

6/5//05

Club News Sheet – No. 131

Mon 2/5/05	1 st Clive/Ken	64%	2 nd Chuck/Terry	55%
Wed 4/5/05	1 st Gerard/Derek	58%	2 nd Jim/Tomas	58%
Fri N-S	1 st Jim/Tomas	58%	2 nd Gerard/Derek	56%
Fri E-W	1 st Monte/Alan	58%	2 nd Mike/Phil	56%

Don't forget that there's an accompanying 'beginner's' news sheet – no. 131. This week it covers 1NT overcalls and hands that are too good for a 1NT overcall (so 19+).

Bidding Quiz

Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.

Hand A Hand B With Hand A partner opens 1♠, (a) what do you bid?
(b) What would you do if RHO had doubled?

♠ 843	♠ K1042
♥ QJ53	♥ K9653
♦ Q10	♦ AQ
♣ Q542	♣ Q6

With Hand B you open 1♥ and partner responds 1♠.
What do you do?

Hand C Hand D With Hand C partner opens 1NT, what do you bid?

♠ 984	♠ 5
♥ A743	♥ K1087
♦ J76	♦ KJ109653
♣ AK4	♣ Q

What, if anything, do you open with Hand D?

Nice 'n Easy

Board 7 from Friday 6th

Dealer: ♠ Q865
South ♥ A107
Both vul ♦ 873
 ♣ K84

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

♠ 93	N	♠ AJ7	
♥ Q42	W E	♥ J8	
♦ K954	S	♦ J1062	
♣ J1053		♣ A972	
	♠ K1042		
	♥ K9653		
	♦ AQ		
	♣ Q6		

I noticed this auction on Friday. It's nothing special but a few pairs did overbid. What did you bid at (1) with this South hand B in this week's quiz? Partner has bid your 4 card suit and so the hand has improved, but it's still a poor 14 count (AQ doubleton is a bad holding) and 2♠ is quite sufficient.

And what happened? 2♠ made +1 but one N-S pair overbid to 4♠ (minus one).

The bottom line: -

With a minimal (12-14) hand, a simple raise of partner's 1♠ response is quite sufficient.

Raise partner if RHO doubles

Board 1 from Monday 2nd

Dealer: ♠ QJ765
North ♥ 96
Love all ♦ A83
♣ K97

West(A)	North	East	South
-	pass	1♠	dbl (1)
2♠ (2)	pass (3)	pass	dbl (4)
pass (4)	pass (5)		

♠ 843	N	♠ AK1092
♥ QJ53	W E	♥ K2
♦ Q10	S	♦ J954
♣ Q542		♣ 108
	♠ -	
	♥ A10874	
	♦ K762	
	♣ AJ63	

- (1) It's playable in all 3 suits and so double is reasonable, but with a 5 card major I would prefer a 2♥ overcall.
- (2) What did you do with this West hand A(a) in this week's quiz? Without the double I would choose 1NT rather than 2♠ because all the points are outside ♠'s and there may be a ♥ fit. But what did you bid in the actual situation with West hand A(b) after the double? Now you could pass with this miserable hand and a free bid of 1NT here should show a reasonable hand. After the double you know that RHO has ♥'s and with this poor West hand (all quacks) the deal may belong to the opposition, so I now prefer 2♠ rather than pass - make it difficult for the opposition - maybe they will get too high in a ♥ contract? Who knows - make life difficult for them.
- (3) And here we are - it's difficult for North! If West had passed then North would have an easy 1NT bid and that would keep South silent. But North has no option now other than to pass - double would be a poor bid and it's for take-out anyway.
- (4) E-W have come to a halt in the bidding and so South knows that North must have some values, so a 2nd double (also for take-out) is very reasonable.
- (5) And it's again difficult for North! Didn't that 2♠ bid at (2) cause him a headache! Anyway, he chose to pass and thus convert the double into penalties and it looks like the best option to me.

And what happened? The ♠ situation was marked by the bidding and East made the contract exactly. That was a top for E-W. The other results were mixed and I note that one N-S pair did bid 4♥ (and somehow make !). The bottom lines: -

- With a 5 card major, I prefer to overcall rather than double.
- If partner opens 1♥/♠ promising a 5 card suit then I personally will only support with 3 cards if I have an honour in the suit or have a weak suit elsewhere (else I choose 1NT).
- But when RHO doubles then things are different. There is no need to make a 'courtesy' bid of 1NT with around 6-7 points as partner gets another go if he has a good hand, so I prefer a 1NT response after an intervening double to be about 8 with a stop (re-double with more).
- And after a double I will always raise partner with any 3 card support and a weak hand (less than 9) - it may make life more difficult for the opposition.

The Michaels cue bid

Board 24 from Monday 2nd

When you bid the opponent's suit it is hardly ever natural. One common convention is that an immediate bid of two of opener's one level opening shows a weakish two-suited hand with about 6-11 points. 5-5 shape is ideal.

Dealer:	♠ 8753				
West	♥ K	West	North	East	South
Love all	♦ 98	pass	pass	pass (1)	1♠
	♣ J108754	2♠ (2)	pass	3♥ (3)	3♠
		pass	pass (4)	4♥ (5)	pass
♠ 964	N	♠ K	pass	4♠ (6)	5♥ (7) dbl
♥ QJ653	W E	♥ A10984	all pass		
♦ QJ1063	S	♦ 754			
♣ -		♣ K932			
	♠ AQJ102				
	♥ 72				
	♦ AK2				
	♣ AQ6				

- (1) In 3rd seat a 1♥ opening is a reasonable alternative to pass.
- (2) A Michaels cue bid. In this situation promising ♥'s and a minor.
- (3) East knows there is a ♥ fit, 4♥ is an alternative. I don't know for sure, but I suspect that East was being somewhat devious here (perfectly acceptable). He is pretty sure that South is going to bid again and is angling at being doubled later in 4♥?
- (4) With 4♠'s opposite a strong partner I would raise to 4♠.
- (5) Now East knows that N-S have missed 4♠, so why on earth would he want to bid on here? He's still hoping to be doubled in 4♥?
- (6) At last.
- (7) But East was not bothered, he knows that there is a double fit (a ♥ fit and a fit in one minor) and was quite happy to 'sacrifice' in 5♥. If it goes one down doubled then that's 100 away and better than them scoring 140 or 170 in a 3♠ contract if he had passed at (5). And who knows, if West is not minimum for his bid then 5♥ may even make.

And what happened? The defence slipped up and 5♥ actually made for a clear top. 4♠ was making at other tables and those pushed into 5♠ went down (but 5♠ looks like a make to me, with just the ♥A and one ♣ ruff to lose?).

The bottom lines: -

- Michaels cue bids (and the associated UNT) are excellent conventions if not abused – I really do like to be 5-5 in the two suits, especially if at the minimum point range.

The Unusual NT (UNT)

Board 21 from Monday 2nd

We've just seen that a Michael's cue bid is used with some weak two suited hand types. The other half of the convention is the UNT, which always shows the lowest two unbid suits. I have given many examples in the past of the convention being abused (when not 5-5) but there was a pretty good example on Monday.

Dealer:	♠ A63			<u>Table A</u>				
North	♥ KQJ7643			West	North	East	South	
N-S vul	♦ 87			-	1♥	2NT(1)	3♥ (2)	
	♣ 4			3NT(3)	4♥	dbl (4)	pass	
				6♣	dbl	all pass		
♠ KJ7	N	♠ 9						
♥ A10	W E	♥ 2		<u>Table B</u>				
♦ J3	S	♦ AKQ1042		West	North	East	South	
♣ AKQJ82		♣ 107653		-	1♥	2NT(1)	pass (2)	
	♠ Q108752			5♣ (5)	all pass			
	♥ 985							
	♦ 965							
	♣ 9							

Table A (1) The Unusual NT, 6-11 pts and 5-5 (at least) in the two lowest unbid suits (so the minors minors here). Some may consider this hand a bit too strong for the UNT. If you don't play the UNT (or think it's too good) then 1♦ followed by a ♣ bid is an excellent alternative.

(2) A bold bid by South.

(3) But this West knew what to do. He obviously had read somewhere that if 3NT is a reasonable option – then bid it. 4NT (ace ask) is an excellent alternative.

(4) Now when you have pre-empted (the UNT is a pre-empt) a subsequent double shows a good hand for the pre-empt (and hopefully a couple of quick tricks).

(5) That's all West needed to know, one ace is good enough for the slam.

Table B (2) This South decided to pass, fine.

(5) But for some reason this West was mesmerised. He knew partner was weak with both minors but found a pathetic 5♣ bid. 3NT would be reasonable but

all he really has to do is ask for aces with 4NT (4♣ would be to play and simply pre-emptive as partner has shown ♣'s) and then bid 6♣.

And what happened? 5♣ made +1 on the lead of the ♠ A and scored a cold bottom. One other pair languished in 5♣ but scored better when the ♠ A was not led and 13 tricks rolled in. 6♣ doubled scored the top with 6♦ and 3NT being bid at the other tables.

The bottom lines: -

- If you need just one ace for slam, then why not ask partner if he has it?

Now this really was a very poor show by the West at Table B, but luckily for me we don't usually mention names in the news sheets any more.

A Penalty double!

Board 10 from Friday 6th

This hand generated considerable discussion after the Friday session: -

Dealer:	♠ AQ92				
East	♥ 4	West	North	East (D)	South
Both vul	♦ 7	-	-	1♦ (1)	pass
	♣ AKJ9742	1♥	dbl (2)	2♥	2♠ (3)
		pass	3♣ (4)	3♦	dbl (5)
		pass	pass (6)	pass	
♠ 8743	N	♠ 5			
♥ Q952	W E	♥ K1087			
♦ AQ4	S	♦ KJ109653			
♣ 106		♣ Q			
	♠ KJ106				
	♥ AJ63				
	♦ 82				
	♣ 853				

- (1) Did you open with this East hand D? It's not usually a good idea to pre-empt (3♦ here) with a 4 card major and the 1♦ opening seems reasonable to me. Pass is the alternative.
- (2) Now I've mentioned this before; a double in this position (with a passed partner and both opponents unlimited) needs to be a strong/shapely hand, and this North hand qualifies. In principle it shows both black suits.
- (3) Since RHO has bid this is now a 'free bid' and shows values (about 6-9).
- (4) North intended this as forcing. Whether it is or not is not really relevant here but it certainly shows a very good hand with a good ♣ suit – and with two red singletons it's unlikely to be passed out. Whether it denies 4♠'s or not is another moot point which I won't go into. The hand is too good for 3♠, 4♣ is forcing as is a cue bid of 3♦/♥ but that may promise 1st round control.
- (5) But here's the point, what does this double mean?
What would you bid with this South hand at this stage?
First of all, let's discuss what double means. Partner has advertised a big hand, the opponents have not agreed this suit, you are sitting over the bidder – it is penalties!
Presumably this South did not think so, 82 is not normally considered a good enough trump holding for a penalty double.
So what should South bid? Even if double was not for penalties it would be pretty meaningless. Pass is obviously quite sensible – you're not quite sure what hand type partner has so let him bid. But I would bid 3♥ - a cue bid showing the ♥A – as you have support for both black suits this seems to be clearly the best bid to me.
- (6) I would pull partner's penalty double with this hand – but then some partners can sometimes get very touchy if you pull their 'penalty' double and so I do have some sympathy with North.

And what happened? E-W made 3♦ doubled exactly. N-S have a comfortable slam in either black suit; nobody found 6♠ but two pairs did bid to 6♣.

The bottom line. If you are not sure what a double means (or how partner will read it) then don't bid it – especially if you have other better alternatives.

A 10 is sometimes worth a lot !

Board 5 from Friday 6th

Dealer: ♠ AJ
North ♥ KJ92
N-S vul ♦ AQ84
 ♣ Q108

Table A

West	North	East	South (C)
-	1NT	pass	3NT (1)
all pass			

♠ K73	N	♠ Q8652
♥ Q1085	W E	♥ 6
♦ 103	S	♦ K952
♣ J652		♣ 973
	♠ 984	
	♥ A743	
	♦ J76	
	♣ AK4	

Table B

West	North	East	South (C)
-	1NT	pass	2♣ (1)
pass	2♥	pass	4♥ (2)
all pass			

Table A (1) What did you bid with this South hand C in this week's quiz? Now you all know me, never deny a 4 card major. I would bid 2♣, Stayman. And if partner responded 2♦ or 2♠ then bid 3NT.

Table B (1) This South knows about 4-4 fits.
(2) And once a 4-4 ♥ fit is uncovered then that is where you normally want to play, so bid 4♥. Now there is a convention (SID – Stayman in Doubt) whereby a bid of 3♦ here says that we have a 4-4 ♥ fit but are totally flat and asks partner to define his hand further. In particular he can bid 3NT if he too is 3433. It's a quite useful convention, especially with recent improvements (Advanced SID, or ASID), but hardly anybody has heard of it.

And what happened? 3NT makes exactly if declarer takes a deep ♥ finesse and does not try the ♦ finesse (1♠, 4♥'s, 1♦ and 3♣'s). But 4♥ is a far better contract and made 10 tricks. The 4-4 fit is still usually superior to NT even when trumps split 4-1!

But, unfortunately, there is a little white lie. South actually has the ♠ 10 and not the ♠ 8 and so there was a 2nd ♠ stop and 3NT also made 10 tricks. Presumably the two South's who majestically jumped to 3NT ignoring a possible ♥ fit fully realised what a powerful card the ♠ 10 was? The bottom line: -
- 10's are often worth more than zero points.

Bidding Quiz Answers

Hand A: (a) 1NT or 2♠. Both are reasonable in my opinion, but with all of the points outside ♠'s I prefer 1NT. Unlike a 4-4 fit, a 5-3 fit does not always usually play better than NT (is that English? – but you know what I mean).

(b) 2♠. After the intervening double there is another option – pass. But I always like to make life difficult for the opposition and will raise ♠'s with any 3 small after a take-out double.

Hand B: 2♠. Quite sufficient, 3♠ would be an overbid. If game is on then partner will make a noise.

Hand C: 2♣, Stayman. Look for the 4-4 ♥ fit and bid 3NT only if there isn't one.

Hand D: 1♦ or pass. 3♦ is not recommended when you have a 4 card major.