

Last week's winners: Monday 11/11/03

Friday 15/11/03

1st Bob/Allan 65%
2nd Ian/Terry 59%

1st Clive/Jim 60%
2nd Ian/Mike 54%

Ian commented on my very accurate description of his 3♥ bid (news sheet 53) being 'the most blatant case of unethical conduct that I have ever seen'. Instead of apologising, he asked 'did he pick the right suit?'. I guess that it's time to give him another warning after his unnecessary rudeness/raising of his voice against Tomas/Wendy on Friday –
be carefull.

Bidding Quiz**Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.**

Hand A Hand B

♠ QJ97 ♠ 95
♥ 9543 ♥ A1098
♦ J85 ♦ AK1083
♣ 83 ♣ A3

With Hand A LHO passes and partner opens 1♣. Do you bid? If yes, then what?

What do you open with Hand B? Suppose that you choose 1♦, then what is your rebid after 1♠ from partner?

Hand C Hand D

♠ 753 ♠ 6
♥ KJ52 ♥ J
♦ K3 ♦ KJ108753
♣ A853 ♣ QJ72

You are dealer and pass with Hand C. Partner opens 1♥, what do you reply?

With Hand D partner opens 1♠. You are playing a strong NT and so have insufficient values for 2♦; so you bid 1NT. Partner then rebids 2♥. Great! But what do you do??

Hand E Hand F

♠ 98754 ♠ A52
♥ KQ108 ♥ 9854
♦ - ♦ -
♣ AK54 ♣ Q98762

You choose to open Hand E with 1♠, fine. Partner responds 1NT. 2♥ is best now (you don't want to lose a possible ♥ fit) but partner then bids 3♦. What do you do?

What do you do with Hand F as dealer (I don't mean burn it)?

Hand G Hand H

♠ 102 ♠ -
♥ K86 ♥ AQJ10
♦ QJ1054 ♦ AKQJ6
♣ A72 ♣ K642

With Hand G partner opens 1♥. As you will read soon, with 3 card support and values for a 3♥ bid, it is best to bid 2♣/♦ first and then bid 3♥ (thus showing 3 card support). So you bid 2♦ and partner replies 3♦, so what is your bid now?

With Hand H partner opens 1♣, what are you going to do?

Passed Hand BiddingBoard 24 from Monday 11th

When you are a passed hand you may sometimes have to adjust your bidding as many bids that are normally forcing no longer are.

West (C)	West	North	East	South
♠ 753	pass	pass	1♥	pass
♥ KJ52	2♣ (1)	pass	pass (2)	2♠ (3)
♦ K3	3♥	pass	4♥	pass
♣ A853	pass	pass		

- (1) This is an incorrect bid for two reasons. With values for a limit raise (to the 3 level) you should simply bid 3♥ when you have 4 trumps. You only go via 2 of a minor to show three card support. However, when you are a passed hand you no longer have the luxury of distinguishing between 3 and 4 card support as 2♣/♦ may be passed out. So with a similar West hand with just 3♥'s you would also have to bid 3♥. There is a solution, it's called 2-way Drury, popular in the USA but not common in Europe.
- (2) East had just a 12 count with 3♣'s and saw no reason to bid on.
- (3) Luckily South came to the rescue, 4♥ was a comfortable contract.

Don't pass 1♣ with ♣ shortage.Board 23 from Monday 11th

Not everybody agrees with me, but I will not pass a 1♣ opener (maybe short) if I can avoid it. I was East on this deal and would bid the same if playing better minor: -

West	East (A)	West	North	East (me)	South
♠ A642	♠ QJ97	-	-	-	pass
♥ Q8	♥ 9543	1♣ (1)	pass	1♦ (2)	pass
♦ KQ9	♦ J85	1NT (3)	pass	pass	pass
♣ K1076	♣ 83				

- (1) We play a prepared ♣, and so this could be just 2 or 3 cards.
- (2) I would never pass here. South is a passed hand and is quite likely to pass again (indeed he did at another table when 1♣ was passed out). 1♣ is very likely to be a miserable contract looking at the East cards (it was -2). But why 1♦ and not 1♥? I learned this trick from Chuck – yes, one is never too old to learn! A year or so ago I would have bid 1♥ but Chuck had this sequence with a similar hand a few months back, I am always willing to learn from a master - he had a very persuasive argument: -
If you bid 1♥ then partner is quite likely to go leaping off into 2,3 or even 4♥; so bid 1♦ and then pass any response from partner. Also, the strong hand will be declarer in any major suit contract. All very logical, I liked it. This was my first opportunity to put it to the test.
- (3) Obviously it should have worked out fine; West should simply rebid 1♠ which is an excellent contract. Never deny a 4 card major.

Your next bid after transferring.Board 20 from Monday 11th

I've been all through this before (news sheet 19), but somebody still got this totally wrong on Monday, an easy 3NT was missed: -

West (B)	East	West	North	East	South
♠ 95	♠ AJ1072	1NT (1)	pass	2♥	pass
♥ A1093	♥ Q6	2♠	pass	3♠ (2)	pass
♦ AK1083	♦ Q7	pass	pass		
♣ A3	♣ Q982				

- (1) Not everybody would open 1NT(15-17) with two doubletons, I think it's fine with this hand. If you don't open 1NT then you may have problems later showing the strength and balanced nature of the hand. I would like a better hand to reverse.
- (2) Wrong on two counts – First of all, it has game values and so East must either bid game or make a forcing bid. Secondly, when you rebid the transfer suit, this shows a 6 card suit (you have already shown 5 with the transfer). A 3♣ bid here would be game forcing and show a ♣ suit so is OK, but I prefer 3NT as the hand has honours in both doubletons. Either way you end up in 3NT.

Another Game MissedBoard 11 from Monday 11th

As I said just now, you should try to open 1NT with a balanced 15-17 points as otherwise you may have trouble telling partner your strength. This West hand is possibly a little too strong and unbalanced (points concentrated in two good suits) for a strong 1NT opening. I think that the opening bid is fine, but this auction goes to show how difficult it can be to show a 17 point hand having not opened 1NT.

West	East	West	North	East	South
♠ AKJ95	♠ 1065	-	-	-	pass
♥ 32	♥ AJ964	1♠ (1)	pass	1NT (2)	pass
♦ KQJ10	♦ A93	2♦ (3)	pass	2♠	pass
♣ K3	♣ 106	pass (4)			

- (1) Similar to the last hand and 1NT is a possible opening. However, the strength is located in two excellent suits and with a 5 card major I think that 1♠ is fine.
- (2) East is spoilt for choice here. I think it's not good enough for 2♥ when playing a strong NT. 2♠ and 1NT are the two possibilities. With an honour in the ♠ suit, I would bid 2♠. Without a ♠ honour I prefer 1NT (especially as there may just be a ♥ fit). I would not, however, argue with anybody who bids 2♠. Either is fine by me.
- (3) Here we see the problem with not opening 1NT. 2♦ is a reasonable bid but does not show the strength of the hand. Most people play 3♦ here as game forcing and this hand is good, but not good enough to force to game. I would bid 2NT (showing 17-18 points). East would then have bid 4♠, fine. The 2♦ bid here could still have worked out OK, however: -
- (4) After partner's belated support, I would make a try for game with 3♠ (or 2NT).

I was East and we played this against Hans/Clive. Hans, of course, was openly critical of my bidding, stating that a 1NT response must have a stopper in all the unbid suits. I have never heard such drivel in my life. Just look at the next hand (D) where North correctly replied 1NT with two small singletons!

A New Suit by a Limited Hand

Board 26 from Monday 11th

Back in news-sheet 36 I said that a new suit at the three level is usually forcing. I was, however, very careful with my wording and said by an unlimited hand. So what is it when the hand is already limited?

Table 1

North (D)	South (E)	West	North (me)	East	South
♠ 6	♠ 98754	-	-	pass	1 ♠
♥ J	♥ KQ108	pass	1NT (1)	pass	2 ♣ (2)
♦ KJ108753	♦ -	pass	pass	pass	
♣ QJ72	♣ AK54				

Table 2

West	North	East	South
-	-	pass	1 ♠
pass	1NT (1)	pass	2 ♥ (3)
pass	3 ♦ (4)	pass	3NT (5)
pass	??? (6)		

- (1) Sometimes a 1NT response has to be made on a very unbalanced hand, especially when the opening is a major suit; this happens when the responder has insufficient values to bid at the two level. 2♦ is OK playing a weak NT, but not with a strong NT.
- (2) Now I prefer 2♥ here (as otherwise a ♥ fit may well be lost forever). This simple rebid generally offers partner the choice of passing or preference to the first suit. 2♣, however, worked out very well on this deal as it was the best contract!
- (3) As I said, I prefer this 2♥ bid to 2♣.
- (4) Now then, crunch time. What does this bid mean? a new suit at the 3 level. North thought that it is a weak bid with a long suit and that South should pass. South (Hans) later maintained that it shows 9-10 points with a good suit and is invitational (to 3NT). Who is correct? Think about it logically, and in fact this is well-defined in Bridge literature.
North is correct. The bid is weak, showing a long suit, a misfit for partner's suits and a statement that 3♦ is the best contract. South *must* pass. Obviously it is not an invitation for 3NT, North's first bid was prepared to play in 1NT, so upon discovering a mis-fit he is certainly not now looking for 3NT. The same bid would be made by North on a much weaker hand. With the afore mentioned 9-10 pt hand, North would bid 2♦ or 2NT at once.
- (5) Pass is the only option here. 3NT with a minimum and void in partner's suit is gross.
- (6) Obviously a lottery now, the pair went on to bid a poor 5♣ (-1). But not as bad as the pair who played in 3NT (-4). Do *not* bid NT with mis-fits, PASS a.s.a.p.

At King Arthur's Court

A gang of ruffians had been raping and pillaging throughout the kingdom of Camelot. King Arthur had had enough and so he sent Sir Lancelot and Sir Gawain off to deal with the situation. The gang was led by Frederick and Friedrich, father and son. After a week the knights encountered the gang; the father, Frederick, was killed in the ensuing battle and his son, Friedrich, was taken back to Camelot. King Arthur was fed up with too many criminals getting off by means of hats, pebbles, coloured doors etc and so decided to have Friedrich executed immediately. But upon arrival at the gallows, the chief executioner said 'I can't execute this man, he's my son'. How is that possible?

A fairly uninteresting board, but then nothing is mundane these days when Hans and myself meet at the bridge table. The hand seemed bog standard to me, but not to Hans who had no hesitation in quickly criticising my bidding (he was South): -

West	East (G)	West	North	East (me)	South
♠ Q9	♠ 102	1♥	pass	2♦ (1)	pass
♥ A9532	♥ K86	3♦ (2)	pass	3♥ (3)	pass
♦ A87	♦ QJ1054	pass	pass		
♣ QJ9	♣ A72				

- (1) I mentioned this earlier, with a limit raise (to 3) of partner's major, bid a minor suit at the 2 level and bid 3 of his major next time. This distinguishes 3 card support from 4 card support. Some might say that this hand is not worth a limit raise to 3♥ (I would not argue, it is close).
- (2) An interesting problem, what is the best rebid with this hand after partner's 2♦ response? 2♥, 2NT or 3♦? Doubtless some person(s) will have strong views, but I am not so quick to criticise others. I think that any of these 3 are reasonable but they all have their flaws: -
 - Decent support for partner, so 3♦ cannot be wrong. But 4 card support would be nice.
 - A balanced 13 count, so 2NT (12-14) cannot be wrong.
 - A bit weak, so 2♥ in preference to 2NT. Some would bid this, but it's a poor suit.
 And me? I would not argue with any of these bids (I'm an easy goin' guy), but I slightly prefer my partner's choice of 3♦.
- (3) You (I mean me, i.e. East) started off with the intention of bidding 3♥ now, I don't see that partner's choice of a 3♦ rebid has changed anything. Hans sees it differently. He said that I should bid 4♥ as partner's response has improved my hand. Let's see; the East hand has 8 losers (2 in each suit), if partner covers 5 of them then 4♥ makes. Partner has shown no more than a minimum hand so far, it is *very* unlikely that he can cover 5 of these losers if he is going to pass 3♥.

As I said, I think that East's bidding is fine, so how good is a 4♥ contract on this hand? Hans says that it is good and that 4♥ only failed because there was an adverse 4-1 trump split (thus losing 2 ♠'s and 2 ♥'s). He cynically added that I did not look at the hand closely to see why 4♥ failed. Really??? Let's see who did not look closely, 4♥ is a *very* poor contract. You have 3 automatic losers (2 ♠'s and 1 ♥). To make 4♥ you need ♣K onside, ♦K onside and trumps split exactly 3-2. I make that about a 15% proposition. With just one thing 'wrong' it goes one down, with two things 'wrong' then 4♥ is two down. To say nothing of a possible 5-0 trump break or being doubled (note that the hand is missing important trumps – the Q,J, and 10). Now Hans is welcome to continue to bid 15% games (please do when I am the opposition), but please don't try to tell me that I should do so.

One final point. As I said, the East hand has 8 losers and with only 3 trumps many people would consider that it is only worth a raise to 2♥ (I would not argue – the (delayed) raise to 3♥ is perhaps a slight overbid). I think either is fine but bidding 4♥ is just silly.

Finally (I really mean that this time), think about what a 3♥ bid at (3) means. It says 'I have invitational values (+- 11 points), a ♦ suit and 3 card ♥ support, it's up to you'. Doesn't that sum up the East hand in a nutshell?? I believe that the East hand is minimum for this bid. Bridge is a partnership game, and it relies upon good co-operative bidding. Some person(s) simply do not understand that and bid like a bull in a china shop.

A terrible Pre-empt

Board 27 from Monday 11th

South (F) Ian opened this hand with 3♣. I went over this in some detail in news-sheet 48 when he bid 3♣ on a similar hand. This is a very poor bid for a number of reasons: -

- ♠ A52
 - ♥ 9854
 - ♦ -
 - ♣ Q98762
- 1- only a 6 card suit, and a very weak one at that.
2- if partner has ♥'s or ♠'s then this hand plays very well in either.
3- if the opponents end up in a ♥ or a ♠ contract then partner will probably lead a ♣, wouldn't you prefer a ♦?

At What Level Do You Overcall?

Board 10 from Friday 15th, both vul.

You have a ♠ suit and RHO opens 1♣, do you overcall 1♠, 2♠ or 3♠?.

South	West	North	East	South
♠ KJ10852	-	-	1♣	3♠ (1)
♥ Q107	pass	pass	pass	
♦ Q2				
♣ 106				

- (1) A reasonable 6 card suit. N-S were playing strong jump overcalls and so the holder of this hand elected to bid 3♠, reasonable? I don't think so. A 3♠ pre-emptive overcall should be a 7 card suit, and what's more, this hand has decent ♥'s. I can see no reason for bidding anything other than a mundane 1♠. And what if you were playing 2♠ as weak? I would still overcall 1♠, take away the ♥Q and a weak 2♠ overcall would be acceptable, although many (including me) would not bid it vulnerable.

What happened? It was a miserable partscore hand and 3♠ (two down, vulnerable) scored a cold bottom.

Bidding Quiz Solutions

Hand A: I would never pass. Although partner had 4 ♣'s, 1 ♣ was still a miserable contract (minus two). A 1♥ bid is obviously reasonable, but I prefer 1♦.

Hand B: I opened this hand with a strong 1NT. If you choose 1♦ then you have a rebid problem: - Suppose you open 1♦ (perhaps you play a weak 1NT when 1♦ is correct), then what do you do when partner responds 1♠? Playing a weak NT it's easy, 1NT showing 15-16 pts. But playing a strong NT the 1NT rebid shows 12-14 points and this hand is too good. So 2♦? This normally promises a decent 6 card suit. So a reverse into 2♥? It's not really good enough. There is no satisfactory rebid (2♦ is the best of a bad bunch), that's why the (strong) 1NT opener is best. Always think about your rebid before you make your opening bid.

Hand C: 3♥. You cannot bid 2♣ with a view to bidding ♥'s later (even if you thought it was a good idea) as your bid is non-forcing and partner may pass.

Hand D: 3♦. Once you have limited your hand with 1NT then a subsequent new minor suit (2 or 3 level, makes no difference) is weak and demands that partner passes.

Hand E: Pass. You have said your hand and partner wants to play in his long ♦ suit.

Hand F: Pass. 3♣ is a terrible bid.

Hand G: 3♥. Partner's ♦ support is not enough to make this hand worth a game bid.

Hand H: Jon was my opponent here and he had a very easy solution. Ask for aces (two), kings (two), count the tricks (12, 13 if the ♦'s produce 5 tricks) and bid 7NT. If the ♦'s don't behave there must be another chance for a 13th trick. Good stuff Jon, but why do it against me? Two pairs reached 6NT (reasonable but rather pessimistic. Much better, however, than the two pairs that ended up in miserable ♣ contracts. Opener has not even promised 4 ♣'s and playing in ♣'s (five, six or seven) with this poor suit is just silly.