

Last week's winners: Monday 27/10/03

Friday 1/11/03

1st Clive/Eddie 58%
 2nd Alex/Jeff 57%

1st John G/Dave 56%
 2nd Hans/Philip 54%

Bidding Quiz

Hand A Hand B You open Hand A with 1♥ and partner responds 1♠,
 What is your rebid?

♠ A7 ♠ -
 ♥ A9743 ♥ J10962
 ♦ A10632 ♦ 103
 ♣ A ♣ AK10765

What do you open with Hand B?

Hand C Hand D With Hand C partner opens 1♥, do you respond?

♠ Q6542 ♠ Q5
 ♥ 5 ♥ J1086543
 ♦ 54 ♦ K
 ♣ QJ954 ♣ AJ3

What would you open with Hand D?

And what would you bid if RHO had opened 1♦?

At King Arthur's Court

Conan the conman had been sentenced to death. The courtyard by the gallows was covered in pebbles, either black or white. King Arthur loved his games of chance, especially if somebody's life was at stake. He said to Conan 'I'll pick up two pebbles, one white and one black. If you can pick the white one out of my hat then you will go free'. King Arthur then proceeded to pick up two pebbles, but having no intention of letting the villain off, he secretly chose two black pebbles. Conan noticed this deceit, but how did he save his head without calling the King a cheat?

Unauthorised InformationBoard 11 from Monday 27th

West	West	North	East	South
♠ A2	-	-	-	1NT (1)
♥ J872	pass	2NT (2)	pass (3)	3♦
♦ J87	3♥! (4)		
♣ J1084				

(1) 15-17 (2) Transfer to ♦'s

(4) Obviously absurd. What actually happened is that East (a learner) called me over at (3) and asked if he should bid. I said that either bidding or passing were reasonable with his hand. This is similar to a long pause (partner knows that you are thinking of bidding). West's bid at (4) is unethical in the extreme. The Director (me) was called and would have awarded an adjusted score had it been necessary. You are not allowed to take advantage of partner's hesitation, questions, explanations or anything else. Any information conveyed to you by such means is unauthorised and cannot be used by you. This particular example is perhaps the most blatant case of unethical conduct that I have ever seen. Ian has been warned, it's in my black book.

Bid Your Hand Just OnceBoard 13 from Monday 27th

Dealer:	♠ A862	West	North	East	South
North	♥ A1074				
Both vul	♦ QJ32	-	pass (1)	1♣	1♠ (2)
	♣ 7	2♣	4♠ (3)	dbl (4)	pass
		5♣ (5)	5♠ (6)	dbl (7)	pass
♠ 5	N	♠ 74	pass	pass	
♥ J63	W E	♥ K952			
♦ 109654	S	♦ AK8			
♣ AQ93		♣ K1054			
	♠ KQJ1093				
	♥ Q8				
	♦ 7				
	♣ J862				

This was the bidding I saw at one table.

- (1) With 11 points and good shape with both majors, many would choose to open. It does not quite conform to the rule of 20, but I would open 1♦.
- (2) A sound 1♠ overcall
- (3) With excellent ♠ support and good shape, it's worth a raise to 4♠. There are more sophisticated methods to show a sound raise, but with no agreements then 4♠ is fine.
- (4) I've no idea what East meant this as. I would assume penalties but I cannot see that East has any sensible option other than pass. If you wish to compete, then bid 5♣.
- (5) Presumably West understands his partner and removed the double.
- (6) Now this really is silly. North stated his hand pretty well last time and should leave it up to partner, especially as East's double last time may have been for penalties. If North feels that his hand is worth two subsequent bids then why did he not open??
- (7) It sure is for penalties this time.

4♠ made and 5♠ failed. North simply got what he deserved (a bottom). 5♣ is probably two, maybe three down. Once you have bid you hand, leave it up to partner.

BalancingBoard 5 from Friday 1st

South	West	North	East	South
♠ K873	-	pass	1♥	pass
♥ 10842	2♦	pass	2♥	pass
♦ Q762	pass	2♠ (1)	pass	pass
♣ Q	3♥	pass	pass	3♠ (2)
	pass	pass	pass	

- (1) North's 2♠ bid here is in the so-called balancing (the pass-out) seat. He has already passed twice and is simply making a noise. E-W are prepared to play in 2♥ and so the points are fairly evenly spread, North has already taken into account that South has some values and probably 4 ♠'s. North is quite likely to have only 4 ♠'s for this bid.
- (2) South should pass. North's 2♠ bid has pushed them up into (an unmakeable) 3♥ on a 5-2 fit. Also, this South hand has defence against ♥'s.

The bottom line? When partner balances, he is already bidding your hand.

The Jump Rebid in a 2nd suit

Board 15 from Monday 27th

North (C)	South (A)	West	North	East	South
♠ Q6542	♠ A7	-	-	-	1♥
♥ 5	♥ A9743	pass	1♠ (1)	pass	2♦ (2)
♦ 54	♦ A10632	pass	pass (3)	pass	
♣ QJ954	♣ A				

- (1) 1♠ looks pretty obvious to me. Hans was East and predictably stated that North should have passed the opening 1♥ bid. To each their own.
- (2) So what is your rebid? 4 aces and 16 points so jump to 3♦? NO. True, the hand has 4 aces, but that's all. The suits have no other honours and the singleton ace and doubleton in partner's suit are not great. 3♦ would (should) be forcing. 2♦ is quite sufficient with this hand. If game is on, partner will bid again.
- (3) I think that pass is very prudent. Some would give 'false' preference to ♥'s (just in case partner has 5 ♥'s and just 4 ♦'s, but with a (sub) minimum and a miss-fit it's best not to bid again and give partner the opportunity to go leaping about.

And what happened? 2♦ was a fine contract. It was bid and made at one other table but a third went overboard in 3♦. At the 4th table E-W got a good score by playing in 2NT (-1). Presumably this was not doubled because North failed to respond?

A Silly Pre-Empt (and much more)

Board 6 from Monday 27th

West	East (B)	West	North	East(Ian)	South
♠ AQ87	♠ -	-	-	3♣ (1)	pass
♥ 7	♥ J10962	4♣ (2)	pass	4♥ (3)	
♦ AQ984	♦ 103	5♣	pass	5♥ (3)	dbl
♣ J98	♣ AK10765	etc and onto -1700			

Eddie called me over after he had played this board and asked about this silly result at the previous table (above) – is there even any point in scoring when people bid to ludicrous contracts like this? I happen to know what happened: -

- (1) This is a very poor pre-empt. I have stated in previous news-sheets that you should not normally pre-empt with an outside 4 card major, with a 5 card major it is just silly. But then Ian is not often accused of being sensible.
- (2) I was asked what to bid here. Opposite a normal pre-empt (non-vul against vul) then there could be a game your way, but not for sure. Opponents may possibly be able to make 4♥ and I suggested that 5♣ or 4♣ are possibilities. West chose 4♣.
- (3) Of course it never occurred to me that anyone would take this as asking for aces! And also take a subsequent 5♣ as asking for kings!!

The bottom line. Most experts and experienced players only use 4♣ to ask for aces after partner has bid NT. Simplest is only to play Gerber directly after a 1NT or 2NT opening. I gave a more comprehensive summary in news-sheet 31 for more experienced pairs. If you insist that 4♣ is always your ace ask, then it cannot work after a ♣ suit is trumps (you need to be able to sign off or raise ♣'s) and so 4♦ is then the ace ask.

A New Suit at the 4 level!

Board 23 from Monday 27th

Now we all know the saying 'a new suit at the 3 level is forcing'. There are, of course numerous exceptions; but how about this new suit at the 4 level from Monday?

Dealer:	♠ 764	West (D)	North	East	South
North	♥ A7				
Both vul	♦ 32	-	-	-	1♦
	♣ KQ10642	3♥ (1)	4♣ (2)	pass	4♦ (3)
		pass	pass	pass	
♠ Q5	N	♠ J109			
♥ J1086543	W E	♥ K			
♦ K	S	♦ A10754			
♣ AJ3		♣ 987			
	♠ AK82				
	♥ Q92				
	♦ QJ986				
	♣ 5				

- (1) Supposed to be weak, the only 'weak' aspect of this hand is the ♥ suit. With all the points outside the ♥ suit, a 1♥ overcall is quite sufficient.
- (2) So what is a 4♣ bid here? Partner has not shown the suit and you are bidding at the 4 level. It obviously has to be a good suit, but how good a hand? Is it weak, invitational or forcing? The player who bid this on Monday maintained that the bid was pre-emptive and that partner should pass. Obviously nonsense, there is no jump and so no pre-empt. Anyway, it is a well-known saying that one does not pre-empt over a pre-empt. So is the bid encouraging or forcing? Eddie, Clive, Bob, Dave and myself discussed this on Friday. We all agreed that it is not weak and should show a good hand/suit (much better than this one). As to whether it is forcing or not, we agreed that it is really a matter of partnership agreement (I would take it as forcing with no agreement to the contrary). All pretty irrelevant with this actual hand, pass is the only sensible option.
- (3) South asked me about this bid, I thought that 4♣ was forcing and agreed that 4♦ is probably better than 4♠. North disagreed and said South must pass, all his years of experience and 86,000 or so master points dictate that 4♣ is pre-emptive. Just goes to show exactly how much master points are worth (I have none). All pretty irrelevant as any bid over 3♥ (except a penalty double) gets (and deserves) a bottom. 3♥ goes 3 down.

At King Arthur's Court - Solution

Conan picked a pebble out of the King's hat, but 'accidentally' dropped it on the floor amongst the other pebbles before anyone could see the colour. He then said 'Sorry your Highness, but we can establish its colour by looking at the pebble remaining in your hat'.

Bidding Quiz Solutions

- Hand A: 2♦. Not good enough for 3♦
- Hand B: Pass (or 1♥ or 1♣ if you really want to open), but do *not* pre-empt with 3♣.
- Hand C: Some people would pass, but not me; I would bid 1♠.
- Hand D: 1♥, 1♥. Totally unsuitable for a pre-empt (either opening or overcall).