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It is best to use my home number to contact me unless I am at the bridge club.

Mon 16 th	1 st Janne & Lasse	68%	2 nd Gene & Bengt	60%
Wed 18 th	1 st Henrik & Terje	67%	2 nd Janne & Lasse	56%
Fri 20 th	1 st (individual) Ivy	61%	= 2 nd Phil, Dave, Sean, Paul W	58%

Bidding Quiz

Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.

Hand A Hand B

♠ KQ108643 ♠ A8653
 ♥ Q ♥ AK
 ♦ AQ92 ♦ A532
 ♣ 3 ♣ 43

With Hand A partner opens 1♥ and you respond 1♠. Partner then bids 2♦, what do you bid?

- (a) What do you open with Hand B?
 (b) Suppose you open 1♠ and partner responds 2♣, what do you do now?

Bidding Sequences Quiz

All of these sequences occurred this week

- C** 1NT pass 2♣ pass What is 4♣ - natural, splinter or ace-ask?
 2♠ pass 4♣
- D** 1♥ pass 1♠ pass What is 4♣ - natural, splinter or ace-ask?
 2♦ pass 4♣
- E** 1♣ pass 1♦ pass What is 1♠ - natural or 4th suit forcing?
 1♥ pass 1♠
- F** 1♣ pass 1♦ pass What is 2♠ - natural or 4th suit forcing?
 1♥ pass 2♠

Make declarer guess

Board 17 from Monday 23rd

I overbid and ended up in a very dodgy slam on this deal on Monday. But I note that **every** declarer made 12 tricks! I think that slam will not make with sensible defence.

Dealer: ♠ A76

North ♥ KQJ984

Love all ♦ K92

♣ 8

♠ 843

N

♠ Q105

♥ A65

W E

♥ 107

♦ Q5

S

♦ 108764

♣ K9763

♣ 1054

♠ KJ92

♥ 32

♦ AJ3

♣ AQJ2

West

North

East

South

-

1♥

pass

1♠

pass

3♥ (1)

pass

4NT

pass

5♠ (2)

pass

6♥ (3)

(1) A bit of an overbid, but North's ♥ suit is fairly solid and partner's ♠ bid improves the hand.

(2) 2 keycards + the ♥Q

(3) With miserable trumps and tenaces galore, 6NT may be a better bid.

And what happened? The hand was played six times; three in 6♥ making and three in 3NT making +3. But this deal is not included for the bidding but the play; you really do need a lot of help from the defence to make 12 tricks – and I witnessed the play at two tables: -

When I was North, declarer in 6♥, East led the ♦10 for some reason. So that was 3 ♦ tricks in the bag for free. But I still needed to make a black suit guess; I drew 2 rounds of trumps and West ducked twice! That left him with his ♥A, so I cleared the ♦'s and played a trump and West was end-played, having to concede a black suit trick to dummy.

I was only playing for fun (my scores did not count) and I later kibitzed the hand being played by Dave as South in 3NT (1♥ - 1♠ - 2♥ - 3NT - pass). West led the ♣6 and so declarer has 11 tricks. He tackled the ♥'s and West again ducked twice. Dave simply led a 3rd round of ♥'s and this West was also end-played to concede 12 tricks.

The bottom lines: -

- Sometimes it is correct to hold up with Axx – this is usually when declarer has communication problems.
- But don't hold up if you are subsequently going to be end-played. Both of the above West's should have risen with the ♥A on the 2nd round and immediately exited with their 3rd ♥.
- Since everybody made 12 tricks I assume that all of the E-W's do not understand end-plays?
- Dave got a fortunate lead, but without the subsequent end-play Dave would have had to guess whether to finesse ♦'s or ♠'s for his 12th trick.
- I also got a fortunate (very strange) lead, but without the subsequent end-play I would have had to guess whether to finesse ♣'s or ♠'s for my 12th trick.
- Don't give declarer freebies - make him guess.

Sit on your hands

Board 22 from Wednesday 25th

The title is an allusion to page 20 of Tony Forrester's excellent book "Secrets of Success".

Dealer:	♠ KQ6	West	North	East(B)	South
East	♥ J10632	-	-	1♠ (1)	pass
E-W vul	♦ 94	2♠	pass	3♦ (2)	pass
	♣ K7	3♠	all pass		

♠ J94	N	♠ A8653
♥ 975	W E	♥ AK
♦ J6	S	♦ A532
♣ QJ852		♣ 43
	♠ 107	
	♥ Q84	
	♦ K1087	
	♣ A1096	

- (1) What did you open with this East hand B(a) in this week's quiz? 5242 is not balanced, but I would open 1NT with high honours in both of the doubletons. With ♣ 43 I agree with 1♠.
- (2) But here we see the problem – should East now make a try for game? What did you bid with this East hand B(b) in this week's quiz? 3♦ here was a help-suit game try. I think that this is a very poor 15 (the ♥AK are bad – points belong in long suits) and I would pass.

But rather than hearing my mutterings, let's hear it from a real expert – Tony Forrester. In Chapter 1 of 'Secrets of success' he explains when you should make a help-suit game try, having opened 1♠ and got a 2♠ response: -

"If your hand seems to be borderline then imagine that partner's hand contains two cards totaling six points, i.e. an ace and a queen or two kings, and place them specifically where you would like them to be. If with these cards alone, game is likely to be on, make a game try; otherwise sit on your hands.

So how does this East hand fare in Tony's test? Clearly it's the ♠K and ♦K that are needed, but is game then a fair prospect? Looks like 1♠, 1♦ and 2♣ losers to me – so no. East should not make a try. There are other ways of looking at it – as I said, the doubleton ♥AK are 'bad'. And yet another method – popular in the UK although I don't use it myself – is the losing trick count. This hand has 6 losers and that is considered to be only just above a minimal opening.

And what happened? 3♠ went minus two, so 200 away for a clear bottom. 1♠ and 2♠ made exactly at other tables for the top scores to E-W. Note that if West does not bid 2♠ but passes, then North will balance with 2♥ and N-S can make 3♥ for a good score. West's 2♠ bid would have worked great had East passed.

The bottom lines: -

- West's 2♠ response was sub minimum but acceptable in my opinion.
- Had E-W been playing 2/1 then there would have been no problem whatsoever – West would have shown a weak raise by going via the forcing NoTrump.
- Do not open 1NT with 5422 type shape unless both doubletons are good.
- Ignore what I write if you wish, but listen to Tony Forrester.
- His book is in the library if you wish to borrow it.

Dave's Column

Boards 24 from Wednesday 25th

Here is this week's Dave input involving the best play for the contract. Actually it's a quite complex issue involving Restricted Choice by both defenders. Restricted choice is a complicated mathematical topic which I rarely discuss in the news-sheets.

♠ KJ97	N	♠ Q865	You are West, declarer in 6♠. You win the ♥Q lead and lead a small ♠ to the ♠K which North wins with the ♠A. North continues with the ♥J which you win.
♥ 83	W E	♥ AK4	
♦ AQ62	S	♦ KJ42	
♣ AQ4		♣ K3	

Problem A – which ♠ do you now lead from East?

Problem B – which ♠ would you lead from East if East's ♠'s were ♠Q652?

Dave's Column answer

Board 24 from Wednesday 18th

South ends up in 6♠. How do you play the hand (problem A) on the ♥Q lead?

Dealer: ♠ A
West ♥ QJ1052
Love all ♦ 987
♣ 8752

♠ KJ97	N	♠ Q865
♥ 83	W E	♥ AK4
♦ AQ62	S	♦ KJ42
♣ AQ4		♣ K3

♠ 10432
♥ 976
♦ 105
♣ J1096

You open 1NT with the West hand and after a Stayman sequence you reach the excellent 6♠. You win the opening lead in dummy and try a ♠ to your king but it loses to the ♠A. North continues with the ♥J which you win in dummy, what do you do next?

Hint: All you have to do is avoid a 2nd trump loser, and the only danger is a 4-1 break

Tip: When a defender plays a card, do not assume that all combinations containing that card are equally likely.

Play: Several authors, including Hugh Kelsey in "Test Your Percentages", have misanalysed this position. The correct play is to continue with the ♠Q. Although A10xx with North is three times more likely than singleton ace, with the former holding North should duck over two thirds of the time (Restricted choice - see Terry's note next page). With the singleton ace he has no choice but to play it. Only if you believe that North would not duck that often should you play him to have ♠A10xx (so lead a low ♠ from East). If the King had held you should then play low to the queen, as with ♠A10xx, West might have won. With a small singleton he had no choice but to play it. As Kelsey stated, arguing that's West's ace is 3 times more likely to be from A10xx, "such problems can be confusing when you first come across them". Indeed so.

Terry's comments: - I've got loads of them; they are on the next page.

Terry's comments: This all seems very complex maths and advanced psychology to me! I do not believe that there are many players in the Pattaya Bridge Club who would duck (over two thirds of the time!!) when holding ♠A10xx. And actually the mathematics is interesting – the author states that A10xx is three times more likely than a singleton ace. Is that statement true? The four cases where West has the ace are below (we ignore singleton ten and 3-2 splits as then there is no problem).

North	South	When South plays the ♠2 that actually eliminates possibilities
(a) A	10432	(c) and (d) so it appears that the odds are exactly even. But ...
(b) A1043	2	... restricted choice also applies to South on this deal. Most
(c) A1042	3	players would randomly pick from the ♠2, 3 or 4, a 'small card'
(d) A1032	4	(I actually played the ♠3). So in reality the odds are indeed 3-1 that North holds A10xx and South a 'small card'.

So then, as it's 3-1 on that North has A10xx, should declarer play a small cards from East? Not necessarily so! This is the point that the author is trying to make. If North understands restricted choice then he too will choose randomly from the ♠A and his two small ♠'s. The author maintains that a good defender will play low 'over two thirds of the time' and so when he does indeed play the ♠A it is just as likely to be from A10xx as to be singleton.

That is true (if West indeed understands restricted choice and does frequently duck) and so an ace appearing from a West of this calibre is then evens of being singleton.

I believe that the author's claim that you should play the ♠Q is incorrect and I agree with the Hugh Kelsey and the other authors. Playing the ♠Q is at best a 50% shot and if North is a non-expert and likely to frequently play the ace from A10xx it is definitely inferior.

The bottom lines: -

- A bit too complex for a simple guy like me. Restricted choice is a very complicated can of worms "that can be confusing" (excuse the pun). It really is beyond the scope of the news-sheets.
- It would have been an easier problem, and perhaps more interesting, if the ♠8 in the East hand was exchanged with a low ♠ from the South hand (so problem B, which is my concoction). Declarer then does have to play the ♠Q at trick four as he cannot pick up an original ♠A108x with North but can pick up an original 108xx with South.
- And what happened at the Pattaya bridge club? Everybody made 11 tricks. Just one bid slam and went down; three made an overtrick in 4♠ and one made +2 in 3NT.
- Perhaps I should continue to place the emphasis on the bidding. Dave and his partner were the only ones to bid to 6♠. The sequence 1NT - 2♣ - 2♠ - 4♣(ace ask) - 4♥ - 6♠ seems automatic to me and Dave and 6♠ only fails because of the bad 4-1 split.

So my (possibly rubbish) answers to the two problems are:

Problem A - a low ♠.

Problem B - the ♠Q.

Support PartnerBoard 22 from Friday 27th

Dealer: ♠ KQ108643
 East ♥ Q
 E-W vul ♦ AQ92
 ♣ 3

Table A

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

♠ J52	N	♠ A97
♥ K62	W E	♥ J1074
♦ 106	S	♦ J7
♣ K10984		♣ J765
	♠ -	
	♥ A9853	
	♦ K8543	
	♣ AQ2	

Table B

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

'Expert Table'

West	North(A)	East	South
-	-	pass	1♥
pass	1♠	pass	2♦
pass	4♣ (1)	pass	4♥ (5)
pass	4NT (6)	pass	6♦ (7)
pass	pass (8)	pass	

Table C

West	North(A)	East	South
-	-	pass	1♥
pass	1♠	pass	2♦
pass	4♣ (1)	pass	4♠ (3)
pass	6♠ (4)		

Table A: (1) What did you bid with this North hand A in this week's quiz? This is a poor bid for two reasons – (a) partner may have no ♠ support, and (b) 6♦ may be on.

Table B: (1) This North's bid was even worse - 3♠ is not forcing.
 (2) North could recover by bidding ♦'s now – but it's messy.

Table C: (1) This North correctly thought that slam was on. 4♣ was apparently Gerber (I do not recommend this, but then I would not ask for aces anyway).
 (3) South later said that he should have bid 5♠ - one level higher – to show two aces and a void. This is not an efficient method to show a void (which could either be ♣'s or ♠'s). There is a page on the website that tells you how to sensibly show voids in response to Blackwood.
 (4) With a known 4-4 or better ♦ fit this North decided to bid slam in a suit in which partner is probably short.

'Expert' Table: (1) This is the best bid and my answer to question A. A splinter, agreeing ♦'s and showing ♣ shortage with definite slam interest. 3♣, 4th suit, is a good alternative.
 (5) A cue bid, so showing slam interest.
 (6) RKCB.
 (7) 1 or 3 keycards and a ♠ void. A void in partner's suit is not normally an asset, but South is going to slam and so it's best to show the shape. 5♣ is the alternative.
 (8) The ♠ void opposite does not improve North's hand and so he settles for the small slam.

And what happened? The board was played just these three times. The comfortable 6♦ was missed at every table and so the inelegant 4♠+1 scored the top. The bottom lines: -

- Support partner.
- In suit contracts 4♣ is often needed as a cue bid or a splinter and should not be used as the ace ask.

Bidding Quiz Answers

Hand A: 4♣, a splinter agreeing ♦'s, showing ♣ shortage and slam interest. 3♣ (4th suit forcing) is also a very reasonable option; this would enable you to look for a higher scoring ♠ slam should partner come up with belated support (maybe a doubleton). Charging into any ♠ contract is simply being a bull in a china shop.

Hand B: (a) 1♠. I will not open 1NT with two doubletons unless they both have top honours.
(b) pass. It's fairly close between pass and making a game try (3♦) but I don't think it's quite good enough – you run the risk of going one (or two) down in 3♠ when partner has a poor hand. This sequence highlights just one of the advantages of playing 2/1 when I would bid 3♦ as a direct 2♠ bid is constructive when playing 2/1.

Bidding Sequence Quiz Answers

C	1NT	pass	2♣	pass	4♣ is asking for aces. You can play it as a keycard ask by agreement
	2♠	pass	4♣		
D	1♥	pass	1♠	pass	4♣ is a splinter agreeing ♦'s, showing ♣ shortage and looking for slam
	2♦	pass	4♣		
E	1♣	pass	1♦	pass	This is up to partner ship agreement. Most play it as natural.
	1♥	pass	1♠		
F	1♣	pass	1♦	pass	This depends upon your answer your (E). If 1♠ would be natural then 2♠ presumably has to be 4 th suit forcing.
	1♥	pass	2♠		

A Word about the sequence 1♣ - 1♦ - 1♥ - 1♠.

♠ KJ52 You hold this hand and partner opens 1♣. Unless you are a Walsh player
♥ 62 (which I don't really want to go into as Lewis is the only club member other
♦ K8754 than myself who plays Walsh) then you will respond 1♦. Partner then bids 1♥,
♣ 84 but he could easily be 4-4 in the majors and so you have to bid 1♠, natural.

So if you do not play Walsh, you need 1♠ in this sequence as natural. If you play Walsh then 1♠ would be forcing (probably to game) and you can play it as either natural or 'maybe natural'.

Having agreed that 1♣ - 1♦ - 1♥ - 1♠ needs to be natural, many players agree that sequence (F), 1♣ - 1♦ - 1♥ - 2♠ is 4th suit forcing.