



Monday 25/10/2004

Friday 29/10/2004

1 st	Paul/Terry	65%
2 nd	Clive/Ken	59%

1 st	Dave/Jim	63%
2 nd	Alex/Jeff	59%

Bidding Quiz

Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.

Hand A Hand B

What do you open, non vul in 1st seat with Hand A?

♠ 97	♠ KQ32
♥ J	♥ K98432
♦ K962	♦ 10
♣ QJ10987	♣ 54

With Hand B partner opens 3♣ and RHO bids 3NT, what do you do?

Hand C Hand D

With Hand C RHO opens 1NT, (a) what do you bid? Suppose you overcall 3♠ and LHO bids 4♥ round to you. (b) what do you do now?

♠ AQ107654	♠ AK54
♥ K	♥ Q93
♦ 8	♦ Q85
♣ J953	♣ J75

With Hand D RHO opens 1♣. (a) what do you do? Suppose you pass, LHO bids 1♥ and RHO bids 2♣, then (b) what do you do this time?

Hand E Hand F

With Hand E partner opens 1NT. (a) what do you bid if RHO overcalls 2♠? (b) what do you bid if RHO overcalls 3♠? (c) suppose you bid 4♥ (or 3♥ in sequence (a) which partner raises to 4♥) and RHO now bids 4♠, what do you do?

♠ 2	♠ Q762
♥ 98752	♥ KJ64
♦ AKQ52	♦ AJ3
♣ 107	♣ 92

With Hand F LHO opens 1♣, RHO bids 1♥, LHO bids 2♣ and this is passed round to you. What do you do?

What does a world Champion say?

Board 24 from Monday 19th July. N-S vul

West (A)	East (B)	West	North	East	South
♠ 97	♠ KQ32	me		Chuck	
♥ J	♥ K98432	3♣ (1)	3NT	4♣	pass
♦ K962	♦ 10	pass	dbl	all pass	
♣ QJ10987	♣ 54				

What did you open with Hand A? And what did you bid with Hand B? This may seem familiar – of course it is. It's from news-sheets 90 & 91, I was West, Chuck was East. Chuck blamed me for the lousy result – saying that you need a 7 card suit. I wrote the hand up and also reproduced a nearly identical hand where Marty Bergen also opened at the 3 level. Chuck dismissed this – saying that what Marty sez is total nonsense and that real bridge players will not pre-empt with a 6-card suit like this.

I maintained that a 3♣ opening was fine and that Chuck's 4♣ bid was ludicrous. Now of course I could not find a hand like Chuck's in my library – I don't think that any sensible player would dream of bidding 4♣, let alone try to defend the bid later!

And Chuck most certainly did try to defend his atrocious bid – see his Devil's Advocate article reproduced in news-sheet 91. Chuck says that other 'top players' agree with his 4♣ bid and disagree with my 3♣. Names please - I assume it was Hans ? Or is this just another Chuck fabrication? I stated that I disagreed with everything Chuck wrote and that I would try to get an expert opinion.

Anyway, as promised, I sent the hand off to an expert panel – so let's see what a multiple ex-world champion says about my bid and about Chuck's bid.

So what did the expert do with my hand?

3♣. These days it is normal to open a non-vul pre-empt on a 6 card suit in 1st or 3rd seat, particularly when the suit is as solid as this one and with an outside 4 card minor. I would describe 3♣ as middle of the road.

And what did the expert do with Chuck's hand?

Pass. 4♣ is unwise for two reasons. Firstly, once one opponent has described his hand fairly accurately then a further pre-empt gives them fielder's choice.... Secondly, this hand is defensive in nature and may well not produce a single trick in offence.

Don't bid your hand twice.

Board 3 from Monday 25th

Dealer: ♠ AQ107654
South ♥ K
E-W vul ♦ 8
♣ J953

♠ KJ98 N ♠ 2
♥ J106 W E ♥ 98752
♦ J3 S ♦ AKQ52
♣ AKQ2 ♣ 107

♠ 3
♥ AQ43
♦ 109764
♣ 864

Table A

West	North (C)	East (E)	South
-	-	-	pass
1NT	2♠ (1)	3♥ (2)	pass
4♥ (3)	4♠ (4)	pass (5)	pass
dbl	all pass		

Table B

West	North (C)	East (E)	South
-	-	-	pass
1NT	3♠ (1)	4♥ (2)	pass
pass	4♠ (4)	dbl (5)	pass

- Table A: (1) So what did you overcall with Hand C in this week's quiz? Playing natural methods I would choose 3♠ but would not argue with 2♠ or even 4♠.
- (2) What did you bid with Hand E(a) in this week's quiz? This East bid 3♥ (as would I) which is best played as forcing.
- (3) So should West bid 3NT or 4♥ now? The ♠ holding shouts out for 3NT but there is a 5-3 ♥ fit and West has a weak doubleton ♦. It's close and I would not argue with either although 3NT would have been a nice contract – because it's played by the correct hand – 4♥ is played by East and a ♠ lead spells doom.
- (4) Of course it does not matter what West bids if North behaves like this. This is one of my pet 'hates'. Bid your hand just once. If you think it's worth 4♠ then bid 4♠ at your first turn and nobody will say anything other than 'unlucky' if you get a bad score. Bid again like this and you deserve all the criticism thrown at you.
- (5) And what did you bid with Hand E(c)? I would double with these weak ♥'s – save partner the decision. 5♦ may work out, but I would prefer to take the money.

- Table B: This was my table (I was East). This time North overcalled 3♠ at (1) which would also be my choice. It's not quite so easy for East now as it was at Table A; you are now one level higher at (2) and so have to bid 4♥, going past 3NT.
- (4) So North's pre-empt has worked; the opponents are in 4♥ which will go down. Bidding again here is terrible. North then 'tried a Chuck' – If you have made a stupid bid and get a poor score (like Chuck's infamous 4♣ bid) – then immediately go on the offensive and try to blame partner. This North said that he thought 4♥ was making as his partner did not double; saying that South should double the 4♥ bid. What nonsense. The other three players at the table were all also very experienced and all told him exactly what they thought.

And what happened? 4♠ doubled cost 500 and so these N-S's shared the bottom. Now I don't know the bidding at other tables but all of the other E-W's got too high (5♦, 5♦ dbl, 5♥ and 5♥ dbl). Presumably North also bid 4♠ at some stage – and in that case either East or West should double. 5♦ by East at (5) is unwise (take the money). The bottom lines: -

- If you have made a foolish bid and it results in a bad score, don't try to blame partner.
- Once you have pre-empted then do not bid again.
- Pre-empt to the level that you are prepared to go to at the first opportunity.
- The 5 level belongs to the opponents.

Who should make the effort?

Board 3 from Friday 29th

Dealer: ♠ J8
South ♥ A1085
E-W vul ♦ 10976
♣ 863

♠ AK54	N	♠ Q762
♥ Q93	W E	♥ KJ64
♦ Q85	S	♦ AJ3
♣ J75		♣ 92

♠ 1093
♥ 72
♦ K42
♣ AKQ104

West (D)	North	East (F)	South
-	-	-	1♣
pass (1)	1♥ (2)	pass (3)	2♣ (4)
pass (5)	pass	pass (6)	

N-S scored a top for 2♣ making +1 when E-W can make 9 tricks in ♠'s. So which one of them should have bid? East says the West should double at (5) and West says that East should either double or bid 2♠ at (6). Who do you back? Here are my opinions: -

- (1) So what did you bid with Hand D(a) at (1) in this week's quiz? I don't like double because it has too many ♣'s. A take-out double should be short in the suit bid and playable in the other three suits unless strong enough to bid again over a minimum response. With this very flat hand bidding is dangerous.
- (2) North can bid either 1♦ or 1♥ here. My preference is 1♥ with a weak hand.
- (3) East could double but I definitely prefer pass.
- (4) I would rebid 1NT but 2♣ worked out OK.
- (5) So then, should West double now (to show ♠'s and ♦'s)? Did you double with Hand D(b) in this week's quiz? I believe that the answer is no – because bridge is a partnership game and East still has a go. But my main reason is that North is unlimited and bidding will be dangerous with this flat hand.
- (6) But here it's different. Did you bid at (6) with Hand F in this week's quiz? Both North and South have limited their hands and East is in the pass- out or balancing seat. He knows that partner has values and should either double or bid 2♠.

The bottom lines: -

- Be aware of balancing. In the pass-out seat you know that both opponents are limited and so you can 'bid partner's hand'.

Bidding Quiz Answers

Something a little new for the first two hands. Hand A is obviously Hand B's partner. Now we have seen these hands before (news-sheets 90 & 91) and Chuck and myself had widely different opinions. It was easy to find plenty of support in the literature for my 3♣ opening, but Chuck simply dismissed this as the writings of mad men. Obviously I could not find any documentation of anybody raising a pre-empt with two small after a 3NT overcall and so I wrote off to the UK's bidding quiz and got the views of a multiple ex-world champion. So here you can compare a World Champion's comments with Chuck's and mine: -

- Hand A: Me: 3♣. Looks pretty standard to me with this solid 6 card suit when non-vul. Marty Bergen opens at the 3 level on a virtually identical hand.
- Chuck: Pass. A 3-level pre-empt promises a 7 card suit. As far as Marty Bergen is concerned, I don't care what he has to say, EVER.
- World Champ: 3♣. These days it is normal to open a non-vul pre-empt on a 6 card suit in 1st or 3rd seat, particularly when the suit is as solid as this one and with an outside 4 card minor. I would describe 3♣ as middle of the road.
- Hand B: Me: Pass; and be thankful that partner has solved your otherwise awkward lead problem. 4♣ is ludicrous and is a no-win proposition. It is most certainly a candidate for the worst bid of the year.
- Chuck: 4♣. East has every reason to believe that opponents can make 3NT.
- World Champ: Pass. 4♣ is unwise for two reasons. Firstly, once one opponent has described his hand fairly accurately then a further pre-empt gives them fielder's choice.... Secondly, this hand is defensive in nature and may well not produce a single trick in offence.

Just a word about Chuck comment '*East has every reason to believe that opponents can make 3NT*'. This shows a complete lack of understanding of what pre-empting is all about. One pre-empts so that the opponents have little room to find the correct contract and nobody really knows what is best. To bid here when you have no idea if 3NT makes or not is just silly. It is similar to the beginner's mistake of bidding again having pre-empted.

So it looks like I drive down the middle of the road while Chuck mows down pedestrians on the sidewalk? Let's get onto last week's hands: -

- Hand C: (a) 3♠. It depends upon your partnership style/methods. 2♠, 3♠ or even 4♠ are all reasonable.
- (b) Pass. Once you have described your hand then that's it, to bid again is suicidal when both opponents have shown strength.
- Hand D: (a) Pass. Too many ♣'s for a take-out double.
- (b) Pass. Double would be for take-out showing ♠'s and ♦'s but there is no need for such a risky bid on this flat hand as partner is still there.
- Hand E: (a) 3♥. This is best played as forcing.
- (b) 4♥. What else?
- (c) Dbl. 5♦ could work out better but it really is a gamble – I prefer to 'take the money'. Pass (a forcing pass) is reasonable, but I like to take the pressure off partner and I don't really want to play in 5♥.
- Hand F: Either 2♠ or double. This is the pass-out seat and partner has values but was unable to bid. You have to 'bid his hand'.