

Last week's winners: Monday 28/7/03

Friday 1/8/03

1st Chuck/Terry 68%
 2nd Tobjorn/Gunn 62%

only 7 players, so no results.

A New Format

In my eternal quest to make the news-sheet more interesting, I am trying something new. On this first page you are given a number of bidding questions, all the hands are from recent weeks at the club. See how you do.

Bidding Quiz

Solutions appear throughout this news-sheet.

Hand A Hand B

♠ AQ8 ♠ A10
 ♥ 985 ♥ AJ8753
 ♦ J3 ♦ A93
 ♣ QJ542 ♣ K7

You are playing a strong NT for these two.
 With Hand A, partner opens 1♦, what do you reply? And what if you had passed initially, does that change your bid?

With Hand B, you open 1♥ and partner responds 1♠.
 So, 16 points and a 6 card suit, what is your rebid?

Hand C Hand D

♠ AQ ♠ A104
 ♥ AQ98 ♥ 10632
 ♦ 75 ♦ K
 ♣ Q10952 ♣ AQJ43

Hand C was held by an Acol player. So, playing 4 card majors and a weak NT, what do you open with Hand C?

With Hand D partner opens 1♦. What do you bid?
 If you choose 2♣, partner rebids 2♦. What is your 2nd bid?

Hand E Hand F

♠ K5 ♠ J
 ♥ A742 ♥ K875
 ♦ KQ74 ♦ AQJ973
 ♣ 876 ♣ K6

You are playing a strong NT. With Hand E, partner passes as dealer. You open 1♦ and partner responds 2♣. What is your bid?

With Hand F you open 1♦ and partner responds 2♣ (promising 8+ pts – you are playing Acol). What is your rebid?

What would your rebid be if partner had responded 1♥?

Hand G Hand H

♠ KJ32 ♠ J8652
 ♥ A4 ♥ 103
 ♦ J1064 ♦ K103
 ♣ AKQ ♣ A52

You are again playing a strong NT.
 With Hand G, partner opens 1♦, you bid 1♠ and partner rebids 1NT (12-14). You try Blackwood/Gerber and partner has 1 ace. What do you bid. Do you have enough for 6NT?

With Hand H partner opens 1NT (15-17). You transfer and partner obediently bids 2♠. What now?

The Power of a Fit

Board 19 from Monday 21st

North (G)	South	North (Joe)	South (Bob)
♠ KJ32	♠ A6	-	1♦
♥ A4	♥ K1095	1♠	1NT (1)
♦ J1064	♦ KQ972	2♣ (2)	2NT (3)
♣ AKQ	♣ J8	4NT (4)	5♦
		6♦	pass

(1) 12-14

(2) 2♣ is a new suit by responder and is forcing. Some players play this as Checkback/NMF but I believe that Joe/Bob play it as natural. Sometimes it is OK to bid a three card minor and there is no better bid here. 2♦, of course, would be weak and 3♦ is only invitational.

(3) Bob had choices here. If you play the 2♣ bid as natural then there is little point in bidding 2♥ (2♥ would not be a reverse as he has already limited his hand). Anyway, with good cover in the suits that Joe had not bid, 2NT is fine. With 3 card ♠ support, South would have bid 2♠ of course.

(4) I prefer to play 4♣ as asking for aces here (after partner's last natural bid was NT).

I believe that Joe/Bob had agreed to play 4NT Blackwood if ♣'s had been bid naturally. Either is fine as long as you agree it with your partner.

Well done Joe/Bob. This board was played 4 times, and only they found the excellent 6♦ contract. Others were in 6NT (one pair in 3NT) and justice was served when ♠Q was offside so 6NT was -1. The only injustice was that Chuck and I got a bottom (Joe/Bob bid this against us). 6NT depends upon the ♠ finesse, 6♦ is a doddle and depends upon nothing. These hands have 31 combined points, that is not enough for slam unless you have a fit or a long suit to run. Of course, when you have a fit, you have to play in it!

I have said repeatedly not to look for minor suit games, 3NT is usually better. I have also said that with fits (4-4 or 5-4) in a major, bid the major suit game rather than 3NT. However, I have not yet said much about slams. The principle of the 4-4 or better fit is also relevant for slam contracts, it will often give an extra trick (as in this case). Minor suit 4-4 fits are fine for slam, do not bid 6NT just because you have no major suit fit – if there is a minor suit fit, then bid the slam in the minor unless you have oodles (33+) of points. A combined 31 points is not usually enough for 6NT without a long suit, it is enough for slam if there is a fit.

But how does North know that South has 4(+) ♦'s? Playing a short ♣ a 1♦ opening is always 4+. Playing Better Minor an initial 1♦ opening may be 3 card. However, South's bidding has denied 3 card ♠ support, so with just 2 ♠'s he must have 4 or 5 ♦'s.

Note that this is still an excellent slam even if South has only 4 ♦'s. e.g. replace 2♦ with the 2♣ and 6♦ is still cold. Then, of course, 6NT would fail even if ♠Q was onside.

A Two level response? Board 1 from Monday 21st. Love all, South opens in 3rd seat.

North (A)	South (E)	North	South
♠ AQ8	♠ K5	pass	1♦
♥ 985	♥ A742	2♣	2NT
♦ J3	♦ KQ74	pass	
♣ QJ542	♣ 876		

This really is a poor contract, 1NT is far safer. What went wrong? A two level response after passing shows about 10-11 points and a 5 or 6 card suit. It is not an invitation for partner to bid on with a miserable 12 count. South should pass, there is a known 5-3 or better fit. Mind you, I would not bid 2♣ with Hand A (but 1NT) as I would prefer a better suit to suggest a final 2♣ contract.

Chuck's Comment: - *'Why 10-11 points for a two level response? Pard does not have 15 (he would have opened 1NT), so bid 1NT with 10 pts. If pard has a better than min hand then he will give you another chance to bid. 2♣ by a passed hand shows 11-12 points.'*

So there you have it. I don't like the 2♣ bid here, Chuck rules it out completely.

Now consider the case where North is not a passed hand, say South dealt and again opens 1♦, what should North bid now? 2♣ would be forcing and this hand is not good enough to cope with a probable 2NT response from partner.

Hand A	Hand J	Hand K
♠ AQ8	♠ AQ8	♠ AQ8
♥ 985	♥ J95	♥ Q95
♦ J3	♦ J2	♦ J2
♣ QJ542	♣ QJ1042	♣ KJ1042

Let's study this a little deeper. We are playing a strong NT and partner deals and opens 1♦. What is our response with each of these hands?

We have already discussed Hand A. It should bid 1NT. The reason is that if you bid 2♣ and partner replies with the quite likely 2NT then you may well be too high.

And Hand J? Enough for an invitation? If partner had opened a weak NT (12-14), then you would invite with 2NT. You are, however, playing a Strong NT. If you bid 2♣ and partner rebids 2NT (12-14) then what? No room to invite. You have no idea whether to bid 3NT or pass. The wrong hand is making the decision and you will get it wrong 50% of the time. So, the hand with the point spread has to make the decision. Easy. The correct bid with this hand is 2NT showing a balanced 11 points. If opener has the 12-14 type hand then he knows whether to bid game or not. Chuck agrees, bid 2NT.

And Hand K? Here you will not be embarrassed by a 2NT rebid from partner. Respond 2♣ as you can then safely bid 3NT over a 2NT rebid. Chuck recommends 3NT with hand K. I can't really see why, but a minor disagreement.

If you play a weak NT, then obviously a no-brainer. Bid 2♣ with all 3 hands.

Summary: (when playing a strong NT)

After a 1♦ opening from partner: -

Hand A :- 1NT
Hand J :- 2NT
Hand K :- 2♣

If you had passed initially
and partner opens 1♦:-

Hand A :- 1NT (or 2♣?)
Hand J :- 2NT
Hand K :- you would have opened

Inviting after a Transfer

Board 1 from Monday 14th

You do not always have to bid an excellent slam to get a clear top. Sometimes just having a good understanding of hand evaluation (not just counting points) will also score a top.

East1 (H) You hold this Hand H and partner opens a strong NT. Obviously you transfer with 2♥ and partner completes the transfer with 2♠. What now?
♠ J8652 Simple really, all the books say that with 8 points opposite a 1NT opener you should invite. So bid 2NT, invitational (8 points) and showing just a 5 card ♠ suit. That's what happened at three of the four tables on Monday.
♥ 103
♦ K103
♣ A52 3NT was reached twice and 3♠ once. They all failed. So, no problem, you have followed the 'rules' and it failed – it will be the same for everybody?

But what happened at the fourth table? Well, that East simply passed 2♠. What! Does this East not know about points? Does he not read any books? Doesn't he read the news-sheets?

Actually he does – it was me! Just look at that trump suit, jack high with no intermediates. High cards are good in long suits, not 3 card suits. With very poor trumps, no touching honours etc. etc. this hand is not worth an invitational bid. And what happened? 2♠ made on the nose.

By the way, if 4♠ is going to make opposite this hand then partner will usually need a good hand with 4 trumps. We play super accepts and partner's simple acceptance of the transfer denied 4 trumps.

The Jump Rebid

Board 2 from Monday, dealer East

East (B)	West	East	Hand B from the front page. Did you jump to 3♥? If you did then you have plenty of company. The board was played 5 times on Monday and only
♠ A10	-	1♥	Chuck/myself rested in 2♥. Other contracts of 3♥,
♥ AJ8753	1♠	2♥	4♥ and 3NT stood no chance.
♦ A93	pass		
♣ K7			

A jump to 3♥ here is not forcing but is strongly invitational. It shows a good 6+ card suit and about 16-18 points. East has a good hand, but the ♥ suit is too moth-eaten to jump to the three level when partner has promised no support. A quiet 2♥ is quite sufficient with this hand. If game is on, partner will make another move.

Skip a 4 Card Major and bid it later?

West Hand 21 from Monday 21st

		<u>Table 1</u>		<u>Table 2</u>		<u>Table 3</u>	
East (F)	West (D)	East	West	East	West	East	West
♠ J	♠ A104	1♦	2♣	1♦	1♥ (1)	1♦	2♣
♥ K875	♥ 10632	2♦	3♣	4♥ (2)	6♥ (3)	2♦	2♥ (4)
♦ AQJ973	♦ K	pass		pass		3♥ (5)	4♥ (6)
♣ K6	♣ AQJ43					pass	

Table 1: 3♣ made an overtrick, but 4♥ made +1 at other tables. What went wrong?

1♦ is the correct opening even if you play Acol. 2♣ by West is also correct.

Should East bid 2♥ at his 2nd turn? No. That would be a reverse and this hand is not good enough, so 2♦ is fine. And West's 3♣ bid? This is where it went wrong, West has values for game. 3♣ is not forcing and, what's more, it denies a 4 card major. A double sin. West should bid 2♥ (a new suit by responder, so forcing) at his 2nd turn.

Table 2: This also went wrong when West bid on over 4♥. What was the problem here?

East's jump to 4♥ at (2) shows a relatively balanced hand (no singleton),

18-20 points and 4♥'s. It invites partner to look for slam. This hand is not good enough and it is not balanced. Neither is it good enough for a game forcing 3♠ splinter, the trumps are too weak and the hand is not strong enough. Be satisfied with a 3♥ bid over partner's 1♥. Now what about that 1♥ bid at (1)? As I said earlier, 2♣ is to be preferred. If you bid 1♥, what is your next bid if partner rebids 1NT or 2♦? A♣ bid would show 5♥'s. If possible, try to bid out your shape; if West starts with 2♣ and then bids ♥'s next go, that shows a game forcing hand with 5♣'s and 4♥'s – perfect. Having started out on the wrong foot, what should West do at (3)? If partner indeed has about 19 points, then slam may well be there. I suggest 5♥, which means 'I have values for slam opposite your monster but I am worried about the quality of the trump suit, bid 6♥ with good trumps'. 5♥ would have made because the ♥A was onside with North. So just two trump losers.

Table 3: They got it right. Perfect bidding. West correctly showed his good ♣ suit first.

2♥ at (4) is a reverse after a two level response and is game forcing. 3♥ at (5)

is stronger than 4♥ (fast arrival) and is encouraging. West wisely did not investigate slam at (6) because of his poor trumps. Indeed, 4♥ could easily be the limit if the ♥'s lie badly.

Chuck's Comment: - *The only sensible auction was at table 3 and I agree with it 100%. At table 2 East's 4♥ bid was an overbid and West's bid of 6♥ is justified although the initial 1♥ response was a poor bid.* A minor and unimportant difference of opinion (about what West should bid over East's 4♥ at table 2). No problem, Chuck and I would both bid as Table 3.

Note. This concept of responder bidding the strong 5 card minor and then reversing into the 4 card major was fully covered in news-sheet 23. It is standard practice.

Open a 4 Card Major?

West Hand 19 from Monday 21st

Hand C You are playing Acol (4 card majors, weak NT). What do you open?
A decent 4 card major, so open it 1♥? Many Acol players would, but what
♠ AQ is your rebid? Partner responded 1♠. If you now bid 2♣ then this promises
♥ AQ98 5♥'s. The holder knew that he now had a problem, and settled for 2♠,
♦ 75 with that resulting in a final contract of 4♠ minus two. So how do you bid
♣ Q10952 this hand (playing Acol)? The answer is that although you play 4 card majors,
that does not mean that you must open a 4 card major just because you have
one. Many people would open this hand 1♣, but you have the same problem after a 1♠ response from partner.
You do not have the values to reverse into 2♥, the hand is not strong enough for 2NT (15-16) and it really
would be sad to have to rebid that ♣ suit. Easiest is to simply open 1NT. If you don't like it, then read up on the
Crowhurst convention.

So when should you open a 4 card major when playing Acol? Personally, I rarely do. I will only open
a *decent* 4 card major and then only if my rebid is No Trump (so I have a balanced hand and 15+ points)
and I really only like to do it with a good 16+ (a hand where I will raise the 'awkward' 1NT response to
2NT).

Bidding Quiz answers

These have all been fully described earlier, but a summary is: -

- Hand A: Respond 1NT to a 1♦ opening. 2♣ is a problem if partner rebids 2NT.
If you are a passed hand, then still respond 1NT. Although a response of 2♣ having passed is
not totally unreasonable, it should be a better suit.
- Hand B: Rebid 2♥. The hand does not warrant a jump to 3♥.
- Hand C: I prefer a weak 1NT opening. If you do not open 1NT with two doubletons, then open 1♣. You
have no rebid if you open 1♥.
- Hand D: You should bid 2♣ at the first turn and then 2♥ if partner rebids 2♦. This
first 2♣ bid is not denying a 4 card major as you intent to bid it next go.
- Hand E: You should pass partner's 2♣ bid. You have a 5-3 or better ♣ fit. You expect partner to have
5 *good* ♣'s or a 6 card ♣ suit.
- Hand F: Rebid 2♦ after a 2♣ response. The hand is not strong enough for a 2♥ reverse.
If partner's initial response was 1♥, then rebid 3♥. The hand is not strong enough for a splinter
(3♠) nor good enough for a jump to 4♥.
- Hand G: Bid 6♦. With a 4-4 (possibly 5-4) fit, the ♦ slam has better chances than NT. You do not have
enough for 6NT.
- Hand H: Pass! This ♠ suit is too miserable to invite game.