

The word is spreading – 7 ½ tables on Friday! And Chuck likes the game here so much that he is staying another week; or is it just that with all the American airlines going bust, he cannot get a flight? Best to get home before the war starts? Especially if you want to check up on the well-being of your commander-in-chief. Year of the goat – should be a good year? Is there a year of the ass?

Last week's winners:

Monday 3/2/03			Friday 7/2/03		
winners	Malgosia/Chuck	64%	N-S winners	Hans/Bob	65%
2 nd	Joe/Martin	61%	E-W winners	Chuck/Terry	69%

My apologies to John/Ralph. I printed incorrect results for the Monday 27th session. They won N-S with 58.5%, guess I'm getting cross-eyed. This partnership is interesting: - John plays traditional Acol, Ralph has probably never heard of Acol or a weak NT. Their two sessions together are 58.5% and 58.7%. Not bad.

Responding to Partner's Pre-empt Another hand from Friday: -

West - Terry	East - Chuck	West	East
♠ A9	♠ Q10543	2♥	2♠
♥ QJ10643	♥ -	3♥	pass
♦ 987	♦ AKJ3		
♣ Q8	♣ KJ32		

East's 2♠ bid is natural and forcing, asking partner to bid a feature (ace, king or singleton) in support of ♠'s, with 4♠ in mind as a final contract. Again, I am virtually speechless! I told Chuck exactly what I thought of his bid - you should pass like a shot on mis-fits like this (and hope that the opponents compete). This time Hans was 100% (and more) on my side. Chuck is not the only one who over-bids hands like this – two pairs reached 4♥. We got, of course, the predictable reaction from Chuck – he said that I should not open a weak two with such 'poor' trumps. Again – 'you *cannot* be serious'. This is virtually a text book weak two; if this does not qualify, then don't play weak two's. 3♥ went down. Let's quote Marty Bergen (10 time US national champion) - MARTY SEZ... Vol 2 page 85 - 'The most attractive suit for a pre-empt is topless, but nicely filled out'. 'QJ10987 is an excellent trump suit' – far better than Q105432 !!!

The Prepared ♣

I prefer this to better minor as I stated last week.

Interesting to note that Bob and Hans have switched to this system. Anything to do with them winning N-S on Friday? And, of course, Malgosia plays a prepared ♣ and Malgosia/Chuck won on Monday. Perhaps Chuck will come round to playing a sensible system with me? Now Chuck told me that he used to play prepared ♣ and then changed. I think I have to take back what I said a couple of weeks ago about getting older and wiser. If there is any interest, I can run off a couple of pages as to why the prepared ♣ is far superior to better minor. It's in the data bank.

Hand Evaluation

An interesting hand from Friday.

West - Terry	East - Chuck	West	East
♠ J	♠ KQ102	1♥	1♠
♥ Q8732	♥ 1095	2♦	3♥
♦ K1092	♦ Q75	pass	
♣ AQ6	♣ K104		

A fairly standard auction – but is it? 3♥ stood no chance. 2♥ is a good contract. Anybody to blame?

I said that I did not think that Chuck's hand was worth 3♥. Totally flat, no ruffing values, poor trumps. Now when you get to know Chuck, you know that his reply will always be on the offensive. He said that my hand was not worth an opening bid. Now even knowing Chuck as well as I do, it is sometimes difficult to know if he is joking or not. There are not many Americans that I would care to quote, but the words of one distinguished tennis player are apt: - 'you *cannot* be serious'. I could not find a single player who would pass the West hand. Maybe Chuck can find one in USA? So, accepting that the opening bid is fine, as are the next two bids, what about East's 2nd bid? What should East bid over 2♦? Opener has shown 9 (possibly 10) red cards. You need a good 10 - bad 12 to raise to 3♥. I believe that 3♥ is way off here. 2♥ is the bid (you have just 10 points, your values are in the wrong suits - the ♠ honours are useless, only 3 trumps, no trump honour, no ruffing possibilities, no ace). So I asked Hans. Obviously he approved of the opening bid but said that he would bid as Chuck did at the 2nd turn. What's more, he said he would bid 4♥ (as did two pairs on Friday – minus 2 and 3 doubled) at teams – afraid of missing game! I am speechless; just because it's teams, no need to give away 500. Usually we have Hans on one extreme and Chuck on the other with me in the middle. I think they have both lost their marbles here – or have I? I'll just check, seems OK, everything functional.

After the session, Hans studied the hands for several minutes. Presumably wondering why 3♥ is hopeless with that 'great' East hand!? I have my own definition of a sound opener – a hand that can withstand a limit (11 point) raise to the 3 level with a *good* expectation of making. This deal does not, so either the opening is unsound or the limit raise is – take your pick. This is what gave Hans such a dilemma – he thinks both hands are good (or very good) yet you end up in a bad contract. The answer is that the East hand is not that good for the reasons stated above. It is nowhere near a limit raise.

How many times must I re-iterate that 4333 shapes are bad and should deduct 1 point? Which leaves the hand a clear 2 points shy of the requirement for a limit raise to 3♥. 10 minus 1 = 9, not 11.

After Partner Reverses

East	West	East	This time we have a hand from Friday that was held by our opponents. Not a particularly spectacular hand, but I know that this is an area where I disagree with Chuck. What do you bid?
♠ 10863	1♦	1♠	The 2♥ bid is a reverse and should show 16+ points with 5+ ♦'s and 4 ♥'s. I asked Chuck what he would bid. He said that he would bid Lebensohl 2NT
♥ Q76	2♥	?	
♦ 953			
♣ A87			

(a convention that enables you to bail out below game – in this case after partner has reversed). The bidding then goes 2NT - 3♣ - 3♦ (or 3♥) - pass. Where 3♣ is simply a forced bid enabling partner to pass or sign off below game. I asked Chuck if opener should pass the 3♦/♥ bid and he said yes. Of course I knew all of this and was just baiting him. I simply said ‘wouldn't it be simpler to just pass 2♥?’. A moment's hesitation... then he said that opener does not have to pass 3♥ if he has a rock crusher. My answer is to simply find a hand that can open only 1♦ yet make game opposite this heap. Something to think about if you have a few hours to spare. Where are you going? 4♥ on a 4-3 fit? 5♦? 3NT with inadequate cover in the black suits? Game is remote. Of course, with solid ♦'s, top ♥'s and ♠A, partner makes 3NT. However, with *solid* ♦'s it is usually better to rebid 3NT or 2NT (which I would raise to 3 with this East hand). The reverse *usually* implies a lesser hand without solid ♦'s. Even if it is possible to construct a hand that makes game, you will lose more all the times you go down in 3♥, 4♥ or whatever when you end up in when partner has a standard 17-19 point reverse.

What this all really boils down to is, is a reverse after a one level response forcing? I maintain that it is *virtually* forcing. If you have stretched for your initial response, then you can pass. After all, a reverse *is* a limit bid. On this particular deal you have a totally flat 6 count that is only worth an initial response because partner may have a ♠ suit. Once partner has denied ♠'s then I would pass a 2♥ reverse – because without a ♠ fit the hand was not worth an initial response. Just look at this East hand – it is flat garbage. How many times must I re-iterate that 4333 shapes are bad and should deduct 1 point? Heard that before somewhere? Any bid over 2♥ is bound to get you into trouble. What actually happened? 4♥ went down 3 for a bottom. I totally disagree with Chuck on this one – a reverse after a 1 level response is not absolutely forcing. Interesting to hear Hans' (and your) opinion. Incidentally, the experts disagree on this – I can provide support for either view.

Just as an aside, it may appear that I 'pick on' Chuck and Hans. Not really, I just reproduce interesting hands and state people's views - perhaps with a little more emphasis on my own?

But these are the big guys and they can take it. They are welcome (and I have asked them) to contribute to the news-sheet (I promise that I will not censure any contributions). What am I going to do when Chuck leaves us? Hans is nowhere near controversial enough to supply enough amusing material. Perhaps you will be next in the spotlight? So just bid sensibly! Please ask if you want any particular bidding topic covered. I am currently working on RKCB.

Multi Landy - A Defence to 1NT

When the opponents open 1NT it is best to overcall only on shapely hands (especially over a strong NT). Since you are already at the two level, you really need something more sophisticated than simple natural overcalls in order to show two suited hands. There are numerous different defences to 1NT around, but the most popular by more advanced players in USA is Cappelletti (also known as Hamilton – depends on which coast of the USA you are on). This defence is not quite so common in Europe; but a popular defence is Multi-Landy, which is the same as Cappelletti except that the meanings of 2♣ and 2♦ are reversed. Multi-Landy definitely is an improvement over Cappelletti and so it is what I shall describe here. Hans and Bob play Multi-Landy, as (I believe) do Joe and Martin. Chuck, of course, plays Cappelletti.

Playing Multi-Landy, over a 1NT opening by opponents the bids are :-

- 2♣ = both majors (9+ cards)
- 2♦ = a single suited hand (6+ cards, could be any of the 4 suits, but usually a major)
- 2♥ = 5 ♥'s + a minor suit
- 2♠ = 5 ♠'s + a minor suit
- 2NT = both minors (at least 5-5)
- dbl = penalties (15+ pts).

Over 2♣, responder bids his best major or 2♦ if he is equal length. This is the big advantage over Cappelletti - when responder is equal length the overcaller can bid his longer major, with Cappelletti it is a lottery as responder must choose a major. Obviously when responder has one major longer than the other, he bids the longer.

2♦ is usually a major suit. If you have a decent minor suit, it will often pay to defend 1NT – especially if you are on lead with a suit that is good to lead from. Also, if your suit is a minor, then you have to play at the 3 level so it is usually best to defend. Thus this 2♦ is usually (but not always) a major suit.

Responder bids using the same philosophy as with a multi 2♦ opening, ie :-

responder normally bids 2♥, but bids 2♠ if he is prepared to go to 3♥ or more opposite a ♥ suit. Bear in mind that overcaller is limited to 14 high card points (with more, he would have doubled). Of course, nothing is lost on the odd occasion where overcaller has a long minor (you will always be at the 3 level).

Over a 2♥/♠ opening, responder either passes or bids 2NT which asks over-caller to bid his minor.

2NT should be corrected to best minor.

dbl should be passed unless responder has a very weak hand (4- points), in which case he should attempt to bail out by bidding a 5 card suit. With a very flat weak hand, it is usually best to pass; partner may just have 1NT set in his own hand, and even if 1NT doubled makes it is usually not a disaster (it is not a game contract).