

29/4/05

Club News Sheet – No. 130

Mon 25 th N/S	1 st Chuck/Hans	58%	2 nd Kenneth/David	52%
Mon 25 th E-W	1 st Ursula/Jean-Marc	57%	2 nd Dave/Kees	52%
Wed 27 th N/S	1 st Clive/Ken	64%	2 nd Dave/Gene	57%
Wed 27 th E-W	1 st Monte/Richard (USA)	65%	2 nd Kenneth/John	52%
Fri 29/4/05	1 st John Gavens/Terry	63%	2 nd Clive/Ken	59%

Everything is back to normal now, I hope; thanks (nearly) everybody for your continual support. I have re-started 'the beginner's page(s)' and it will be issued as a separate document on Mondays with the same number as the accompanying news-sheet.

Bidding Quiz

Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.

Hand A Hand B With Hand A partner opens 1♣, what do you do?

♠ 982	♠ Q53	With Hand B LHO opens 2♥, what do you bid?
♥ KJ865	♥ KQJ984	
♦ 6543	♦ A3	
♣ 3	♣ A2	

Hand C (a) Would you open with Hand C (if so, with what?)?
Suppose that you choose to open 1♣, then what is your rebid if ...

♠ Q	(b) Partner bids 1♦?	(c) Partner bids 1♥?
♥ Q109	(d) Partner bids 1♠?	(e) Partner bids 1NT?
♦ KJ83		
♣ KJ1052		

Hand D With Hand D partner opens 1♣

	(a) What do you respond?
♠ AJ10764	(b) Suppose you bid 1♠, then what do you bid after partner's 2♣ rebid?
♥ K4	
♦ AJ654	
♣ -	

Hand E Finally a tricky problem that occurred at the table on Friday.

LHO opens 2♥ and both partner and RHO pass, what's going on?
Before you answer the final question (e) (what do you bid), think about the following questions: -

♠ A9742	(a) Opener has about 8 points, where are the missing 26 points?
♥ -	(b) Opener has 6♥'s, where are the other 7♥'s?
♦ Q10952	(c) Why did RHO not bid or raise♥'s?
♣ 863	(d) Why did partner not bid?

If you work out all of the above then you should know the answer to ...

(e) ...what do you bid?

A 'quickie' question. With no opposition bidding, how many♣'s does opener promise in this auction?
1♣ - 1NT - 2♣.

Don't pass partner's 1♣ with a singleton

Board 11 from Monday 25th

Dealer: ♠ 982
South ♥ KJ865
Love all ♦ 6543
♣ 3

West	North(A)	East	South
-	-	-	1♣ (1)
pass	pass (2)	pass (3)	

♠ K74	N	♠ Q1065
♥ Q10	W E	♥ 9743
♦ K109	S	♦ J2
♣ KQ652		♣ AJ7
	♠ AJ3	
	♥ A2	
	♦ AQ97	
	♣ 10984	

- (1) N-S were playing Acol and so South could not open 1NT.
- (2) What did you do with this North hand A in this week's quiz? I would never pass a 1♣ opening with a singleton if I can muster up a bid. 1♥ looks best to me.
- (3) East could make a balancing bid here, but pass may well work out best.

And what happened? The 4-1 fit did not play that well and went two down for a joint bottom.

The bottom line: -

- I've said it many times before – don't pass partner's 1♣ opening with shortage if you can possibly scrape up a bid.

Lead quiz

Jean-Marc gave me this hand from an internet game. You are West with this bidding. What card should you lead after partner's double?

West

♠ Qxx
♥ 109xx
♦ 8
♣ 98xxx

West	North	East	South
-	1♦	pass	1♥
pass	2♣	pass	3♣
pass	3♠ (a)	pass	3NT (b)
pass	pass	dbl	all pass

- (a) 4th suit, asking for a ♠ stop.
- (b) Promising a ♠ stop

Partner has been silent throughout the auction but then doubles the freely bid 3NT contract. Why? Answer next page.

Lead quiz answer

Jean-Marc's hand from the internet: -

West	East	West	North	East	South
♠ Qxx	♠ Axx	-	1♦	pass (1)	1♥
♥ 109xx	♥ Qx	pass	2♣	pass	3♣
♦ 8	♦ AKQ10x	pass	3♠	pass	3NT
♣ 98xxx	♣ QJx	pass	pass	dbl (2)	all pass

I won't go into the bidding in detail as it's a lead problem. East decided upon a 'trap' pass at (1); a 1NT overcall or double followed by 1NT are alternatives but the pass should have worked out well if partner had understood the double at (2).

So what did you lead in the quiz? Actually, it's text-book stuff but you can work it out logically. Partner has been silent throughout the auction but then doubles the freely bid 3NT contract. Why?

Because he has an excellent ♦ suit. It's similar to the Lightner double of a slam and demands that partner lead dummy's first bid suit. So the answer is the ♦8.

Don't make a weak bid with a strong hand

Board 22 from Friday 29th

Dealer:	♠ 3	West(D)	North	East	South
East	♥ J97652	-	-	1♣	pass
E-W vul	♦ Q82	1♠ (1)	pass	2♣	pass
	♣ Q63	2♦ (2)	pass	3♣	pass
		3♠	pass	pass (3)	pass
♠ AJ10764	N	♠ K8			
♥ K4	W E	♥ Q3			
♦ AJ654	S	♦ 73			
♣ -		♣ AK109874			
	♠ Q952				
	♥ A108				
	♦ K109				
	♣ J52				

- (1) What did you bid with this West hand D (a) in this week's quiz? 1♦ is correct when 4-4 (bid 4-4's up the line) or if you have more ♦'s than ♠'s. But with 5-5's you bid the higher ranking first, so bid 1♠ here.
- (2) So what did you bid with this West hand D(b) in this week's quiz? 2♦ here is not enough because it is not forcing, 3♦ is correct. A jump to 4♦ is wrong because as it's an unnecessary jump (3♦ is forcing), it would be a splinter agreeing ♣'s!
- (3) East thought that West was weak and so passed.

And what happened? The comfortable 4♠ game was bid at just one table out of 5. I note that one pair reached 5♦, presumably because West bid 1♦ at (1) and East correctly gave preference to the first bid suit. The bottom lines: -

- Don't make a non-forcing bid if you know you have game values and partner does not.
- Bid the higher ranking of two 5 card suits in most situations.

Why no slam?

Board 8 from Wednesday 27th

Dealer: ♠ 865
West ♥ J8543
Love all ♦ 64
♣ J43

♠ AK3	N	♠ QJ7
♥ A1097	W E	♥ KQ2
♦ A87	S	♦ KQ105
♣ 1062		♣ AQ8

♠ 10942
♥ 6
♦ J932
♣ K975

Table A

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

'Expert' Table

West	North	East	South
1NT	pass	4NT (2)	pass
pass (7)	pass		

- Table A
- (1) A balanced 15 count, so open 1NT? You all know me, I'll deduct a point for the totally flat 4333 type shape. But the great top cards, the good intermediates and the two 10's offset this and so for me a 1NT opener is OK.
 - (2) Unless you play a sophisticated system you should only bid Stayman if you have a 4 card major
 - (3) This pair had agreed the 4♣ was ace-asking, I'll go into the correct 'standard' responses on the next page.
 - (4) This player believed that 4♦ showed 0 or 3 aces. I guess that you could agree to play that (I can't see the point myself unless it's Roman Keycard with the ♥K included in the responses).
 - (5) When you use 4♣ as an ace ask, then 4NT is a sign off; quite why this East chose 4♥ is a mystery. Anyway, East should have realised that a few wheels had come off as it's impossible for West to have zero aces and have a 1NT opener.
 - (6) And perhaps West should have realised that those wheels were rolling – East has asked for aces (so looking for slam) but has backed off with a 3 ace response! That must be impossible and so clearly East has not taken the 4♦ bid as 0 or 3 aces.

- 'Expert' Table
- (2) So I'm not too impressed with the auction at Table A, but how would our 'experts' bid it? Now there are mechanisms to locate a 4-4 (or better) minor suit fit after a 1NT opening but they are beyond the scope of this news-sheet. So today our 'experts' are simple souls. What did you bid at (2) with this East hand B in this week's quiz? With no 4 card major 2♣ is pointless/misleading. If you have no mechanism to locate a possible ♦ fit then the hand is maybe worth a slam force and I think that with this totally flat hand it's a toss-up between 6NT or a very pessimistic quantitative 4NT. This expert East was a pessimist and lucked out. I believe that most expert pairs would reach 6NT.
 - (7) And East has an easy pass with his minimal 1NT opener if East chooses 4NT.

And what happened? Our E-W pair at Table A lucked out for an average out as 4♥ made and two pairs bid the hopeless 6NT slam.

But why is 6NT a poor contract with a combined 34 points? It basically needs two out of 3 suits behaving to make – so it's probably against the odds.

34 pts will normally be enough for slam, but the problem here is that both hands are totally flat with no fit. If either hand had a 5 card suit then 6NT would be odds-on. It boils down to what I am continually saying, you cannot over-emphasise how poor the 4333 type shape is (in either NT or a suit contract). When you both have it, it's hopeless!

The bottom lines: -

- You need a 4 card major to bid 2♣ Stayman.
- Know/agree your responses to Blackwood and Gerber.
- Deduct a point for the totally flat 4333 type shape.

Standard Responses to Gerber and Blackwood: -

If 4♣ asks for aces: -

- 4♦ = 0/4 aces
- 4♥ = 1 ace
- 4♠ = 2 aces
- 4NT = 3 aces

If 4NT asks for aces: -

- 5♣ = 0/4 aces
- 5♦ = 1 ace
- 5♥ = 2 aces
- 5♠ = 3 aces

Now there are the 'Roman' response whereby the first step is 0/3 but this only really makes sense if there are 5 'aces'. And it most certainly has to be agreed and is not commonly used over a 4♣ ask.

Discarding – Suit preference.

Lavinthal (aka McKenney)

It's time for a repeat of an article from news-sheet 99: - When you are defending and can not follow suit then you have to discard something. It is often best to convey information to your partner with this discard and there are various schemes. One of the best and most commonly used is Lavinthal, also known as McKenney. The most important point is that you DO NOT discard in a suit that you like, but discard from one of the other suits. There are two remaining suits and the size of your discard indicates which of these remaining two suits you like, a high/middle card indicates the higher ranking and a low card the lower ranking.

For example, you are discarding on ♥'s and would like partner to lead a ♦. Discard either a low club (so asks for the lowest ranking of ♠'s and ♦'s) or discard a high ♠ (so asks for the highest ranking of ♣'s and ♦'s). Note that you always have a choice of two suits to discard from and can usually make the signal clear. When you are defending it is important to take special note of partner's *first* discard – that will tell you which suit he likes.

I have witnessed countless occurrences of people throwing away a trick in defence (especially in NT contracts) by discarding in a suit to indicate that they like that suit – that system really sucks. Don't discard from a suit you like, play McKenney.

- ♠ A1063
 - ♥ 74
 - ♦ AK83
 - ♣ 873
- Lavinthal Suit preference is also used in other situations. Suppose that you are on lead defending a ♥ contract. You lead the ♦A and get an encouraging ♦9 from partner. So you continue with the ♦K and he plays the ♦2. So he encouraged. Suppose that you know from the bidding that partner is probably ruffing the next ♦; which ♦ do you lead? The answer is the ♦8. This is Lavinthal and asks partner to lead back a ♠ (the ♦3 would ask for a ♣).

What's going on ...?

Board 15 from Friday 29th

Dealer: ♠ Q53
South ♥ KQJ984
N-S vul ♦ A3
♣ A2

♠ 8	N	♠ KJ106
♥ A107532	W E	♥ 6
♦ K87	S	♦ J64
♣ J94		♣ KQ1075
	♠ A9742	
	♥ -	
	♦ Q10952	
	♣ 863	

Table A

West	North(B)	East	South(E)
-	-	-	pass
2♥ (1)	pass (2)	pass	dbl (3)
all pass			

Table B

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	pass
pass (1)	1♥	dbl	(4) pass
pass (4)	pass		

- Table A (1) This looks like a classic weak two opener to me. And, especially at favourable vulnerability, I'm sure that most people would open 2♥.
- (2) But unfortunately for West, North has a monster ♥ hand sitting over him! But how can North possibly penalise West? A double would be for take-out! So what did you bid with this North hand B in this week's quiz? I guess that you could bid 2NT, but if your partner has his wits about him then it's surely best to pass and hope that partner has the guts to double?
- (3) So what did you bid with this South hand E in this week's quiz? Actually I was South at Table A and I admit that it took me a little while to work it out! Where are the ♥'s? Where are the points? Why have neither North nor East bid? If you take the Spock (Star-Trek) approach there is only one logical conclusion. Partner has a big hand with a ♥ stack! Thus you should double here. It is, in principle, a take-out double but in this situation you 'know' that partner is going to pass.
- Table B (1) This West chose not to open, I guess they don't play weak twos?
- (4) An obvious take-out double.
- (5) And can you really blame West for passing here? This sort of hand is one of the very rare exceptions to the rule of never passing partner's one-level take out double. 1NT is the alternative.

And what happened? 1♥ doubled at Table B made +1 for a good score of 360 to N-S. But this was beaten by the N-S at Table A where 2♥ doubled went 3 down for 500. One N-S pair bid 4♠ but that looks like a dodgy contract to me. I guess that most West's opened 2♥, but no other N-S managed to manipulate the double.

The bottom lines: -

- When RHO bids your suit, pass is usually the best bid.
- In situations where a double by partner would have been for take-out, you can sometimes work out that he has passed because he has a penalty hand.
- This latter scenario occurs frequently if you play negative doubles.

Obey the Law

Board 6 from Friday 29th

Dealer: ♠ 6432
East ♥ A763
E-W vul ♦ A5
♣ 974

♠ AJ	N	♠ Q
♥ KJ842	W E	♥ Q109
♦ 10764	S	♦ KJ83
♣ Q6		♣ KJ1052

♠ K109875
♥ 5
♦ Q92
♣ A83

Table A

West	North	East(C)	South
-	-	1♣ (1)	1♠ (2)
2♥ (3)	2♠	3♥ (4)	3♠ (5)
4♥ (6)	dbl (7)	all pass	

Table B

West	North	East	South
-	-	pass (1)	2♠ (8)
all pass			

- Table A (1) So did you open this East hand C in this week's quiz? It's just 12 points and the singleton Q is not worth two points. Still, with a reasonable 5 card suit, two 10's and excellent intermediates I would open 1♣.
- (2) I would prefer a weak 2♠ here but North plays strong jump overcalls.
- (3) With a 5 card ♥ suit and a good card in partner's ♣'s, 2♥ is fine here.
- (4) But I don't really like this. This is a minimal opener with only 3 card support – I would like 4 card support to freely bid at the 3-level here, I would pass. Incidentally, there is a convention (the support double) to indicate just 3 card support in this situation but that's probably best left to more experienced players.
- (5) This is where the Law takes over. It's a competitive situation and South has only promised 5 ♠'s. With a 6 card suit the 'Law' says it's 'safe' to go one more.
- (6) But this is wrong! West has just the 5 ♥'s and 11 points that he has already promised and so should not go beyond the level of the Law.
- (7) Now North has 4 ♠'s (he has only promised 3) but this is where the 'adjustments' to the Law come into play. If North's points were mainly in ♠'s then he should press on, but with all of the points outside ♠'s the double here is good judgement at pairs scoring. 4♠ is reasonable at teams where you cannot afford the opponents to possibly make a vulnerable game.
- Table B (1) This East chose to pass.
- (8) And this looks like a classic weak 2♠ opener in any seat to me, although not everybody may agree?

And what happened? 4♥ doubled went one down (declarer got the ♦'s wrong) and the resultant 200 gave N-S the top. 2♠ passed out made for a good score. All the other N-S's got too high in 4♠ and all went down. The bottom lines: -

- Obey the Law.
- But if the opponents are too high, you can double them!
- Be aware of pairs scoring. One down doubled vulnerable is 200 and a top/bottom on a partscore hand. At teams scoring I would simply pass at (6) – you think it's probably one down but that's a poor double at teams (but correct at pairs).

Bidding Quiz Answers

Hand A: 1♥. Don't leave partner floundering in a 4-1 or whatever fit if you can possibly muster up a bid.

Hand B: Pass. Double would be for take-out. 2NT is a possibility but surely it's best to pass and hope to get a penalty (hopefully doubled if partner has his thinking cap on and understands balancing). You know that partner has at most a singleton ♥ and on a good day he may make a take-out double in 4th seat or the bidding may progress in another way and you may then get a chance to make a penalty double.

Hand C: (a) I would open 1♣ but I guess that pass is reasonable.
(b) If partner responds 1♦ then I bid 2♦.
(c) If partner responds 1♥ then I bid 2♥.
(d) If partner responds 1♠ then I bid 1NT (one of the very few occasions where I bid 1NT with a singleton in partner's suit – I prefer it to the alternative of 2♣).
(e) If partner responds 1NT then I bid 2♣ - we have a ♣ fit (probably 5-4 but possibly just 5-3 – work it out, or look at the 'quickie' answer). This 2♣ bid most definitely does not promise a 6 card suit in this situation.

Hand D: (a) 1♠. One bids 5 card suits from the top down in most situations. If you respond 1♦ and then later bid ♠'s then that shows either 4♦'s and 4♠'s or longer ♦'s than ♠'s (and usually only 4♠'s).
I don't like a game forcing 2♠ jump shift response here as it implies a better suit and there's not so much room to show the 2nd ♦ suit.
(b) 3♦. Natural and forcing. 2♦ would be non-forcing and 4♦ is a splinter agreeing ♣'s and looking for a ♣ slam. 3♠ is not a good option as it's generally played as not forcing (but highly encouraging) and it leaves ♦'s out of the picture.

Hand E: (a) Partner probably has the lion's share.
(b) Partner probably has most of them.
(c) Because he has a mediocre hand with less than 3♥'s.
(d) Because he has a big hand with a ♥ stack but could not double because that would be for take-out.
(e) Double! Well done if you got this one right. Pass and 2♠ are somewhat less good alternatives – note my toned-down language, in former days I would state a stronger opinion about pass or 2♠.

'Quickie' answer: The sequence 1♣ - 1NT - 2♣ promises only 5♣'s. Partner has denied a 4 card major and must have at least 3♣'s and so there's a ♣ fit.
If your partnership style is to always respond 1♦ with 3343, 2344 or 3244 shape then there's a guaranteed 5-4 ♣ fit. Opener probably has a singleton in a major suit and so does not want to play in 1NT.

Let's hope that everybody is happy with this news-sheet?

Terry