


## English Bridge

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ENGLISH BRIDGE
is published four times a year by the

## ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION

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Printer: Precision Colour Printing
Front Cover Illustration: Audrey Quinton
English Bridge is also published online in the Members' Area at www.ebu.co.uk


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# Rounding off the year 

When you read this, the EBU's AGM will have taken place. Awards for exceptional service will have been made, elections will have been run, a look over our shoulder at the year gone by will have taken place, and the future will have been discussed.

I was up for re-election to the post of Chair. One is allowed to serve two consecutive three-year terms, and this will be my second. The reason that I am able to write this so far ahead of the AGM (early November) is that I stood unopposed, which is not necessarily cause for celebration. An organisation such as the EBU, rooted in democracy, should encourage challenge which includes the discussion of, and sometimes the acceptance of, different points of view.

To this end, my colleague on the board Tony Russ, is arranging periodic County Chairs' Meetings - if you haven't attended one on behalf of your county, please do: the Board doesn't set the agenda, counties do, and they have proved lively testing grounds for a variety of subjects. Any member can always contact us via the county shareholders if they think there's a subject or idea that needs investigation.

Finally, we have three vacancies on the Board for co-opted members. If you would like to be part of the future of Bridge in England, get in touch. We don't bite - we're ordinary player members, just like you. But be warned: there are no easy rides. It's a hard-working committee. If you think it's a load of besuited old men sitting in leather chairs lighting cigars with fivers, those days are long gone.

## PICKING UP NEW PARTNERSHIPS

I've changed my habits. Over the last couple of months I've played with a handful of people I'd never played with, and you know what? I've quite enjoyed it. Mike Graham is a fine player from Essex who I have known for decades, but despite a few abortive attempts to arrange a game in the nineties,
we had never played a board together until the recent Crockfords' Plate final. Heather Dhondy counts as a new partner because, prior to being thrown together in a recent match, we hadn't sat across the table from each other for a quarter of a century. Brendan Doolan, a charming player from South London, hooked up with me at my local club, likewise Athena Chow, a young player who swiftly came to the conclusion that I was probably the worst player in the country, but remained very polite about it.

There was nearly another new partner, a 'Distinguished Gentleman of the Bridge World'. Alas, he had to cancel because of Covid (he's better now, thanks for asking), but he's not getting off that lightly. I'm flicking through my diary, poised to find a new date. I mention this because, as we all know, bridge is a partnership game, and part of the enjoyment for a lot of people is carefully honing a system and wheeling it out week-in, week-out with a person you enjoy playing with. I know - I've been there myself. But perhaps, now that we're all nearly back to normal, and back to our local clubs, it's time to mix it up a bit. It's only 24 boards - why not just play with someone else for a laugh, now and again? Cut your system agreements to a minimum, and concentrate on playing the cards you're dealt. You might be surprised at how well you do, you might be surprised at how liberated you feel.

## National Pairs Qualification

Watch out for some changes next year to the National Pairs. Qualifying for regional finals will be based on your club pairs results in specified weeks in February. We want to make this event truly national, and to involve as many members as possible. Look out for more information on this.

It only remains for me to thank you all for supporting your clubs, counties and the EBU over the last few difficult years. The compliments of the season, and I wish you all the very best of health.

TTony Forrester is this year's master compiler to test your bridge brain. Send in your answers for a chance to win our most coveted prizes:

## The Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards

has again very generously donated a double-pack of the most recent Master's playing cards. This set commemorates the 100th anniversary of the BBC, and continues an annual tradition of Masters' cards dating back to 1882 .

Each pack is beautifully designed, and the twin packs of cards are presented in a blue leather case, and are limited to 350 sets. The cards also come with a booklet about the cards and the history of the BBC.
Each set is backed with the BBC 'Testcard' but, unusually, the sets are different. The first depicts Information and Education (Children, Science, Radio and News as the suits); and the other Entertainment (Drama, Sports, Family and Comedy), with the Court Cards of both showing lively portraits of famous personalities. The $\$$ depicts Roy Plomley who devised Desert Island Discs; and in Set 2, the K shows Morecambe and Wise. There are further clever design features, including a few modifications to some pip cards.


You are South in each problem. Playing Teams, what would you bid at the key moment and why? Up to 10 marks each.

```
\triangle }
* 108
*Q10874
&AJ976
```

| Q1 |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| N/S Game. Dealer | North. |  |  |  |
| W | N | E | S |  |
|  | $1 \vee$ | Pass | $?$ |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Choose from: (a) 1NT; (b) 2 ; (c) 2

```
& }
* AQ109
-Q1087
& AKJ7
```

Choose from: (a)Pass; (b) 1 $\boldsymbol{Y}$; (c) Dble: (d) 1NT

| - Q | Q3 $\mathrm{N} / \mathrm{S}$ Game. Dealer West. |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - K9765 | W | N | E | s |
| $+3$ | $1{ }^{14}$ | Dble | 4 | ? |

Choose from: (a) 5母; (b) 5 ; (c) Pass; (d) 4NT
Continued overleaf

## Happy

 Christmas!

## COME ON! GIVE IT A GO

Send your entries by email or post not later than 31st December. By email: lou@ebu.co.uk or
Lou Hobhouse, Raggett House, Bowdens, Langport,
Somerset, TA10 0DD. pening leads. This time you are sitting West, playing Teams. Choose which suit to lead. Up to 10 points each.

| $\begin{aligned} & 7 \\ & \text { K } 108763 \\ & \text { QJ } 7 \\ & 632 \end{aligned}$ |
| :---: |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

D efence. You are sitting East, playing Teams. 10 points each.

Q7


West leads the A, 7, 2 and 10, and switches to the
\$7. How do you defend?

Q8


West leads the 2 . How do you defend?

Choose your lead:
(a) spade; (b) heart; (c) diamond; (d) club


## ACOLytes - Common Problems



## When raising partner isn't invitational

Itouched upon the concept of raising partner for pre-emptive reasons, rather than to invite to game, in my last column, when I wrote about how a single raise of a weak two does not show an invitational hand. Today we are going to look at how this can also apply in contested auctions.

One phrase that you will hear often is that you should 'bid to the level of the fit'. This is a rule that is related to the pre-emptive raises that we will come on to in a minute. It is saying that, if both sides have roughly the same number of points, you should be contracted for as many tricks as you have trumps. If you have a nine-card fit in hearts, for example, you should bid to $3 \boldsymbol{\square}$, and not let opponents play in $2 \boldsymbol{s}$ or three of a minor. This can mean jumping straight to 3 with a weak hand with four-card support for partner's known five-card suit, but it is a more broadly applicable concept.

## When is a raise weak, and what does THAT MEAN?

When both sides are bidding constructively, $\boldsymbol{a}$ jump-raise of partner's suit shows less than invitational values. This deprives the opponents of the space to communicate information about their hands. With a strong hand - invitational values you can start by making an Unassuming Cue Bid - a bid of the opponents' suit - and later compete to 'the level of the fit' if necessary.

Here is an example of bidding to the level of the fit with the South hand:

```
4 A864
\vee 63
* Q 1072
& 854
```

| Love All |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| West | North | East | South |
| 19 | 19 | Dble | $?$ |

I would bid 3 here. You could redouble (with no fit) or make an Unassuming Cue Bid if you held a good hand and were interested in game, so jumping to 3 here just shows partner four spades and a not-terrible-but-not-really-great hand. Partner will have at least five spades for their overcall, so you know that you have at least a nine-card fit. Hence, bidding to the three level is bidding to the level of the fit. Partner will usually pass unless they have extra shape or strength - they won't take you for an invitational hand.
The basic meaning of the $3 \boldsymbol{d i d}$ is not affected by vulnerability, but you should be a little more circumspect when vulnerable - if you go two down undoubled it is more likely to be a bad score. I could hold a very weak hand - say, a suitable four count to jump to 3 here when non-vulnerable, but would always have at least six or seven points and a decent shape (not $4 \cdot 3 \cdot 3 \cdot 3$ !) if vulnerable. The top end of the bid is around eight points. With a good nine and four-card support I would make an Unassuming Cue Bid.

## Unassuming Cue Bids - a Refresher

The EBU website archives tell me that I wrote about these in February 2020, which feels a world away! I think it might be time for a refresher. An Unassuming Cue Bid is when you bid your opponent's suit to show a good raise for your partner. You can do this when your side has overcalled and you are bidding opener's suit, or when your side has opened and RHO has overcalled, and you bid RHO's suit. While this is widely played, it's worth checking partner plays UCBs over both your opening bids and overcalls.

In the example auction above, 2 (the opposition's suit) would show a good raise in spades - about $10+$ points and at least three-card support. With four-card support you don't need quite as much as a 10 count - a decent nine will suffice. The UCB would apply even if opener's club was announced as 'could be short'.

This makes sense because you can＇t really want to play in clubs．Having two different ways of raising spades on this start（going through or bidding spades directly）allows you to show more different hand types on the most important auctions，ie the ones where you have a fit for partner．

The most common auctions where jump raises are weak are ones where you have a UCB available and are choosing not to use it，so can＇t have a good raise for partner．If partner opens，say， $1 \boldsymbol{\downarrow}$ ，and RHO passes，jumping to 3 shows an invitational hand because you do not have a different way to show a better raise in hearts－the opponents have not bid a suit that you can make a UCB in．

Here are some hands for you to have a look at． What would you bid in each case？In all cases， assume that no one is vulnerable．

| $\begin{gathered} \text { Hand } 1 \\ (1 \diamond)-1 \vee-(P) ? \end{gathered}$ | Hand 2 1ヵ-(P)-? |
| :---: | :---: |
| ¢ 76 | －KJ54 |
| －KQ 32 | － A 76 |
| －J 8742 | －QJ 86 |
| －93 | －54 |


| $\begin{gathered} \text { Hand } 3 \\ 19-(P)-? \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Hand } 4 \\ \text { (1v)-1A-(2 } \left.{ }^{\mathrm{A}}\right)-? \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Hand 5 } \\ \text { (1v)-1ヶ-(Dble)-? } \end{gathered}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| ¢ J 1085 | 4 A 8653 | －AK 87 |
| $\checkmark$ A 52 | $\checkmark 5$ | － 82 |
| －Q 952 | －K 93 | －K852 |
| －87 | 2） 864 | － 196 |


| Hand 6 <br> （1『）－1ヵ－（Dble）－？ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Hand 7 } \\ \text { (1४)-1@-(Dble)-? } \end{gathered}$ |
| :---: | :---: |
| － 9765 | － 8754 |
| －6 | － 832 |
| － A 943 | －Q 76 |
| ¢ 7432 | \＆J 84 |

Hand 1 －Bid 3v．This shows four hearts for partner and a weak hand－enough that this might make－but not an invitational hand．If you wanted to invite you would bid 2 as an unassuming cue bid．

Hand 2 －Bid 31．This is not bidding to the level of the fit because this is an uncontested auction． This is just a good old－fashioned invitational raise to the three level，showing four－card support and about 11 points．

Hand 3 －Bid 24．As in Hand 2，this is a situation where a jump to 3 shows an invitational raise， and you are not strong enough to do that．If partner had overcalled，this hand would be perfect for a 3 bid，as you would have an unassuming cue bid available，but in an uncontested auction you will have to content yourself with a simple raise．
Hand 4 －Bid 4a．Did you identify the unassuming cue bid by RHO？This hand is a slightly spicier example of bidding to the level of your fit．You have five trumps for partner，a very useful singleton，and enough scattered values that 4s could well have play．If it doesn＇t，you could still get a good score．Perhaps the opponents were making 4 and this is a cheap sacrifice，or they incorrectly guess to bid 5 now．

Hand 5 －Bid $2 \boldsymbol{V}$ ．This hand is far too good for a simple raise to 2 or a jump to 3 ．Making an unassuming cue bid tells partner that you are interested in game．
Hand 6 －Bid 34．This hand has great shape and having only low trumps is fine when you have nine of them between you－you aren＇t promising any good ones．Even though you have only four points I would definitely bid $3 \boldsymbol{1}$ on this．

Hand 7 －Pass．This hand has terrible shape and few high cards，and the ones that you have don＇t rate to be very useful．Don＇t be tempted to bid 24， thinking that it shows a worse hand than $3 \boldsymbol{-}$－it does not，it shows a qualitatively different hand！ Partner will now think you have more points than this，and only three spades，and will completely misjudge the rest of the auction／defence．


## Basic Cardplay

## Blockages 5

Continuing with the topic of blockages we see in this article how to turn a defensive weapon on its instigators. Let's start, though, with a simple example of how to disrupt defensive communications.

You open 1NT as South and North raises you to game via Stayman. West fishes out the $\downarrow \mathrm{Q}$ as the opening lead.; How should you play?


Your initial Count and Plan reveals nine available tricks: six 'toppers' (three spades, one diamond and two clubs) with three slow hearts to add to the basket. What could possibly go wrong?

Well, the opponents may be mean enough to set up four diamond winners and the A before you can establish your nine winners. Do you have a counterplay if diamonds are 5-2?

You may think that a hold-up play is appropriate here and it is certainly true that if West started life with $\uparrow$ QJ $10 x x$ and East held the $\geqslant$ A then ducking trick one would bring home the bacon. However, this line would fail if West held a five-card diamond suit together with the crucial ace of hearts.

You can, in fact, all but guarantee the contract by taking the $A$ at trick one. If diamonds are 5-2, East will have started with $\downarrow$ Kx. What can he do if you
take the ace of diamonds immediately? If he bravely throws the $\$ \mathrm{~K}$ away at trick one, East-West cannot run off four diamond tricks when in with the A . If East holds on to his king, the diamonds are irredeemably blocked. Let's look at the full deal:

| South plays 3NT. West leads the $\downarrow$ Q |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { KQ6 } \\ & \text { J } 1086 \\ & \text { K } 863 \end{aligned}$ | Online readers can click here |
| $\begin{aligned} & \text { \& } 8 \\ & \text { A } 3 \\ & \text { QJ } 1064 \\ & \text { J } 1085 \end{aligned}$ |  | $\begin{aligned} & 109532 \\ & 9752 \\ & K 7 \\ & \text { Q9 } \end{aligned}$ |
|  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { AJ7 } \\ & \text { KQ4 } \\ & 9532 \\ & \text { A42 } \end{aligned}$ |  |

Note that if diamonds are 4-3 then nothing matters - the defenders can never establish enough tricks to beat you before you have banked your contract.

Now, what if we alter the hand a little? Once again, you are playing 3 NT after a similar sequence and the two hands seem uncannily familiar. This time, though, West places the 6 on the table as his opening lead. How should you play?


As in Hand 1, your initial Count and Plan reveals nine available tricks: six top tricks with three slow hearts to add to the coffers. As before, the problem is to prevent East-West from taking four diamonds and the A should West have started with a fivecard diamond suit.

The crux of the matter is to read the lead. What information can you glean? The answer may be a little unexpected - as declarer you should trust that West has led his fourth-highest diamond and apply the Rule of Eleven.

This famous rule is used more by the defenders than by declarer, so it is satisfying to turn matters to your advantage when playing the hand. Here, you apply the Rule by subtracting the value of the card led (a six) from 11, giving $11-6=5$. This means North, East and South have (between them) five cards higher than the $\downarrow$. As declarer, you can see three of them, so East has two diamonds higher than the six. The $\$ 64,000$ dollar question is which?

If West's suit were headed by any three honours
 almost certainly have led an honour. On that basis, East's two diamond cards must surely both be honour cards and the suit can be blocked by rising with the A at trick one. Let's look at the full deal:


After taking the A , the defenders cannot beat 3NT, no matter how hard they try. It does East no good to unblock the $\downarrow \mathrm{K}$ on the ace, the diamonds still cannot be run off. Note that the contract would have been bombproof had diamonds broken 4-3.

Have you got it? Paul's quiz is online p68


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## Beat Today's Experts

These hands are all from modern events and David Bird points to some useful lessons to be learned from them. Bid them with your partner and then see how your efforts compare with the experts' bidding.

## DECEMBER 2022 WEST HANDS

(IMP scoring on every deal)

| 1. E/W Game | - Q 75 |
| :---: | :---: |
| Dealer West | - KQJ963 |
|  | - A |
| (Jonsson) | \& 1086 |
| 2. Game All | - 53 |
| Dealer East | - K |
|  | - AKQ 76 |
| (Sebbane) | \& KQJ98 |
| * South bids 3 ${ }^{\text {P }}$ |  |
| 3. Love All | @ 7 |
| Dealer North | - KJ1064 |
|  | -87532 |
| (Aa) | - K 4 |

* North bids 24 (5 spades, 4+ in a minor)

| 4. N/S Game | - AKQ |
| :---: | :---: |
| Dealer North | $\checkmark$ - |
|  | - A 842 |
| (Von Arnim) | - AK 10872 |
| 5. N/S Game | ¢ K Q 1093 |
| Dealer East | - 765 |
|  | - AJ97 |
| (Yavas) | - 5 |
| 6. E/W Game | - K |
| Dealer South | - KQ864 |
|  | - KQ 73 |
| (Nawrocki) | * Q 76 |

## Beat Today's Experts

These hands are all from modern events and David Bird points to some useful lessons to be learned from them. Bid them with your partner and then see how your efforts compare with the experts' bidding.

## DECEMBER 2022 EAST HANDS

(IMP scoring on every deal)

| 1. E/W Game | K 4 |
| :--- | :--- |
| Dealer West | K75 |
| (Magnusson) | KQ 1095 |
|  |  |
| 2. Game All | KQ |
| Dealer East | 92 |
|  | J 10842 |
| (Seguineau) | A643 |

* South bids 3

| 3. Love All | AK863 |
| :--- | :--- |
| Dealer North | AQ7 |
|  | AQ 106 |
| (Livgard) | A |

* North bids 2 ( 5 spades, $4+$ in a minor)

| 4. N/S Game | - 1097 |
| :---: | :---: |
| Dealer North | - 98732 |
|  | - 73 |
| (Hausler) | - QJ 4 |
| 5. N/S Game | - A |
| Dealer East | - K Q 9 |
|  | -8642 |
| (Kuranoglu) | \& AK974 |


| 6. E/W Game | J 53 |
| :--- | :--- |
| Dealer South | A 102 |
|  | A K 10832 |

Did you beat the experts? - Page 36

## Heffilump Traps

In each of the following hands you are sitting South. You are playing in a teams match with IMPs scoring. You should make a plan to give yourself the best chance of making your contract, even if that means giving up on the possibility of making overtricks.


You are in 3 NT . West leads the $\mathbf{~}$. Plan your play.

Hand 3

- Q 73
- J 74
- K9653
- A Q


You are in 6 ${ }^{\boldsymbol{4}}$. West leads the $\mathbf{V}$. Plan your play.

Hand 2

- J 5
- A 7
- AK 643

28632


- A 982
- 953
- Q 975
\& $A K$

You are in 3NT. West leads the Q . Plan your play.

Hand 4

- A 743
- 103
- K 105
\& K 963

- K 85
- K 6
-AJ962
\& 72

You are in 3NT. West leads the 5 and East follows with the Plan your play.

David Bakhshi gives the answers on page 34

## Let me ask you how would you play this hand?

You, playing as South, become the declarer in 6 .
West leads the Q .
What is the best line of play?


Please note that the format of the leads quiz has changed. You must choose which card from which suit to lead.

To help you with your leads, it will be assumed that we play top from a sequence, top from a doubleton, second from three or more small cards and fourth highest from an honour, unless there's a good reason to make a non-standard lead.
 Piper to get computer-generated simulations to provide best lead scenarios. Details on methodology can be seen by clicking here.


A twin-pack of Piatnik playing cards is the prize on offer. For information on Piatnik cards visit www.gibsonsgames.co.uk/collections/all-cards
There are TWO categories in our competition: up to and including Master, and those with higher ranking. Please indicate the category for which you are entering with your answers. In the event of a tie, the winner from each category will be randomly selected. The editor's decision is final.

Entries to the Editor, Leads Quiz, Raggett House, Bowdens, Langport, Somerset, TA10 0DD
or e-mail lou@ebu.co.uk by 31 December 2022.
Please make sure you include your full postal address AND rank even if entering by e-mail

## TW0 answers - Teams \& Pairs



| South | West | North | $\begin{aligned} & \text { East } \\ & 1 \underbrace{1} \end{aligned}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 14 | Pass | 44 | Dble ${ }^{2}$ |
| Pass | $4 \mathrm{NT}^{3}$ | 5 | All Pass |
| ${ }^{1}$ Could be just two clubs. ${ }^{2}$ Good hand (obviously) but essentially for take-out, so .. |  |  |  |
| ${ }^{3}$ We took it out. 4NT shows two suits |  |  |  |

What is your lead playing teams and, playing pairs?

Hand 2

- A 53
$\checkmark 8$
- 9532
- 107542

| South | West | North | East |
| :---: | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $1 \boldsymbol{v}$ | Pass | $2 \boldsymbol{\omega}$ | Pass |
| $3 \boldsymbol{N}$ | Pass | $4 \mathrm{NT}^{1}$ | Pass |
| $5 \boldsymbol{\varphi}^{2}$ | Pass | $6 \boldsymbol{v}$ | Dble |
| All Pass |  |  |  |
| ${ }^{1}$ RKCB. ${ }^{2} 2$ keycards + trump queen |  |  |  |

What is your lead playing teams and, playing pairs?


| South | West | North | East <br> 3s |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Pass | 49 | $4 \mathrm{NT}^{1}$ | Pass |
| 5\% | Dble | All Pass |  |
| ${ }^{1}$ See comment from last article - better to play this as any two suits. |  |  |  |

What is your lead playing teams and, playing pairs?

## CLUB PLAYER゚S <br> BIDDING QUIZ

You are sitting West. What should you bid with each hand below on the given auction at matchpoint pairs? Assume love all except where indicated.

| Hand 1 | W | N | E | S |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - 10 | 17 | Pass | 14 | Pass |
| $\checkmark$ AQ 10872 | ? |  |  |  |
| - J 9 |  |  |  |  |
| Hand 2 | W | N | E | S |
| - K |  |  | Pass | Pass |
| - A 1072 | 17 | Pass | 14 | Pass |
| - J 762 | ? |  |  |  |
| \& AK 96 |  |  |  |  |

## Hand 3

- Q 103
- Q 108
- K Q J 862
* 4

| Hand 4 |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - 5 | W | N | E | S |
| -109763 | Pass | 1 1s | 2 | 24 |
| - J 3 | ? |  |  |  |
| \% AQ 876 |  |  |  |  |


| Hand 5 | W | N | E | S |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - Q 964 |  |  |  | 1* |
| マ 8764 | Pass | $1{ }^{1}$ | 11 | Pass |
| - J98 | ? |  |  |  |
| $\pm$ Q J |  |  |  |  |


| Hand 6 - - | W | N | E | $S$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| -J65 | Pass | $2{ }^{2}$ | Pass | 24 |
| -KQ974 | ? |  |  |  |
| \& Q J 732 | ${ }^{1} 12$ | ${ }^{2} 5+$ | ades |  |

Julian Pottage gives his answers on page 61

## Did you get it right?

Let me tell you how you should have played it...

We have:
1 trick in 7 tricks in 1 trick in 2 tricks in


## - K 864 <br> 972 <br> Q7 <br> QJ10 7

The suit offers an easy option for an extra trick. QJ10 can score an extra trick after forcing the King. However, there might be a small issue: entries.

Consider the line to win the lead, play a to the Ace and a top trump from hand with the idea to then overtake the Queen with the King, drawing the last trump and keeping the 3 as an entry to dummy. This sounds good in theory but in practice if the are 3-0 it won't work.

The solution
Instead, after winning the lead in hand, you can play another top discarding the Ace of . Now you can start immediately with the while you still have your guaranteed K entry in dummy.

Do you want to see more of these puzzles?

## Traps for the Unwary

## by Michael Byrne

## Rebidding Balanced Hands 1

Balanced hands are the lifeblood of constructive bidding for any partnership as they come up time and again and play a huge part in normal auctions.

It is important to know not only what the bids show, but also what continuations mean, which bids are forcing and what you should do next.

Regardless of whether you play a 12-14 opening NT or a 15-17 opening NT, a minimum 1NT rebid shows the other strength. Back in the day, no trump rebids used to show two-point ranges, 15-16, 17-18, 19-20 and so.

This makes no sense at all (it was very unwieldy) and now, as we live in enlightened times, most people have taken on the idea of grouping balanced hands into these strengths:
a) 12-14-Open 1 NT
b) 15-17- Open a suit and rebid 1NT after a one-level response from partner
c) 18-19- Open a suit and rebid 2 NT after a one-level response from partner
d) $20+$ - Open 2 NT or 2 depending on strength (we will look at these in future articles).
You will first notice that the hideous 3NT rebid showing 'exactly' 19 points has been consigned to the dustbin, thank goodness. It just stole bidding space from your own side, and made it harder to explore major suit games and slams.

You will also notice that the rebids show threepoint ranges, but the final group is only a two-point range. This is no coincidence - when you run out of bidding space you will need to know partner's strength with a greater degree of accuracy.
Compare and contrast these two sequences:

| West | East |
| :--- | :--- |
| $1 \uparrow$ | $1 \stackrel{1}{*}$ |
| 1 NT | $?$ |


| West | East |
| :--- | :--- |
| 1 | $1 \stackrel{s}{1}$ |
| 2NT | $?$ |

In the first sequence there is plenty of bidding space and room to investigate whether partner is maximum or minimum.

In the second sequence there isn't much room, so you will just have to make a decision about whether you are going to game.

Hence in the first sequence it is fine for the range to be three points; in the second sequence it makes sense for it to be only two points.
You may argue that occasionally you might find yourself in 3NT a point light. However, remember that the important thing about whether to bid 3NT is whether the hands fit well and whether you have the right opponent on lead - things which no bidding system in the world can tell you. If you don't believe me have a look at these two sets of hands:

A


With Deal A you have 27 points, yet 3NT has no play at all, assuming the opponents manage to fish out a spade to lead - they do have nine of them.

On Deal B you have only 24 points, yet 3NT is completely cold on any defence. Both hands contain similar shapes and some intermediates, so essentially we must put the difference down to luck.

What does this mean for us when bidding? We can't get every hand spot on all the time, all we can

Cont/p18


Congratulations to Peter Crouch, winner of the Player of the Year Championship for 2021-22.

The Championship awards points for finishing in the top positions of major competitions, and Crouch topped the table with 35 points after winning the Premier League and Point-a-Board Teams, with top finish places in the Spring Fours, the Gold Cup and the Crockfords Cup.

The full list of points scorers, and information on the 2022-23 competition, which restarted in October with the Gold Cup finals, can be seen on the Player of the Year page: www.ebu.co.uk/ competitions/player-of-the-year-championship

|  |  | Points |
| :--- | :--- | :---: |
| 1 | Peter Crouch | 35 |
| 2 | Richard Plackett | 30 |
| 3 | Espen Erichsen | 26 |
| $4=$ | David Bakhshi | 25 |
| $4=$ | Janet de Botton | 25 |
| $4=$ | Artur Malinowski | 25 |
| $4=$ | Tom Townsend | 25 |
| 8 | Simon Cope | 23 |
| $9=$ | Andrew Black | 21 |
| $9=$ | David Gold | 21 |
| $9=$ | Tom Paske | 21 |

Please recycle this magazine when you have finished with it

## Do YOU want to ask ME about a hand?

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## Balanced hand rebids, from p16

do is try and play in game when we have the general values, and if we are a jack short it normally won't make any difference.

Let's imagine partner opens 1 and rebids 2 NT over our 14 response. What would we say on the following hands?


| Hand 1 | Hand 2 | Hand 3 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - AK 1096 | ¢ J 9742 | - QJ873 |
| - J 64 | $\checkmark 74$ | $\checkmark 53$ |
| - 52 | - 3 | - 187 |
| -832 | \% KQ853 | -142 |


| Hand 4 | Hand 5 |
| :---: | :---: |
| - AQ 94 | - A Q 108742 |
| $\checkmark 4$ | $\checkmark 32$ |
| - Q 10843 | - J 4 |
| \& 963 | \& 4 |

Hand 1 should clearly bid on to game, but which game will be best? Facing a $2 \cdot 4 \cdot 4 \cdot 3$ shape we want to play in 3 NT , but facing three-card spade support we might want to play in $4 \boldsymbol{4}$ and facing a 5 -card heart suit we might want to play in $4 \boldsymbol{V}$. The good news is that everything we bid is forcing so we can simply bid $3 \checkmark$ (showing exactly threecard support) and take it from there. If partner has three-card spade support they can show it, or continue with hearts if happy there. If partner beats a firm retreat to 3 NT we will pass, secure we are in the best strain.

Hand 2 should continue with 3 , natural and forcing. You will occasionally get too high if the deal is a misfit (if partner has a doubleton spade and no A then you will struggle in game) but, on balance, your source of tricks in clubs will come in very handy in 3NT. And of course if partner has three-card spade support you have an eight-card fit and will be happy there.
Hand 3 should pass 2NT. It's true that if partner has three-card spade support and a doubleton in one of the minors then you will be in the wrong partscore, but any further bid you make will
simply get you too high. You might well already be booked for a minus score, but facing something like

- K 5 『AJ72 KQ105 AQ8

I would rather take my chances in 2 NT than play in $1 \mathbf{V}$. (And yes, it is definitely right to respond on these sorts of hands).
Hand 4 should just raise to 3 NT. It's true that facing a very specific hand such as

## - KJ5 『Q852 AKJ7 \& KQ

then 5 or 4 might be better, but if you introduce diamonds you will simply cloud the issue as to your relative suit lengths. With 26-27 between you and no major suit fit it seems natural to play in 3 NT and take your chances.
Hand 5 should start with $3 \boldsymbol{A}$, natural and forcing to game. You certainly want to play in 4 but you might well have a slam on if partner has the right cards, so take the bidding slowly and see if you can elicit partner's co-operation. If he bids 3 NT then you can continue with $4 \boldsymbol{*}$, now clearly a cue bid for spades since you failed to bid the suit naturally at your previous turn, and if instead partner has spade support they will cue bid with a slam suitable hand such as


## The Dos and Don'ts of Rebidding Balanced Hands

Do be prepared to change your NT rebids from what you learned on your mother's knee to a modern approach. The 'times they are a-changin', and so is standard bidding.
Do play a 1 NT rebid as a three-point range (15-17), appreciating that there is plenty of bidding space to unravel whether your side belongs in game or not.
Don't jump to 3NT at your second turn because you have 19 points. You will get to the wrong game a lot of the time, and make partner nervous of responding light, which is a vital part of modern competitive bidding.
Don't try to improve the part score when partner jump rebids to 2NT (18-19). Any bid you make is forcing to game, which helps you explore the best game or slam.

Try Michael's Quiz, online page 69

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## Bridge Fiction

## The Recommended Lead

Since resuming the partnership with his wife, the Headmaster was enjoying the game more and more. What a difference it made to have a capable performer across the table! Charlie Benson had tried his best, no doubt, but it was difficult to concentrate fully at his age. If truth be told, it was somewhat amazing that he still managed to teach Latin and Greek effectively. The school's Classics Alevel grades had dropped noticeably in recent years, but he would be a hard man to replace. How many current leavers from teacher training colleges were fluent in Ancient Greek?
'It's you to bid, Alfred,' prompted Norma Doulton.
'I'm fully aware of that,' retorted the Headmaster, hastily thumbing through his cards. One queen and three tens - what use were they to anyone? 'No bid,' he said. This was the deal before them:


| West | North | East | South |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| The | The | Norma | Stefan |
| Headmaster | Matron | Doulton | Götel |
| Pass | 1\% | 1 V | 14 |
| Pass | 20 | Pass | 2 |
| Pass | 24 | Pass | 4* |
| All Pass |  |  |  |

Stefan Götel arrived in 4@, and the Headmaster placed the $\boldsymbol{\$ 1 0}$ on the table. He gazed in disbelief at the dummy laid out by the Matron. 'You opened on a 10 -count?' he exclaimed.
'I don't think you're quite up to date, Headmaster,' the Matron replied. 'You remember the former pupil, Jonathan Blake, who now works in America? He very kindly sent me a bridge book by a wellrespected bridge teacher over there.'

The Headmaster beckoned for play to continue. Since when did Americans have anything valuable to say about Acol bidding?
'Apparently, you must add points for distribution,' continued the Matron. 'You have to add one point for each doubleton and three points for a void. I could hardly pass with 12 points in my hand.'
The German master won the first trick with dummy's $\boldsymbol{\$}$. If clubs broke 3-2, the suit would produce four tricks. If he simply drew trumps and ducked a club, though, he would lose three heart tricks and go down. What could be done? Ah, yes. 'Play the four of clubs, please,' he said.

Norma Doulton won with the j . She then cashed two heart winners before declarer could take any discards on the club suit. Stefan Götel won her diamond switch and drew trumps. When the clubs subsequently split 3-2, he claimed the remaining tricks for his contract.

The Matron beamed across the table. 'You see, partner? If I don't open the bidding, we'd probably miss the game!'
The Headmaster slumped in his chair. He could hardly criticise a member of staff, himself. Surely, though, Götel should gently point out to her how absurd these comments were.
Götel smiled at the Matron. 'Your doubleton heart was worth two extra points on its own,' he replied. 'It prevented them from taking three hearts and a club.'

Meanwhile, across the room, two fifth-formers faced Bertie Bellis and Percy Cutforth:


John Hutson led the $\downarrow \mathrm{K}$ against $4 \boldsymbol{\downarrow}$, the senior maths master winning with the ace. After a few moments thought he played the king and queen of trumps, finding that he had a loser in that suit. He then continued with four rounds of spades, discarding dummy's clubs. A club ruff was followed by a heart to the ace. Nine tricks had been scored, and a second club ruff with dummy's last trump brought the total to ten.
'Not easy, partner, but you needed to lead a club,' observed Neil Phillips. 'We get two clubs and a trump trick, and he can't avoid another loser in diamonds.'
'Is that right?' queried John Hutson. 'Suppose we take the ace-king of clubs and you switch to a diamond. Mr Bellis wins and plays three rounds of trumps. He can then discard dummy's remaining three diamonds on the Q and the top spades.

Neil Phillips nodded resignedly, turning to his left. 'Was there any way to beat it?' he enquired.
'Not in practice,' Bertie Bellis required. 'A low club lead to the king and a club back would beat it.

You don't set up my queen for a third spade discard, then.'

Percy Cutforth chuckled to himself. 'It's lucky we didn't have some new-boy beginner in the West seat,' he observed. 'Fourth-best from your longest suit? It's the first thing they're taught!'


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# Finessing through declarer 



Finessing? I thought this was an article about defence?

Well, yes, it is. And the most important part of defence is a well-reasoned mind (this segue will make sense eventually, I promise). Logic is a defender's best friend, and such logic is particularly useful when we aren't sure what suit to play. Consider what you would do on the following hand.


| South | West | North | East |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $1 \mathrm{NT}^{1}$ | Pass | $2 \mathbf{e}^{2}$ | Pass |
| $2 \boldsymbol{1}$ | Pass | $3 N T$ | All Pass |
| ${ }^{1} 12-14 ;^{2}$ | Stayman |  |  |

Partner starts the defence with the $\mathbf{\$ 7}$, and declarer predictably calls low from dummy. After winning with the A , we have to decide what suit to play at trick two.

One old adage that springs to mind is 'lead back partner's suit'. But surely that can't be right here. Partner's $\mathbf{7}$ is clearly from a bad holding (2nd highest in fact). We need to find another suit to attack, and the suit that stands out the most is clubs - not because we have an honour in clubs, but because dummy is weak in clubs.

Leading the suit that dummy is weak in is good for two reasons:

First, we generally want to attack the suit that
partner has honours in. By counting the honours we can see, we can figure out that partner is more likely to have honours in clubs than any other suit. And second, it means that any honours that declarer has are ready to be finessed.

While it may not feel like it, the play of the cards is the same when defending as when declaring. And anything that is possible for declarer, is equally possible for the defence. And that, of course, includes the legendary finesse. Here's the full hand:


Not only did we find partner with an honour in clubs, but we also found it well placed. Declarer's K was of no use to him whatsoever, and despite declarer's combined 29 points, the contract is swiftly defeated before we even give up the lead.
Partner did well to lead a passive spade, rather than the aggressive J. That would have given up a trick and allowed declarer to make his contract. It's a good thing he read my article on leads against no trump contracts.

But that's enough about old articles. Now that we know that the defence can take a finesse, it's important to realise that doing so correctly isn't as easy as it may seem.


This time partner starts with the VJ. Declarer wins in hand with the A and immediately runs the \&
Obviously, we know what to do. A quick check of dummy confirms what suit we should be switching to. Partner may have led the $\vee \mathrm{J}$ with the hope of setting up the suit, but we can see that our best chance is to play on diamonds.

Accordingly, we take our K and place a diamond on the table. But which diamond? Normally, we would lead the lowest from a threecard holding headed by an honour. But is that what we would do if we were declarer?

I remind you, that the play of the cards in defence is just the same as in declarer play. And if we held this suit as declarer, would we start with a low diamond?

With no other entry to our hand, it is imperative that we start with a top diamond. If we lead the $\downarrow 2$, declarer will play low, partner will be forced to win the trick, and there will be no further finesses for the defence to take.

But if we start with the $\downarrow$ J, everything will be fine. If declarer covers with $\uparrow \mathrm{K}$, partner will score the rest of the tricks. And if declarer ducks, we continue with the 9 and pick up the rest of the tricks with a second finesse. This is exactly how we would play the suit if we were declarer so it is exactly how we should play the suit as defenders.

But is it actually the best way to play the suit? I'm sorry - for I have misled you. That wasn't the real hand. The actual hand is as follows:


This time, partner's diamond suit isn't quite as good. On our $\downarrow \mathrm{J}$, declarer plays low. And partner comes under pressure. What should he play?

If partner plays low, the suit is blocked. When we continue diamonds, partner will be forced to win the trick and the defence will be unable to take a third finesse against the king.

If partner unblocks the ten, declarer's $\$ 8$ will come into the game. Declarer will cover the 9 with the king, and his remaining 85 will be enough to ward off partner's Q6.

You see? This is why defence feels so different to declarer. Because we can't see partner's hand, it often feels like we are playing in the dark. What works on one layout doesn't work on another, and we are forced to guess what to do.

But that's where well-reasoned analysis comes into play. On this layout the $\$ J$ is no good. But the $\checkmark 9$ is just good enough. When declarer plays low, partner follows with six. Then we follow up with the $\$$ and partner can play the ten, leaving us on lead and allowing us to finesse three times.

You may think this quite fanciful, but when does leading the $\$ 9$ first ever cost? If declarer has the \$10, he will always come to a trick in the suit no matter what we lead. You may be worried that partner will see the $\$ 9$ (a high card) as denying a higher honour, but if partner has a well-reasoned mind, he will appreciate why you may have chosen such an odd card.

And if not, you can always direct him here.

## Bridge with a Twist

## You were a knave, Jack

In January 2021 a friend sent me an article published in the $i$ newspaper. (I am a very slow reader). It described a Dutch initiative to replace the traditional king, queen and jack with gender-neutral names and symbols: Gold bars, Silver coins and a Bronze shield. The reason behind the proposed change was 'to break with the centuries-old tradition of sexual inequality in playing card decks that rank men above women'.

Going with the Dutch proposal would lead to problems with the current laws of bridge, and with its terminology. We would have to redefine the word 'honour', or we would have to learn to say things like 'Cover a metal with a metal' or 'Splitting your metals,' and explain our leads (not as in plumba, Ed) as 'Fourth best from ace, metal, or ten'. Of course, we could simplify that last bit by renaming the ten as 'tin', so then it would be a metal too!

Maybe we could compromise and rework the court cards as Monarch, Consort and Courtier (or Press Officer), with suitably androgynous pictures.

I found a piece on the internet, originally published in April 2007, about a not-dissimilar situation. It celebrated the centenary of the 1907 announcement that the name 'knave' would be changed to 'jack'. The reason given was that having the abbreviation ' $J$ ' would prevent confusion between the ' Kn ' and ' K '. The article (it was early April) explained what had happened behind the scenes. Men were complaining about the sexual inequality of the use of the word 'knave' for the lowest of the court cards. Why did he have to be a male of dubious character, they asked, and ranked below a woman? Why could the card not be called a 'wench' or a 'trollop'? Fearful of a backlash from the embryonic Suffragette movement, a compromise was reached behind closed doors; the 'J for Jack' solution was agreed and presented to the general public.

I sent my friend the link to the article and he pointed out that it had been published in very
(very) early April, and suggested that I had been hoodwinked (what a strange word that is). I immediately resolved to do some proper research into the knave-to-jack transition. My thanks to various whist/bridge historians, and the English Playing Card Society.

A knave started out as a male servant, or a man of humble birth, but the meaning evolved over time into a scallywag or prankster, and then a rogue or rascal; ending up as a man who is unprincipled, dishonest and evil. Shakespeare's plays include many usages of the word knave, none of them complimentary.
The most famous literary knave of all is almost certainly the tart-stealing Knave of Hearts from Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865).


The Knave of Clubbs. Tis merry when Knaves meet. 1611

Jack had been used since the 17th century, as slang for the card marked Kn and known as knave. The word jack was considered low class, as evidenced by this exclamation by Estelle in Charles Dickens' 1860 novel Great Expectations: 'He calls the knaves, jacks, this boy!' Nevertheless its usage was recognised in books such as Facts and Speculations on the Origin and History of Playing Cards (London, 1848) which says: 'The term Jack, another name for the Knave ...'

There was also an issue when the abbreviations for King and Knave were printed at the top left corner of cards. Fanning the cards could lead to confusion between ' $K$ ' (or ' $\mathrm{KG}^{\prime}$ ) and ' KN ', as in the following example:


Acknowledging the popular usage of Jack, and recognising the K-Kn problem, Samuel Hart produced the first pack of cards with ' J ' on them in 1864 in Philadelphia.


Cards with ' $K n$ ' on them were still being produced as late as 1900 .

The move to Jack and J in whist and bridge literature was slow and erratic. The first edition (1890) of Foster's Whist Manual defines Jack on page 2. The Whist Journal switched to J in 1892 and, when criticised, the move was stoutly defended by the editor.

The Schwab Trophy between USA and Britain, billed as the first Bridge World Championship, was held in London in 1933. In their reports on the match, Lieut-Col Beasley, the British captain, wrote J, while the American captain, Ely Culbertson, used the abbreviation Kn.

Ben Cohen, the editor of Bridge Magazine, gave his views in his editorial in January 1949, the first issue after the war. He wrote 'It is not tidy to call the fourth highest honour by two names. I have always called it the knave and will continue to do so. For the sake of convenience the knave will be shown in diagrams as J.' Many writers followed this hybrid approach, although maybe not intentionally. My research has found that in the 75 articles I have written for English Bridge, I once wrote 'knave', when I should have written 'jack'. (Tony Forrester's Christmas Quiz, in this issue, arrived with a knave, but departed to the printer as a jack. Ed)
What of other writers? Agatha Christie mentions
the game of bridge in ten stories and one play, but I could only find relevant information in three of them. In The Seven Dials Mystery (1929) Christie writes 'declarer played the knave. In Cards on the Table (1936) Hercule Poirot asks a suspect 'Why do you put on the knave?'. Neither book makes mention of a jack. In the play Spider's Web (1954) one of the characters says 'black ten on the red jack'. It seems that Christie had moved with the times and updated her nomenclature.
I asked my panel of playing-card experts whether there was any connection between the abbreviations Kn for knave in bridge, and Kn for knight in chess, and was told there wasn't. Alfred Lord Tennyson seems to agree; in Gareth and Lynette (1859) he wrote 'Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight but knave.' But it is just possible that he was not talking about playing cards.

I thought there might be such a link in other countries, because the Swedes say 'knekt' and the Danes say 'knaegt'. But, alas, I was wrong. 'knekt' means foot-soldier or peasant, and 'knaegt' means youngster - not a knight in sight. The Danes also use 'bonde', peasant, so some Scandinavian solidarity there.

Elsewhere there is a wide range of names for our Jack. The Dutch say 'boer', meaning farmer, for their third picture card. The official German word is 'Bube', they also use 'Bauer', farmer. In Iceland they say 'gosi', meaning young. Israelis use KQJ cards, but call the jack 'nasid' for prince.

The Chinese say 'hook' for the jack, and they are equally picture-orientated when they say 'egg' for a Queen and 'sharp' for an Ace.
The Japanese have adapted the English word and say 'jakku', but the major influence comes from the French. Their word for jack is 'valet', and Bulgaria, Portugal, Russia, and others, use a variant of the word. The French have gone one step further and
 given their four valets names: Hogier, La Hire, Hector and Lancelot for spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs.

If you have any ideas for what the English could name their court cards, please let Lou know, lou@ebu.co.uk. My suggestions for some are Peter Stringfellow, Elizabeth Taylor and Arthur Scargill. (Can you work them out, Ed?)

## Clever play



Playing teams, South opens 1 NT and North jumps to 3NT which ends the auction. Sitting West you lead the 5 and dummy's nine holds the trick. The jack of hearts is now run to your king, partner following with the two. How do you plan the defence?

This is where you have got to:


Begin by counting the high card points. You began with thirteen, and dummy had fourteen. That leaves thirteen points between your partner and declarer, so you can work out that partner has at most one point. You partner's card in hearts indicates an odd number, which suggests that declarer now has three tricks in the suit, to go with three spade tricks by repeating the finesse, and at
least three club tricks. There is one chance to defeat the contract and that is to play for four diamond tricks now. If partner has four diamonds, declarer's honours will fall under the ace and king. Switch to a top diamond. This was the full deal:


Do you think that declarer could have done anything differently to give you more of a problem in defence? Suppose he had inserted the queen of spades at trick one? This just might have created the impression that partner held the jack, and although you should at least switch to one top diamond, some defenders might be tempted to clear the spades.

> EBU NATIONAL POINT-A-BOARD TEAMS

> PLAY IN THE 2023 NATIONAL POINT-A-BOARD TEAMS 21ST - 22ND JANUARY Entries close on 20th January

> A TWO-DAY MATCH POINTED COMPETITION FOR TEAMS OF UP TO 6 PLAYERS

> Enhanced Master Points will be awarded for matches won
> The format will either be a round robin over two days or a two session qualifier on Saturday followed by a Final/Consolation Final on Sunday
> $£ 210$ per team of up to six players
> (SAVE $£ 10$ off entry when booking before 31st December) More info at www.ebu.co.uk/national-point-board-teams


## EBU NATIONAL TEAMS LEAGUE

PLAY IN THE NEW SEASON OF THE NATIONAL TEAMS LEAGUE STARTING ON 18TH JANUARY
Entries close on 11th January
16-BOARD MATCHES PLAYED WEEKLY FOR TEAMS OF UP TO 8 PLAYERS

Matches take place on Wednesdays at 7.30pm, on RealBridge or BBO
Master Points will be awarded for all matches RealBridge games will be graded for the NGS

Entry Fees $£ 48$ per team
More info at www.ebu.co.uk/national-teams-league

## Heather's Hints

\% If you don't want your opponents to switch suits when they gain the lead, consider which card you win with to create the impression that it is right to continue. This can also apply (on a different hand) to which suit you discard from. On this hand, declarer's only danger was if the heart finesse failed and West found the diamond switch. Winning the spade with the queen hopefully creates the impression that East has the jack and might persuade West to continue the suit.
$\because$ If the opponents reach 3 NT on an auction similar to that above, and you hold a strong hand in context, it is especially useful to work out how many points partner can hold. It won't be very many, obviously, but is there one card that could assist the defence?
\% Were you tempted to overcall with the West hand over 1NT? You shouldn't be. Your suit is only five cards in length and of poor quality, and the rest of your hand is very balanced. The only possible upside is stealing a partscore, but the downsides could include going for a penalty when the opponents can't make game (as might well have happened on this hand), getting partner off to the wrong lead, or tipping declarer off about how to play the hand.

## FREE ACOL DAYLONGS ON BBO

Bridge Base Online, BBO , is now running a free daily Acol Daylong. The robots are trained Acol players and carefully alert all their bids. The competition is run over eight boards and you are lucky enough to know you always have the hand with the most (or equal) points.

The games have become very popular with around 1,000 players, and they run on GMT, so it's all over at midnight.


A How should you play this suit combination for five tricks in no trumps assuming plenty of entries to both hands in outside suits?

B What difference would it make if you were to have a 6-2 fit rather than a 5-3 fit:

$$
\text { \& AKJ } 1053
$$

$$
42
$$

This time you'd be aiming for no losers and six winners.
A. Most players know that the finesse is a superior play to the drop (eight ever, nine never); trying to drop the queen doubleton by cashing the ace and king is the play of a cloven-hooved basher.

However, it is correct to cash the ace first just in case the queen falls singleton offside. If nothing interesting happens on the first round of the suit, you should return to the South hand and finesse the ten, playing West for Qxx or Qxx .
B. Now, with AKJ10xx facing a doubleton, it is wrong to cash the ace first; the right play is to take the first-round finesse. Why? Well, this way you will lose to the singleton queen with East for sure, but you will gain on other 4-1 breaks.

There are five singletons that East might have in the case of a 4-1 split, with only one of them being the queen. Were you to cash the ace first, cross to the South hand and finesse the 10 you'd fail to make all six tricks whenever East was dealt a singleton small club.

Your play would succeed only if West started with 2 alone, 2 ax or 2 xx. You would fail whenever West started life with E Qxxx. True, you'd make all six tricks when West started with exxxx and East the singleton queen, but that's four times less likely than West holding four cards including the queen.

## Great Bridge Disasters

TThe final weekend of Crockfords features two competitions, one for eight teams so far unbeaten in the knockout stage of the tournament, and one for eight teams who had the misfortune to lose an early round, thus qualifying for the Plate, through which they progressed without further setback. It is not often that a side with 27 high-card points and a 5-5 fit cannot make a game, but in the 2022 Crockfords finals these cards were dealt.


Events in the main final were, so to speak, uneventful. At all six tables (yes, I know I said eight teams, but one team was unable to play) East-West bid a game and at four tables they were allowed to make it. Twice this was because North led a spade against 3 NT after South had not managed to find a way into the auction. Once it was because, although South did contrive to attract a diamond lead against 3NT by West, the subsequent defence was, shall we say, not indicative of the form that had carried the partnership to this stage. Another South persuaded his partner to lead a heart against 3NT, but on being allowed to win the first trick with $\geqslant 10$ was unable
to persuade himself to shift to a diamond, and an overtrick resulted.

In the Plate final there was more variety, although again only six teams were in action. Two East-West pairs made 3 NT on a spade lead, one was defeated on a diamond lead, and one tried 5 which was doubled and beaten a trick. At a fifth table one pair thought they had a disaster after the following brief but instructive auction:

| West | North | East | Sout |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Dble ${ }^{2}$ | Pass ${ }^{3}$ | Pas | Pass ${ }^{5}$ |
| ${ }^{1}$ Weak with one major, an accurate if not allencompassing description; ${ }^{2} \mathrm{~A}$ good hand of some sort; ${ }^{3}$ Neutral, asking South to bid the major; ${ }^{4}$ Unaware that... ${ }^{5}$... South would have good reason to find an alternative course of action. |  |  |  |

Two diamonds doubled made two overtricks there was no defence to prevent that; indeed, the par result on the deal is for East-West to lose 100 in five clubs doubled against 130. Minus 580 was good for a gain of 7 IMPs when the real disaster was reserved for the sixth table:

| West | North | East | South <br> Pass |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $1 \mathrm{NT}^{1}$ | Pass | $2 \mathbf{e}^{2}$ | 3 |
| Pass | Pass | Dble $^{3}$ | Pass |
| Pass $^{4}$ | Pass |  |  |
| ${ }^{1} 15-17 ;{ }^{2}$ Stayman; ${ }^{3}$ For take-out, but . . |  |  |  |
| 4 | $\ldots$ not so treated |  |  |

Finally a game that could not be defeated had been reached, and South's campaign brought in +870 . See page 59 for results.

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## Trouble at the table



Please could you clarify for me whether standard Acol includes Benji? As I understand it, EBED are teaching three weak twos, so 2 is weak.

The various Standard English Acol (foundation/basic/full) all play $2 / 2 / 2$ natural. Usually $2 / 2 \checkmark / 2$ are natural and weak, but traditionally $2 \boldsymbol{\wedge} / 2 \boldsymbol{\sim}$ were natural and strong: stronger than a one-level opening and weaker (in points) than a 2 opening.

Benji $2 / 2$ is not part of Standard English Acol as defined by the EBU, EBED or Bridge for All.

If an opponent describes 2 as 'Acol' you should not assume it is strong (or weak) - it is probably best to ask them to explain more.

If you play Benji you can use 'Benji Acol' as a broad explanation of your system, but be prepared to answer further questions the opponents may have.

Clare Batten asks: Is it permitted to open 2e to show a weak two in diamonds? If yes, can you suggest how to defend against this bid. I was playing with a robot when this bid was made by the same pair in consecutive hands. The first time I doubled and the robot thought I had clubs. The second time I overcalled and, although we reached game, we missed a slam.

In the EBU/BBO relaxed games (level 2), 2 must be strong or show clubs. So to show a weak diamond hand is not permitted.

In most EBU open games (level 4), it is permitted for to show a weak two in diamonds, it is also permitted for to be two-way showing a weak two in diamonds or a (very) strong hand.

With a human partner, you should treat the bid as
if it shows a weak two in diamonds. So $2 \boldsymbol{\vee}, 2 \boldsymbol{a}$ and 2 NT are natural, as if they had opened $2 \downarrow$. Without discussion, a double of the artificial would be clubs, and 2 would be a cue-bid showing a takeout double of a weak $2 \downarrow$. But you might agree that double is a strong hand and 2 is Michaels showing both majors.
With a robot partner, the robot will not understand the explanation from the opponents and will continue to assume that the opponents are playing the robot's system. The robot will assume all bids are natural (including diamonds). You would have to bid like that and if the opponents keep bidding you will have to check what your bids and doubles mean by hovering over the bids before you make the call. But on this auction, the robot will not be 'thinking' about bidding slam and you will have to guess before the robot stops bidding. Good luck!

Robert Perrin asks for help to understand what is a comparable call. Here's the situation. Player opens the auction with a bid of $1 \boldsymbol{2}$. This bid is out of rotation. His LHO is dealer and has yet to bid. Dealer does not accept the bid which is withdrawn. Dealer passes. Offender's partner bids 14 and dealer's partner passes. Offender must now make a comparable bid or offender's partner must next pass. But what is a comparable bid?

And what should a director say to the offender when a comparable call is going to be difficult to find?

It is not part of the law that a player must make a comparable call; and the laws cannot (do not) ensure that a player will have a comparable call to make.

Playing something like Acol, 1 is essentially clubs and opening values. 2 is not a comparable
call because it could be less than opening values. 3 would be a comparable call if it is a strong jump shift (natural, strong, forcing), but not if was natural and weak, nor if was an artificial raise. A strong jump shift 3 would be a comparable call even if it does not describe the offender's hand, they can bid so as to not silence partner, whatever their hand.

But it may not be in the offender's best interests to make a comparable call even if it does show their hand as the auction may become unmanageable. It may be best for the offender to guess the final contract (perhaps 3NT or 4@?) and have partner pass.

When a bid out of rotation is made by 3rd or 4th hand, and offender's partner then opens the bidding, there will often not be a comparable call.

I think the director should just outline the comparable call law and see if the offender thinks they have a comparable call. The director and offender can then discuss potential comparable calls, away from the table.

Lynn Paynter asks about an unusual scenario. At the table all four players had their cards turned over and were playing to the last trick. However, dummy had no card left to play and all her 13 cards were oriented on the table (so at some point she must have played two cards to one trick). Declarer was already two off in her contract and offered to make it three off. As it happened, they had a complete bottom on that hand anyway so there was no need to make any adjustments. However I would like to know what should be done.

This question is one which is a favourite on TD courses. The laws are clear, but there are practical difficulties.

Twelve tricks have been played, but dummy has quitted 13 cards, so we presume that dummy has contributed two cards to a trick. The practical problem is working out which trick it was - this can sometimes be determined quickly if quitted cards are stuck together - otherwise you need to see where the sequence of oriented cards does not match that of the other hands. Having identified the defective trick, the TD applies Law 67B2(a).

When the offender has played more than one card
to the defective trick, the Director inspects the played cards and requires the offender to restore to his hand all extra cards, leaving among the played cards the one faced in playing to the defective trick (if the Director is unable to determine which card was faced, the offender leaves the highest ranking of the cards that he could legally have played to the trick). Ownership of the defective trick does not change.
Your case is simplified because it is trick 13 , so nobody can benefit if they see any of the played cards, and because dummy 'cannot revoke'. It is most likely that card should be restored to dummy to be played to trick 13 , and there is no penalty.

Aclub is considering setting up a regular Level 2 'no fear' session for novices and improvers, and has been looking in the Blue Book to find out exactly which partnership understandings are allowed, and not allowed, at Level 2.

Can a 2 opening bid be used if it alerted and explained as ' $23+$ points or eight or more playing tricks, suit unspecified. Could it have less than 16 points and fewer than five controls'?

This is not permitted for a bid at level 2. At level 2 , an artificial bid must be strong which requires $16+$, or $12+$ and $5+$ controls. With no restriction on suits, this bid is not permitted at level 4 .

But (in response to a follow-up question) an artificial opener is permitted at level 4 if the explanation is ' $23+$ points, or eight or more playing tricks in a major. Could have less than 16 points and fewer than five controls'

The regulations on 'strong' bids changed in September but it won't change the basic point of these answers.

Robin Barker is the EBU's Deputy Chief Tournament Director. He is editor of the White Book and looks forward to answering your questions. Please email him - robin@ebu.co.uk.

The author, English Bridge and the EBU are not responsible if the information provided is incorrect or incomplete.

## COMPETITION NEWS

## SENIORS CONGRESS

The Seniors Congress is imminent - 6th-8th December on RealBridge. It is a friendly weekday event for any bridge players born in 1959 or earlier.

It is an excellent opportunity to try out a green point event from the comfort of your own home. What have you got to lose? Why not give it a try?

If you have not played in an EBU event before you may enjoy either the Swiss Pairs or Swiss Teams. For the Swiss Teams event, you and your partner will need team-mates. Swiss events are a special type of competition designed so that you play other players of your own level. The first round you will have a random starting position and could play against anybody else who has entered.

However, the result of each round determines who you play against next. Each round progresses in the same way.

## YEAR END CONGRESS

There is still time to join us between Christmas and New Year for the Year End Congress, 27th - 30th December. This year we will once again be in London and the ILEC, near Earls Court.

Tuesday - Stratified Swiss Pairs
Wednesday - Stratified Swiss Pairs and Jack High Swiss Pairs Thursday - Mixed or Open Pairs
Friday - Stratified Swiss Teams and 9-High Improvers Pairs
The venue is just a few minutes' walk from West Brompton station which offers both underground and National Rail services and is only two stops from Clapham Junction. Rooms are available to book at the linked IBIS hotel, which also has a chargeable car park, with further car parking nearby.

## ONLINE KNOCKOUT TEAMS

Entries are now open for the Online Knockout Teams. It is for teams of four, from a squad of six, all of whom are members of their own federation and a majority from the 'home unions'. There is a Plate competition for teams which lose their first match, so everyone is guaranteed at least two matches. Entries close 17th March 2023

For all events, you can book online via My EBU.
Alternatively, please email:
comps@ebu.co.uk or call 01296317203.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Red - Anticipated F2F Events

## DECEMBER 2022

$$
4
$$

Sussex GP Swiss Pairs, BBO
6-8 Seniors Congress, RealBridge
9-11 Lady Milne Trophy Trials, Young Chelsea BC
16-18 Channel Trophy, Lille, France
16-18 Teltscher Trophy Trials, Coventry \& North Warwickshire BC
27-30 Year End Congress, llec Conference Centre, London

## JANUARY 2023

6-8 Midland Counties Congress, RealBridge
6-8 Camrose Trophy, 1st weekend, N. Ireland
7-8 Manchester Congress, RealBridge
9-12 British Winter Sims, various clubs
14-15 Oliver Cowan New Year Congress, Nottingham
21-22 National Point-A-Board 2023, RealBridge
28-29 Chester Congress, Deva Bridge Club
29 Dorset GP Swiss Pairs, RealBridge

- FEBRUARY 2023

6-9 Junior Squad Sim Pairs, various clubs
10-12 Harrogate Spring Congress, Harrogate
17-19 Junior Camrose \& Peggy Bayer
18-19 Tollemache Finals, Stratford upon Avon
24-26 North Devon Congress, Barnstaple
25-26 Ranked Masters Pairs, RealBridge
26 Masters Pairs, various clubs

- MARCH 2023

3-5 Camrose Trophy, 2nd weekend, Ireland
4 Manchester Swiss Pairs, Altrincham
4 Leicestershire GP Swiss Pairs, Leicester
4-5 Wiltshire GP Congress, Bath
5 Merseyside \& Cheshire GP Swiss Teams, RealBridge
6-9 Club Stratified Sims, various clubs
18-19 Cumbria GP Congress
31-2 Norfolk GP Congress, Norwich

- APRIL 2023

2 Portland Pairs, RealBridge
7-10 Easter Festival, London
8-9 Northern Easter Festival
11-14 British Spring Sim Pairs
14-16 Devon GP Congress, Torquay
15-16 National Pairs Final, RealBridge
21-23 Lady Milne Trophy, Scotland
22 Shropshire GP Congress, RealBridge
22-23 Portland Bowl Finals, London
28-2 Schapiro Spring Foursomes, Bristol
29-30 Cheltenham Congress, Cheltenham

## MAY 2023

2-7 Lambourne Jersey Congress, Jersey

## EBU CONGRESSES AND COMPETITIONS

## All events are Green Pointed unless stated（BP：Blue Points）

## Enter via 01296 317203，comps＠ebu．co．uk or at www．ebu．co．uk／members

## London

Year－End Congress
27 － 30 December
ILEC Conference Centre，London


Stratified Swiss Pairs Stratified Swiss Teams Mixed or Open Pairs Jack High Swiss Pairs

## National

Point－a－Board Teams
21 － 22 January RealBridge

Harrogate Spring Congress 10－12 February Crowne Plaza，Harrogate


Weekend of Point－a－Board． Qualifying rounds－Saturda Finals－Sunday Enhanced Green Points in finals

## Ranked Masters Pairs

$$
\begin{gathered}
25-26 \text { February } \\
\text { RealBridge }
\end{gathered}
$$

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { Since } 2020 \text {, for purposes of } \\
& \text { movements, Premier Life Masters } \\
& \text { merge with Life Masters, and } \\
& \text { National Masters with Regional } \\
& \text { Masters. All groups have separate } \\
& \text { ranking lists, trophies and prizes. }
\end{aligned}
$$

Separate competitions for： Premier Grand Masters Grand Masters Premier Life Masters Life Masters National Masters Regional Masters

## Masters Pairs

26 February For players below Regional Master Regional Venues

The Masters Pairs will be held at host clubs．Entry fees will be set by the clubs，so cheaper than previous years．Clubs retain part of entry fees，so you＇re supporting your local club．List of venues and entry information at www．ebu．co．uk／masters－ pairs\＃clubs

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Easter Festival
7－10 April ILEC Conference Centre，London


Stratified Swiss Pairs Stratified Swiss Teams Mixed or Open Pairs Jack High Swiss Pairs

## Overseas Congress

15－22 April
The Bay of Kotor，Montenegro


Swiss Pairs，Swiss Teams
Mixed／Open Pairs－BP
Round Robin Pairs
Pivot Teams－BP
IMP Pairs－BP


## 3NT. West leads the $\mathbf{V} \mathbf{4}$.

You have four top tricks, and you hope to win three extra tricks in diamonds and at least one trick in hearts. Which heart should you play from the dummy at trick one?


## 3NT. West leads the $\vee \mathrm{Q}$.

You have seven top tricks, and expect to make two more tricks in diamonds, assuming they divide $2-2$ or $3-1$. If either opponent started with $\$ 1082$ you will not win all five rounds of diamonds, but if they are not $4-0$, you will not need to find any other winners.

Holding the $\mathbb{V} 10$ in your hand makes it correct to play low from the dummy, as this will guarantee that you can win two heart tricks no matter which heart East plays at trick one. In this case, East will play the $\geqslant$, and you win with the 10 , and then turn to diamonds.

Does it matter which diamond you lead from your hand at trick two? You hope to find West with the Q . If West has four or five diamonds then you will only be able to win four tricks in the suit, as long as West uses the $\downarrow \mathrm{Q}$ to beat your $\downarrow \mathrm{J}$. If West has two or three diamonds, then you will always make five tricks by finessing through West, but if West has the singleton $\downarrow$ Q, it will be crucial to avoid having the $\uparrow \mathrm{Q}$ beat your $\downarrow \mathrm{J}$. You should therefore start with a low diamond at trick two. When West plays the Q , you can win all five diamond tricks.

Your ninth trick can be guaranteed by leading the Q at trick three. Winning five diamonds and two hearts brings your trick total to nine, ensuring that you will make your game.

If you duck the first trick, West can simply continue hearts, so your decisions thereafter will be the same whether you win the first trick or not. So, assuming diamonds are not 4-0, then what could go wrong?

It looks natural to win the $\vee$, then lead the 3 to the $Q$ followed by the $\uparrow 5$ to the $\uparrow$. If diamonds are $2-2$, you can now win the third diamond in your hand, and the fourth diamond with dummy's A so that you can cash dummy's fifth diamond. But, if diamonds are 3-1, you will have to win the A on the third round, then win the fourth diamond in your hand. This will be very bad news, as you will now be stranded from dummy's fifth diamond. Is there any way to avoid this?

It is crucial to win the fourth round of diamonds in the dummy, so it is necessary to preserve the 5 in your hand until the fourth round of the suit. You should therefore win the first round with the $\downarrow$, then lead the $\uparrow 9$ (or $\uparrow$ ) to the $\checkmark \mathrm{K}$ on the second round. When diamonds split 3-1, you win the third diamond with dummy's $A$, throwing the $\$ 7$ (or $\uparrow 9$ ) from hand. Leading from the dummy on the fourth round of the suit, you play the 6 under which you play the $\$ 5$, so you are still in the dummy to cash the 4 and make your game.

| Hand 3 |  |
| :---: | :---: |
|  | - Q 73 |
|  | - J 74 |
|  | -K9653 |
|  | \& AQ |
| - 8 | - A 4 |
| - KQ985 | N - 10632 |
| - Q 102 | W E J 8 |
| -8753 | -109642 |
|  | \& KJ109652 |
|  | - A |
|  | - A 74 |
|  | -KJ |

## 64. West leads the VK.

You have five top tricks, with six extra tricks available in spades. Superficially, it appears that you need to find West with a rather unlikely $\vee \mathrm{KQ}$ in order to make your contract. Can you see any other chance?

You win the first trick with the A , and start drawing trumps. East wins the \&A, and likely returns a heart, which you trump, and West follows with a low
heart. You draw the outstanding trump and, with no advantage to delaying, you cash two rounds of clubs. Missing $\$ \mathrm{QJ} 10 \mathrm{xx}$ it looks like you will have to lose a diamond trick in the fullness of time. However, it is worth noting that as long as dummy has the $\geqslant J$ intact, then West will need to retain the Q . If he can be forced to make some discards, he might start to experience some difficulties. This will be true as long as West started with at least three diamonds.

You have four 'spare' winners in spades, which force West to make four discards (he probably threw a heart on the second spade). West's first three discards are easy, as he can spare the 9 and 87 , so if you save your last trump, West will have no further problems. It is therefore crucial that you cash your final trump. What should West throw now?

If he throws the $\vee$, the $\vee$ will be your 12th winner, so he will almost certainly throw the 2 instead. Since the J is now useless to you, you throw the $\geqslant$ from the dummy, and play on diamonds. When you lead the $\$ 4$ to the $\downarrow$, then play back to the $A$, the defenders remaining four diamonds all fall, and your $\$ 7$ provides your 12th winner.

If you haven't executed this technique before, you will have performed your first successful squeeze. West was put into a position where he could not make a winning discard when you played your final trump.


## 3NT. West leads $\mathbf{2}$. East plays the $\mathbf{~ J}$.

You have six top tricks, and could potentially win extra tricks in every suit, but diamonds offer the chance of making three extra tricks without losing the lead.

However, if West has the A, then there is a danger of losing too many tricks along the way, especially if East
gains the lead and plays a heart. You should therefore aim to make extra tricks in diamonds whilst protecting your $\geqslant$ K. You can use your A to beat East's at trick one, then lead the 2 to the $\downarrow \mathrm{K}$, followed by the $\$ 10$ from the dummy. When East plays low, you also play low from your hand. If East has the $\downarrow$, you will have nine easy tricks. If West wins the Q , he cannot now lead a heart without giving you your ninth trick. Say he instead switches to the 10 .

How should you now plan to make the extra trick that you need? It is worth considering West's initial 5 lead. Assuming he has led his fourth highest club, then we can deduce that he also has the Q 108 , either by studying the missing spot cards, or through the use of the Rule of 11.

You can therefore win the spade switch with your $\boldsymbol{~ K}$, and lead a club. If West plays low, you can insert dummy's to make your ninth trick. If West plays the 10 (or Q ), then you can simply duck this trick. West can continue with the $\$$, but you win the ash three rounds of diamonds, then lead a club, taking a marked finesse of West's remaining high card to make your ninth trick.

## Beat Today's Experts



## 1. E/W Game. Dealer West

|  | $\begin{aligned} & 186 \\ & 1084 \\ & 743 \\ & 15532 \end{aligned}$ |
| :---: | :---: |
| Q Q 75 <br> -KQJ963 <br> - A <br> - 1086 |  |
|  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { A } 10932 \\ & 2 \\ & 1862 \\ & 974 \end{aligned}$ |


| West | North | East | South |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Jonsson | Drijver | Magnusson | Brink |
| $1 \boldsymbol{2}$ | Pass | $2 \downarrow^{\text {A }}$ | Pass |
| 2 | Pass | 3 | Pass |
| 4 | Pass | $4 N T$ | Pass |
| $5 \boldsymbol{\$}$ | Pass | 6 | All Pass |
|  |  |  |  |

Our deals all come from the European Championships, contested in Madeira's

## 2. Game All. Dealer East

Funchal. Here Iceland face the Bermuda Bowl champions, Switzerland. Ragnar Magnusson's 2 response is forcing to game (the two-over-one system). When West rebids $2 \boldsymbol{\downarrow}$, showing at least six hearts, East can then bid just $3 \boldsymbol{\square}$ on the next round.

Steinar Jonsson's control-bid (cue-bid) of 4 shows a diamond control. Importantly, this denies any first- or second-round control in both the black suits. Otherwise, he would have bid $3 \boldsymbol{4}$ or $4 \boldsymbol{e}$. East then knows that both the A and the K are missing.

Expecting a large number of tricks in the red suits, Magnusson presses ahead with RKCB, the response showing two key-cards ( $\vee \mathrm{K}$ and A ) plus the $\vee \mathrm{Q}$. He then bids $6 \boldsymbol{\square}$, which is easily made after the lead to South's ace. Michal Klukowski and Piotr Gawrys flatten the board at the other table.

Playing Acol, East would have to jump to 3 on the second round, agreeing hearts and showing a spade control.

Awards: $6 \Upsilon(10), 6 \mathrm{NT}$ (6), games (4).

France face Bulgaria. Lionel Sebbane's 4NT overcall shows the minor suits, and all now depends on Zamir Seguineau's next move. Would you bid $6 \uparrow$, with his useful cards, or just 5 $\downarrow$ ?
There is no easy answer. South's pre-empt has forced you to guess. West would have bid 4 NT if his $\geqslant \mathrm{K}$ was the A or \&. The French East decided to stay low, and he was right on this occasion. All one can say is that the world's top players tend to guess right more often than you or I do!

Note that a 4NT overcall over 4 (or 3 - 4 ) shows any two-suiter, rather than the minors. Partner will use their common sense when responding. With $3 \cdot 2 \cdot 5 \cdot 3$ shape, for example, they will bid 5 . A mistaken response of 5 would force partner to go to $5 \mathbf{~ w i t h ~ h e a r t s ~ a n d ~ c l u b s . ~}$
Awards: 5\$/5® (10), slams (3).

| 4. 7 <br> - KJ1064 <br> - 87532 <br> \& K 4 | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Q } 10954 \\ & 95 \\ & \text { K } 9 \\ & \text { O } 1098 \end{aligned}$ |
| :---: | :---: |
|  |  |
|  | 12 832 14 176532 |


| West | North | East | South |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $A a$ | De Donder | Livgard | Bahbout |
|  | $2{ }^{\text {A }}$ | Dble | Pass |
| $4 \checkmark$ | Pass | $4{ }^{\text {A }}$ | Pass |
| $5{ }^{\text {A }}$ | Pass | 5 | Pass |
| 6\% | Pass | 6 | All Pass |

Norway face Belgium in the Round Robin. Steven de Donder's 2 shows five spades and $4+$ cards in a minor. Allan Livgard's hand is so strong that he starts with a double, despite holding five cards in North's main suit. Terje

## 4. N/S Game. Dealer North

|  | $\begin{aligned} & 8642 \\ & \text { K Q J } 106 \\ & \text { J } 105 \end{aligned}$ |
| :---: | :---: |
|  |  |
|  |  |


| West | North | East | South |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Von Arnim | Attanasio | Hausler | Manara |
|  | Pass | Pass | Pass |
| $2 \mathbf{2 4}$ | Pass | $2 \boldsymbol{v}^{\mathrm{A}}$ | Pass |
| 3 | All Pass |  |  |

Germany face Italy in the European Mixed Teams. Some players respond $2 \boldsymbol{v}$ to show an immediate double-negative ( $0-3$ HCP). One objective is to stop out of game

Aa then jumps to $4 \boldsymbol{\Downarrow}$, adding a bundle of points for his distribution.

Livgard's 4 (one level beyond four of the trump suit) is Kickback Blackwood. (This is a potentially valuable spacesaving method. 4NT instead of 4 would have shown a spade control.)
West's 5 is the 1430 response to show one (or four) keycards. Why are these responses better than 3041? Because they allow more space for the trump-queen ask in the valuable situation where the responder shows one keycard. If they held zero keycards, a queen-ask would be unlikely.

54, the equivalent of 5 NT in standard RKCB, asks for side-suit kings. 6 shows specifically the K . If instead West had held the $\downarrow$ K, East might well have bid $7 \downarrow$.

At the other table, North passed, and East opened 2 subsequently bidding spades and diamonds. West later bid 5 , declining to control-bid the K , but the Belgian East went to 6 anyway.

Both declarers safety-played the diamonds (ace first), making twelve tricks.
Awards: $6 \mathrm{NT} / 6 \uparrow$ (10), $6 \uparrow$ (9), games (5), grands (3).
when the opener is short of game values and the dummy will be useless. On this deal, only a trump lead prevents declarer from taking twelve tricks, including two diamond ruffs. North led a heart, of course, and three overtricks were made. What do you make of this unsuccessful auction?

East's pass (I will try to restrain myself) was absurd. Support of QJx and a possible ruffing value? He should
 would be worth a raise to $4 \boldsymbol{Q}$. This would be non-forcing, after the initial double negative response.

| West | North | East | South |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Baroni | Grunke | Gandoglia | Eggeling |
|  | Pass | Pass | Pass |
| $1 \mathbf{1 0}$ | 10 | Pass | $2 \boldsymbol{2}$ |
| Dble | Pass | $3 \mathbf{2}$ | Pass |
| $5 \%$ | All Pass |  |  |

Irene Baroni's 1\% showed 11-21 HCP and $2+$ clubs. When she heard of club support opposite, she leapt to 5 .

Awards: 5\& (10), 6e (8), part-scores (3).

## 5. N/S Game. Dealer East

| ¢ K Q 1093 | ¢ A |
| :---: | :---: |
| $\checkmark 765$ | - KQ 9 |
| - AJ 97 | - 8642 |
| - 5 | 2 AK9 74 |


| West | East |
| :--- | :--- |
| Yavas | Kuranoglu |
|  | $1 \%$ |
| 14 | $2 \vdots$ |
| 2 | 3 |
| All Pass |  |

France face Turkey in the European Womens Championship. Playing a 15-17 1NT, what should Serap Kuranoglu open on the East cards? She chose 15 and then faced a rebid problem over partner's 14. 1NT would show a 12-14 hand, and she was short of the values needed for a reverse bid of $2 \downarrow$.

Over the rebid, Dilek Yavas continued with a forcing $2 \downarrow$. What should East do now? With KQ9 in the unbid suit, 3NT looks good to me. No, she chose a raise to $3 \$$, which was compatible with a minimum opening bid. Game was missed on a combined 26 -count.

| West | East |
| :--- | :--- |
| Rolland | Puillet |
| 2 | 1 NT |
| 3 | $2 \boldsymbol{2}$ |
| All Pass | 3 NT |

Carole Puillet opened 1NT. Bravo! Over partner's 3 $\$$, she bid 3NT rather than 4 . Bravo, encore une fois! It was a well-earned 7 IMPs.

Awards: 3NT (10), 5४/4@ (5), part-scores (3).

## 6. E/W Game. Dealer South



| West | East |
| :--- | :--- |
| Nawrocki | Wiankowski |
| $1 \%$ | $2 \dot{2}$ |
| 2 | $3 \%$ |
| 3 | $3 \dot{2}$ |
| $4 \dot{2}$ | 5 |
| All Pass |  |

Piotr Wiankowski's response was forcing to game, and they stopped in 5 . Unless South holds all four missing trumps, there are 12 tricks on top. Who do you blame?
I think West should have bid 4 instead of that nebulous $3 \downarrow$. Over East's 4 , West would then bid $4 \uparrow$, showing the all-important spade control. The way it went, it seems that East was worried about $2=5=4=2$ shape opposite.

At the other table, spade intervention made East-West's task harder and the board was flattened in $5 \boldsymbol{\$}$.

Awards: 6\% (10), 5i (6), 4Y/3NT (5).

Our European stars began with three 10s, surprising no one, then stumbled into a $3 / 3 / 6$ finish. If you beat their total of 42/60, you can sleep well tonight. Let's look for some bidding tips.

## Tips to Remember

$\%$ Opening 1NT with a singleton honour, or rebidding 1NT with any singleton in partner's suit, can work well. Don't worry that some old-timers may be turning in their graves.
$\%$ When opener rebids their suit $(1 \boldsymbol{V}-1 \mathbf{V})$ a jump to such as $4 \boldsymbol{q}$ suggests a heart slam and shows a club control. This may be a singleton, but can also be an ace or a king. <br> \title{
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## Gold Cup Finals 2022

## Black \＆Gold



Eight exceptionally strong teams reached the Gold Cup quarterfinals in October．

| Brian Senior | beat | Mike Ash | 72 | IMPs |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Andrew Black | beat | Jeremy Dhondy | 43 | IMPs |
| Alexander Allfrey | beat | Simon Gillis | 9 | IMPs |
| Neil Rosen | beat | Tim Leslie | 14 | IMPs |

The semi－finals would be Alffrey v Black and Senior v Rosen，at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club． The Allfrey match was broadcast on BBO．

The score was 22－22 after 24 Boards．The aggressive and adventurous partnership of Gunnar Hallberg and Simon Hult then entered the fray for Black．On Board 19，with E／W vulnerable，Hult （North）held these cards：

```
4764 『10983 63 $7543
```

Hallberg opened $1 \$$ ；West passed and Hult ventured 1 on his zero－count，East passing．What would you do when Hallberg raises to $2 \boldsymbol{\square}$ and the next player passes？

With a minimum hand opposite，Hult expected E／W to have an easy vulnerable game．He raised blithely to 4 and this was passed out！Four down undoubled cost 200，while Andrew McIntosh \＆ Tom Paske collected +600 on their two 14 －counts． A nine IMP swing．

Black gained big IMPs in the fifth set．On Board 33，Hallberg opened 2 on this hand：

$$
\text { \&AKQ マ2 } \downarrow \text { KQ32 \& AKQ95 }
$$

and rebid $3 \boldsymbol{2}$ ．
Hult drove to 6 on：
＠J76 VKQ875 A107 84
Not a sparkling contract，but +1370 when clubs split 3－3．Robson opened 1e and made +690 in 3NT，for 10 IMPs away．


Opening 3 defenders cashed four hearts，and the diamond suit then came in for +600 ．At the other table Crouch opened $1 \%$ as South，and Hallberg overcalled 1母， making +110 in 2 ． 12 more IMPs to Black．

On Board 39，at Game All，McIntosh held：

## －Q 72 －K543 4 KQ1093

The bidding was 1 from partner， $1 \checkmark$ response， 1NT（12－14）rebid．What would you say？McIntosh went all the way to 3 NT ！Paske held 12 HCP ，but the cards lay well and +600 was recorded for an－ other 10 IMPs．Black took the set 33－1．The next two sets saw more gains for Black，and Allfrey con－ ceded with the score at 124－63 and only eight boards to play．

In the other semi－final，not covered on BBO， Senior beat Rosen by 114－94．

The final started well for Senior．What do you bid on this East hand at Game All？

ゅ1096 マKJ87 AQJ863

| West | North | East | South |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Isporski | Hult | Trendafilov | Hallberg |
| Paske | Senior | McIntosh <br> Penfold <br>  <br> Dble | $4 \boldsymbol{e}$ |

Trendafilov bid 5NT (pick a slam) and was happy to hear 6 from partner, who held

```
&AKJ \A94 \K1094 982
```

That was +1370 . McIntosh bid only $4 \boldsymbol{\vee}$, for +620 , and lost 13 IMPs.

On to Board 38. Would you say anything as South, with only E/W vulnerable?

```
$J1083 $64 -KJ5 &(1098
```

| West | North | East | South |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Penfold | Mctntosh | Senior | Paske |
| Black | Holland | Gold | Mould |
|  |  | Pass | Pass |
| $4 \checkmark$ | Pass | Pass | $?$ |

Paske ventured a bravura protective double, finding partner with

$$
\text { A99542 997 } 83 \text { \& KJ72 }
$$

$4 \boldsymbol{~ d o u b l e d ~ w a s ~ o n l y ~ o n e ~ d o w n . ~ M o u l d ~ a l l o w e d ~ 4 ~}$ to play, and that was 620 away for an 11 IMP swing.

We move to Board 51. You are West, with E/W vulnerable:
คKQ4 V1097 © J AK10874

| West | North | East | South |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Mould | Hult | Holland | Hallberg |
| Paske | Isporski | McIntosh | Trendafilov |
|  |  |  | 1 |
| $2 \boldsymbol{2 s}$ | Dble | Pass | 2 |
| $?$ |  |  |  |

What now? Mould competed further with a takeout double, which looks unwise with North having suggested the major suits over him. Hult duly redoubled and 2 by East was doubled for 500 . Paske passed instead and North bid 3NT. When McIntosh led the (from 32) Paske accurately played low, to preserve communications. 3NT went one down, and Black gained 11 IMPs.

Black led 145-86 with one board remaining of set 7. Would Senior concede? No, they scored 10 IMPs on the last board and fought on.

Board 60. N/S Game. Dealer West

- 175
- Q 852
- AQ104
- K 10
- 842
- A963
- 92
- 9643
- 6

- AKQ1093
- 4
- 53
- AQJ 5

| West | North | East | South |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Black | Holland | Gold | Mould |
| Pass | 1 | Pass | $1 \boldsymbol{1}$ |
| Pass | 1 NT | Pass | $3 \boldsymbol{1}$ |
| Pass | $4 \boldsymbol{\omega}$ | Pass | 4 NT |
| Pass | $5 \$$ | Pass | $6 \boldsymbol{\$}$ |
| All Pass |  |  |  |

Mould ruffed the second heart and went one down when the diamond finesse lost.

| West Isporski | North McIntosh | Trendafilov Paske |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Pass | $1 *$ | $1 \vee$ | 14 |
| 37 | Pass | Pass | 4 |
| Pass | 49 | Pass | 4NT |
| Pass | 5\% | Pass | 64 |
| All Pass |  |  |  |

West led the 9 to the queen and king. What should East return?

A lead of dummy's suit is often a singleton, and East returned a diamond. Declarer could then draw trumps and ditch his singleton heart. The 17 IMP swing closed the door for Senior, attaching several padlocks. Black eventually won by 173-129.

Congratulations to the winners: Andrew Black, Tom Paske and Simon Hult, winning their first Gold Cup, Gunnar Hallberg his fourth, David Gold his fifth, and Andrew McIntosh his sixth.

It had been a splendid final to watch. That we could all enjoy it was down to the heroic efforts of Claire Robinson, Trevor Mathews, and two England NPCs Paul Barden and Simon Cochemé. They stepped in for many arduous hours as BBO Vugraph operators. Many thanks to them!

Iust over seventy bridge players, plus nonplaying spouses, our director and Arena host set off for a Green-Pointed holiday at the Sense De Luxe all-inclusive hotel and spa near Side, just an hour's drive from Antalya Airport in Turkey.

Side is a Mediterranean coastal city in the South of Turkey. It includes a modern resort town and the ruins of an ancient city; one of the best-known classical sites in the country. Side monuments include the Temple of Apollo. Dating back to the second century AD , the temple was believed to have been a gift from Anthony to Cleopatra and still has five of its original Corinthian columns, towering over the seafront.

The timetable was a relaxed mix of bridge, free time and excursions giving everyone time to enjoy themselves, and to meet and socialise with bridge players from across the country.


Karen Kayes was on her first ever congress, was NGS Grade 7 and has been playing bridge for four years in Leeds. She really enjoyed the bridge but also the down time and socialising. Karen admitted to meeting some big characters but felt it helped improve her game and recommends an EBU Overseas Congress to anyone. She will be coming again.

Conversely June Brown (pictured below with Karen) has played bridge for 30 years. Turkey was her first overseas congress though she is a regular congress player in England. She loved the format and relaxed atmosphere. 'The hotel was great, and I especially enjoyed Side, though I may have purchased more Turkish Delight than intended.'

Albert Kitchin has been playing bridge for seventy years and his table partner Linda Fleet for thirtyseven. Linda loves the fact you don't need a partner

to go and has attended several congresses alone. Albert brings his non-bridge playing wife, Trish who has been coming to congresses for eighteen years and looks forward to meeting other nonplaying friends each year.

Bill Gardner, our self-proclaimed moaner-inchief, with over 40 congresses under his belt believed the Sense De Luxe the best hotel to date - a true compliment! He, alongside other regulars, would be delighted to welcome newcomers wanting to enjoy a holiday while playing Green- and BluePointed competitions.

This year the EBU borrowed BridgeMates and a dealing machine from a Turkish club, and we all enjoyed learning a bit of Turkish. Our absolute favourite was the Turkish for 'Opening Lead' - Atak.

To start with the dealing machine was a bit sluggish but fortunately in an all-inclusive hotel Vodka was on tap and after a few glugs we had the dealing machine working smoothly.

To see some more of the fun had by all, please read our blog:
hwww.ebu.co.uk/blog/autumn-sun-antalya
For the results see EBU Results/Antalya First for Bridge Congress

But most importantly, why not join us in April 2023 in Montenegro:
www.arenatravel.com/bridge-holidays/ebu-congress-on-the-bay-of-kotor.

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## Answers to September's Problems

Problem one comes from long term correspondent Dave Simmons (thanks yet again, Dave), problem two is from the world championships in Salsomaggiore in April and problem three from another long-time friend, Alan Jones.

> Hand 1
> J 86
> KQ83
> 75
> Q187

| South | West North East |  |
| :---: | :--- | :--- |
| 14 | Pass $4 \infty$ | $4 \mathrm{NT}^{1}$ |
| 54 | All Pass |  |
| ${ }^{1}$ Minors. Note: It is better to play this as |  |  |
| any two suits, but your partnership has |  |  |
| agreed it shows the minors specifically. |  |  |

(a) a spade: 5 marks. I suppose it could be right, but it sounds like the opponents have trumps coming out of their ears (partner is highly likely to be void) so I cannot see this achieving much at all. It is just conceivable that it is even worse to lead the $\mathbf{J}$ (partner I suppose might just have the singleton Q) but it is so remote that I am not altering the mark. But, for sure, a trump is better than this:
(b) 『K/Q: 2 marks, low heart: 1 mark. Wild horses would not drag a heart lead out of me. If partner has the minors and the oppo are gaily bidding to 54, they must have some shape. Someone (probably declarer) has a heart suit. Leading a top honour in it therefore is not a good idea, and the only thing to be said for it is that it is at least better than a low heart!
(c) 7: 8 marks, 5: 1 mark. I have scored the diamonds pips so differently as there is no reason
at all to go around deceiving partner about your length - it could be disastrous if partner tries to give you a ruff for example when actually it is declarer who has the singleton.

A diamond actually lets the contract through as dummy comes down with KJ10x of diamonds and declarer has stiff ace and can organise two discards and an overtrick... Personally, I consider this extremely unlucky. A diamond might have been the only way to beat the contract on other layouts. However, I am sure the best chance of beating the contract is...
(d) Q : 10 marks, any other club 1 mark. If you have any tricks in this suit you want to get at them before the mice do. As it happens, this time partner has AKxxx of clubs and they are 2-2. Cashing the clubs and waiting for your heart trick is the only way to beat the contract. Again, it is absurd to deceive partner about the club honours, so any other club has been marked down as a lead.
Pairs Bonus: E : 5 marks. The same lead for the same reasons.

## Computer simulations - best lead:

## © $\mathrm{Q} / \mathrm{J}: 73.9 \%$ chance of defeating the contract

 (teams)$\$ \mathrm{Q} / \mathrm{J}$ or $\$ 7: 3.12$ tricks - highest average tricks taken with this lead (pairs proxy)

## Hand 2

ค K 3

- K 6542
- A 83

2 $K 107$

| South | West | North | East |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1ヵ | Dble | $2 \boldsymbol{\uparrow}$ | Pass |
| 4 | All Pass |  |  |

A nasty hand to lead from. Partner is unlikely to have much at all on this bidding so we must look towards the safest lead. It was faced by many players in Salsomaggiore on auctions similar or identical to the one given.
(a) 3: $\mathbf{2}$ marks, $\mathbf{~ K}: 1$ mark. Well, the argument is that declarer will never play you for this holding and so will finesse back into your now singleton king; you will have had a chance to look at the dummy and therefore know what to switch to. That is why the 3 is scored slightly higher than the $\boldsymbol{K}$. The problems with that are (a) declarer may not have been able to hold the lead on dummy and therefore is in no position to finesse again and (b) even if they could hold the lead on dummy, they may have other things they want to do. One thing is for sure - Nathan's computer will never lead this as the now singleton king will be dropped $100 \%$ of the time
(b) 『4: 4 marks, $\mathbf{V K : ~}_{1} 1$ mark. This essentially needs partner to have the queen or the ace to avoid giving away a trick and therefore is heavily odds against on this bidding.
(c) A: 7 marks, low diamond: 1 mark. The computer may well lead this and it was the choice of Boye Brogeland, multiple world champion and one of the best opening leaders in the world. It will cost if declarer has the unsupported king but not much otherwise.
(d) $\mathbf{~ 7 : ~} 10$ marks, $\mathbf{~ 1 0 : ~} 4$ marks, $\mathbf{e}$ K: 1 mark. This was the popular choice at the table, and if I had not seen Brogeland's lead I would have thought it

## CONGRATULATIONS TO FEBRUARY'S WINNERS:

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clear. Why is it better to underlead the K rather than the $\nabla_{K}$ ? Simply because you are much shorter in clubs than hearts. If either declarer or dummy has a doubleton heart (which was the case) then a heart lead could well blow your heart trick (it did) whereas that is much less likely when you only have a three-card suit. At the table the opponents had a 4-4 club fit and so you got your king anyway.
Pairs Bonus: 7: 5 marks. The same lead for the same reasons. It is even more right to be as passive as possible on this hand at Pairs.
I think Hand 2 is difficult to lead from, and I was interested to see what the computer analysis showed:
Computer simulations - best lead:
*3: $43.1 \%$ chance of defeating the contract (teams)
A: 3.39 tricks - highest average tricks taken with this lead (pairs proxy)

```
Hand 3
- 983
- A 2
- 865
2 K 10863
```

| South | West | North | East |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $3 \vee$ | Pass | $4 \checkmark$ | 4NT ${ }^{1}$ |
| Pass | 52 | 5 | 6\% |
| Pass | Pass | 6 | Dble |
| All Pass |  |  |  |
| ${ }^{1}$ Minors (if yo | had sp | s you | ould bid |

(a) a spade: 2 marks. Someone has a lot of spades since partner does not have them. That is going to be dummy, so it cannot be right to lead spades.
(b) A: 6 marks, ${ }^{2}$ 2: 1 mark. A good sensible lead, allowing you to look at the dummy and know what to switch to. The trouble is that there may now be no winning options. Say you had to knock out the A before declarer could draw trumps... The $\mathbf{V}$ is a lot worse, since it will leave you with the A and unlikely that there are any other trumps out. Declarer will just go about playing spades and you have just given up a probably vital tempo.

Continued overleaf/. . .

## Prize Leads continued from p45

(c) 6: 10 marks, $\uparrow 8 / 5: 7$ marks. It is hard to see how this can be wrong unless declarer has a quick spade discard(s) for a club(s), but then it is likely the same would have happened with diamonds. Surely diamonds are your best source of tricks? Just how many club tricks are you going to cash when partner has freely bid to the six level when you might have had two or three clubs only? Surely both partner and dummy are highly distributional and a club void in dummy is not at all unlikely. At the table dummy hit with $\uparrow \mathrm{Kx}$ and partner had the $A Q$ so was charmed by the lead. Again there is no reason to confuse partner about your diamond length so the other pips have been marked down.
(d) K: 7 marks, others: $\mathbf{3}$ marks. As discussed above, this may well be ruffed and so is not recommended. However, if you are going to lead a club, then the right card is the king. It is impossible to see how this can cost over a low club and if it holds you will know what to do.
 your K holds and the switch is obvious. Why does it matter do you say? Because on the low lead, partner won and cashed the $\star$ to make sure of beating the contract. After all he did not know you had a quick trump trick to get in with and push a through.
Pairs Bonus: $\downarrow$ 6: $\mathbf{5}$ marks. The same lead for the same reasons.

Computer simulations - best lead:
a diamond: $94.7 \%$ - chance of defeating the contract (teams)
a diamond: 3.13 tricks - highest average tricks taken with this lead (pairs proxy)
The full results of the computer simulation can be found on page 70. An appendix detailing the methodology can be found by clicking here.

## SEND IN YOUR LEAD PROBLEMS

Email the editor, lou@ebu.co.uk. Alan will be delighted to use them if suitable.


## LICENSED BRIDGE

WHEN you see the 'LB' sign in an advertisement in the magazine, it means that:

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Barry Brelsford 1942-2022

Barry Brelsford was a recipient of the EBU Dimmie Fleming Award in 2015 after 20 years of voluntary work for Lancashire CBA including a stint as Vice-Chairman, Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. Barry also ran the Fylde Bridge League for many years. He represented the LCBA County and was a long standing member of Lytham Bridge Club where he was a regular Tournament Director as well as filling many positions on the Committee and being a Trustee.


Dinah Caplan
1932-2022
Dinah Caplan made her international debut, aged 78, after winning the Lady Milne trials with Lizzie Godfrey by a comfortable margin. As Zia Mahmood pointed out in an article for The Guardian at the time: 'Age is No Barrier'.
She had learned bridge at home and played frequently in London's rubber clubs before taking up duplicate upon retirement. She was a frequent competitor at most of the EBU's tournaments, often hitting the medal positions, and won the Portland Pairs with Michael Byrne in 2019.


## And here is what you think of it . . .

AJuly 2022 member survey about the NGS (National Grading Scheme) attracted over 4,000 responses, with comments ranging from 'best thing the EBU has ever done' to 'I feel it has an extremely detrimental effect.' The level of interest shows that it is a hot topic, and while a majority of respondents ( $56.9 \%$ ) feel it is a useful service, a significant minority ( $16.8 \%$ ) do not, with the remainder in the 'not sure' camp.
never. There is no problem with ignoring the NGS, and players can even make their grade private - a feature which only about half of respondents knew about. Such players are still graded though, and that is mathematically important to the system.

Where do you find your NGS grade, and how do you make your grade private? Log into My EBU, which is linked from the main EBU website, and recent sessions along with your NGS grade are

What is NGS though? Nearly $90 \%$ of respondents said they had heard of it, though one suspects that those who had not heard of it may have been less inclined to complete the survey; and indeed, higher-ranking players are overrepresented in the survey results. Either the NGS is more interesting to expert players, or the EBU needs to do a better job of communicating its merits to players of all standards.

The aim of NGS is to give an

Do you view the NGS scheme as a useful service to members?
4,025 responses

indication of the relative current bridge standard of every EBU member, based on their results in the graded games of EBU clubs, counties and national events. The scheme runs alongside Master Points (MPs), which are awarded for good performance in a bridge session. MPs accumulate but never reduce, so they represent lifetime achievement, whereas your NGS grade may go up or down every time you play and fluctuations are expected.

Some of us find the NGS compelling. Some 34\% of respondents usually check how their grade changes after every session. 'Can we calculate the new grade after a session earlier? I would like to see if my grade has changed without having to wait until the next morning,' said one player. That said, $34.1 \%$ said they only occasionally check, and $31.3 \%$
shown. Select Account at top right and then My Details. Under Account settings you will find NGS Preferences, which you can set to public or private. You can change this as often as you like, and the change will take effect overnight after you do so.

What is the value of the NGS? Master Points are great, especially for newer players who get promoted relatively quickly, but become less interesting in the large middle ground, when the lower ranks have been achieved but the highest remain out of reach. With NGS, 'there is always something to play for,' said Gordon Rainsford, Chief Executive of the EBU. One of the nuances is that without the NGS, if a session is not going well, players might feel that their play no longer matters. With the NGS, every board makes a tiny difference
so there is still an incentive to play well.
Another key factor, said Gordon, is that 'it enables handicap games, and some clubs use that. Some do

project was in limbo. I said can I help because I've got a bit of a mathematical background?'

Mike Christie now leads the project and is responsible for the Python scripts that run every night to calculate the grades. He was interested in a core problem with the NGS, that it calculates individual grades whereas bridge is played by two people in partnership. 'There were sceptics in the team who said it will never work,' he said. He did some experiments based on previous work with a statistical system called Kalman Filters and 'I convinced myself that yes, it
it as the main measure of ranking their games.' There are also events like 'Jack-high' tournaments which the NGS makes possible. Far from being mainly for experts, the NGS helps players of any standard to evaluate their progress and compete on level terms, as well as determining who is of a similar standard to them. Another benefit over MPs is that young players can achieve a high grade quickly, based on playing ability.

The origins of the NGS go back longer than a decade. 'The NGS is based on what I did for Bridge Club Live, while it was still the EBU online bridge club, and that in turn was based on what I did for Sheffield bridge club, which in turn was based on what I did for a club in Wiltshire, back in the nineties' said Barrie Partridge, talking to English Bridge about how the scheme came about. His motivation? 'I was interested in a handicapping scheme, which was basically a grading scheme'.

The NGS requires details of every session played, and only became possible in 2010 with the introduction of the universal membership scheme (UMS), where every session was uploaded to the EBU. It was always intended that the NGS would be a benefit of UMS, but there was some delay, not least because the leader of the project, Dr John Carter, sadly died in March 2010. 'He was the initial brains behind the whole scheme,' said Mike Christie, speaking to English Bridge. 'I remember writing an email to Barry Capal [EBU General Manager at the time] saying what's happened? The

Did you know that you can hide your grade if you wish?
4,046 responses
would work.' As it turned out, 'my Kalman Filter system was much too complicated, but it showed that John Carter's simpler system was good.'
The EBU has published a full guide to the NGS www.tinyurl.com/guideNGS - which explains more details about how it works, for those interested. We

asked Mike though: how accurate is the NGS and does it have any problems?
'It's only a rough guide,' he said. 'but it's hard for you to be more than one or two grades out, in your actual playing strength. It's more accurate than I ever guessed it would be.' One of the more difficult areas is with people who almost always play with each other. The NGS cannot know which of the two is playing better, and this can lead to arbitrary grading if one of the two very occasionally plays with someone else. NGS does gradually converge the grades of regular partners, but only slowly.

Mike adds that the partnership grade is particularly reliable. 'People don't pay an awful lot of attention to partnership grades, but they're pretty
accurate, you are measuring a partnership,' he said.
What is the most common complaint about the NGS? 'People think that playing with a weaker player will harm their grade, so they won't act as host,' said Mike. The NGS actually has provisions for hosts to exclude themselves before a session. In addition, when a novice plays their first 150 graded boards, their partner's grade is automatically left untouched. Nevertheless, 'people misunderstand this,' said Mike.

If, for example, a player rated King plays with a 3, the 3 is going to get two or three bottoms. But that's reflected in what's expected.' Mike says there is 'no actual evidence' for a detrimental affect when playing with a weaker partner, and the matter has been extensively examined. If their grade changes, it will change for both of them. Say they score $44 \%$ that might be good for the 3-level player, but bad for the king. This doesn't mean the ' 3 ' rises and the king falls. The system determines whether $44 \%$ is a good result for their partnership grade, and given the
strength of the opposition. If it is they both rise equally, but otherwise they both fall.

That said, 'there is an advantage to having a regular partnership, that's one of those things,' Barrie told us. The reason is that regular partnerships perform better, not because of any flaw in NGS.

Data scientist (and bridge international) Jonathan Cooke examined NGS statistics on behalf of the EBU from 2019 and 2021, concluding in his report that 'the NGS ratings are generally working as they should,' and noting that 'players will not lose on the NGS when partnering with weaker players.'
What about those who play bridge for fun, perhaps even with a glass of wine, and do not want to worry about the NGS? The ever-present scheme can feel a bit relentless at times; but one solution is not to worry about it, hide your grade if you like, and enjoy the bridge!
Tim Anderson is the EBU's Membership
Development Officer and IT Manager

## WHAT EBU MEMBERS THINK OF THE NGS

'It is world class. I have seen nothing comparable in any of the countries in which I have played.'
'Absolute waste of time'
'It's mathematically incorrect to use a grading scheme for individuals, the game is a team game'
'Great system, way better than MPs for evaluating form'
'It has killed the enjoyment of playing with weaker partners, just for a fun game.'
'The worry is if I play with a beginner will my grade go down'
'Only really applicable to serious tournament players.'
'Best thing the EBU has ever done!'
'I think it is a really good thing' 'It stops you playing for enjoyment'
'Much better than Master Points'
'Helpful when trying to find a partner'
'In trying to rebuild our club after lockdown I am playing with anybody of any grade this has a negative effect on my grade.'
'Some form of 'current standard measure' is probably useful to most players even if they won't admit it!!'
'I feel it has an extremely detrimental effect on the game of bridge.'
'It's an essential part of bridge, otherwise it would become a little pointless if you can't measure your improvement.'
'A very unjust and unnecessary part of our wonderful game.'
'It's fine as long as you don't play for the sole purpose of keeping or increasing your NGS.'

## 'Vast improvement on masterpoints and gold points keep it going!'

'Just happy to play the game not especially interested in my grades or ranking.'

## BUILDING CLUB MEMBERSHIP



Did you know that the EBU has a specific membership development website dedicated to the topic of building bridge club membership?
It was launched in September 2018 as part of the EBU's then-new membership development campaign. It has articles on why membership development and bridge marketing are needed, how to set up a teaching programme in a club, case studies, and much more.
Until now some of this material has required a login but to make it as easy as possible for clubs to benefit from these resources, we have removed this requirement. Take a look at: www.ebumemberdevelop.org.uk

The EBU also provides promotional templates for clubs, such as those above, at www.tinyurl.com/eburesources
We would like the sites to be fresh and up-todate and welcome ideas and contributions. Please contact tim@ebu.co.uk with your feedback.

## YOUNG PLAYER AWARDS



Lucy Norman and Charlotte Bedford have been presented with the EBU's 2022 Young Pair of the Year award. The pair achieved the silver medal in the Junior Europeans 2022, they won the 2021 Online U26W Channel Trophy and were part of the best junior team in the 2022 Spring Fours.

The Young Player of the Year award was presented to Ewa Wieczorek by EBU Chairman Ian Payn and Youth Squad Leader (U26W) Claire Robinson. Ewa gave a strong performance in the U26 team, and won the last Junior Camrose. She also achieved selection for the senior European ladies team in Madeira and was reserve for the senior mixed team.



Congratulations to Jonathan Lillycrop, the EBU's Club Liaison Officer, who has been awarded the European Bridge League title of NBO International TD after gaining an $\mathrm{A}^{\star}$ grade at the Max Bavin TD course in Warsaw. He is pictured (left) with Eitan Levy from the EBL Tournament Committee.

# English Bridge <br> Education \& Development <br> <br> GIVE TEACHING A GO 

 <br> <br> GIVE TEACHING A GO}

## Make it a team effort . . .

Bridge teaching can be a rewarding role and has wide appeal. When bridge is your passion, teaching can offer a little extra income and some of our EBTA members have even gone on to make it a career. Many are just keen to share their expertise and be part of a teaching team.

When Stuart Bridge decided on teaching, he had just scaled down his work to four days a week and is making good use of that spare day! He firstly enrolled on an EBED Club Teacher Training course and persuaded a fellow club member, Tina Cottee, to join him. He had no previous teaching experience but learnt many different techniques on the course which he now puts into practice, for instance presenting with large format cards and not just relying on slides to get a message across.

He also gets his students to play boards simultaneously so they can have discussions at the table to analyse play and then have whole group feedback. Stuart is using Bridge for All Book 1 for a group which began in January, but also likes to use extra material from lots of sources and some of his own hands, including those recently played in his club in Bath.

Both Stuart and Tina said they gained an immense amount from the Club Teacher Training course, from tapping into the enthusiasm of the trainer, Richard Banbury, to meeting and sharing ideas with other budding teachers. They both latched onto the idea of online teaching in a big way after seeing a video demonstration within the course. Once Stuart got started with face to face lessons, he and Tina planned how they could get the students practising between lessons. An online practice session was born and Tina runs the weekly sessions using hands

to match the previous lessons' topics. Stuart has also done a great job in recruiting fellow club members to join the RealBridge sessions so that every table has an experienced player to assist. Asked what he enjoyed most about teaching, Stuart said, 'Without a doubt the students' enthusiasm for learning the game'. Well . . . here's what his pupils say:
'As a complete newcomer to bridge, I couldn't have asked for a better teacher than Stuart. He's exceptionally well organised with his lesson planning and moves through topics at a pace that keeps everyone engaged and on their toes, but not so fast that he loses us! He is always happy to help outside of lessons (email etc) if there are topics missed or just not grasped. As a result our group has made great progress and we are all starting to feel more confident about the game.'
'I came along to lessons to support my friend and to be honest thought that bridge wouldn't be for me, that it was just a game elderly people played. But the way that the game has been taught by Stuart has hooked me from the start.

Breaking the game down like Stuart has makes it a bit like a jigsaw which starts to piece together and a bigger picture is starting to emerge. The way that the club then supports us with additional mentoring when we play online on Wednesdays is really helpful too.

I am such a convert now that I am spreading the word to friends who have never considered bridge and I am really encouraging my teenage daughters to learn too.'
'Stuart has been a great bridge teacher who has channeled his own passion for the game into the lessons. The best recommendation for his teaching that I can offer is that all 16 of our beginners group have completed the course and will be back for more in September.'

Another teaching duo at work in Pinner (North London), are Kate Deed and Pam Adler working together to deliver their Bridge for All beginners courses. They both took part in EBED Club Teacher Training in late 2019 and were all set to teach when lockdown struck. This meant that they had to teach online. Between them they had all the skills they needed but the partnership works so well as Kate has fantastic IT skills and Pam is an ex-school teacher. Kate was able to set up lessons initially with BBO and Zoom and handle all the manipulation of deal files and slide preparation. Pam works more on the lesson objectives and makes sure that 'differentiation' is addressed. In education jargon, that means ensuring that there is something for everyone in mixed ability classes something which many teachers find a challenge.

Now that they are back to offering face-to-face lessons, they run the same lesson twice with an afternoon and evening group. Both groups can therefore take advantage of the extra online practice session run by Kate, for more play in between lessons. The pair are thrilled to report that their students are also playing together socially for practice and this is both in person and online.
We asked Kate about teaching and she replied,
'Teaching is incredibly rewarding. When the students tell us how much they enjoy their lessons and playing bridge, it means so much.' And this is what her pupils say:
'I had never held any cards in my hand ever and wanted to learn to play bridge for some time but didn't seem to have enough spare time for it. Now
that I am retired, I decided to take lessons. I enjoy the game, preferably face to face. I think the theory and rules can be daunting but playing sessions are held in a very friendly manner and help me to enjoy the game. I am glad that I have chosen the right hobby in my retirement.'
'We like both F2F \& online play. We have twice tried to learn bridge before - unsuccessfully - but feel we are learning very well with you.'
'Golf and bridge goes together and I showed my strength in playing good golf and thought I should show my intelligence so took up bridge. A lot of ladies played bridge at my golf club in Essex and I always wanted to do that plus a few of my family members are really good bridge players and my sister-in-law in fact teaches bridge in Kampala.'
'Learning bridge properly during the pandemic has been my salvation. Now life is returning to some form of normality it is great to be playing face-to-face. However, I also like playing BBO or RealBridge and can see it coming into its own come the winter months. Does also cut down on the petrol costs. Thanks to both of you for your guidance and patience.'
'I think my brain is a little sharper as a result of bridge - not sure my husband would agree!'


Like many teachers, Kate \& Pam are enjoying the features offered by RealBridge for delivering some of their sessions and finding the EBED teaching resources and support invaluable. If you think you'd like to take up the challenge of teaching bridge please get in touch. EBED has lots of resources to help you.
See the latest dates for EBED Club Teacher Training at http://ebedcio.org.uk/club-teachertraining and find out more about becoming a member of English Bridge Teachers' Association at http://ebedcio.org.uk/ebta


Spinning Plates


One of your students asks repeatedly how to open a flat 12-14 count while another queries the wisdom of opening 1 NT without a club stopper - familiar scenario? One is lagging woefully behind while the other is ahead thinking for themselves. The problem is not so much how to respond to these two individually but how to respond simultaneously - different needs in the same class, or worse - at the same table. To complicate things further, a class never starts with students at the same level. A so-called 'beginner' can have played bridge as a youngster, be a card sharp at poker or not know the names of the suits. All our students have different needs and managing them can feel like spinning plates - just as one is going nicely another starts to wobble. The skill needed here, I have no doubt, is one of the most challenging in teaching. Known as 'differentiation', it's a method where you devise lesson activities and responses which cater for the varying levels of ability and experience with which you are confronted.

Take as an example a simple worksheet or quiz with perhaps five or six questions. Without differentiation, these might cover precisely the topic you have been teaching and you would expect all students to complete it. A differentiated task would set a wider range of questions - the first couple asking for a simple recall of prior learning and the last covering a future topic or idea. You tell the class that no one is expected to answer them all and students pick the ones they feel they can tackle. This allows the more able to run ahead while those who need more time and support don't feel the unhelpful pressure to complete the task. In a 1 NT revision lesson an early question might be three examples of hands that would open 1NT with the students asked to identify what they have in common. A middling question might be to ask them to construct their own hand and a later one to think of the disadvantages of the weak NT. The first
requires recall and is scaffolded by examples. The second requires knowledge to be applied where the third asks them to think originally. The same technique can be applied to the hands. Four deals testing finessing can range from the simple to the deep and you can ensure that each student plays the one most appropriate for them.

A very useful technique is to differentiate by seating plan so long as you vary this week to week or during the lesson. Try sometimes putting those of similar abilities on the same table so that you can give them slightly easier or more difficult problems to solve as appropriate. This method favours the more able students who are not held back. Subsequently mix things up to favour the less able as they can learn from the more confident and don't feel stigmatised. It can work to ask the most able to mentor such a table.

Language, as always, matters with feedback and praise given for achievement rather than outcome. For example, if your more able student completes a task accurately avoid over-praising them but ask what would happen if one card moved or the lead were different. Stretch them until they begin to be challenged. Conversely recognise the most modest achievements of those finding it harder.
The biggest danger if we don't differentiate is that we end up teaching to the middle range of our students and ignoring the needs of the outliers who are then made to feel like they're in the wrong class. Instead, if you make quite clear from the start that you expect all students to be different - that they will learn at different speeds and have different needs - then everybody feels enabled to learn. It's certainly extra work and it can take some practice to manage but these techniques do forestall problems and crucially lead to fewer smashed plates.

If you have teaching ideas or tips to share please contact marysharp@btinternet.com

A$s$ any bridge teacher will tell you, checking what students already know is essential before heading straight into a new topic. A mixed improvers group can be a challenge to your plans. Let's suppose you plan to teach Stayman and Transfers or move on to look at how these most common of conventions apply in different situations, not just after opening bids ... but your group's prior knowledge is mixed. Some may have learnt the weak takeout method or perhaps need revision of basic bidding. A good starting point is a short exercise to check what they know already using examples from Beginning Bridge Book 1. Let's take a look:


## Bridge for All

 TEXTBOOKSThe Bridge for All textbooks have exercises and practice hands, and you can see preview pages on our website. Books can be purchased directly from EBED with discounts available for all members of English Bridge Teachers Association. Contact Lisa Miller:
Tel: 01296317217
Email: lisa@ebedcio.org.uk

1

- Partner opens 1NT. What do you reply?

| Hand A | Hand B |
| :---: | :---: |
| - Q 73 | - 32 |
| - KJ 6 | - 765432 |
| - K 987 | - 32 |
| - K104 | - 432 |

2. 

You open 2NT and partner responds 3. What is your next bid?

|  | Hand C |
| :--- | :--- |
| AQJ2 | Hand D |
| AQ | AQ |
| KQ104 | KQ1043 |
| A6 | A106 |
| KQJ | KQ4 |

Question 1B will evoke lively discussion about the opponents having 28 points! It can refresh knowledge, and after a few months of learning students will begin to see things they may have overlooked in earlier lessons.

Question 2 checks students know and remember that Stayman can be used after 2NT.

These examples can be useful for students about to move on to a second year with Continuing Bridge Book 2 when they will encounter new bidding scenarios.




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# Getting Young People into Bridge 

by Tim Anderson

## Any club can do it ...

Getting young people into bridge: it's the way to revitalise the game says Sue Johnson and any club can do it
'Bridge is easy to learn and anybody can learn it,' says one of her pupils. 'I really like bridge because it is exciting, relaxing and enjoyable. You don't even notice that you are learning maths!'

These quotes come from children learning bridge at the age of seven or eight; and the fact that they are doing so is great news for the future of our game. Could it happen in nearby schools for our bridge clubs up and down the country?

Sue Johnson, who runs New Tricks - a bridge charity in North London where these kids are taught - believes it can happen anywhere, with benefits for the children as well as for bridge. It is done in primary schools with enthusiastic support from the teachers. 'How I sell it to the head teachers is, you've got this whole range of skills, that are good for the children's intellectual development and social development. And it's for nothing, we come into the school and we do this for you. All we need is time with the children, and it costs you nothing. Whereas most clubs, be it football, gymnastics, chess, they bring in external providers which charge the school.'

Sue feels that while chess is also very good for a child's education, bridge has some unique benefits. 'Chess is also great for problem solving and learning confidence. But the key difference is the social dimension and the cooperation ... it's developing empathy in a way that chess is not.'

Approaching a school though is not that easy. How do you get started? 'Where I started was with a bunch of unsolicited emails, most of which did not get a response, but one did,' Sue told us. 'A guy who ran the after-school club in a primary school said yes, sure, come and do this. And once you have a springboard in one school then it becomes easier to
go to other local schools.
'Some of it has been quite random. I met a guy when I was out walking my dog, who had the right size children, and I said, where do they go to school? Please introduce me to the head teacher. He did, and she was enthusiastic, and then wrote an email to some other head teachers in the area saying this has worked really well in our school, why don't you do it too?'

It sounds fantastic but there is plenty of groundwork to do in terms of getting volunteers, planning the courses, and getting everything set up. 'I figured that the way bridge is taught to adults is

quite off-putting', Sue said. 'They're taught to bid and to play at the same time, so they come to bridge as something which has masses of rules and theory. Friends who are beginner players say, 'I can't remember all the rules, how many points I'm supposed to have to do this?' I explain that these are not rules, they are guidelines based on logic and if they put aside what they see as rules and think about how the cards are going to play in the game, it will make sense.
'In order to teach children, you've got to put aside bidding to start with and get them to engage with the fun element of the game, which is taking tricks and beating each other. I formed a model about how I would want to teach, and started making videos based on that model,' she said.

Bridge clubs play an important role in Sue's work. 'When lockdown ended, I set about recruiting volunteers though bridge clubs. We got people to send out emails to their membership saying if you want to help, get in touch. We started to build a bank of volunteers, get them DBS checked, and approach schools at the same time.' The charity, where Sue is assisted by others including bridge teacher Mary Sharp, professional player Steve Root, and video expert Dermot Hunt, now has around 55 children learning bridge every week across four schools.

Are there any immediate benefits for the clubs? 'The big upside for bridge clubs is that quite often children will go home and play with their parents they want to teach their parents so they can practice. You've now got a whole other potential generation of new learners in young parents. They'll be working but they can come with their kids if you have a session for them to learn as well. What we need to do to revitalise the game is to get young people to engage with it.'
'In one of our schools we had a 'bring a relative to bridge' day. Each of the eight children in the bridge club brought their mother, father, godmother, or whoever along as their partner. The kids loved it because they were able to teach their parents something, which was fantastic for them. The parents loved it because they could see their kids really enjoying it, and they also said, this is an interesting game.'

As the children grow older, the ideal thing is to start a weekend club where they can play in their own time. A bridge club premises is ideal for this.

What can clubs do if they would love to see bridge taught in local schools, but do not know how to go about it? 'I would recommend gathering two or three people who are like-minded in your area, that could work with at least one school. You do need three or four people because children aged 9 or 10, which is the ideal age, need a supervisor per table.
'We can provide a massive amount of support, a course structure, detailed lesson plans, hands, notes on how to teach Minibridge, how to extend from there, what are the learning methods that work, what works less well and so on. We're making a series of videos aimed at kids. You don't have to be an experienced teacher in order to do this.
'Money should never stand in the way of delivering bridge teaching to schools. We should be
able to do all this for nothing, because it's important if we're going to create more equality in the world of bridge in schools, where there is almost none at the moment - it's a very privileged school activity.'
For more information visit New Tricks web site where you can also find contact details: www.newtricksschools.org/


## NEW JUNIOR SQUAD LEADERS

After many successful years in charge of the U21 Squad, Michael Byrne will be the Squad Leader for the U26s. He will be assisted by Stephen Kennedy, former member of the U26 squad and author of two successful bridge books.

The U21 squad leader will be Ewa Wieczorek who has recently represented England in the Junior European Championships in the Netherlands and Women's Europeans in Madeira, and was crowned Young Player of the Year (see p51).

The U16 Squad Leader will be Oliver Cowan who moved into a full time career in bridge at the start of Covid with the Oliver Cowan Bridge Club and has a passion for encouraging junior bridge. He will be assisted by Alan Shillitoe who has been involved in the Junior Squad Training system for many years.

The Junior squads are open to everyone up to the age of 25 , no matter their experience. If you or someone you know would like to join then contact Abbey Smith on 07891586 410, or email abbeybridgelessons@hotmail.co.uk


## Member Suspended

An EBU Disciplinary Committee recently considered the following charges against Barry Jones (BBO name Nagog) at a meeting in September.
$\%$ That in a number of online tournaments organised by the Deva Bridge Club, since on or about August 2021, played on the Bridgebase Online (BBO) platform, he was aware of the layout of hands when playing. This was achieved by 'self-kibitzing' or by illicit communication with a kibitzer.
$\because$ This gave him knowledge of the complete layout of all four hands, enabling him to take bridge actions, informed by such knowledge, which he might not have taken in the absence of such knowledge. He took such bridge actions when in possession of information to which he was not entitled under the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge.

The defendant admitted the charges, and a disciplinary meeting was held. The Disciplinary Committee found the charges proved to their comfortable satisfaction, and that the defendant's conduct constituted an offence under paragraph 3.2(iii) of the EBU Disciplinary Rules, being a breach of the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge as in force from time to time and paragraph, and paragraph 3.2(iv) of the EBU Disciplinary Rules, being unfair or dishonest play. They considered the mitigation offered.

The Committee imposed a sanction of suspension of EBU membership for a period of 24 months.

## NATIONAL HANDICAP PAIRS

Congratulations to Cyril Green \& Jim Berry from Cheltenham Bridge Club, who finished in first place, with a handicapped score of 64.07 .

In second place were Stephen Button \& Peter Adams from Scunthorpe Bridge Club, with a handicapped score of 63.64 and in third place were Colin Lennox \& John Jenkins, with a handicapped score of 62.09 .
Nearly 400 pairs took part, playing in 17 clubs and counties, both face-to-face and online.


Congratulations to Sarah Bell (left) who, with Marie Eggeling of Germany won a silver medal in the Women's Pairs of the World Bridge Series in Wroclaw. At the same time John Vos \& Tidor Tiholov were second in the pairs side event.

Nevena Senior \& Nicola Smith won silver medals in the Tri-Polar team in the McConnell Cup (Women's Teams). Sally Brock and Fiona Brown also won bronze medals in the Baker team in the McConnell Cup.
In the Rosenblum (Open Teams) David Gold and Zia Mahmood were bronze medallists in the Robinson team, along with Andrew Black's team which contained Gunnar Hallberg, Andrew McIntosh and Tom Paske, who missed out on the final by three IMPs.

LORDS VS COMMONS 2022


The House of Lords defeated the House of Commons in their annual bridge match in early November. This year the Commons took a 32 IMP lead in the first stanza, but the Lords fought back to win by just two IMPs. The House of Lords now leads the series 26-21. Pictured from the winning team are Lord Hamilton, Lord Kalms, Baroness Henig, Lord Oaksey, Earl of Caithness, James Cooper and Baroness Blackstone. Lord Mendoza, not pictured, completed the team

The Tony Berry Trophy, for best played hand, was won by Evan Harris.

## AUTUMN CONGRESS

October's Autumn Congress, played on RealBridge, concluded with the A-final for the Eastbourne Bowl, which was won by the Nettleton team comprising Sara Moran, Andrew McIntosh, Tom Paske \& Diana Nettleton. The Murphy team (Paddy Murphy, Mark Roderick, Liz Commins \& David Stevenson) came second.

The Burlington Cup (the secondary final) was won by Mike Wenble, David Barnes, Stefan Lindfors \& Janet Barnes, and the Sussex Cup (the consolation final) was won by Lilias Lamont, Andrew Doye, James Bond \& Graham Davison.

The Two Star Pairs, the main competition at the Autumn Congress, was won by Richard Plackett \& Espen Erichsen, ahead of Derek Maggs \& Alan Sia with Bill Pencharz \& Jerry Cope coming third.
The Two Star Pairs was the second competition in the 2022/23 Player of the Year Championship, and Richard and Espen now move up to 7th in the standings. Tom Paske's fourth placed finish moves him into first place. Please note: from next year the 2-Stars Pairs will be part of the Spring Bank Holiday Congress which will be held face-to-face.
The Swiss Pairs - for non-qualifiers, and those joining the congress after the qualifying rounds was won by Denis King \& Mike Fawcett, with David Wing \& Roland Gronau finishing second and Giles Ip \& Mark Hill third.


CONGRATULATIONS to Ken and Pat Flavell who have celebrated 70 years of marriage at both the kitchen table and the bridge table. Pat, 94 and Ken, 99, have played regularly at Broxbourne Lowewood Bridge Clubs. Since the pandemic they have tackled the technology and are regulars on BBO, at Broxbourne BC. Playing Precision, they're still seen at the top in their club game.


The Crockfords Cup final was won by team Leslie: Ben Norton, Kieran Dyke, Michael Byrne \& Mike Bell (pictured from left). Tim Leslie \& Ollie Burgess played in earlier rounds. The Leslie team and the Garvey team (John Carroll, Nick Fitzgibbon, Tommy Garvey, Tom Hanlon, Mark Moran \& Adam Mesbur) both finished the day with 71 VPs in the closely contested seven team final, but team Leslie won the split tie having won the head-to-head match.

In third place were the Allfrey team of Peter Crouch, Espen Erichsen, Zia Mahmood \& Richard Plackett (plus Alexander Allfrey \& Andrew Robson who played in earlier rounds) who finished with 62 VPs from their six matches.

This was a first victory in the event for all players in the Leslie team.
The Crockfords Plate - the consolation competition for those beaten in the first round of the Cup - was won by Harry Anoyrkatis, Tim Brierley, Jim Grant \& Graham Hartley.

## GREAT NORTHERN SWISS PAIRS



Alec Smalley \& Michael Byrne (pictured) won the Great Northern Swiss Pairs in Leeds in early October. They were just two VPs ahead of Tom Gisborne \& Sandy Davies. Third were Tom Dessain \& Rodney Lighton.
The Improvers' Pairs was won by Brian Lawrence \& Mike Dunne with 73 VPs from five matches.

CROSSWORD NO 37

|  | mpi | b | by | MER | A |  | Answers online, p71 |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | ${ }^{2}$ | ${ }^{3}$ |  | 4 |  | 5 |  | 6 | 6 | T | 8 |
| 9 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 11 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | ${ }^{12}$ | 13 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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|  |  | ${ }^{15}$ | 5 | 16 |  |  |  | ${ }^{17}$ |  |  |  |
| 18 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 19 |  |  |
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| 20 |  |  |  |  |  | $\overline{21}$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | 23 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## ACROSS

1 Soothes away disappointment with boards (8)
9 What jumpers might use to accommodate slope on course (10)

10 Further visit to Niagara Falls held back (5)
11 Trick to take piece back (4)
13 Grovelled for a share of the eight per cent return (5)
14 A player's no alternative to picking up shelves and a nasty disease (7)
16 Let the wine breathe before serving Charles de Gaulle, perhaps (7)
18 Still works the land (5)
20 Stonework - a lithological introduction (4)
21 Push one's way onto boat (5)
22 A source of amusement concerning adverse reaction (10)
23 All the first singing brother left out (8)

## DOWN

2 Pairs peg on, becoming prominent features in the Royal Albert Hall (10, two words)
3 Anna's baked bread (4)
4 Merman starts with this puzzle - such a craftsman (5)
5 Desperately, Noel Coward got rid of one probable loser (7, two words)
6 Alarm knight's opponents (5)
7 Flower god's upsets continue to be tedious (10)
8 A month before maybe Merman's boundless pursuit of group (8)
10 Roads apt to facilitate flexibility of use (8)
12 Flying saucer available with one's bottle opener on board (7)

15 Find a buyer for soft fabric (5)
17 Blended a type of whisky like this (5)
19 A group of patriots (4)

## COMPETITION



Poor Santa! Send your entries for the cartoon above to lou@ebu.co.uk or Editor, Raggett House, Langport, Somerset, TA10 0DD by 15th January.

Thank you for all the captions I received for the one below. Congratulations to Robert Michelmore for my favourite, shown below the picture. Other close contenders were Peter Sturton's 'Felix's tactics were risky . . . knocking out the ace of spades could lead to an unpleasant squeeze'; Dave Robinson's 'She had a funny feline the cards were stacked against him', and Reg Tripp's 'Beware unexpected plays! Paws before you claim'.


## Ben reached the four-level despite interference

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## FORTNUM \& MASON

EST 1707


# Julian's answers to questions from page 15 




2V. As the hearts are good and they are a major while diamonds are a minor, you should simply rebid the hearts and not risk being left in $2 \downarrow$. If $2 \downarrow$ makes, you would need to make ten tricks with diamonds as trumps for a diamond contract to score better.

| Hand 2 |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| \& K | w | N | E | S |
| - A 1072 |  |  | Pass | Pass |
| - J762 | 17 | Pass | $1{ }^{1 /}$ | Pass |
| + AK96 | ? |  |  |  |

1NT. Since the singleton is the king and partner has bid the suit, you should have no qualms about the 1NT rebid. Indeed your choice of opening bid indicates that the plan to rebid 1 NT ; you should have opened 1 if you planned to rebid $2 \boldsymbol{\$}$.


3ヶ. With an opening bid on your left and a twolevel response on your right, partner cannot place you with too strong a hand. The strength of the diamond suit makes it a playable trump suit and the suit you probably want led if North declares a spade contract.


Dble. The fact that you are a passed hand gives you a bit of latitude. You do have both unbid suits and tolerance for partner's suit. Your partner is likely to have too many spades to compete further if you do not take any positive action.

| Hand 5 | W | N | E | S |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| ¢ Q 964 |  |  |  | 1* |
| - 8764 | Pass | 17 | 14 | Pass |
| - 198 | ? |  |  |  |
| - Q J |  |  |  |  |

24. Holding four-card support for an overcall, you would typically raise to the three level expecting your side to have a nine-card fit and so bid to the nine-trick level. Here the fact that most of your values are in your short suits mean the hand is less offensively orientated than usual, which makes the single raise sufficient.


2NT. While there is a risk involved in entering the bidding with a descriptive bid when the opponents might outbid you, the need to ensure the opponents do not get to play quietly in 2 (if North was planning to pass) takes precedence. 2NT asks partner to pick a minor.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 

Send your letters to the editor, Lou Hobhouse, Raggett House, Bowdens, TA10 ODD, or e-mail lou@ebu.co.uk The editor reserves the right to condense letters. Publication does not mean the EBU agrees with the views expressed or that the comments are factually correct.

## BRIDGE CRUISING

I am just back from a cruise on the Iona, a P\&O ship from Southampton. No Bridge was offered on any day in the 'What's on' sheet. I went to reception and asked them to inform players that they could meet in the library in the evening before dinner. They said 'no', and that they did not encourage that sort of thing. What they do seem to encourage is people (family types) losing money in the casino.

When asked 'why?' they said that they were trying to attract families and an activity like bridge was not contributing to a family-type atmosphere.

## Gordon Joy

As Editor, I contacted P $\leftrightarrow O$ to ask for their comment and received this reply: Thanks so much for your email. I have just had a long discussion with our on board team and we have formal, organised bridge sessions on Arcadia, Aurora and Ventura and on our longer cruises with bridge teachers. We are also looking at ways to arrange non-hosted sessions on our other ships as it is certainly a popular activity. Thanks for your email Gordon - I hope it has prompted a positive change on board.

## LOOK AFTER THE ELDERLY

I learnt to play bridge for a challenge on my 60th birthday and joined my local club Kenilworth. Twenty one years on I am still trying to play at a reasonable standard. Now the rules are changing and, to be
honest, are not easy to understand. It is taking away from the enjoyment of the game. I do not want to stop playing because it is a big part of my life. I will try and follow the rules and sometimes change is necessary but please remember that it is the elderly bridge players who keep the game surviving.

## Patricia Walton

## CROSS WITH CROSS IMPS

I read with interest that all the teams were selected for the Europeans by cross-imps. I once played in a five table cross imps trial. At four tables the biding went:

| E/W Game. Dealer West. |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $\mathbf{W}$ | $\mathbf{N}$ | $\mathbf{E}$ | $\mathbf{S}$ |
| 2NT | Pass | $3 \mathbf{v}^{1}$ | Dble $^{2}$ |
| Redble | All Pass |  |  |
| ${ }^{1}$ Transfer to spades, ${ }^{2}$ Hearts |  |  |  |

The contract made plus two for 1760 to E/W. At my table my partner opened 2 NT , I bid $3 \checkmark$ and my LHO thought 'I have been here before' and she passed. My partner bid 3 and I bid 3NT. We made 660 but, scored against the other four tables, lost something like 80 IMPS! So I am very suspicious about selection by cross-imps.

## Maureen Dennison

## AYLESBURY DICTIONARY

Here in Yorkshire we have our own version of the Aylesbury Dictionary (EB, Sep 22/p19), as told to me by old Harry of Harrogate:
Checkback - Cash only, don't trust banks;
Weak twos - Players from the South;

Loser on loser - ditto.
Also in the North:
A spade call is a spade;
Borderline hands are always levelled up;
A hand of 20+ points is 'fair to middling';
Sacrifices are seldom made; All slams are Grand.

Kenneth Flowers

## NEW MINIBRIDGE FOR THREE

I have developed a new version of simplified bridge and have been using it for teaching youngsters and novices with great success:

Place yourself as dealer with two learners. Deal four hands one will be dummy. Dealer says (honestly!) how many 'tops' (aces, kings and queens) they have in total. Continue clockwise, with each player saying 'Pass' unless they have more 'tops'. This can be automated by replacing the aces kings and queens with those from another deck. Place the dummy opposite the declarer (the player with the most tops). The player who is not on lead tells declarer which is dummy's longest suit and how long it is. In the case of equal length suits, only give information on the higher ranking suit. The table is also told the number of dummy's 'tops'.

The sum of declarer's and dummy's tops is called the 'playnumber' and the object is to win at least as many tricks as the playnumber + one in NT and + two in a suit. This turns out to be remarkably accurate.

Continued overleaf...

In the very first hand declarer has to choose no trumps since there are so many other things to keep track of during the play.

Keep the cards separately in tricks. After the hand is played comment on it and, if it is the first hand, look at what might have happened if there had been trumps.

When you have played a couple of times the rules can be extended
and declarer can choose a trump suit. This is a good moment to start to explain scoring. The contract can also be doubled, but only by the defender on lead, and redoubled.

One and a half years ago I played this (in NT) with a seven year old and an eight year old. To make them more interested I put six five kronor coins (50p) in a pot. If they made their contract
they were allowed to take one coin from the pot. If they did not make it they had to put one back in the pot (if they had one). When the pot was empty the game was over. The kids liked it but maybe it was just the money we played several games.

How did it go? Well I was able to retrieve some of my money but absolutely not all.

Göran Rundqvist

## Landmark Promotions

August - October 2022

| Congratulations to the newly-promoted <br> Grand Master: <br> Lesley Harrison, Gloucestershire |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
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| Bedfordshire | Tony Dodson | Master |
| Master | Roger Foreman | Alex Onions |
| Ling Dent | David Hull | Kent |
| Berks. \& Bucks. | Sandy Lambert | Life Master |
| Master ${ }^{\text {B }}$, | Lynn Lucas | Lindsey Clark |
| Master | Sally Riley | Michael Griffiths |
| Marijke Bennett | Gloucestershire | Will Roper |
| Margaret Hamley | Grand Master | Regional Master |
| Tony Heyes <br> Roger Johns | Lesley Harrison | Jennie Cain |
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| Pat Whitworth | Regional Master | Helen Kennedy |
| Cambs \& Hunts | Rosaleen Kaye | Glynis Prentis |
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| Julian Stafford | Diana Evans | Michael Wood |
| nw | Janet Little | Lancashire |
|  | Sarah Rowland | Life Master |
| Peter Meredith | Jackie Saitch | Michael Fay |
| Peter Meredith | Hants \& I.O.W. | Master |
| Cumbria | Master | Christopher |
| Regional Master | Richard Cottle | Callaghan |
| Alan James | Jane Jenner | Christine Chamber- |
| Simon Robins | Herefordshire |  |
| Devon | Master | Evelyn Hunter |
| Master | Pat Armitage | Paul Likely |
| Peter Crawford | Herts | Jeffrey Moore |
| Direct Overseas |  | Diane Turner |
| Master | Regional Master | Maxine Whalley |
| Alan Sia | George Lock | Leicestershire |
|  | Master | Master |
| Dorset | David Beale | Tushar Shah |
| Master | Mick Gray | Lincolnshire |
| Linda Lumsden | Carol Ingham | Master |
| Essex | John Lambe | Keiron Barron |
| Life Master | Paul Lee | Louise Mitcham |
| David Tennet | Jean Morris | Judy Waine |


| London |
| :--- |
| Regional Master |
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| Master |
| Mike Klein |
| Ann Liddell |
| Michael Wellby |
| Manchester |
| Life Master |
| Gillian Whyte |
| Master |
| Peter Berens |
| Richard Tomlinson |
| Middlesex |
| Master |
| David Clarke |
| Mary Hayes |
| Stephen Sheldon |
| Norfolk |
| Master |
| Vinod Kumar |
| Bipin Shah |
| Nigel Simpson |
| North East |
| Regional Master |
| Ann Rooke |
| Master |
| Paul Ingoe |
| Northampton- |
| shire |
| Life Master |
| Ufuk Cotuk |
| Doreen Simpson |
| Regional Master |
| Alan Bamford |
| Master |
| Kathy Dawe |
| Linda Hollington |
| Paul Redfern |
| Notts |
| Master |
| Lesley Sweet |


| Oxfordshire | Warwickshire |
| :---: | :---: |
| Master | Life Master |
| Christine Bishop | David Cass |
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| Colin Seabridge | Sue Cannaby |
| Somerset | John Winter |
| Regional Master | Westmorland |
| Raymond Nicholson | Regional Master |
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| Staffs \& | Wiltshire |
| Shropshire | Life Master |
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| Regional Master | Master |
| Norbert Voelker | Suzanne Grist |
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| Paul Hadlington | Brian Tanner |
| Surrey | Pam Ward |
| Regional Master | Worcester |
| Simon Carter | Regional Master |
| Harry Figov | Grahame Selby |
| Grahame Pope | Yorkshire |
| Master | Life Master |
| Suleman Akhtar | Steve Blackburn |
| Vicky Bevan | Carol Heron |
| Gay Lewis | Ian Johnson |
| Jalil Minakaran | Regional Master |
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| Pushpa Shah | Master |
| Tony Winship | Sally Gregory |
| Sussex | Kevin Hambling |
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# Reducing the trumps 



TThe following hand from a recent daily IMPed Pairs Tournament of 18 boards gave London's Mike Tucker a chance to shine.


He had reached 6 as South and received a 5 lead to A. 10 was returned and declarer threw the $\mathbf{~} 7$ and won with the $\boldsymbol{K}$ in dummy. The $\downarrow$ K and a diamond to $A$ revealed the bad trump break, causing declarer to sit up!

He now had to try a trump reduction play to reduce the number of trumps in his hand to that of East in order to get to a particular end position. He would need three entries to dummy to achieve this.

First, declarer cashed the A and crossed to the $\checkmark \mathrm{K}$ and ruffed a club. He still needed two entries to dummy and it meant that the 10 would have to serve as an entry, so he played the 9 and finessed
the $\$ 10$ successfully. He could now ruff another club while East threw a spade. Declarer now overtook the Q with K and we were here:


Declarer was in dummy where he needed to be. He led the 8 but East declined to ruff, so declarer discarded his $\boldsymbol{A}$. When declarer led a heart from dummy, he could overruff whichever trump East played.

Declarer did need clubs to break 4-3 and for West to have the $\boldsymbol{1}$, but sometimes you just have to play for cards to be right. Mike also noted that West could have scuppered his plan by playing the $\mathbf{~} \mathbf{J}$ on the $\$ 9$ lead which ruins his vital third entry to dummy. However, if declarer had cashed the A before the $\$$ K, the spade finesse would not have been needed. The slam scored +8 IMPs.

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# $A O \cos$ 

## Funbridge Competitions

# Avoid those nasty guesses 

We've all played contracts that you know can be made provided you guess right. The fate of the contract may depend on a two-way finesse for a queen, a finesse-or-drop guess, deciding which finesse to take, or judging whether to take a finesse or play for a squeeze to have worked. Declarer's 3NT contract on this month's deal from a Funbridge Team Game can always be made if declarer guesses well in the endgame. However, can you see how to avoid taking a guess at all?


| West | North | East | South <br> $2 N T$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Pass | $3 \mathbf{6}$ | Pass | 3 |
| Pass | $3 N T$ | All Pass |  |

A regular Stayman auction quickly installs you in 3NT. West leads the to his partner's ace and the $\$ 2$ is returned. How would you play?
Suppose you play the $\boldsymbol{J}$ at trick two. West wins with the Q and plays a third spade, knocking out your king, East discarding a heart. You have eight top tricks and chances for a ninth in both minors. The problem is that you cannot afford to take a losing finesse as West has two spade winners.

One reasonable option from here is to cash the AK, in case the queen falls, and then to cash your
heart winners. West discards a diamond on the third heart and everyone throws a diamond on the fourth round of the suit. What are your choices in the fourcard ending? One option is to lead a club towards your jack, which will work if East began with either ${ }^{2} \mathrm{Qxx}$ or Q 10 xx . A second is to play East for the $\star \mathrm{K}$ and simply take a diamond finesse. A third possibility is to play for West to have been squeezed in three suits and forced to bare his $\downarrow \mathrm{K}$, so you lead a diamond to the ace hoping the king will fall.

Obviously, you know that one of these choices will work. The problem is, which one? Do you see how you could have avoided this guess?
Let's go back to trick two. East's return of the $\mathbf{~} 2$ strongly suggests that West has not led a four-card spade suit. Yes, it is just about possible that he has led from 10 xx , meaning that East holds $\boldsymbol{A Q x x}$. More likely, though, is that West started with five spades. That is a problem as both of your minorsuit finesses are into the danger hand. Or is it?

Rather than playing a forlorn $\mathbf{J}$ at trick two, you do much better to retain that useful card. Win trick two with the $\boldsymbol{\$} \mathrm{K}$ and immediately start cashing hearts. West discards a diamond on the third heart, which is all you need, as West now has no safe exit cards. If you exit with a third round of spades, West will win with the Q . He can cash two spade winners, but he will then have to give you your ninth trick by returning a minor suit into your tenace. On the fourth and fifth round of spades, you can comfortably discard two diamonds from dummy and a club and a diamond from your hand. Nine tricks are easy.

Note the importance of NOT cashing the fourth heart before throwing West in. Yes, West will have to make an awkward discard on that trick, but it also means that you will subsequently be squeezed when West cashes his last spade. You will have to throw from AQ/AJ6. Whichever suit you throw, West exits in that suit, thus not giving a trick away. Once again, you have to guess whether West has bared the $\star$ K, come down to a doubleton Q , or whether the diamond finesse was working all along.

# BBO Just Declare 

Just Declare, as the name suggests, places you permanently as declarer. You don't bid, you don't need a partner, you just play to win tricks mple!


So, the principle is straightforward, but why play Just Declare? OK, so it's fun (that's a given!), but it's more than just a bit of fun; there are plenty more reasons to play.

It's good for players of all levels from beginners to advanced, it's flexible, can be played at any time and is a great way to focus on your trick taking, without getting overly hung up over bidding conventions. If however, you want to see the bidding box, just click on the contract, and the bidding will be displayed.

In short, working on your declarer play is going to have a positive impact on your overall bridge performance. It's fun, and will help you improve.

There are three different versions; Just Declare Solitaire, Just Declare Daylong and a version you can play without having to login via a link on the homepage of the BBO website.

Just Declare Solitaire - Find it here: BBO > Solitaire > Just Declare

Just Declare Solitaire has an infinite number of hands where all contracts are makeable. There's total points scoring, with the highest each day being listed on a live leaderboard. It tests your declarer skills, and your challenge is to make the contract.


Just Declare Solitaire is free to play and a great place to practise when you have a few minutes. It helps make choosing your line of play come more naturally during an actual game. You can play for hours, or just a few minutes; it fits in with your schedule. If you're waiting for a tournament to start and want to warm up, then give this a try.
Just Declare Daylong - Find it here: BBO > Competitive > Daylongs > Just Declare Daylong
The Just Declare Daylong is a competitive game, scored in Matchpoints. You compare your performance with other players to see who plays the hand best. The great thing here is that it's a very pure test of skill as everyone plays with the same cards and the same contracts.

You can get a feel for Just Declare Daylong for free every Monday and Friday (look for Just Declare in the list of Free Tournaments). There's also a premium daylong every day, with BBO points awarded if you do well.

Finally, there's a 'reward' version available at the beginning of every month as part of the monthly BBO Festival (a three day festival that starts on the first Monday of every month), in which you can win BB\$ prizes as well as BBO Points.

Whatever version of Just Declare you end up playing, you can be sure you'll have fun and get some cerebral exercise in the process.

## Click here to play Just Declare

## Paul Bowyer's Quiz from p10



Your Count and Plan reveals six top tricks (one spade, three diamonds and two clubs). Three hearts can easily be established but do the opponents have the tempo to set up enough winners in spades and hearts to defeat you? Should you take the on the first round or should you duck it?


Your Count and Plan reveals six top tricks. Three hearts can easily be established but do the opponents have the tempo to set up enough winners in spades and hearts to defeat you? East plays the Q at trick one. Should you take the on the first round or should you duck it?

## ANSWERS

You cannot make this hand if West started with $\triangle K Q J 10 x$ and the A. Given the overcall, it is highly likely that the ace of hearts lies with West, so holding up the A is pointless. Best play is to take the A immediately, hoping East started with either $\boldsymbol{1 0 x}$ or $\mathbf{~ J x}$. Now the suit is blocked, and the contract can't be beaten. Here's the full deal:


Yes, 3 NT would have been defeated if West had led the 5 initially, but who defends like that? Note that if you were to duck trick one, West would continue with a low spade at trick two as you could hardly have started with A109; with that holding you'd have had no cause to duck trick one.

Applying the Rule of Eleven to the opening lead, you can see that East has precisely two cards higher than the 5 ( $11-5=6$, and you can see four cards higher than the 5 between dummy and declarer).

Had West started with any three honours ( KQJ , $\uparrow$ KQ10, $\uparrow$ KJ10, $\uparrow$ QJ10) he would surely have led one of them, so it's all Lombard Street to a China orange that East's two spades are both honour cards. With that in mind, you can block the suit by taking the at trick one and playing on hearts immediately. Here's the full deal:

| - KJ753 <br> - A9 <br> - J10 <br> \& QJ 84 | $\begin{aligned} & \text { \& } 8642 \\ & \vee K J 104 \\ & \text { AK4 } \\ & 52 \end{aligned}$ | click to play online |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $<w_{s}^{N}$ | $\begin{array}{r} \hline \text { Q10 } \\ \bullet 7652 \\ \bullet 98763 \\ +109 \end{array}$ |
|  | - A 9 |  |
|  | - Q 83 |  |
|  | - Q 52 |  |
|  | - AK763 |  |

Note that, with West's spades known to be ropey, the location of the A is almost certainly on your left. Thus, holding up the A is unnecessary and is actually fatal.

## Michael Byrne's Quiz from page 16

 ou are sitting West and open $1 \boldsymbol{d}$ what is your next bid after partner responds $1 \boldsymbol{?}$ ?| West | East |
| :--- | :--- |
| 10 | $1 \%$ |
| $?$ |  |


| Hand 1 | Hand 2 | Hand 3 | Hand 4 | Hand 5 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| - KJ6 3 | - AJ | ¢ KQ 3 | - A Q 10 | - 193 |
| $\checkmark 4$ | - K 4 | - KJ | - K 4 | $\checkmark 2$ |
| - AQ9 7 | - Q 973 | - A 3 | - Q109 | - AKQ4 |
| \% AQ 83 | \& KQ853 | * AJ 8643 | - KQJ103 | - KQ 1074 |

## ANSWERS

Hand 1 should rebid 14 . You are not balanced and 1 NT is misleading to partner and can be fatal when partner fails to look for a $4-4$ spade fit.

Hand 2 should rebid 1NT. This is a more natural call than $2 \boldsymbol{2}$, holding so much strength in the two doubletons.

Hand 3 should rebid 2NT. It wouldn't be terrible to rebid but the suit is ropey and there is so much outside strength. If partner has a fair hand it probably won't matter what you do, but if
partner has a weakish one then laying claim to the no trumps early on will make things a bit easier.

Hand 4 should rebid 2NT, 18-19. It might only contain 17 high card points but the club suit is worth an extra point and you have a lot of tens that make the hand worth a bit more than the point count would suggest.

Hand 5 should rebid 2 . With all of the points in two suits it doesn't feel right to treat it as balanced, and the small singleton in hearts might lead partner to choose the wrong part score.


## COMPUTER SIMUULATION Oङ SEPTEMBER LEADS QUIZ RESULTS



## Assumptions

South has at least one shortage. Either exactly five spades and $12+$ HCP or $6+$ spades and $10+$ HCP. North has either exactly four spades, 3-8 HCP and at least one shortage, or $5+$ spades and $0-8 \mathrm{HCP}$.

East has $10+$ HCP of which no more than four are in the majors, and is at least 5-5 in the minors with at least the Qxxxx in each suit.

In the following results the $\%$ is the frequency with which the contract will fail on a given lead (used as a proxy for teams), while the tricks is the average number of tricks E/W will win on a given lead (used as a proxy for pairs play).

## Best lead in each suit:

2 Q 73.9\%, 3.12 tricks
中6 73.5\%, 3.08 tricks
४ 7 73.3\%, 3.12 tricks *
Q $\mathrm{Q} 9.3 \%, 2.75$ tricks
Other leads:
م) 73.9\%, 3.12 tricks
4 $83.3 \%, 3.07$ tricks

- $53.3 \%, 3.12$ tricks

ب8 73.2\%, 3.09 tricks
2 7 73.2\%, 3.09 tricks

By Nathan Piper

Ⓙ 69.7\%, 2.98 tricks
VK 59.3\%, 2.75 tricks

* 55.0\%, 2.67 tricks
\$ 54.0\%, 2.65 tricks


## Comments:

East and South both have a high-level pass/double/bid-on decision. I find these decisions hard when I'm given a particular hand so formulating the general requirements is very tricky especially as they are likely to vary considerably with vulnerability, form of scoring and partner. Given the results are quite close I'm left feeling that slightly different assumptions may lead to a different result for a spade lead. I don't think that switching up the assumptions is likely to get a diamond to overtake a club though. I did actually do a run allowing East to have no club honours and a club was still top.

We can also be extremely confident that a heart lead is worst. The reason for this is indicated by both the high percentages across the board, and the surprisingly good performance of a trump lead: this contract is likely to fail so long as we don't give away a trick. The simulation results contained only two hands in 10,000 where a heart lead was necessary to defeat the contract, whereas there are lots of layouts where it costs a trick.

Judging purely by average tricks the results look too close to call for the best pairs lead. Alan Mould says that after an auction like this the traveller will be all over the place, so there will be many more matchpoints available for setting the contract and 'going plus' than for saving overtricks or getting extra undertricks. Analysis of the simulation results also shows that the high average for the diamond lead is skewed by a few rare hands where there were several undertricks. A club beats a diamond on more hands that a diamond beats a club so a club is the winner at pairs too.


## Assumptions

South has either exactly five spades and $17+$ HCP or exactly six spades and $15+$ HCP，or $7+$ spades and 9＋НСР．

North has either exactly three spades and 4－9 HCP， or four spades and 2－6 HCP．
East has $0-6$ HCP if holding a $5+$ card suit or 0－7 HCP otherwise and no 8 －card suit．
Best lead in each suit：
－ $343.1 \%$ ， 3.32 tricks
A $43.0 \%, 3.39$ tricks＊
－ 4 41．9\％， 3.32 tricks
2838．2\％， 3.23 tricks
ع $1037.7 \%, 3.21$ tricks
\＄3 17．1\％， 2.54 tricks
\＄K 16．9\％， 2.51 tricks

## Other leads：

－ $842.9 \%$ ， 3.32 tricks
『 5 41．9\％， 3.32 tricks
$\checkmark 241.9 \%, 3.32$ tricks
『 $641.9 \%, 3.32$ tricks
マK 33．2\％， 3.07 tricks
er $\mathrm{K} 29.9 \%, 3.00$ tricks

## Comments：

This auction is much easier to simulate and，while the requirements for each hand（especially North） may be a matter of style，I＇m pretty confident that changing the point ranges or distribution requirements slightly isn＇t going to have any significant effect on the results．The results were so close（and surprising！）that I re－ran the simulation with 100,000 hands－and got the same results as my first run．

Computers do like ace leads（see the methodology section for why）so I＇m not surprised to see the A doing well．I＇m also not surprised that a low diamond is better than a low heart．Partner is very weak so is likely to have nothing in whatever suit we choose．If the low diamond draws a blank we will probably still score the $A$ ，but if a low heart fails we will probably never make the $\geqslant \mathrm{K}$ ．

It was，however，surprising to me that the computer preferred the $\leqslant 3$ to the $\star A$ at teams．From a longer holding the ace would be automatic due to the increased chance of someone having a singleton．If it＇s partner who＇s short you want to deliver a ruff and if it＇s not you don＇t want to go to bed with your ace．A trawl through the simulation output found several ways in which a low diamond can gain over the ace．These included putting partner in for a club switch，avoiding setting up a diamond suit in an otherwise entryless dummy and avoiding giving tempo to declarer（and thereby avoiding a later endplay）．

While it＇s close at teams，we can＇t afford to underlead the $A$ at pairs lest we never make it．It＇s much better to cash it and then start thinking．

Hand 3 overleaf

| CROSSWORD NO 37 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Compiled by MERMAN |  |  |  |  |  | Answers from p60 |  |  |  |
| L | U | D | O | ${ }^{3}$ | U | F | F | E | R |
| A | ${ }^{7} \mathrm{C}$ | A | T | A | P | U | L | T | A |
| ${ }^{9} \mathrm{P}$ | E | N | T | F | ${ }^{10}$ | R | A | I | N |
| ${ }^{111} \mathrm{~T}$ | I | C | K | E | T | I | G | N | K |
| 0 | L | E | ${ }^{12} \mathbf{M}$ | ${ }^{13} \mathrm{~S}$ | ${ }^{14}$ | E | A | K | S |
| ${ }^{16}{ }^{16}$ | I | R | A | T | E | S | ${ }^{17}$ | E | T |
| ${ }^{188} \mathrm{~A}$ | D | $19$ | N | ${ }^{20}$ | A | L | T | R | Y |
| ${ }^{21} \mathbf{W}$ | H | I | T | E | R | ${ }^{22}$ | E | E | L |
| E | ${ }^{23}$ | C | R | 0 | L | L | E | D | U |
| $\frac{24}{24}$ | R | E | A | M | Y | $\stackrel{25}{\text { I }}$ | R | I | S |

Hand 3
983
A2
865
K 10863

| South | West | North | East |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $3>$ | Pass | 4 | $4 \mathrm{NT}^{1}$ |
| Pass | 50 | 5 | 6\% |
| Pass | Pass | 67 | Dble |
| All Pass |  |  |  |
| ${ }^{1}$ Minors (if you had spades you would bid 4¢) |  |  |  |

## Assumptions

South has 3-9 HCP, with $6+$ hearts, at most four spades.

North has $8+$ HCP, with $3+$ hearts and at least one minor suit shortage.
East has $12+$ HCP, at least 6-5 in the minors, at least three of the top five diamonds and two of the top five clubs (unless 6-6 when at least QJ in each).
Best lead in each suit:

- $64.7 \%, 3.13$ tricks *
- $84.7 \%, 3.13$ tricks
\& $\mathrm{K} 93.7 \%, 3.08$ tricks
10 93.7\%, 3.06 tricks
e8 93.7\%, 3.04 tricks
26 93.7\%, 3.04 tricks
- A 93.5\%, 2.96 tricks

4 8 93.4\%, 3.12 tricks
Other leads:
-5 94.7\%, 3.13 tricks
e3 93.7\%, 3.03 tricks
〔3 93.4\%, 3.12 tricks
-9 93.4\%, 3.12 tricks
$\vee 2$ 84.5\%, 2.59 tricks

## Comments:

Of the three hands this month this is the one where I have by far the least confidence in the simulation results. Rather like hand 1 it's impossible to specify the exact requirements for the unseen hands, but this time we hold the N K, which
depending on our assumption about partner's holding, may or may not be safe to lead or to lead away from.
In the above simulation we're assuming that partner must have pretty strong minors to effectively drive to the six level on their own. This means there is no danger to the K lead over a small club and, furthermore, the K is a bit better than a small club at pairs because we retain the option to lead through dummy's $\downarrow$ K next.
For comparison I ran a version of the simulation where I didn't provide any suit quality requirements about East's minors. This was the result:

Best lead in each suit:

* 6 94.9\%, 3.13 tricks *
894.1\%, 3.05 tricks

6 94.1\%, 3.04 tricks
2 10 94.1\%, 3.06 tricks
※K 94.0\%, 3.08 tricks

- $93.7 \%, 2.96$ tricks
- $893.7 \%, 3.12$ tricks

Other leads:

- 8 94.9\%, 3.13 tricks
- 5 94.9\%, 3.13 tricks
294.1\%, 3.03 tricks
- 3 93.7\%, 3.12 tricks
@93.7\%, 3.12 tricks
2 84.8\%, 2.62 tricks
As you can see this made no difference to the order of the suits but made the slightly worse than the other clubs because on a few (unrealistic for the bidding) hands we gift declarer a trick that he can use to discard a diamond loser.

In both version the difference between pips in the same suit is too small to be considered significant.

