

**Club News Sheet – No. 114**

7/1/2005



Mon 3/1/05	N-S winners		E-W winners	
	1 <sup>st</sup> Martin/Rosemary	62 %	1 <sup>st</sup> Rulf/Ole	64 %
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Alex/jeff	60 %	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lars/Rune	57 %
Wed 5/1/05	1 <sup>st</sup> Rune/Lars	63 %	2 <sup>nd</sup> Clive/Terry	59 %
Fri 7/1/05	N-S winners		E-W winners	
	1 <sup>st</sup> Mike(Can)/Phil	62 %	1 <sup>st</sup> Bjorn/Jim	57 %
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Bob/Dave	61 %	2 <sup>nd</sup> Margit/Peter	50 %

On Monday we had a ‘simultaneous’ with pre-dealt hands. At the end of the session a booklet was distributed with the hands and commentary by Brian Senior. At our club many of the deals did not go the way Brian predicted! His commentary is largely playing Acol (weak NT and 4 card majors) and I’ll indicate differences where relevant.

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

Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A partner opens 1♣ and you bid 1♦. Partner then bids 1♥, what do you do?
♠ 953	♠ J4	
♥ J10	♥ A	With Hand B you open 1♣ and partner responds 1♦. RHO doubles (showing the majors), what do you bid?
♦ AK863	♦ 852	
♣ 654	♣ AKQJ743	
Hand C	Hand D	With Hand C LHO opens 1♦, partner doubles and RHO bids 1♥, what do you do?
♠ 876	♠ J6432	
♥ K84	♥ QJ1073	With Hand D you open 1♠. Partner responds 2♦ and you bid 2♥. Partner then bids 2NT, what do you do?
♦ K73	♦ A	
♣ A1092	♣ K9	
Hand E	Hand F	With Hand E partner opens 1♠ and you bid 2♦. Partner then bids 2♥, what do you do?
♠ K5	♠ A5	
♥ K5	♥ 73	With Hand F you open 1♣ and LHO overcalls with a weak 2♠. Partner doubles (negative, promising 4♥’s and 11+ points), what do you bid?
♦ Q10954	♦ KJ95	
♣ A543	♣ KQJ54	
Hand G	Hand H	With Hand G partner opens 1♥ and RHO overcalls a weak 2♠. What do you do (you are vulnerable, they are not)?
♠ AQ108	♠ K107	
♥ 1065	♥ AKJ962	With Hand H partner opens 1NT. (a) What do you bid?
♦ AJ73	♦ -	(b) Suppose you choose a 2♦ transfer and partner bids 2♥, then what do you do next?
♣ Q4	♣ 10974	

### How big a hand?

How many points does the 1NT bid in this sequence show?

West	North	East	South
1♦	pass	pass	1♠
1NT	...		

### Play Quiz

You are declarer in a NT contract. You are in hand but have only one sure entry to hand left. You want to tackle this ♠ suit, so which card do you lead from Jxx?

Dummy	You(declarer)
♠ A1098	♠ J32

### How much of a stop for 1NT?

Board 2 from Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Dave brought boards 1 and 2 to my attention because the East-West hands were inverted when he played them. Now I possibly did mis-deal board 1 (next page) but this one was correct when I played it on round two and the East-West hands were then apparently switched somewhere before it got to Dave's table on round 8. I feel that 3♦ by N-S is the best contract whichever way round the E-W hands are and so I let the results stand (anyway, I don't know in which round the E-W hands were switched). The diagram here is that at Dave's Table.

Dealer:	♠ QJ5			<u>Our Table (E-W hands the other way round)</u>			
East	♥ 10653			West	North	East	South (me)
N-S vul	♦ 864			-	-	pass	1♦
	♣ K73			pass	1♥	dbl (1)	3♦ (2)
				all pass			
♠ 9432	N	♠ 876		<u>Table A (as diagram)</u>			
♥ AQ72	W E	♥ K84		West	North	East(C)	South
♦ Q	S	♦ K73		-	-	pass	1♦
♣ Q854		♣ A1092		dbl	1♥	1NT (3)	all pass
	♠ AK10						
	♥ J9						
	♦ AJ10952						
	♣ J6						

Our Table: In Brian's commentary there was no dbl at (1) and South just bid 2♦ at (2) and 3♦ was eventually reached. I think that 3♦ at (2) is just about acceptable.

Table A: But with the E-W hands switched as in this diagram the dbl comes from West. (3) So what did you bid with this East hand C in this week's quiz? You don't have to respond to partner's take-out double when RHO bids but ten points opposite partner's take-out double is worth a noise, but what noise? I don't really like 1NT with just Kxx in ♦'s; partner has asked you to bid one of the other suits and I think that 2♣ (promising around 7-10 pts) is a better bid.

And what happened? The most popular contract was 3♦ by South, just making and scoring just above average. 1NT by East receive the ♦J lead and went three down for a cold bottom. The bottom line: -

- When partner makes a take-out double he is asking you to pick from the other suits and is short in the suit bid, so only bid NT with good stops in the enemy suit.

## An advanced sacrifice?

Board 25 from Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>

This board actually was switched – I presumably had mistakenly inverted the East-West hands when I prepared the deal. I feel that the same 3NT contract as Brian suggested should easily be reached, but one individual claimed that 3NT was just ‘lucky’ and that 5♣ is a better bid at (3); let’s have a look: -

		<u>Brian’s Table (E-W hands the other way round)</u>			
Dealer:	♠ J4	West	North	East	South
North	♥ A	-	1♣	dbl	1♠
Love all	♦ 852	2♥	3NT (1)	all pass	
	♣ AKQJ743				

		<u>Table A</u>				
♠ AK97	N	♠ 863	West	North(B)	East	South
♥ J1042	W E	♥ Q8753	-	1♣	pass	1♦(2)
♦ A64	S	♦ QJ7	dbl	3NT (3)	all pass	
♣ 82		♣ 106				

		<u>Table B</u>				
♠ Q1052		♠ 863	West	North(B)	East	South
♥ K96		♥ Q8753	-	1♣	pass	1♦
♦ K1093		♦ QJ7	dbl	5♣ (3)	all pass	
♣ 95		♣ 106				

Brian’s Table: This one is easy – The East-West hands were swapped to that in the diagram above and so it was East who doubled and Partner (South) decided to bid 1♠ and West bid 2♥. So you expect a ♥ lead and with a ♥ stop and 8 tricks in the North hand a 3NT bid at (1) is ‘obvious’.

Table A: The actual deal we had (East-West as above) was perhaps more interesting. This time East passes but what should South bid? Walsh players bid 1♠ at (2) (I like to play Walsh but know of nobody else who plays it!), but 1♦ is ‘standard’ and bid by most people. This time it’s West who doubles (showing both majors); what did you bid at (3) with this North hand B in this weeks quiz? I cannot see any other remotely sensible bid other than 3NT – more of this later.

Table B: The same as Table A, except that this North chose 5♣ at (3)

So what do you think, 3NT or 5♣ at (3)? There was a lengthy discussion after the event. North at Table B claimed that 5♣ is the best bid as the ♠ suit may be wide open. I believe that 5♣ is a very silly bid and that 3NT is ‘obvious’, here are my arguments: -

- 1. Partner may easily have a ♠ stop
- 2. The opponents may well not lead a ♠ (a ♥ lead look favorite).
- 3. Even if they do lead a ♠ and partner has no stop then there will only be 4 losers if they split 4-4. If one opponent had 5 ♠’s then he probably would have bid them.
- 4. 3NT describes this hand type perfectly – there may be a slam for N-S and a 5♣ bid shuts that out.
- 5. 3NT requires 9 tricks to make. 5♣ requires 11 tricks to make and partner will need a lot of help here for 5♣ to succeed.
- 6. Even if 5♣ makes, 3NT with an overtrick scores more.

North at Table B then tried another tack, and he even managed to convince one player that he was partially correct!? He claimed that 5♣ is a good bid as the opponents may have a major suit game and so it's an 'advance sacrifice'.

My bidding is not 'advanced' enough to even think of that! With an excellent 15 points with two aces and an unlimited partner I would think more about a possible slam our way than about the opponents possibly bidding game.

Now I subsequently gave the North hand to Austin and he came up with an equally good, perhaps superior bid at (3). 1♠ would be natural and so a jump to 3♠, especially in the opponent's presumed suit, is not. It is in principle a splinter but when partner's suit is a minor (♦'s here) he should indicate a stop in the suit by bidding 3NT. This would obviously be an excellent bid if South is on the same wavelength and had say ♠Kx. But I still like my direct 3NT for the reasons stated earlier (they may not lead a ♠ and/or ♠'s may split).

And what happened? 3NT was bid at four tables, either making exactly or +1 (it made +1 on a ♠ lead(!) and only exactly on a ♥ lead) and scored well. 5♣ was bid twice and went down on both occasions.

The bottom lines: -

- Don't worry unduly about a lack of a stop in a suit unless the opponents have bid it.
- With a long minor (especially a solid one) think 3NT.
- If you want to find out if partner has a stop in a particular suit, then ask him.

### 1NT difficult to reach?

Board 25 from Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Brian's commentary says that 1NT is difficult to reach, not playing Standard American: -

Dealer: ♠ 953  
 North ♥ J10  
 E-W vul ♦ AK863  
 ♣ 654

♠ K7	N	♠ 10864
♥ A852	W E	♥ K74
♦ Q543	S	♦ J97
♣ Q102		♣ K87
	♠ AQJ2	
	♥ Q963	
	♦ 10	
	♣ AJ93	

#### Brian's Table

West	North(A)	East	South
-	pass	pass	1♣
pass	1♦	pass	1♥
pass	2♣ (1)	all pass	

#### Table A

West	North(A)	East	South
-	pass	pass	1♣
pass	1♦	pass	1♥
pass	1NT (1)	all pass	

Brian suggests that North should bid 2♣ at (1), I'm not convinced. I guess that playing Acol it's difficult as a 4 card major opening is allowed and this South sequence would often indicate 5♣'s. Playing Standard American South could have 3♣'s for this auction (even just 2♣'s if you play the short ♣) and I would bid 1NT at (1) despite the lack of a ♠ stop and I would bid 1NT even if playing Acol.

And what happened? Two pairs did reach 1NT. Alex/Jeff of course reached 3NT (and made it!). I guess that if you continually overbid like this then you have to play well?

The bottom line: -

- Don't worry unduly about a lack of a stop in a suit unless the opponents have bid it.

### 3NT by South whatever?

Board 10 from Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Brian says that this board should end up in 3NT by South whether West overcalls in ♠'s or not, I disagree – I was South and most certainly did not bid NT.

Dealer:	♠ K109	<u>Brian's Table</u>				
East	♥ AJ106	West	North	East	South (F)	
Both vul	♦ A10	-	-	pass	1♣	
	♣ 10972	pass	1♥	pass	1NT (1)	
		pass	3NT	all pass		
♠ J876432	N	♠ Q				
♥ 94	W E	♥ KQ852	<u>Our Table</u>			
♦ Q64	S	♦ 8732	West	North	East	South (F)
♣ A		♣ 863	-	-	pass	1♣
	♠ A5		2♠ (2)	dbl (3)	pass	3♠ (4)
	♥ 73		pass	3NT	all pass	
	♦ KJ95					
	♣ KQJ54					

Brian's Table: With no interference it's easy. The 1NT rebid here at (1) was 15-16 playing a weak NT and I agree that this South hand is easily worth that.

'Our' Table: But playing a strong NT it's different, and it's also different if there is a ♠ overcall. 2♠ at (2) was a weak jump overcall – I would not bid it with such a weak suit, especially vulnerable (see page 11). Anyway, after the 2♠ overcall my partner's double at (3) was negative – promising 4♥'s and values to at least compete to the three level. So what did you bid at (4) with this South hand F in this week's quiz? 2NT would be 12-14 but is non-forcing and a bit feeble. 3NT is possible although partner may take it as 18-19 points. Anyway, this South hand now has values for game but ♠Ax is not a good enough stop against most vulnerable two level overcalls in my opinion. I would prefer to be in 3NT only if partner also has a ♠ stop – so I asked him. 3♠ at (4) asks partner to bid 3NT with a ♠ stop and he obviously obliged.

And what happened? Looks like Brian was wrong here – North was declarer in 3NT at 4 tables out of 10. 3NT made +2 at our table for a shared top.

The bottom lines: -

- A negative double promises the unbid major(s) and values to compete to the next bid in that suit. So in this situation it showed values to compete to at least 3♥.
- If you want to find out if partner has a stop in a particular suit, then ask him.

## Nobody in 3NT!

Board 6 from Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Brian says that this board should end up in 3NT by West - and this time I agree. But it seems that the whole club is indoctrinated with the concept that you should always play in a 5-3 major suit fit. I guess you know my opinions by now, I will usually always play in a 4-4 fit, but not always in a 5-3 fit. If the 3 card hand has weak trumps and no obviously weak suit elsewhere then 3NT is often better, as here.

Dealer:	♠ 64	<u>Brian's Table</u>			
East	♥ J	West (G)	North	East	South
E-W vul	♦ 109654	-	-	1♥	2♠ (1)
	♣ K10952	3NT (2)	all pass		

♠ AQ108	N	♠ 5	<u>Table A</u>			
♥ 1065	W E	♥ AK743	West (G)	North	East	South
♦ AJ73	S	♦ KQ82	-	-	1♥	2♠ (1)
♣ Q4		♣ A73	4♥ (2)	pass	4NT	pass
	♠ KJ9732		5♥	pass	6♥	double
	♥ Q982		all pass			
	♦ -					
	♣ J86					

Brian's Table: (1) 2♠ is a weak jump overall. Now this is a much better example (decent suit) than the examples on pages 5 and 11. I was South and I also overcalled 2♠. But what did you bid with this West hand G at (2) in this week's quiz? Playing Acol 3NT is fairly obvious as the 1♥ opening only promises 4 cards. Playing Standard American it's different as it's a 5 card opener and thus a known 5-3 fit. But with these lovely ♠'s and weak ♥'s I would bid 3NT.

Table A: And here we see the problem with West bidding 4♥. As I said, I would bid 3NT and warn partner that I have value in ♠'s and not in ♥'s. 4♥ is a very poor bid with just three poor trumps. East is expecting 4 card support opposite and does not know about the 'wasted' values in ♠'s. He reasonably went into slam mode and with all the aces present obviously bid 6♥.

And what happened? Not a single pair at our club found 3NT. 6♥ was bid at three tables, it was obviously hopeless and went 3 down at most tables. I put the blame squarely on West's shoulders.

The bottom lines: -

- Do not directly support partner's 5 card major first go at a high level with only 3 trumps, especially three poor ones.
- A 5-3 fit is not always better than NT.
- AQ108 is an adequate stop for NT!
- Don't worry unduly about a lack of a stop in a suit unless the opponents have bid it. So don't worry about the ♣Qx in this West hand.
- Qx is an interesting holding, I mentioned it in my booklet on hand evaluation (Appendix B in the 2003 Yearbook). It is usually best in declarer's hand as if dummy has Axx (as here) then the suit is immune from an opening lead without conceding two tricks.

**Play in a major?**

Board 14 from Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>

I made a different decision to that at Brian’s table on this deal: -

Dealer:       ♠ K5  
 East         ♥ K5  
 Love all     ♦ Q10954  
               ♣ A543

♠ Q10987       N       ♠ A  
 ♥ A8           W E     ♥ 9642  
 ♦ J32           S       ♦ K876  
 ♣ Q107                   ♣ J862

♠ J6432  
 ♥ QJ1073  
 ♦ A  
 ♣ K9

Brian’s Table

West	North(E)	East	South(D)
-	-	pass	1♠
pass	2♦	pass	2♥
pass	2NT (1)	pass	3♥ (2)
pass	3♠	pass	pass
dbl	all pass		

Table A

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

Table B (our table)

West	North (E)	East	South (D)
-	-	pass	1♠
pass	2♦	pass	2♥
pass	2NT (1)	pass	pass (2)
pass			

Brian’s Table: Pretty straight forward and described in the booklet. I agree with Brian that 3NT would be an overbid at (1) because of the mis-fit.

Table A: This North decided to bid the 3NT game with his 12 count; so this time it’s 4♠ that gets doubled. So it looks like a horrible ♠ contract is unavoidable? Let’s see what happened at my table: -

Table B: I was South here and my partner (Joe) correctly bid just 2NT at (1). But what did you do at (2) with this South hand D in this week’s quiz? A 3♥ bid shows 5-5 and is obviously very reasonable as it’s what Brian suggests, but my thoughts were along these lines: - ‘Partner may or may not have a 3 card ♥ suit, even if he has and we miss a 5-3 ♥ fit that is not always bad – I have most of my points in the minors and 2NT should play very well, especially as it is unlikely that we will get a ♠ lead’.

And what happened? We did not get a ♠ lead and 2NT played very well (just making). Three pairs overbid to 3NT (including Alex/Jeff of course) with two going down; Martin/Rosemary’s fine showing was helped when they made an overtrick in 3NT! All ♠ contracts scored badly whether they were doubled or not.

The bottom line: -

- Always look for the 4-4 major suit fit, but a possible 5-3 fit is not always preferable to NT.

## N-S made it easy for E-W?

Board 11 from Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Brian gives E-W a clear run to 4♠, we did not make it so easy for them: -

Dealer:	♠ -		<u>Brian's Table</u>			
South	♥ 10972		West	North	East	South
Love all	♦ KJ652		-	-	-	pass
	♣ AQ52		pass	pass	1♠	pass
			2♠	dbl	4♠	dbl
			all pass			
♠ 1032	N	♠ AJ9875				
♥ AJ843	W E	♥ KQ				
♦ Q74	S	♦ -	<u>Our Table</u>			
♣ 107		♣ K8643	West	North	East	South (me)
	♠ KQ64		-	-	-	1♦ (1)
	♥ 65		pass	1♥	1♠	pass
	♦ A10983		2♠	3♦	3♠ (2)	pass
	♣ J9		pass	4♣ (3)	pass	4♦
			all pass			

Brian's Table: 4♠ doubled was reached three times on Monday and, as Brian says, it should make.

'Our' Table: (1) It was different here – I decided to open the South hand. Now it does not conform to the rule of 20 (it's 19) but all the points are in two suits and a 1098 sequence is worth something in a 5 card suit. You also have an easy 1♠ rebid over a 1♥ response from partner.

(2) The Law says it's OK to bid 3♠ here (9 combined trumps). 3♠ is merely competitive and does not invite partner to bid 4♠. The hand is probably worth a game try (either dbl, 3♣, 3♦ or 3♥ are all game tries).

(3) Obviously North wants to push on to 4♦, but bids his ♣'s on the way in order to inform South where his points are if he ends up defending. This is not a game try as North has already attempted to sign off in 3♦.

And what happened? 4♠ doubled made twice and went two down once. There were an assortment of other contracts but 4♦ made and scored a virtual top.

The bottom lines: -

- 1098 in a 5 card suit is worth a point.
- In a competitive situation where partner has supported your suit then a bid of your suit (so the 3♠ by East at (2) here) is just competitive and a game invitation is any other bid.

## Count Your Cards – or get an adjusted score

How many times do I cave to repeat this simple **rule**? It was last printed in news-sheet 109. On Monday we again had one table playing out a hand completely with one defender having 12 cards and 14 cards in dummy. Luckily the curtain cards were filled out (shame they did not check them before play) and it was easily remedied. I gave both parties an average minus. As we had the curtain cards I did not bother to penalise the previous table who mis-boarded it. It's very simple, count your cards before you even look at them.



## A silly convention!

Board 14 from Wednesday 5th

There was controversy on this deal (of course it involved Alex and his partner), let's have a look: -

Dealer:	♠ K10952		<u>Table A</u>			
East	♥ A1086		West	North	East	South
Love all	♦ K10		-	-	1♦ (1)	pass
	♣ Q8		pass	1♠	1NT (2)	2♥
			3♣ (3)	all pass		
♠ Q7	N	♠ AJ8	<u>Table B</u>			
♥ 5	W E	♥ KQ2	West	North	East	South
♦ 942	S	♦ QJ853	(Alex)		(Thorlief)	
♣ K1096532		♣ AJ	-	-	1NT (1)	pass
	♠ 643		2♦ (4)	etc to 4♣		
	♥ J9743					
	♦ A76					
	♣ 74					

Table A: (1) This East hand has 18 points and decent shape; but the AJ doubleton is poor and so is the 5 card suit. I would not argue if you chose to open 1NT (I would).  
(2) Did you get this right in this week's quiz? The bid shows 18-19 points.  
(3) I guess you could gamble 3NT, but the ♠Q cannot be an entry and you need three ♣'s with partner (or ♣Ax and a lucky 2-2 split) for 3NT to make.

Table B: Here we had the problems. As I said, 1NT at (1) is fine, but I believe that Alex/Thorlief play a 16-18 1NT in any case. Now when Alex bid 2♦ at (4) there was no alert and I understand that Alex told his partner that he must alert. Of course this is illegal – you cannot alert your own bid. Anyway, upon being woken up Thorlief apparently simply said 'transfer'. So what's going on? I assume that Alex/Thorlief play 'compressed transfers'. This is a very silly convention which I describe on the next page. Anyway, Alex was way short of the 5 card ♥ suit that his partner indicated he had, so the pair were fined half a top. If experienced players want to play 'unknown' conventions then they have to be alerted and properly explained; failure to do this will be dealt with by adjusted scores.

And what happened? Alex/Thorlief got a poor score anyway, but they were additionally fined a ½ top. The fortunate ♣ situation meant that the 3NT bid at 4 of the six tables made.

The bottom lines: -

- I don't mind if a standard 2♦/♥ transfer is alerted or not; or partner of the bidder can simply announce 'transfer'. If you play this silly Compressed Transfer scheme then I guess that you have to announce 'transfer to ♥'s or ♣'s'.
- You cannot alert your own bid (or inform partner that he must alert). A breach of the rules like this by an experienced pair may lead to an adjusted score.
- Non-standard conventions must be alerted. A failure to do this by an experienced pair may lead to an adjusted score.

## Transfers to a Specific Minor

Transfers to the majors are universally established and it is also very beneficial if you can transfer to the minor suits. Now many players play that 2♠ is a weak transfer to ♣'s which responder will either pass or correct. But it is much better if you can specifically transfer to ♣'s and to ♦'s (and thus use them with weak, invitational or strong hands). The best way to do this is '4-way transfers' whereby 2♠ is specifically a transfer to ♣'s and 2NT is specifically a transfer to ♦'s.

This is what many experienced players play but has the drawback that 2NT is no longer available as a natural raise of partner's 1NT opening. So a natural raise is done by bidding Stayman first. This works fine and most players are happy with this.

## Compressed Transfers

A very silly convention, but since Alex/Thorlief appear to play it I'll explain it. If you want to retain 2NT as natural then you have no bid to explicitly transfer to ♦'s. One solution is to instead use the 2♠ bid as a transfer to ♦'s. Of course you then have no transfer to ♣'s and so you place a double meaning on the 2♦ 'transfer' bid: -

After 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥, 2♠ cancels the transfer to ♥'s and is instead a transfer to ♣'s.

This, of course, has numerous drawbacks: -

- 1- If the next player bids over the 2♦ 'transfer' then subsequent bidding is very messy.
- 2- Since the 2♦ bid may or may not be a transfer to ♥'s opener has to be very careful about super-accepting. Only one super-accept bid (2♠) is allowed and the continuations are somewhat convoluted.
- 3- There is considerable loss of accuracy when only one super-accept is available.
- 4- Of course, if the next opponent interferes over this super-accept (or normal accept) then responder is in a real pickle; opener cannot know if the transfer was anything but genuine.
- 5- A 2♦ bid allows the opposition to come in cheaply when responder has a weak hand with ♣'s.
- 6- When responder makes an artificial (transfer) bid there is always the danger that the next player will get in a 'cheap' double, to show values and/or as an opening lead indicator. If responder makes two such bids then it really does make life easy for the defenders.
- 7- This is by no means standard and if you fail to alert/explain this and also the subsequent 2♠ transfer then you will be penalised.
- 8- And, most important of all, there is a *very useful* meaning for 2♠ in this sequence.

So, in my opinion, it's all nonsense. 4-way transfers is the way to go.

I have a book on responses to 1NT which explains 4-way transfers and the sensible meaning for 2♠ in the sequence 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠ if you want to borrow it.

## Worth a weak jump overcall?

Board 7 from Wednesday 5th

We (North-South) collected a huge score (1400) on this deal, let's have a look: -

Dealer:	♠ K				
South	♥ AQ94	West	North	East	South (me)
Both vul	♦ AQ106	-	-	-	pass
	♣ 10975	pass	1♦ (1)	2♠ (2)	pass (3)
		3♣ (4)	pass	3♦	dbl (5)
		3NT (6)	dbl	all pass	
♠ Q	N	♠ A87542			
♥ J732	W E	♥ 5			
♦ 984	S	♦ KJ53			
♣ KQJ83		♣ 62			
	♠ J10963				
	♥ K1086				
	♦ 72				
	♣ A4				

- (1) I would open 1♣. I believe it's always best to open 1♣ when equal length in the minors, regardless of relative strength.
- (2) A weak jump overcall. I guess it's not too bad but I would like a little more 'body' in the suit when vulnerable. Bear in mind that a weak jump overcall is slightly different from a weak two opening in that one opponent has already bid and so you are much more likely to get doubled for penalties.
- (3) Double (negative and showing four ♥'s) is a reasonable alternative here, but with these good ♠'s and nothing in partner's suit I preferred to defend 2♠ doubled (partner will normally re-open with a double when you play negative doubles and pass in this position)
- (4) It's a mis-fit and, as I always say, bail out ASAP (not in NT) with a weak mis-fit. I would most certainly pass here.
- (5) Of course I don't have ♦'s, but up to now partner is unaware that I have a decent hand and so a penalty double here gets the message across (I wanted to double 2♠ for penalties).
- (6) E-W are in a hopeless position now, but NT is bound to be the worst spot.

And what happened? 3NT doubled went minus five for 1400 to N-S. At another table 3NT went minus two, but that was by N-S as declarer! (A deserved bottom, don't you know about 4-4 fits, Alex/ Thorlief? – surely it's better to know about basics like that rather than play silly 'advanced' conventions like compressed transfers?). Two N-S pairs were in a sensible 4♥, one made and the other went two off. One other table got East in 2♠ doubled and collected 800.

The bottom lines: -

- When partner makes a weak jump overcall, he has a 6 card suit. The queen should normally be adequate support and do not rescue him into your 5 card suit, especially when one level higher.
- When you are being bombarded by penalty doubles, never bid NT!
- Remember that if you play negative doubles then you have to pass with a hand where you would like to double for penalties and most partners (at least mine) will usually re-open with a double which you can then pass.

## What does it mean?

Board 10 from Friday 7<sup>th</sup>, both vul

Assuming that you play transfers, then what does a jump to 3♥ over partner's 1NT opening mean?

North (H)	South	<u>Table A</u>			
		West	North	East	South
		-	-	pass	1NT (1)
♠ K107	♠ AQ2	pass	3♥ (2)	pass	4♥ (3)
♥ AKJ962	♥ Q83	pass	pass (4)	pass	
♦ -	♦ AJ54				
♣ 10974	♣ AJ6				

<u>'Expert' Table</u>				<u>Table B</u>			
West	North	East	South	West	North	East	South
-	-	pass	1NT (1)	-	-	pass	1NT (1)
pass	2♦ (2)	pass	2♥	pass	2♦ (2)	pass	2♥
pass	3♠ (5)	pass	3NT (6)	pass	4♥ (5)	all pass	
pass	4♦ (7)	pass	6♥ (8)				
all pass							

Table A: (1) It's 18 points, but knock off a point for the 4333 type shape and 1NT is the best opening. But what did this 3♥ bid at (2) mean? Actually it's up to you as you don't need the bid as natural when you play transfers. 'Standard' is that it's a good long suit looking for slam but there are better options that I spell out below. (3) Having not discussed it, this South simply raised to game. (4) And North has no idea if his partner has a hand suitable for slam or not.

Table B: (1) Again the good 1NT opening. (2) What did you bid at (2) with this North hand H in this week's quiz? This North transferred, I think that that's best. (5) But what should North do now? What did you do at (5) with this North hand H in this week's quiz? You have a lot more bidding space than Table A and I give my recommendations below.

And what happened? Just one pair out of nine reached the easy slam. Actually, that's not quite true, another pair did reach the 6♥ slam but then bid on to 7♥ going one off.

So how should the hand be bid to slam, and what's the best meaning for the jump to 3♥? Let's start with the jump to 3♥. I do not like the 'standard' meaning of a good suit looking for slam – it takes up too much room and it's best to start off with a transfer, especially as the correct hand is then declarer. There are a number of options (they are all spelled out in my book on NT bidding) but probably the best 'easy' option is to play splinters.

'Expert' Table: So how do we bid this hand? We start with a transfer as at Table B but should we bid at (5)? A 3♣ bid would be natural and game forcing but it's a poor suit and we want to play in ♥'s, a splinter is surely best. Now some experts do play that 3♠, 4♣ and 4♦ are splinters in this situation, but I prefer to have 4♣ as the ace (key card) ask and 4♦ as a general slam try. The very best solution is to play a jump in the other major as an ambiguous splinter and opener then asks about the shortage suit. It's all laid out in detail in the NT book. So 3♠ at (5) is an ambiguous (slam seeking) splinter, 3NT at (6) asks and 4♦ at (7) shows ♦ shortage. South could check on key cards but with no 'wasted' ♦K or ♦Q he has an easy 6♥ bid at (8).

## Quiz Answers

- Hand A: 1NT of course. What's the problem? Brian suggests 2♣ – I disagree, especially if you play that a 1♣ opening may be 3 (or even 2) cards. Playing Acol then 1♣ guarantees a 4 card suit but I would still bid 1NT.
- Hand B: 3NT. 9 tricks are usually easier than 11. If you are worried about the lack of a ♠ stop then you could bid 3♠ and if partner is on the same wave-length he will bid 3NT with a ♠ stop.
- Hand C: 2♣. When RHO bids after partner's take-out double you are not forced to bid, so it's a 'free bid' and shows some values (typically about 6-10). Partner is presumably short in ♦'s and so you bid your 4 card suit. ♦Kxx is not good enough to bid 1NT with partner's known shortage.
- Hand D: 3♥ or pass? 3♥ shows 5-5 in the majors and is what was recommended at Brian's table. I passed.
- Hand E: 2NT. This is now a poor 12 count as it's a mis-fit. 3NT is an overbid.
- Hand F: 3♠. You have one ♠ stop but that will not be enough, you need an additional stop from partner to make 3NT – so ask him.
- Hand G: 3NT. I agree with Brian here even though partner has promised 5 ♥'s. The big feature of this hand is the ♠'s sitting over the overcaller, not the miserable 3 card ♥ support. A pass (playing negative doubles) awaiting partner re-opening double is not really that attractive at this vulnerability.
- Hand H (a) 2♦, transfer. Now some players do play that 3♥ here shows a good suit looking for slam but I don't like it as it takes up loads of bidding space and how do you proceed after partner's 4♥?  
(b) It's impossible unless you have some sort of system here. 3♣ would be natural and game forcing but this is a poor ♣ suit and the important points of the hand are the excellent ♥'s and the ♦ shortage – you can get this message across with a splinter. Now some players do play that 4♦ is a splinter (setting ♥'s as trumps) but I prefer to play ambiguous splinters (3♠ is a splinter setting ♥'s and showing shortage in an unspecified suit).
- How big a hand: The 1NT bid should be around 18-19 points – a hand that was too good for a 1NT opening and not good enough for a 2NT opening (i.e. a hand that would jump rebid in NT if partner had responded). It must be this sort of strength as partner has passed and so has only 0-5 points.
- Play Quiz: You must lead a low ♠. You hope to make 3 ♠ tricks and should play for split honours. If you lead the ♠J initially then this will run round to RHO's honour. When you get back to hand you then have only ♠xx left and so lead a ♠x, LHO ducks again and you have to win in dummy. You have no further entry to hand and if LHO started with Hxxx you will lose another ♠ trick unnecessarily.