

11/3/2005

Club News Sheet – No. 123

Mon 7/3/05	N-S	1 st Paul(IRL)/Terry	66 %	2 nd Bob/Dave	59 %
	E-W	1 st Kees/Bjorn	55 %	2 nd Jeff/Michael	54 %
Wed 9/3/05		1= John (Can)/Jean Charles		and John(UK)/Kenneth	59 %
Fri 11/3/05		1= John (Can)/Jean Charles		and Jan/Tom	59 %

Bidding Quiz

Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.

Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A LHO opens 1♣ and this is passed round to you. (a) What do you bid. (b) What would 2♥ mean?
♠ A	♠ AK98	What do you open with Hand B?
♥ AK10742	♥ A63	
♦ KQ2	♦ 1085	
♣ K42	♣ AK4	
Hand C	Hand D	With Hand C partner opens 1♦ and RHO overcalls 1♥, what do you do?
♠ A53	♠ 94	With Hand D partner opens 1NT, what do you bid?
♥ Q102	♥ 32	
♦ A75	♦ AK86432	
♣ 10852	♣ 87	

That 4333 type shape yet again

Board 3 from Monday 7th

Dealer:	♠ 63				
South	♥ Q104	West	North	East	South (B)
E-W vul	♦ A942	-	-	-	1NT (1)
	♣ 10932	pass	pass	pass	
♠ Q102	N	♠ J754			
♥ J2	W E	♥ K9875			
♦ KQ76	S	♦ J3			
♣ QJ76		♣ 85			
	♠ AK98				
	♥ A63				
	♦ 1085				
	♣ AK4				

(1) So what did you open with this South hand B in this week's quiz? I've said it a few times – deduct a point for the flat 4333 type shape. And I'm glad to see that at least 3 out of the 6 South's on Monday followed my advice as at this table.

And what happened? 1NT is clearly the best spot and the three 1NT bidders scored well. One South opened 1♣ and played there (not as good a spot as 1NT), quite why North passed this 1♣ opening I don't know (bid 1NT). The other two N-S pairs both ended up in 3NT going down. Presumably South opened 1♣ and then jumped in NT – serves him right.

The bottom line: - Same as ever, deduct a point for the 4333 type shape. The message is gradually sinking in as 50% (but one of them was me!) got it right this time.

Too high

Board 10 from Friday 11th

Dealer: ♠ A53
East ♥ Q102
both vul ♦ A75
♣ 10852

West	North(C)	East	South
-	-	pass	1♦
1♥	1NT (1)	pass	pass
pass			

♠ J87	N	♠ Q94
♥ K8653	W E	♥ J4
♦ Q3	S	♦ 10982
♣ KJ3		♣ A974
	♠ K1062	
	♥ A97	
	♦ KJ64	
	♣ Q6	

(1) What did you bid with this North hand C in this week's quiz? 1NT is correct. With no interference, a 1NT response is 6-10. With interference it's best to play it as about 8-10 as there is no need for the 'courtesy' 1NT with a weaker hand as partner gets another bid if he is strong. This 1NT bid should, of course, guarantee a stop in the overcalled suit.

And the rest of the passes seem totally obvious to me.

But what happened? Just 2 out of the 6 tables stopped in 1NT. Every other N-S pair got too high. Now I simply don't understand this. N-S have no fit and have the combined values for 1NT; full stop. If the opponents choose to bid on at the two level then let them – you get 100 for every trick that they go down.

The bottom lines: -

- Don't let the opponents bully you into 2NT when you have the values for just 1NT – prefer to defend, especially if they are vulnerable.

I ran out of space in last few new-sheets, so here are a couple of deals that I've been saving: -

Transfer to a minor?

Board 24 from Wednesday 23rd

Dealer: ♠ A32
 West ♥ AKQ5
 Love all ♦ J105
 ♣ A32

West	North	East	South (D)
pass	1NT (1)	pass	2♠ (2)
pass	3♣ (3)	pass	3♦ (4)
all pass			

♠ KQ8	N	♠ J10765
♥ 984	W E	♥ J1076
♦ Q7	S	♦ 9
♣ K10964		♣ QJ5
	♠ 94	
	♥ 32	
	♦ AK86432	
	♣ 87	

- (1) This North is a firm believer in deducting a point for 4333 type shape. The 3 aces are good but the two 32's are bad. It's borderline and I won't argue with 1NT or with 1♣ followed by 2NT (showing 18-19).
- (2) What did you bid with this South hand D in this week's quiz? A 7 card suit headed by the AK is worth far more than 7 points – a simple 3NT is the best bid. This actual 2♠ bid was a weak transfer to either ♣'s or ♦'s.
- (3) forced, partner will pass or correct.
- (4) long weak ♦'s.

And what happened? 3♦ was not a great success, with 3NT making +3 being the most popular result, so what went wrong?

The problem was that this South hand is far too good for a weak transfer (remove the ♦A and it would be fine). With 7 ♦'s to AK 3NT is the bid as partner must have at least two ♦'s.

OK, but how would you bid a similar South hand that had only 6 ♦'s?

In Standard American the bid is 3♦ - showing a 6 card ♦ suit with two top honours, nothing else, and invitational to 3NT; but some do say that AKxxxx is too strong for this bid.

Another alternative (which I prefer) is to play 4-way transfers (with this scheme a transfer to ♣'s or ♦'s may be either weak or strong, as with major suit transfers). I have a book on responses to 1NT which explains 4-way transfers if you want to borrow it.

Pre-empt in the pass-out seat?

Board 16 from Friday 25th

Dealer: ♠ 87632
West ♥ Q985
E-W vul ♦ 873
♣ J

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

♠ KQ54	N	♠ J109
♥ -	W E	♥ J63
♦ A65	S	♦ J1094
♣ AQ10876		♣ 953
♠ A		
♥ AK10742		
♦ KQ2		
♣ K42		

- (1) What did you bid with this South hand A in this week's quiz? I guess that without any agreement you have to double and then bid ♥'s. But actually there is a better method. Since this is the pass-out seat there is no need for a weak jump overcall (with a weak hand you just pass) and so the jump overcall takes on its old-fashioned meaning of strong or intermediate. If you play a strong jump overcall in this situation then 2♥ is the bid, showing a better hand than double followed by bidding ♥'s.
- (2) West enquired about the 2♥ bid and North informed him that it was weak. Now perhaps West should have suspected that something was amiss and passed? But he has a very nice hand and so bid 3♣.
- (3) With 4♥'s North has a clear raise to 3♥
- (4) Now South is not allowed to 'know' that North believed his bid to be weak, it is unauthorised information. But in this situation he has a clear raise to 4♥.

And what happened? Most N-S pairs reached 4♥ and so it scored a little above average.

The bottom lines: -

- There is no such animal as a pre-empt in the pass-out seat.
- So in the pass-out seat: -
 1. You have to decide what openings of 2♥ or 2♠ are.
 2. You have to decide what openings at the three level are, if you play them at all!
 3. You have to decide what jump overcalls are.

Bidding in the pass-out seat in 4th position.

Here is a reasonable scheme: -

- 1- Openings of (2♦), 2♥ and 2♠ are strong, the good old-fashioned 8 playing tricks. If you play strong two's (or Benjamin) then playing 2♥/♠ as a very strong weak two (say 9-12 pts) is an option. But remember that it may be dangerous to open up a 'weak' 2♥ in 4th seat without much in ♠'s.
- 2- If you open 3♣/♦/♥/♠ then this must be some type of strong hand.
- 3- Jump overcalls are strong.

When your hand improves – part 1

Board 24 from Wednesday 9th

Dealer: ♠ J62
West ♥ 542
Love all ♦ KJ832
♣ 52

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

♠ 1098	N	♠ KQ754
♥ 10743	W E	♥ AKQ9
♦ 6	S	♦ 754
♣ AK1076		♣ J
	♠ A3	
	♥ J8	
	♦ AQ109	
	♣ Q9843	

- (1) Now with a ♣ stack like this West would normally prefer to defend 2♣ doubled; but he has ♠ support (so N-S are short in ♠'s). Nether the less, I think it's correct to go for the penalty with these great ♣'s sitting over the overcaller, and as this E-W pair play negative doubles West passed, awaiting partner (semi-automatic) re-opening double.
- (2) I would re-open with a double here, but it's not too unreasonable to show this great ♥ suit. This is most certainly the best move if partner turns out to have a poor hand that was not a penalty pass (quite likely as he passed initially).
- (3) Now E-W have missed the penalty double, but East has promised a shapely hand with both majors. So what would you bid with this West hand now? West's hand has improved (it's a double fit) and it is now well worth a game invitation, so either 3♥ or 3♠. Normally one should always go for the 4-4 fit but West knows here that any ♦ ruffs will be taken in the short ♠ hand so playing in a 5-3 ♠ fit should be equally good.

And what happened? Out of six tables, just one pair managed to clobber South and scored 800 defending 2♣ doubled. Just two tables reached 4♠ which made +1 for the shared 2nd top. The other 3 tables were in ♠ partscores.

The bottom lines: -

- Hand evaluation is an evolving process and your hand improves/degrades throughout the bidding. If you have a double fit with partner, your hand has improved.

When your hand improves – part 2

Board 22 from Wednesday 9th

Dealer: ♠ 86
East ♥ KQ6542
Love all ♦ 75
♣ 973

♠ K109	N	♠ AQJ54
♥ 7	W E	♥ 103
♦ QJ94	S	♦ A862
♣ AKJ84		♣ Q5

♠ 732
♥ AJ98
♦ K103
♣ 1062

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

- (1) West obviously has the values and shape to know that 4♠ should make, but bidding it directly is not good as that is usually a weaker hand with (usually) 5 trumps. There are other options (such as a 3♥ splinter) but with only 3 card support it's best to bid another suit first and then support partner at the game level (this is called a delayed game raise, and shows a sound raise to game rather than a pre-emptive one). So, West bid 2♣.
- (2) The bid of the opponent's suit may mean one of many things. Partner's first priority is to bid NT if he has a stop. This 3♥ bid here is a good bid as the ♣Q is an excellent card and if NT is the best strain then it must be played by West.
- (3) But of course West is definitely not interested in NT and 4♠ is the 'obvious' bid, isn't it?
I did not think so. I was West and my previous bid at the two level only promised a good 10+ points. East has shown a game forcing hand opposite this (so usually at least a good 14+). Now the opponents have bid ♥'s and a singleton is an excellent holding (in a trump contract) and so my hand has improved immensely. I simply went on a slam hunt, 4NT was RKCB.
- (4) 4♠ here showed 2 key cards + the 'trump' queen. Exactly which suit was trumps (♣'s or ♠'s) was unclear, and in these ambiguous situations it's usually best to assume the last suit that was naturally bid (so ♣'s here). But actually the response was the same as East held both black suit queens!

And what happened? 12 tricks are easy (or should be) – do not take a ♦ finesse, but ruff a ♥ in dummy, draw trumps and toss the 3 losing ♦'s on dummy's ♣'s. Two pairs bid the slam and made. The other 4 tables all just bid game and two made only 11 tricks.

The bottom lines: -

- Hand evaluation is an evolving process and your hand improves/degrades throughout the bidding. If the opponents bid a suit in which you are short, your hand improves if you have a fit with partner.

When your hand improves – part 3

Board 12 from Wednesday 9th

I have frequently said not to overcall/double just because you have values, you can always leave it to later (especially if your partner understands balancing). Let's see an example of this from Wednesday: -

Dealer:	♠ K964				
West	♥ K9	West	North	East	South
N-S vul	♦ 98	1♦	pass (1)	1♥	pass (2)
	♣ K10632	2♦	dbl (3)	pass	2♠
		3♦ (4)	pass	pass	3♠ (5)
		all pass			
♠ Q73	N	♠ J2			
♥ 2	W E	♥ AJ54			
♦ KQJ753	S	♦ 642			
♣ AJ9		♣ Q754			
	♠ A1085				
	♥ Q108763				
	♦ A10				
	♣ 8				

- (1) Best to wait.
- (2) And obviously South cannot say anything.
- (3) But now North has a nice bid – double, showing 4 ♠'s and 4 or 5 ♣'s. Incidentally I (South) was asked about this bid and I said that North had 4 ♠'s and probably 5 ♣'s. Why not just 4 ♣'s? Because with a flatter hand he would probably pass. And why not 5 ♠'s? Because he would then have overcalled 1♠ at (1).
- (4) With this great ♦ suit I think that this is a good bid.
- (5) Now this South (me) knows about the Law of Total Tricks, so why bid 3♠ with just a 4-4 fit? Because of shape! – and the knowledge that E-W have probably have at least a 9 card ♦ fit. This is a nice South hand but West bidding ♦'s (three times) and East bidding ♥'s (length/strength over the bidder) has improved this hand immensely, it's now easily worth 3♠.

And what happened? Obviously ♠'s played very nicely and South made 11 tricks. One other South presumably thinks that there are only 13 important cards in the deck (the 13 that he/she is looking at) and deservedly lost 200 playing in 3♥ doubled (I don't know the bidding, I guess it's not printable). Every other E-W was peacefully left to play in a ♦ partscore.

The bottom lines: -

- If your hand is unsuitable for action at your first bid, then pass – you have a partner.
- When the opponents have bid two suits, then a double shows the other two – isn't that easy – why make life difficult with an ambiguous bid earlier?
- Look for the 4-4 fit (it's better than a 6-2 fit!).

Aces are for taking kings

Board 1 from Wednesday 9th

Dealer: ♠ K10764
North ♥ 3
Love all ♦ A642
♣ KJ10

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

♠ 2	N	♠ AJ953
♥ Q65	W E	♥ KJ104
♦ K98	S	♦ J103
♣ A76542		♣ 3
	♠ Q8	
	♥ A9872	
	♦ Q75	
	♣ Q98	

- (1) This South hand is just about worth 2♥ playing Standard American (as long as you do not play that a 2-level response promises another bid).
- (2) Partner has pushed the level up to two; either 2♠ or 2NT show a minimum hand here.

Anyway, this particular deal is not in the news-sheet for the bidding, but the play. To start with, what should East lead? It does not look attractive to lead from this ♥ holding and I agree that his choice of the ♦J is reasonable. Declarer won this with the ♦A and led a small ♠. And then East lost it! He inexplicably rose with the ♠A and returned a ♠. This is very poor play (from an 'experienced' player). Obviously he should duck and then await the ♠ return from dummy, taking declarer's ♠K with his ♠A and then continue with ♦'s (or ♥'s if West signalled for a ♥ on this 2nd round of ♠'s).

And what happened? 2NT is a very poor contract, but making it was a great score for N-S. I note that 2NT went minus 4 at one table.

The bottom lines: -

- Ace are for taking kings.
- It is rarely a good idea to lead into declarer's known 5 card suit.

Enough for 6NT?

Board 5 from Wednesday 9th

When partner opens 1NT then responder generally need about 18 points (so 33-35 total) to insist upon 6NT, but things are different with a good long suit: -

Dealer:	♠ KQ62	<u>Table A</u>			
North	♥ AJ98	West	North	East	South
N-S vul	♦ K105	-	1NT	pass	6NT (1)
	♣ K8	all pass			

♠ 74	N	♠ J10853	<u>'Expert Table'</u>			
♥ K1032	W E	♥ Q65	West	North	East	South
♦ 862	S	♦ QJ43	-	1NT	pass	2♠ (1)
♣ 10495		♣ 6	pass	3♣	pass	4♦ (2)
	♠ A9		pass	4NT (3)	pass	6NT (4)
	♥ 74		all pass			
	♦ A97					
	♣ AQJ932					

Table A: (1) Rather abrupt, but very effective.

Now I was asked the best way to bid to 6NT. At one table East bid 4♣ (Gerber) but they got into a mess as partner did not understand it. 4♣ here at (1) is Gerber (ace asking) but apart from the aces, South really needs to know if North has the all-important ♣K. The best way to establish this is to play 4-way transfers over 1NT and to play RKCB. And, in addition, it's best to play Kickback (rather than 4NT as the RKCB bid) when a minor suit is trumps: -

- 'Expert' (1) Transfer to ♣'s
Table (2) RKCB. With ♣'s as trumps it's best to play that 4♦ asks for key-cards.
(3) The 3rd step, so showing 2 key cards without the ♣Q.
(4) So North has the key ♣K in addition to the missing ace and so 6NT is the spot.

And what happened? There are obviously 12 tricks on top in 6NT but Table A was the only pair to bid it. 3NT and 4NT were other common contracts.

The bottom lines: -

- AQJxxx is worth far more than 7 points, especially if partner has the king.
- After a 1NT or 2NT opening, a direct 4♣ is ace-asking (Gerber) but it is rarely a good bid unless you know exactly where you are going.
- With a minor suit as trumps, 4NT is often too high as the ace ask. There are options; some experts play that 4 of the minor is the ask but I prefer Kickback (4 of the suit above).

So what does double mean?

Board 15 from Friday 11th

Here we see an example of three appalling doubles in a row!

Dealer:	♠ J1052				
South	♥ AJ4	West	North	East	South
N-S vul	♦ 1087	-	-	-	1♣
	♣ A94	dbl (1)	redbl (2)	1♠ (3)	1NT (4)
		dbl (5)	2NT (6)	pass	pass
		dbl (7)	all pass		
♠ K	N	♠ Q8764			
♥ Q9872	W E	♥ 105			
♦ AJ943	S	♦ K52			
♣ K5		♣ 876			
	♠ A93				
	♥ K63				
	♦ Q3				
	♣ QJ1032				

- (1) I've said it numerous times – a take out double should be short in the suit bid and playable in the other 3 suits (especially the majors). Double here with a singleton ♠ is silly. If you play the UNT then that is a possibility (weak with the lowest two unbid suits) but I would simply overcall 1♥ and maybe hope to get in a ♦ bid later.
- (2) This is fine, 9+ points and no fit.
- (3) Now North's redouble has said that N-S have the majority of the points and are often looking for a penalty. With a 5 card suit East should bid it. This bid is absolutely correct and promises zero points.
- (4) This is incorrect. When partner redoubles he is looking for blood and 1NT is an impossible bid here. Pass is correct.
- (5) Heaven only knows what this double means. I believe it was penalties as he thought that his partner had points for his ♠ bid.
- (6) Why on earth anybody would want to take out 1NT doubled into 2NT baffles me.
- (7) Surely this one is penalties? But, again, East has promised nothing.

And what happened? 2NT doubles made exactly and West got his well deserved frigid bottom. One West got into the good spot of 3♦ and another rested peacefully in 2♥. All other West's got too high and scored badly (but not as badly as this West).

The bottom lines: -

- A take-out double should be playable in all 3 unbid suits. With a two-suited hand either play Michaels/UNT or overcall the higher ranking hopefully followed by the lower ranking.
- When your partner re-doubles then you usually have only two sensible bids, pass or double. Bidding NT can never be right, we had another example of this silly 1NT rebid last week, Hand K (Redouble is out for blood).
- In 4th seat (after an opening bid, double and re-double) bid a 5 card suit – this promises zero points.
- Don't keep on doubling when the opponents have more points than you and partner has promised nothing but a mis-fit!

