

Last week's winners: Monday 21/4/03

Friday 25/4/03

winners Hans/Paul 60%
2nd Philip/Terry 58%

Hans/Paul 53 VP
Ian/Jan(Nor) 48 VP

Well, that's all over for another 51 weeks. I managed to hardly get wet at all – simple, simply get a crate of beer and stay at home typing up bridge things.

Chuck was conspicuous by his absences last week, guess he had a visa run or wanted to stay dry. I received a few comments about last week's sheet. Everybody agreed with my analysis and opinions.

Which Suit to Develop – The Answer to last week's problem

West leads the ♥J.

If South plays on ♦'s first then he obviously takes the finesse. If the ♦Q is offside then that's bad. If the ♦'s are then 4-2 then South is one down, that's very bad.

An unlucky lie of the cards?

No.

Dealer:	♠ K92	West	North	East	South
South	♥ 863				
Both vul	♦ AKJ84	-	-	-	1♣
	♣ Q9	pass	1♦	pass	1NT
		pass	3NT		
♠ 643	N	♠ QJ108			
♥ J10942	W E	♥ 75			
♦ 72	S	♦ Q1095			
♣ 65		♣ AK7			
	♠ A75				
	♥ AKQ				
	♦ 63				
	♣ J10543				

There is another suit - ♣'s - that can provide more than enough tricks. The development of a long is nearly always better than taking a finesse. Attacking ♣'s gives South 10 tricks – 2 ♠'s, 3 ♥'s, 2 ♦'s and 3 ♣'s.

Hand Evaluation – A (Strong) 1NT opener?

Hand A	Hand B	Remember Hand A from last week? I opened the hand 1♦ and rebid 1NT (showing 12-14 points – all it's worth).
♠ 972	♠ A72	Anyway, at our regular Wednesday meet, Hans, Paul and myself discussed the hand. Paul is adamant that it is 15
♥ AQ5	♥ A95	points and should open 1NT (I'll have to lend Paul a book on hand evaluation). Much to my surprise, Hans was totally
♦ AJ86	♦ A862	on my side (and even more so!). Hans quoted Hand B and
♣ A82	♣ A82	said that he would not open a strong NT. I am a great advocate of adjusting for shape, intermediates etc, but this (adjusting by 2 points) may be going a little too far? If you open 1♦ then partner will never place you with this shape and 16 points. I'm not sure what Hans' point was; maybe that a 4 ace hand is better suited to a trump contract? Probably true, but I cannot see how to continue the bidding if you do not open 1NT, the hand is too good for a 1NT (12-14) rebid.

Extended Stayman?

While discussing the previous hand, the sequence 1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♣ - ? was mentioned. A few years back this was often Extended Stayman, asking for a 3 card major (responder is presumably 5-5 in the majors). Nobody plays this these days. It's been overtaken by developments in transfers and improved Stayman sequences. So this sequence would now normally show a weak hand with 6 ♣'s and a 4 card major (if you agree to play it that way!).

The Simple Overcall!

Yet another disagreement between Hans, Paul and myself on Wednesday.

Hand F	I held this hand and my RHO (Hans) opened 1♣. I overcalled 1♥.
♠ J32	Subsequently I was propelled into 4♥ by my partner who apparently expected more for a 1 level overcall.
♥ K9743	Now I agree that the hand is no thing of beauty, but I maintain that it is worth a 1 level overcall. Paul thinks it's reasonable, Hans disagrees (he would pass). Hans expressed the opinion that, as we play weak jump overcalls, a simple overcall guarantees 11+ points. Now I am getting used to
♦ 943	Hans, and so I was not speechless this time! However, I still never know if he is joking or not, but I believe that he is serious here. Jump overcalls are 6 card suits. You can play them as weak, intermediate or strong, however you wish; but they do not affect your simple overcalls (except that a simple overcall denies whatever you need for a jump overcall). So, playing weak jump overcalls does not preclude a normal 1 level overcall of 8-10 points on a 5 card suit that would jump overcall if the suit was 6 cards. Hans disagrees, I see absolutely no logic in what he says and it is certainly a concept that I have never encountered before. So, let's consult the library!
♣ A2	

Hand G	Hand H	Just for the record, all of these guys play weak jump overcalls (although I think it is irrelevant).
♠ 94	♠ KQJ93	Hand G overcalled a 1♣ opening with 1♠ – Better Bidding with Bergen, vol 2 page 12. Hand H is from 'Standard Bridge Bidding for the 21 st Century' by Max Hardy – he recommends a 1♠ overcall over any opening bid.
♥ KJ875	♥ 85	
♦ A1063	♦ 1096	
♣ 52	♣ 764	

Hand J	Hand K	Hans countered that I only read American books and that things are different in the real world. Good point! Now I would fully agree that Americans often have a limited approach to many things, but their Bridge theory is as good as anyone's. Anyway, point taken; but I do read other material. Hans can not pull the wool over my eyes by saying that they play things differently in Holland – I happen to be fairly adequate at Dutch! So let's look at a Dutch magazine. Hand J is van de Nederlands Maandblad Juli 2002, page 29, it overcalled a 1♣ opening with 1♠. Hand K is from an acknowledged Dutch expert, Bieden Met Berry, page 18, – 1♥, het absolute minimum voor een volgbod op éénniveau.
♠ Q9754	♠ 92	
♥ K76	♥ AK1093	
♦ K95	♦ 872	
♣ 74	♣ 943	

I checked with Hans and Paul on Friday, asking them if they would overcall on hands F-J. Hans said he would pass with all 4 hands (so he was not joking), Paul would overcall on all but Hand J (the Dutch overcalling hand). I agree 100% with Paul. Hand J is not as good as Hand F and is probably not really worth an overcall (so they do play things differently in Holland?) – Hand F has a better trump suit and an outside ace. Note hand H, a far cry from Hans' 11 point criteria; Paul and myself go along with Max Hardy, Berry Westra and Marty Bergen – points smoints. If you have a reasonable 5 card suit – then bid it, especially at the one level. As Berry says, a very good seven points is 'the absolute minimum for a 1 level overcall'. Eight points is fine. But be aware, you should have a reasonable suit – say 3 points or Q109xx. Quite often a hand is suitable for an overcall but unsuitable for an opening bid, and vica-versa. You certainly do not need 11 points for an overcall and you do not need a 5 card suit for an opening bid.