



Club News Sheet – No. 105

5/11/2004



Monday 1/11/2004

Friday 5/11/2004

1st Jeff/Alex 61%
 2nd David/Kenneth 58%

1st Bob/Dave 66%
 2nd Clive/Phil(UK) 60%

Bidding Quiz

Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.

Hand A Hand B With Hand A you a vul in 3rd seat, what do you open?

- | | | |
|-------------|---------|---|
| ♠ 7 | ♠ A7 | (a) what do you open with Hand B? |
| ♥ KJ1097543 | ♥ A7 | (b) suppose you open 1♣ and partner bids 1♠, what now? |
| ♦ AQ3 | ♦ AJ102 | (c) suppose it goes 1♣ - 1♠ - 2♦. LHO then chips in with 2♥ |
| ♣ 10 | ♣ AJ643 | and partner bids 3♦. What now? |

Hand C Hand D With Hand C partner opens 1♦ and RHO bids 2♠ (weak), what do you bid?

- | | | |
|---------|----------|--|
| ♠ 7 | ♠ Q | With Hand D LHO opens 2♥ and partner overcalls 2♠, what do you do? |
| ♥ A942 | ♥ 865 | |
| ♦ J9643 | ♦ AJ109 | |
| ♣ AQJ | ♣ KQ1064 | |

Hand E Hand F With Hand E partner opens 1NT, what do you do?

- | | | |
|----------|---------|---|
| ♠ Q2 | ♠ 843 | With Hand F partner opens 1♠, what do you do? |
| ♥ J652 | ♥ KJ | |
| ♦ J10963 | ♦ QJ986 | |
| ♣ A4 | ♣ K32 | |

Hand G Hand H With Hand G RHO opens 2♥, what do you bid?

- | | | |
|----------|---------|--|
| ♠ AK1064 | ♠ AK864 | With Hand H it goes pass from both LHO and partner and RHO opens 4♥, what do you do? |
| ♥ A104 | ♥ A | |
| ♦ 85 | ♦ 984 | |
| ♣ A52 | ♣ AQ92 | |

Bidding the opponent's suit

I was called over on Monday when a player bid a suit that the opponents had bid and turned up with nothing in the suit. I said that that was quite normal and need not be alerted. One player disagreed with me and was adamant that any bid that is not natural needs alerting.

Now the rules on alerts keep changing; they are different from country to country and are also different depending upon the level of the competition. This is how I see it: - A bid that is 'standard' need not be alerted. So no alert is needed for Stayman or transfers etc. When you bid the suit that an opponent had bid then this is not showing that suit (standard) and so need not be alerted. In fact, strictly speaking, one should only alert if the bid is natural (this also applies to 2♦/♥ after partner's 1NT opening – alert if natural!). Now this is all rather complicated and I don't really care who alerts what as long as they are reasonable sensible about it, agreed? The best solution is to fill out a convention card, especially for regular partnerships. Gerry will be bringing me some nice new blank convention cards when he comes in December – so no excuse then.

Anyway, there were a few examples of this 'bidding of the opponent's suit' on Monday: -

Bidding the opponent's suit – part 1

Board 20 from Monday 1st

Dealer: ♠ AK1064
 West ♥ A104
 both vul ♦ 85
 ♣ A52

Table A

West	North (G)	East	South (D)
2♥	2♠ (1)	pass	pass (2)
pass			

♠ 953 N ♠ J872
 ♥ KQJ732 W E ♥ 9
 ♦ 643 S ♦ KQ72
 ♣ 9 ♣ J873
 ♠ Q
 ♥ 865
 ♦ AJ109
 ♣ KQ1064

Table B

West	North (G)	East	South (D)
2♥	2♠ (1)	pass	3♥ (2)
pass	3NT	all pass	

Table A: (1) So what did you bid at (1) with Hand G in this week's quiz? Double is incorrect. A one-level overcall is about 7-17 points, a two-level overcall is about 11-17 points and 2♠ is clearly correct with this hand.

(2) And what did you bid at (2) with Hand D? I don't like pass, see Table B.

Table B: South had the same decision at (2). Now 3♣ is not too bad but it is not forcing. My partner's choice of 3♥ is easily the best bid. It sets up a forcing situation and asks, in the first instance, for a ♥ stop. Since North had a ♥ stop this ended the auction in the correct spot.

And what happened? 3NT was bid 4 times, making 9,10 or 11 tricks. 4♠ was bid once, just making and N-S played in 2♠ twice making +2.

The bottom lines: -

- You can overcall at the two level with 11-17 points.
- If partner has overcalled at the two level, then 12 points is usually enough for game.
- Bidding the opponent's suit can mean many things. It invariably denies a good holding in the suit and generally asks partner to bid NT with a stop.

Bidding the opponent's suit – part 2

Board 17 from Monday 1st

Dealer: ♠ A7
North ♥ A7
Love all ♦ AJ102
♣ AJ643

♠ KJ54	N	♠ Q102
♥ 5	W E	♥ KJ109642
♦ 843	S	♦ 65
♣ KQ1098		♣ 5
	♠ 9863	
	♥ Q83	
	♦ KQ97	
	♣ 72	

West	North (B)	East	South
-	1♣ (1)	pass (2)	1♠ (3)
pass	2♦ (4)	2♥ (5)	3♦ (6)
pass	3♥ (7)	pass	3NT
all pass			

- (1) So what did you open at (1) with Hand B(a) in this week's quiz? It's not good enough for 2NT so 1♣ is fine.
- (2) I would overcall with a weak 3♥ here. A weak 2♥ is inadequate and pass is!
- (3) So should South respond 1♦ (up the line) or 1♠? It's a matter of style but I prefer 1♠ with a weak hand like this.
- (4) What did you bid with Hand B(b) at (4) in this weeks quiz? I chose 2♦, a reverse. After a one-level response it's up to you if you play it as forcing, most play it forcing for one round. If your partner may pass 2♦ then I guess you have to bid 3♦ or 2NT.
- (5) Finally a rather pathetic noise, but it's too little too late. There is little point in bidding 2♥ here as it takes up no bidding space and may even help the opponents.
- (6) North's reverse promises about 16+ points and so this South hand correctly just supported ♦'s. As South is now under no obligation to bid (because of the overcall) this raise to 3♦ shows more than a minimum. This belated murmur by East actually helps N-S!
- (7) What did you bid with Hand B(c) at (7) in this week's quiz? North's hand has improved now that partner has promised ♦ support and a non-min and so North can look for 3NT. He has a stop and 3NT is not a poor bid, but I would like a 2nd stop in partner's hand and so bid 3♥, the opponent's suit.

And what happened? Two East players bid to 4♥, got doubled and went down three to share the bottom. I don't know the bidding – why on earth East would want to bid more than 3♥, especially against non-vul opponents is a mystery to me. I do hope that we did not have East pre-empting and then bidding again?

The bidding above was our table and we thus (because of these silly 4♥ contracts) got just a little above average for 3NT making. One other table was in 3NT and as it was by North I guess he just blasted it.

There were three other curious contracts; 3♣ doubled by North (-3), 3NT doubled by West (!) (-2) and 3♥(-2) by East.

Quite how one East managed to settle in 3♥ undoubled is strange. Presumably he overcalled with a weak 3♥. Whether South chooses to double or not is marginal, but surely North must do something (double) when holding four aces?

Bidding the opponent's suit – part 3

Board 12 from Monday 1st

Dealer: ♠ AJ96
West ♥ Q75
Love all ♦ AKQ8
♣ 95

Table A
West North East South (C)
pass 1♦ (1) 2♠ (2) 3♠ (3)
pass 3NT all pass

♠ 54 N ♠ KQ10832
♥ K1086 W E ♥ J3
♦ 1075 S ♦ 2
♣ 8762 ♣ K1043
♠ 7
♥ A942
♦ J9643
♣ AQJ

'Expert' Standard American Table
West North East South
pass 1NT 2♠ 3♠ (4)
pass 3NT (5) all pass

- Table A: (1) This pair play a weak NT and (I assume) 5 card majors and so opened 1♦. Playing Standard American the correct opening is 1NT and playing Acoll it's 1♠.
- (2) A textbook weak jump overcall.
- (3) What did you bid with Hand C at (3) in this week's quiz? This South reasonably thought that if partner had a ♠ stop then 3NT would be a fine contract. Now, actually, I think that there is a better bid. If you play negative doubles I would double just in case there is a 4-4 ♥ fit; and subsequently bid ♠'s if no ♥ fit is uncovered.
- 'Expert' Table (4) When partner's 1NT opening is overcalled you obviously lose your Stayman bid. So most experienced players play that a cue bid of opponent's suit is Stayman. It is game forcing. As this is a specific meaning of the cue bid (it is not a general bid asking for a stop) I feel that it could be alerted.
- (5) North bids 3NT with no 4 card ♥ suit. Now this is a rather simplistic scenario because North may or may not have a ♠ stop! I have covered the complete scheme in the section on Lebensohl.

And what happened? Somehow two N-S pairs managed to reach a silly 4♥ on a 4-3 fit! I cannot understand how North can fail to bid 3NT however the bidding goes. Four tables found the excellent 3NT and the last played in 5♦.

Now then, I'm sure that everybody agrees that the bidding in the last three examples was fine. But I was called over by Jim (West) at this table when dummy came down with just the ♠7. Jim maintained that the 3♠ bid at (3) promises ♠'s unless alerted. I disagree. Jim says that he will download something from the internet to prove me wrong. Fine by me, I will always publish any sensible opinions by anyone in the news-sheet. Anyway, until I am proven wrong I do not believe that a bid of the opponent's suit needs alerting – it is self alerting.

Note that in board 20 my partner bid 3♥ (the opponent's suit) which I did not alert. And in board 17 I bid 3♥ (again the opponent's suit) which my partner did not alert. Quite so.

And as an aside, Paul (Ire) and myself were discussing this and Paul said that currently at higher level tournaments any bid above 3NT does not need to be alerted. I think that this is very sensible – virtually all bids above 3NT are conventional and it's up to the opponents to ask (preferably at the end of the auction unless they intend to possibly bid).

Pre-empt to the limit (and then keep quiet)

Board 5 from Friday 5th

Dealer: ♠ J3
North ♥ -
N-S vul ♦ K10752
♣ K87653

♠ AK864 N ♠ Q10952
♥ A W E ♥ Q862
♦ 984 S ♦ J6
♣ AQ92 ♣ J4
♠ 7
♥ KJ1097543
♦ AQ3
♣ 10

Table A

West	North	East	South (A)
-	pass	pass	2♥ (1)
dbl	pass	2♠	3♥ (2)
4♠	all pass		

Table B

West (H)	North	East	South (A)
-	pass	pass	4♥ (1)
dbl (3)	pass	pass	(4) pass

Table C

West (H)	North	East	South (A)
-	pass	pass	4♥ (1)
pass (3)	pass	pass	

Table A: So what did you open with Hand A in this week's quiz? This South chose a weak 2♥ – feeble is an understatement. And it's too late to try again at (2) – the opponents have found their fit.

Table B: This South got it right. Generally speaking with a 6 card suit it's a 2 level pre-empt. With 7 cards it's a 3-level pre-empt and with an 8 card (major) it's the 4 level. But what did you do with Hand H at (3) in this week's quiz? It's much too good to pass and either dbl or 4♠ are acceptable. With a 5 card ♠ suit I prefer 4♠.

With 4♥'s East chose to pass; reasonable, but I would bid 4♠.

Table C: This West chose a meek pass at (3). Clearly this is wrong as 4♠ makes comfortably opposite just a 6 count and 4♥ should go down.

And what happened? N-S were allowed to play in 4♥ at 4 of the 5 tables (doubled at just one table). It went down twice and made twice (when West did not signal for a ♣ on the 2nd round of ♥'s). 4♠ made exactly.

The bottom line: -

- Pre-empt to as high as you are prepared to go at your first turn and do not bid again.
- When the opponents pre-empt then you must assume that partner has his fair share of the outstanding points. Obviously West cannot make 4♠ on his own, but he should assume that partner has 6-7 points here.
- If you feel that 4♠ is pushing it, then double. A double of 4♥/♠ is generally played as values. Partner may bid with a shapely hand or else pass.

Worth a raise to 3♠?

Board 16 from Friday 5th, E-W vul.

North	South (F)
♠ AK975	♠ 843
♥ AQ52	♥ KJ
♦ 72	♦ QJ986
♣ 105	♣ K32

Neither of these contracts were successful, let's have a look: -

Table A

West	North	East	South
pass	1♠	pass	2♦ (1)
pass	2♥	pass	3♠
pass	4♠	all pass	

Table B

West	North	East	South
pass	1♠	pass	2NT (1)
pass	pass	pass	

So what did you bid with Hand F at (1) in this week's quiz? It's an interesting hand as there are a number of fairly reasonable options: -

- (a) 1NT. 6-poor 10 points. With 3 card support it is often best to support but with all the honours outside the suit 1NT is a good bid.
- (b) 2♠. 6-poor 10 points. This is an equally good bid.
- (c) 2NT. A good 10 to poor 12 points. This is not a good 10 and so I don't like the bid.
- (d) 3♠. A good 10 to poor 12 points. Again, the hand is not good enough. And this direct jump usually promises 4 card support.
- (e) 2♦ (with a view to bidding 3♠ next go, showing 3 card support and good 10 to 12 points). Again, I don't think that this hand is good enough.

And what happened? 4♠ was bid twice and went two down. 2NT was 1 down. Just 1 pair stopped in 2♠. And how should the hand be bid?

Either: - 1♠ - 2♠ - pass or 1♠ - 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - pass

The bottom lines: -

- Points in partner's suit are good. No points in partner's suit is bad.
- A 10 point hand is on the border (between 1♠/1NT or 2♠/2NT). With 10 points look at how good your hand is for partner (4 card support is good, honours in partners suit are good).
- You need a very good 10 to make the higher bid.

And this deal is an excellent illustration of my point about bad 10 counts. North has a good opener yet even 3♠ does not make. Why? Because the South hand is a very poor 10 in support of ♠'s.

An Acol Auction

West	North	East	South
pass	1♠	2♣	2♦ (1)
pass	2♥	pass	3♠ (2)
pass	4♠	all pass	

bid 2♠ at (2), thus showing 8-poor 10 with just 3 card ♠ support. Perfect.

This was the auction at one table where N-S play Acol. Here East overcalled but that is irrelevant. Playing Acol you can respond at the two level with as little as 8 points (as opposed to the good 10 required with Standard American). So playing Acol 2♦ at (1) is acceptable. But South should then

Worth an invitation?

Board 11 from Friday 5th, love all.

North (E) South

♠ Q2 ♠ AJ3
♥ J652 ♥ KQ4
♦ J10963 ♦ A54
♣ A4 ♣ K1098

Table A

West	North(me)	East	South
-	-	-	1NT
pass	2♣ (1)	pass	2♦ (2)
pass	2NT (3)	pass	3NT
all pass			

Table B

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1NT
pass	2♣ (1)	pass	2♦ (2)
pass	pass (3)	pass	

Table A: So what did you bid at (1) with this North Hand E in this week's quiz? Pass, or is it worth an invitation? 8 points is the norm for an invite (so 2♣; followed by 3♥ if partner responds 2♥ or by 2NT if partner responds 2♦/♠). But is this hand worth 8 points? 6 of the points in doubletons is bad, but a 5 card suit is good, as is an additional 4 card suit. The J109 in a 5 card suit are also good and that's enough for me to make a move. So 2♣.
2♦ at (2) denies a 4 card major. 2NT at (3) then invites 3NT and South has an easy bid to the good game.

Table B: This started off the same but at (3) this North decided to chicken out. It may sometimes work, but I prefer 2NT.

And what happened? 3NT either made or made+1, scoring far more than 2♦ making 10 tricks.

Bidding Quiz Answers

Hand A: 4♥. It's a decent 8 card suit and so too good for 3♥.

Hand B: (a) 1♣. It's not good enough for a 2NT opener.

(b) 2♦. A reverse. If you do not play this as forcing then I guess it's either 3♦ or 2NT.

(c) 3♥. You want to play in 3NT but I would like a little something in ♥'s in partner's hand. A direct 3NT is a reasonable alternative.

Hand C: Double (negative). Look for the 4-4 ♥ fit. If this hand did not have 4 ♥'s then 3♠ (asking partner for a ♠ stop) would be the bid. 5♦ (as chosen at one table) is a poor bid at pairs as either a 4-4 ♥ game or 3NT will score more.

Hand D: 3♥. 3NT is sure to be a good spot if partner has a ♥ stop. If partner denies a ♥ stop (say with 3♠) then you can bid 4♣, forcing, leaving open all the options of 4♠, 5♣ or 5♦.

Hand E: 2♣. It's close but I think it's just about worth an invitation. So bid Stayman and raise a 2♥ response to 3♥ and bid 2NT over a 2♦/♠ response.

Hand F: 1NT. 2♠ is an equally good alternative. The hand has poor support for partner's suit and is not worth 2NT or 3♠ or 2♦.

Hand G: 2♠. With a 5 card ♠ suit 2♠ is far better than double. To double and then bid ♠'s shows a stronger hand. If the ♠ suit were a minor then 2NT would be reasonable.

Hand H: 4♠. Dbl is OK but not so good in my view. Pass is too feeble for me.