

Last week's winners: Monday 1/12/03

Friday 5/12/03

1st Norman/Dave 69%
 2nd Clive/Hans 65%

1st Terry/Kaj 63%
 2nd Joe/Don 53%

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

Hand A

Hand B

With Hand A you open 1♣, LHO overcalls 1♦, partner bids 1♥ and RHO bids 2♦. All the bids have improved your hand immensely, so what is your bid now?

♠ 10864
 ♥ AKJ7
 ♦ 7
 ♣ AKQ4

♠ KJ73
 ♥ A97
 ♦ Q1062
 ♣ K7

With Hand B RHO opens a weak 2♥, what do you bid?

Hand C

Hand D

With Hand C partner opens 1♣, what is your response?

♠ AK2
 ♥ 832
 ♦ 954
 ♣ AK43

♠ 1043
 ♥ K8
 ♦ 9
 ♣ KQJ9876

With Hand D partner opens 1♦ and RHO doubles (take-out). What do you do?

Hand E

Hand F

With Hand E partner opens a strong NT, Do you transfer or simply pass with this weak heap?

♠ J96
 ♥ 108542
 ♦ J9
 ♣ 852

♠ 2
 ♥ J653
 ♦ QJ108654
 ♣ 5

With Hand F LHO opens 1♦ and partner doubles (take-out). If RHO passes what would you do?

Hand G

Hand H

I made up these last two hands. I have included them because it is clear (when you read this news-sheet) that bidding after the opponents have made a take-out double needs to be explained. I will produce something on this topic soon, but for now test your knowledge with these two. With both of these hands partner opens 1♥ and RHO doubles, what is your bid?

♠ KJ94
 ♥ 5
 ♦ KJ94
 ♣ KJ94

♠ 5
 ♥ KJ954
 ♦ J54
 ♣ 7654

Is It Forcing?

West

North

East

South

Sequence J

1♣
 2♠ (J)

1♦

1♥

2♦

Is West's 2♠ at (J) weak, invitational or forcing?

West

North

East

South

Sequence K

1♦

dbl

2♣ (K)

Is East's 2♣ at (K) weak, invitational or forcing?

Is it Forcing?

First of all, two basic auctions (no opposition bidding): -

(a) 1♣ - 1♥ - 1♠ and (b) 1♣ - 1♥ - 2♠

The 1♠ bid in (a) can be anything from 11 to about 17 points, it is non-forcing.

The 2♠ bid in (b) is forcing, say 18-20 points.

Hand L	Hand M	Hand N	You are dealer with each of these hands.
♠ AJ107	♠ AK107	♠ AKQ7	In all cases you open 1♣ and partner responds 1♥.
♥ 74	♥ Q4	♥ K6	With Hand L you rebid 1♠
♦ 54	♦ 54	♦ 54	With Hand M you rebid 1♠
♣ AQ975	♣ AQ975	♣ AKJ75	With Hand N you rebid 2♠, forcing.

That's all quite simple, but consider the case when there is opposition bidding, this sequence occurred on Monday.

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♦	1♥	2♦
2♠ (1)			

So which of the three hands above would qualify for the 2♠ bid here at (1)? With Hand L you have a minimum opener and it is probably best to convey that message by passing. With Hand M you certainly want to bid and 2♠ is 'obvious'. Thus this 2♠ bid cannot now be forcing – opponents are pushing you and it is competitive. So what do you bid now with Hand N? You need to find a forcing bid; 3♠ is forcing but I prefer double – opponents have agreed ♦'s and so this is not penalties, it shows 4 ♠'s and offers partner a choice of strains. With 3 ♥'s I would support partner's ♥'s.

Find a forcing bid

Board 1 from Monday 1st, love all.

As I have said many times, when you have support for partner's major it is often best to bid another suit and subsequently raise partner. It is, however, important to be sure that your bid is forcing. Also, it is very dangerous to bid a major suit, especially ♠'s (they are higher ranking than partner's ♥'s and partner may pass or subsequently put you back into ♠'s).

West (A)	East	West	North	East	South
♠ 10864	♠ Q95	-	pass	pass	pass
♥ AKJ7	♥ Q653	1♣	1♦	1♥	2♦
♦ 7	♦ J10	2♠ (1)	pass	pass (2)	pass
♣ AKQ4	♣ J976				

4♥ is a very reasonable contract (♠J was onside and so it makes unless opponents find a ♠ ruff). A ♠ contract is silly, so what went wrong in the bidding?

- (1) West assumed that this was forcing, intending to bid ♥'s next time.
- (2) with his minimum and good ♠ support, East was happy to pass.

In my opinion the fault lies with West, 2♠ (as I explained in the previous section) is not obviously forcing and East's pass is understandable, although 3♣ is a reasonable alternative. So what should West bid at (1)? There is no point in introducing the ♠ suit (3♠ would be forcing).

Another forcing bid is 3♦; and also double would be for take out. All rather silly as there is a great ♥ fit. So bid 4♥? A very sensible bid. However, those of you who have digested recent news-sheets will know the best bid – 4♦, a splinter, agreeing ♥'s and showing ♦ shortage. Even with a passed hand opposite, there could be a slam. With this minimal hand East would, of course, sign off in 4♥.

A Take-out Double?

Board 15 from Friday 5th, N-S vul.

North (B)	South	West	North	East	South
♠ KJ73	♠ Q98	-	-	-	pass
♥ A97	♥ J2	2♥ (1)	dbl (2)	pass	3♣ (3)
♦ Q1062	♦ A843	pass	pass	pass	
♣ K7	♣ 8432				

- (1) Weak.
- (2) A take-out double.
- (3) Nothing is attractive, but South has to bid. The cheapest 4 card suit is recommended.

So, a very silly contract that went minus 5 for a cold bottom. Anyone to blame? Yes. The double at (2) is a very poor bid. A take-out double needs to be playable in the other three suits (or strong enough to bid again if partner chooses your weak suit). This North hand should simply pass (especially vulnerable when partner is a passed hand).

3NT is usually better than 5 of a minor

Board 9 from Friday 5th, E-W vul.

West (C)	East	West	North	East	South
♠ AK2	♠ 8	-	pass	1♣ (1)	pass
♥ 832	♥ AK75	2NT (2)	pass	3♦ (3)	pass
♦ 954	♦ AK82	5♣ (4)	pass		
♣ AK43	♣ 10965				

- (1) Hans and myself actually agree here, we both prefer 1♣ when 4-4 in the minors.
- (2) This should be 11-12 points (and denying a 4 card major). Non-forcing.
- (3) forcing
- (4) I would not have bid like West has, but surely 3NT must be best now?

So, a very silly contract that made +1 because the ♣QJ were doubleton. 3NT is far superior (it makes +1 for the same reason but scores more). So what can we say about the bidding? As I said, the 1♣ opening is fine, but what should West respond at (2)?

2NT is incorrect as it is non-forcing and this hand is too strong. So 3NT? An excellent choice, it shows about 13-15 points and no 4 card major, usually exactly 3334 shape (in that order); but I prefer 1♦ (it's OK to 'lie' in a minor). The reason I prefer to take it slowly instead of a direct 3NT is the ♦ *and* ♥ weaknesses. After a 1♦ response, East would then bid 1♥ and then West bids 3NT with a fair degree of confidence.

In the actual auction 3♦ at (3) is forcing but I don't like it as it implies more ♣'s than ♦'s. I would punt 3NT at (3). But, as I said, the auction should go 1♣ - 1♦ - 1♥ - 3NT.

The bottom line? 3NT is usually better than 5 of a minor – especially when you have *two* stops in *every* suit!

A Two-level Response after an Intervening Double

Board 12 from Friday 15th

Dealer:	♠ KQJ93	West	North	East (D)	South (F)
West	♥ Q1092				
N-S vul	♦ -	1♦	dbl	2♣	etc...
	♣ A1032				

... to 3NT by E-W which went one down.

♠ A876	N	♠ 1043
♥ A74	W E	♥ K8
♦ AK732	S	♦ 9
♣ 4		♣ KQJ9876
	♠ 2	
	♥ J653	
	♦ QJ108654	
	♣ 5	

This was the bidding at a two tables on Friday and I have no problem with it. Hans, however, does. At the end of the session he criticised East's 2♣ bid in front of an 'audience' of half a dozen or so players, saying that 2♣ here shows 10+ points, is unlimited and forcing. He said that the East hand should pass as there is no fit, adding

that after North has doubled East has no obligation to bid with a mis-fit.

This was more than I could take. I came to East's defence, saying that East's 2♣ bid was fine. A heated conversation along the following lines ensued (I have added the italicised comments in brackets for clarity): -

Hans: 2♣ is fine? really?? So what **exactly** does this 2♣ bid show??? **I want to know!**

Terry: About 7 – a poor 10 points, a good 5+ (at least) ♣ suit and obviously non-forcing (*with more values one would re-double*).

Hans: Utter nonsense. That is not any system that I have ever heard of. The bid shows 10+ points, unlimited, could be a 4 card suit and is forcing (*just the same as if there had been no double*).

So, two **totally** opposite opinions. I'm sure that Hans will agree that one of us certainly is talking absolute nonsense. Let's clear up who: -

First of all, what is this system that Hans has never heard of? Well; I maintain that it is Acol, or Standard American, or any other basically natural system that you care to name. Moreover, whether you play a strong or weak NT is irrelevant for this sequence. A couple of quotes should suffice (both refer to non jumps): -

'A new suit at the two level after the take-out double is non-forcing. It is a correction by responder who will have very limited values, no fit for opener's suit and at least 5 cards in the suit of the response.' – Standard Bidding for the 21st century – Max Hardy.

'A two-level bid in a new suit after an intervening double shows a goodish 5 card or longer suit and 6-9 points; non-forcing.' – Acol in Competition – Eric Crowhurst.

So then, pretty clear in Standard American and Acol – I have no idea what system Hans plays. Hans believes that East should pass with this hand. Presumably South and West then both pass and E-W should take their medicine like grown men? Note that this South hand is one of those rare ones when you can convert a one level take-out double into penalties, although bidding 1♥ is also an acceptable bid for South.

The bottom line. If one wishes to continually criticise others and tell them how to bid, it really does help if you know what you are talking about. Furthermore, if anyone tells me in front of an audience that I play a system that they have never heard of, expect to get the answer back in full in the next news-sheet. '*Be prepared*' – Baden Powell.

A Solid Lead Board 5 from Friday 15th Nov, N-S vul

South	West	North	East	South
♠ K95	-	1 ♠	pass	2 ♣
♥ A2	dbl	3 ♣	3 ♥	4 ♠
♦ Q72	5 ♥	dbl	pass	pass
♣ QJ1064	pass			

So what can we say about South's bidding? I think it's fine, he has shown his ♣ suit, 3 card ♠ support and game values. Excellent. Partner has elected to go for the penalty, so what do you lead? Answer at the bottom of this page.

What do you open? Board 9 from Monday 25th Nov, E-W vul

North There was a discussion on Monday 25th about the best opening bid with this hand. Assuming Standard American then it's not clear. The hand is not worth 2 ♣, so 1 ♦ or 2NT? 2NT is 20-21(22) and a (high) singleton is acceptable for a 2NT opening. I would not argue if my partner chose either but I would open 2NT, especially with a partner who is prone to pass 1 ♦ with an 'unsuitable' hand and 4-5 points. But what if you play strong two's? Easy, 8 playing tricks so open a strong 2 ♦. And what if you play Benjamin two's? Not quite so clear, a strong ♦ hand is shown by the sequence 2 ♣ - 2 ♦ - 3 ♦ and as you are at the 3 level, 9 playing tricks are needed. This hand is about 8 ½ playing tricks, so slightly short. With the nice controls and good ♦ suit (texture!), I would open this hand with a Benjy 2 ♣. The main problem is that if you end up in NT then the wrong hand (partner) may be declarer. Still, you can't have everything and the sequence is quite likely to go 2 ♣ - 2 ♦ - 3 ♦ - 3 ♠ - 3NT and so no problem.

Passing Partner's Better Minor? Board 6 from Friday 15th Nov, E-W vul.

West	East	
♠ 10973	♠ Q2	This board was played 3 times on Friday and each time the opening bid by East (1 ♣, 1 ♦ and a weak 1NT) was passed out. 1 ♦ was a poor score. Was anyone at fault? First of all, I always prefer to open 1 ♣ when equal length in the minors, but that is perhaps personal preference although there are a number of sound reasons why it is best. Anyway, should West pass an opening bid of 1 ♣ or 1 ♦? Passing 1 ♣ is a close call, you have ♣'s and so there is no real reason to bid. However 1 ♥ is perhaps reasonable. So passing 1 ♣ is fine (I would), but what about a 1 ♦ opening? Playing better minor it could be 3 cards and I would never pass with this hand (although many would). 1 ♥ is my choice. A 1NT rebid then lands in a good spot. What happened? 1 ♣ and 1NT went minus 1 but 1 ♦ was minus 2 for a bottom.
♥ 10973	♥ J84	
♦ 64	♦ AK85	
♣ KQ5	♣ A942	

A Solid Lead Answer to the lead problem above.

South actually led a small ♠ and East held ♠ AQ, so the contract was just 3 off (+500) instead of minus 4 (+800). As 4 ♠ makes exactly (+620) this converted a cold top into a cold bottom. Was South just unlucky? No. The correct lead stands out a mile, partner's 1 ♠ opening does not promise the ♠ A or the ♠ Q (he had Jxxxx), the clear safe lead is ♣ Q. The bottom line? Leading (top) from a sequence is usually good, especially if partner has supported the suit.

Transfer with a weak hand?

Board 9 from Friday 29th, E-W vul

It is probably even more important to transfer when you hold a weak hand opposite partner's 1NT than when you hold a stronger one: -

North	South (E)	West	North	East	South
♠ K1083	♠ J96	-	1NT	pass	pass (1)
♥ AQ7	♥ 108542	pass			
♦ K86	♦ J9				
♣ KQ4	♣ 852				

1NT really was a nightmare for North to play (I know – I was North) – no communication to dummy.

Playing in ♥'s this dummy will provide two or three tricks – it was useless in NT. So it may turn out to be a 5-2 fit, even that will usually play better than 1NT. South must transfer.

And what happened? 1NT went 1 down, and it went 3 down at another table (presumably the same bidding?). At a third table they got too high in a 3♥ contract by North (minus 1). As North was declarer, it must have been via a transfer but why they got to the 3 level baffles me. A super-accept? The North hand is maximum but you should only super-accept with a max and 4 card support, this deal demonstrates why – partner may be bust.

Bidding Quiz Answers

- Hand A: 4♦, a splinter agreeing ♥'s and showing ♦ shortage. Bid 4♥ if you (or your partner) do not yet understand splinters.
- Hand B: Pass. Not good enough for 2NT and not shapely/strong enough for double.
- Hand C: I would bid 1♦ although 3NT is not wrong. But 2♣, 3♣ and 2NT are all incorrect as they are not forcing.
- Hand D: 2♣, non-forcing. You can redouble with 9 points but I would like a little more in at least one major suit. Pass could be a disaster if LHO also passes. Actually, I prefer 3♣ with this hand if you have agreed that it is a weak bid.
- Hand E: Transfer. This hand is probably useless in a NT contract. Even a 5-2 ♥ fit will probably play better in 2♥ than 1NT, and partner may have 3,4 or 5 ♥'s!
- Hand F: Pass or 1♥. This hand is one of those *very rare* cases when it is OK to convert partner's take-out double at the one level into penalties. 1♥ is also fine.
- Hand G: Redouble. This shows 9+ points and (generally) no fit for partner. It often means (as in this example) that you wish to double the opponents in their final resting place (hopefully the graveyard).
- Hand H: Do not redouble just because you know that 1♥ doubled will make!! If you pathetically redouble in the (mis)belief that this shows ♥'s then what are you going to say to partner after opponents easily bid and make their 4♠ contract? With support for partner, raise him as high as you dare after a double. I would bid 4♥ with this hand (law of total tricks) but for the feint hearted I guess that 3♥ is OK, 2♥ is far too feeble for me. I cannot find a suitable adjective for pass (I will give you a few lessons if you chose pass).
- Sequence J: I would say invitational, I made my case earlier. I guess that one could make a case for it being forcing but I would not make the bid with a strong hand unless that had definitely been agreed (one can always double and subsequently bid ♠'s if necessary with a strong hand).
- Sequence K: Weak, non-forcing (about 7-9 pts). Generally a good suit with shortness in partner's suit when a complete pass-out of the double would be disastrous.