Club News Sheet – No. 66

30/1/2004

Last week's winners: Monday 26/1/04

Friday 30/1/04

N-S 1st Norman/Dave 58 % E-W 1st Lars/Lars 60 % 1st Paul(Ire)/Joe 61% N-S 2nd Don(US)/Gary 57 % E-W 2nd Paul(Ire)/Hans 58 % 2nd Norman/Dave 60%

So the almighty current regime in the USA wants to preach democracy to the rest of the world. Will all the residents of Florida get a vote this time? And can they even count them? So Russia has a biased media – I tuned into Fox News a few weeks back, I have never seen such a load of biased right wing propaganda in my life! Talk about black kettles and pots or whatever.

It also looks like Tony has got the British media (BBC) crawling under his thumb as well, eh?

Bidding Quiz		Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.
Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A partner opens 1NT (15-17). Do you invite slam (perhaps with a quantitative 4NT) or simply bid 6NT?
♦ Q8 ♥ J7	♦ KQ1084 ♥ 5	Or what? Bid Stayman first?
◆ KQJ42 ♣ AQ42	◆ KQ654 ♣ Q3	With hand B partner opens 1Ψ and you respond $1 \blacktriangle$. Partner then rebids 1NT (12-14), what is your bid?
Hand C	Hand D	With hand C partner opens a strong NT, what is your bid?
▲ J986♥ J965◆ Q642♣ Q	A Q432✓ AK82A A9A A85	Just for a change an Acol question. You play Acol (4 card majors and a weak NT), what do you open with hand D?
Hand E	Hand F	With Hand E you open 1 \clubsuit and partner responds 1 \blacktriangledown . What is your rebid?
AK7✓ AJ3✓ 9♣ AJ9874	▲ 1064✔ A853◆ 4♣ AKQ104	With Hand F partner opens 1 \(\text{a and you respond 2.*. Partner then rebids 2.*. } \), what is your bid?
Hand G	Hand H	With hand G RHO opens ◆, what is your bid?
★ KQ98♥ Q5♦ J653★ K104	AJ92✓ AK103A93№ 109	With Hand H you open 1NT and partner bids 2*, Stayman. What is your response?
Hand J	Hand K	With hand J partner opens 1 ♦, what is your response?
♦ 853♥ AK2♦ KJ1065♣ J10	↑ 10↓ A3↑ AKQ10953♣ Q72	With Hand K you open 1 ♦ and partner responds 1 ♠. What is your rebid?

The Beginner's Page

Last week I covered the opening bids of 1 of a suit and 1NT. This week we'll look at responding to opener's 1 level opening bid.

First of all let's lay down the points requirements. Generally speaking you need 6 or more points to respond to partner's opening. A new suit is always forcing and opener must rebid something. So a new suit is 6-27 points (unlimited).

Limit Bids

But there are two ways in which you can tell partner how many points you have (these are called limit bids – because you show how many points you hold within a limited range). When partner opens with one of a suit there are two types of limit bids and they are not forcing. Partner may pass if there are insufficient points to look for game - generally around 25 in total.

These two limited responses are supporting partner and bidding NT.

Suppose that partner opens $1 \, \mathbf{v}$, then the ranges of the limit bids are: -

1NT	=	6-10	pts	2♥	=	6-10	pts
2NT	=	11-12	pts	3♥	=	11-12	pts *
3NT	=	13-15	pts	4♥	=	13-15	pts *

Since we play 5 card major suit openings, you may raise partner with just 3 cards.

Let's have a few examples, partner has opened 1♥, what do you respond?

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3	Hand 4	Hand 5	Hand 6
♦ 764	♦ 764	▲ K76	♦ Q76	♦ Q76	♦ Q76
♥ K98	♥ KJ8	♥ KJ98	♥ J8	♥ J8	♥ J8
♦ 986	♦ K86	♦ A987	♦ AJ97	♦ AJ97	♦ AQ97
♣ J752	* 8762	. 87	* 8754	♣ A874	♣ AQ74

Hand 1: Pass. You generally need 6 points to respond.

Hand 2: $2 \checkmark$. Sufficient points and support for a raise.

Hand 3: $3 \checkmark$. Good support and 11 points, invite $4 \checkmark$ by raising to $3 \checkmark$.

Hand 4: 1NT. Jx is not good enough support to raise partner and 1NT is best

Hand 5: 2NT. 11-12 points and poor support for partner's suit.

Hand 6: 3NT. 13-15 points and poor support for partner's suit.

Next week I'll cover responder bidding a new suit.

^{*} Note, there are better, more sophisticated, ways of showing a raise of partner's suit to the 3 and 4 level, but I'm keeping it simple here.

Mentioning Names etc.

One member (Chuck of course) asked if I could refrain from mentioning his name in the news-sheets. I have stated my policy before and am not changing it. For the record: -

- (a) If I notice a nice bidding sequence or play then I can obviously mention those concerned.
- (b) If I notice a particularly bad bid etc then I generally refrain from mentioning names.
- (c) If one partner of a partnership criticises his partner and I feel that the criticism is unjustified then I usually say nothing. I may write it up if it's worthwhile but I will not mention names. It's generally up to people to choose their partner and up to them if they believe what they say.
- (d) If a player criticises an opponent incorrectly then I feel obliged to say/write something. I see nothing wrong with names in this scenario don't give erroneous unsolicited advice.
- (e) If somebody criticises me or challenges me to write up a particular hand then the gloves are off. Expect to be named, be *sure* that you know what you are talking about!
- (f) If there is a general discussion about a hand with various people expresing their views, then I see nothing wrong with stating who thinks what if I report the debate.

I have received an *enormous* amount off support recently (thanks everyone) for the way I run the club and the news sheets. At least most people appreciate how much effort I put in. I am not changing things because of the minority opinions of just one or two players (it is just two – Hans and Chuck). As I said two weeks ago, if you can do better, do so.

Support with just 3 cards?

Board 4 from Monday 26th, both vul.

North	South (E)	North	South
▲ J64	♠ AK7	pass	1 ♣
♥ Q9864	♥ AJ3	1♥	2 4 (1)
♦ A83	♦ 9	pass	
4 53	♣ AJ9874		

Recommended bidding: - pass -
$$1 - 1 - 3 - 4$$
. Sequence A or pass - $1 - 1 - 3 - 3 - 4$. Sequence B

And remember that debate about 3 being weak or forcing in a similar sequence to Sequence B news-sheet 51 (Gotcha)? This North hand is a perfect example of why it should be forcing. If South rebids 3., what other sensible bid does North have?

Another a fine mess you've gotten us into, Stanley Board 3 from Monday 26th, E-W vul.

		<u>Table A</u>		<u>Table B</u>	
West (H)	East (A)	West	East	West	East
♦ AJ92	♠ Q8	1NT	2.	1NT	2.
♥ AK103	♥ J7	2♥	3♦	2 🌲	3NT (1)
♦ A93	♦ KQJ42	3 ^	3NT	4♥	
4 109	♣ AQ42	pass			etc to 6NT

East knows that it's combined 30-32 points and he has a good ◆ suit, so 6NT (via some convoluted sequence if you wish)? That's what no less than 6 of the 9 E-W pairs did on Monday, with only Lars/Lars and Tom/David managing to stop in a sensible 3NT. 6NT failed by one or two tricks on every ocassion. So how should East bid? It's difficult if you don't have a form of minor suit Stayman. First, let's look at Tables A and B: -

- Table A. 2* was Stayman. Now generally speaking 2* Stayman guarantees a 4 card major. This bidding shown was not very scientific but was lucky in that East discovered that there was no fit and so did not bid slam.
- Table B: 2♣ Stayman again. Now it is generally accepted that you should reply 2♥ to Stayman when holding both majors; the reasons are probably a bit complex and some players do indeed say that it makes no difference. So, 2♠ is acceptable for some players. But East really has got himself into a fine mess now; 3NT at (1) guarantees 4 ♥ 's (otherwise he would not have bid Stayman!). The rest of the auction to 6NT was meaningless.

So, pretty silly really. Only bid Stayman if you have a 4 card major. There is an exception if you play 4-way transfers but it is not applicable here.

How should the hand be bid? The basic thinking (by East) should be – when partner opens a strong NT then you need 18+ points for 6NT and a good 15-17 points to invite. This is a good 15 but only worth an invitation (4NT).

Should West accept? It's in the middle but if my partner had bid an invitational 4NT directly over my 1NT I would not accept as there is no fit (he did not try Stayman).

Another possible bidding sequence if you play minor suit transfers is to transfer into ◆'s and then bid ♣ 's, game forcing. West, with no fit, would then bid 4NT which East should pass.

My recommended bidding: -	1NT - 4NT - pass
or (if you play 4-way transfers)	1NT - 2NT - 3 - 4 - 4NT - pass
or even	1NT - 2NT - 3 - 6 - pass

In these latter sequences 2NT is a transfer to ◆'s and 3♣ is a super accept. 4♣ is a 2nd suit and you would have to agree that 4NT is a suggestion to play there (no 4-4 or better fit), it should be. A difficult hand, especially for non-familiar or non-expert partnerships.

Just one more point. $6 \spadesuit$ is a fairly reasonable contract on this board (far better than 6NT). It's funny that a large number of players (just about the whole club?) seem to have a mental block when it comes to bidding minor suit slams and prefer hopeless 6NT contracts.

A Tangled Web

Board 17 from Friday 30th, love all.

West (J)	East	West (me)	East
• 853	♠ A	-	1♦
♥ AK2	♥ J87	3NT (1)	pass
♦ KJ1065	♦ A8432		
♣ J10	♣ A974		

Not very scientific, but what should West (me) bid at (1)? You have game going values so $2 \spadesuit$ and $3 \spadesuit$ are out (non-forcing). It is extremely dangerous to lie in a major suit which partner has not denied, so $1 \clubsuit$ and $1 \spadesuit$ are out. 2NT is non-forcing so no good. $4 \spadesuit$ and $5 \spadesuit$ are bad because they go past 3NT. You could lie in \clubsuit 's and bid $2 \clubsuit$, but that really is a distortion, isn't it? With this East hand he would raise to $3 \clubsuit$; you are no better off and partner thinks that you have \clubsuit 's. If you then bid 3NT partner may well bid $4 \clubsuit$ and you're in another fine mess.

Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive.

Playing standard methods the hand is virtually unbiddable and I think that my choice of 3NT is the best option. 3NT was easily the best contract of course (it made +1). The board was played 5 other times in 3,4,5 and even 6♦ (minus 1)! It seems that nobody heeds my advice about NT scoring more than minor suit contracts??

But seriously, how should the hand be bid? The only real way is to play inverted minors, but the only players that I know for sure who play them are Chuck and Clive (some others may do?), it really is a fine convention. It is rather advanced but I have a few sheets on it if you want to read it up. If you don't play inverted minors then I would bid 3NT every day of the week.

The 3NT rebid

Board 8 from Friday 30th, love all.

West (K)	East	West (me)	East
▲ 10♥ A3◆ AKQ10953♣ Q72	A A542✓ 52◆ 872♣ A1043	1 ♦ 3NT (1)	1 A pass

Simple, eh? Just one other pair bid 3NT (good show, Angela/Mike). Other contracts were a miserable 2♦ or 3♦ and an optimistic 5♦. I think that I've said it before, but if 3NT is a viable option, then bid it!

But seriously, what does the 3NT rebid at (1) mean? The best scheme is to play a jump to 2NT as 18-19 (17-19 if you play a weak NT) and to leave the jump to 3NT as a long solid or semi-solid suit suit – as in this example. It says 'shut up' – politely of course, and partner is expected to pass unless he can envisage slam, it does not ask partner to seek an alternative game contract. Another advantage of this scheme is that after the jump to 2NT partner has more room to investigate a fit or even slam. Of course if responder's first bid was at the two level, then the jump to 3NT encompasses both of these hand types.

The bottom line? This use of the jump to 3NT really is very descriptive and is common practice by experienced players.

Find the 4-4 fit

Board 23 from Monday 26th, both vul.

North (C)	South (D)	<u>Table</u>	A	Table B		
▲ J986	♠ Q432	North	South	North	South	
♥ J965	♥ AK82	-	1NT	-	1 ♠ (2)	
♦ Q642	♦ A9	2 . (1)	2♥	2 ♦ (3)	3NT (4)	
♣ Q	♣ A85	pass		pass		

There were a mixed bag of final results on this board from Monday. $2 \, \Psi$ is the best contract; two pairs stopped in $1 \, \text{NT} - I$ would always bid (garbage) Stayman with that North hand at (1). Just 3 pairs found the good sequence as Table A.

At Table B they were playing a weak NT and South elected to open $1 \spadesuit$. Now this is old-style Acol. Jeremy Flint (and others) have presented the philosophy of bidding 4 card suits up the line (when playing 4 card majors) and this is the preferred practice now. The reason is that if you open $1 \heartsuit$ you always have a rebid (support partner if he bids \spadesuit 's or else bid NT). If you open $1 \spadesuit$ and rebid $2 \heartsuit$ then this promises $5 \spadesuit$'s these days.

But that was not the only problem at this table. Playing a weak NT you need 8 points to respond with a new suit at the 2 level and this North hand is too weak. Anyway, with 4 card support it should simply have bid $2 \spadesuit$ at (3). And the 3NT bid at (4)? It shows 17-19 points, but the \blacktriangledown (and \spadesuit) fit was missed.

The bottom lines: -

- (1) Bid 4 card suits up the line, whether an opening bid (playing 4 card majors) or at a subsequent stage in the auction (both opener and responder).
- (2) Support with support. If partner opens 1 ♥/♠ then support directly (to the correct level) with 4 card support.
- (3) You can bid garbage Stayman with very weak 4441 and similar hands (short *'s).

Nice Bidding

Board 11 from Monday 26th, love all.

West	East (B)	West	East
▲ A9	♠ KQ1084	1♥	1 🛦
♥ A10984	♥ 5	2♥ (1)	3 ♦ (2)
♦ A97	♦ KQ654	3 ^	4 ♠
4 1074	♣ Q3	pass	

This was the bidding at one table (Lars/Lars). I like it apart from the fact that I prefer 1NT at (1). The rest would be the same, though, and an excellent contract was reached. 3 ◆ at (2) is best, even if partner had rebid 1NT. With two good 5 card suits, bid them.

So, a fine final contract which made +1 the two times it was bid. Six pairs managed to land in a miserable 3NT where the opponents can take 5 \clubsuit tricks off the top.

The bottom lines. A good 5-2 fit is playable and is preferable to NT if a suit is wide open. Bid out your shape. I would also bid $3 \spadesuit$ at (2) if I held just $4 \spadesuit$'s.

A Word About the Scoring

One member queried the scoring last week; he had a higher total number of matchpoints than another pair that I placed above them. How come the lower total got a higher %? Now it's always possible that I have made a mistake – but really, is that likely? Don't answer that.

The reason is that when there is a sit-out then some pairs usually play more boards than other pairs. Rather than give players an average for the boards that they do not play, they get no score but their final percentage reflects the number of boards that they actually played.

How do you bid slam?

Board 5 from Monday 26th, E-W vul.

West (F)	East	West	East
▲ 1064	♠ AKJ972	-	1 🛦
♥ A853	♥ 642	2♣	2 (1)
4	♦ A87	4 ♦ (2)	4NT
♣ AKQ104	. 9	5♥	6 ♠

Slam (6 + 1) was bid at just one table on Monday (well done Lars/Lars) but I don't know their bidding. 13 tricks were usually made in 4 + 1. I was asked how 6 + 1 could be bid and this bidding is my concoction.

- (1) West's ♣ bid has not improved East's hand and 2♠ here shows 6♠'s.
- (2) It's up to West to make the move. The West hand looks very good knowing that there are 6 ♠ 's opposite and a 4 ♦ splinter (agreeing ♠ 's and showing a singleton or void ♦) is the best bid. It's easy then. 4 ♦ is a splinter here because it's an unnecessary jump as 3 ♦ would most definitely be forcing (a new suit at the 3 level *and* a reverse).

The bottom line? Splinters really are worth mastering. Think I've said that before?

Overcalls are 5 card suits

Board 12 from Monday 26th, N-S vul.

North (G)	West	North	East	South
★ KQ98♥ Q5◆ J653★ K104	1 ♦ pass pass	1 (1) 2NT (2) pass	pass pass pass	2 ♥ 4 ♥

4♥ went down for a poor score. I went into not overcalling on 4 card suits in some detail last week. South had a good hand here, but North did not! The overcall at (1) is unwarranted, pass is correct. And if I had (heaven forbid) overcalled 1♠ at (1) then I would most certainly pass at (2), thankful that we had found a good spot. 2NT at (2) shows a far better hand (around 15-17 points).

The bottom lines? Overcalls are 5 card suits. If you overcall and partner responds in a new suit then this is not forcing and a NT bid by you shows a good hand (around 15-17, the same as a 1NT overcall but with a poor holding in partner's suit).

Bidding Quiz Answers

Hand A: Invite. The hand is not good enough to blast 6NT. A general guide is that 18 points is enough for 6NT and you should invite with a good 15-17. 6 of a minor would be a good bet if there is a 5-4 or 4-4 minor suit fit, but most casual partnerships do not have a mechanism to discover this. I have a somewhat complicated but excellent paper on locating minor and major suit fits after a 1NT opening if you are interested.

Do *not* bid 2. Stayman. This is just silly as a subsequent 3NT or 4NT bid by you guarantees a 4 card major (otherwise you would make the same bid without bidding Stayman).

Hand B: 3♦, forcing. Bid out your shape. 4♠ may be a better spot than 3NT.

Hand C: 2♣, (garbage Stayman) and pass any response.

Hand D: 1 ♥, the modern trend in Acol is to bid 4 card suits up the line. It really is far superior to opening 1 ♠ and then rebidding 2 ♥ (which now promises 5+ ♠ 's). Playing Standard American you obviously open 1NT.

Hand E: 3♣ or 3♥. The hand is too strong for 2♣ or 2♥ and not quite good enough for a game forcing 3♦ splinter. I prefer 3♥, normally this would promise 4 card support but the aces and singleton are sufficient compensation in my view.

Hand F: 4♦, a splinter. It sets ♠'s as trumps and shows ♦ shortage (singleton ov void). Partner's 2
♠ bid promises 6 ♠'s here and slam could be on if he has the right cards (no wasted honours in ♦'s), so tell him about your support and shortage.

Hand G: Pass. Overcalls are 5 card suits. Wrong shape for a double.

Hand H: 2♥. It is generally accepted that you should respond 2♥ when holding both majors. If partner then bids 3NT you should convert to 4♠ as his 2♣ bid promised a 4 card major. Having a special bid (such as 2NT) to show both majors in response to Stayman is unsound – partner may have a hand like hand C.

Hand J: A tricky one. The only real solution is to play inverted minors, but they are a somewhat advanced convention and so we have to find the best bid without them. You have a lovely fit and game going values. 1 ♥ or 1 ♠ are lies that are too dangerous (if partner supports). 2 ♦ and 3 ♦ are underbids and non-forcing. 2 ♣ is an option but it really is a distortion here. 4 ♦ and 5 ♦ are options that I don't like as they go past 3NT. That leaves just one bid. You all know me - if 3NT is a viable alternative, bid it! I would (did) respond 3NT.

Hand K: 3NT. If 3NT is a viable option, bid it! But seriously, 3NT is the correct bid here. A jump rebid of 2NT is best used as a balanced 18-19 points (17-19 if you play Acol). That leaves the double jump to 3NT for a hand with a long running (minor) suit. This is a very powerful hand (8 tricks) and you need very little from partner to make 3NT. 3♦ is not forcing and would be a gross underbid.

Now there were a few tricky hands this week, and a couple that really cannot be properly bid without advanced conventions (Minor suit Stayman, Shape Asking Relays after Stayman, 4 suit transfers, Inverted minors etc.). These are probably a bit advanced for the news-sheet, but tell me if you would like me to explain any of these.