



Monday 18/10/2004

Friday 22/10/2004

1st Jerry/Paul 71%
 2nd Martin/Rosemary 54%

1st Alex/Jeff 57%
 2nd Clive/Ken 54%

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

Hand A	Hand B	What do you open with Hand A?
♠ KQ743	♠ 10	With Hand B partner opens 1♣, what do you respond?
♥ AKQJ	♥ KQ107543	
♦ AJ102	♦ 7	
♣ -	♣ 10975	
Hand C	Hand D	With Hand C LHO opens 2♥ and partner doubles, what do you bid?
♠ KQ8632	♠ 854	
♥ 7	♥ AKJ10	With Hand D LHO opens 1♣ and partner doubles, what do you bid?
♦ Q63	♦ 6543	
♣ 762	♣ 93	
Hand E	Hand F	With Hand E RHO opens 1♣, LHO bids 1♥ and partner doubles (a) What do you bid? (b) What would you do if RHO now bids 1♠?
♠ Q965	♠ AQJ7	
♥ J82	♥ AK95	
♦ 98632	♦ 92	With hand F you open 1♣ and partner responds 1♥. What do you bid?
♣ 3	♣ A103	

It's time to re-state a few rules, regulations etc:**Dress Code**

Short-sleeved (vest-type) T-shirts are unacceptable. Would it be too much to ask that people actually wear a shirt? I note that Jeff has a very impressive shirt that he keeps for the exclusive use at the bridge club. Perhaps others could follow his fine example?

Alerts

There were a couple of problems on Friday. Now I do like to keep things simple and the rules keep changing anyway. At our club we follow the principle that anything that is 'standard' does not need to be alerted. So Stayman and transfers need not be alerted.

But there are a few greyer areas. The modern trend is for weak jump overcalls and they are now 'standard' and do not need to be alerted; thus intermediate or strong jumps overcalls do need an alert. And what about jump shifts? – say partner opens 1♣ and you jump to 2♥. Is this a weak or strong bid? 'Standard' is that it is strong (good suit, game forcing); but many pairs play this as (very) weak, but if weak it needs to be alerted as that is not standard.

In the USA a weak NT need to be alerted. In the UK a strong NT needs to be alerted. So at our club? Neither needs to be alerted; one can alert or announce if you wish, or even fill out a convention card? As far as I am concerned, if you don't know what the opponents play then ask. Perhaps easiest is the Alex approach of always asking about everything – but then I guess that that slows things down and you may always finish each round last?

Slam played in 1♠ - twice!

Board 14 from Monday 18th, love all.

With 11 solid tricks and slam on a finesse, only one of the 6 tables even got to game on this board from Monday: -

West (A)	East	West	North	East	South
♠ KQ743	♠ J62	-	-	pass	pass
♥ AKQJ	♥ 762	1♠ (1)	pass	pass	pass
♦ AJ102	♦ K543				
♣ -	♣ 862				

So what did you open with Hand A at (1) in this week's quiz? It's 20 points, but that is not as important as it's playing strength. There are 3-3½ in ♠'s, 4 in ♥'s and 2-2½ in ♦'s; that's about 9-10. If you play strong twos (or Benjamin) then a strong 2♠ is fine, although a game forcing 2♣ (2♦ playing Benjamin) may be better.

Playing Standard American it's easy – open 2♣. Now the 2♣ opening is often 23+ points, but that is for balanced hands. With an unbalanced hand, open 2♣ if you are within one trick of game in your hand. This West hand easily qualifies.

And what happened? The ♦Q was doubleton 'onside' and so 12 tricks were easy. It was passed out in 1♠ at two tables scoring 12 tricks so 230 to E-W. At another table this West let North play in 3♣ undoubled! That resulted in just +100 for E-W and the deserved frigid bottom. A couple of pairs made somewhat miserable 'efforts' – reaching 3♠ and 4♦. The only decent E-W score was +1100 defending 5♣ doubled.

And how should the bidding go playing Standard American?

2♣ - 2♦ - 2♠ - 4♠ - pass; where 2♠ is game forcing and so 4♠ is weak (fast arrival).

The bottom lines: -

- With 9 or more tricks in your hand, open 2♣.
- With 9 or more tricks in your hand, do not let the opponents play in 3 of your void!

Play quiz

Answer overleaf.

YOU ↓ You are North, defending against 6♠. You lead the ♣J which declarer wins with the ♣K. Declarer then leads the ♠J, do you cover?

♠ Q4	Dealer:	West	North	East	South
♥ Q92	South	-	-	-	pass
♦ J8432	Both vul	1♣	pass	1♥	pass
♣ J106		1♠	pass	4NT	pass
		5♦	pass	6♠	all pass
N	♠ A1076				
W E	♥ K865				
S	♦ A9	← DUMMY			
	♣ AQ2				

Increasing the odds

Board 7 from Monday 18th

Dealer: ♠ Q4
South ♥ Q92
Both vul ♦ J8432
♣ J106

♠ KJ95	N	♠ A1076
♥ A104	W E	♥ K865
♦ K105	S	♦ A9
♣ K94		♣ AQ2

♠ 832
♥ J73
♦ Q76
♣ 8753

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

Not a great slam, but 4 out of 7 tables reached it on Monday, so let's have a look: -

Obviously one rebids 1♠ at (1) – I note that one pair somehow reached a very poor 3NT – guess that they don't know about the power of the 4-4 fit?

Anyway, it's all obvious up to (2) but should East go slamming? It's 29+ combined points with a 4-4 ♠ fit. Enough for slam? Maybe, it's close, but I would settle for 4♠ because both of the 4 card suits have just one honour – A1076 is pushing it for slam quality when the points are borderline. Note that a 4♠ bid is not shut-out, it shows enough points for game but with no singleton (otherwise splinter); partner is invited to press on with a suitable hand (about 15+).

And what happened? Obviously the one pair in 3NT got a deserved poor score. 6♠ depends upon finding the ♠Q – 3 pairs succeeded and one failed. The other two tables were in 4♠ and 7♠ and both made 12 tricks

It appears that finding the ♠Q is a 50% guess, so why did 5 out of the 6 playing in ♠'s succeed? I know that I would have got it wrong but for a little help from the opponents: -

So how do you play this ♠ suit?

Usually with 5 out missing the queen one should lay down (or lead up to) an honour and then finesse on the 2nd round. But when you hold the jack, ten and nine you can increase the otherwise 50% odds by inducing an inexperienced player into making a mistake.

Here I played the ♠J from hand and intended to win with the ♠A if not covered and finesse the ♠9 on the way back. Fortunately this North foiled my losing decision by playing the ♠Q and leaving me with no losing option!

The bottom line: -

Only cover an honour with an honour if you can promote something in your or partner's hand.

Play Quiz Answer

You should smoothly duck. Since the ♠10 is in dummy there is little chance of promoting a card in partner's hand. Declarer has exactly 4 ♠'s and is fishing for the ♠Q; if you duck then he will rise with the ♠A in dummy and take a losing finesse into your ♠Q.

The only possible holding for partner where covering is correct is ♠K9x. That means declarer has ♠J8xx and it is unlikely that he would lead the ♠J from that holding (and it would be a poor play).

Responding to partner's take-out double

The next three deals feature a take-out double and an incorrect response. It's pretty straightforward really. When partner makes a take-out double it is rarely correct to pass. With zero points you have to bid; so a suit bid promises 0-9 points. A 1NT bid is 6-9 and denies a 4 card major of course. 2NT is 11-12. A jump in a suit is about 10-12 and with a stronger hand it's usually best to force with a cue bid of the opponent's suit.

If you hold a minimal hand with a 4 card major and a 5 card minor then you have to decide which to show; I would usually opt for the major suit.

But if RHO bids after your partner's double then you are no longer forced to bid, and so a non-jump in a suit promises some values, typically 7-9 points.

Let's see how this was not applied three times on Friday (the first two by the same player!): -

Don't deny a 4 card major

Board 11 from Friday 22nd, love all.

West East (D)

♠ AJ92 ♠ 854
♥ Q974 ♥ AKJ10
♦ AQ ♦ 6543
♣ Q65 ♣ 93

Table A

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
dbl (1)	pass	1NT (2)	all pass

Table B

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
1NT (1)	pass	2♣	pass
2♥	pass	3♥ (3)	all pass

Table A: So what should you bid at (1)? Double or 1NT? If you double then you are more likely to find a possible major suit fit if partner is weak, but what if he bids 1♦? People never agree with this type of hand and so I think that either 1NT or double are reasonable, provided that you play Stayman and transfers after a 1NT overcall.

And what about this 1NT bid at (2)? Now the 1NT response to a double shows 6-9 points, but it's usually best to have a stop in the suit bid. But the over-riding factor in bidding 1NT is that it denies a 4 card major. 1NT here is terrible.

Table B: This West chose 1NT at (1) and East bid Stayman. The 3♥ invitation at (3) is marginal but certainly acceptable.

And what happened? 3♥ made exactly and beat the 1NT contract at two other tables. Quite how one E-W pair landed in 2♠ (just making) baffles me.

The bottom line. Never deny a 4 card major. But overcalling 1NT with one (or both) majors is acceptable provided that you play Stayman over partner's 1NT overcall (it is standard).

A weak jump shift?

Board 4 from Friday 22nd

Dealer: ♠ Q965
West ♥ J82
Both vul ♦ 98632
♣ 3

♠ A743	N	♠ 10
♥ 96	W E	♥ KQ107543
♦ AK	S	♦ 7
♣ AQ642		♣ 10975
	♠ KJ82	
	♥ A	
	♦ QJ1054	
	♣ KJ8	

Table A

West	North (E)	East (B)	South
1♣ (1)	pass	1♥ (2)	dbl (3)
1♠ (4)	2♦ (5)	2♥ (6)	3♦
3♥ (7)	4♦ (8)	4♥	dbl (9)
all pass			

Table B

West	North	East	South
1♣	pass	2♥ (2)	pass
4♥	all pass		

Some interesting bidding, let's have a look: -

- Table A: (1) What would you open with this hand? It's 17 points but really is too strong for 1NT. I would open 1♣ with a view to rebidding either 2♠ or 2NT, depending upon whether your partnership style allows 2NT when holding 4♠'s.
- (2) What should East respond? 1♥ is correct. This East hand is not strong enough for 2♥ (game forcing) and I discuss the 'weak' 2♥ jump at (2) at Table B later.
- (3) And what about South's double? You need a good/shapely hand to bid here as the opponents have already shown about 20 points minimum and neither is limited. This hand is probably just about good enough.
- (4) West is not obliged to rebid after the opponent's double and to do so shows extras, but this hand has too many extras. It's far too good for 1♠. Re-double or 2♠ or 2NT are the sensible options.
- (5) So what did you bid with Hand E(b) in this week's quiz? If West had not bid over partner's double you would have to bid either 1♠ or 2♦, showing 0-9 points (I prefer 1♠). Since West has bid you are off the hook and to bid is a 'free bid' and shows about 7-9 points. Obviously this North hand should pass.
- (6) This East Hand could not jump last go, but with this great suit I think an invitational 3♥ is better than just 2♥. 4♥ is also an alternative.
- (7) With this monster, 4♥ is in order anyway.
- (8) So a number of poor bids so far, but this 4♦ really is worse than North's previous outing. Quite why he wanted to 'push them up' is a mystery.
- (9) A clear double. Somebody is lying but partner has confirmed a good hand with about 8 or 9 points so obviously the opponents are way overboard??

- Table B: (2) A word about the weak jump response. This is not standard, but some more experienced players play that when partner opens with 1♣/♦ then a jump to 2♥/♠ is pre-emptive. And by pre-emptive it is meant a 6 or 7 card suit that is too weak to reply at the one level; so about 2-5 points. This East hand is far too good.

And what happened? 4♥ was bid and made exactly at 3 tables and so North's shenanigans converted a top into a bottom by pushing then into the easy game and inviting partner to double. At the 4th table N-S were allowed to play in 4♦ for the N-S top.

The bottom lines: - The weak jump shift is weak, it is much weaker than an opening 2♥/♠ since partner has opened. KQxxxx is far too good.

- A free bid after partner's take-out double promises 7-9 points.

Pre-empt only once

Board 15 from Friday 22nd.

Dealer: ♠ J9
South ♥ 52
N-S vul ♦ 10752
♣ Q10983

♠ A104 N ♠ KQ8632
♥ K8 W E ♥ 7
♦ AK84 S ♦ Q63
♣ AKJ4 ♣ 762

♠ 75
♥ AQJ109643
♦ J9
♣ 5

Table A

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	3♥ (1)
dbl	pass	3♠	4♥ (2)
dbl	all pass		

Table B

West	North	East (C)	South
-	-	-	1♥ (1)
dbl	pass	1♠ (3)	4♥ (4)
dbl	all pass		

Table C

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♥ (1)
2♥ (5)	pass	2♠ (6)	pass
4♠	all pass		

So what would you open with this South hand? It's an 8 card suit so normally it's 4♥. But there are just 7½ tricks and the vulnerability is unfavourable. The law of two applies at this vulnerability and a cautious player would open 3♥, although I would not argue with a 4♥ opener. But I would argue with South's bidding at Tables A & B: -

Table A: This south chose to open 3♥, which is probably the best bid. But then he undid his good work at (2) by bidding again. There really is no excuse for this – if you consider that the hand is worth 4♥, then bid it first go. Do not open at a lower level and let the opponents exchanges information before they double you for penalties.

Table B: This South chose to open 1♥, I prefer 3♥ or 4♥. Anyway, West doubled and what did you bid at (3) with Hand C in this week's quiz? In response to partner's take-out double a non-jump bid is 0-9 points, so bid 2♠ as this East did? If you think that this East hand is seven points, then look again. Partner has doubled ♥'s and that usually promises ♠'s. You have an excellent 6 card ♠ suit and a singleton in the opponent's suit. This Hand C is easily worth a jump to 2♠, maybe more. So East has missed the boat and E-W will not find their slam now, but South then let them off the hook by making the same mistake as his partner in crime at Table A by bidding an unwise 4♥ at (4).

Table C: This E-W do not play Michaels and so this immediate cue bid of the opponent's suit at (5) shows an enormous hand (equivalent to a 2♣ opener). Obviously East should jump to 3♠ at (6) in search of slam.

And what happened? 4♠ made +2 at both tables. 4♥ doubled went 3 down for 800 away. At the 4th table the final contract was 3♥ doubled (minus two).

The bottom lines: - Do not bid again after pre-empting, but pre-empt to the limit 1st go. KQxxxx in a suit that partner can support is worth far more than 5 points.

4-4 or 5-4?

Board 8 from Friday 22nd

Dealer: ♠ AQJ7
West ♥ AK95
Love all ♦ 92
♣ A103

♠ K4 N ♠ 853
♥ QJ W E ♥ 107
♦ J1054 S ♦ KQ763
♣ QJ987 ♣ 542
♠ 10962
♥ 86432
♦ A8
♣ K6

Table A

West	North (F)	East	South
pass	1♣	pass	1♥
pass	2NT (1)	pass	3♠ (2)
pass	4♥ (3)	pass	all pass

Table B

West	North	East	South
pass	1♣	pass	1♥
pass	2♠ (1)	pass	3♠ (4)
pass	4♥ (5)	pass	pass (6)

Table A: (1) So what did you rebid with Hand F at (1) in this week's quiz? The hand started out as a very good 18 points. After partner bids ♥'s it improves and is now easily worth a game force. 2NT shows 18-19 points and, although rarely passed, is not forcing. I prefer 4♥ or the 2♠ bid of Table B.

(2) Normally this bidding of ♠'s having opened ♥'s would be a reverse showing extra values (16+). But after partner has shown strength it's best to play that it is simply natural and not showing any extras.

(3) Apparently North intended to bid this all along (he considered his 2NT bid as forcing). So I asked why he did not simply bid 4♥ at (1)? He said that he considered 4♥ to be shut-out; more of this soon.

Table B: This North chose 2♠ at (1) and this is a very sensible game forcing bid. I would have bid 4♥ but upon reflection I believe that 2♠ may be a better bid as there may be a superior 4-4 ♠ fit. South obviously supports the ♠'s at (4), I would have bid 4♠ (fast arrival). But I find North's 4♥ bid at (5) inconsistent; why bid ♠'s initially if you want to play in ♥'s? And, again, as South I would convert to 4♠ at (6) because it's a known 4-4 fit (often better than 5-4) and, on this bidding, North may have only 3 ♥'s.

And what happened? All 4 tables bid to 4♥, 3 made 12 tricks and the 4th made 13 tricks. With the ♠K onside and the ♥'s splitting 12 tricks are easy. But note that if you play in a ♠ contract then 13 tricks are trivial! – you get a ♦ discard on a long ♥.

The bottom lines: -

- Look for the 4-4 fit. It is usually better than a 5-3 fit and a good 4-4 fit is even better than a 5-4 fit.
- Don't bid ♠'s unless you would consider them as trumps.
- If you find a 4-4 fit, then don't lose it!
- A sequence like 1♣ - 1♥ - 4♥ is most certainly not shut-out. It shows about 19-20 points and it invites partner to look for slam with a suitable hand. If you play splinters then it denies a singleton or void.
- Do not confuse the above sequence with Fast Arrival. Fast Arrival is a jump to game in a *game forcing* situation.

The Jump Shift

Hand G	Hand H	Hand B
♠ 10	♠ 10	♠ 10
♥ KQJ1086	♥ Q109543	♥ KQ107543
♦ A1062	♦ J62	♦ 7
♣ KQ	♣ 975	♣ 10975

It's time to cover the jump shift. Partner opens 1♣ or 1♦, what do you bid? In Standard American a jump to 2♥ would be strong, a good 5+ (usually 6+) card suit and game forcing. Hand G is a typical example.

Another less popular scheme is that a jump is weak, but by weak we really mean weak.

When partner opens and you have 6 or more points you simply bid your suit at the one

level. So the weak jump shift is defined as a hand with a long (6 or 7) card major but *too weak* to respond; i.e. it is 2-5 points. Hand H is typical for such a weak 2♥ response. Hand B is far too strong for this weak jump shift and should simply respond 1♥.

Bidding Quiz Answers

Hand A: 2♣. This hand is far too strong for a 1♠ opener. A 2♣ opening is 23+ points if balanced or else one trick short of game. This hand has at least 9 playing tricks and so should open 2♣ - you need very little from partner to make slam!

Hand B: 1♥. The hand is not good enough for a game forcing jump to 2♥. If you play weak jump shifts (so 2♥ is weak) then you should still bid 1♥ as this hand is far too good for a weak jump shift which is about 2-5 points. I would never dream of a pre-emptive bid with this hand, you have 4 card support for partner and an excellent 7 card major; if you want to pre-empt then the only bid other than 1♥ that makes any sense to me is 4♥.

Hand C: 2♠. This hand is far too good for a feeble 1♠. I would not argue if you bid 3♠ or even 4♠.

Hand D: 1♥. This promises 0-9 points. 1NT (6-9) would be a very poor bid because it denies a 4 card major and usually suggests a stop in the suit bid. Even if this ♥ suit were nit so strong, I would always prefer 1♥ to 1♦, show the 4 card major.

A couple of club players may be quoted as saying '*I consider it more important to show my points than to show a 4 card major*'. If you are a believer in that philosophy, then take up Precision ♣ rather than a natural system like Standard American or Acol.

Hand E: (a) 1♠. You must bid and both 1♠ or 2♦ show 0-9 points. It's usually best to show the major and so I prefer 1♠.

(b) pass. Once RHO bids then you do not have to respond to partner's double. So with 0-6 points you pass and with 7-9 you make a non-jump bid.

Hand F: 4♥. 3♥ is not good enough as it is only invitational. A 2NT bid is 18-19 points but is not 100% forcing. This is 18 points but it has improved by partner's bid and must insist upon game. 4♥ is the 'obvious' bid - it shows about 19-20 points, 4 card support but no singleton/void (you would have splintered). This jump to game here is most definitely not a weak or shut out bid (as one member incorrectly suggested). Fast arrival only applies in game forcing situations.

Now I would have bid 4♥ but I also like the 2♠ bid made at one table - but only if you intend to play in 4♠ if partner supports ♠'s!