

4/3/2005

Club News Sheet – No. 122

		<u>winners</u>		<u>runner-up</u>	
Mon 28/2/05	N-S	1 st Ken/Thorlief	63 %	2 nd Bob/Dave	61 %
	E-W	1 st Jan/Tom	62 %	2 nd John(UK)/Ruth	58 %
Wed 2/3/05		1 st Bob/Dave	70 %	2 nd Jeff/Michael(Ger)	55 %
Fri 4/3/05		1 st Bob/Dave	69 %	2 nd Richard(IRL)/Thorlief	59 %

We had another ‘simultaneous’ on Monday, and when I refer to ‘Brian’ and ‘the booklet’ it is Brian Senior’s commentary on the booklet of the hands that was handed out.

Bidding Quiz

Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.

Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A partner opens 2NT, what do you bid?
♠ 9875 ♥ J643 ♦ KJ ♣ 765	♠ 97 ♥ AK6543 ♦ 3 ♣ 9865	With Hand B partner opens 2NT. You transfer with 3♦ but what do you do after partner’s expected 3♥ response?
Hand C	Hand D	With Hand C you open 1♦, LHO overcalls 1♥, partner passes and RHO bids 1♠, what do you do?
♠ QJ63 ♥ K8 ♦ A653 ♣ KJ2	♠ 976 ♥ AKQ65 ♦ K43 ♣ K9	With Hand D RHO opens 1♣, what do you bid?
Hand E	Hand F	With Hand E partner opens 1♠ and you bid 2♣. Partner then rebids 2NT (12-14), what do you do?
♠ K85 ♥ K85 ♦ 976 ♣ KQ82	♠ K10842 ♥ A7432 ♦ J9 ♣ 5	With Hand F partner opens 1NT, what do you bid? (and what do you plan to bid next turn?)
Hand G	Hand H	With Hand G partner opens 1♦, you pass and LHO overcalls 1♠. Partner then bids 2♥, what do you do?
♠ KJ9 ♥ 98743 ♦ 763 ♣ 86	♠ 8632 ♥ 9 ♦ Q852 ♣ AKQ3	With Hand H partner opens 1♦ and RHO overcalls 1♠, what do you do?
Hand J	Hand K	With Hand J you open 1♦, partner passes and RHO bids 1♠. What do you bid?
♠ A65 ♥ KQJ10 ♦ AQ842 ♣ Q	♠ AJ9 ♥ AJ1086 ♦ KJ5 ♣ 109	With Hand K the opponents are vulnerable and you are not. You open 1♥, LHO doubles and partner redoubles. (a) What do you do? (b) Suppose that you pass, LHO bids 1♠ and partner passes, what do you do now?

Editorial Only 24 boards

On Monday we had 8 tables. Now 8 tables is a decent number for a Mitchell (N-S stationary), the recommended movement being 3 boards a round with every N-S meeting every E-W and everybody playing all boards. It is 'perfect' except that it is just 24 boards (and two tables have to share boards). Especially as we now start at 1.00, a couple of people have asked me if we can have a longer movement.

The only two other recognised movements are a 26 board Howell with two boards a round (people prefer a Mitchell if possible as there is less moving about) or a 28 board Mitchell. The problem with this 28 board Mitchell is that every player misses one set of opponents and also one set of boards. Also, if there is a sit-out then it's for 4 boards and 35 minutes really is a bit long.

But I have come up with a solution; I've 'invented' a 30 board Mitchell (27 boards played) where every N-S pair meet every E-W opponent (and meet just one opponent twice). This should work fine and no sharing boards; I'll try it next time we have 8 tables. And if everybody keeps up to speed you can actually play 30 (so all of the) boards with this new movement.

Play Stayman (and transfers) over 2NT

Board 24 from Friday 4th

Dealer: ♠ 9875
West ♥ J643
Love all ♦ KJ
 ♣ 765

Table A
West North(A) East South
- - - 2NT
pass 3NT (1) all pass

♠ J432	N	♠ A10
♥ 105	W E	♥ 872
♦ A98	S	♦ Q107542
♣ K983		♣ 104
	♠ KQ6	
	♥ AKQ9	
	♦ 63	
	♣ AQJ2	

Table B
West North East South
- - - 2NT
pass 3♣ (1) pass 3♥
pass 4♥ all pass

Table A: (1) So what did you bid with this North hand A in this week's quiz? Two 4 card majors, but with only one point between them, should you bid Stayman or 3NT?

Table B: (1) Anyone who reads the news-sheets knows the answer – look for the 4-4 major suit fit.

And what happened? Justice was served in a big way. Two N-S pairs bid like Table A, they both went 3 down for a well deserved -150. Three N-S's bid like Table B and all made 4♥ exactly.

The bottom line. Look for the 4-4 major suit fit; the quality of the suit is totally irrelevant (unless you are thinking about slam). A 4-4 fit will usually score an extra trick in one hand or the other and stops the rot if the opponents have a long suit.

So how do you bid slam?

Board 20 from Monday 28th

Dealer: ♠ AK10
West ♥ J8
Both vul ♦ A875
♣ AKQ4

♠ J8654	N	♠ Q32
♥ 1082	W E	♥ Q7
♦ KQ	S	♦ J109642
♣ J107		♣ 32
	♠ 97	
	♥ AK6543	
	♦ 3	
	♣ 9865	

Table A

West	North	East	South (B)
pass	2NT (1)	pass	3♦ (2)
pass	3♥ (3)	pass	3NT (4)
all pass			

'Expert table'

West	North	East	South (B)
pass	2NT (1)	pass	3♦ (2)
pass	3♥ (3)	pass	4♣ (4)
pass	4NT (5)	pass	5♦
pass	6♣ (6)	pass	pass (7)
pass			

Table A: This was the bidding at most tables.

- (1) 2NT is the best opening, even with a weak doubleton; the hand is far too strong to risk a one level opening.
- (2) Transfer.
- (3) I did witness one player refuse to accept the transfer and bid 3NT here. I cannot see the point, you should bid 3♥ and await developments.
- (4) What did you bid with this South hand B in this week's quiz? With 7 points 3NT is obvious here? I don't think so, think slam.

Brian says that 6♥ and 7♣ are makeable on this deal but does not suggest any bidding. Nobody at our club bid any sort of slam and I was asked how a slam can be sensibly bid. I can't see how to reach 7♣ but here's my suggestion for a small slam: -

- 'Expert' Table
- (4) AKxxxx is worth far more than 7 points. I would look for slam and as partner has at least 2♥'s the simple 6♥ is not a bad bid. But if you play 4♣ as natural here (it should be) then that is the bid, natural and looking for slam.
 - (5) Blackwood. But actually most experts will not use 4NT to ask for aces if ♣'s is the trump suit and 4♦ (Kickback) is the best bid to ask for key cards here.
 - (6) With a known 4-4 fit, 6♣ is safer but a greedy North might bid 6♥ at pairs.
 - (7) Or South may be afraid of the quality of his ♣'s and retreat into 6♥.

Brian goes on to say that in 6♥ declarer should ruff a ♦ in the South hand and lead towards North's ♥J, this is a safety play and may enable declarer to make 12 tricks if there is a 4-1 trump break.

Now I watched Dave play this hand and he did follow Brian's advice of the safety play in ♥'s and led up to the ♥J after ruffing a ♦ in the South hand. Unfortunately, what Brian omitted to mention, and what happened to Dave, is that East won with the ♥Q and led a ♦ to give his partner another ♥ trick, so only 11 tricks were made. Tough luck Dave! However, after West has played the ♦K&Q on the first two rounds of the suit doesn't it look ominous? The simple (technically inferior?) approach (bang down the ♥AK) works on this deal.

And what happened. 4♥ was the most popular contract with some in a rather silly 3NT. Dave's (and Brian's) safety play scored very badly. The bottom lines: -

- Establishing ♣'s as trumps for a slam is often very difficult, especially after a 2NT opening that consumes so much bidding space and where 4♣ may be Gerber.

Understanding Stayman

Board 10 from Monday 28th

Brian says that E-W will do well do make 1NT. Our intrepid E-W pair here bid to 3NT (and deservedly went 3 down), so who would you blame? Apart from the obvious 1NT opener, can you spot the only two sensible bids up to and including when 3NT was bid?

Dealer: ♠ Q10854

East ♥ Q963

both vul ♦ Q3

♣ A2

♠ A972

♥ 8754

♦ J6

♣ 643

N

W E

S

♠ 3

♥ KJ2

♦ K108752

♣ J105

♠ K76

♥ A10

♦ A94

♣ KQ987

West

North

East

South

-

-

1NT

pass

2♣ (1)

2♠ (2)

2NT (3)

pass

3NT (4)

all pass

Answer:

The only two remotely sensible bids were the two passes by South. Everybody else seems to be on another planet.

- (1) This is reckless gambling. You should only bid Stayman if you can cope with any response (including 2♦). You must pass here.
- (2) With a strong 1NT opener on your left and an unlimited responder on your right who has promised at least one 4 card major, bidding here is extremely dangerous. 2♠ doubled would be an expensive excursion.
- (3) But apparently you can bid whatever you like when this East is the opposition. What a silly 2NT bid! Partner's 2♣ bid has not promised any values but he may well have 4 ♠'s and be able to apply the axe. You cannot respond 2NT to partner's 2♣ Stayman bid under any circumstances, and here it's especially silly.
- (4) We might as well make it a total of 4 ludicrous bids. Partner is 15-17 and with this 5, that adds up to a total of 22 max, what was this West thinking?

And what happened? 3NT -3 was a clear top to N-S. Only 3 E-W pairs out of 8 managed to stop at the one level.

The bottom lines: -

- There are only 3 responses to Stayman; 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠. If the next opponent interferes then there are two more (pass and double). 2NT is never an option, but even neverer when the next player bids a major over partner's Stayman bid.
- You need a good hand to overcall a major over Stayman with a strong NT opener sitting over you.

This particular E-W pair have been telling me of their bad run recently – I completely understand. This N-S pair have been doing pretty well, that's also understandable if North is allowed to get away with bids like this.

The dog should not bark!

Board 21 from Monday 28th

Remember last week (the dog that did not bark) when I said about not pre-empting with an outside 4 card major, let's see what can go wrong if you ignore this advice.

Dealer:	♠ Q1098743				
North	♥ J1043	West	North	East	South
N-S vul	♦ 4	-	2♠ (1)	3♣ (2)	pass
	♣ 4	3♥	pass	4♥ (3)	4♠ (4)
		dbl	all pass		
♠ K65	N	♠ J			
♥ KQ752	W E	♥ A98			
♦ 97532	S	♦ AQ106			
♣ -		♣ AK952			
	♠ A2				
	♥ 6				
	♦ KJ8				
	♣ QJ109863				

- (1) Brian says that the combination of vulnerability and the 4 card ♥ suit should prevent most players from opening 3♠. I totally agree of course, but it should also prevent one from opening 2♠!
- (2) Double is an alternative, but most players would expect a 4 card ♥ suit.
- (3) But East is perfectly happy now as he has excellent support for partner's ♥ suit.
- (4) 4♠ is perhaps a dubious decision at this vulnerability, but South most certainly does not expect North to have 4 ♥'s and a certain trick in the suit!

And what happened? 800 to E-W and a clear top.

The bottom line: -

- Do not pre-empt (at either the two or three level) if you have an outside 4 card major.
- Remember the barking dog.

The 1NT rebid after partner does not respond

Board 19 from Monday 28th

Dealer: ♠ QJ63
South ♥ K8
E-W vul ♦ A653
♣ KJ2

West	North (C)	East	South
-	1♦	1♥	pass
1♠	1NT (1)	2♥ (2)	pass
3♣	pass	pass (3)	pass (4)

♠ AK1094	N	♠ -
♥ 4	W E	♥ A109762
♦ K	S	♦ QJ10974
♣ 1076543		♣ A
	♠ 8752	
	♥ QJ53	
	♦ 82	
	♣ Q98	

- (1) What did you bid with this North hand C in this week's quiz? Partner has promised zero points and you need about 18-19 points to bid 1NT here. I believe that this North thought that it still showed 12-14 points. It's simple arithmetic/logic, partner probably has less than 5 points so it's 19 points max, 1NT will not make (and may well go for a number). Maybe a few 800 penalties in the future will change things?
- (2) East cannot introduce his ♦ suit as North has bid that.
- (3) A good pass. Bail out ASAP with a total mis-fit.
- (4) I would double here as I have good ♥'s sitting over the ♥ bidder, but then I would take partner for 18-19 points.

And what happened? 3♣ made with an overtrick and scored around average.

The bottom lines: -

- The 1NT rebid is only 12-14 if partner responds!
- If partner does not bid then a 1NT rebid shows a hand that was too strong to open 1NT.

What's it all about? – you can always ask!

Board 18 from Monday 28th

Dealer:	♠ 976				
East	♥ AKQ65	West	North (D)	East	South
N-S vul	♦ K43	-	-	pass	pass
	♣ K9	1♣	dbl (1)	1♠	pass
		2♠	3♥ (2)	dbl (3)	pass (4)
		pass (5)	pass		
♠ QJ84	N	♠ AK1053			
♥ -	W E	♥ 943			
♦ A752	S	♦ QJ8			
♣ AQ1076		♣ 84			
	♠ 2				
	♥ J10872				
	♦ 1096				
	♣ J532				

- (1) What did you bid with this North hand D in this week's quiz? A simple 1♥ overcall looks fine to me.
- (2) And here we see just one problem with the initial double, mentioning your suit here at the three level, when partner has passed throughout, is asking for trouble. It shows a hand that was too good for a simple 1♥ overcall initially and I would certainly prefer to have a 6th ♥ as well as a bit more in the way of high cards.
- (3) And here East went into a deep think. What was North's bid? Presumably he had missed the relevant news-sheets (saying it's a very strong hand) – but he could always ask South. Double was very silly of course, best to ask if you don't know what a bid means - this N-S are an established pair and South certainly knew that North was very strong. What would you bid with this East hand? With a good 5 card suit that partner has supported and three small ♥'s (that's a good number as partner is probably short – two of the enemy's suit is the worst holding) I would bid 4♠, although a 3♠ bid would also get you there.
- (4) As I said, South knew exactly what was going on and was all set to raise to 4♥, but 3♥ doubled scores more of course so he passed the double.
- (5) West assumed that East had the ♥ stack that South actually had. Looks like this North lucked out again.

And what happened? 3♥ doubled made exactly and was a clear top to N-S. E-W bid and made 4♠ comfortably at most tables.

The bottom lines: -

- A one-level overcall is around 7-17 points
- If you double and then bid a new suit, this shows a hand that was too strong to simply overcall. Generally around 17+ with a 6 card suit.
- If you don't know what an opponent's bid means and you know that they are an established experienced pair, then ask the bidder's partner!

An easy game missed

Board 6 from Monday 28th

Brian dismisses this board as trivial, E-W should always bid to 4♠ and always make 11 tricks – but apparently not in Pattaya.

Dealer:	♠ QJ6				
East	♥ KJ832	West	North	East	South
E-W vul	♦ Q98	-	-	pass	pass
	♣ 108	1♣	dbl (1)	1♠	2♦
		2♠ (2)	pass	pass (3)	pass
♠ AK85	N	♠ 109742			
♥ Q	W E	♥ A65			
♦ K754	S	♦ 6			
♣ AJ75		♣ KQ64			
	♠ 3				
	♥ 10974				
	♦ AJ1032				
	♣ 932				

E-W asked me where they went wrong here, who do you think should have bid more?

- (1) I would simply overcall 1♥. To me this is a no-brainer, with a 5 card major and 3 in the other major, do not double but simply bid your suit. Why on earth would you want to possibly end up in a 4-3 fit if you have a 5-3 fit in the other major?
- (2) Now West apparently got confused here. East's one level response still promises 6+ points after an intervening double, although it is generally limited to about 9-10 points as otherwise he might redouble. So with this 17 count and a great fit for partner, he must bid more than 2♠ which is a minimal response. 3♠ or 4♠ would work.
- (3) East is maximum and quackless with 5 ♠'s, 1st round ♥ control, a useful singleton and great support for partner's 1st bid suit. He should bid 3♠ (if not 4♠).

Both East and West grossly underbid and should share the blame.

And what happened? Brian's prediction (4♠ making +1) was true for 5 out of the 8 boards.

The bottom lines: -

- With a 5 card major and 3 in the other major, overcall rather than double.
- 4144 shape with 17 points is worth a noise when partner responds in your 4 card major!
- 9 points with a 5 card major which partner (opener) has supported is worth a noise, especially with a singleton in one of the opponent's suits.

Way overboard

Board 26 from Wednesday 2nd, dealer East

We played this board on Wednesday, and two out of the 6 E-W pairs overbid to a very poor 4♠. Who's fault?

West	East (E)	West	North	East (E)	South
♠ J9762	♠ K85	-	-	pass	pass
♥ 102	♥ K85	1♠	pass	2♣ (1)	pass (?)
♦ AK8	♦ 976	2NT (2)	pass	4♠ (3)	all pass
♣ A109	♣ KQ82				

- (1) East's 2♣ bid is fine as long as your partnership plays that it is forcing (East is a passed hand). If 2♣ is passable then East should simply bid an invitational 3♠. Probably the best solution by a passed hand over a major suit opening is to play (2-way) Drury here. This deal is in the booklet and Brian also says that East should just invite game.
- (2) Not a pretty rebid! But it is East who has pushed up the level and this 2NT rebid simply shows 12-14 points. In fact, if you don't play Drury then 2♣ at (1) should be a 5+ card suit and I would pass with this West hand. If 2♣ is forcing here in your system (not a good idea) then 2NT is probably the best rebid as it's a miserable ♠ suit.
Now I am not totally sure about the bidding and South may have overcalled 2♦ at (?), if that is true then West has another option, he can pass to show a minimum opener and should only bid 2NT when at the top end of the range (so 14) with decent ♦ stops.
- (3) What did you bid with this East hand E in this week's quiz? A jump to game here should be about 12-14 points. Obviously East cannot have that as he's a passed hand and so the action is only warranted with about 11 and a good ♠ suit and excellent shape. This actual hand is 11 but with no shape whatsoever (knock off a point for the 4333 type shape) and with only 3 trumps a 3♠ bid is quite sufficient.

The bottom lines: -

- Deduct a point for the totally flat 4333 type shape.
- If you have this 4333 type shape and partner's major suit opening is one of your 3 carders then this shape is especially bad (only 3 trumps and absolutely no ruffing potential).
- With no agreement to the contrary, the bid of a new suit by a passed hand is not forcing. So with 3 card support for partner's major suit opening you have to make the appropriate support bid straight away.
- The best solution to this passed hand problem is to play (2-way) (reverse) Drury but that is a rather advanced convention.

Stronger than a normal reverse!

Board 10 from Wednesday 2nd

A comfortable 4♥ contract was missed at 5 tables out of 6 on Wednesday, what went wrong?

Dealer:	♠ Q10842				
East	♥ A	West (G)	North	East (J)	South
Both vul	♦ K95	-	-	1♦ (1)	pass
	♣ AJ73	pass	1♠	2♥ (2)	pass
		pass (3)	pass		

♠ KJ9	N	♠ A65
♥ 98743	W E	♥ KQJ10
♦ 763	S	♦ AQ842
♣ 86		♣ Q

♠ 73
♥ 652
♦ J10
♣ K109542

- (1) A strong hand, but 1♦ is the only sensible opening.
- (2) But what did you rebid with this East hand J in this week's quiz? With a couple of points less (say 15-16) then double is fine, but I think that this hand is a bit too good and I go along with this reverse into 2♥. Now normally a reverse shows about 15-17 points when partner has responded, but when partner has passed (so less than 6 points) it must show a very good hand (around 18+).
- (3) And what did you bid with this West hand G in this week's quiz? Partner is expecting 0-5 points from you and inviting (virtually forcing) you to bid. You have 5 card support in his major suit and 4 points (maybe not a great 4, but North need not have both the ♠ A and ♠ Q). I would most certainly bid 3♥, if not 4♥.

And what happened? 2♥ made +3 but still scored well as only one pair bid to 4♥ and made.

The bottom lines: -

- 5 card support for partner's (4 card) major is a big +
- If you open, LHO and partner both pass and RHO overcalls then: -
 - . A double shows a reasonable hand (say 15-17 points)
 - . A reverse shows a very strong hand (say 18+ points)
- So a reverse opposite a passed partner is stronger than a reverse opposite a partner who has responded.

Promising a stop

Board 27 from Wednesday 2nd

Dealer: ♠ KQ975
South ♥ AK42
Love all ♦ J10
♣ 75

West	North	East (H)	South
-	-	-	pass
1♦	1♠ (1)	2NT (2)	pass
3NT	all pass		

♠ A4	N	♠ 8632
♥ Q75	W E	♥ 9
♦ AK9764	S	♦ Q852
♣ J4		♣ AKQ3
	♠ J10	
	♥ J10863	
	♦ 3	
	♣ 109862	

- (1) Double is a reasonable option here with both majors (pray that partner does not bid 2♣).
- (2) What did you bid with this East hand H in this week's quiz? With no overcall you would bid 1♠, but the overcall makes life difficult. You have the values for 2NT but no ♠ stop so that's a very poor bid (if 3NT is the best contract then it has to be played by West if he has a stop – a holding like Kx is only a stop if West is declarer.
- So East has a few options. He has good ♣'s and good ♦ support and so a 2♠ bid, asking partner to bid NT with a ♠ stop is quite reasonable. Another option is to bid 2♣ and hope that partner can rebid NT. And a third option is the simple 3♦, again hoping that partner will bid 3NT.

And what happened? As West had the ♠A it mattered not who declarer was, sometimes there's no justice in this game. This board was left over from Monday's simultaneous and I note that Brian says there's a cold ♦ slam but that most pairs should reach 3NT by West. I agree that 6♦ is difficult to bid.

And what happened? Nobody bid slam. Just three pairs bid to 3NT and I note that just one pair did play it from the West hand (well done Jeff/Michael). Note that the ♥J lead by South defeats 3NT played by East – West really should be declarer; and with no tenace to protect, East should know this.

The bottom lines: -

- A 2NT response after RHO has overcalled promises a stop in the overcalled suit.
- You can always bid the opponent's suit to ask for a stop.
- Especially when playing in NT, the stronger hand and/or the hand with a tenace to protect should be declarer

Which finesse? - part 1

Board 15 from Wednesday 2nd

Dealer: ♠ QJ1085
South ♥ 6
N-S vul ♦ AQ1064
♣ Q7

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
pass	1♠	pass	4♠ (1)
pass	pass (2)		

♠ -	N	♠ 76432
♥ J98754	W E	♥ Q3
♦ K9875	S	♦ J3
♣ 84		♣ K952
	♠ AK9	
	♥ AK102	
	♦ 2	
	♣ AJ1063	

- (1) There are more sophisticated bids but this was an unfamiliar partnership
- (2) Partner has shown around 19 points and looking for slam would be very reasonable.

And what happened? One pair bid 6♠ but went down. Most were in 4♠ making just +1 (only one pair made +2). But how should the hand be played for 12 tricks? If you count the top tricks it's 5 ♠'s, 2 ♥'s, 1 ♦ and 1 ♣, so 9. But (at least) two more ♣'s can be developed and a ♦ ruff brings the total to 12 (or 13). The best approach is pull one round of trumps. When West shows out try the ♣ finesse next (lead the ♣Q). When this succeeds (East may cover to promote his ♣9 or duck, it matters not) declarer should spurn the ♦ finesse by cashing the ♦A and ruffing a ♦ high. Then draw trumps and lead ♣'s again. The 4-2 ♣ break means that there are only 3 ♣ tricks but that's still 5 ♠'s, 2 ♥'s, 1 ♦, 1 ♦ ruff and 3 ♣'s – a total of 12. Only one declarer managed 12 tricks – well done Bob/Dave.

Which finesse? - part 2

Board 7 from Wednesday 2nd

And Dave showed his good technique again on this slam: -

Dealer:	♠ Q97				
South	♥ 9865		West	North	East
Both vul	♦ Q74		-	-	-
	♣ 762		1NT	pass	2♣
			2♦	pass	4♣ (1)
			4♠	pass	6NT
					pass
♠ J8	N	♠ K643			
♥ QJ4	W E	♥ AK102			
♦ AJ7	S	♦ K85			
♣ AQJ43		♣ K10			
	♠ A1052				
	♥ 73				
	♦ 10632				
	♣ 985				

(1) Gerber.

This bidding was fairly typical. You need about 17 points to insist upon 6NT opposite a 15-17 1NT, but this East is 16 with two 10's and excellent top cards (no quacks) and I think that 6NT is fine.

So let's look at the play. West has 11 top tricks and the 12th can come from either the ♦Q finesse or playing for the ♠A with North. Which should you try? Of course both happen to fail.

	♠ Q97		
	♥ -		
	♦ Q74	DUMMY	
	♣ -	↓	
♠ J	N	♠ K64	
♥ -	W E	♥ -	
♦ AJ7	S	♦ K85	
♣ QJ		♣ -	
	♠ A1052		
	♥ -		
	♦ 106		
	♣ -		

But Dave knew the answer – you don't try either unless you really have to!
 He reeled off 4 rounds of ♥'s and then started on ♣'s. With 6 cards remaining North appears to be in trouble. Should he unguard his ♠Q or the ♦Q on the ♣Q lead? The answer is that he should have been looking at his partner's discards and, seeing that partner is clinging on to ♠'s, he should keep his ♦'s. In practice he threw ♦'s on the last two rounds of ♣'s and Dave had 12 tricks when the ♦Q fell on the first round when he led up to the ♦K.

And what happened elsewhere? Just one other pair (Irene/Maud) made the slam.

The bottom lines: -

- Watch your partner's discards, and keep a guard in the suit that partner is discarding.
- Don't be in too much of a hurry to make a guess if you can reel off winners and put the defence under pressure.

5-5 in the majors opposite partner's 1NT

Board 21 from Wednesday 2nd, N-S vul.

West	East	West(F)	North	East	South
♠ K10842	♠ Q9	-	pass	1NT	pass
♥ A7432	♥ K64	2♣ (1)	pass	2♦	pass
♦ J9	♦ AK85	2♠ (2)	pass	2NT (3)	pass
♣ 5	♣ K1097	3♥	pass	3NT (4)	all pass

- (1) So what did you bid with this West hand F in this week's quiz? Stayman is not the answer when 5-5 in the majors, I'll come on to the solution shortly.
- (2) And any regular readers of the news-sheet know that this is a weak bid (showing 5 ♠'s and 4 ♥'s) and partner must pass. Maybe this pair play a different version of Stayman?
- (3) But Jeff does not read the news-sheets anyway, and even if you wanted to it's impossible to get Jeff to pass below game if he has 15 points and you have made any sort of bid.
- (4) Jeff reasonably placed partner with just 4 ♥'s and so bid 3NT.

And what happened? 4♥ was bid at most other tables and scored better.

So what's the solution when 5-5 in the majors?

One rather out-dated method with 5-5's is Extended Stayman (1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♦). But the problem is that there is no differentiation between invitational and strong hands. Also, this sequence is far better used as a Quest Transfer (showing 6 ♥'s and 4 ♠'s, with 1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♥ showing 6 ♠'s and 4 ♥'s).

Another practice in common use by many (most experienced?) players is: -

- 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠ shows 5-5 in the majors and is invitational
- 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 3♥ shows 5-5 in the majors and is game forcing.

So here you have to agree that with 5-4's in the majors you use Stayman (as I have said many times). This latter solution is probably best unless you want the real ultimate solution and you can read that up in my book on responses to 1NT.

Redouble is for Blood

Board 9 from Friday 4th

Dealer: ♠ AJ9
North ♥ AJ1086
E-W vul ♦ KJ5
♣ 109

♠ 642	N	♠ K1073
♥ 975432	W E	♥ Q
♦ -	S	♦ Q972
♣ Q765		♣ AJ43
	♠ Q85	
	♥ K	
	♦ A108643	
	♣ K82	

Table A

West	North(K)	East	South
-	1♥	dbl	redbl
pass (1)	1NT (2)	pass	3NT (3)
all pass			

Table B

West	North(K)	East	South
-	1♥	dbl	redbl
pass (1)	pass (2)	1♠	pass (4)
pass	2♥ (5)	pass	pass (6)
pass			

Table A: (1) Pass is best here. If partner retreats in ♠'s or ♣'s then that's fine.
(2) But this is wrong. What did you bid with this North hand K(a) in this week's quiz? Partner's redouble expresses an interest in penalising the opponents somewhere and North can only bid with a very shapely hand. 1NT is an impossible bid.

(3) South was all set to jump on anything that East bid, but now settled for 3NT.

Table B: (2) Automatic.

(4) At this vulnerability I would double (penalties) here. N-S have around 25+ points and E-W are probably in a 4-3 fit. They won't make 1♠ and at this vulnerability at pairs scoring a double is surely the best bet. One down will net you the 'magic' 200 and will beat any N-S partscore. If you have game then 1♠ will surely go minus two and 500 beats any N-S game.

(5) So what did you bid with this North hand K(b) in this week's quiz? For exactly the same reasons I would double here.

(6) This pass is feeble with a combined 25+ points.

And what happened. N-S at Table A still got a good score when 3NT made +3. N-S at Table B got a near bottom with 2♥ just making.

The bottom lines: -

- Redouble shows 9+ points and generally a mis-fit for partner. It shows the balance of power and is usually looking for a penalty. Either partner should jump at the chance to penalise the opponents and not bid unless partner has passed an opportunity to double.
- Be aware of the vulnerability. If the opponents are vulnerable then one down doubled will usually get a top score if there's no game. And if you are non-vul with vul opponents then setting them two scores more than your non-vulnerable game.

Play a convention over the opponent's 1NTBoard 23 from Friday 4th

Dealer: ♠ Q7
 South ♥ K54
 Both vul ♦ K9642
 ♣ 1084

♠ 98	N	♠ KJ652
♥ J108	W E	♥ AQ743
♦ QJ5	S	♦ 108
♣ QJ752		♣ 6
	♠ A1043	
	♥ 96	
	♦ A73	
	♣ AK93	

Table A

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

Table B

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1NT
pass	pass (1)	2♥ (4)	pass
pass	dbl (5)	2♠ (6)	dbl (7)
all pass			

Table A: (1) A reasonable invitational raise.

(2) Which means that East would have to compete at the 3-level and so he wisely passed.

(3) With this minimum South cannot accept.

Table B: (1) This North chose to pass, I guess it's near to borderline.

(4) But now East can compete at the two level. What a shame that they had no system bid to show both majors here! So East reasonably chose 2♥.

(5) With this 8 count (so a combined 23 min) North decided to double.

(6) And East said 'thanks for helping me make the right choice' as he put the 2♠ bidding card on the table.

(7) But South doubled that, and 2♥ would have made!

And what happened? 2♠ doubled was one down, so the 200 for N-S would normally be a complete top. Note that if E-W played a defence to 1NT (say Multi-Landy) then 2♣ would show both major and they would end up in the correct contract of 2♥.

Now I said that +200 was a near top for N-S. I have no idea what went wrong with the defence at Table A, but N-S scored +240 for 2NT making 12 tricks. With the ♥'s wrong, the ♠'s wrong, the ♣'s wrong and an unavoidable ♦ loser it looks like 7, maybe 8 tricks to me. With results like this no wonder this N-S pair score around 70% most of the time! Were E-W on drugs? I'm wondering if maybe the board was mis-boarded?

The bottom lines: -

- Play some sort of defence to a 1NT opening, 'natural' really is not good enough. At the minimum you need to be able to show a hand with both majors.
- I described 'Multi Landy' in news-sheet 15. Cappelletti is very similar but (in my opinion) slightly inferior.
- I also briefly went into DONT in news-sheet 11. Alex is a believer in the DONT convention but both Thorlief and Jeff have told me that they both don't like it. I totally agree, the best defence is Multi Landy. Don't play DONT.
- Don't be mesmerised by the club champion. If he's in a contract that should make just 7 tricks don't let him make 12! Five more than his entitlement on a flat hand really is too generous.

Converting a take-out double into penalties

Board 13 from Friday 4th

Dealer: ♠ A1094
North ♥ 543
Both vul ♦ A52
♣ 1074

♠ 865	N	♠ KJ73
♥ KQ6	W E	♥ J1097
♦ KJ64	S	♦ -
♣ Q52		♣ KJ963
	♠ Q2	
	♥ A82	
	♦ Q109873	
	♣ A8	

West	North	East	South
-	pass	pass	1♦
pass	1NT (1)	dbl (2)	2♦
pass (3)	pass	dbl (4)	pass
pass (5)	pass		

- (1) Obviously any news-sheet reader will bid 1♠ here.
- (2) A take-out double of 1♦.
- (3) I was East and with these ♦'s and partner showing values I wanted to double, especially as I had no 4 card major fit with partner. However, this was a first time partnership and I was not sure that partner would take it as penalties (it should be, sitting over the ♦ bidder when they have no known fit).
- (4) Anyway, good old partner came to the rescue. This 2nd double is again for take-out and is an excellent bid for two reasons: -
 - 1- Both opponents are limited and so partner has some points. With this great shape there must be a fit unless
 - 2- partner has a ♦ stack! In which case he will pass this 2nd double.

And what happened? 2♦ doubled was one down for the magic 200 to E-W. Actually, every single table was playing in ♦'s (often 3♦) but this was the only table where it was doubled. Guess I've got the blood lust?

Actually, 2♦ should make. But declarer led the ♦3 from hand to the ♦A, presumably under the impression that East had the ♦'s? If you are not sure about the meaning of the bidding, declarer can always ask and would have been informed that both of East's doubles were for take-out.

The bottom lines: -

- Look for the 'magic 200' at pairs scoring. One down doubled vulnerable is usually a top/bottom.
- When you make a take-out double, a 2nd double by you is also for take-out.
- But one is always free to pass partner's take-out double for penalties, this is usually only wise when you are sitting over declarer.

Sheep?

Board 2 from Friday 4th

Dealer: ♠ 73
East ♥ 75
N-S vul ♦ 8653
♣ AJ976

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

♠ KQ9	N	♠ AJ8542
♥ KQ1084	W E	♥ AJ
♦ A	S	♦ J7
♣ K843		♣ Q102
	♠ 106	
	♥ 9632	
	♦ KQ10942	
	♣ 5	

(1) If you play 2♥ as forcing here (I certainly do) then you could bid 2♥, but what's the point? You have a known 5-3 or better ♠ fit and here you can take a ♦ ruff in the short trump hand. So simply check that there are not two aces missing and bid slam.

The above (or something similar) seems obvious to me but 6♠ was bid only 3 times out of the six tables. And what happened? The sheep in 4♠ won the day as the defence won the first two tricks with the ♣A and a ♣ ruff. Sometimes there is no justice.

Bidding Quiz Answers

Hand A: 3♣, Stayman. Look for the 4-4 major suit fit.

Hand B: 4♣. Look for slam! ♥AKxxxx is worth far more than 7 points, especially as you know that partner has two or three of them. If 4♣ is natural in your system, then bid that. If 4♣ is asking for aces in your system then still bid it, followed by 6♥ if there is no more than 1 ace missing.

Hand C: Pass. Partner has promised nothing and a 1NT bid here would show 18+ points. It is only 12-14 when partner has bid!

Hand D: 1♥. This hand is not good enough to double and then bids ♥'s. A simple overcall is around 7-16 points and this hand simply qualifies.

Hand E: 3♠. This shows just 3 trumps and an invitational hand; perfect.

Hand F: 2♦, transfer, followed by 2♠. This is the way to show an invitational hand 5-5 in the majors. If you consider the hand game forcing then you can bid 2♥ to start with followed by 3♥. These two sequences promise 5-5 and is one reason why I keep on saying that with hands that are 5-4 or 4-5 in the majors that you should use Stayman.

Hand G: 3♥ (or maybe even 4♥). Partner has a very strong hand (around 18-19).

Hand H: 2♣ or 3♦ or 2♠. You cannot bid 2NT with no ♠ stop.

Hand J: 2♥. This reverse promises a very strong hand when partner has passed. Double is an option but promises only a slightly weaker hand (say 15-17 pts.).

Hand K: (a) Pass. Partner's redouble is 9+ points and generally a mis-fit, he is usually out to penalise the opponents.

(b) Double. Partner's pass is forcing and inviting you to double if you possibly can. The opponents are probably in a 4-3 fit (partner probably has 3 ♠'s) and with this non-min opener I think that double is best, especially at this vulnerability.