

Last week's winners: Monday 18/11/03

Friday 22/11/03

1<sup>st</sup> Bengt/Ken 58%  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Phillip/Jeff 57%

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 2<sup>nd</sup> John G/Terry 51%

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

Hand A Hand B

♠ A ♠ A54  
 ♥ 1086432 ♥ 107  
 ♦ KJ6 ♦ AK9872  
 ♣ 643 ♣ A7

With Hand A LHO opens 1NT and RHO bids 2♦ (xfer). Obviously you pass, LHO bids 2♥ and RHO raises to 4♥, what is your bid?

Hand C Hand D

♠ KQ10653 ♠ 953  
 ♥ 9 ♥ AKQJ5  
 ♦ KJ87 ♦ 52  
 ♣ A5 ♣ 1092

With Hand C partner opens 1♥, you bid 1♠ and partner rebids 2♣. What do you bid?

With Hand D partner opens 1NT and you transfer with 2♦. But what is your bid after partner's expected 2♥ reply?

Hand E Hand F

♠ 9752 ♠ 4  
 ♥ Q10753 ♥ AQ942  
 ♦ 72 ♦ KQ103  
 ♣ Q2 ♣ A75

With Hand E partner opens 1♦ (better minor), do you bid or pass?

With Hand F RHO opens 1♥! What do you do?

Hand G Hand H

♠ K74 ♠ Q93  
 ♥ A10654 ♥ 2  
 ♦ J ♦ QJ62  
 ♣ AK109 ♣ J7532

With Hand G you open 1♥ and partner replies 1♠. What is your rebid?

With hand H LHO opens 1♣, partner overcalls 1♠ and RHO bids 2♥. (a) what do you do? *Suppose* that you pass. LHO bids 3♥, partner tries 4♦ and RHO bids 4♥. (b) what now?

**Is it Forcing?**

Something new this week, I've run out of 'King Arthur' teasers for a while, so how about testing your knowledge on whether some bidding sequences are weak, invitational or forcing – a very important area of Bridge bidding which even the most experienced seem to get wrong. Is the last bid in these sequences weak or forcing? (No opposition bidding).

Sequence J 1♦ - 1♥ - 2NT - 3♥?

Sequence K 1♦ - 1♥ - 2NT - 3♣?

Sequence L 1♥ - 1♠ - 2NT - 3♥?

Sequence M 1♠ - 2NT - 3♣?

## Is it Forcing?

There was an interesting hand on Monday that prompted a few (incorrect) statements from one individual about weak/forcing bids after partner has bid 2NT. We shall consider two main sequences (there is no intervention): -

(a) 1x - 1y - 2NT - ?                      and              (b)              1x - 2NT - ?

In sequence (a), 2NT shows 18-19 points (17-19 if you play a weak NT)

In sequence (b), 2NT shows 11-12 points and denies a 4 card major or 3 card support if 'x' was a major suit.

Let's start with Monday's hand. It was played six times and nobody reached the best contract. This is how I think that the bidding should go, a poor 3NT was reached at 4 tables and 1♦ was passed out at the other two: -

Board 19 from Monday 18<sup>th</sup>, E-W vul

North	South (E)	West	North	East	South
♠ KQJ	♠ 9752	-	-	-	pass
♥ J2	♥ Q10753	pass	1♦ (1)	pass	1♥ (2)
♦ AQJ6	♦ 72	pass	2NT (3)	pass	3♥ (4)
♣ AJ84	♣ Q2	pass	pass	pass	

- (1) I would open 1♣, but it appears that most opened 1♦.
- (2) I would never pass 1♦ (or 1♣) with a hand like this with both majors. 1♥ is fine.
- (3) Some players rebid 3NT here. It is best to play 2NT as 18-19 (17-19 if you play a weak NT) and reserve 3NT for hands with a good long suit.
- (4) 3♥ is weak here.

So then, what bids are weak after partner has bid 2NT in sequence (a)? Simple, there are just two, pass and a rebid of responder's suit. Any other bid, *including belated support for opener*, is forcing. And in sequence (b)? The only weak bid here (apart from pass) is a simple rebid of opener's suit, any other bid is forcing.

To summarize, in response to partner's 2NT bid in both of these sequences, everything is forcing except a repeat of your suit (or pass!). This really does make a lot of sense; in both sequences the 2NT bid has advertised values for game unless partner is extremely weak for his bidding so far, to have more than two weak options really is silly as game will be there most of the time. The important thing is to find the best game/slam contract.

Hand N              Now then, let's get serious (perhaps this is for the more advanced bidder?).  
 Suppose that you hold this hand as South and the bidding has gone the same  
 ♠ 9752              (1♦ - 1♥ - 2NT - ?). What do you bid? As I said, 3♥ is weak and you have  
 ♥ KQ753              values for game. You could just bid 3NT but that could be wrong if partner  
 ♦ K7                  has 3♥'s. You do not really want to bid this anaemic ♠ suit, so how do you find  
 ♣ 32                  out if partner does have 3♥'s? Bid 3♣, forcing. This is a form of Checkback, checking if  
                          partner has 3 card support for your major. With the actual North hand, he would bid 3NT, fine.

## Bidding Game With No Support?

Board 5 from Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> , N-S vul

When you have values for game, you may have to work a little to get to a playable spot: -

North	South (C)	West	North (me)	East	South
♠ -	♠ KQ10653	-	1♥	pass	1♠
♥ AQ1063	♥ 9	pass	2♣	pass	4♠ (1)
♦ A1095	♦ KJ87	pass	pass	pass	
♣ QJ63	♣ A5				

A poor contract that went two off, what went wrong? South has a reasonable 6 card major with 13 points opposite an opener, so just unlucky?

I don't think so. I mentioned bulls and china shops last week, there is absolutely no need to charge into game at (1). The first thing to consider with this South hand is 'do you want to insist upon game?' You do not like partner's two suits and a non-forcing 3♠ would be the choice of many. But with a reasonable 6 card major, going to game is reasonable and then you have to find a forcing bid (2♠ or 3♠ are not forcing), best is 2♦. This happens to be natural, but it is 4<sup>th</sup> suit forcing; partner would then describe his hand further, he should bid 2NT with a decent ♦ stop and would support ♠'s with something like ♠Ax, ♠Jxx or ♠Jx at a push with no ♦ stop. A subsequent 3♠ by South is then forcing, showing a decent suit and partner should be able to fix the best final game contract (he would support ♠'s with ♠Jx or even a small doubleton). There are various possible ways that the auction may go (I give two examples below) but anything is better than just charging into 4♠ when you know nothing about partner's trumps.

1♥ - 1♠ - 2♣ - 2♦ - 2NT - 3♠ - 3NT or 1♥ - 1♠ - 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♦ - 3♠ - 3NT.

There are various other auctions possible, including landing in a not totally unreasonable 5♦. What happened? 4♠ was two down for a bottom. One pair stopped in 3♠ (reasonable) and the third found the decent 3NT (it made +1).

The bottom line. Take your time, preserve the china.

## An Easy Ride

Board 3 from Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> , E-W vul

North	South (H)	West	North (me)	East	South
♠ AK854	♠ Q93	-	-	-	pass
♥ Q4	♥ 2	1♣	1♠	2♥	pass (1)
♦ A7543	♦ QJ62	3♥	4♦	4♥	pass (2)
♣ 8	♣ J7532	pass	pass	pass	

The same N-S pair. E-W made a comfortable 10 tricks, what went wrong for N-S? 3♠ made +1 at another table and E-W were pushed up to 5♥ (minus one) at the third. The answer is that North made valiant efforts (some would say too pushy), non-vul, on his 13 count without hearing the minutest whisper from partner. But at some stage one simply has to give up. If South, with a singleton in opponent's suit, cannot bid 2♠ at (1), or 4♠ at (2) upon learning about the double fit, then what can one do? Another complete bottom.

The bottom line. Support with support. The law of total tricks dictates that South should bid 2♠ at (1) (8 combined trumps). With a double fit he should most certainly compete to 4♠ at (2). Don't give the opponents easy rides, especially when you are non-vul against vulnerable opponents. Take advantage of the possession of the ♠ suit.

## Qui Culpa?

Board 17 from Friday 15<sup>th</sup>, love all.

Dealer:	♠ KJ7	West (A)	North	East	South (D)
North	♥ 97				
Love all	♦ AQ1098	-	1NT (1)	pass	2♦
	♣ AQ7	pass	2♥	pass	4♥ (2)
		dbl (3)	pass	4♠ (4)	dbl
♠ A	N	pass	pass	pass	
♥ 1086432	W E				
♦ KJ6	S				
♣ 643					
	♠ 953				
	♥ AKQJ5				
	♦ 52				
	♣ 1092				
		♠ Q108642			
		♥ -			
		♦ 743			
		♣ KJ85			

I was asked to comment on this board, no doubt the asker will not like my answer, but then perhaps one should not be so quick to criticise partner if one's own bidding is suspect? 4♠ went 4 down, so -800 for a very poor score. Who was to blame? I like to be fair, and so I will say that the only person who's bidding was sensible was North (it was not him who asked me)! Everybody else contributed to the silly final contract.

- (1) A sound strong 1NT opener, much better than 1♦, do not let a weak doubleton deter you from opening 1NT with a balanced hand within your range; and with tenaces in three suits, North most certainly should strive to be declarer.
  - (2) Just last week I again repeated that with just 5 of the transfer suit, don't rebid them. The correct bid here is 3NT, showing game values and exactly 5♥'s. The fact that the♥'s are very good is largely irrelevant, they will score just as many tricks in NT. Leave it up to partner to convert to 4♥ if he wishes to with 3♥'s.
  - (3) Now this, in my opinion, is the root cause of the ensuing problem. West can count and knows exactly what is going on; he knows that South has 5 good♥'s and that 4♥ is an inferior contract (to 3NT). But why double? Let them play in 4♥, you know that most of the field will be in the superior 3NT (everybody else was). 4♥ may go down, in which case you get a top board anyway; and if 4♥ makes (as it should here) then you still get the top board as obviously NT will make the same number or more tricks. But if 4♥ doubled makes then you get zilch. Doubling is a poor bid even if it were not for the unpredictable – North or South may pull it to 4NT, are you going to double that? it makes with an overtrick – or partner (who you know is void in♥'s and must have long♠'s) may pull it.
  - (4) That said, I would never pull the double. West's double says that he can set 4♥ on his own (South is unlimited and you could have zero points for all West knows) – the fact that West cannot set 4♥ is largely irrelevant. So pass and let partner explain his bid after the contract makes and the dust has settled. The bottom lines: -
    - (a) With a 5 card major, a balanced hand and game going values opposite partner's 1NT opening, transfer and then bid 3NT.
    - (b) When you know that the opponents are in an inferior contract, do not double and give them a chance to get off the hook. And if you do double, it helps if you have sufficient to defeat the contract.
    - (c) If partner says that he can defeat the contract on his own, then let him prove it.
- ♠ J109864     Just in case you think that I'm making it up and that I could not resist a  
♥ KQ5         double when holding 6 trumps, remember this hand from news-sheet 31?  
♦ A             (under the title 'How Greedy are You?'). The opponents bid to 4♠ and I  
♣ J64           most certainly did not double and let them escape (5♦ was making easily).

## A Jump Rebid

Board 7 from Friday 15<sup>th</sup> , both vul.

A horrible 5♣ contract was reached on this board

South (G)	West	North	East	South
♠ K74	-	-	-	1♥
♥ A10654	pass	1♠	pass	3♣ (1)
♦ J	pass	4♣	pass	4♥ (2)
♣ AK109	pass pass	5♣	pass	pass

5♣ was one off, what went wrong? South's 3♣ rebid at (1) is way over the top, 2♣ is quite sufficient although many may prefer 2♠. Even 2♥ is reasonable (the pair were playing 4 card majors). 3♣ at (1) is forcing (most people say game forcing). I don't like the 4♥ bid at (2) either, if I had got myself into this mess (it most certainly was not me) then I would try 4♠, this miserable ♥ suit is not worth rebidding, especially with decent support for partner.

What happened? 5♣ went one down; two pairs stopped in a sensible 2♣.

## When RHO bids Your Suit

Board 1 from Friday 15<sup>th</sup> , love all

West (F)	East	West	North	East	South
♠ 4	♠ Q652	-	pass	pass	1♥
♥ AQ942	♥ 72	dbl (1)	pass	2♠ (2)	pass
♦ KQ103	♦ A87	2NT (3)	pass	3NT	pass
♣ A75	♣ QJ84	pass	pass		

- (1) An excellent 15 points, so what do you do when RHO bids your suit? A double of 1♥ promises 4♠'s or a very good hand, this hand is totally unsuitable for a double. A 1NT overcall (15-18) points is a reasonable possibility (a singleton is OK for a NT overcall, the important thing is to have stop(s) in the suit opened). However, I prefer to wait and see, so my vote goes for pass
- (2) You should respond to partner's double of 1♥ in a similar way as you would if partner had opened (a 4 card) 1♠. So bid ♠'s at the minimum level with 0-9 points and jump in ♠'s with a good 10 - poor 12. I think that 2♠ is a slight overbid here as the suit is weak.
- (3) Now a 1NT overcall is 15-18 points. If you double and then bid NT it shows a hand too good to overcall 1NT immediately (so 19-20 points). Here we see the problem with the initial double at (1).

And what happened? North led a ♠ and 3NT was doomed. At other tables E-W got good scores by simply letting N-S play the hand. The bottom line? Don't be too eager to make a take-out double with an unsuitable hand, and remember that a double of a major suit generally promises 4 cards in the other major.

**Your opening 1NT MUST be within your allotted range (and NO singleton).**

Hand N	Hand P	On Friday one player opened both (!) of these hands with a strong 1NT. There is little point in me scoring the sessions if people bid like this. One point outside your range is allowed, 3 (with a singleton) or 5 (!) is <u>not</u> . 1NT on these hands is an (inverted) psyche – illegal. And twice in one (18 board) session is way over the top. Now this really messes up the scoring. I will automatically award a zero score for bids like this, so
♠ AQJ	♠ AKQ64	
♥ 87	♥ K	
♦ AK82	♦ KQ83	
♣ AKJ9	♣ K107	

there really is little point in even playing the hand. And to be fair to all the other players, I don't see why opponents should be gifted a top, so they get their average for the board – this only causes ill-feeling. The perpetrator has been warned.

And what should the opening bids have been? Hand N is a balanced 22 count, so an obvious 2NT (or 2♣ followed by 2NT, depending upon your system). Hand P is a not-so-balanced 20; some people will open 2NT with a singleton A or K (it is allowed for 2NT) and that is quite reasonable on this hand. Another sensible alternative is a simple 1♠. The hand is just short of the playing strength for a strong 2♠, but that would be my choice.

**Raising Partner's Pre-empt**

Board 4 from Friday 15<sup>th</sup>, both vul

North	South (B)	West	North (me)	East	South (Garry)
♠ J	♠ A54	pass	2♥ (1)	pass	4♥ (2)
♥ KQ9632	♥ 107	pass	pass	pass	
♦ 653	♦ AK9872				
♣ 1084	♣ A7	(1) Weak			

So what can we say about South's 4♥ bid at (2)? Should he have bid 2NT (or a forcing 3♦) in order to find out more about opener's hand? No. 4♥ as chosen by Garry is the best bid. You want to try 4♥ even if partner is minimum. Do not mess about (with 2NT Ogust or whatever), bid 4♥ and be happy to double opponents if they come in. What happened? 4♥ made exactly. One pair played in 2♦ (+2), I guess they don't play weak twos?

**Bidding Quiz Answers**

- Hand A: Pass, opponents are in a bad contract. As the Beatles and Rambo said 'let it be'.
- Hand B: 4♥ (and double if opponents come in). Do not mess about (with 2NT etc).
- Hand C: 3♠ (invitational) or 2♦ (forcing). Do *not* leap off into a possibly silly 4♠.
- Hand D: 3NT. With just 5 ♥'s and a balanced hand you should not bid 4♥.
- Hand E: You know me by now, I would never pass 1♣ or 1♦ with this hand containing both majors. I would bid 1♥, 3♥ was the best contract.
- Hand F: Pass! With just one ♠ you cannot double. 1NT (15-18) is a reasonable alternative but I prefer to pass and await developments.
- Hand G: 2♣ is quite sufficient (2♠ is equally good). 3♣ is over the top.
- Hand H: (a) support partner with 2♠. (b) having been a coward once, bid 4♠ now.
- Sequence J: Weak, although opener may bid 4♥ (but never 3NT) with a suitable hand.
- Sequence K: Forcing. With a weak hand with ♣'s (and ♥'s) responder should pass (or bid 3♥ with 5 ♥'s). This type of bid is often looking for the 5-3 major fit.
- Sequence L: Forcing. Presumably 3 card support, suggesting 3NT or 4♥; but maybe slam.
- Sequence M: Forcing, natural, a ♣ slam may be there. 4♣ would be asking for aces (4NT would be quantitative) so we need 3♣ as forcing.