣ A Q 10 3



♠ A 6 4
♥ K 4 3 2
♦ A Q 6
♣ 8 5 2

You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♣7. How do you plan the play?

4.

♠ A 10 7 3 2
♥ K 8 4 3
♦ 10
♣ 8 5 4



♠ Q J 9 8 5
♥ A
♦ K Q J 5
♣ A 6 2

You are declarer in 4♠ and West leads the ♣K. How do you plan the play?



Doubles

This series is all about adding to your armoury to make your bidding more efficient. It's not about adding obscure agreements that come up every three years which get forgotten. If you take up anything new, then it needs to be agreed, it needs to be remembered and it needs to be more efficient than what went before. There is a sad story about a regular pair who played a 2NT response to an Acol 2♣ as showing a six-card suit with two top honours. They waited patiently for it to come up and it duly did after a number of years. The opening hand bid 3♣ to find out which suit his partner had and then... it turned out one of them thought they bid the suit and one of them thought they transferred into their suit. Some time in 2030 they may get another, more successful, board for this convention, but it will be longer than that before it shows a profit! Take up the ideas in this series, learn them and play them with your regular partner and you should see an improvement in your club score.

The double is one of the most powerful weapons in your armoury and agreeing with partner how you use it is key to getting more hands right. If you woke up someone who had been playing in 1955 he would be astonished, maybe appalled, at how many doubles are no longer for penalties.

Time for a hand. You hold:

♠ K Q 7
♥ 9 3
♦ A Q 5
♣ K Q J 9 8



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

What to do next? You are too good to pass, you can't bid no-trumps because you have no heart stop, to rebid clubs would show more clubs and fewer points, so what is left? The answer is to double. This is for take-out and shows the values for a strong no-trump or more. Partner might hold:



♠ 8 6 3
♥ 5 4 2
♦ K J 10 7 6 4
♣ 5

He couldn't bid over 1♥, he wouldn't enjoy your bidding 3♣, but he would be delighted to know you had a good hand and some diamond support. You don't have to have four and partner should bear that in mind.

On the other hand, he might have:



♠ 8 6 3
♥ 5 4 2
♦ K J 7
♣ 10 7 6 5

Now partner has an easy 3♣ bid over the double.

To double in an auction will often save your having to guess what to do, and involves partner in the discussion.

Suppose the auction starts:

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♥	Dbl	2♥
?			

You hold the following:

♠ K 10 7
♥ 7 4
♦ A K 4
♣ A Q 9 4 2



Partner has shown four spades for his negative double, but you have no idea how good his hand is. You don't have any clear bid, so once again you can double to suggest better than a minimum opening, not a four-card spade suit, else you would have supported, and no ability to bid no-trumps. Partner might hold:



♠ Q J 8 4
♥ J 8 3
♦ Q 9 8 5
♣ J 3

He can bid 2♠ hoping to get out at the cheapest level. He has already denied five spades else he would have bid 1♠ instead of doubling.

On the other hand, he might hold:



♠ Q J 8 4
♥ A Q 5
♦ 5 3 2
♣ J 10 3

In which case he would be delighted to bid 3NT knowing you had approximately strong no-trump values.

One reason some players are not keen on too many take-out doubles is that they fear they will miss large penalties, but this need not happen.

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♥	Dbl	3♥
?			

You hold:

♠ K J 5	
♥ 7	
♦ A K 9 4 3	
♣ K Q 5 2	

You don't support spades as you know partner has only four, you can't bid no-trumps with no stop in hearts and you don't want to bid 4♣ because that will rule out 3NT if your partner has a suitable hand. So you double to say you are not sure what to do, but have a decent hand and, lo and behold, partner holds:

	♠ A 9 4 3
	♥ K J 10 9
	♦ 7 6
	♣ 4 3

Partner will be delighted to pass or bid 3NT, depending on the vulnerability. With only eight hearts between them the opponents probably should not be at the three level, but as long as they are, you have an opportunity to collect a penalty.

If your partner is going to use doubles as a flexible tool,

then he expects you to be flexible as well. Try to find some sort of fit. You won't always find the best fit, but as long as you find a playable one, the opponents will find it relatively hard to double (unless they have read this article) and may be pushed up a level.

Pushing them one level higher is a principal aim of using the double in a competitive auction.

Suppose the auction starts:

West	North	East	South
		1♣	1♣
Dbl	2♣	Dbl	Pass
?			

and you hold:

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

What should you do? Partner already knows that you have four hearts.

You could bid 3♦ to show your second four-card suit and ask him to choose but what if he had

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

3♣ is the most flexible bid. If you look at the two hands, you don't mind 3♣ too much. It has some chances of making.

3♦ on the other hand could be quite a bad contract if the trumps do not break. Couldn't you, however be missing a 4-4 diamond fit? Yes, you could, but first you might ask yourself what partner opens if he is 4-4 in the minors with a decent hand. If you don't know then perhaps that should be written down for a discussion. ■

In summary

- **Don't sell out too easily, particularly in pairs events.**
- **The most flexible tool at your disposal is a double to show some extra values and no clear action.**
- **Sometimes you will collect a penalty as a bonus.**
- **Be flexible when you double: you can't always have ideal shape, but also be flexible in response and recognise that partner is trying to keep your side in the auction.**
- **Occasionally, it will go wrong and you may go for -200 or worse, but remember, at pairs, it is the frequency of gain not the size of the gain that is important.**

We Are Survivors

(For those born Before 1940 . . .)

We were born before television, before penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, videos and the pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens, before dish-washers, tumble driers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes . . . and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together (how quaint can you be?). We thought 'fast food' was what you ate in Lent, a 'Big Mac' was an oversized raincoat and 'crumpet' we had for tea. We existed before house husbands, computer dating and sheltered accommodation was where you waited for a bus.

We were before day care centres, group homes and disposable nappies. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, artificial hearts, word processors, or young men wearing earrings. For us 'time sharing' meant togetherness, a 'chip' was a piece of wood or fried potato, 'hardware' meant nuts and bolts and 'software' wasn't a word.

Before 1940 'Made in Japan' meant junk, the term 'making out' referred to how you did in your exams, 'stud' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt and 'going all the way' meant staying on a double-decker bus to the terminus. In our day, cigarette smoking was 'fashionable', 'grass' was mown, 'coke' was kept in the coalhouse, a 'joint' was a piece of meat you ate on Sundays and 'pot' was something you cooked in. 'Rock Music' was a fond mother's lullaby, 'Eldorado' was an ice-cream, a 'gay person' was the life and soul of the party, while 'aids' just meant beauty treatment or help for someone in trouble.

We who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch when you think of the way in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder there is a generation gap today . . . BUT

By the grace of God . . . we have survived!

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The Diaries of Wendy Wensum

Episode 33:

Celebrations

Millie and Justin wanted to give a party for their bridge friends to celebrate their newly acquired marital status and organised a delightful Sunday afternoon reception at the Riverside. Guests, all bridge players mainly from the club, were greeted with pre-prandial drinks. After a buffet lunch in the bar, we proceeded into the bridge room for a session of duplicate pairs. 'Is it stuffy in here today?' inquired Millie, 'I feel quite soporific. I must have eaten too much lettuce with my meal.' I have learned not to comment on these occasions, but I was dubious about Flopsy-bunny syndrome, believing more in the effect of gin and tonics rather than salad. Millie had booked me as her partner and decreed that Justin and Spouse should renew their occasional bridge partnership for the day. During the session, this hand caught my eye. We were playing against Heavy Metal Bill and his lovely wife, Angie, who was dealer as North.

West seat found a pre-emptive four diamonds. After two passes Bill had a choice of bids, one of which was pass, but instead he took a shot at four hearts which, after two more passes, I doubled.

The full sequence was:

West	North	East	South
Millie	Angie	Wendy	Bill
	1NT	Pass	2♦ ¹
4♦	Pass	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Dbf	All Pass

¹Transfer to hearts

Millie led the ace of diamonds, winning the trick, and continued with the jack. Bill played the queen from dummy, the king came from me and Bill ruffed in hand. He then went to table with a club and took a heart finesse, losing unluckily to the singleton queen. Three rounds of spades came next and Bill won the third of these with a trump. He was now hopelessly out-gunned in hearts. He tried removing a round of trumps, hoping they might now be two-two. Finding the bad news, he won a club in dummy and followed this with the master spade throwing a club from hand. Bill led out the ace of clubs which I ruffed and conceded one more trick. The contract of four hearts doubled was down three for minus 500.

'After that I could do with a cigarette,' lamented Bill. 'Have a mint humbug instead,' Millie offered kindly. 'I don't smoke humbugs,' was Bill's response as he shuffled off to the veranda for a nicotine boost. I turned to Angie. 'I know Bill likes Rock music. Does he still do his impressions of famous Heavy Metal artists?' I inquired. 'Yes, he does, but I much prefer his impression of silence,' declared Angie with heart-felt passion. I glimpsed

Millie grinning, but for once she made no comment. Marriage was clearly having a good effect on her, but I doubted if the improvement would last.

When Justin and Spouse played the hand, the first three calls were the same. Now Dawn as West bid her diamond suit at the three level and this was followed by two passes. With a singleton in the opponent's suit Spouse didn't feel like passing and with the shapely nature of his hand bid four clubs. He admitted later that his fingers were metaphorically crossed as he was relatively weak and didn't really know whether his bid was forcing or not. West passed now and, with four good clubs, Justin bid five clubs which ended the auction.

West	North	East	South
Dawn	Justin	Dennis	Spouse
	1NT	Pass	2♦ ¹
3♦	Pass	Pass	4♣
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

¹Transfer to hearts

Dawn led the ace of diamonds and switched to a spade. The defence took two spade tricks, but Spouse ruffed the third round, dropped the singleton queen of hearts and escaped for just one off and minus 50. He apologised for his bid, but Justin pointed out that three diamonds would make and five clubs was a reasonable save. Of course, four clubs would have been an even better contract. At the end of the session, champagne and a wedding cake appeared as if by magic and the happy couple were toasted by the assembled company, who had thoroughly enjoyed an afternoon celebrating Millie's and Justin's marriage, rather appropriately with a session of bridge. ■

Dealer North. Love All.

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

Angie opened a weak one no trump. I passed and Bill in the South seat bid two diamonds as a transfer to hearts. With seven diamonds, Millie in the



DEFENCE QUIZ

by **Julian Pottage**

(Answers on page 41)

You are East in the defensive positions below playing teams or rubber bridge. It is your turn to play. Both sides are using Acol with a 12-14 1NT and 2♣ Stayman.

1. ♠ Q 8 3
♥ 10 9 5 2
♦ A K J 8 5
♣ K

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

3. ♠ Q 7 4
♥ 8
♦ K Q 7 4
♣ A K 8 3 2

♠ 8 5
♥ A 10 7 5
♦ A 8
♣ Q J 7 5 4

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♥

All Pass

Partner leads the ♠J and dummy plays low. What do you play?

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠

All Pass

Partner leads the ♦J and dummy covers. What is your plan?

2. ♠ K Q 9 3
♥ 10 5
♦ K Q J 8
♣ 9 6 5

♠ 7 5
♥ 8 7 4
♦ 9 7 5
♣ A K J 8 3

4. ♠ Q J 10 4 2
♥ K Q J 7
♦ A Q 3
♣ K

♠ K 7 5
♥ 5 4
♦ K 6 4 2
♣ Q 6 5 3

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Dbl	2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT

All Pass

Partner leads the ♠10. What do you do?

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

¹Strong with heart support

²Shortage ³Two aces

Partner leads the ♠10. Dummy wins and leads the ♠Q. What is your plan?

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Ruffing for Extra Tricks

Ruffing is one of the most powerful methods available for declarer to develop extra tricks in trump contracts. In my seminar, I explore the idea of delaying the drawing of trumps to allow you to use dummy's trumps to their full potential. Accurate bidding should push you upwards when you have a singleton in your hand, but you will only make your final contract if you make the most of your distribution. When you make your plan, check to see how much use of your distribution you have to make. If you need ruffs, then, generally, you will need to delay drawing trumps.

As much as it is good to ruff in dummy to make extra tricks, ruffing in the long trump hand is not so good – generally, you do not gain by doing this. Ruff in the long hand only if it is part of your plan: to get from hand to hand; to establish a long suit; or you are forced to, by the defence. This is why a singleton with the shorter trump holding is generally valued more in the bidding than one with the long trumps.

In the second half of the seminar, I talk about the power of defenders to upset the outcome: attacking declarer's trumps, either by leading them or by switching to them. Other tactics can come when you know trumps are breaking badly for declarer (you have a singleton or have four): you can force declarer to ruff in his long

trump hand and hopefully cause him to lose control. As much as trumps are important for declarer to develop extra tricks, it has to be equally important for the defenders to destroy declarer's plans. Both hands below show declarer making the most of his trumps, but, as so often, on the first hand, if the defenders had led a trump, declarer would have had no chance of making his contract at all.

Making more trump leads is a sign of a better defender.

Hand 1:

♠ A 2
♥ 6 3
♦ A 5 3
♣ J 10 8 7 6 5

♠ J 4
♥ K Q J 10
♦ J 9 8 7
♣ Q 4 2

♠ 10 9 8 5
♥ 9 5 4 2
♦ K 2
♣ A K 9

♠ K Q 7 6 3
♥ A 8 7
♦ Q 10 6 4
♣ 3

Contract 2♠. Lead ♥K

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

You have five top tricks and hope to make an extra trick from your long trumps and one from diamonds too, which leaves one more trick to find. Ruffing a heart in dummy will give you the extra trick, but it might not be easy to take it since you have no easy

entry back to your hand after the ♥A has gone (you need to use ♠2 to ruff with).

The solution is simple: keep hold of the ♥A. Let West win the first trick with his ♥K. He switches to a trump, but you can win ♠A, cross to ♥A and ruff a heart.

Now you play a diamond towards your queen, East wins his king, but you ruff the fourth heart, draw two more rounds of trumps (leaving the defence's winning trump outstanding) and play your diamond winners.

If you win the first trick and play a heart back, the defenders will again play a trump, but what can you do after you win ♠A? Whatever you try, the defenders can draw dummy's last trump and you will end up losing an extra heart trick and with that your contract.

When you are aiming to make extra tricks by ruffing, it is important to plan carefully: making sure you have the entries to move from hand to hand. ▶

Hand 2:

♠ K J 6 3
♥ A K 7 6
♦ Q 8 4 3
♣ 4

♠ 5 4
♥ Q J 10 9
♦ J 9
♣ K J 9 8 5

♠ 8 7
♥ 8 5 2
♦ K 10 7 6 5
♣ Q 10 7

♠ A Q 10 9 2
♥ 4 3
♦ A 2
♣ A 6 3 2

Contract 6♠. Lead ♥Q.

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

All Pass

North's 4♣ was a splinter bid: showing four-card spade support, 11+ high card points and a singleton or void in clubs. 4♦ and 4♥ were cue bids and 4NT was Keycard Blackwood with North showing two key cards (♥A and ♠K).

You have nine top tricks: three ruffs in dummy will give you twelve, so this is what you should go for. However, needing three ruffs will require you to delay drawing trumps.

You need four entries: three for ruffing and one to get back to hand at the end to draw the trumps. You can use one entry in trumps, your two outside aces, but then you will need to ruff a heart. You need two rounds of hearts to stand up, but that is not an unreasonable hope.

Take the ♥A-K and play ♣A and ruff a club. Play a trump back to hand, ruff the next club high and play a diamond to the ace. Ruff the last club high and then cross back to hand by ruffing a heart high to draw the remaining trumps. All you lose is a diamond trick.

Splinters are great bids – allowing slams to be bid on minimal values – but it is so important for the declarer to make full use of the singleton.

Here, North's club singleton and the trumps alongside generated three extra tricks. ■

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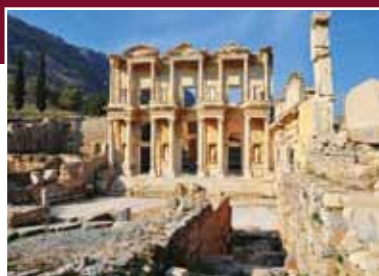
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Maid Marian's Inspired Play

Snow was falling outside, but the Baron of Beef ale-house was well warmed by two log fires. The outlaws had joined the regular customers for their weekly duplicate game.


'You don't like the local brew?' enquired the enormous Will Bowyer, taking his seat. 'Haggard's Gold. None better.'

'I could barely lift such a large tankard,' Maid Marian replied. 'This sweet Spanish wine is more to my taste.'

'Never tried it,' said Will Bowyer, reaching for his cards. 'Wouldn't trust any drink brewed by Spaniards, anyway.'

This was the deal before them:

Dealer South. Love All.

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

West	North	East	South
Will Bowyer	Robin Hood	Garth Switch	Maid Marian
Pass	3NT	All Pass	2NT

When West led the ♠J against 3NT, East discouraged with the ♠2 and Maid Marian won with the king. Now, how

many top tricks did she have? Three spades, one heart, one diamond and... four clubs after she had lost one to the king. That was a total of nine. How pleased her beloved Robin would be.

Marian played the ♣A and was about to lead the ♣Q when a thought occurred to her. The ♥A was the only entry to dummy and she would need to cash the ♠Q when she was over there.

Glad that she taken the trouble to make a plan, Marian cashed her other spade winner before continuing with the ♣Q. Now nothing could go wrong, she thought. When she reached dummy to make all the clubs, she would be able to take the third spade trick as well.

Will Bowyer won the second round of clubs with the king. Seeing no future in spades, he switched to the ♥10. Maid Marian won with dummy's ace and noticed that... oh dear... somehow the clubs had become blocked. If she played a club to the bare jack at this stage, there would be no way back to dummy.

Robin Hood smiled at her. 'Don't look so worried, my love,' he said. 'Not every contract can be made.'

Marian called for the ♠Q and was about to discard a diamond when, suddenly, a light appeared in her splendid blue eyes. On this trick she could dispose of the blocking ♣J.

After this clever move, nothing could prevent her from scoring three more club tricks in the dummy. A diamond to the ace then gave her the contract.


'What marvellous play!' exclaimed Robin Hood. 'I'm partnering a bridge champion tonight.'

Bowyer was less impressed by the

turn of events. He had expected a good result when Marian ended as declarer. Did she have to choose this particular moment to display such prowess?

A few rounds later, Robin Hood found himself in a slam:

Dealer South. N/S Game.

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

West	North	East	South
Katelyn Blunt	Maid Marian	Leofrick Blunt	Robin Hood
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

Katelyn Blunt, a slightly built woman who was nevertheless the mother of five sons and a daughter, led the ♦J against the slam.

Maid Marian laid out her dummy. 'I couldn't believe it when you bid two spades,' she said excitedly. 'Look, I have five spades for you.'

'So I see,' replied Robin Hood, who was doing his best to look enthusiastic about the lean dummy that had appeared.

'I suppose I should have used the Duke of Richmond's 4NT to ask for aces,' Marian continued. 'Still, ▶

you play the cards so well. I was sure a slam would be there.'

Robin Hood won the diamond lead with the ace. It seemed that he would need the ♥Q to fall in two rounds, but... maybe the club suit offered an extra chance. Before drawing any trumps, he led the ♠A and then the ♠J.

If West had followed with a low club on the second round, Hood planned to discard dummy's last diamond. If East won the trick, nothing would have been lost; he would then have to hope that the ♥Q would fall. Katelyn Blunt decided to cover with the ♣Q and Hood ruffed in the dummy. He returned to his hand with a trump and led the ♣10. When West covered with the ♣K, Hood ruffed in the dummy again. Both defenders followed to a second round of trumps and he was then able to discard dummy's diamond loser on the established ♣8. The ♥Q failed to drop in two rounds but the slam was his.

Leofrick Blunt shook his head ruefully. 'Everyone else will stop in game,' he informed his wife.

'With five-card support and a near-solid side suit of hearts?' exclaimed Maid Marian. 'It was an obvious slam bid.'

The session was nearing its end when Friar Tuck arrived at Robin Hood's table. Tuck was partnered by the black-bearded Father Mendez, a priest with a high opinion of his own game. It had always been a mystery to him why his considerable talents were rarely translated into a good finishing position. The Good Lord must have contrived this ordeal as a means of testing him.

The players drew their cards for this deal:

Dealer North. Game All.			
♠ K 10 5 2		♠ Void	
♥ A		♥ 10 9 6 4	
♦ K Q 5		♦ 7 6 3	
♣ A 10 8 4 2		♣ K Q J 9 6 5	
♠ J 7 6 4			
♥ J 8 3 2			
♦ J 10 9 4			
♣ 7			
♠ A Q 9 8 3			
♥ K Q 7 5			
♦ A 8 2			
♣ 3			

West	North	East	South
Maid	Friar	Robin	Father
Marian	Tuck	Hood	Mendez
	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	7♠
All Pass			



Maid Marian lost no time in leading her singleton club. Her beloved Robin had once mentioned to her that a singleton made a fine lead against a slam. How good it would be if Robin could win with the ace and give her a club ruff. Mind you, that wasn't very likely

when they had used the Duke of Richmond's 4NT and then bid a grand slam.

Father Mendez stroked his beard happily as he inspected the dummy. What excellent cards the king and queen of diamonds were. The Good Lord must be rewarding him for his pious tolerance of recent results. Not before time, it had to be said.

The priest won the first trick with the ace of clubs and continued with a trump to the ace, exposing the 4-0 break. What now? He could pick up West's ♠J easily enough but he would need a heart ruff in dummy to bring his total to thirteen.

At Trick 3, Father Mendez led the ♠9. After some thought Marian played low on this trick. Declarer ran the trump nine, crossed to the ♥A and returned to his hand with the ♦A. He then ruffed his heart loser with the ♠10 and cashed dummy's bare ♠K.

Mendez was well pleased with his play so far. After returning to hand and drawing West's last trump, the grand slam would be his.

The priest ruffed a club with the ♠8 and could not believe it when a delighted Maid Marian overruffed with the ♠J. Trumps 4-0 and clubs 6-1? By the Saints, what a diabolical division of the cards!

'I had a feeling my singleton lead would beat the contract,' said Maid Marian.

Robin gazed lovingly into her eyes. The opening lead had made no difference, surely? To make the contract, the priest should have played the ♥A at trick 2. He could

then cross to the ♠A, run the ♠9, ruff a heart and play the ♠K. The ♦A would be an entry to draw the last trump.

'It was a brilliant lead, my dearest,' said Robin Hood. 'The learned priest here is a fine player of the cards but you gave him no chance at all.'



Hungarian Tiger

Back in 1970, when we still had thrupenny bits, Jeremy Flint co-wrote a book with Freddie North called *Tiger Bridge*. They depicted the great players as the tigers of the bridge world. In this article, I nominate Tim Seres as a tiger.

In the hand below (from 1958), your right-hand opponent is Tim Seres and he opens 3♥, which your left-hand opponent raises to 4♥. The bidding comes back to you. Do you double or pass?

♠ K Q 8
♥ K Q 10 2
♦ J 9
♣ 10 8 7 6

W E
S

We'll come back to this bidding question later, but for the moment let's say that you elect to double.

Dealer South. Team Invitational Event.

♠ A 7 6
♥ 9
♦ A K 8 4 2
♣ A J 5 3

♠ K Q 8
♥ K Q 10 2
♦ J 9
♣ 10 8 7 6

N
W E
S

♠ J 9 5 4 2
♥ 7
♦ Q 10 7
♣ K Q 9 4

♠ 10 3
♥ A J 8 6 5 4 3
♦ 6 5 3
♣ 2

West	North	East	South
	Dick		Tim
	Cummings		Seres
			3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Db!	All Pass		

'It looks from the double that West fancied himself as a bit of a tiger too.'

Cover the East and South cards for a few moments and take a little time over this deal. Don't rush it. You lead the ♠K, which is ducked. Your partner signals an odd number of spades, so you assume that declarer has a doubleton. What are your thoughts and your plans now? ►



Chalet. A Bengal white tiger. She lives at the 'Out of Africa' wildlife park in Arizona. Photo: Haig Tchamitch

Thomas Peter (Tim) Seres (1925 – 2007)

Like many Hungarians, Seres left his home country following the Second World War and ended up living in Australia, his home for many years. He was such a talented player that the ABF (Australian Bridge Federation) automatically selected him to represent Australia with permission to choose his own partner. Honoured for his services to bridge, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1988. The ABF estimated that he played close to one million hands in his lifetime.

The ABF has a lovely biography and appreciation of Tim. They say, 'Unarguably so much better than anyone else, Tim was one of the huge natural talents that very occasionally surface in competitive endeavours. Don Bradman as a cricketer is a convenient analogy.'

It is said that, at the 1964 World Team Olympiad during the Australia v Brazil match, the organisers asked if the players required an interpreter. The answer was, 'No, we all speak Hungarian.'



Photo: ABF

Hint Number 1

Tim Seres has this shape: 2-7-3-1.



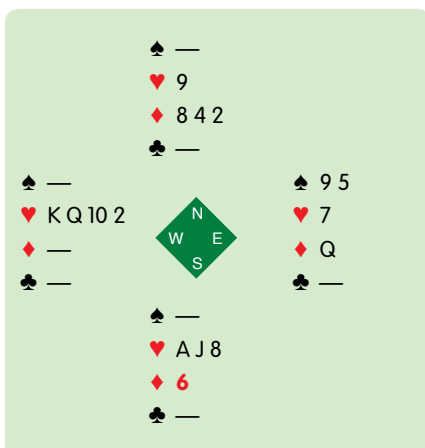
Top Australian player and writer and self-confessed non-soap user, Michael Courtney (pictured), has written an excellent book about Tim, *Play Cards with Tim Seres* (1995).

Hint Number 2

You are in grave danger of being end-played. Can you do something about it, now, at trick 2?

Analysis

It appears that Seres is going to enjoy his top cashing tricks in dummy and use those cards as entries to ruff black cards with his small trumps. If you continue with a spade, this is how the play will go: Declarer will win and ruff a spade immediately. Then, he will use his minor suit entries (♠A first) to take three club ruffs in hand. This is what is left.



Now declarer can play the ♦6 and you will be embarrassed twice. Once at having to ruff your partner's winner and, seconds later, when you are humiliated at being end-played to concede the last two tricks. So the trick tally for dealer is five top tricks in aces and kings, four little trumps and an end-play to score the ♥J.

When you first look at the layout of all four hands, it looks as if South is doomed and will be defeated by two tricks, doesn't it? After all, aren't the defenders due a spade, diamond and three trumps?

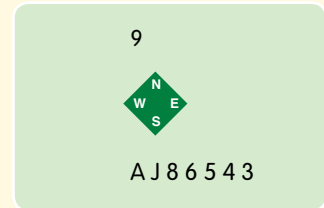
If you sipped your coffee and pondered the deal without the extended details, hints and benefit of the full deal and found the defence of playing a diamond at trick two, then you should be very pleased with yourself. That switch will force declarer to utilise an entry prematurely, so he can't carry out the trump reduction and end-play. So, either keeping quiet in the auction, or switching to a diamond is the winning action. But this article is about tiger bridge, so maybe it is right to double and maybe it is even right (but optimistic) to hope that the tiger is snoozing.

Having said all of that and returning to the opening question ... should you have doubled or not?

There is an important point here: when North raises the pre-empt to game, you know that it's not a raise based on heart support and pre-emption, because you have too many good hearts yourself. So it must be a value-based raise. If you double, you may or may not defeat the contract, but most likely you'll be getting it only one down.

I showed the hand as a declarer play problem to a few top players, without West doubling, and even then they were tempted to go for the trump-reduction play, but recognised that it was close between that line and playing for a friendly layout of the heart suit (hoping for only one loser).

I asked a different group of people if they would double. England International and *Daily Telegraph* bridge columnist, Tom Townsend, told me he'd double at any form or scoring and any vulnerability. I guess he is a tiger too. ■

Normal play for that specific trump layout

Lead the nine. If East plays low, play your jack (hoping the K-Q are onside).

If they play a top honour, win the ace and play the jack, hoping to pin the ten.

Going back to the early 1930s

Would you like to see a news clip of Ely Culbertson discussing bridge? (There will be more articles about Mr and Mrs Culbertson in 2015).

Believe it or not, there are two excellent short clips (with sound) on the British Pathé (news) website. www.britishpathe.com/search/query/culbertson

The subject matter of one clip is somewhat unusual. I'll leave you to form your own opinions.



British Pathé say, 'British Pathé is one of the oldest media companies in the world. Their roots lie in 1890s Paris where their founder, Charles Pathé, pioneered the development of the moving image. They were established in London in 1902, and by 1910 were producing their famous bi-weekly newsreel the Pathé Gazette. By the time Pathé finally stopped producing the cinema newsreel in 1970, they had accumulated 3,500 hours of filmed history amounting to over 90,000 individual items.'

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Beginners' Bridge Corner

Mary's Thirteenth Lesson

by Liz Dale

It was the day of the luncheon. There was a definite air of light-heartedness about the group. Much laughter and frivolity. Lots of, 'Oh I like your shoes, handbag,' etc and, 'Where did you get your jacket from?' comments flying around the room before the session started.

Alasdair brought the learners to attention. 'Today you are going to be introduced to a principle that will improve your game by leaps and bounds. If you can learn it,' Alasdair continued, 'you will be a most reliable, valuable and very much sought after bridge partner.' Alasdair paused, whilst everyone listened intently. You could hear a pin drop.

With the flick of a

button, extra large, multi-coloured lettering covered the Smartboard screen (see box below).

'When opener opens in one suit and rebids in another suit, he promises five cards in his first suit.'

Alasdair continued, 'This brilliant principle, if it can be mastered, gives the partnership so much strength in their armoury of tools. If no-trumps has not been rebid by opener, then opener is, in fact, giving his partner a huge amount of information. Opener is saying, 'I am not balanced.' He is also trying to describe his strength. Not as precisely as our no-trump bids, but still giving the power to responder to make the decisions about the best contract. You now

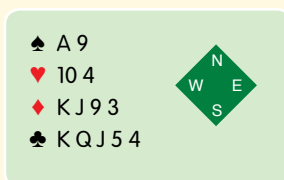
have many choices, but opener is relying on you.'

Umm! thought Mary. This is a lot to take in, in one session. 'Yes, it is a lot to take in,' stressed Alasdair, 'but it is worth spending more time on the homework than usual this week. Learning the 'barrier principle' is one of the best bidding techniques a partnership can have and definitely worth mastering.' Complete silence. As usual, Joan came to the rescue. Looking at the thoughtful faces around the room she said in a loud voice, 'Well, that's that then. You will all have to move in with me for the week and no-one can leave until we've got it sorted!' Laughter all around the room. ■

Opener's rebid after opening 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠ with an unbalanced hand Below the Barrier (12-15 HCPs) or Above the Barrier (16-19 HCPs) (The barrier is two of the opening bid)

Example One: Unbalanced Hand

Opener's Rebid **Below** the Barrier
(opening 1♣ so barrier = 2♣)

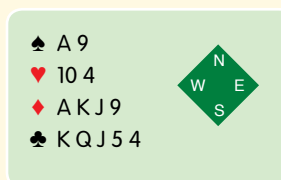


Holding 5+ ♣, 4 ♦ and 12-15 HCPs

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♣			

Example Two: Unbalanced Hand

Opener's Rebid **Above** the Barrier
(opening 1♣ so barrier = 2♣)



Holding 5+ ♣, 4 ♦ and 16-19 HCPs

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♦			

READERS' LETTERS

MORE JUNK

I recently purchased an old boxed bridge set.

The included scoring table reads as follows:

The 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th in no-trumps 30 points
The 2nd, 4th and 6th in no-trumps 40 points

I believe that until 1932, the score for no-trumps was 35 points a trick and I have never seen this more complicated method of scoring before. Does anyone know when it was in effect or is it merely a mistake, possibly the printer, who did not understand the rules?

Mr Michael Zaidner
by email.

NEW SHIP

I have today returned after cruising on Balmoral. I found the facilities for bridge OK, but the general ambience rather down market compared with the other ships you have provided bridge parties on. Also, it is larger, with all that that implies. I shall not be coming back, but good luck with your plans.

Brian Sutcliffe by email.

On the positive side, our groups are self-contained and the bridge room a good size.

MORE MEMORIES

The article mentioning Dorothy Shanahan, see pages 28-29 of BRIDGE 143, brought back happy memories for me, as she was my manager (Senior Statistician – surveys) when I was an assistant statistician at the National Coal Board (NCB) from 1967 to 1969. In those days it seemed odd to me that she took time off to play bridge for England and was often away for a couple of weeks. During my time there she also played in the first team, with Bill Oakland (Senior Statistician – data collection), in the Premier Division of the LBHCBA (London Business Houses Contract Association). I also played for the NCB at that time but in their 5th team in a lower league – Division 6, Central.

Over the years from 1982, I have served on the

committee of the LBHCBA in various guises – results secretary, secretary and currently tournament organiser, as I believe in giving back to the bridge community some of my time, as the game has given such great enjoyment over some 55 years.

Mr Philip Watson by email.

PS. I was sorry to learn of the passing of Tony Priday, as I knew him through his active participation in the Camrose Trophy in the 1970s and 1980s.

SUGGESTION

We have purchased a number of the Bernard Magee DVDs and are always delighted with the bridge content and Bernard's easy style of delivery. However, the thing that is not so good is the camera panning away from the screen on which the hand under discussion is displayed, to focus on members of the audience. Lovely though they no doubt are, their faces do not add to the learning curve and we have to freeze the frame to study the hand in order to understand the points Bernard is making. Could the camera try and stay on either Bernard or the screen please?

No offence intended, this being just a bit of feedback.

Mrs Rosemary Ormerod
by email. ▶

Better Hand Evaluation

Bernard Magee

Introduction

Better Hand Evaluation is aimed at helping readers to add greater accuracy to their bidding. It deals with auctions in which you and your partner, against silent opponents, can describe your hands fully to each other and, by evaluating them accurately, find the best final contract. The emphasis of all good, accurate bidding is on hand evaluation.

There are two general types of auction: a) a fit is found and b) no fit is found.

When you do not have a fit, you are aiming to describe the strength of your hand as soon as possible, most often using no-trump bids. This book begins by discussing balanced hand bidding in Acol, as it is very important that both members of a partnership have an accurate knowledge of how to show hands of different strengths.

When a fit is found, there is much re-evaluation of the hand to be done; point count, though still important, needs to be evaluated together with distribution. The best way of reaching an accurate assessment is to use the Losing Trick Count; this is an important method of hand evaluation and takes up a number of chapters.

Finally, we move on to different forms of evaluation including game tries and splinter bids. You can never know enough methods of hand evaluation; the more you learn, the better you get at judging your hand.

Although the Losing Trick Count is used more easily in tandem with your partner, a large proportion of the ideas in this book can be used by an individual. For example, evaluating your hand to be worth an extra point is going to help anyone you partner – as long as you get it right.

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READERS' LETTERS continued

SHARERS

I do so agree with Mr Knight in your December issue. I, too, deeply regret that you no longer match single players seeking a like-minded person to share a cabin. I have benefited from this in the past and it worked very well. The Mr Bridge explanation for no longer offering this valued service is that cruise companies don't like it, apparently they think people will fall out. However, it is in the best interests of cruise companies too, it must be better for them to have two people per cabin spending their money on drinks, etc. The single supplement with which they can use cannot fully compensate for all those half empty cabins. Please think again Mr Bridge.

**Elizabeth Lonkhurst,
Folkestone, Kent.**

This is outside my control. They can and do fall out, believe me, sometimes creating enormous difficulties whilst on board, especially men randomly paired. We do still have some ladies sharing with our same-sex hosts, so do contact us if you would consider being a sharer.

DISAPPOINTED

I was very interested in the bridge on the Isle of Wight and your original plans seemed to be for a 7-day event with transport from the north. However, it now seems to have been cut to 4 days and no mention of transport.

It is very difficult for us north of Watford to travel south, especially with advancing years. Are there not enough of us to warrant a coach?

**Mrs Pat Davies,
Sandbach, Cheshire.**
Short answer ... no.

SAD NEWS

I regret to have to inform you that after 44 years, the Hogarth Bridge Club has had to close. We have become too few, old and/or infirm to carry on. It seems that there are now too few people wanting to play rubber bridge or Chicago in the afternoon, other than at home.

However, I would like to thank you for your support in the past, in the form of raffle prizes and hope to be on another cruise before too long.

**Mr Ian Lewty,
Richmond, Surrey.**

AND ANOTHER THING

Could I please urge you to show London telephone numbers correctly? A few years ago the area codes for Inner (0171) and Outer (0181) were amalgamated into the new London-wide code 020. The '7' and the '8' are now part of the subscribers' numbers, not of the area codes.

So London numbers are now 020 7123 4567 or 020 8123 4567; showing them as 0207 or 0208 123 4567 is the telephonic equivalent of the greengrocer's apostrophe.

**Mr Ian Lewty,
Richmond, Surrey.**
Is this really so?

**Write to Mr Bridge at: Ryden Grange, Knaphill, Surrey
GU21 2TH or e-mail letters @mrbridge.co.uk**

E-mail correspondents are asked to include their name, full postal address, telephone number and to send no attachments.

Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

CHARITY EVENTS

JANUARY

- 29 **HUDDERSFIELD PENNINE ROTARY CLUB**
Outlane Golf Club. 12 for 12.30. £50 per table including 2-course lunch, afternoon tea & biscuits. Raffle prizes. Limited to 22 tables.
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FEBRUARY

- 11 **WIMBORNE ROTARY CLUB**
Allendale Community Centre, Hanham Road, Wimborne. 2pm. £30 per table incl. tea. Don Phillips ☎ 01202 972211
- 13 **GT STUKELEY CONSERVATIVE CLUB** Village Hall, Gt Stukeley, 10.00 for 10.30. £14.00. Sheila Stephenson
☎ 01480 457338
Kay Brownlow
☎ 01480 880663
- 14 **ST MARGARET'S AND WESTON HOSPIECARE**
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Should I Double a Pre-emptive Raise?

Q Playing pairs and sitting West, at love all, I held:

♠ K 9 8
♥ 7
♦ K Q J 9 2
♣ A J 9 2



West	North	East	South
2♦	2♥	Pass	3♥
?			

I passed and so did partner, who held:



♠ Q 5 4
♥ A 9 2
♦ 10 4
♣ K 10 6 5 3

3♥ went two off, but we can make 4♣. Am I good enough to double 3♥ because 3♥ is likely to be pre-emptive and East will pass? Could partner take a similar action?

Mike Allen by email.

A This is a close decision. With one of my partners, our style with this hand type is that either we double to start with or (if the hand is strong enough) we overcall and then double – we do not

overcall and then pass. The fact that you have such good diamonds and only three spades does make the initial overcall quite attractive. Love all and pairs is the ideal time for action on a competitive part-score deal. You should probably double 3♥. As you are the one with the short hearts, the onus is on you, if anyone, to act again.



Q In the hand below, South was left in the position of keeping losses to a minimum (4♥-2), instead of playing in a part-score.

Dealer West. Game All.

♠ K J 3
♥ Q 7 4
♦ A 10 8 7
♣ A 10 3

♠ A 6
♥ A J 9
♦ J 9 5 2
♣ K Q J 4

♠ 10 9 8 2
♥ 5 3 2
♦ 4
♣ 9 8 7 6 5

♠ Q 7 5 4
♥ K 10 8 6
♦ K Q 6 3
♣ 2

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dbl	Pass	3♣ ¹
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

¹Pick a major (not alerted)

Should North double or await a protective re-opening double from South, even though some say, 'never disturb a club'? Should South bid a forcing 2♠, rather than 3♠?

Geoff Simpson, Torphins, Aberdeenshire.

A The textbooks advise North to pass over 1♣ as the hand is balanced and not quite good enough to overcall 1NT. In real life, some people would double. For me, the lack of shape combined with the lack of a 4-card major would dissuade me from doubling.

Unless the 1♣ opening was prepared, East's pass over the double looks a little odd. With 5-card support and a singleton, some sort of raise to make life tougher for the opponents is in order.

Once East passes, South should bid 2♣ rather than 3♣ to ask North to pick a suit (any suit, not just a major). North then bids 2♦ and South 2♥. Since the cue bid is forcing to suit agreement, North must bid again, 2NT with a club stop and no 4-card major. South, holding a singleton club, will not fancy 2NT and retreats to 3♦. Whether 3♦ should be forcing is debatable. I suppose that as a jump to 4♦ is available to force,

it should be non-forcing.

Life would be much easier if North passed over 1♣. South has a textbook re-opening double (remember, you add 3 points in the pass out seat). Knowing that North could not act over 1♣, South knows then to stop in a part-score.



Q What should I bid as West with the hand below?

♠ 7 3
♥ 8 4
♦ Q 9 7 3
♣ K J 8 6 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
?			

Michael Windsor-Richards by email.

A Your partner's double is for take-out, so you should take it out. A simple 4♣ seems to be sufficient. You do not want to be getting too excited with 6 points; partner will not be thinking you have a Yarborough. Your heart holding is also poor with the lead coming through partner's holding.

Q How does one bid this hand from our improvers' class? Some pairs managed to reach 4♥ making 13 tricks. No-one bid a slam; I found it quite difficult to bid.

Dealer South.

♠ 4
♥ A Q 7 4 2
♦ A 10 5
♣ A 9 8 4

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

♠ A J 9 3
♥ K J 6
♦ J
♣ K Q 7 6 5

Andrew Mountain,
Oakleigh, Wrexham.

A Reaching at least a small slam seems entirely possible.

The auction might start:

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

¹Most players would not raise with such a pathetic hand

²North is too strong for a non-forcing jump preference of 3♣

³The jump shows genuine secondary heart support and extra values

Knowing of the two-suit fit and that South holds a singleton diamond facing the ace as well as better than a minimum opening, North can hardly stay out of a slam from here. Indeed, it would not be unreasonable just to bid 6♣ over 3♥.

Q My partner opens 1♠. Should I respond in spades or hearts with this hand?

♠ K J 8 5
♥ J 9 7 6 4 3 2
♦ 8
♣ 6

Doreen Parrington by email.

A With 4-card spade support, weak hearts and the two singletons, I would feel inclined to raise the spades. If you respond 2♥, partner is never going to believe you have only 6 HCP. How many spades you should bid is an interesting question. A jump to 3♠ sounds about right. If you are playing 5-card majors, you might raise all the way to 4♠.

♣♦♥♠

Q This deal comes from a small duplicate event.

♠ A K J 5 3
♥ A 4 3
♦ A 10 4 2
♣ A

♠ Q 7 6
♥ Q J 10 9 8 7
♦ 7
♣ Q 10 3

West	North	East	South
	2♣ ¹	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠ ²	Pass	4♥
Pass	6♠ ³		

¹5 quick tricks

²Cue bid; since North has all 4 aces and the ♠K, Blackwood seems useless

³North having 5 losers estimated South to have 7 losers
Could we have bid the hand better? Possibly South could bid 4♦ with a singleton. 6♠ made easily when West had ♥K-x.

Edward Bland by email.

A Whatever the merits of the methods, no doubt you obtained a good score for making 6♠. I agree 6♥ would be safer. I cannot see a way for North to make a 'pick a slam bid'. North might have raised 2♥ to 3♥, though the spade suit does look good. South might have jumped to 4♠ over 2♠ (fast arrival) and 4♥ without the ace or king is dubious.

North has five quick tricks for sure, but is a little light on playing strength for a 2♣ opening. Assuming that South has a 7-loser hand for a simple response also seems rather optimistic. The slams make because of the two-suit fit. North was quite right to re-evaluate in the knowledge of the two-suit fit.

♣♦♥♠

Q My LHO opened 1♠. My partner had 23 points as follows:

♠ A K x x
♥ K Q
♦ K Q x
♣ A Q x x

My partner, who is not a very experienced bridge player, bid 2NT. We all queried this as we understood 2NT to be a convention. She

corrected her bid to 1NT.

On this bid and with my usual partner, I might have bid Stayman as my hand was:

♠ J x x x
♥ 10 x x x x
♦ J x
♣ x x

But this partner does not play Stayman, so I bid 2♥ as a take-out. My partner then bid 3♥ and I passed. As it happened, 3♥ made exactly.

What should the correct bidding have been and should we have been in game of some sort?

Ann Yeldon by email.

A Many people (including everyone you would meet in a tournament) play a 2NT overcall in second seat as showing a two-suited hand, usually the red suits, so that is not an option. With a balanced hand, if a 1NT overcall shows 15-17, double followed by 1NT shows 18-20. Double followed by 2NT would therefore show 21-22 or maybe 21-23. Given the unguarded honours in hearts and the seemingly poor spot cards, I do not mind showing 21-22/23. You are probably going to end up in 2NT if you do that.

The modern alternative is to double and then cue bid (2♣). That covers a variety of hands. This way you will find the spade fit because partner will start with 1♥ and, when forced to bid again by your cue bid, rebid 2♠. If you find the spade fit, you might well bid game.

E-mail your questions for Julian to:
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Taking the 'Downing' Trick

by Peggy Millidge

This was a recent deal at the club. One which shows how difficult teaching and learning bridge are.

brow in relief, took his ♠A and then ran five clubs and finally his ♠K and ♠5 brought home the contract. 'That was lucky,' he commented.

Later, when we were going over the hands, Richard smirked. 'We held them to the contract here,' he said. I tried to sustain a smile, but something must have shown on my face for his smirk faded.

'You could have got them down,' I said mildly.

'But you told me not to take my winners.'

He was defensive.

'True,' I replied, 'Normally aces are for gobbling up kings or queens. You held both the ace and the queen so, of course, you are not going to lead the ace, with the king presumably in declarer's hand.'

Richard's expression relaxed, the anxiety replaced once again by self-satisfaction.

'But,' I went on, fixing him with a gimlet stare, 'this was different. How many tricks did we have?'

'Four,' he mumbled.

'And how many more tricks did we need to defeat the contract?'

'One, I suppose.'

'And could you have taken that one?'

A small shimmer of understanding began to dawn on Richard's face. He still demurred,

'But you had told me...'

'Ah,' I said, 'But this was the 'downing trick'. Always take the downing trick if you have the chance.'

'You shift the goalposts,' he grumbled.

I could see that there was work to be done before he began to think bridge!

Dealer South. Love All.

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

West North East South

Richard

Peggy

1NT

Pass 3NT All Pass

South opened a weak no-trump and North jumped to game, with 12 HCP and a powerful five-card club suit. Richard led the ♥6, declarer called for the ♥2 from dummy and I took the trick with the ♥Q. I led the ♥10 back and declarer won, for his first trick. Five obvious clubs would make six tricks and ♠A-K makes eight, but declarer didn't dare tackle diamonds, so for his extra trick he decided to take the spade finesse at trick three. Alas for declarer, Richard held the ♠Q and was able to take his two remaining heart tricks. We had made three tricks in hearts and the ♠Q and Richard still held the ♦A. Unfortunately, he had learned his lessons too well. He was not going to lead the ace, he wanted to keep it to capture a high card from West's hand. Instead, he played back a spade. South mopped his



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Two Recent Slams

This is the first article in a new series. In future months, I hope that readers will send me their favourite slam hands (whether bid or missed). Mr Bridge will provide a small prize each month for the winner. The hands should be bid using reasonably natural methods and display good judgement rather than good guessing. I would like the reader who submits the hand to give me a running commentary of the thought processes used in arriving at the final contract (which need not be successful, but does need to be a good contract).

Because this is the first month, I am going to have to make do with some of my own slams. The first comes from the World Mixed Pairs final in Sanya, China. Some of you might have seen it in my online blog from that event.

Dealer North. E/W Game.

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

North	South
1♥	2♣
3♠	4♣
4♦	4♥
4♠	4NT
6♣	7♣

The first two bids are straightforward enough. Then North's 3♠ was a splinter bid, showing shortage in spades with a fit for clubs. That made my hand look

fantastic so I set trumps and three cue-bids followed. We do not play any ace-asking convention when a minor suit is agreed – because we find the response is often too high – so I now decided to bid an encouraging 4NT. Then, if partner signed off, I would bid 6♣, but, if he bid the slam himself, then I'd raise to the grand. So there we were in the excellent grand.

The trouble was that I was so excited I forgot to play it carefully. After a diamond lead, I should win the ace and play the king of clubs. Now I can ruff three spades in the dummy and later discard the other one on dummy's queen of hearts. However, I started with a low club to my queen, and then failed to find the red-suit squeeze needed to recover and make my contract.

The second slam comes from the third weekend of England's Premier League (see hand in next column).

My 1NT opening was weak and 2NT showed diamonds. 3♣ denied A-x-x/K-x-x or any four diamonds. 4♣ showed shortage and was a slam try. Well, I wasn't going to stop out of slam now. I agreed diamonds, then there were two cue-bids and partner bid an encouraging 4NT. I bid 5♣ in case he was thinking of a grand slam and he bid the slam. On a spade lead, when there was K-x-x on side and the heart finesse was right, I made all 13 tricks.

Dealer South. N/S Game.

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

North	South
	1NT
2NT	3♣
4♣	4♦
4♥	4♠
4NT	5♣
6♦	

I am sure that all of you out there have slam auctions that you are proud of. So send them to sally@mrbridge.co.uk and I'll publish the best few and choose a winner each month.



Transfers

Transfers apply over an opening bid of 1NT or 2NT and also when there is a natural overcall of 1NT or 2NT. A bid of either red suit shows five or more cards in the suit above the one bid, thus 1NT-2♦ shows 5+ hearts and 1NT-2♥ shows 5+ spades. If you held just four of a major, you would develop your hand via the use of Stayman, as normal. The remainder of the article is going to focus on the 1NT opening bid and assumes that you are playing a 12-14 no-trump.

Whenever I ask the question, 'What is the advantage of playing transfers?' to a class, I invariably get the answer, 'So that the strong hand plays the contract.' There must be bridge teachers around the country espousing this theory, but let me assure you that this is *not* the main advantage of playing transfers.

When your partner has opened 1NT, the hand is described to within a narrow range, both in terms of points and distribution. On the other hand, you may have a wide variety of hands to describe as the responder and the great thing about transfers is that, when partner is forced to respond, you are given a second go to complete the picture of your hand.

You may have an invitational hand, or a game-forcing hand looking for the best game, or a slam-going hand looking for the best fit. Transfers allow you to describe all of these hand types for the simple reason that you have two chances instead of one.

Consider your approach on the

following hand after partner opens 1NT (12-14).

♠ 8	
♥ K 7 6 4 2	
♦ A K Q 6 3	
♣ A K	

West	North	East	South
		1NT	Pass
?			

Playing traditional methods, you would bid 3♥, forcing, which partner would raise to four. What now? You would probably try Blackwood and, on hearing that partner has just one ace, you would have to decide whether to gamble on six hearts or settle for five.

If you were playing Roman Keycard Blackwood, you would be able to ask for the queen of trumps, but if partner didn't hold that card, you would certainly settle for five hearts. This was your partner's hand:

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

As you can see, you are happy to play in 6♦ or 6NT (even 6♣ is a fair contract), but the one slam you must avoid is 6♥.

Playing transfers, you have a

comfortable ride. You can start with a 2♦ transfer, which partner will complete with 2♥ and now you can rebid 3♦, showing a game forcing hand, at least, with five hearts and four or more diamonds.

Note that partner, holding a fit for both of your suits, is now able to raise your diamonds, knowing that if you were merely investigating the right game, it is still possible to play in 4♥.

Knowing that you hold a nine-card diamond fit, prospects of slam look good. Again, you will try Blackwood and, when partner shows one ace, you can try six diamonds, knowing that if partner is missing the queen of hearts, there should be sufficient in the black suits to come to twelve tricks.

Consider the following hand:

♠ 8 6 5	
♥ K 7 6 4 2	
♦ A 6 3	
♣ A 4	

This time, you have invitational values facing your partner's 1NT. Again you can start with a 2♦ transfer, which partner will complete with 2♥. You finish off your description of your hand by rebidding 2NT. This shows an invitational hand with exactly five hearts and allows partner four options:

Holding a minimum with just a doubleton heart, he can pass. Note that it is not possible to describe your hand and stop in 2NT if you are not ►

playing transfers. Holding a minimum with three or four hearts, he can correct to 3♥. If he has a maximum, he can choose between 3NT and 4♥ depending on whether he has a fit for hearts.

If you were not playing transfers, you would have to begin with Stayman, and bid 3♥ over your partner's response (assuming you do not get a 2♥ response). This shows an invitational hand, however partner will not know if you hold five or six hearts, or if you have a second suit, and hence the correct contract will be harder to determine.

Transfers can also assist with finding the right game holding both majors. Suppose you hold five spades and four hearts in a game-going hand?

♠ A K 8 6 5
♥ K 7 6 4
♦ A 6
♣ 10 4



This would cause you a problem using traditional methods. You would like to begin with Stayman to investigate a fit in either suit, but if partner responds 2♦, your 3♠ rebid would be only invitational, thus you would have to guess between 3NT and 4♠. Alternatively, you could make a forcing bid of 3♠ showing five or more in that suit, but now you would risk losing the four-four heart fit.

No such headaches exist for those using transfers. You can simply respond 2♥ and then rebid 3♥ over partner's 2♠ response.

Note that a new suit following a transfer is forcing to game. Similarly if you held five hearts and four spades, you would begin with 2♦ and rebid 2♠ over partner's 2♥ response, as on this hand:

♠ A K 8 6
♥ K 7 6 4 2
♦ A 6
♣ 10 4



As you may have worked out, there is no such thing as a free lunch. You are no longer able to make a weak take-out into diamonds at the two level. Since we have already traded this option in clubs in order to be able to use Stayman, this is a small price to pay for the advantages that transfers offer.

It is still possible to play in either minor with a weak hand, however, it now has to be at the three level (which was always the case with clubs). The bid of 2♠ is currently redundant, since with five or more spades you would respond 2♥ to 1NT.

This can be used to show a weak hand with a long minor. This minor should be at least six cards in length since partner may only hold two. With a weak hand and just five cards in a minor, it is better to pass 1NT.

In response to 2♠, partner can bid 2NT and now you will show which minor you hold by bidding it naturally, thus with the following hand the bidding sequence will be:

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

♠ 8 6 5
♥ K 7
♦ A 6 5 4 3 2
♣ A 4



Many players break major suit transfers in certain situations. Breaking the transfer means making a bid other than the next suit up, in response to partner's transfer bid, for example 1NT-2♥-3♠.

Breaking the transfer always shows 4-card support for partner and a suitable maximum hand. They can be useful to enable a game to be reached on minimum values because of the known good trump fit.

Consider the following hand:

♠ K J 8 7 3
♥ 7 4 2
♦ A Q 9 4
♣ 5



Facing your partner's 1NT, you would respond 2♥, preparing to pass the expected 2♠ response. However, if partner were to respond 3♠ showing four-card support and a maximum, you would be tempted to have a go at 4♠.

If your partner's hand opposite was, for example, the hand below, you would be making eleven tricks.

♠ A Q 10 2
♥ 9 5
♦ K J 2
♣ A 9 4 3



This is the full structure of responses to 1NT:

2♣ Stayman

2♦ transfer to hearts

2♥ transfer to spades

2♠ weak take-out in a minor

2NT invitational

3♣ / 3♦ / 3♥ / 3♠ natural slam try

3NT to play

MR BRIDGE CRUISES

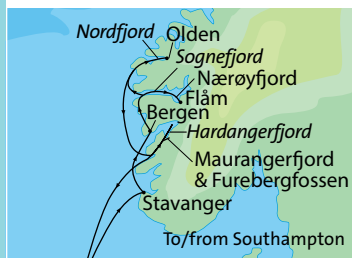


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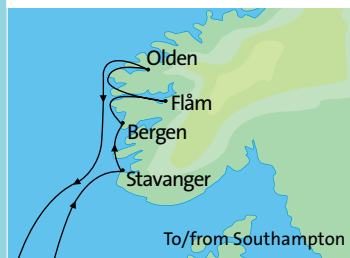
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Answers to Julian Pottage's Defence Quiz on page 21

1.

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

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

♠ K 5
♥ A K Q 8 3
♦ Q 6
♣ A J 7 4

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

Partner leads the ♠J and dummy plays low. What do you play?

In another context, you might duck to stop the ♠Q and ♠K from scoring on separate tricks. Here, you should see that your side has no second spade winner. One of dummy's spades can go on the ♣A or some of declarer's can go on the diamonds. Assuming South can count aces, your only real chance of beating the slam is to find partner with a trump trick. Take the ♠A at trick one. If you do not take it, declarer's second spade will disappear on the third round of diamonds.

2.

♠ K Q 9 3	
♥ 10 5	
♦ K Q J 8	
♣ 9 6 5	

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

♠ A 8 4
♥ A K J 2
♦ 10 6 3
♣ Q 7 2

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Dbl	2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Partner leads the ♠10. What do you do?

Since the ten would be a strange lead from 10-x-x, declarer's queen must be a stopper. One option is to win the first trick and switch to a heart. If partner has the ace-queen-jack (or ace-king-jack), your side can make three heart tricks and two club tricks.

A better bet is to play partner for an ace. On many layouts, declarer will not have nine top tricks, in which case that ace and four club tricks will suffice. To take advantage you need to maintain communications and so duck the first trick, playing the ♣8 to encourage.

3.

♠ Q 7 4	
♥ 8	
♦ K Q 7 4	
♣ A K 8 3 2	

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

♠ A K J 10 2
♥ Q J 6 3 2
♦ 5 2
♣ 9

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

Partner leads the ♦J and dummy covers. What is your plan?

The bidding has been revealing. You know that South has 5-5 in the majors. Surely, the opposing plan is to ruff hearts in dummy.

You should begin by capturing the ♦Q with the ♦A. You want the lead and do not want the ♦A to run away. You then switch to a trump; the eight seems best.

Your more important play is still to come. If declarer wins the trump in dummy and leads a heart (or wins in hand, crosses to a club and leads a heart), you may need to be ready. If you fly in with the ace to play a second trump, it is unlikely that your side will make two more heart tricks. Instead, you need to duck the first heart. Partner may have the king or declarer the king-jack and misguess.

4.

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

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

♠ 6
♥ A 10 9 8 3 2
♦ J 10 5
♣ A J 7

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

¹Strong with heart support

²Shortage

³Two aces

Partner leads the ♠10. Dummy wins and leads the ♠Q. What is your plan? Although the usual rule is to refrain from covering a touching honour, here you should think rather than follow low sheepishly. You know that partner holds one ace. Given the bidding, this is most likely to be in spades. If so, you can protect your king from a ruffing finesse by playing it now. You can exit safely with a trump (or a spade). In due course, you make the setting trick with the ♦K. ■

20 October 1805

The Vice Admiral's Medal

Capitaine Louis La Coeur walked past the sentry into the Great Cabin, blinking at the light which was flooding through the vast rear windows, the dancing waves casting green and pink lights on the walls and ceiling from the setting sun. 'Ah do come in my dear Captain,' said Captain Hardy, taking his hand in a slightly moist grip. 'May I have the honour to present the Vice Admiral? Capitaine La Coeur of the Navy of the Republic, sir.'

The man turned from his gaze at the sea. He was smaller than Louis had imagined, but had a bearing that spoke of authority and sublime confidence, but with a sensitive mouth despite the loss of one arm and the sight in one eye. 'I trust that your quarters are not too uncomfortable, Capitaine?' he remarked in a calm voice, 'but I regret that it will be necessary for you to remain in our custody until after tomorrow's engagement with the Emperor's Fleet off Cape Trafalgar and of course we could not invite you to table, as we had to discuss the proposed deployment of our own ships. However,' he added crisply, 'I hope that you have eaten?' Louis nodded, the memory of the sea pie still lying heavily in his stomach. Really, he thought, it cannot be the way the English cook that enables them to win battles, although to be fair the Bordeaux had been a fine wine and of a noble vintage.

'Your reputation goes before you,' the Vice Admiral continued, 'We understand that you are the finest bridge player in all Paris and Captain Hardy has invited you to join our modest table for a rubber or two, if you consent?'

Louis nodded. He looked around the Great Cabin as he started to relax. This was a scene that he would describe to his children and grandchildren. On the leather seating sat a dozen officers, hatless, but with the confident bearing of a successful Navy, many with the scars of battle, including three marine officers in their scarlet jackets with



Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson

white suited servants, one for each man in the room.

The men gathered round a small green baize-covered table, rather Louis thought like that picture of the Hospital Operation by the Dutch master. 'May I introduce Captain Charles Adair of His Majesty's Royal Marines?' said Hardy as the four men sat down. 'He has drawn the card to partner you so if you wish to discuss tactics please take a minute while the servant brings more wine, some pickles and a selection of our ship's bis-

cuit.' 'Never mind the tactics,' smiled the Vice Admiral, 'just go straight at them, eh my friend?' looking across the table at Captain Hardy.

Louis noticed that there was a small device for holding the Vice Admiral's cards and guessed that his personal aide would be shuffling and arranging the cards. Perhaps some advantage could be gained by the location by the non bridge player in the holder, often the unguarded would arrange the best suit at the left with highest cards left to right. Louis had won many francs in Paris by this deduction. His train of thought was disturbed by an unusual question.

'Which of these would you choose?' asked the Vice Admiral tapping his biscuit upon the baize and pointing at the two wriggling worms. 'Why that looks the bigger and therefore the healthier,' said Louis. 'No my dear Sir,' came the rejoinder, 'You must always choose the lesser of the two weevils.'


A roar of laughter greeted this witticism.

'Are you married?' asked the Vice Admiral with a perceptive that made him think that the great man could read his mind.

'No my Lord,' he replied, still smarting that he had been made to look foolish by a worm, 'only to the Service.' There was a shocked silence as those in the Cabin realised that this could be an allusion to the man's association with Lady Hamilton, but when the Vice Admiral smiled and said, 'Let us cut the cards - we have a doughty opponent here,' the onlookers relaxed and many breaths were exhaled softly.

The first two hands were uneventful - a routine 3NT made with the elegant precision one would expect from the

French maestro, then a straightforward 4♠ by Hardy. And so, at game all, as darkness enveloped the ship, the following hand occurred.

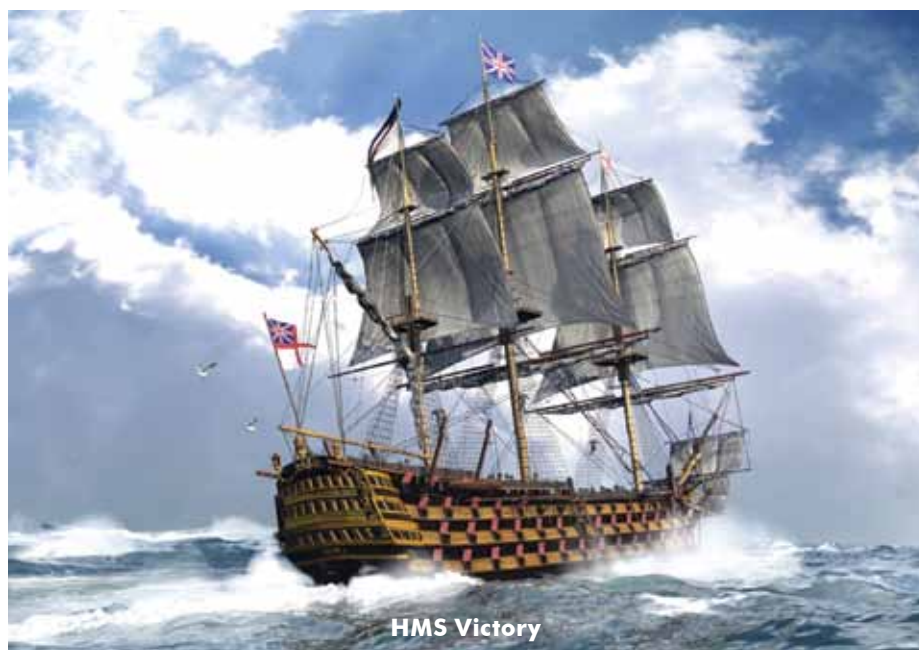
	♠ 3 2	
	♥ A Q 10 9 8 7 6 5	
	♦ 6	
	♣ A Q	
♠ Q J 9 7 6 4		♠ A 10 8 5
♥ J 3		♥ K 2
♦ A Q 7		♦ K J 10 9
♣ K 7		♣ J 10 9
	♠ K	
	♥ 4	
	♦ 8 5 4 3 2	
	♣ 8 6 5 4 3 2	

West	North	East	South
<i>La Coeur</i>	<i>Hardy</i>	<i>Adair</i>	<i>Nelson</i>
	4♥	Db1	Pass
4♠	All Pass		'Take-out

Hardy lead the ♥A and continued with the ♥5, covered by the ♥K and ruffed by the Vice Admiral with his singleton ♠K. A club continuation defeated the contract by one trick. The playing of the major-suit kings on the same trick was unusual.

'Hard luck, sir. I think we might have made 4♥ though, so your judgement was excellent,' remarked Captain Hardy to Louis. He whispered across the table to the Vice Admiral, 'When kings meet, my Lord, one has to lose!' This was a reference to The French pretender's difficulties with mad King George at the English Court and the Vice Admiral smiled in return. Maybe his Captain was more subtle than he thought. He made a mental note of the phrase. Nelson said, 'Kings meet, Hardy! Very apropos, I will remember that!'

The evening came to a successful high for the English Navy, as Captain



HMS Victory

Hardy made a successful contract in 3NT and completed the rubber. Louis raised his glass and his wine shone ruby red in the light of the newly trimmed lamps in the Great Cabin. 'I drink to His Majesty's Navy,' he cried, 'I had no idea that you were such brilliant players of this noble game.'



Captain Thomas Hardy

He reached into a waistcoat pocket and drew out a green leather pouch, from which he produced a gold medal about one and a half inches round with a gold pin on the reverse.

'This is my bridge medal from the Grand Prix de Versailles year of 1804, dear Admiral,' he exclaimed. 'It would do me the greatest honour if you

would accept this token of my esteem. I have been very impressed by the kindness and courtesy of your officers and the free access to the – I think you say quarter deck – during my parole.' He held up his hand to stifle any polite refusal from Lord Nelson. 'Believe me, sir this evening will live long in my memory and I have high hopes of repeating my success at this year's gathering in Paris.'

Vice Admiral Nelson received the medal and looked at it intently. 'My dear Louis,' he said and there was a respectful silence from the assembly. 'You do me a great honour and I not only accept this as your precious gift, but I will wear it later today – it is passing midnight – when we meet your countrymen at sea. We can set you ashore with the others after the battle. By the way Louis, did you notice that my aide did not always arrange my cards in the holder in the same manner for each hand?'

'Mark this, gentlemen,' he continued, 'while there are men in France to resume after the Emperor, of this calibre, we know that we are fighting for the common good. Meanwhile, I too give you a toast. Please refill your glasses. To our wives and sweethearts – may they never meet!' ■

Footnote: Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson and Captain Charles Adair were both killed in the action the following day at Trafalgar. There has always been some doubt if Nelson's dying words were, 'Kiss me, Hardy,' or 'Kismet Hardy.' It may well have been, 'Kings meet, Hardy,' replaying the hands of the previous evening in his delirium.



A Few Days with Sally Brock

The Mixed Pairs Grinds to a Finish

Last month, I left you in the middle of the Mixed Pairs in Sanya. The semi-final passed off peacefully. We had rather a poor start but recovered to finish in 20th position or thereabouts.

The final started terribly but we recovered somewhat. After 20 boards we were on 43%, but six boards later had improved to 53% – they were six pretty exceptional boards. After that, we had our moments but never really put enough good boards together and we finished 18th.

Moving on to the Women's Teams

The format of the women's teams was a complete round robin over three days: a total of 25 seven-board matches. We had good moments and bad moments: moments when we looked as if we were coasting it and moments when it looked as if we had no chance. In the end, we finished eighth, the last qualifying spot.

In my new article 'Sally's Slam of the Month' I have reported on a grand slam in clubs that we bid in the Mixed Pairs. This is its best friend (hand in next column).

After a long complicated auction where I thought Nicola had a much more suitable hand than she actually had, I was declarer in 7♣. I got a spade lead, ruffed a couple of spades in hand and a heart in the dummy and played all my trumps, hoping for an ending

where either someone was squeezed in spades and diamonds, or someone held a singleton diamond honour. Is that a better line than what works? Draw two rounds of trumps, take a heart finesse, cash all my hearts throwing diamonds from dummy and then ruff a diamond in dummy. All I know is that I didn't find the winning line.

Dealer South. E/W Game.

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

♠ K 10 9 8 7 6

♥ 9 3 2

♦ 7 2

♣ 10 8

N
W E
S

♠ Void

♥ A K 10 8

♦ A 10 8 3

♣ A K Q J 6

The Quarter-Final

Today, we had a 56-board quarter-final match against a Chinese team with a really long unpronounceable name (known as 'PUSHI' for short). The match started disastrously; this was a hugely expensive deal from the first set (hand in next column). I am not quite sure how the bidding went in the other room (didn't dare ask), but team-mates defended 5♠ doubled, which made. In our room the bidding was:

West	North	East	South
	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

North's 2♦ was a Multi and 2NT a strong relay. When North showed a minimum with hearts, South leapt to 6♥ to protect her king of spades. Where North opened a weak two in hearts, South bid 6♦ to protect the king of spades. Sometimes East doubled this and West found the killing lead, but at our table there was no killing lead. Should Nicola (West) have bid at the six level? Norwegian super-star Geir Helgemo was in the same situation and found the winning 6♠ bid, but did he deserve quite such a suitable dummy?

Dealer North. Game All.

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

♠ A Q 8 7 6

♥ 10 7 5 4

♦ Void

♣ A Q 9 7

N
W E
S

♠ K 5 3

♥ A Q 3

♦ A K Q J 9 5 2

♣ Void

We were 20 odd down after the first set and a few more in the second, so at half-time we were losing by 28. However, a near-perfect third set saw us gain 54 IMPs. And we gained another few in the end to guarantee a bronze medal. Tomorrow, we have a tough semi-final against the US Moss team.

Ups and Downs

Nicola and I sat out the first set, after which we were 47 IMPs up. Wow! ►

Our team-mates had surpassed themselves. So we were happy that they continue. Unfortunately, that did not go so well and they lost most of the lead.

It was our turn now and we had a pretty good card. Not that we did anything particularly spectacular, but we didn't do much wrong and they did. We avoided a poor slam, bid in the other room and, for the second time in two days, an opponent thought that after opening 1♦, with a 3-3-6-1 shape, and hearing a response of one of a major, it was a good idea to jump to 3♣ on her singleton. Her partner raised to 5♣. Not what she was hoping for. She bid 5♦ and played there going three down, when her side was cold for 3NT. I know a lot of people don't like bidding 3-card majors, but it is safe in this situation. If you bid 2♥ over 1♠ and partner raises, you know that he/she has five spades (otherwise he/she would have responded 1♥ to start with) so you can convert back to spades.

We're in the Final Now

Well, we did it. They had a great first set without us, so carried on for the second, where they lost a little. At half time, we were 30 or so up. With gains in the final two sets, we won comfortably.

After the bridge there was a medal ceremony where we were given medals, replica trophies, a lovely bouquet of orchids and a rather strange box of bridge pins. Bridge is big in China and a lot of the time we were on mainstream TV. After some glasses of champagne, we went to dinner at the outdoor seafood restaurant in the MGM Grand Hotel (the most over-the-top lavish hotel I have seen).

The Women's pairs Begins

We started the pairs well. After 20 boards, we were leading, but the next

20 did not go well and we dropped down to fifth.

The second day of the event was terrible. The first 30 boards hadn't been great, but we had been above average and maintained our position. The last 14 boards were awful. We sat against the cards and they did everything right against us. We scored just over 31%. I think if we had been card perfect, we might have raised this to 40%. We dropped like a stone and finished 10th.

The closing ceremony was fun. The Chinese do this much better than Europeans. In Europe, you go into an auditorium and listen to a lot of speeches and maybe watch people getting medals (it's pretty boring if you have a medal to collect, but if not . . .). Then, all too often, you have to sit through some sort of performance. Eventually, you are allowed out and can get a drink and perhaps the odd cocktail nibble. Here, everyone arrives early so it starts on time. There were round tables for 10 or so and the champagne is already flowing. You sit at your table, drinking, eating, and talking to your friends, while a whole lot of stuff is happening on the stage. Much more fun.

The Journey Home

The flight home was fairly painless. I was impressed by the amount of legroom on the China Southern/KLM flight. It did take 24 hours door to door though.

After unpacking, showering and sorting through my mail and such-like, we went to meet Ben, Gemma and Hayden, who, as it was half-term, were at a children's farm near us. We spent an enjoyable couple of hours nattering and watching Hayden win a colouring competition, construct a dam in the sandpit and hollow out a pumpkin into a lantern for Hallowe'en.

Life Goes On

Briony has held up well in my absence. She is now working two days a week on the fund-raising team of a children's hospice charity in Oxford. It is

unpaid at the moment, but she is hoping there might be a paid job on offer before too long. Back to the gym too.

London Super League

On Wednesday, I went into London for a London Super League match. The cold Nicola had in Sanya turned into a chest infection needing antibiotics, so she dropped out and I played the match with Heather.

The traffic was bad and I arrived a bit late. Barely settled into my seat, I picked up the South hand below:

Dealer South. E/W Game.				
♠ 10 7				
♥ K 10 4 3				
♦ 5 3				
♣ A 10 9 4 2				
♠ 2				♠ 3
♥ A 8 7 5				♥ J 9 6 2
♦ A K J 10 8				♦ 9 7 6 4
♣ 6 5 3				♣ K J 8 7
♠ A K Q J 9 8 6 5 4				
♥ Q				
♦ Q 2				
♣ Q				

I like to open these hand-types at a high level and thought I was OK to open 4♠ (though obviously very good for such an action) and would bid 5♠ if the opponents came in. West doubled and East bid 4NT. There I was with 5♠ and West's double closed the auction.

Of course, they can't make anything. West led the ace and king of diamonds and switched to a low club. This seemed a very strange play to me. If he held the ace of hearts, why wouldn't he cash it? If he didn't have the king of clubs, how did he know I didn't? So, like a mug, I took my chance at making my contract and played low on the club and went two down.

The problem with opening my hand 4♠ is that these days you never shut everyone up and then you have to guess on the next round. Barry, who also had a match and was playing the same hands, opened 1♠. West doubled but no-one bid anything terribly ►

exciting so when he bid 4♠, he was left there untroubled. A much wiser course than mine.

At the weekend, Briony went up to Bradford to visit Toby, while Barry and I had a quiet weekend at home doing absolutely nothing.

A Better Result

I spent Monday with Briony. Then in the evening, Barry and I had dinner with my old bridge partner Steve and his girlfriend Sophie. They live half of their life in London and the other half in the US so it can be hard to catch up with them.

I spent Tuesday writing on my laptop at Barry's and in the evening we had a rearranged London Super League match. I played with Nicola who is recovering from her chest infection, with Heather and Binkie in the other room. We won comfortably and there were several interesting boards.

It is strange how the decision of whether or not to make an innocuous little bid can often have an unexpected effect.

This was Board 1 of the match:

Dealer South. Love All.

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

At my table, the bidding was:

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

West kicked off with a top heart, which I ruffed. I played the king of spades, won with the ace and West played another heart. There are various ways to succeed, but the line I chose was to lay down the queen of spades and then play a diamond to the ten. When that held, I could ruff a diamond in the dummy and lost just two trump tricks and a club.

In the other room, the bidding was:

West	North	East	South
			1♠
2♥	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Here, with fewer clues to the distribution, Simon tried to ruff two diamonds in the dummy. He ruffed the lead and played ace, king and another diamond, ruffed with dummy's four and overruffed with the seven. East played another heart but declarer now had to lose another overruff to go with the ace of spades and a club.

I can't really see anything wrong with this line of play, other than that it didn't work.

Nicola chose not to raise spades immediately because she had good defence to hearts and did not want to encourage me to bid four spades over four hearts. When she didn't raise, it was more tempting for East to raise to take our space away. The final double then suggested some diamond strength, hence my choice of play.

A Parliamentary Affair

The next day, I met Briony in West-field for lunch. We went to Tossed, where you can get tailor-made salads – healthy and delicious. And we did some Christmas shopping. Then she dashed off to meet a friend while I went to the House of Lords for the annual parliamentary match.

I arrived at the right entrance, at the right time and was escorted first to the dining room for tea: crustless cucumber sandwiches, scones with jam and cream and delicious cakes. At the start of the second half, the Commons had a lead of over 1,000. Although the

Commons won last year, they lagged 18 to 21 overall so they wanted to win.

I settled myself behind Baroness Billingham (South), one of the nicest members of the House of Lords team. This was an interesting deal:

Dealer East. Game All.

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

Her partner, Lord Harrison, opened 1♣ fourth in hand and East overcalled 1♠. With no negative double available, she bid 2♥, West raised imaginatively to 3♠ and North bid 4♥. A spade lead would have been more testing, but West chose his singleton club and there was not much for declarer to do other than knock out the ace of trumps, draw one more trump and rattle off winners. It didn't matter whether East gave West a club ruff or not.

In the excellent booklet of hands devised by Paul Bowyer, the hand was put in to see whether declarers in 3NT were observant enough to spot and deal with the potential club blockage. In 3NT, if you win the first or second spade and start on the clubs, you have to remember to unblock the seven, eight and ten of clubs under the top honours, otherwise you cannot get at all your tricks.


The final result was a win by 4,000 to the Commons. Then it was a trek across London by rush hour tube, followed by a drive out to High Wycombe – all very time-consuming. As soon as I got home, I had a coaching session online with my Irish women.

By the way, our ProBridge website (www.pro-bridge.co.uk) is starting to get a lot of enquiries from potential clients. It has taken a while to pick up but now seems to be going strong, so do pay it a visit. ■



Answers to David Huggett's Play Quiz on page 17

1.

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

You are declarer in 6♦ and West leads the ♥K. How do you plan the play?


You have eleven tricks on top and the twelfth will surely come from the club suit, although that suit may well break 4-2.

Win the lead and play two top diamonds from hand. If everyone follows, play the ace of clubs, a club to the king and ruff a club high.

Now, you can enter dummy with the king of diamonds and the two remaining clubs will furnish two discards for the hearts.

If trumps had broken 4-1, then you would have needed the clubs to break 3-3.

2.


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

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

It looks a messy sort of hand at first sight, but maybe that lead has done you no harm. If it is indeed fourth highest – and why wouldn't it be? – then the Rule of Eleven tells you that East has no club higher than the seven, in which case you should let the opening lead run round to the eight.

Two subsequent club finesses will give you four club tricks, which, together with your five outside winners, will give you enough tricks for the contract and hearts will offer an overtrick or two.

3.

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


You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♥7. How do you plan the play?

If the club finesse works, then it will be a simple matter to knock out the ace of diamonds later and come to more than enough tricks. But what if it loses? Presumably, East will return a heart and you will be in trouble if West has the diamond ace and enough hearts remaining to beat you.

Now try playing on diamonds first. Whoever wins will play a heart, but now, when you take the club finesse, you will survive even if it is wrong, because either East will have no hearts left or the suit

would have broken 4-3, when all you are losing are two hearts and a trick in each minor.

4.

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

You are declarer in 4♠ and West leads the ♣K. How do you plan the play?

That club lead has hit your weak spot and, if you are not careful, you might lose a trump, a diamond and two clubs. You can discard a club loser from hand on the king of hearts once you have unblocked the ace. So do just that and then play a trump to the ace, spurning the finesse so that you can get that vital discard.

You might lose a trump trick even if the finesse was right, but you have guaranteed your contract. ■

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NOV 22	MARRAKESH/AGADIR Morocco Sightseeing. Drive to Agadir to rejoin ship	
NOV 23	At Sea	
NOV 24	LAS PALMAS Canary Islands	
NOV 25	At Sea	
NOV 26	AD DAKHLA Western Sahara Desert	
NOV 27/28	At Sea	
NOV 29	PRAIA Cape Verde Islands	
NOV 30-DEC 5	At Sea	
DEC 6	SAO TOME	
DEC 7	BOM BOM ISLAND Principe	
DEC 8/9	At Sea – Crossing the Equator	
DEC 10	LUANDA Angola	
DEC 11/12	At Sea	
DEC 13	WALVIS BAY Namibia	
DEC 14	LUDEFITZ Namibia	
DEC 15	At Sea	
DEC 16-18	CAPE TOWN South Africa	overnight
DEC 19	CAPE TOWN South Africa Transfer to Airport for flight home	

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