

		<u>Winner</u>		<u>Runner-up</u>	
Mon 12 <sup>th</sup>	N-S 1 <sup>st</sup>	Neil/Barry	63%	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Paul Kelly/Alan 62%
	E-W 1 <sup>st</sup>	Jan/Philip	59%	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Gerard/Derek 56%
Wed 14 <sup>th</sup>	N-S 1 <sup>st</sup>	Chuck/Terry	66%	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Paul Kelly/Hans 54%
	E-W 1 <sup>st</sup>	Bob P/Jan	59%	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Gerard/Derek 57%
Fri 16 <sup>th</sup>	N-S 1 <sup>st</sup>	Paul Kelly/Chuck	67%	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Mike(Can)/Bill 52%
	E-W 1 <sup>st</sup>	Dave/Hans	61%	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Angela/Mike P 60%

The Gold Cup is pretty much decided now, current standings are: -

**1<sup>st</sup> Chuck** 1911.2%    **2<sup>nd</sup> Dave** 1892.2%    **3<sup>rd</sup> Bob** 1859.7%    4<sup>th</sup> Clive 1799.3%

in the Silver Plate competition (best 10) we have    1<sup>st</sup> **Clive**    2<sup>nd</sup> Gerald/Derek  
and in the Bronze Medal competition (best 5) we have    1<sup>st</sup> **Gerald/Derek**    2<sup>nd</sup> Paul K

**Bidding Quiz**

**Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated**

Hand A      Hand B      What do you open with Hand A?

♠ AKQ43    ♠ A9  
♥ 7          ♥ QJ10972    With Hand B partner opens 1♣. (a) what do you bid?  
♦ KJ54      ♦ K765        Suppose you bid 1♥ and partner jumps to 3♣,  
♣ AKQ      ♣ K            (b) what now?, and (c) would 3♥ now be forcing?

Hand C      Hand D      With Hand C partner opens 1♦, what do you bid?

♠ K6          ♠ AK4  
♥ AK8        ♥ K1063      With Hand D partner opens 1♣, what do you bid?  
♦ 1083        ♦ 10985  
♣ J9643      ♣ AK

Hand E      Hand F      What do you open with Hand E?

♠ AKQ        ♠ KJ94  
♥ J76        ♥ J53        With hand F partner opens 1♦ and RHO overcalls a  
♦ AK95      ♦ A9543     weak 2♥. What do you bid?  
♣ K54        ♣ 9

Hand G      Hand H      With Hand G partner opens 1♠, what do you bid?

♠ KQ965    ♣ J6  
♥ J          ♥ J109832    Hand H – a tricky one to finish with. LHO opens 1♦, partner  
♦ KQ        ♦ 106        overalls 1nT and RHO bids 2♠. What do you do?  
♠ K9853    ♣ 942

## Suitable for Jacoby 2NT? – part 1

Board 11 from Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

Dealer: ♠ KQ965  
South ♥ J  
Both vul ♦ KQ  
♣ K9853

♠ J8 N ♠ 3  
♥ K8654 W E ♥ 10973  
♦ 1075 S ♦ J982  
♣ J72 ♣ AQ64

♠ A10742  
♥ AQ2  
♦ A643  
♣ 10

### Table A

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

### Table B

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♠
pass	3♥ (1)	pass	4♥ (6)
pass	4♠ (7)	pass	pass (8)

- Table A: (1) This deal generated a lot of discussion on Friday. What did you bid with this North hand G in this week's quiz? NT here was Jacoby 2NT, promising 4 card ♠ support and at least values for game. I don't like the bid here as Jacoby is generally a balanced hand with no shortage - as with shortage you would splinter. So what should North bid? I would bid 2♣, especially if playing 2/1 as the subsequent auction is then easy. If not playing 2/1 and it goes 1♠ - 2♣ - 2♦ then North would then presumably bid 2♥, 4<sup>th</sup> suit, to get a game-going auction. There are other good alternatives; a simple 4NT (RKCB) is sensible as all North really wants to know is how many aces South has. The problem with this (and the subsequent 4NT later bid by this North) is that you get too high if partner turns out to have just one ace! Is there a real solution? Yes – see Bidding Quiz answers at the end.
- (2) I have covered Jacoby 2NT in lessons. It's on the web and there is a leaflet on in the conventions folder. 3♦ here should show ♦ shortage.
- (3) As I said above, there is little point in bidding Jacoby 2NT – especially if partner does not know it. This North then simply launched into RKCB regardless.
- (4) 3 key cards playing 1430.
- (5) Quite why East doubled is a mystery. Perhaps South's 'psychic?' 3♦ bid leaned him towards thinking that he may score the ♣AQ?
- Table B: (1) This West chose to splinter. Now some players (especially 2/1 players) do play 3♥ as a splinter here but that is not standard. Standard is that 3♥ is a strong jump shift, showing a good hand with good ♥'s.
- (6) And that's what South assumed and correctly bid 4♥
- (7) Meant as natural and to play.
- (8) South passed here, but later asked be about the ethics in this situation. When North bid 4♠ South then thought that North had made a mistake with his splinters and wondered if he could ethically bid on?

My answer (others may disagree?): - In a genuine established partnership where 3♥ is definitely strong then 4♠ at (7) would be a cue bid looking for a ♥ slam and South is obliged to bid. In a casual partnership I think it's very reasonable for South to assume that North has made the wrong bid and indeed had ♥ shortage. There is nothing unethical about bidding on here and I would bid 5♦ (a cue bid) which actually is the same bid I would make if 3♥ was natural.

## Suitable for Jacoby 2NT? – part 2

Board 1 from Monday 12<sup>th</sup>

Dealer: ♠ AK752  
North ♥ QJ73  
Love all ♦ 84  
♣ A7

West	North	East	South
-	1♠	pass	2NT (1)
pass	4♠ (2)	pass	4NT (3)
etc to 6♠			

♠ Q86	N	♠ -
♥ 1082	W E	♥ K985
♦ K75	S	♦ 1032
♣ K1064		♣ Q98532
	♠ J10943	
	♥ A4	
	♦ AQJ96	
	♣ J	

- (1) Now this pair were playing 2/1 and the Jacoby 2NT convention. South chose a Jacoby 2NT but that would not be my choice. The Jacoby 2NT promises 4 card support and at least game going values, but it is in principle a balanced hand. With a singleton one usually prefers to splinter. Having said that, some may prefer not to splinter as it takes up a lot of room and may prefer to show this great ♦ suit. Playing 2/1 it's easy, bid 2♦.
- (2) And I don't like this response to the Jacoby 2NT either. Playing Jacoby 2NT the jump to 4♠ shows a weak opener and this hand is too good.
- (3) Fortunately South had a hand good enough to press on anyway.

And what happened? Nearly everybody bid the slam, making 12 tricks.

And how should the hand be bid? Playing 2/1 I would recommend:

1♠ - 2♦(game forcing) - 2♥ - 2♠ - 3♣ (cue) - 3♦ (cue) - 3♠ - 4NT etc. to 6♠.

Now the play is also fairly interesting. Obviously declarer easily picks up the ♠'s and then takes a losing ♦ finesse. But I did see one declarer then take the ♥ finesse. This is poor technique and the contract fails if the ♥K was offside. You should combine your chances and try for the 3-3 ♦ split (or the ♦10 falling) and then 3 losing ♥'s can be thrown on three good ♦'s. If the ♦'s did not behave you can always fall back on the ♥ finesse.

The bottom lines (for the previous two articles): -

- Jacoby 2NT should have 4(+) card support and be balanced. With a shortage one normally prefers a splinter and with a two-suiter it may be better to bid the other suit, especially if you play 2/1.
- Some players put an upper limit on the point range for Jacoby, but then you really have to play something like Swiss which I will get round to at a much later date.

## Play Strong Jump Shifts!

Dealer: ♠ A9  
South ♥ QJ10972  
E-W vul ♦ K765  
♣ K

♠ KQ5	N	♠ 87642
♥ 653	W E	♥ 4
♦ 103	S	♦ AJ9842
♣ J7642		♣ 5
	♠ J103	
	♥ AK8	
	♦ Q	
	♣ AQ10983	

Board 3 from Monday 12<sup>th</sup>

### Table A

West	North(B)	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
pass	1♥ (1)	pass	3♣ (2)
pass	3NT (3)	all pass	

### Table B

West	North(B)	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
pass	1♥ (1)	pass	3♣ (2)
pass	3♥ (3)	pass	4♥ (4)
pass	pass (5)		

### 'Expert Table'

West	North(B)	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
pass	2♥ (1)	pass	3♥
pass	3♠ (6)	pass	4♣ (6)
pass	etc (7) to 6♥		

Table A: (1) What did you bid with this North hand B(a) in this week's quiz? It seems to be a recurring theme recently. I would bid 2♥ - strong with a good suit. As I have frequently said, I think that this is the best use of the jump shift as you may otherwise have problems telling partner how good your hand is. And this deal is just another example where nobody let partner know how good their hand was. Anyway, as far as I know, everybody in the club bid just 1♥.

(2) This looks spot on to me.

(3) Now what did you bid with this North hand B(b) in this week's quiz. Obviously you have game forcing values (and more!) but is 3♥ forcing? I assume that this North was not sure and so bid 3NT.

Table B: (3) So is 3♥ here forcing?

Yes! I've been all through this before (news-sheets 51 & 66). The best bid now is 3♥. 3♦ is also forcing but I much prefer to rebid this great ♥ suit.

(4) With no reason to expect a monster opposite, South obviously bids 4♥.

(5) And it's really too late for North to press on.

'Expert' (1) Our experts like an easy life and play strong jump shifts.

Table: (6) cue bids.

(7) and N-S have various routes to the excellent 6♥ slam.

And what happened? 3NT made +2 but scored badly. Everybody else bid 4♥.

The bottom lines: -

- Play strong jump shifts! Nobody found the easy slam, and I believe it was because North simply did not show what a great hand he had! After South has shown a good hand it's then difficult for North having not jump shifted immediately. The fact that **nobody** even had a sniff at slam bears this out!
- The strong jump shift really makes life easier.

**Strong or weak? – play Lebensohl**

Board 31 from Monday 12<sup>th</sup>

Dealer: ♠ Q98  
South ♥ A75  
N-S vul ♦ AK853  
♣ KQ

♠ A73                    N                    ♠ K10542  
♥ K4                    W E                    ♥ Q6  
♦ J742                    S                    ♦ Q9  
♣ A865                    ♣ J1073  
  
♠ J6  
♥ J109832  
♦ 106  
♣ 942

Table A

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

Table B

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

‘Expert Table’

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

Table A: (1) This pair play a weak NT, so 12-14 .

(2) weak, to play.

(3) South’s bid is weak (about 0-5 pts) and North should pass.

Table B: (4) 15-18

(5) weak, to play.

(6) with no agreement, South cannot bid as 3♥ would presumably be forcing

‘Expert’ Table (6) But our experts do have a conventional bid here – Lebensohl. South wants to play in 3♥ and does not want to hear a raise from partner. So he bids 2NT – Lebensohl, which demands that partner bid 3♣. South then bids 3♥, to play. With a strong hand, South would have bid a direct 3♥, forcing.

And what happened? 4♥ doubled went one down for a poor score, 3♥ making would have got a good score. 2♠ by East was a good score for him.

The bottom lines: -

- When partner doubles 1NT, then pass with 6 or more points, with less bid your best suit.
- When you double RHO’s 1NT opening and partner bids – he has nothing! (5 or less points).
- Play Lebensohl

## A 2♣ opener?

Board 17 from Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>

Now just last week I mentioned a hand ♠86 ♥AKQ1073 ♦A ♣K1062 and said that it was about 8½ playing tricks; I was asked how I arrived at this figure. Now I have actually written a few pages on playing tricks and it's on the web. With this hand there are the obvious 7 red playing tricks; the ♣K is ½ a playing trick and a 4 card suit is worth one additional playing trick – so it's 8½. Now the reason I'm mentioning this is that a hand came up on Wednesday that I evaluated as 9½ playing tricks and thus opened 2♣ (our strongest bid). But as nobody else bid slam I am wondering if nobody else thought this North hand A worth a 2♣ opener (or 2♦ playing Benjamin twos)?

Dealer:	♠ AKQ43	West	North(A)	East	South
North	♥ 7		(me)		(Chuck)
Love all	♦ KJ54	-	2♣ (1)	pass	2♦ (2)
	♣ AKQ	pass	2♠	pass	3♠ (3)
		pass	4♣ (4)	pass	4♥ (4)
		pass	6♠ (5)	all pass	
♠ 102	N	♠ 965			
♥ Q32	W E	♥ KJ10865			
♦ A98	S	♦ 103			
♣ 87653		♣ 109			
	♠ J87				
	♥ A94				
	♦ Q762				
	♣ J42				

- (1) What did you open with this North hand A in this week's quiz? I make it 9½ playing tricks (5 in ♠'s, 3 in ♥'s, ½ for the ♦K and one for the 4 card ♦ suit). The 'modern' 'norm' for opening 2♣ in Standard American (or 2/1) is one trick short of game in your hand. Now I personally do actually like to have some sort of minimum point range (say about 17+ points – for example I will not open 2♣ with 9 playing tricks but only 14 points). Anyway, this North hand easily qualifies for 2♣ in the modern style.
- (2) We play this as a 'waiting' positive (2♥ is the negative in our system).
- (3) Slow arrival, so decent ♠ support.
- (4) Cue bids
- (5) North knows that just the ♦A is missing so there is no need for any further messing about.

And what happened? Just this one table out of six bid 6♠, the rest were in 4♠ making +2.

The bottom lines: -

- If you do not play Benjamin twos, then play 2♦ waiting and 2♥ negative over 2♣, it really is the best scheme for non Benjaminites. It's written up on the web.
- And 9½ playing tricks is a clear 2♣ opener in Standard American these days.
- Playing Benjamin this hand is perhaps borderline between a 2♣ or 2♦ opener. I would not argue with either but you will probably miss slam if you start 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♠ playing Benjamin and I would prefer a 6 card suit for 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♠. So I would open a Benji 2♦.

**If a NT bid describes your hand – then bid NT!**Board 17 from Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>

Dealer: ♠ A75  
 North ♥ J9  
 Love all ♦ AQJ54  
 ♣ AK10

♠ Q982 N ♠ J1043  
 ♥ Q65 W E ♥ 107432  
 ♦ K92 S ♦ 76  
 ♣ Q72 ♣ 85  
 ♠ K6  
 ♥ AK8  
 ♦ 1083  
 ♣ J9643

Table A

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

Table B

West	North	East	South(C)
-	1♦	pass	2NT (1)
pass	4NT (4)	pass	6NT (5)
all pass			

Table A: (1) What did you bid with this South hand C in this week's quiz? I do not like 2♣ with 11 point hands like this – basically because you are fixed over 2NT (12-14) from partner (and also over 3NT).

(2) Now there has been a 'debate' in an earlier news-sheet about what 3NT here shows. I am a firm believer that NT bids should have a fixed point range and think that it's 18-19. Chuck correctly stated that *some* experts play it as weaker. I don't see the point and think that 3NT here is correct.

(3) And whatever 3NT meant, South really has no option but pass.

Table B: (1) Now Chuck and I were actually S-N at this table; and Chuck correctly bid 2NT – not necessarily because he is a better declarer than me, but because it is the best bid. It shows +- 11 points and no 4 card major and is a far better bid than 2♣.

(4) Invitational. 4NT after a natural 2NT (or 1NT or 3NT) from partner is simply inviting slam and is passable. I think that this North hand is worth an invite because of the good 5 card suit.

(5) South has shown his hand pretty exactly and with a 5 card suit, good top cards and good intermediates he correctly accepted.

And what happened? 3 tables bid 6NT, 3 tables stopped in 3NT. 3 tables made 12 tricks and 3 tables made 13 tricks. I can see no other reasonable line than taking both minor suit finesses (after the first one works) and 13 tricks are easy.

The bottom lines: -

- 5 card suits are a + factor. Both N and S upgraded and found the good slam.
- With a balanced 11 points (and no 4 card major) respond 2NT to partner's 1 level opening rather than 2♣.
- Only respond with a suit at the two level if you know what to do with a 2NT rebid.
- 4NT over 3NT or 2NT or 1NT is quantitative.

## A poor 2NT opener?

Board 26 from Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

I overheard this comment as one North unravelled the score traveller and observed that another North competitor had achieved a +ve score on this board – ‘*How can anybody open 1♦ with this hand? – everybody should open 2NT and accept his defeat like a man*’.

Dealer: ♠ AKQ  
East ♥ J76  
Both vul ♦ AK95  
♣ K54

### Table A

West	North(E)	East	South
-	-	pass	pass
pass	2NT (1)	all pass	

♠ 875	N	♠ 10964
♥ K1052	W E	♥ AQ98
♦ Q64	S	♦ J87
♣ A62		♣ Q10
	♠ J32	
	♥ 43	
	♦ 1032	
	♣ J9873	

### Table B

West	North	East	South(C)
-	-	pass	pass
pass	1♦ (1)	all pass	

Table A: (1) What did you open with this North hand E in this week’s quiz? It really is very simple, especially if you heed my continual advice in the news sheets. This hand is 20 points, but knock off a point for the totally flat 3343 shape – so it’s really 19; and bearing in mind that AKQ triplet is a very poor holding the hand is nowhere near a 2NT opener. If 2NT (or more) is going to make then partner must have enough points to respond, if 1♦ is passed out then that will score better than 2NT going down. This poor 2NT opening was chosen at most tables.

Table B: (1) I believe that only one North (whoever was North from Jim/Tom) found this excellent 1♦ opening.

And what happened? 2NT was -1 at most tables and scored a joint bottom. 1♦ made exactly and scored a near top.

The bottom lines: -

- Same as ever, knock off a point for the totally flat 4333 type shape.
- AKQ bare is a very poor 9 points – degrade it unless partner has bid the suit.
- Quite simply, this North hand is nowhere near worth a 2NT opener!



There were three examples from Friday where a 4-4 ♥ fit was ignored – with varying success: -

**Ignoring the 4-4 ♥ fit - part 1**

Board 20 from Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

Dealer: ♠ 842  
 West ♥ J753  
 Both vul ♦ 852  
 ♣ 654

♠ 10	N	♠ AJ6
♥ KQ64	W E	♥ A1092
♦ AKQ976	S	♦ J
♣ KQ		♣ AJ982
	♠ KQ9753	
	♥ 8	
	♦ 1043	
	♣ 1073	

Table A

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

Table B

West	North	East	South(C)
1♦ (5)	pass	1♥	pass
3♣ (6)	pass	3♠ (7)	pass
4♥ (8)	pass	pass (9)	pass

Table A: (1) Presumably waiting.

(2) Not waiting any more, RKCB for ♦'s.

(3) 2 keycards (♦A,K) plus the ♦Q.

(4) Looks like my ♦J is a great card.

Table B: (5) I agree with table A that it's a 2♣ opener.

(6) West decided to show strength by inventing a suit.

(7) Since the auction is game forcing I see little point in 4<sup>th</sup> suit here as East has the ♠'s stopped.

(8) Showing his ♥ support eventually.

(9) Obviously East should be looking for a small slam, but the grand is probably not biddable after West's failure to open 2♣.

And what happened? With 16 top tricks most players claimed a modest 13 fairly quickly after they had demonstrated their ability to not get blocked. One player did indeed try to go down but with both minor suits splitting that was impossible even having blocked himself.

The bottom lines: -

- You can ignore 4-4 fits if you have all the available tricks without a ruff.
- Note the nice bidding at table A – RKCB really worked a treat here.

## Ignoring the 4-4 ♥ fit - part 2

Board 17 from Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

Dealer: ♠ AK106  
 North ♥ 82  
 Love all ♦ 9874  
 ♣ 1063

♠ J82	N	♠ Q5
♥ A543	W E	♥ K976
♦ KJ1066	S	♦ AQ532
♣ K3		♣ A4

♠ 9743  
 ♥ QJ10  
 ♦ -  
 ♣ QJ9872

### Table A

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

### Table B

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

Table A: (1) I have no problem with 1NT here, both doubletons being good enough.

(2) ‘Obviously’ West should try Stayman before bidding game

Table B: (1) But I also think that a 1♦ opening is fine.

(6) West decided to show strength by inventing a suit.

(7) and 4♥ is reached whether East bids 2♥ or overbids with 3♥ here.

South at Table A elected to lead the ♥Q and when dummy came down North exclaimed ‘*fixed again*’. And so he would have been had declarer been on the ball: -

This declarer simply took his 9 top tricks and gave up – stating that he was ‘*afraid of the ♠’s*’. How would you play in 3NT as declarer in the East seat after the ♥Q lead?

You can mess about taking a few top tricks first if you wish, but before you relinquish control of the ♣ suit you should lead another ♥ - a 3-2 break in that suit will give you a 10<sup>th</sup> trick and a top board. You should lead a low ♥ and duck it (or not – it does not really matter – you could equally well have ducked the opening lead). If both follow to this 2<sup>nd</sup> round of ♥’s then you have two top ♥’s left and are assured of 10 tricks for a good score – note that the ♠’s are not a problem as the opponents can cash only two tricks in the suit – Qx opposite Jxx is a guaranteed stop on any distribution.

And what happened? Everybody else was in 4♥, usually making exactly. This E-W had ‘fortunately’ landed in a lucky 3NT which happened to be cold for 10 tricks on any lead but declarer failed to take advantage of it.

- It’s virtually always best to bid Stayman with a 4 card major.
- Qx opposite Jxx is always a stop.

### Ignoring the 4-4 ♥ fit - part 3

Board 23 from Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

Dealer:	♠ 7	
South	♥ A72	
Both vul	♦ QJ764	
	♣ 7632	
♠ Q109	N	♠ AK4
♥ J854	W E	♥ K1063
♦ AK2	S	♦ 10985
♣ Q85		♣ AK
	♠ J86532	
	♥ Q9	
	♦ 3	
	♣ J1094	

#### Table A

West	North	East(D)	South
-	-	-	pass
1♣ (1)	pass	1♦ (2)	pass
1♥	pass	1♠ (3)	pass
1NT	pass	4NT (4)	pass
pass (2)	pass		

#### Table B

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	pass
pass (1)	pass	1NT	pass
2♣	pass	2♥	pass
4♥	all pass		

- Table A: (1) A dubious opener. I would pass (knock off a point for the 4333 type shape).  
 (2) What did you bid with this East hand D in this week's quiz? Most players bid 'up the line – so 1♦ here' without even thinking. But with a strong (slam going) hand it's sometimes best to think. If you bid 1♦ and partner responds 1♥ then what are you going to do? Are you/your partner happy about forcing sequences in this situation? Obviously this pair were not – read on.  
 (3) 4<sup>th</sup> suit? This is the very first problem – is 1♠ natural or 4<sup>th</sup> suit in this sequence? Expert opinion is divided but with no other agreement it's best to play 1♠ as natural here and a jump to 2♠ as 4<sup>th</sup> suit. I have no idea what this East plays nor what he considered 1♠ to be. The problem that East has here is that any ♥ bid is not forcing.  
 (4) With 17 points, a decent 4 card fit for partner and excellent intermediates East is obviously looking for 6♥ (it's a shame that West did not have a real opener). Apparently East meant this as Blackwood on the way to the doomed slam. Obviously everything is a total mess now. E-W play RKCB but there is no remotely agreed suit and 4NT after a natural 1NT bid is quantitative. 4♣ would be the ace ask. Obviously there would have been no problem has East simply bid 1♥ at (2). There are actually ways out of the 'mess'; jump to 3♥ now – this would confirm that 1♠ was indeed 4<sup>th</sup> suit and 3♥ is thus forcing; or 4♣ Gerber.  
 (5) West correctly took this 4NT as quantitative and finally found one of the pass cards in his box and so they luckily avoided the ♥ slam.

Table B: (1) It's easy after West does not open this flat hand.

And what happened? 4NT luckily scored about average. I note that 2 other pairs also somehow managed to miss the 4-4 ♥ fit and land in 3NT. The bottom lines: -

- look for the 4-4 major suit fit.
- After partner's last bid was 1NT or 2NT, then 4♣ is the ace ask and 4NT is quantitative .
- The sequence 1♣ - 1♦ - 1♥ - 1♠ has to be defined. Chuck and I have defined it as natural with a jump to 2♠ being the 4<sup>th</sup> suit bid (this is a fairly common treatment). Others play that it may or may not be natural. Others have no idea what they are doing.
- If you/your partner are not totally sure about 4<sup>th</sup> suit forcing sequences, then try another method if there is one (that's just one reason that I continually recommend playing strong jump shifts rather than weak ones).

## 4<sup>th</sup> Suit Forcing

It is apparent that even some of the club's more experienced players have trouble with 4<sup>th</sup> suit forcing. So I have written a few extra sheets about it'll be on the web soon.

### Negative doubles still apply over weak jump overcalls

Board 6 from Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

Dealer: ♠ KJ94  
East ♥ J53  
E-W vul ♦ A9543  
♣ 9

#### Table A

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

♠ A86	N	♠ 43
♥ Q107642	W E	♥ K8
♦ -	S	♦ 10872
♣ Q864		♣ AK532
	♠ Q1075	
	♥ A9	
	♦ KQJ6	
	♣ J107	

(1) Weak

(2) What did you bid with this North hand F in this week's quiz? With no interference it would be 1♠ but the hand is not good enough for 2♠ (forcing) now and that would promise a 5 card ♠ suit anyway. The best bid is double – negative and promising just 4 ♠'s. 3♦ would be reasonable without the 4 ♠'s.

(3) Not much point (zero pre-emptive value), but I guess it's lead directional.

(4) For South to bid 3♠ now would show a big hand.

And what happened? 4♦ made at one table and went down at another. Most N-S's knew about negative doubles; reaching ♠ contracts usually making 10 or 11 tricks.

The bottom lines: -

- Look for the 4-4 major suit fit (same old broken record).
- Negative doubles still apply over weak jump overcalls.

## SOS redouble?

Board 7 from Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

Dealer: ♠ AK4  
South ♥ QJ  
Both vul ♦ KJ76  
♣ J853

♠ 2	N	♠ Q1086
♥ K84	W E	♥ A762
♦ 98543	S	♦ AQ
♣ A96		♣ K107
	♠ J9753	
	♥ 1095	
	♦ 107	
	♣ Q42	

### Table A

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

### Table B

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♠
pass	3♥ (1)	pass	4♥ (6)
pass	4♠ (7)	pass	pass (8)

- Table A: (1) What would you open with this North hand? It is 15 points but a QJ doubleton is a poor holding. Having said that, it is not usually as poor in NT as in a suit contract. The hand has reasonable shape and I would not argue with a 1NT opener nor with 1♣/♦. Also, I would not criticise partner whatever he chose. Anyway, this North chose 1NT and all went pretty smoothly.
- (2) With a 15 count one can double a 1NT opening, but with no obviously good lead I think that pass is fine here.
- Table B: (1) This North chose not to open 1NT and I have absolutely no problem with that. Open 1♣/♦ and rebid 1NT (12-14). So which minor do you open when 4-4? I've been through this a few times. In Standard American 'better minor' you open your 'better' minor, so 1♦ here. But, although I am prepared to play 'better minor', I personally will always open 1♣ when equal length in the minors (3-3 or 4-4) regardless of relative strengths. But this is a personal preference and up to you/partnership agreement.
- (3) With both majors I prefer dbl to 1NT, although 1NT (15-18) is acceptable.
- (4) Unfortunately 1♠ here is usually played as forcing.
- (5) A dubious decision (I would like better ♦'s) that worked. I would bid 1♥.
- (6) Now this pass generated some discussion. South suggested that North should bid 1NT and then South could escape with a 2♠ bid. I would not bid 1NT, but redouble (SOS) is an alternative. But with 4 decent ♦'s I would also not argue with pass. The redouble would enable N-S to play in 1♠, a nice spot.

And what happened? 1♦ doubled went for 500, as did 1NT doubled at another table. Most N-S's ended up in 2♠ undoubled, 200 away for about average.

The bottom lines: -

- Don't criticise partner when he has made reasonable decisions that just happened to turn out badly?
- However, if your partnership agreement has an understanding that you open 1♣ when 3-3 or 4-4 in the minors, then stick to that agreement (it's a good one in my biased opinion).

## Bidding Quiz Answers

Hand A: 2♣ (or 2♦ if you play Benjamin twos). It's 9½ playing tricks and worth your strongest bid.

Hand B: (a) 2♥, a strong jump shift. If you do not start with this strong bid then you may well have problems later getting across the length/strength of this ♥ suit.

(b) 3♥. Show this great suit.

(c) Yes, 1♣ - 1♥ - 3♣ - 3♥ is forcing.

Hand C: 2NT, +-11 points with no 4 card major. I do not like to bid 2♣ with hands like this because you are then fixed over a 2NT rebid (12-14) from partner – you have no idea if you should bid on or not as it is the wrong man making the decision (it's your partner who has the 3 point spread and it's he who should be deciding). And there is also the problem which actually occurred with this hand – what do you do if you reply 2♣ and partner bids 3NT? 'Obviously' pass – but you may miss slam. If you can describe your hand in one bid, then do so; and 2NT does that with this hand.

**Note.** A 2NT response to 1♣/♦ of +-11 is 'standard' and is what most people play (perhaps because of the reasons I stated above). But in SAYC it is defined as 13-15, this is because SAYC is a bit basic and a 13-15 2NT response is sometimes handy if you do not play inverted minors. Anyway, that's for another day and I suggest that everybody at the club plays the 2NT response as +-11.

Hand D: 1♥. Whether you respond 1♦ or 1♥ when 4-4 is a matter of personal/partnership preference. But there are situations where you have to think. If you respond 1♦ here then what will you bid over 1♥ from partner? It's too good for 4♥ and are you/your partner sure about your 4<sup>th</sup> suit forcing sequences? If not, KISS and bid 1♥.

Hand E: 1♦ (with a 2NT, 18-19, rebid in mind). This flat hand is nowhere near worth a 20-21 2NT opener.

Hand F: Dbl. Negative, promising values (about 6+, some prefer 8+) and 4 ♠'s.

Hand G: 2♣, especially if you play 2/1. But if you do not play 2/1 I have a lot of sympathy for the straightforward 4NT ace ask – that's all you really need to know.

But there is a problem with this type of hand – very strong but aceless. If partner replies 1 ace (certainly very possible) then you are too high!

The solution. **3NT** – Baby Blackwood! I wrote up Baby Blackwood in news-sheet 153. It's on the web and in the conventions folder but is something that certainly is not standard and would have to be agreed.

## Notice from a member.

My name is Mike Bell & I have been attending the last couple of weeks, giving a lift to Dave who lives on the same estate.

My e-mail address is mwbell2000@yahoo.co.uk. I am looking to rent a property long term now I have my retirement visa. I wonder, therefore, if you could mention this in your next circular. I am paying 20K per month but people say this is too much?

yours, Mike Bell.