

**Club News Sheet – No. 70**

27/2/2004



Last week's winners: Monday 23/2/04

Friday 27/2/04

1<sup>st</sup> Paul (Ire)/Joe 61%  
 2<sup>nd</sup> John/Phyllis 58%

1<sup>st</sup> Mike/Tomas 61%  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Clive/Terry 58%

There are a few Mikes around, but the one who won on Friday is the Canadian bachelor. 61% is a good score, especially for a relatively inexperienced player. Guess he has a good teacher?

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

Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A you open 1♦ and partner responds 1♠. (a) what is your rebid? Suppose that you chose a simple 2♣, then (b) what do you do when partner bids 2♦?
♠ KQ ♥ 83 ♦ AK754 ♣ KQ43	♠ KQ942 ♥ 10 ♦ K643 ♣ 1096	With hand B partner opens 1♠, what do you bid?
Hand C	Hand D	With Hand C partner opens 1NT. You try Stayman but partner responds 2♦, so what do you bid now?  With hand D RHO opens 1♠, what is your bid?
♠ J954 ♥ Q1076 ♦ AK86 ♣ 5	♠ AQ5 ♥ Q10874 ♦ J63 ♣ K7	
Hand E	Hand F	With Hand E you open 1♠ and partner raises to 4♠. What now?  With Hand F partner opens 1♥ and RHO overcalls 1♠, what is your bid?
♠ AJ875 ♥ AQJ82 ♦ A ♣ J5	♠ AK82 ♥ 43 ♦ A643 ♣ 1094	
Hand G	Hand H	With Hand G partner opens 1♦ and RHO overcalls a weak 3♥. You are vulnerable, they are not. What do you do?  With Hand H partner opens – you've guessed it – a weak 2♠. I guess that it's not really a surprise, but what do you bid?
♠ K3 ♥ A1065 ♦ K5 ♣ K10985	♠ - ♥ Q10864 ♦ AQ1085 ♣ KQ9	
Hand J	Hand K	With Hand J RHO opens 1♠. Nobody vulnerable, so what do you bid?  With Hand K you open 1♥, LHO overcalls 1♠ and this is passed round to you. You are playing negative doubles, what is your bid?
♠ - ♥ 864 ♦ 10862 ♣ A109843	♠ 7 ♥ QJ952 ♦ J109 ♣ AKQ3	

## The Beginner's Page

Last week we looked at our rebid when partner responds in a new suit. We continue the theme this week: -

Hand 7	Hand 8	Hand 7 is too weak for 1NT, so you open 1♦. But what is your rebid if partner responds 1♥? You have the correct point count for a 1NT rebid but that is wrong because it denies a 4 card major. Rebid 1♠.
♠ AQ74	♠ AQJ4	Hand 8 is too strong for 1NT. This time open 1♦ and rebid 2♠ over 1♥. It has the values for 2NT but that again denies 4♠'s.
♥ A54	♥ A54	
♦ J963	♦ AJ83	
♣ Q2	♣ K2	

What do you do if you don't have a good 2<sup>nd</sup> suit to bid and can't bid NT? You can rebid a 6 card suit: -

Hand 9	Hand 10	Here we open 1♥ and partner responds 1♠ in both cases. Rebidding a 6 card suit is fine, so with Hand 9 you bid 2♥. Hand 10 is stronger and 3♥ is the bid. This tells partner that you have a good hand with a good ♥ suit and invites him to bid game if he can.
♠ Q7	♠ K7	
♥ AQJ654	♥ AQJ654	
♦ J63	♦ J63	
♣ Q2	♣ A2	

And here are a couple of trickier hands: -

Hand 11	Hand 12	In both cases you open 1♣. But what do you rebid with Hand 11 when partner responds 1♦? A 2♦ bid is not unreasonable, but I prefer 1NT. Always support major suits, but NT usually scores more than minor suit contracts. With Hand 12 partner responds 1♠ to your 1♣ opening. With weak ♥'s it is better to support with 2♠ than bid 1NT. This bid usually shows 4 card support, but not always.
♠ QJ7	♠ AQ7	
♥ K6	♥ 64	
♦ QJ43	♦ QJ43	
♣ KJ42	♣ KJ42	

So. Don't be in a rush to support partner's minor suit if NT is a sensible option, but support a major suit even with just 3 cards if the shape dictates.

And what should opener do if partner's original response was a strong jump shift?

Here we have something different. Partner's jump has made the auction forcing to game, so there is no need for you to jump with a good hand. In fact, the reverse is often the case. Since a jump takes up bidding space, we often bid slowly with good hands and jump with bad ones. This is called fast arrival: -

Hand 13	Hand 14	With hand 13 we opened 1♦, with the intention of bidding 2♣ over partner's 1♥/♠/NT response. However, partner bids 2♥. This is game forcing and guarantees a good long ♥ suit. Now 3♣ here would not be unreasonable, but I prefer 4♥. You have adequate support for ♥'s but that's all. So don't encourage partner. With Hand 14 we again opened 1♦ and partner jumped to 2♥. This hand is much better in support of ♥'s. Bid 3♥, forcing, and showing decent support for partner.
♠ K7	♠ A7	
♥ Q6	♥ Q64	
♦ KJ543	♦ KJ643	
♣ QJ42	♣ A42	

**Void in partner's weak two!**Board 20 from Friday 27<sup>th</sup>, both vul.

North	South (H)	West	North (me)	East	South (Clive)
♠ KJ10964	♠ -				
♥ K53	♥ Q10864	pass	2♠	pass	pass (1)
♦ 72	♦ AQ1085	pass			
♣ 64	♣ KQ9				

There was a bad ♠ split (6-1) and so was this a disaster for N-S? It certainly was, but not in the way you may expect. Read on. First of all my opinion of the bidding.

The weak 2♠ opening is excellent (texture in the suit) and obvious (to most players), but what about South's pass at (1). What did you bid with Hand H in this week's bidding quiz? Pass is the only sensible bid. In our system 2NT would be Ogust (enquiring about opener's hand) and any other bid is forcing. It's a mis-fit, so South should bail out *now*. \_

So why was it a disaster for N-S? – That's just my warped sense of humour - it was a disaster for all of the *other* N-S pairs! And what happened? One down at this table, so 100 away, a clear top! Two other N-S pairs found an inelegant 3NT (minus 2 – luckily not doubled but still 200 away). Another pair got to 3♠ and went two off (I believe that that pair do not play weak twos and so North opened 3♠?). I would not open at the 3 level vulnerable, but then I like to play weak twos. One other pair did actually find the ♥ fit and played in 3♥, but that was not a roaring success as it was doubled and went for 800!

The bottom line. With a mis-fit, bail out ASAP, preferably before you get doubled! It is rarely correct to bid NT with a void in partner's suit.

**A tricky bid**Board 18 from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>, N-S vul.

West (A)	East	West	North	East	South
♠ KQ	♠ A10964	-	-	pass	pass
♥ 83	♥ Q2	1♦	pass	1♠	pass
♦ AK754	♦ 983	2♣ (1)	pass	2♦ (2)	pass
♣ KQ43	♣ 1085	4♦ (3)	pass	pass	pass

4♦ was minus 3 for a bottom, what went wrong?

Obviously the first two bids are correct, but what should West rebid at (1)? 3♣ perhaps? No! The hand is not good enough for a game forcing jump to 3♣. With a 3<sup>rd</sup> ♠ it would be close, but with no known fit 2♣ is quite adequate. 2♦ at (2) was simple preference and could be just two card support.

Now this 4♦ at (3) is the problem. Remember that partner has not supported ♦'s – he only gave preference. So what should West bid? Pass is a bit feeble but reasonable, 3♦ is probably also reasonable. But with two top ♠'s I would bid 2♠. This bid shows this shape exactly (or possibly 3154 or something similar) and a good hand. If partner has manky ♠'s he will convert to 3♦, fine. With this East hand he would simply pass 2♠.

And what happened? A mixed bag of results, but 2♠ was bid and made at one table and was the best spot.

## Systems on, Systems off?

Let's assume that you play Stayman and Transfers over partner's 1NT. That's all very simple, but what if the opponents interfere before you get a chance to bid? I prefer bids to be natural here, so Stayman and Transfers do not apply – systems off. A good scheme is to play Lebensohl (it's described in the 2003 yearbook).

And what system do you play if LHO opens 1 of a suit and partner overcalls 1NT? Most people play that Stayman and Transfers apply here – systems on.

### Systems on

Board 19 from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>, E-W vul.

Dealer:	♠ 952	West	North	East	South
South	♥ QJ74				
E-W vul	♦ 10873	-	-	-	1♣
	♣ A2	1NT (1)	pass	2♦ (2)	pass
		2♥	pass	4♥ (3)	pass
♠ KQ8	N	♠ J74	pass	dbl (4)	pass
♥ K10	W E	♥ A96532	pass		
♦ KJ62	S	♦ 54			
♣ K763		♣ Q5	(1) 15-18		
	♠ A1063				
	♥ 8				
	♦ AQ9				
	♣ J10984				

E-W went down just 1, but minus 200 is not a good score on a part-score deal. Anything wrong or just unlucky? Let's analyse the auction: -

- (2) This is the opposite situation to where your 1NT opening has been overcalled. When partner overcalls 1NT then I prefer to play 'systems on'. I.e. 2♣ is Stayman and 2♦/♥ are transfers.
- (3) This is an overbid. Partner has promised only 2♥'s. Even 3♥ here is a bit pushy (but just about OK).
- (4) So then, would you double with this hand? You have no guarantee of setting the opponents and a double may help declarer in the play of the hand. On the other hand, partner has opened and your ♣ A and four trumps will be awkward for declarer. On balance, I think that double is OK at pairs but I would pass at teams.

And what happened? The contract was one down and N-S scored the 'magic 200' – that's why it's a reasonable double at pairs. At pairs, the difference between 100 and 200 is usually the difference between a top and a poor score. At teams this difference is not so important and it's a disaster if they make (with an overtrick). 2♥ or 3♥ either made or went down at other tables; 4♥ down one undoubled would have only scored just above average for N-S.

### Editor's Note

There is more about intervention over 1NT (stolen bid, double of 2♣ as Stayman, double of 2♦ as a transfer) etc in news-sheet 110.

## Systems off

Board 7 from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>, both vul.

Dealer:	♠ Q8	West	North	East	South
South	♥ AQ943	-	-	-	1NT (1)
Both vul	♦ 8532	2♣ (2)	2♥ (3)	3♣ (4)	3♥ (5)
	♣ 74	4♣ (6)	pass	pass	pass
♠ K965	N	♠ J1032	(1) 12-14		
♥ J	W E	♥ 10652	(2) natural		
♦ QJ10	S	♦ 97			
♣ AQ952		♣ KJ8			
	♠ A74				
	♥ K87				
	♦ AK64				
	♣ 1063				

E-W went down 3, minus 300 is not a good score on a part-score deal. So who is to blame for E-W getting too high? Let's analyse the auction: -

- (3) After intervention it's simplest to play systems off (no Stayman or transfers). So 2♥ here is natural and just competitive (a 5 card suit).
- (4) Partner has only promised 5 ♣'s, but when one overcalls 1NT with a minor suit, then it is very often a 6 carder. With top ♣'s, 3♣ is quite reasonable with this hand, you don't want to sell out to 2♥.
- (5) Again, partner has only promised a 5 card suit and competing values; but with good support and top cards, 3♥ is fine.
- (6) So this is the problem! Obey The Law. The initial overcall promised 5 cards and the number of ♣'s in your hand has remained constant. To venture to the 4 level you need 10 trumps. Partner may well have supported with just 3 cards at his last turn. This hand must pass (especially vulnerable!).

And what happened? 4♣ cost 300. 3♥ made exactly at some tables and scored about average.

## 3♦ after Stayman?

Board 3 from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>, E-W vul.

West	East (C)	West	North	East	South
♠ AK7	♠ J954	1NT	pass	2♣	pass
♥ K8	♥ Q1076	2♦	pass	3♦ (1)	pass
♦ 10753	♦ AK86	4♦	pass	pass	pass
♣ AQ62	♣ 5				

4♦ is obviously a silly contract whether it makes or not. So what should East bid at (1)? First of all, there is no universally defined definition of what 3♦ here means, it has to be agreed with your partner. Playing it as natural (as here) is one alternative – but the bid really should be looking for slam and East needs a stronger hand. The best bid at (1) is 3NT.

The bottom line. I've said it before, if 3NT is a viable alternative it's usually better than five (or 4) of a minor.

**Trust Partner**Board 8 from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>, love all.

Dealer:	♠ K87642	West	North	East (D)	South
North	♥ AK2				
Love all	♦ AK74	-	1♠	dbl (1)	2♣ (2)
	♣ -	2♥ (3)	3♦ (4)	3♥ (5)	pass
		pass	dbl (6)	pass	4♣ (7)
		pass (8)	pass	pass	(9)
♠ J3	N	♠ AQ5			
♥ J963	W E	♥ Q10874			
♦ 852	S	♦ J63			
♣ A983		♣ K7			
	♠ 109				
	♥ 5				
	♦ Q109				
	♣ QJ106542				

E-W went down 4, converting a near top into a bottom (3♥ went minus two at another table, undoubled). There are a number of interesting points in the auction: -

- (1) I cannot see the point of doubling with this hand, overcall 2♥. If you double and partner responds in a minor you will miss a possible 5-3 ♥ fit. If you double and then bid 2♥ over partner's 2♣/♦ then that shows a much stronger hand.
- (2) Now I have discussed this bid before (news-sheet 58). The bid is non-forcing after a double and shows a decent long suit with about 6-9 points. This hand is pushing it slightly. But 2♣ is OK and pass is also quite reasonable, but I prefer 3♣ as long as you have agreed that it is a weak bid after a double.
- (3) If South had passed then West would have to bid 2♥ even with no points. Once South had bid then West does not have to, so a bid here is a 'free bid' and promises some values – about 6-9 points with 4 ♥'s. Fine.
- (4) North has a nice hand, but no fit for partner. Still, passing is a bit chicken and I think that 3♦ is fine (2♠ would also be OK).
- (5) West has promised 4 ♥'s (and values) and so The Law says that 3♥ is fine here.
- (6) A nice hand, so do you sell out with a pass, double, or bid 3♠? Partner has not promised much, but he has promised ♣'s. Defending 3♥ looks fine as you can draw 2 or 3 rounds of trumps when you get in. I think that dbl is worth a go, especially at pairs.
- (7) I don't like this. Partner has bid ♠'s. Partner has bid ♦'s. Partner has doubled ♥'s for penalties. He has no ♣'s!! Pass or 3♠ are the alternatives. I prefer pass, but then doubling opponents is my favourite pastime – teach 'em a lesson.
- (8&9) Excellent. Do not be greedy and double – they may retreat into 4♠ which makes!

And what happened? 3 down, so -150, but that's a bottom for N-S. At other tables N-S are collecting plus scores in 3♠. Jon/Jan managed to get themselves doubled in 4♠ and made an overtrick (the East hand should not double 4♠). 3♥ doubled goes one down.

The bottom lines. If you have overbid, do not compound the felony by removing partner's penalty double. Trust partner.

## A one-level penalty double?

Board 10 from Friday 27<sup>th</sup>, both vul.

Dealer:        ♠ AK82  
East            ♥ 43  
Both vul        ♦ A643  
                  ♣ 1094

♠ QJ653	N	♠ 1094
♥ AK7	W E	♥ 1086
♦ 8	S	♦ KQ752
♣ 8752		♣ J6
	♠ 7	
	♥ QJ952	
	♦ J109	
	♣ AKQ3	

### Table A:

West	North (F)	East	South
-	-	pass	1♥
1♠	2NT (1)	pass	3NT (2)
pass	pass	pass	

### Table B:

West	North (F) (me)	East	South (K) (Clive)
-	-	pass	1♥
1♠	pass (3)	pass	dbl (4)
pass	pass	pass	

So what do you think of the bidding? An obvious 1♥ opening and an equally obvious 1♠ overcall. The bidding was then as table A at 4 tables, with just Clive/me diverging: -

Table A: So what do you do at (1). 11 points and two solid stoppers in their suit, so 2NT is 'obvious'? I disagree. Evaluating your hand is not just a matter of adding up 4 for an ace etc. This hand started off as a good 11 count. Partner's 1♥ opening has not improved it but with no interference the hand would still be worth 11 points, so 2NT (but you would obviously bid the ♠ suit first). So bid 1♠ and then 2NT over partner's 2♣ rebid. But things are different once West has overcalled in ♠'s. Your best suit (♠'s) is not a possible source of tricks anymore and the hand is no longer worth 11 points. So after the 1♠ overcall 1NT is the bid. After North's 2NT overbid South's 3NT is very reasonable.

Table B: Now N-S play negative doubles and North has to make a decision at (3). If I chose to bid NT, I would settle for 1NT. But there is an alternative; when you have a mis-fit for partner then it is often best to defend, so I chose a 'penalty' pass (I expected to make 3 ♠ tricks, whereas I only expect two in a NT contract). Normally it is desirable to have 5 trumps, but with these quick tricks I think that defending is probably the best bet – there is no guarantee that 3NT will make your way and setting them just 1 (200) will likely be a good score. Playing negative doubles the opener should re-open with a double at (4) about 95% of the time – if it is at all feasible that partner has a penalty hand. South obliged and 1♠ doubled was the final contract.

And what happened? E-W went down just 1, so 200 to N-S. And at other tables? This +200 was the only entry in the N-S column! 3NT by N-S went one or two down at *every* table. So it looks like 24 points does not always make 3NT, eh?? Or else the North hand is not worth 11 points?? Either way, it's time to pass the cucumber sandwiches.

The bottom lines. Hand evaluation is a process that continues throughout the bidding. Upgrade/downgrade your hand accordingly. For example, if North's ♠ holding was ♠AQ109 then this would be an enormous upgrade after the overcall. ♠AKxx needs downgrading. If you could not stomach my 'penalty' pass then bid 1NT, not 2NT, with this North hand. This is probably a much safer way to get a good score on the board

## Pre-empt Just Once

Board 15 from Friday 27<sup>th</sup>, N-S vul.

Dealer:	♠ K3	West	North (G)	East	South
South	♥ A1065				
N-S vul	♦ K5	-	-	-	1♦
	♣ K10985	3♥ (1)	3NT (2)	pass	pass
		4♥ (3)	dbl (4)	pass	pass
		pass			
♠ 764	N	♠ J1082			
♥ QJ97432	W E	♥ -			
♦ A6	S	♦ 10974			
♣ Q		♣ AJ763			
	♠ AQ95				
	♥ K8				
	♦ QJ832				
	♣ 42				

So what about this bidding? The 1♦ opening is obvious. And the weak 3♥ overcall? It's not that pretty a suit (lots of holes) but non-vulnerable it is the obvious bid. So what does North do at (2)? To me it's clear, 3NT (with double – for penalties – a poor 2<sup>nd</sup> choice). So 3NT goes round to West; 4♥ here is a terrible bid. I believe his thinking went along the lines 'they are vulnerable, we are not, they will get 600, 3 down only loses 500'. This is muddled thinking. You should pre-empt (to the max) just one time. You have deprived N-S of bidding space with 3♥ and 3NT may well not be the best contract for them. That is what pre-empting is all about – it is not about conceding 800 penalties. This West hand is not worth 4♥; but if it was, then bid 4♥ first go. Here, North has advertised a good hand with good ♥'s, N-S have had time to exchange information and they will get the decision (double or 4NT) right if you bid again.

And what happened? West got exactly what he deserved – minus 800 and a clear bottom. And the other tables? Well, that baffles me slightly; one N-S pair correctly landed in 3NT but two pairs allowed West to play in 3♥ (undoubled) and the other in 3♥ doubled. 3NT at (2) looks obvious to me (I would double if the vulnerability was the other way round). Passing 3♥ is simply, well, .....? Words fail me.

The bottom lines. Pre-empt just once (to the limit). Having pre-empted, *never* bid again unless partner invites. At unfavourable vulnerability, (initially) look for game your way rather than a penalty.

## Tea and Cucumber Sandwiches

One of our members took me to task over my comments that Hand D last week (♠K32 ♥J63 ♦972 ♣AK53) was not worth 11 points and should pass a weak 1NT opening by partner. His opinion was that any full-blooded Englishman should bid 2NT over a weak NT and that 3NT usually makes with a flat combined 24 points in England (he bid 1NT – 2NT – 3NT and went down). If you are 'unlucky' enough to go down then that's tough, you have done your duty to Queen and country. And you can discuss your misfortune whilst consuming the tea and cucumber sandwiches afterwards.

John G and myself do not partake of cucumber sandwiches, nor do we bid 3NT with two flat hands totalling 24 points. And is the defensive play in the UK really that poor?

Just to set the record straight, the 2NT response to a 1 level opener (or a weak 1NT) is 11-12 points. I will always bid 2NT if the hand *is* worth 11 points (after evaluation). Hand D last week (and hand F on the next page) *are not* worth 11 points.



## The 5-3 Major Suit Fit

Board 11 from Friday 27<sup>th</sup>, love all.

I am continually saying that one should search for the 4-4 major suit fit. There are always exceptions, but 4♥/♠ usually plays better than 3NT. But what about the 5-3 fit? Now 4♥/♠ is often the best contract, but nowhere near as often as with a 4-4 fit. Why? With the 4-4 fit you have flexibility and may get the extra trick with a ruff in either hand. The 5-3 fit is not flexible, and you will only get the extra trick if you get a ruff with the short trump hand. So, if you have unbid suits *well* covered 3NT may be best, as it is on this deal from Friday: -

Dealer:	♠ A7	West (J)	North (G)	East	South
South	♥ Q97		(me)		(Clive)
Love all	♦ J743				
	♣ QJ52	-	-	-	1♠
		pass (1)	1NT	pass	3♥
♠ -	N	pass	3NT	pass	pass (2)
♥ 864	W E	pass			
♦ 10862	S				
♣ A109843					
	♠ Q96543				
	♥ J10				
	♦ A95				
	♣ 76				
	♠ KJ1082	(1) Non-vulnerable, a weak 3♣ is a good alternative here. With a decent 6 card suit (good intermediates) it is better than a 2NT distorted (unusual – the UNT).			
	♥ AK532				
	♦ KQ				
	♣ K				

- (2) South has shown 5 ♠'s and 4+ ♥'s. Many players would bid 4♥ here – hoping for a 5-3 ♥ fit or otherwise to play in ♠'s. Partner, however, knows that you have at least 9 cards in the majors and has opted for 3NT. With points to spare and excellent high cards in the minors and poor ♥ intermediates, passing 3NT is an excellent choice here. This is an example of when the 5-3 fit should be ignored. If North had ♥xxx instead of ♥Qxx then there would be an unnecessary ♥ loser in addition to the two aces if playing in ♥'s.

And what happened? 3NT made 11 tricks and would normally be an excellent score. Certainly better than 5♥ which also made 11 tricks. There were, however, a few odd results. Two(!) pairs reached 4♠, silly. Both were doubled (dangerous when 4NT or 5♥ makes), one made and one went down. I would most certainly not double 4♠ if they have two(!) spots to run to (let it be). So why did the excellent 3NT only get an average? It was beaten by 4♠\* making, but also by a somewhat illegible scribble on the score sheet where it appears that E-W conceded -1100 in 5♦ doubled. Is that really true, Bob/Michael? How on earth can East end up playing in ♦'s? Even if West bid an UNT 5♦ is far too high. Maybe West bid 2NT and then bid his ♣ suit later? – that is pre-empting twice and asking for a bottom. I would not mind, but it (and the silly 4♠\*) robbed me/Clive of a well bid top!

The bottom lines: -

- A 5-3 major suit fit is usually best, but prefer 3NT if you have oodles of points and all unbid suits well stopped.
- Pre-empt only once (UNT is a pre-empt).
- If you pre-empt with UNT or Michaels and then bid again, many players (including me) would take that as a very strong hand.
- UNT (and Michaels cue bids) are probably the most abused conventions out there; they should promise 5-5 in the specified suits; not 5-4, not 6-4 etc. They are generally weak bids, but if you bid again then most experienced players play that they were actually very strong.
- And note that by very strong, I mean just that – not just a 5-5 14 count.

**Raising Partner's Major directly to 4 is weak**

Board 14 from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>, love all.

North (B)	South (E)	West	North	East	South
♠ KQ942	♠ AJ875	-	-	pass	1♠
♥ 10	♥ AQJ82	pass	4♠ (1)	pass	4NT (2)
♦ K643	♦ A	pass	5♣	pass	6♠
♣ 1096	♣ J5	pass	pass	pass	

No less than three of our *leading* pairs got too high (6♠) on this hand on Monday. Who's fault? Basically, what is North's 4♠ bid at (1)? In beginner's books you will read that it shows game going values with 4 + card support for partner's major. More advanced players do not bid like this, 4♠ is pre-emptive; showing 5 card support and a weak hand. With a stronger hand, bid another suit (2♦ in this case) and subsequently jump to 4♠ (unless you play more sophisticated methods such as Jacoby 2NT and/or Swiss or splinters).

South has a nice hand, but should most certainly pass 4♠. Even if you do try Blackwood at (2) South should then give up in 5♠ and hope that that contract is not defeated. This North hand is pretty much max for it's 4♠ bid.

The bottom line. A direct jump to 4♥/♠ after partner opens one in the suit is weak. It shows 5 card support but is *most certainly not* a slam invitation.

## Bidding Quiz Answers

- Hand A: (a) 2♣. The hand is not good enough for a game forcing 3♣.  
(b) 2♠. Pass or 3♦ are reasonable, but the best bid is 2♠.
- Hand B: 4♠. This is best played as a weakish bid with 5 trumps. This particular hand is about max for the bid – it could be considerably weaker.
- Hand C: 3NT. Occasionally the opponents will run a number of ♣ tricks, but usually 3NT will make. You do not have the values for a ♦ game. Looking for a Moysian (4-3) fit in a major is incorrect as if you have to take ♣ ruffs, it's with the long trumps.
- Hand D: 2♥. I went over this last week (remember 'bad bidding from books'?). When you have a five card major, then bid it! Contrary to some people's belief, a double is not necessarily a stronger bid than an overcall. And an overcall at the two level should have about the values of an opening bid or better (say 11-17 pts).
- Hand E: Pass. Partner has a weak hand with 5 ♠'s. Slam is very unlikely and if you make an attempt then even 5♠ will go down opposite a minimum hand. This hand is *nowhere near* good enough to look for slam after a weak 4♠ response.
- Hand F: 1NT. The hand started off as a good 11 points. Partner bidding ♥'s is a slight minus, but it's still worth 11 points. RHO's 1♠ overcall, however, means that you only have two ♠ tricks. So downgrade and bid just 1NT. Another reasonable but pushy alternative is a penalty double (or a penalty pass if you play negative doubles).
- Hand G: 3NT. Double is reasonable, but not the best bid at this vulnerability. Pass is pathetic.
- Hand H: Pass. A mis-fit. You have nowhere near the values for game and any bid that you make other than pass could well lead to disaster. Under *no* circumstances bid NT in a situation like this. It's a mis-fit, so bail out at the *earliest* opportunity (now). Who knows, you may even get lucky if the opponents compete.
- Hand J: 3♣, if you play weak jump overcalls. Failing that 2♣ is acceptable to some partnerships but I would require a better hand for a 2 level overcall. Pass is a very sensible alternative. But how about the dreaded UNT (showing a weak hand with both minors)? I don't like it; these ♦'s can hardly be called a suit. No. Either a weak 3♣ or pass.
- Hand K: Double. When you play negative doubles it is virtually always correct to re-open with a double in case partner has a penalty hand.