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The EBU members' magazine – September 2023 – Issue 302



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07 Oct	Sentido Hotels Crete 4* Pearl Beach/5* Aegean Pearl	Duplicate	7 - 14
07 Oct	MS Ave Maria Bridge Cruise Split Croatia	Duplicate	7
14 Oct	4* Athena Beach Hotel Paphos Cyprus	Duplicate & Bowls	7 - 21
04 Nov	5* Paloma Perissia Hotel Side Southern Turkey	Duplicate	7 - 14
21 Dec	4* Barcelo Occidental Playa De Palma Spain	Duplicate	7 - 14
07 Jan	4* Playa La Arena Hotel Santa Cruz de Tenerife Spain	Duplicate & SM Bowls	7 - 28
01 Feb	4* H10 Rubicon Palace Hotel Playa Blanca Lanzarote	Duplicate	7 - 14
15 Feb	5* Paloma Oceana Hotel Side Southern Turkey	Duplicate	7 - 28
13 Mar	4* Fuerte El Rompido Huelva Southern Spain	Bridge, Bowls Walk & Golf	7 - 14
02 Apr	4* Palmon Bay Hotel & Spa Herceg Montenegro	Duplicate	7 - 12
14 Apr	4* Barcelo Occidental Playa De Palma Spain	Duplicate	7 - 14
16 Apr	5* Paloma Perissia Hotel Side Southern Turkey	SBU Congress	7
4 May	4* Sol Meliá Cosmopolitan Rhodes Greece	Duplicate	7 - 14
18 May	Boreas Gulet Bodrum Southern Turkey	Bridge Cruise	7
30 May	4* Hotel Torretta Montecatini Tuscany Italy	Duplicate & Tour	10
11 Jun	4* Hotel Onabrava & Spa Santa Susanna Spain	Duplicate & Tour	7 - 14

DATE	RESORT	HOLIDAY TYPE	NTS
08 Oct	Old Swan Hotel Harrogate	Duplicate & Tour	4
12 Oct	Holiday Inn Kenilworth Warwick	Bridge Club Live	4
13 Oct	Whitehouse Hotel Worcester	Duplicate & Tour	3
13 Oct	Newbury West Grange Hotel Newbury	Duplicate	3
29 Oct	White Swan Hotel Alnwick	Duplicate & Gin	4
02 Nov	The Lambert Hotel Watlington Thame	Duplicate	4
13 Nov	Charingworth Manor Hotel Exclusive Use	Duplicate & Walk	4
24 Dec	Holiday Inn Kenilworth Warwick	Christmas Bridge	4 - 9
24 Dec	Holiday Inn Hotel Ironbridge	Christmas Bridge	4 - 9
18 Jan	The Lambert Hotel Watlington	Duplicate	4
06 Feb	Charlecote Pheasant Hotel Stratford Upon-Avon	Duplicate	4
22 Feb	Newbury West Grange Hotel Newbury	Duplicate	4
04 Mar	Marsham Court Hotel Bournemouth	Duplicate	4
11 Mar	Dunston Hall Hotel & Spa Norwich	Duplicate	4
21 Mar	The Lambert Hotel Watlington	Duplicate	4
28 Mar	Metropole Hotel & Spa Llandrindod Wells	Duplicate	4

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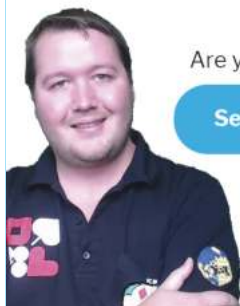
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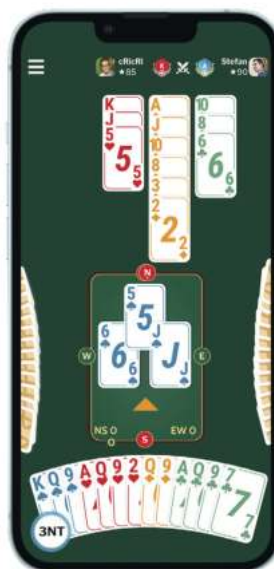
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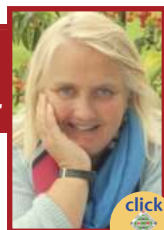
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Summer Frolics

CELEBRATING EBED

Ten years ago English Bridge Education & Development was spun off as an independent charity from the EBU. It can be very proud of all its achievements. On p54 Mary Sharp talks to three people who each benefitted from different courses run by EBED. They tell their stories and how it changed their lives – even inspiring love!

The courses that EBED offer for potential teachers, directors and learners have evolved to a very high standard. The textbooks commissioned by EBED are hugely popular, continuously updated and enhanced by a vast array of resources to support teachers and students. EBED also supports youth bridge and has just hosted an extremely successful summer bridge camp, attended by 70 youngsters aged from eight to 21.

Giorgio Provenza has now finished his time at the helm and returned to his native Italy. He presided over improvements in the organisation and oversaw the efforts put in to support teachers to teach online during the pandemic. As well as leading EBED, Giorgio nurtured the junior squads, bringing new talent into the fold as the U16s 'aged-out'.

Mark Humphris joined EBED in February last year and takes over from Giorgio. Mark will put his own stamp on EBED. His focus is on modernising training, enhancing the materials that support teachers and students and working with the EBU to develop a strategy for youth bridge. Supported by Lee Guy, Chair of the Trustees, we wish him well, and another successful 10 years for EBED.

BRIDGE, FJORDS & STAVE CHURCHES

Robert and I decided to holiday in Norway this year and ventured to Lillehammer to take part in a couple of sessions at their national bridge fest. It didn't go quite as we planned. We arrived to play in a two-session tournament named *The IMP*. We like an IMP, so that sounded good, and it was an afternoon session followed by a morning session so we could resume our road trip quickly.

Disappointing then to find it was cancelled, but it was suggested we could take part in the Category Pairs the following day. No – it was ending late, and we needed to be on our way well before then. But something curious happened. Driving back to our hotel in a swanky hire car with gadgets galore – as close to self-driving as you can get – suddenly, over the speakers came WARNING, IMMINENT HAZARD, WARNING, IMMINENT HAZARD. Where, where, where – what had it spotted that we'd missed? It turned out to be a government warning on the phone, played over the car's speakers. Back at the bridge fest, in the final of their big pairs event, 100s of phones in the tournament hall had bellowed those same words. I was surprised it hadn't caused more chaos. Why the warning? We were in for some rain and a hell of a storm.

With little more than drizzle and no lashing wind, we ignored it. By the following morning we found ourselves marooned in Lillehammer, with all routes impassable because of floods and landslides. Norway only has about three roads so there are no workarounds. We could have played in the Category pairs – but we'd missed it trying to get away. Optimistic we'd get out the next day we missed a teams event, and when we gave up trying to leave and decided to stay for the last tournament, a bus arrived having finally got through – a road was open, so we binned the bridge and made tracks.

If the lack of bridge was a disappointment, it was nevertheless a fabulous trip with fjords and stave churches our focus. It's worth Googling images for Norwegian stave churches. You can smell the heavy tar coating from 50m and luckily they are incredible in the rain as well as the sun.

For those who went to the EBU Summer Meeting, I hope you got more bridge than we did. Reports are that it was a very enjoyable event all round, with increased numbers and the temperature remained comfortable for the whole four days. Congratulations to all the winners – a summary of the results is on p49. □



What can I reply with just 6-9 points?

If your partner opens one of a suit there are only three things you can reply with a weak hand. Once you know how little is available, you can make the best choice. So, to reply to partner with '6-9' points, you can only:

- ♣ support partner; or
- ♣ bid a new suit at the one-level; or
- ♣ bid 1NT.

Luckily, there is an *order of priority* when responding to your partner's opening bid when you are weak:

- 1 If your partner opened one of a major and you have a fit, your priority is to show it by bidding two of the major.
- 2 If you can't support partner's major, or partner opened a minor suit, you can bid a new suit at the one level, promising 6+ points and at least a 4-card suit.
- 3 Support partner's minor if you can't show a major suit at the one-level.
- 4 If you cannot do any of the above, bid 1NT: it's the only bid that's left!

Before I go through each of these, let me define what I mean by a 'weak hand'. This can loosely be described as a hand in the 6-9 HCP range; but understanding where this range comes from will help you judge when to deviate from it.

The lower bound

It is sensible to think of partner's opening of 1♣/♦/♥/♠ as 12-19 points, and therefore six points is the minimum you need to make the magic 25 combined points where you should be bidding a game. However, we've all seen games made with far fewer points, so although 6-9 is an easy band to remember, try and reply if you think you can provide a trick. Here are some examples of what counts as a trick:

- ♣ any ace
- ♣ a king and a queen (even in different suits)

- ♣ two honours in the same suit
- ♣ a 5-card major headed by a king

Try experimenting – you'll soon get a feel for whether your hand should respond.

Exception to the upper limit of nine points? Next issue we'll cover when to diverge from this upper bound.

Quiz 1: Should you respond with these 4-HCP hands when partner opens 1♦?

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3
♠ J 4 3 2	♠ A 4 3 2	♠ K 9 4 3 2
♥ J 6 4	♥ 7 6 4	♥ J 6 4
♦ 7 3 2	♦ 7 3 2	♦ 7 3
♣ Q 5 4	♣ 6 5 4	♣ 6 5 4

Hand 1. Pass. What's the point? Playing in diamonds is unlikely to be a disaster and there is no guarantee that your measly collection of queens and jacks will provide a trick.

Hand 2. Respond. An ace is definitely a trick! Bid 1♠.

Hand 3. Respond. With five spades headed by the king, there is a real chance you have a trick and you have a decent major suit to offer as trumps Bid 1♠.

SUPPORTING PARTNER'S MAJOR

Let's say partner opens 1♥.

♠ 3 2
♥ A 7 6 4
♦ K 7 5 3
♣ 7 4 2

Here's a classic hand which would raise 1♥ to 2♥. It is neatly within the 6-9 range and you have a known 8-card fit with your partner.

What about this hand?

♠ 2
♥ A 7 6
♦ K 7 5 3 2
♣ 7 5 4 2

This time, you might only have a 7-card fit. Is it really a good idea to respond 2♥? Well, yes – for a few reasons:

- ❖ If you have a 5-3 fit, you get to find it soon and it takes bidding space away from those pesky opponents!
- ❖ Given that your partner has not opened 1NT, they cannot have a 12-14 balanced hand. Therefore, they are either unbalanced (usually with a 5+ card heart suit) or have 15+ HCP; this makes your 3-card raise much safer. If partner is still interested in game with more points but only four hearts they can rebid no trumps next.
- ❖ On this hand, you have a singleton in the hand with the shorter trump holding. You are likely to be able to *ruff in the short hand* to produce extra tricks.

Similarly, let's say you hold this hand:

♠ 3 2
♥ A 7 6
♦ K 7 5 2
♣ 7 5 4 2

Ruffs in the short hand are still a possibility with your spade doubleton. It's not as good as a singleton, of course; but it does still mean there's an advantage to having a trump suit!

Raising partner with 3-card support and 4-3-3-3 shape is much less rewarding. Take this hand as an example:

♠ 4 3 2
♥ A 7 6
♦ K 7 5 2
♣ 7 5 2

Your hand is not going to produce any ruffs; if partner has 15-16 balanced, the hands are likely to play better in 1NT than in 2♥. Having said that, the most important thing (as always!) is that you and your partner know what to expect from each other's bids; I recommend discussing this and deciding whether raising on hands like this is allowed. Of course if the opposition intervene then you should stretch to bid, and 2♥ would be a good idea.

Finally, beware when you have a hand such as this:

Yes, you will often be able to ruff diamonds in the short hand; but you have four spades! It would be preferable to play in a 4-4 spade fit rather than a 4-3 or even a 5-3 heart fit, so you should show your spades.

♠ K 7 5 2
♥ A 7 6
♦ 3 2
♣ 7 5 4 2

Quiz 2: Should you raise to 2♥ or bid something else when your partner opens 1♥?

Hand 4	Hand 5	Hand 6
♠ A 2 ♥ Q J 2 ♦ 10 8 6 4 ♣ 8 7 4 3	♠ A 8 4 2 ♥ Q J 2 ♦ 10 4 ♣ 8 7 4 3	♠ A 8 2 ♥ Q J 4 2 ♦ 10 4 3 ♣ 8 7 4

Hand 4. 2♥. Preferable to 1NT for its pre-emptive value, ease of finding a 5-3 fit and potential for ruffing a spade in the short hand.

Hand 5. 1♠. Since you don't have a definite heart fit, see whether your partner can show support for the other major.

Hand 6. 2♥. Yes, you are 3-4-3-3; but you have a definite 8-card heart fit.

BIDDING YOUR OWN SUIT OR SUPPORTING PARTNER'S MINOR

This often causes confusion. You should not be supporting a minor unless you have already ruled out a major fit. For example, with the following hand, after your partner has opened 1♣:

♠ 4 2
♥ Q 9 4 3
♦ J 10 5
♣ A 7 6 3

Yes, you have club support but there are two reasons to show your hearts instead. First, if you have a fit in both hearts and clubs, you want to be playing in hearts because it is a major; and second, even if you don't have a heart fit, you would still prefer to play in no trumps rather than a minor most of the time.

Another common mistake is to support a minor with only three cards, confusing those hands with the ones we discussed in the previous section. Consider this hand after a 1♣ opening:

♠ 4 3 2
♥ Q 9 4
♦ J 10 5 3
♣ A 7 6

There is no point in attempting to play in 2♣ on this hand in what might be a 4-3 fit. If partner has only four clubs, a no trump contract will be superior. Bid a new suit if you can at the one-level – in this case, diamonds.

♠ 4 2
♥ Q 9 4
♦ J 10 5 3
♣ A 7 6 2

Finally, look at this hand. Again, partner opens 1♣. You can choose between 1♦ and 2♣; you have no 4-card major to bid, so that requirement does not

Continued overleaf

apply. Overall, my preference is to make the more pre-emptive 2♣ bid: with good partnership understanding, you can still have a nice auction even when partner is strong; plus, making life difficult for the opposition is a huge advantage of playing Acol.

Quiz 3: Should you raise to 2♣ or bid something else when partner opens 1♠?

Hand 7	Hand 8	Hand 9
♠ 9 4	♠ J 4	♠ 9 4
♥ Q 8 7 5	♥ 9 8 7 5	♥ Q 8 5
♦ 10 6	♦ 10 6 5	♦ 10 6 5
♣ A J 7 5 3	♣ A Q 10 9	♣ A J 7 5 3

Hand 7. Bid 1♥. It is better to look for an 8-card heart fit than to commit to a 9-card club fit. A *major* fit is the holy grail in bridge.

Hand 8. Bid 1♥. Suit quality is not a requirement here; you are simply promising 4+ hearts and at least a weak hand.

Hand 9. Bid 2♣. You are balanced but there is a real chance that playing in clubs might be better than no trumps, as you have a 9-card fit and a doubleton in spades.

THE DUSTBIN NT

So-named due to the eclectic mix of hands that choose to bid 1NT. There are lots of misconceptions surrounding this bid because of the way it is described: such as *6-9 points, any old rubbish*. This is true but it does not pinpoint the real meaning of the bid.

Responder's 1NT is simply a bid used for *hands that have no other option*; it is a last resort that denies the ability to make any of the higher-priority bids. That means that it is not so much about what the bid *shows* but what it *denies*. It provides negative inferences – it tells opener what you do not have. It is the only 1NT bid that does not promise a balanced hand.

It shows 6-9 HCP because you have enough to reply, but not enough to bid a new suit at the 2-level – but the number of points you have is not the sole reason for making the bid. Shape-wise, what you are telling your partner will vary depending on which suit was opened.

Let's look at this in detail:

1♠ - 1NT

1NT says 'I do not have support for your spades and I only have a weak hand, so I was not strong enough to bid my longest suit at the 2-level'.

1♥ - 1NT

1NT says 'I do not have support for your hearts; I do not have four spades; and I only have a weak hand, so I was not strong enough to bid my longest suit at the 2-level'.

1♦ - 1NT

1NT says 'I do not have four hearts or spades; I do not have support for your diamonds; and I only have a weak hand, so I was not strong enough to bid my longest suit at the 2-level (which must be clubs)'.

1♣ - 1NT

In theory 1NT says 'I do not have four diamonds, hearts or spades; I do not have support for your clubs; and I only have a weak hand'. In practice I ask my partner if they have just 12 cards – with 13 cards they must have four of one suit, and with 6-9 points they can bid 1♦, 1♥, 1♠ or 2♣ so there is never a need to settle for 1NT. There are alternative system tweaks for a 1NT response to a 1♣ opening, but you need to agree these before using them.

Quiz 4: Should the hand given respond 1NT to partner's opening 1♦?

Hand 10	Hand 11	Hand 12
♠ 5 4 3 2	♠ K 7 2	♠ 8 4 3
♥ K Q 6	♥ 5	♥ A 8 6
♦ 6 4	♦ Q 5 3	♦ 10 7 5
♣ J 10 9 5	♣ Q 8 7 6 3 2	♣ Q J 8 2

Hand 10. No. The 1NT bid denies a 4-card major but you have four spades; you should therefore bid 1♠ instead of 1NT.

Hand 11. Yes. It does not matter that you are unbalanced – you are not good enough to change suit at the two level.

Hand 12. Yes. Again, your suit is clubs, which you cannot bid at the 1-level; the fact that you happen to be balanced is irrelevant, although this hand looks very different from Hand 11 which also responded 1NT. □

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Setting up a side suit ~ 2

This article continues an earlier theme about setting up dummy's side suit in a trump contract. As well as realising that you, as declarer, need to make use of a long suit in dummy, you have to appreciate the need for entries to access it.

Let's look at a relatively simple example. How would you play in 4♥ on this model after West has cashed two top diamonds and switched to the ♠10?

club winners on table, so you can draw trumps, ending in dummy, and cash two winners, dumping your spade losers, actually making an overtrick.

If, as is more likely, the side suit breaks 4-2 you should cross to the ♥10 and ruff another club in hand with a high trump, leaving the last club as a winner. Once again, you can draw trumps ending in dummy and cash the last club, ditching one spade loser. This time you record just ten tricks (one spade, six hearts and *three* clubs). Here's the full deal:

Hand 1
South plays in 4♥.
West leads the ♦A.

♠	J 6 3
♥	Q 10 4
♦	10 8
♣	A K 7 6 4

♠	A 4 2
♥	A K J 9 7 6
♦	Q J
♣	J 3

Your **Count and Plan** reveals four losers (two spades and two diamonds) and nine winners (six hearts, one spade and two clubs). Well, at least the arithmetic balances as winners and losers total thirteen – it doesn't always work out that way.

You have to get rid of a loser and the only way of doing so is to either *trump it* or *dump it*. You cannot trump a losing spade on table, so you'll have to dump it on a winner, somehow. The only way you can generate extra winners is to set up a long club and – all important – gain access to it. Drawing trumps is a no-no (it usually is when you count insufficient winners at the outset).

Those hearts in dummy are your entries; your **Plan** is to set up a club winner or two. So take the ♠A at trick three and play off the top clubs and ruff a club (with a high trump; *don't send a boy on a man's errand*) in hand. If they split 3-3 you have two

South plays 4♥. West leads the ♦A

♠	J 6 3
♥	Q 10 4
♦	10 8
♣	A K 7 6 4

♠	10 9 8 5
♥	8 5 2
♦	A K 9 4
♣	Q 8

♠	A 4 2
♥	A K J 9 7 6
♦	Q J
♣	J 3

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Suppose we tweak this deal a little. How would you play 4♥ now? Once again, West cashes two top diamonds and switches to the ♠10.

Hand 2
South plays in 4♥.
West leads the ♦A.

♠	J 6 3
♥	Q 6 4
♦	10 8
♣	A K 7 6 4

♠	A 4 2
♥	A K J 10 9 7
♦	Q J
♣	J 3

The difference is that you no longer have two trump entries in dummy. Does that matter? Yes, it's crucial!

If you work it out, you should see that you can no longer make the hand if clubs are 4-2. You'd take the ♠A, play the ♣AK and ruff a club, cross to the ♥Q and ruff another club. Now the last club would be a master, but you'd have no means of gaining entry to dummy.

You must resort to prayer here and have to hope clubs are 3-3. Winning the spade switch you can play off a couple of top trumps in hand if you wish but then you must play off the two top clubs and ruff a club (high) in hand. If your prayers have been answered there will be two boss clubs on table and the ♥Q to access them.

Strangely, you will either make eleven tricks on this one or nine, depending on whether clubs split evenly or not. Here's the full deal: ☐

South plays 4♥. West leads the ♦A

♠ J 6 3
♥ Q 6 4
♦ 10 8
♣ A K 7 6 4

♠ 10 9 8
♥ 8 5 2
♦ A K 9 4
♣ Q 8 2

♠ K Q 7 5
♥ 3
♦ 7 6 5 3 2
♣ 10 9 5

♠ A 4 2
♥ A K J 10 9 7
♦ Q J
♣ J 3

Online readers can click here

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

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Responding with Balanced Hands Part 2

We have started looking at what you should respond when partner opens the bidding and you are balanced with no particularly long suit.

We saw that a 1NT response is often used as a *dustbin* bid when responding to 1♥ or 1♠, but facing a 1♦ response it is mostly a natural bid (occasionally shapely with a long club suit) and facing a 1♣ opening it is entirely natural.

A 2NT response to 1♣ or 1♦ is natural, showing invitational values (a good ten to a poor 12), but you should only make the call when you hold tenaces and have no 4-card major.

So, is it just a useful point count device?

The short answer is no. One of the problems with leaping about in no trumps is that you make it difficult to find fits, and end up in the wrong part score. You'll notice I don't say 'end up in the wrong game'. That is because if it is a game hand then you can normally bid on and explore whether you belong in no trumps or one of partner's suits. The trouble occurs when partner has a weakish opener and passes a 2NT response. You will frequently be in the wrong strain.

♠ K J 7
♥ Q 10 4
♦ A J 2
♣ 10 8 7 6

Imagine partner opens 1♥ and you hold this hand. Although it contains the right strength and honour structure for a 2NT response, you may set partner a

difficult trap.

Imagine partner has a shapely hand of 11 or 12 points and a singleton and a five-card heart suit. You will definitely want to play in hearts and the only question is whether the hands fit together well and you should play in game, or whether they fit together badly and you should stop in a part score. Sadly you have already reached the 2NT level and you haven't even established whether or not you have an 8-card fit!

♠ Q 5 4
♥ K J 9 5 2
♦ K Q 9 2
♣ J

If partner has something like this they will have to pass 2NT (as a bid of 3♦ would be forward going) and you find yourself going down in 2NT with a comfortable part score (or even a game) available in hearts.

In fact 2NT is such a cumbersome response that I would suggest not using the bid as a natural bid at all. Almost all tournament players now use the call to agree partner's major in some fashion, and as far as I know no one has a word of criticism to say about it.

So, what do you respond then on these no trumpy hands? The answer is very simple, you respond 2♣ or 2♦ and await developments. Remember a change of suit is forcing but it doesn't guarantee a long suit, or even a good one.

Imagine your partner opens 1♥ and you hold these hands:

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3
♠ K J 7	♠ 4 3	♠ A Q 8
♥ Q 10 4	♥ Q 9 3	♥ K 6 5
♦ A J 2	♦ A Q J 2	♦ 9 6 4 3
♣ 10 8 5 3	♣ J 8 5 4	♣ K J 7

On each of these hands the correct response is to bid your longest suit, 2♣ on the first two and 2♦ with Hand 3.

There is no risk attached to these bids. Partner will make their natural rebid – a new suit, or no trumps if they are balanced, or rebid their long suit if they are shapely. In each case we are likely to end up in the (probable) 8-card major suit fit, but we keep all options on the table.

Many people's response to being told to bid a poor minor suit at the two level facing an opening bid is to point out how weak the suit is and how it

will mislead partner, but remember a response is **not** an overcall. It does not show a long suit, nor does it promise any particular strength. It is forcing and enables you to set up a dialogue with your partner to find the right strain and level.

What about a response of 3NT to an opening bid? Am I going to tell you that this is also derelict and old fashioned?

Actually a 3NT response to an opening bid has a lot to recommend it, providing you make it specific enough that there is no room for misunderstanding.

Facing a 1♣ or 1♦ opening bid a 3NT response would suggest 13-15 points (maybe a really good 12 if you're playing teams bridge, where the game bonus is invaluable) and denies a 4-card major suit. (If you want to suppress a 4-card major suit then you do so at your own risk – be sure to have your excuse ready for when partner gets a hold of the hand records and starts interrogating you).

The hand will sometimes have 4-card support, but typically in a 4:3:3:3 shape with soft values, so that a slam is unlikely.

Facing a 1♥ or 1♠ response you should guarantee exactly 3-card support, so that partner can remove it to their 5 card suit if they are shapely, and likewise you will have stoppers and soft values.

Once more let's imagine partner opens 1♦ and you hold the hands below:

Hand 4	Hand 5	Hand 6
♠ K J 7	♠ K Q 3	♠ Q 9 8
♥ Q J 4	♥ Q 9 3	♥ Q J 5
♦ Q 9 3 2	♦ Q J 2	♦ A K 3
♣ A Q 3	♣ K J 5 4	♣ J 7 6 5

Hand 7	Hand 8
♠ A Q	♠ A 2
♥ K J 7	♥ A 8 7
♦ 9 8 4 3	♦ Q 10 8 7 3
♣ Q J 7 6	♣ A 5 4

3NT is a reasonable call on the Hands 4-7, and a ridiculous one of Hand 8. On the first four a slam is very unlikely and you have sufficient soft stoppers in the unbid suits to make 3NT a descriptive and helpful call – it is probably the correct final contract.



On the 8th hand you are very likely to belong in diamonds, not only because you might make a slam but if partner has any singleton then you will be better in 5♦ if there is another trick to lose. Say partner opened 1♦ with something like this hand:

♠	K Q 5 4
♥	8
♦	K J 6 4 2
♣	Q 7 2

The right thing to do (lacking any conventional methods such as inverted raises or the like) is to bid 2♣ and see what partner says, then raise the diamond in a forcing fashion at your next go.

The Dos and Don'ts of responding with balanced hands

Do respond with a natural 2NT bid to a minor suit, denying a major suit and showing invitational values with stoppers and tenaces.

Do feel free to respond a natural 3NT to a minor suit opening bid, but only when your hand is of a very specific type, 13-15 balanced with soft values, no 4-card major and stoppers in every suit.

Don't be afraid to bid a poor minor suit in response to a major suit opener. You are not overcalling and don't need a long suit nor even a good one.

Don't use a natural 2NT response to a major suit, – it achieves very little other than pre-empting your own side out of your best part-score. ☐

TRY MICHAEL'S QUIZ, ONLINE PAGE 67



The Matron's Risky Raise

The Headmaster looked on disapprovingly as John Hutson took his seat. There was nothing specific he could criticise in the youngster's appearance; his school tie was passably done up, and some attempt had been made to brush his hair. Somehow, though, he always managed to look so untidy.

'Are you and Mrs Doulton having a good session, Sir?' Hutson enquired.

'Tuck your shirt in properly, can't you?' replied the Headmaster.

Seeing little wrong in this regard, Hutson made a token adjustment. The players then sorted their cards for this deal:

E/W Game. Dealer South.

♠ 6	♠ K 10 2	♠ A 9 7
♥ A Q J 10 6 3	♥ K 8 4 2	♥ 5
♦ 10 8 6	♦ A K 2	♦ Q J 9 3
♣ J 5 4	♣ A K 10	♣ Q 9 7 6 2

Diagram: A diamond-shaped card layout with 'N' at the top, 'S' at the bottom, 'W' on the left, and 'E' on the right.

♠ Q J 8 5 4 3
♥ 9 7
♦ 7 5 4
♣ 8 3

West	North	East	South
The Headmaster	Neil Phillips	Norma Doulton	John Hutson
Pass	3NT	Pass	2♣
All Pass			4♣

Expecting the ♥K to be on his left, the Headmaster led the ♥A. When this drew the 5 and 7, he continued with the ♥Q. Dummy moved his fingers

towards dummy's king. 'No, no, play low,' his partner said. East showed out on this trick, discarding a club.

When West played the ♥J next, declarer ducked again in the dummy and ruffed in his hand. After a trump to the king and ace, he won the ♦Q return and drew the remaining trumps. He discarded his diamond loser on the preserved ♥K, and the contract was made.

The Headmaster glared at John Hutson. 'You didn't have very much,' he observed, reaching for the South curtain card. 'Good grief! You opened on three points?'

Hutson met the Headmaster's eyes. 'We add a couple of points for a 6-card suit,' he replied.

'That's right,' Neil Phillips agreed. 'A sixth trump is worth a whole extra trick.'

'I've rarely heard such nonsense,' declared the Headmaster. 'Norma and I wouldn't dream of opening on such rubbish. You won't always be rescued by 20 points in the dummy.'

'The boy played it rather well, Alfred,' said Norma Doulton. 'If he passes instead and you open with a weak 2♥, he would be alerted that hearts were 6-1. It would be more obvious to duck when you play the ♥Q.'

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Later in the session, the Matron and Stefan Götel faced Bertie Bellis and Percy Cutforth. The Matron sorted her cards resignedly. It would be so wonderful if, just for once, they could find their way to a good board against this pair. They were good players, everyone knew that, but they were also extremely lucky. This was the deal:

Game All. Dealer South.

♠ K 7 2

♥ 9 8 6

♦ Q 9 5 3

♣ 9 5 2

♠ 10 9 5

♥ K Q J 4 3

♦ A 10 7

♣ A 7

♠ J 6

♥ A 10 7 5 2

♦ J 8 4

♣ 8 6 3

♠ A Q 8 4 3

♥ –

♦ K 6 2

♣ K Q J 10 4

N

E

W

S

West	North	East	South
Bertie Bellis	The Matron	Percy Cutforth	Stefan Götel
2♥	2♠	4♥	1♠
All Pass			4♠

The senior maths master led the ♥K, and the Matron appeared reluctant to display her cards. ‘I know I should have nine losers for my raise,’ she said, ‘but I actually have eleven – if you add one for no aces.’

Götel beckoned encouragingly for the dummy to be revealed. ‘Excellent raise, Matron!’ he exclaimed. ‘Well done.’

The German master ruffed the first trick and played the ace and king of trumps, happy to see a 3-2 break. What now? Since he needed to establish a diamond trick as well as four clubs, he could not afford to draw the last trump at this stage. Suppose he did, turning to the club suit; the defenders would win with the ♣A and force his last trump with another heart. After the club winners were run, they would take the ♦A on the first round and cash a heart trick for one down.

With a confident nod of the head, Götel led a club to the king. Bertie Bellis won and returned a heart, reducing declarer to just one trump. Still unable to

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draw the defenders’ last trump, he next played the queen and jack of clubs.

When Bertie Bellis ruffed the third club, the Matron’s jaw dropped. Had Stefan not realised there was still a trump out? If he went down as a result, he would probably blame it all on her raise to 2♠.

Götel ruffed the heart return with his last trump in hand and cashed two club tricks. Thanks to the protection offered by the ♠7 in dummy, he was then able to establish and enjoy a tenth trick in diamonds. The game was made.

The Matron reached for the scoresheet with no great enthusiasm. Ten tricks wouldn’t be much use to them. Those declarers who had remembered to draw the last trump would have made an overtrick. ‘Good gracious! I can hardly believe it,’ she exclaimed. ‘Only two other declarers have made it. The rest all went down.’

‘It doesn’t surprise me,’ observed Bertie Bellis. ‘Stefan played it very well.’

The Matron was not listening. ‘I’m surprised that everyone bid it,’ she continued. ‘Not many Norths would find a raise on my hand!’



Declarer's Communication Part 2

The previous article looked at ways to disrupt declarer's communication. We did this by ducking our winners, attacking declarer's entries, and we even had a very difficult hand where we had to lead the king from Kxxx – just to take out an entry before declarer unblocked a suit.

This article may also lean towards the spectacular, but for the moment, let us return to the technique of ducking and how it can be used to scupper declarer's communication. When we ducked before, we did so when we had the ace, holding onto it to it for as long as necessary.

Ducking without the ace is not so obvious. But it is just as profitable.

Hand 1

♠ 10 3
♥ 8 6
♦ A Q J 8 4 2
♣ 10 3 2

♠ Q 8 7 (2)
♥ Q J 5
♦ 9 5
♣ J 9 6 4

♠ K J 9 4
♥ 10 9 4 2
♦ K 10 6
♣ 8 7

♠ A 6 5
♥ A K 7 3
♦ 7 3
♣ A K Q 5

Online readers can click here

South	West	North	East
3NT	All Pass	2♦ ¹	Pass
¹ Weak 2♦ (6+ diamonds & 5-10 points)			

In Hand 1, partner kicks things off with the ♠2 (2nd and 4th) and declarer takes with the ace. Next comes a diamond to the queen and, at trick two, East is already faced with the key decision.

If East held the ♦A, it would be easy to duck when dummy held KQJ – almost routine. And the play is virtually the same when holding Kxx over AQJ.

The moment East lets go of the ♦K, he sets up the entire suit. And East should not do that while declarer still has access to the diamond suit.

On the diamonds, partner followed with the ♦9, showing even count, so we can safely place declarer with a doubleton, rather than a singleton. There is no need to worry about cashing spades because partner led the ♠2 (promising four,) so we know there are only three spades to cash (not enough to beat the contract).

The correct play is for East to duck the first round in diamonds to sever communication, and if it is done in good tempo, declarer is likely to come back to hand to repeat the finesse. This gives this play a small deceptive element and it would also be right to duck if East had only the ♦Kx. This would of course leave East's ♦K bare, ready to fall under the ace, but most declarer's won't expect you to duck and will simply repeat the finesse.

This deceptive element can often be the difference between success and failure. Consider Hand 2:

Hand 2

♠ A 4 3
♥ 8 5 4 2
♦ Q J
♣ 9 8 6 2

♠ (Q) J 10 9 8
♥ 10 9 6
♦ K 7 4
♣ 7 4

♠ 7 5 2
♥ K J 3
♦ 5 3 2
♣ K Q 10 5

♠ K 6
♥ A Q 7
♦ A 10 9 8 6
♣ A J 3

Online readers can click here

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

We predictably begin the defence with the ♠Q, and declarer plays the ace from dummy. Declarer then calls for the ♦Q and at trick two we find ourselves with a familiar diamond holding.

Obviously, I'm going to tell you that the correct play is to duck. But why? Declarer has many entries to the South hand and will face no problems reaching his diamond winners. But it isn't entries to the South hand that we should be worried about.

Consider what happens if we take the ♦K straight away. Declarer will win our spade return and count his top tricks. Only eight. To rectify this, he will play a diamond to dummy's jack and take a heart finesse, beaming with glee when it succeeds. Nine tricks and contract made.

Now consider what will happen if we duck the ♦K (in tempo). Declarer, flushed with his success, will probably take the finesse again. And his glee will turn to ash in his mouth when you emerge with the ♦K and knock out the ♠K.

Once again, declarer will be left with only eight top tricks, and with no ♦J in the dummy, there will be no way to take the heart finesse.

Ducking the ♦K may seem like a play with a lot of forethought that requires us to know that declarer has a finesse in a different suit to take. But really, it's just sound principles. On this deal, there is no reason for us to take the ♦K on the first round. You

will always score the king eventually, and by ducking you limit declarer's entries and his options.

And again, it could even be right to duck when you hold Kx. But luckily for you, I'm not mean enough to give you Kx when you need to duck.

Let's look at Hand 3 where you pick up another Kxx and see what we can do with it.

This time partner begins with the ♦Q, beaten by declarer's ace. And unsurprisingly, declarer's next action is to take a finesse by running the ♥8.

And once again at trick two, East has a decision to make. Of course, he could take his ♥K like a normal person, but how is that likely to turn out?

We know that declarer has a doubleton heart because they chose to play in 3NT rather than 4♥, and we know that partner has the ♥Q because declarer should start with the queen from ♥Qx (in order to unblock the suit).

If you take the king and return a diamond, declarer will win and take another heart finesse. A finesse that we know is working. The suit in dummy may not be as good as AQJxx, but it will score just as many tricks if you give up the ♥K too early.

Once again, the right play is to duck.

Unfortunately, this clever duck has less reward than it deserves. Missing the ♥Q declarer is unable to take a second finesse, and he is forced to take his remaining tricks in the other suits. Four clubs, two diamonds, one spade, and two hearts is nine. 3NT just made.

That's disappointing. Still, ducking was definitely correct. Had you taken the king, declarer could take another finesse and score four heart tricks, rather than just two. If only there was some better way to ruin declarer's communication.

As it happened, trick two was once again the decisive moment of the hand. But not for East.

It was the decisive moment for West.

Have you considered what would happen if West casually played the ♥Q when declarer led up to dummy's ♥AJ1094. What could declarer do then?

Well, declarer can't exactly take the ace – that would leave him without an entry to the heart suit. And declarer can't duck, because East still has the ♥K, making a second-round finesse unlikely to end well.

But how does West know to play the queen?

Cont/ . . . p19

Hand 3

♠ 9 4 2
♥ A J 10 9 4
♦ 9 4
♣ 8 4 3

Online readers can click here

♠ K J 10
♥ Q 6 3
♦ Q J 10 5 3
♣ 10 9

♠ Q 5 3
♥ K 7 5
♦ 8 7 6
♣ 7 6 5 2

♠ A 8 7 6
♥ 8 2
♦ A K 2
♣ A K Q J

South	West	North	East
2NT	Pass	3♦ ¹	Pass
3♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass
2NT=20-22, ¹ 3♦ = hearts			

Heffalump Traps

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

Hand 1

♠ A 9 5 2
♥ A 8 4 3
♦ 10 2
♣ K 5 4



♠ J 8 4
♥ J 6
♦ A J 3
♣ A Q 10 9 3

You are in 3NT West leads the ♦6. Plan your play.

Hand 2

♠ A Q 5 2
♥ K 9 3
♦ J 5
♣ A 8 5 2



♠ K J 9 6 4
♥ Q 7 4
♦ A Q 10
♣ 7 4

You are in 4♣ after East opened 1♥. West leads the ♥10. Plan your play.

Hand 3

♠ 7 5 3
♥ A J 7 2
♦ A 8 3
♣ K 10 3



♠ A 10 6
♥ K Q 8 4 3
♦ K 6
♣ Q 9 4

You are in 4♥. West leads the ♦Q and hearts do not split 4-0. Plan your play.

Hand 4

♠ K J 3
♥ A 4
♦ Q 10 9 8 5 4
♣ A 6



♠ A Q 8
♥ Q 9 8 3
♦ J 2
♣ Q 9 5 3

You are in 3NT after West opens 1♥. West leads the ♥J. Plan your play.

CLUB PLAYER'S 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

♠ A Q 9 5 3
♥ 9
♦ A Q 3
♣ K J 6 2

W	N	E	S
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
?			

Hand 2

♠ 7 6 5
♥ 9 7
♦ Q J 7 4
♣ A 10 8 2

W	N	E	S
?		1♦	Dble

Hand 3

♠ A K 8 6 3
♥ K 8 6
♦ Q 7 4
♣ 7 3

W	N	E	S
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

Hand 4

♠ K J 7
♥ A 10 8
♦ K 2
♣ Q 8 6 5 2

W	N	E	S
?	1♠	Pass	2♥

Hand 5

♠ Q 8 5 2
♥ 7 3
♦ 10 4
♣ A J 8 6 4

W	N	E	S
?		1♠	3♦

Hand 6

♠ A 9 4
♥ K 10 6
♦ A K Q J 6 5
♣ J

W	N	E	S
?			3♥

David Bakhshi gives the answers on page 36

Julian Pottage gives his answers on page 62



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Crocs on Defence

Cont from p17

Shouldn't such a play be restricted to experts or superheroes? Surely, I'm not suggesting that we randomly start rising with honours. I even wrote an article on second hand low.

Unfortunately, bridge is a very difficult game (partly what makes it so brilliant) but the answer can often be found in well-reasoned analysis.

West also knows that declarer must have started with a low doubleton, and he should be able to appreciate that declarer lacks entries to dummy. Rising with the ♥Q is similar to when we switched to the king from Kxxx in that earlier article. It forces declarer to take the ace straight away when he would prefer to duck. It just takes a lot of forethought to realise that *now* is such a time.

And if you're up to such well-reasoned analysis, you can look a superhero as well. □



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New Prize Leads Quiz

by Alan Mould

Remember that with the new format, if you think it matters you need to specify which card of a suit you are leading.

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.

COMPUTER LEADS

Alan Mould has teamed up with Nathan Piper to get computer-generated simulations to provide best lead scenarios. Details on methodology can be seen by [clicking here](#).



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by 15 October 2023.

Please make sure you include your full postal address AND rank even if entering by e-mail

ANSWERS TO MAY'S QUIZ: page 44

TWO answers - Teams & Pairs

Hand 1

♠ J 10 9 4 2
♥ 8 4 2
♦ 10
♣ K 10 9 2

South	West	North	East
		1NT ¹	Pass
3♦ ²	Pass	4NT ³	Pass
5♠ ⁴	Pass	6♦	All Pass

¹15-17. ²Natural slam try. ³RKCB. ⁴2KC+♦Q.

What is your lead playing teams and, playing pairs?

* * * * *

Hand 2

♠ K 5
♥ Q 10 9 7 5 3 2
♦ 4 2
♣ A 5

South	West	North	East
		1♦	Pass
2♣	3♥	4♥ ¹	5♥
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
6♣ ²	All Pass		

¹short hearts, agreeing clubs, ²Passing then pulling the double was a grand slam try

What is your lead playing teams and, playing pairs?

* * * * *

Hand 3

♠ A 7 3
♥ 7 6 5 3
♦ J 6
♣ K J 10 3

South	West	North	East
		1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

What is your lead playing teams and, playing pairs?



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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.

SEPTEMBER 2023 WEST HANDS

(IMP scoring on every deal)

1. Game All ♠ Q J 10 9 7
Dealer West ♥ J 7
 ♦ A Q 4
(Klukowski) ♣ J 5 2
* North bids 4♥

2. E/W Game ♠ K Q 8 7 6 5
Dealer North ♥ A 9
 ♦ 8
(Moss) ♣ Q 7 4 3
* North opens 5♦

3. Game All ♠ J 6 3
Dealer East ♥ K Q J 10 9 8 3
 ♦ A 2
(Juster) ♣ 7
* South bids 1♠, North 4♠

4. E/W Game ♠ K Q
Dealer West ♥ A K J 7
 ♦ A K
(Percario) ♣ Q 9 8 5 4

5. Game All ♠ 8 3 2
Dealer North ♥ K 8 7 4
 ♦ A 9 7
(Duboin) ♣ A 7 4
* South bids 1♠

6. N/S Game ♠ A 9 8 6 4 2
Dealer East ♥ K 8 5 4 2
 ♦ –
(Zia) ♣ K 4

Did you beat the experts? – page 46

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.

SEPTEMBER 2023 EAST HANDS

(IMP scoring on every deal)

1. Game All ♠ A K 8 3
Dealer West ♥ –
 ♦ J 10 9 7
(Gawrys) ♣ A Q 9 8 4
* North bids 4♥

2. E/W Game ♠ A 10 9
Dealer North ♥ K 6 2
 ♦ K 5 2
(Grue) ♣ A J 9 6
* North opens 5♦

3. Game All ♠ –
Dealer East ♥ A 7 6 2
 ♦ K J 10 8
(Morgan) ♣ K J 10 9 8
* South bids 1♠, North 4♠

4. E/W Game ♠ A 9
Dealer West ♥ Q 9 8 4
 ♦ Q 10 9 5
(Donati) ♣ K 7 6

5. Game All ♠ A 5
Dealer North ♥ Q
 ♦ K Q J 5 2
(Cima) ♣ K J 10 8 6
* South bids 1♠

6. N/S Game ♠ K 7
Dealer East ♥ 7 6
 ♦ A K 6 2
(Gold) ♣ A Q 10 8 6

Did you beat the experts? – page 46



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Bridge with a Twist

by Simon Cochemé



Simon plays bridge

I am sometimes asked why I don't write about my exploits at the table. There is a good reason for it, and it isn't modesty. Let me give you a couple of deals in which I figure prominently. See if you can guess where I was seated (or, if you are under 30, 'where I was sat').

THE KHYBER PASS

You know those problems where a friend says: 'You open one spade and partner bids two diamonds. What do you bid now?' And you say 'But I wouldn't have opened one spade.' And the friend says 'Yes, but suppose you had.' Well, this is the most extreme example you are ever likely to come across. You hold the hand below and your partner opens 1♣ in fourth seat. What do you bid?

♠ K 9 4
♥ K Q J 8 5 2
♦ 9 7
♣ A K

We can skip over the 'But I wouldn't have passed' bit. Would you want to be in 7♥ on these two hands in a teams match?

E/W Game. Dealer North			
♠ A 8 5		♠ K 9 4	
♥ A 4		♥ K Q J 8 5 2	
♦ A Q 6		♦ 9 7	
♣ J 9 7 5 3		♣ A K	

It's close, but probably yes. If the queen of clubs falls in three, you have two winners to take care of your spade and diamond losers. If the queen of clubs comes down in four, you will need the diamond finesse.

But how to bid it? The board was played in a match between IBM and John Lewis in the London Business Houses League. It took place in rooms at the John Lewis Head Office. Their bridge team motto is 'Never knowingly underbid', but in this instance it was the IBMers in the East-West seats who held the cards.

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass ¹	Pass
1♣ ²	Pass	6♥ ³	Pass
7♥ ⁴	All Pass		

- As the hands were taken out of the board, West leaned back in his chair and his head hit the light switch, plunging the room into darkness. While West fumbled to turn the lights back on, East was composing an amusing comment along the lines of 'Partner, how come you can never find the right switch when we're defending?' When light was restored North placed a pass card on the table and a distracted East, concentrating on the delivery of his witticism, did likewise. A real Khyber Pass.
- It was about now, as West studied his hand, that East realised what had happened.
- East has very few forcing bids available and none of them make good sense. He decided to go for glory. After all, his partner wouldn't have a minimum for his fourth-in-hand opening.
- West now had to determine which, if either, of his partner's bids was to be trusted. Deciding that he would not be to blame for the catastrophe that might ensue if he went on with three aces, he bid one for the road.

Although the diamond finesse was wrong, the clubs broke 3-3. A friendly spade lead won 13 IMPs,

and the match, for the good guys. Well, if you can't be good, be lucky.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

The Young Chelsea Bridge Club celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2008 and held a *Play with an International* event, where the half of the YC membership who were internationals were raffled off to the half that weren't. This deal features World Champion Sally Brock and partner.

N/S Game. Dealer West

♠ 9 4	♠ 8	♠ K Q 10 5 3	
♥ J 10 4 3	♥ 8 6 2	♥ K Q 9 5	
♦ –	♦ Q 10 9 6 5 4 3	♦ 8	
♣ A K J 8 6 4 2	♣ Q 10	♣ 7 5 3	

♠ A J 7 6 2	♠ A J 7 6 2	♠ A J 7 6 2	
♥ A 7	♥ A 7	♥ A 7	
♦ A K J 7 2	♦ A K J 7 2	♦ A K J 7 2	
♣ 9	♣ 9	♣ 9	

West	North	East	South
4♣	Pass	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
Pass	5♦	Dble	All Pass

Brock opened 4♣ as West. It's maybe a little risky with four hearts on the side – caveat pre-emptor, as the Romans used to say – but the heart suit is poor.

North (the International) decided to run from 4♠ doubled and landed in a bed of roses. He had no trouble in making 11 tricks. East's first double was sound but foolish, the second double was pig-headed and very foolish.

Andrew Robson was also playing in the event. He wrote this deal up in *The Times*, reporting on what happened at a number of tables. 'South's undisclosed trump support,' he wrote of this auction, 'must be something of a record.' No names were mentioned.

East wished that he had been at the table where the auction started the same way, but North passed 4♠ doubled and E/W chalked up +1100.

And I, as I am sure you have guessed, was East at both tables. □

CROCKFORDS CUP REVAMP

FOR ANYONE who's played in Crockfords before there's no need to extol its virtues. It is England's premier knock-out teams championship. It's a hybrid of individual matches with a F2F all-play-all final for both the main event and the plate, but this year sees an exciting major revamp to guarantee three matches in the main competition.

Rather than a knockout competition from round one there will be a series of Round Robin groups of four, excluding seeds, guaranteeing three matches. All of these can be played face-to-face or online. Already better value if that's as far as you go. The top two teams in each group progress to the knockout stages with seeds now included so a minimum 50% of the initial entry will have four matches. This makes it a competition attractive to club and county players with a guaranteed three matches at a reduced entry of £86 per team. More bridge at less cost!

If you reach the last 16 teams, the top eight teams play a Main Final, and the next 8 play in the Plate Final, both played face-to-face with an additional entry fee of £100 per team.

The Crockfords Cup attracts leading players but like many sporting events, Crockfords will now provide the opportunity for club and county players to challenge and compete against higher rated opponents with the ever-present possibility of an upset here and there . . .

The Crockford's Cup is the EBU's equivalent of football's FA Cup – a national knockout competition of high prestige and as with any knockout anything can happen over the season. With innovative ideas for the coming season, we hope to attract fresh blood into this exciting teams-of-four event. **Paul Bowyer**

I have been impressed how the recently restructured competitions have made entry much more attractive, keeping prices reasonable and catering well for online as well as face-to-face participation. It has given all bridge players a fair and competitive opportunity while attracting new players at all levels. **Jeff Smith**

Closing Date for entries for the 2023-24 season is 13th October 2023. There's plenty of time to get your team together. You can enter via the website (My EBU, then Utilities), via email to comps@ebu.co.uk or by phone to 01296 317203.



Clever play

E/W Game. Dealer North.

♠ K 10 8 6 5
 ♥ K 9 7
 ♦ 9 8
 ♣ Q 9 2

♠ Q 4
 ♥ Q J 10 8 4 2
 ♦ 10 7
 ♣ 6 5 4

W	N	E	S
All Pass	Pass	1♣	5♦

Playing teams North passes, East opens 1♣ and South overcalls 5♦. Since, as West, you are too weak to mention your heart suit at this high level, you pass and 5♦ becomes the final contract.

You lead the ♥Q to the seven, partner's six and declarer ruffs. Declarer plays the ♦A, which fells partner's king, and continues with the ♦Q, partner discarding the ♣3. Now declarer cashes the ♣A, followed by the king, and plays the ♠2. How do you defend? This is where you have got to:

♠ K 10 8 6 5
 ♥ K 9 7
 ♦ 9 8
 ♣ Q 9 2

♠ Q 4
 ♥ Q J 10 8 4 2
 ♦ 10 7
 ♣ 6 5 4

♠ 2
 ♥ -
 ♦ A Q 2
 ♣ A K

You now know declarer's shape to be 3-0-8-2. What cards do you need from partner in order to defeat this contract? You will need to be able to take three spade tricks, and also prevent declarer getting to dummy to cash the queen of clubs. You therefore have to assume that partner has all the necessary spade cards, AJ9. Let's try and work out what is going to happen

If you play low on this trick, your partner will cover the ten with the jack, or eight with the nine. How can partner now get off lead? Partner can't play a club or a spade, so their only exit card is the ace of hearts which declarer will ruff. Now declarer will lead a second spade. If your queen is covered with the king, there will be no problem since partner has two tricks, but suppose declarer doesn't cover the queen? You will be left on play and you will have to give a trick to dummy.

Now suppose you play the queen on the first round. What can declarer do? If they duck, you can play back either a spade or a heart to defeat the contract, and if they cover a spade, partner will again win and get off lead with the ace of hearts. Crucially, when declarer now plays a second spade, your queen is unblocked and partner can take the next two spade tricks. Therefore it is imperative to unblock the queen on the first round.

Continued overleaf

TOP TEN CLUBS 2022-23

Congratulations to Richmond Bridge Club for coming top in the list of most popular clubs by player sessions between April 2022 – March 2023. The top ten results are:


1. Richmond
2. Wimbledon
3. Cheltenham
4. Stamford
5. South Bucks
6. Tunbridge Wells
7. Oxford
8. Wallingford
9. Bury Athenaeum
10. Wetherby

A more extensive list can be found on the EBU website, <https://tinyurl.com/50topclubs>.

This was the full deal:

South plays 5♦. West leads the ♥Q

♠ K 10 8 6 5		
♥ K 9 7		
♦ 9 8		
♣ Q 9 2		
♠ Q 4		♠ A J 9
♥ Q J 10 8 4 2		♥ A 6 5 3
♦ 10 7		♦ K
♣ 6 5 4		♣ J 10 8 7 3



♠ 7 3 2
♥ –
♦ A Q J 6 5 4 3 2
♣ A K

HEATHER'S HINTS

❖ Sometimes, in order to beat a contract, you have to assume that partner holds all the right cards. Start by imagining those cards in your partner's hand and then work out how to beat the contract on that basis.

❖ There are times when you will need to work out what is about to happen on the next few tricks in order to work out a way to beat the contract.

This hand required a lot of imagination, firstly to place all the right cards in partner's hand, and then to work through the various scenarios to arrive at the correct defence. Often we spend ages devising our plan, only for partner to hold the wrong cards and the contract to be unbreakable, but when occasionally it works, it makes it all worthwhile! □

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The 2024 Gold Cup will run from October 2023 to the Finals in October 2024. The Silver Plate, also administered by BGB, is open to all first and second round Gold Cup losers, with the exception of Scottish teams who have their own Plate, and will commence in April 2024.

Entry fee: £92 per team

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- ❖ Approaches to coaching: supporting and overseeing the entire development of a player (as distinct from instructional teaching)

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Blackwood or Gerber?

Peter Dawes asks how it's best to show a slam invitational hand opposite a 2NT opener, holding a good 5-card major? The question was prompted by this hand:

♠ 8 6 5 3
♥ AK 10 9 6
♦ 5
♣ K Q 8

'Over Partner's 2NT (20-22) I transferred then punted a pick-a-slam 5NT bid. It worked OK, with 6♥ making. But, is a 4NT rebid best played as quantitative or Blackwood? If quantitative, then should you play 4♣ as Gerber with hearts as trumps?'

Bidding after a 2NT opener is often rather clumsy, because you have to start looking for a fit at the 3-level, sometimes at the same time as inviting a slam.

The usual way to play after a transfer is that all new suit bids are natural and forcing, and 4NT is invitational. Traditionally 5NT was also invitational, forcing to a slam but looking for 7♥ or 7NT although many people now play it as you do, as a choice of small slams. If you wanted to use the transfer followed by 4♣ as Gerber, it would make it very difficult to play in clubs.

On this hand, you have enough high cards to make at least a strong slam invitation, but it could be right to play in any of hearts, spades, clubs or NT.

As you are strong enough to go past 3NT, you could actually bid out all your suits in order of length:

2NT – 3♦ (transfer)
3♥ – 3♠ (natural)
3NT – 4♣ (natural)

This assumes that partner has no fit for hearts or spades; with a fit for a major she would not bid 3NT.

Let's look at what partner might hold:

1

♠ A Q
♥ Q J 5 2
♦ A K 8
♣ A 7 5 3

Here, 6♥ is great.

2

♠ A K J 4
♥ Q 3
♦ A Q 2
♣ A J 7 5

Now, 6♠ is best.

3

♠ A K 4
♥ Q 3
♦ A K 6
♣ A J 10 7 6

Ooh, 7♣ is huge.

4

♠ A K Q
♥ Q 3
♦ K Q J 10 9
♣ A 7 3

6NT is the spot.

5

♠ A Q J
♥ 7 3
♦ A K J 10 6
♣ A J 6

Game is high enough.

It's a bit awkward as 4♥/4♠ over 3♠ takes up a lot of room. If instead you had five spades and four hearts, this approach would not just be a bit awkward but very clumsy, so with both majors it is usually easier to start with Stayman. If partner bids a major you have found a fit, and bidding the other major would (conventionally) agree the suit while 4♣/4♦ is natural, holding the other major. Looking at Hand 1, it would start 2NT-3♣ (Stayman), 3♥ – 3♠ (agreeing hearts) while bidding with Hand 2 would go 2NT-3♣, 3♠-4♥ (agreeing spades).

If opener bids 3♦ over Stayman showing no major, you can bid your five-card major – this implies five of that suit (because partner has denied

four) and four of the other major (because you did not start with a transfer).

Hand 3 might start:

2NT – 3♣ (Stayman)

3♦ – 3♥ (five of them)

3NT – 4♣ (implying 4 spades, 5 hearts, 3 clubs)

4♦ (good hand for clubs)

Opener will now force to slam and you should reach the grand slam.

With Hand 4, opposite a slam try, opener has a maximum and knowing of the singleton diamond opposite might just bid 6NT. On the last hand, partner knows she has a poor hand opposite yours, and will sign off in 4NT over 4♣, the most discouraging bid.

With one (or two) additional suits to show in addition to your five card major, transferring and bidding a new suit works fine. But sometimes you only have one suit. With only five hearts, you aren't confident that you should play in hearts as partner may have only a doubleton, so you transfer to hearts then jump to 4NT (natural, invitational with five hearts) or 5NT (forcing with five hearts).

With six or more hearts, if you aren't playing anything special, you may have to invent something. To address this, there are two commonly played conventional solutions:

♣ 'two under' slam tries: In response to 2NT, 4♣ shows a slam try with 6+ hearts, 4♦ a slam try with 6+ spades, 4♥ a slam try with (5 or) 6+ clubs, and you can guess what 4♠ means. The 4♣ and 4♦ bids are often called *South African Texas* although I confess I don't know why. Opener can bid the intervening suit with a good hand for slam.

♣ *Texas transfers* (popular in America). 4♦ is a transfer to hearts, and 4♥ is a transfer to spades (this leaves 4♣ available as Gerber). With a mild slam try, you transfer to hearts at the three-level and raise 3♥ to 4♥. The immediate 4♦ bid is either a sign-off in 4♥, or a hand that is going to bid on above game.

There are many more conventional schemes for bidding opposite a 2NT opening, so you may well come across opponents or partners who suggest something else. None of them is perfect, but the more complex agreements deal better with considerations such as getting the strong hand to be declarer, or coping with more unusual distributions – but you will need a good memory as these auctions are uncommon and can be very artificial. □

CORONATION BRIDGE



Adding a touch of royal panache to the evening, Goring & Streatley Bridge Club raised a toast to His Majesty at their weekly club meeting in early May. At the end of the evening, prizes were given to the winners of the bridge game and also to the winner of the Coronation-themed fancy dress.



MORNING BRIDGE TAKES OFF

Whitley Bay & Tynemouth Bridge Club is a thriving venue offering bridge games in the mornings, afternoons and evenings, but it is the morning games that have increased in popularity. Various reasons for the decline in evening sessions have been put forward – a dislike of driving in the dark, too many boards, and serious players putting others off. All clubs suffer from some of those reasons and a general decline in numbers is widespread.

In the morning it is different. Time is too short to hold long sessions but long enough for a reduced session of 18 boards. Vice-Chair Phil Jackson says, 'We find that, with a 10.30 start, this takes us to no later than a 12.30 finish. The award of Master Points and grading is encouraging and allows Magazine Points to be accrued. Free coffee anytime also helps.' The club offers a host so single players are welcome.

Beginners gravitate to the morning sessions and eventually to the evening, after practice. However, there is a marked difference in the standard of play. Mornings are more popular and can become quite noisy while in the evening the atmosphere is more serious.

For those who have never visited, Montenegro is the southern-most region of the former Yugoslavia. It has a stunning coastline with mountains running down to the sea.

We stayed in the all-inclusive four star Carine Hotel Kumbor, four miles outside of Herceg Novi, where Tito had one of his holiday homes. The views over the sea and mountains were spectacular; the hotel staff, particularly those working on reception, were very helpful. The all-inclusive local wines, beer and soft drinks were available throughout the day until midnight. Almost all of us flew into Dubrovnik airport in Croatia, so there was a further border crossing (and much passport stamping) involved in the transfer to the hotel.

It was good to welcome back many players with a long association with the EBU Overseas Congresses; equally encouraging to welcome players with no experience of Congress Bridge, particularly two

younger players. As always, the atmosphere at the Congress was really friendly – a wonderful example of BB@B.

Play was in a well-lit conference room, which comfortably accommodated eighteen tables. For the afternoon sessions, tea, coffee, water and soft drinks were provided, supplemented in the evenings by wine and beer. The greatest demand was for water, and we were constantly asking for supplies to be refreshed. It wasn't easy to maintain a comfortable temperature in the playing room, as the hotel's air conditioning was switched off, so we were dependent on opening and closing an outside door to attempt to get conditions right: 'too hot' was the cry when the door was closed – 'too cold' or 'too draughty' when it was open. It was only in the final sessions of the Swiss Teams that we seemed to get things right.



The holiday included two trips which were well supported. The first half day trip was to Kotor, located on a beautiful bay on the coast of Montenegro. Kotor is a UNESCO World Heritage site; the old city was built between the 12th and 14th centuries and is filled with medieval architecture and historic monuments. Extending over four kilometres, the city walls lead up to the fortress of Saint Ivan; a challenge for even the fittest of us. After a guided walk around the old town, we had the opportunity to explore the city at leisure. It's not surprising that this is a regular destination for cruise ships – we were fortunate to be there when there were no large boats docked in the harbour.

The longer trip was to Budva where the narrow streets of the old walled town are now surrounded by massive tourist developments; the neighbouring island (it's really a tombolo) of Sveti Stefan is a fashionable tourist destination. Unfortunately, problems with the ferry meant that the journey time for the Budvar trip was rather longer than originally planned.

As well as the organised trips, some of the players used local taxis to visit Herceg Novi, monasteries, wineries and Our Lady of the Rocks.

There were sessions of bridge almost every afternoon and evening. The main events were the Swiss Pairs and the Swiss Teams, which began and ended the Congress. The Swiss Pairs and Multiple Pairs were won by John Holland & Raymond Semp; the Swiss Teams and Pivot Teams were won by Andrea Blaine, Joanne Waterman, Richard Spencer and Emile Lawy. Full results are on the EBU website at www.ebu.co.uk/results/1138.

SEEING RED

I was entertained by one auction in which both sides used only red bidding cards and in the process bid diamonds, hearts and double. It went something like this:

West	North	East	South
	1♦	2♦	Dble
2♥	3♥	Dble	4♦
Dble	All Pass (but these were green)		

The 2023 Autumn Overseas Congress is in Treviso/Venice from 15th – 22nd October. We look forward to seeing you there. □



Tunisia

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COMPETITION NEWS

YEAR END LONDON 2023

Early bird discount!

Don't forget to book early to take advantage of the special early bird offer for the full congress.

We are delighted to announce that the Year End Congress will remain in London. Join us between Christmas and New Year for four fabulous days of bridge. The event will take place from 27th – 30th December at the ILEC Conference Centre, London.

As usual there will be stratified Swiss Pairs and stratified Swiss Teams. There will also be Mixed/Open Pairs and Improver events. The venue is linked to the ibis hotel at Earls Court London.

Full details and prices are available online at ebu.co.uk/competitions/year-end. Please book via My EBU. Enquiries should be directed to comps@ebu.co.uk or call 01296 317203.

TUNISIA CONGRESS

The first Overseas Congress of 2024 will be taking place in Port El Kantaoui Sousse, Tunisia, 4th - 11th March 2024 and is sponsored by First For Bridge.

Join us for a fabulous week at the 5-Star Concorde Green Park Palace. A luxurious beachfront hotel, reviving the elegance of the Arab-Andalusian architecture and set in five hectares of luxuriant garden, Concorde Green Park Palace is perfectly located in Port El Kantaoui Sousse, opposite a 36-hole golf course, a few metres from the marina and near numerous tourist and cultural sites.

SENIORS CONGRESS

**EARLY
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Don't forget to take advantage of our early bird deal giving you money off the full congress at the Seniors Congress being held on RealBridge from 6th – 7th December 2023. Only available for bookings before 24th October.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Red – F2F Events

SEPTEMBER 2023

- 23-24 Crockfords Cup Final, Coventry
- 23-24 Surrey GP Swiss weekend, Redhill
- 23-24 Cumbria/Westmorland GP weekend, Kendal
- 24 Essex GP Swiss Pairs, Billericay
- 28-1 WBF World Bridge Tour, Open Pairs, Istanbul
- 30-1 Great Northern Swiss Pairs, Leeds

OCTOBER 2023

- 1 Metropolitan Cup (GP), RealBridge
- 6-8 West of England Congress, Weston-super-Mare
- 7-8 Gold Cup Finals, Young Chelsea BC
- 8 Suffolk Congress Open Pairs, Elmswell
- 9-12 Autumn SIM Pairs, various clubs, BBO & RealBridge
- 14-15 Premier League 2nd weekend, Young Chelsea BC, Coventry BC & East Midlands Bridge Academy
- 15-22 Overseas Congress, Venice
- 21 OODGP Swiss Teams, RealBridge
- 28-29 Kent & Sussex GP Congress, Tunbridge Wells
- 28-29 Malvern GP Congress, Worcester

NOVEMBER 2023

- 3-5 North East Congress, Gateshead
- 4-5 Premier League 3rd weekend, East Midlands Bridge Academy & Young Chelsea BC
- 6-10 Children in Need SIM Pairs, various clubs, BBO & RealBridge
- 11-12 Tollemache Qualifiers, RealBridge
- 12 EBU Jack High Pairs, RealBridge
- 18-19 Lancashire GP Congress, Preston
- 18-19 Young Chelsea BC Ladies Swiss Teams
- 25 OODGP Swiss Pairs, RealBridge

DECEMBER 2023

- 2-3 Middlesex GP Congress, Richmond BC
- 5-7 EBU Seniors Congress, RealBridge
- 8-10 Lady Milne Trophy Trials, venue tbc
- 15-17 Teltscher Trophy Trials, Coventry BC
- 27-30 Year End Congress, ILEC Conference Centre, London

JANUARY 2024

- 5-7 Midland Counties Congress, West Midlands BC
- 5-7 Camrose Cup, first weekend, Wales
- 6-7 Manchester Congress
- 13-14 Oliver Cowan New Year Congress, Notts
- 15-18 British Winter Sims, various clubs, BBO & RealBridge
- 20-21 National Point-A-Board 2024, RealBridge
- 21 EBU Jack High Pairs, RealBridge



EBU CONGRESSES AND COMPETITIONS

All events are Green Pointed unless stated

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

Great Northern Swiss Pairs

30 September – 1 October
Village Hotel, Leeds



Swiss Pairs – 12 rounds incl Sat
dinner & Sun high tea
Entry via Yorkshire CBA:
<https://tinyurl.com/GNSP23>
9-high Swiss Pairs – LP
Entry via events@ycba.co.uk

EBU Venetian Congress

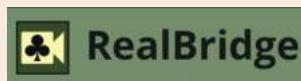
15 – 22 October
Pace Park Hotel Bolognese



Open Pairs – BP
IMP & Pre-Congress Pairs – BP
Pivot Teams – BP
Swiss Pairs, Swiss Teams

Seniors Congress

5 – 7 December
RealBridge



Championship Pairs
(qualifying rounds are BP)
Swiss Pairs
Swiss Teams

Year-End Congress

27 – 30 December
ILEC Conference Centre, London



Stratified Swiss Pairs
Jack-High Swiss Pairs
Stratified Swiss Teams
Mixed or Open Pairs
9-High Improver Pairs

National Point-a-Board Teams

20 – 21 January
RealBridge



Enhanced Green Points in finals
[www.ebu.co.uk/competitions/
national-point-board-teams](http://www.ebu.co.uk/competitions/national-point-board-teams)

Player of
the Year

Harrogate Congress

9 – 11 February
Cedar Court Hotel
Harrogate



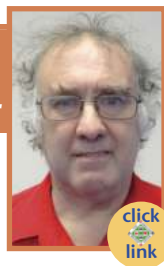
Swiss Pairs
Really Easy Pairs
Swiss Teams
includes two meals in breaks

EBU Tunisia Congress

4 – 11 March
Concorde Green Park Palace
Port El Kantaoui Sousse



Swiss Pairs, Swiss Teams
Pre-congress & Open Pairs – BP
Mixed, Ladies & Mens Pairs – BP
Pivot Teams – BP



Trouble at the table

Everyone asks: what is new in the Blue Book which appeared in May – effective from 1st August 2023?

Stephen Green, Vice Chair L&E, replies:

Feedback following last year's changes has encouraged the L&E to review several elements. In summary there are four main ones:

- ❖ A widening of the use of announcements;
- ❖ No alerting of doubles after the first round of bidding unless they refer to a specific suit;
- ❖ A new presentation and some relaxation of 2+ level opening bids;
- ❖ Introduction of a Glossary for terms often used in the Blue Book.

An Acol player asks: what do I need to know about the new announcing and alerting rules?

Many of these remain unchanged:

- ❖ 1NT is announced, 2NT is not;
- ❖ Stayman and red suit transfer responses to 1NT and 2NT are announced;
- ❖ Strong artificial 2♣ and 2♦ opening bids alerted;
- ❖ Natural two level opening bids are announced.

New announcements for players of common methods:

- ❖ Other transfer responses to 1NT or 2NT showing **one** suit are announced.
- ❖ Jump shifts (jump new suit responses) are announced, whatever the strength: 'Natural, non-forcing', 'Strong, game forcing', or 'Strong, forcing'.

The main difference for Acol players is that opponents playing more artificial methods will make many more announcements – players will need to pay attention to announcements made by the opponents and ask if they need to understand what the announced call shows.

A Benji Acol player asks about the changes to opening 2♣ (or 2♦): what is permitted?

If 2♣ shows a strong hand, it should be defined as 16+ HCP, or 13+ HCP in two suits containing at least 10 cards. This can include hands with any long suit.

If 2♣ is a mixture of strong and non-strong hands, and the non-strong hands are based on a long suit with great playing strength, then the long suit can be any suit except clubs (the suit opened). This is not a change. So...

If you have a partnership understanding for 2♣ which includes 'strong' hands (as defined above) or 'eight playing tricks' or 'hands with great playing strength', then:

- ❖ 2♣ 'strong or eight playing tricks in any suit' is **not** a permitted agreement;
- ❖ 2♣ 'strong or eight playing tricks in any suit except clubs' is a permitted agreement; as is 'strong or eight playing tricks in a major'.

It is agreements that are permitted, not hands, so let's look at an example permitted agreement:

2♣ shows *20-21 balanced, or a hand with great playing strength due to a long suit; if the hand has a long club suit then it will be strong¹ but if the long suit is a suit other than clubs the hand may be as weak as 9 HCP and does not promise any defence.* (¹ 'strong' means at least 16 HCP, or 13 HCP in two suits containing 10+ cards.)

This agreement allows the partnership to open 2♣ with the following hands:

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3
♠ 5	♠ 5	♠ AKQ97542
♥ 753	♥ 87	♥ 93
♦ AK9	♦ A53	♦ 87
♣ AKQ864	♣ AKQ8532	♣ 6

Hand 4	Hand 5
♠ 4	♠ 5
♥ A K Q 7 6 4 3	♥ 8 5 4
♦ K 7 6	♦ A K Q 9 8 3
♣ 7 3	♣ A Q 4

Hand 1 is 'strong' (16 HCP). Hand 2 is 'strong' with 13 HCP in two suits containing 10 cards. Hand 3 is weak (9 HCP) but has great playing strength. Similarly the next two hands can open 2♣, but only because the long suit is not clubs. Hands 3-5 would not be permitted if the long suit could be clubs, regardless of the system – Acol, Benji, SYAC etc.

Andrew Bisson asked about two sequences: I play 1NT-(2♠)-3♥ as competitive – is this alertable? How about 1NT-(2♠^A) or 1NT-(P)-P-(2♠^A). Can this be described as a single suited hand when holding various 6·4·2·1 shapes?

♣ 1NT-(2♠)-3♥ is competitive.

This was alertable as the meaning is 'potentially unexpected'. With the new *Blue Book* this is **announced** 'natural, non-forcing'.

♣ 1NT-(2♠*) or 1NT-(P)-P-(2♠*) where 2♠ shows a single suited hand but holding 6·4·2·1.

There is no problem with this as a permitted agreement – any agreement for a defence to 1NT is permitted at Level 4.

There is no problem with the disclosure – it is understood that 'single-suited' means the bid shows a hand with a long suit. It does not exclude the possibility of side-suits, just that the bid shows the one long suit.

David Burch asks: With North the dealer, an auction started 2NT-Pass-2♦-Pass, at which point I was called to the table. I ruled that South's insufficient bid had been accepted by West's Pass and that the auction should continue. I was called back to the table at the end of the auction to find that North's next bid was 2♥, covering the earlier 2NT bid, South had bid 4NT and the final contract was 6NT, but by whom? North who opened 2NT or South who first bid no trumps in the visible auction?

Also, I am not sure whether I should have allowed North to complete what South obviously intended as a transfer to 2♥.

It is worth checking that the insufficient bid was intended. If it was unintended (as a mechanical error) it can be corrected even if the next hand has called (Law 25A).

Once you have ruled that the insufficient bid is accepted, and the auction is to continue, the offending side can bid how they like – there is no unauthorised information, the 'legal auction' is the auction on the table, including the 2NT opening bid.

When opener rebids 2♥, this does not invalidate the 2NT bid, the 2NT bid is the first bid in the legal auction and so determines who will declare a NT contract. It is good practice when players are bidding in an auction where there has been an accepted insufficient bid, to make sure all the bids are clearly shown by bidding cards – even if the bidding card has to be rearranged, or even borrowed from another box.

Joyce Bianconi asked: should an overcall of a 4-card suit be alerted or is it permissible, given the fact that no convention card is available.

Similarly, Alan Lester asked: do suited overcalls of less than five cards need to be alerted? The question arose in our Tuesday night bridge session which caters for all standards of players where the club actively encourages the 'non-expert' while also explaining at the table the various Laws of bridge without coming down too heavily on minor transgressions, hence the question is asked simply for guidance since the Director (my bridge partner) stated there was no requirement to alert such calls, even if it was an agreed understanding.

Four-card overcalls are not alerted but should be disclosed on the system card.

This is what the *Blue Book* says:

3D1 If a partnership has understandings such as opening lighter in third and/or fourth position, responding or overcalling very light or overcalling on four card suits, these should be disclosed on the system card.

The difficulty in applying this in clubs is that clubs do not usually require system cards. What I suggest for clubs for disclosure of agreements which should be on a system card, is that the pair:

- ♣ has a system card and makes sure opponents see it each round; or
- ♣ pre-announce special agreements as part of introducing their basic system. □



Answers from
page 18



Hand 1

♠ A 9 5 2
♥ A 8 4 3
♦ 10 2
♣ K 5 4

♠ Q 7 6 3
♥ Q 7 5 2
♦ Q 9 8 6 5
♣ —

♠ K 10
♥ K 10 9
♦ K 7 4
♣ J 8 7 6 2

♠ J 8 4
♥ J 6
♦ A J 3
♣ A Q 10 9 3

3NT. West leads the $\spadesuit 6$.

You have six top tricks and expect to make one or two more from clubs. Extra tricks in the majors are unlikely, so making an extra trick in diamonds would also be useful. Does it matter which diamond you play from the dummy on the first trick?

If you play the $\spadesuit 10$, and East covers with the $\spadesuit K$, you will win just one diamond trick if West has the $\spadesuit Q$, and East leads the second round of diamonds. However, if you play the $\spadesuit 2$, you will be guaranteed to win a second trick at some point. If East plays the $\spadesuit K$, you can win the $\spadesuit A$, and later force out the $\spadesuit Q$ to win a trick with the $\spadesuit J$. Having won the $\spadesuit A$ you now turn to clubs. If they are 3-2, you have an easy five winners, and if they are 4-1, you will win five tricks via a finesse if East has $\clubsuit Jxxx$. If clubs split 5-0, you can win five tricks if East holds them, but you will need to finesse twice, so lead the $\clubsuit 3$ at trick two. When West discards, you win the $\clubsuit K$, then lead the $\clubsuit 4$ towards hand, covering whatever East plays.

To maintain communication, you now lead the ♦3. If West ducks, you win the ♦10, and lead the ♣5. If West wins the ♦Q, you win any return, and if necessary, cross to table, to lead the ♣5 towards the ♣10, thereby allowing you to fulfil your contract.

Hand 2

♠ A Q 5 2
 ♥ K 9 3
 ♦ J 5
 ♣ A 8 5 2

♠ 10 7 3
 ♥ 10 5
 ♦ K 8 7 4 3
 ♣ 10 6 3

♠ 8
 ♥ A J 8 6 2
 ♦ 9 6 2
 ♣ K Q J 9

♠ K J 9 6 4
 ♥ Q 7 4
 ♦ A Q 10
 ♣ 7 4

N
 W E
 S

4♠. East opened 1♥. West leads the ♥10.

If East has the $\spadesuit K$, then you will lose no more than two hearts and one club, but if West has the $\spadesuit K$, you will need to try to avoid losing a second heart trick.

If West's ♥10 is a singleton, then the defenders can always win the first two tricks, but if it is from ♥10x, then you can potentially prevent the defenders winning two tricks in the suit (as dummy

has the ♥9, you can assume the ♥10 is either a singleton or the top of a doubleton). If you play low from the dummy, then East can let you win the first trick with the ♥Q.

If you now draw trumps then lead the $\spadesuit J$, West will win the $\spadesuit K$, lead the $\heartsuit 5$, giving the defenders two heart winners and, with a slow club trick to come, the defenders will win four tricks. However, look at the effect of playing the $\heartsuit K$ at trick one. If East ducks then you can later lead towards the $\heartsuit Q$ to win a second heart trick, so East will win the $\heartsuit A$. If East returns a heart, you can play low from hand and win with dummy's $\heartsuit 9$, again restricting your losses to one heart trick, so East is likely to play the $\clubsuit K$ at trick two.

You can now win the ♣A, draw trumps, then lead the ♦J. West can win the ♦K, and return a heart or a club. If West chooses a heart, win with the ♥Q, cash the ♦AQ, throwing dummy's last heart. Trumping the ♥7 in dummy will again restrict the defenders to just one heart, one diamond and one club.

Heffalump Traps

by David Bakhshi

Hand 3

♠ K J 4	♠ 7 5 3	♠ Q 9 8 2
♥ 9 6 5	♥ A J 7 2	♥ 10
♦ Q J 10 2	♦ A 8 3	♦ 9 7 5 4
♣ 8 5 2	♣ K 10 3	♣ A J 7 6

♠ A 10 6		
♥ K Q 8 4 3		
♦ K 6		
♣ Q 9 4		

4♥. West leads the ♦Q. Hearts do not split 4-0.

You have eight top tricks, and can guarantee an extra trick in clubs, but with two losers in spades, you must make two club tricks – just losing the ♣A. With the possibility of finessing in either direction for the missing ♣J, you could easily achieve your target if you knew which opponent has the ♣J, but can you ensure success without that knowledge?

You win the first trick with the ♦K, and note that trumping a diamond (in the long trump hand) will not give you an extra trick. It will eliminate a safe option for the defenders if they are later on lead. If you attack clubs you will have to guess which opponent has the ♣J, but if the opponents attack clubs for you...

Having won trick one with the ♦K, draw trumps then lead to the ♦A, and trump the ♦8. At this point, you can guarantee your contract. You have two inescapable spade losers, so you can simply cash the ♠A, then lead the ♠6. Either defender can win the next two tricks in spades, but will then face a choice of leading a fourth round of spades, or a fourth round of diamonds, both of which will provide you with a ruff-and-discard. It is likely that the defenders will instead lead a club, but this solves your dilemma, as you can simply play low as the second player to the trick, leaving the third player with no way to prevent you from winning two tricks in clubs. This elimination and throw-in neatly ensures the success of your contract.

Hand 4

♠ 9 6	♠ K J 3	♠ 10 7 5 4 2
♥ K J 10 7 5 2	♥ A 4	♥ 6
♦ A K 6	♦ Q 10 9 8 5 4	♦ 7 3
♣ K 8	♣ A 6	♣ J 10 7 4 2

♠ A Q 8		
♥ Q 9 8 3		
♦ J 2		
♣ Q 9 5 3		

3NT. West opens 1♥. West leads the ♥J.

You have five top tricks and can make four extra tricks from diamonds, but since this requires you to lose two tricks, you have to hope that you will not also lose three heart tricks in the process.

It looks natural to play low from the dummy, and win the first trick with the ♥Q. However, when you next lead a diamond, West can win the ♦K, then play the ♥2. You will be forced to win the ♥A in dummy,

and when you lead a second diamond, West will win the ♦A and cash four more heart tricks to defeat your contract by two tricks. Can this be avoided?

West is likely to hold the ♦AK, so you have to avoid them being able to lose a cheap trick to the ♥A. Let us consider the effect of winning the first trick with the ♥A. When you lead a diamond at trick two, West will win the ♦K as before, but if West now plays the ♥K then leads a third heart, you will have two stoppers with the ♥Q9. If West leads a low heart at trick three, you will be able to win with the ♥8, and your ♥Q9 will still act as a further stopper.

If West tries switching suits to spades, you can win with ♠J and lead a diamond while your hearts are protected, and if West switches to a low club, you can either win dummy's ♣A (playing for hearts to split 6-1), or play low from the dummy, hoping to win with the ♣Q, and then play diamonds again while your heart stopper is intact.

Winning the first trick with the ♥A ensures the success of your contract if West holds the ♦AK, or six hearts, or both six hearts and the ♦AK. □



Pieces of Gold, Silver & Bronze

England's top women players carried home a fabulous haul of medals from the European Transnationals. In one semi-final of the Women's Teams, we had England players on both sides. In team *Baker*, Sally Brock and Fiona Brown were alongside the USA stars, Lynn Baker and Karen McCallum. They faced team *Green*, where Heather Dhondy and Marcia Green, joined top Danish player, Christina Lund Madsen, Jovanka Smederevac (an Austrian world champion) and Nikica Sver (Croatia).

With one board of the semi-final to play, Heather's team was 6 IMPs behind. Heather and Christina then beat 4♥ by a trick, while their teammates made 3♥. That was a 6-IMP swing, making the scores level!

It was very late, with no time to play extra boards, so the winners were the *Baker* team, who had beaten *Green* in the round robin. In the final, they would face *Tri Polar* (England's Nevena Senior and Nicola Smith, with USA's Janice Seamon-Molson & Anam Tebha, Irene Baroni (Italy) and Sweden's Kathrine Bertheau). Whichever team won, four of our all-time most successful players would bring back gold and silver medals!

In the first session, the two England pairs faced each other. On Board 8 (next column), Nicola Smith played in 4♠. Fiona Brown gave nothing away with her lead of the ♠6. Nicola Smith won with the jack and played the ♦9, Brown rising with the ace. Forced to concede ground, she exited with the ♥5, which was run to Smith's jack.

Nicola crossed to the ♠Q and played the ♦K, followed by the ♦J. Brock ruffed with the ♠7, overruffed with the ♠K. A club went to the 9 and 10, and Brock removed dummy's last trump. Declarer could not avoid two further losers for one down. Well defended!

In the other room the bidding followed a different path. It is very unusual to defend at the two level, particularly when East has 3-card spade

Board 8 Love All. Dealer West

♠ 6		
♥ Q 10 5 2		
♦ A Q 7 4 2		
♣ A J 7		
♠ A K J 3 2		♠ Q 10 9
♥ J 7 6		♥ A K 3
♦ 9		♦ K J 10 8 5
♣ Q 8 6 5		♣ 9 4
♠ 8 7 5 4		
♥ 9 8 4		
♦ 6 3		
♣ K 10 3 2		

West	North	East	South
Smith	Brown	Senior	Brock
1♠	Dble	4♠	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Baker	Tebha	McCallum	Seamon-Molson
1♠	Dble	Redble	2♣
Dble	All Pass		

support, and their clubs are so modest. Only a world-class pair would sniff out such a situation. The operator could not follow the play, sadly, but East-West extracted a maximum 500, beating 2♣ doubled by three tricks. This splendid +500 exactly duplicated the result of Italian maestros, Versace and Lauria, in the Open event. It was 11 IMPs to Baker.

In the next session, the England pairs played at different tables. There was a monumental number of IMPs at stake on the following board:



**Please recycle
this magazine when you
have finished with it**

Board 16. E/W Game. Dealer West

♠ 8 7 4		
♥ Q 10 9 8 7 3		
♦ 5 3		
♣ Q 7		
♠ Q 9 3		♠ 10 2
♥ –		♥ A K 6
♦ 8 7 6 4 2		♦ K Q 10 9
♣ K J 8 4 2		♣ A 10 9 3
	♠ A K J 6 5	
	♥ J 5 4 2	
	♦ A J	
	♣ 6 5	

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Baroni</i>	<i>Brown</i>	<i>Bertheau</i>
Pass	2♦ ^A	2NT	Dble
Pass	Pass	Redble	All Pass

Kathrine Bertheau led the ♠A against 2NT redoubled, seeing ♠Qxx in the dummy. Clearing the spades might give declarer an eighth trick, and North's multi was known to be based on hearts. South switched to the ♥4, drawing the 10 and ace from the closed hands.

If Fiona Brown could pick up five club tricks now, she could set up the diamonds too and make two redoubled overtricks. That would be +1580.

Brown played the ♣A, seeing spot cards all round. She continued with the ♣3, South playing the aggravating ♣6. Brown decided that South's double of 2NT made her favourite to hold ♣Qxx. She called for dummy's ♣J, which lost to the queen. Irene Baroni cleared the heart suit and the contract went two down redoubled for a loss of 1,000.

Declarer might perhaps have played on diamonds first. This would have given her eight tricks as the cards lie. If instead they broke 3-1, that might help her with the club guess.

West	North	East	South
<i>Smith</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Baker</i>
Pass	3♥	3NT	4♥
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

Nevena Senior led the ♦K to dummy's ace, declarer returning the ♦J to her queen. It looked natural to seek two club tricks. When she played ace

and another club to partner's king, Nicola Smith had to lead into dummy's spades or give a ruff-and-discard. The doubled heart game was then two down, instead of three down after a risky spade switch. It was 16 IMPs to *Tri Polar*, who won the final by 143-116.

So, Nevena Senior & Nicola Smith emerged with gold medals; Sally Brock & Fiona Brown collected silver medals. Heather Dhondy & Marcia Green, after their unlucky tie-break, won a bronze medal.

Is that the end of the story? No, Helen Erichsen & Fiona Brown won the bronze medals in the Women's Pairs. A wonderful championship for our women players! □

LORDS TROPHY

The winner of the 2022-23 Inter-Schools Online League (Lords Trophy) was Eton College. The players gained the chance to take on a House of Lords team at the end of June. Congratulations to the Eton team who won the match by 40 IMPs. The contest went on until almost 7pm as the Immigration Bill was being debated. The Lords team could claim some distraction as they had to vote on three different amendments even though two were Labour, and two were Conservative peers. The Lords, organised by Ruth, Lady Henig, provided a tour, tea and great hospitality.



Eton College, winners of the Inter-Schools League, take on a House of Lords team. From left, Lord Caithness, Andrew Bradkin, Hunter Deane-Johns, Thomas Bradkin, Louis Eddis, Baroness Henig, James Cooper, Lord Hamilton (an old Etonian himself) and Baroness Blackstone (not pictured). Thomas and Jacob Potter had played in the ISL.



Lady Milne Trophy

by Heather Dhondy



England squeak home

This year the Lady Milne was played in Perth in late April. As the host, Scotland had two teams in the event, 'Scotland' and 'SBU'. The other teams competing were England, Ireland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

England were fielding two debutants, and a third who had played just once in the EBU team so was also making her debut for the England team. One of the newcomers, Venetia Anoyrkatis, was just 16, a year or so younger than her mother when she made her debut in 1990 (with me!). However, on this occasion, I was non-playing captain.

The full team was Nevena Senior & Anne Rosen, Sally Anoyrkatis & Venetia Anoyrkatis and Kath Stynes & Debbie Sandford.

We didn't get off to the best start against Ireland when our team bid a perfectly reasonable slam which failed on an unlucky trump break. However the swing came back immediately on the following board:

N/S Game. Dealer West.

♠ 8	♠ K Q 9 6 5 2	♠ A J 10 7 4 3
♥ Q 9 5 3	♥ A K J	♥ 7 4
♦ K 10 9 5 4 2	♦ Q	♦ A J 7
♣ 4 2	♣ 7 6 5	♣ Q 9
	♠ —	
	♥ 10 8 6 2	
	♦ 8 6 3	
	♣ A K J 10 8 3	

West	North	East	South
V Anoyrkatis	Rigney	S Anoyrkatis	Part
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Kenny	Rosen	Fitzgerald	Senior
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

At one table the opponents had a quiet auction to 2♠. This had to fail by one on an abysmal trump break. Things were more lively at the other table, however, when Senior removed 2♠ to 3♣ with her excellent suit and spade void. Now Rosen, whose 2♠ rebid was pretty maximum, liked the look of her hand and proceeded with a naturalish 3♥. Senior raised this to four on the grounds that partner could easily be 6-4 for this bidding, and Rosen corrected to 5♣. 5♣ was a fine contract and duly made for a 12 IMP swing to England.

Stynes and Sandford were in action on the following deal against Scotland:

Love All. Dealer South.

♠ A 6 5	♠ Q 8 4 2
♥ A 10 7 5 4 2	♥ K 6 3
♦ A Q	♦ 9 8 3
♣ K Q	♣ 8 7 3
♠ K 10 3	♠ J 9 7
♥ J 9	♥ Q 8
♦ J 10 5 4	♦ K 7 6 2
♣ A 9 5 2	♣ J 10 6 4

West	North	East	South
Stynes	Symons	Sandford	Punch
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣ ^A	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

The Scottish pair were playing Gazzilli where the 2♣ rebid by North showed either clubs or a 15+ hand. South's 2♥ showed fewer than eight points and (probably) a doubleton heart.

In theory, Scotland had reached the best game, since 4♥ is always defeated on a spade lead. At the other table, Sally and Venetia were in a quiet 3♥, just making, so the spotlight was on the defence to 3NT. Kath Stynes got off to the best possible lead with the ♠3. This was ducked to East's queen, and the ♠2 returned to Kath's ♠10, which was also ducked. Once the spades were cleared, declarer had only eight tricks.

Could things have gone differently? A careful examination of the spade cards played reveal that West was unlikely to have led from a four-card suit, if you believe East's two to be a true card, ie the original fourth highest. Now it could have been from KQ?2, with West holding both entries in clubs and hearts, but Debbie might have returned the king from that holding, believing her partner to have led a four card suit, and catering for Jx in declarer's hand.

The alternative is to play for the spade blockage (as here) and that the hearts will come in for one loser (as they do). You are not completely out of the woods as entries are still tangled, but West has no way to get her partner in, so conceding the ♣A at some stage will give declarer a ninth trick.

Ireland were performing tremendously well throughout the tournament and were leading going into the last set, and we needed a big win to give us any hope. We got off to a great start, gaining several IMPs early on. Then came this deal:

N/S Game. Dealer East.			
		♠ A 7 3	
		♥ Q 5 4	
		♦ Q 6 5	
		♣ K Q J 7	
♠ K 8 6		♠ 10 5 4	
♥ 10 7 3		♥ 9 8	
♦ J 8		♦ 9 7 4 3	
♣ 9 6 5 3 2		♣ A 10 8 4	
		♠ Q J 9 2	
		♥ A K J 6 2	
		♦ A K 10 2	
		♣ —	

West	North	East	South
Douglas	S Anoyrkatis	Bailey	V Anoyrkatis
		Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣ ¹	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♣ ²
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♦ ²
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

¹ Game forcing. ² Cue bid

The 2♣ bid was game forcing, and 2♠ was natural, but didn't show any extras. Now 3♥ showed three card support and 4♣ was a cue bid. It is unusual to cue bid shortage in partner's suit, and Venetia realised this, but it was very deliberate. The key thing she was trying to find out was whether partner had a spade control. By bidding 4♥, she was expecting Sally to bid 4♥, since she knew Sally would be unable to cue bid diamonds looking at her controls in the suit. Over this, she planned to bid 5♦ which made it really clear that she wanted to bid slam with a spade control. If she bid 4♦ initially and partner discouraged with 4♥ then she felt further continuations might be murky.

They don't play Exclusion Blackwood so that wasn't an option, but the auction felt very clear to Sally, who knew she had to bid 6♥ on her hand. She was nervous because we needed a big win, and they had started the match so well. She really didn't want to bid a slam and go one down, but knew she must trust her partner! Sally tells me that Venetia is a great person to play in the last set of a match, always holding her nerve, and producing a good result. She has done it time and time again in pretty much all her major bridge successes.

Congratulations go to my team who just won with 67 VPs, but also to the Irish (65 VPs) who ran us so close. Well done and thanks to the superb organisers of the event which was a great success. □



Debbie Sandford, Nevena Senior, Sally Anoyrkatis, Venetia Anoyrkatis, Heather Dhondy (NPC), Kath Stynes and Anne Rosen

The trophy returns to England

The Senior Camrose for the Teltscher Trophy was held near Newport in late May and organised excellently by the Welsh Bridge Union. Particular thanks go to Ceri Pierce the Match Manager, Mia Deschepper who organised the Vugraph presentation on RealBridge and Sarah Amos and James Vickers the Tournament Directors.

As is customary all the home countries were represented and the WBU had a second team to provide six teams and avoid a sit out.

England were represented by Sally Brock & Barry Myers, Steve Green & Roger Bryant, Tony Sowter & Dave Robinson with your correspondent as the Non Playing Captain. (Known as 'Corporal Jones', and oft-found to be saying 'Don't panic' to his 'Dad's Army' team, so one player whispered to me, *Ed*).

England started against Northern Ireland on Friday evening and the following pair of hands cropped up:

♠	4
♥	A K 9 3
♦	A J 9 4
♣	K Q 7 6
	
♠	A K J 7 6 5 3
♥	7 4
♦	10 7
♣	A 5


Steve and Roger play a strong club system with a number of relay sequences where one player can ask the other for descriptions in game forcing auctions. The result was 6♠.

The opposition found the best lead of a low diamond. Declarer won the lead and the plan was to play two top trumps followed by three rounds of

clubs to discard the diamond loser. This succeeds on any 3-2 trump break if clubs are not 6-1 or 7-0. The alternative (and less good line) is to play three rounds of clubs immediately to ditch the diamond.

It was a good contract but trumps were 4-1 offside so it was destined to fail.

Another possible slam appeared in the same match (rotated):

♠	K 10 3
♥	Q 3
♦	K 2
♣	A Q J 7 3 2
	
♠	A 9 8 6 5 2
♥	K 6 4
♦	A 5 3
♣	K

On the face of it 6♠ requires either a 2-2 trump break or a singleton honour and a correct guess playing restricted choice. In fact it is improved as the defence have to lead a heart otherwise the losers may go away on clubs. Sally and Barry had a natural auction where both black suits were bid en route to the slam which was successful.

An opening win by 16-4 was a sound start. The next two rounds saw us play the two Welsh squads and two further 16-4 wins to leave the team in a strong position.




Round 4 was the match against Scotland where another slam deal came up:



♠	7 5
♥	Q 2
♦	A K Q 2
♣	A K Q 6 3
	
♠	A Q J 9 2
♥	A 7 4
♦	10 8 7 3
♣	7

With North the dealer most players tried an off-centre 2NT opener rather than 1♣ (with concentrated minor suit values 1♣ looks like the nap selection for the bidding panel followed by 2♦ over 1 major) and usually South showed spades and then diamonds and the best contract of 6♦ was reached at the majority of tables. It was a flat board in the match with Scotland.

We secured a narrow win against Scotland so had a sizeable lead going into the final match against Ireland which saw another narrow win. Well done to the team. The first three places were as follows:

	Team	VP total
1	 ENGLAND	72.07
2	 WALES	53.16
3	 SCOTLAND	50.56



Teltscher team from left: Dave Robinson, Steve Green, Roger Bryant, Sally Brock, Barry Myers, Tony Sowter, David Jones (NPC)

MURDER BY NATURAL CAUSES

Helen Erichsen has written her debut novel, *Murder by Natural Causes*, and it looks set to define a new genre – thriller **and** bridge!

Talking about her book, the English international player said 'It's difficult to include bridge in a novel. Describe the technicalities of the game and there is every

chance that non-bridge players will fall asleep after three sentences. Better perhaps to concentrate on the emotions; the heady highs and crushing lows that come from winning and losing at cards.'

It's set at TGR's, The Great Rose, a club where a high stakes money game is still played. Take one gangster owner of the premises, add his pet assassin Cilla, throw in a few murders along the way— ones where the victims are never identified as such because the executions are disguised as deaths by natural causes – and you have a plot.

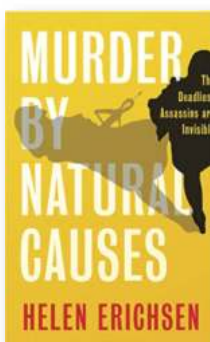
The story is set largely in the 1980s and early 90s. Cilla is the main protagonist, a 22 year old professional hitman, ex KGB, who would like to reinvent herself before her luck runs out. Standing in the way is her boss, Vladimir Haugr, known as Haugr the Ogre, or Vlad the Impaler, due to his aggressive style of bidding and play at the bridge table. Cilla is a valuable commodity to him and he doesn't want to let her go. Can she extricate herself and how many people will she have to kill to do so?

The book has already drawn favourable reviews from many top players:

Helen Erichsen The Agatha Christie of the bridge world - I couldn't put it down! – Zia Mahmood

When was the last time bridge players eulogised about a non-bridge book, a fictional thriller indeed? Right never ... Until Helen wrote her masterpiece. Literally every bridge player I know couldn't put it down - like me! And, I'm sure, you! PS it's not quite accurate to say it's a non-bridge book but I won't give it away – Andrew Robson

What do you do when you can't stop thinking about that 3NT you went down in? Pick up Helen's unputdownable thriller! – Sally Brock





Answers to May's Problems

Problems 1 and 2 are my own – the first from the Tollemache qualifier late last year and the second in a local knockout match. The third comes from prolific correspondent Dave Simmons and as ever I am grateful for the hands he sends.

Hand 1

♠ A 7 5 3 2
♥ Q 9 7 4 2
♦ A K 5
♣ –

South	West	North	East
1NT ¹	2♣ ²	3NT	All Pass

¹ 12-14. ² Majors

Either North simply has enough for game or, as seems entirely possible looking at our hand, has a long club suit. In the latter case, we may well need to cash out (or at least find the right lead) before declarer runs for home with many club tricks. So, what is best?

(a) ♠A: 8 marks, ♠3/2: 4 marks, ♠7/5: 1 mark.

I think if you are going to lead a spade, then you ought to lead the ace, firstly because you retain the lead and it may be obvious what to switch to and secondly you may hit a stiff honour on the table which your ace gobbles up (there was indeed a stiff queen on the table). I led the ace at the table, but I now think it is the wrong lead. If you are going to lead a low spade, then the honest 4th highest 3 is OK or the deceptive ♠2, feigning a 4-card suit which may lull declarer into a false sense of security. There is nothing to be said for the ♠7 or 5 which will have the sole effect of confusing partner.

(b) ♥4/2: 4 marks, ♥9/7: 2 marks, ♥Q: 1 mark.

I don't like this lead for the reasons given above – I think you need to try and hold the lead and then assess what to do. If you must lead a heart the 4th highest is honest, the 5th highest deceptive, the

nine or seven confusing and the queen just bizarre. It shows what I know since a heart beats the hand definitely.

(c) ♦A/K: 10 marks, ♦5: 1 mark. I now think this is the right lead. You certainly hold the lead and can assess what to do. You should lead whichever of the A or K in your methods asks for attitude rather than count (different partnerships play it different ways, hence both are ranked as 10 marks). Whether or not you now beat the contract is rather dependent on your methods and how on the ball partner is. Many partnerships play that you *only* encourage with the queen. Here dummy has Jxx and partner 10xxx and needs you to continue . . . By the way, the lead of the ♦5 is bizarre and if I could give it less than one mark, I would.

At the table dummy had

♠Q ♥10x ♦Jxx ♣AKQ109xx

and declarer held:

♠K10xx ♥AKxx ♦Qxx ♣xx

so you will note that partner has a club stop with their Jxxx. Three rounds of diamonds beats the contract and a heart lead also beats it provided that you leap on a low spade lead at trick 2 if declarer does that and play either red suit – not so hard. A spade lets the contract through as that is declarer's 9th trick after giving up a club. Somewhat amusingly, a number of declarers went several off on a low spade lead when they gleefully won and cashed a top club to discover they then had only three club tricks rather than the seven they thought . . . Oops! I shall be interested what the computer leads – but I bet it is an ace.

Pairs Bonus: ♦A/K: 5 marks. The same lead for the same reasons. There is even less reason to lead a heart here, as it is possibly giving a trick away.

Computer simulations:

♦A/K: 41.9% chance of defeating the contract (teams) and an average of 4.5 tricks (pairs).

Hand 2

♠ 8 5
♥ A 8 6 5 3
♦ 9 5 4
♣ Q 8 3

South	West	North	East
1NT ¹	Pass	2♥ ²	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♥ ³	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT ⁴	Pass
5♠ ⁵	Pass	6♣	All Pass

¹ 15-17, ² transfer, ³ natural, ⁴ RKCB, ⁵ 2 KCs & ♠Q

What do we know here? Declarer has 15-17 points with less than four hearts and exactly three spades and dummy has enough to drive to slam with at least nine cards in the majors. So...

(a) ♠8/5: **2 marks**. It is almost never right to lead trumps against slams bid to make. Given enough time, declarer can almost always generate enough tricks. You need to lead aggressively against suit slams.

(b) ♥A: **10 marks**, ♥other: **3 marks**. This is what I led at the table and it was disastrous, but I still think it is the right lead, so I shall be interested to see if the computer agrees with me. Any time dummy has five hearts or declarer has three hearts then you are just giving partner a ruff – surely that needs the least in partner's hand to beat it? At the table the slam was flat out on the heart guess with KJ10x in dummy and xx in declarer's hand, so my lead did not, as they say, paralyse declarer.

(c) a diamond: **5 marks**. This needs quite a lot from partner to beat the hand – probably the ♦KQ or ♦KJ with ♦Q in dummy and declarer not having a quick club discard (say if dummy was 6·4·2·1 and declarer having AK of clubs. I still prefer it to a trump though.

(d) ♣3: **6 marks**, ♣Q: **5 marks**, ♣8: **1 mark**. This needs less from partner (♣K basically) but is also more dangerous as it might be round into declarer's tenace (it was – AKJxx ♡)

Pairs Bonus: ♥A: **5 marks**. You never get many matchpoints if the opponents bid and make a slam, so the overtrick is all but irrelevant. You have to go all out to beat it, so the same lead.

Computer simulations:

♥A: **52.9 chance of defeating the contract (teams)**, with an average of 1.53 tricks (pairs).

Hand 3

♠ 8 7 5 3
♥ 8 7 5
♦ 7 6 5 3
♣ A 10

South	West	North	East
1NT ¹	Pass	2♦ ²	Pass
2♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass

¹ 15-17, ² transfer

(a) a spade: **10 marks**. This is, in my opinion, a straight choice between our two 4-card suits, with the spade lead edging it since dummy will not have four spades and partner may have doubled 2♦ (assuming your methods play this as diamonds) with diamonds good enough that they want leading.

(b) a heart: **1 mark**. I see no case at all to lead dummy's known 5-card suit when you know they are breaking.

(c) a diamond: **7 marks**. This is OK. For the reasons given above a spade is a better shot.

(d) ♣A: **3 marks**, ♠10: **1 mark**. This is just a wild shot! It might work one time in 30 I suppose. At the table this was that time as partner had ♣KQ9xx and no other high cards and dummy had Jx! But how likely is all that? Not surprisingly, only one player found that lead and that was because the opponents' methods required a start of 2♣ on responder's hand and partner took the opportunity to double. A bit unlucky really.

Pairs Bonus: a spade: **5 marks**. The same lead for all the same reasons. The ♣A is even wilder here.

Computer simulations:

♣A: **14.3% chance of defeating the contract (teams)** and scoring an average of 1.95 tricks (pairs). □

Full details of the computer simulations can be found online, p70

CONGRATULATIONS TO MAY'S WINNERS:

Master: Robin Squire, London (100%)
Open: Barry Ransley, Chatteris



Beat Today's Experts

1. Game All. Dealer West

<p>♠ QJ1097 ♥ J7 ♦ AQ4 ♣ J52</p>	<p>♠ 62 ♥ AQ1096532 ♦ 65 ♣ 10</p>	<p>♠ AK83 ♥ – ♦ J1097 ♣ AQ984</p>
<p>♠ 54 ♥ K84 ♦ K832 ♣ K763</p>		

West	North	East	South
Klukowski	de Wijs	Gawrys	Muller
1♠	4♥	6♣	All Pass

All our deals come from the 2023 Vanderbilt. Zimmermann faces Goodman in the round-of-16. Gawrys went straight to the percentage contract. De Wijs led the ♥A, ruffed in the dummy. Klukowski (rated by many now as the best player in the world) crossed to the ♠9 and ruffed his remaining heart. He then played the ♠A, trumps breaking 2-2, and continued with the ♣9 to the jack and North's 10. He then claimed the slam for the loss of a club trick. Brilliant!

At the other table, West passed and Bas Drijver opened 4♥ on the North cards. Double – Pass – 4♠ was followed by Pass – Pass – 5♥ – Double – All Pass. That was 800 for three down and a gain of 13 IMPs.

Awards: 6♣ (10), 5♠/4♠ (6), 4♥ doubled (3), 7♠ (2).

2. E/W Game. Dealer North

<p>♠ KQ8765 ♥ A9 ♦ 8 ♣ Q743</p>	<p>♠ – ♥ Q85 ♦ AQJ107643 ♣ 108</p>	<p>♠ A109 ♥ K62 ♦ K52 ♣ AJ96</p>
<p>♠ J432 ♥ J10743 ♦ 9 ♣ K52</p>		

West	North	East	South
Moss	de Falco	Grue	Cayne
6♣	5♦ All Pass	Dble	Pass

East doubles the 5♦ opening from North. Should West bid 5♠ or 6♠? Brad Moss spent some time on his decision, eventually bidding 6♠. A diamond and a club had to be

lost, and the slam was one down. I think 5♠ is enough on those West cards. To bid at the five level, rather than passing for penalties, already shows a strong hand. East will expect close to what you have and may give you 6♣ when he has the cards you need. You are expecting a diamond loser and will require four big cards for a slam. Even if partner had the ♠K instead of the ♠J, the clubs are more likely to break badly after the high pre-empt.

West	North	East	South
Nab	Garner	B. Drijver	Wolfson
4NT ^A	4♦	Dble	Pass
5♠	Pass	5♣	Pass
	All Pass		

North opened 4♦ at the other table, allowing more space. 4NT showed two places to play. When West bypassed hearts, bidding 5♠ over 5♣, the message was that he had a strong 5♠ bid. East judged well to pass, gaining 13 IMPs.

Awards: 5♠ (10), 5♦ doubled (6), 6♣ (2).

3. Game All. Dealer East

♠ A K 8 7 2		♠ –
♥ 5 4		♥ A 7 6 2
♦ 9 6 5 3		♦ K J 10 8
♣ Q 2		♣ K J 10 9 8
♠ J 6 3		
♥ K Q J 10 9 8 3		
♦ A 2		
♣ 7		
♠ Q 10 9 5 4		
♥ –		
♦ Q 7 4		
♣ A 6 5 4 3		

West	North	East	South
Juster	Kamil	Morgan	Bernal
2♥	4♠	1♦	1♠
5♥	Pass	6♥	All Pass

Morgan had an excellent fit for partner’s hearts, but could not judge how high to go. He was worth 5♥, but 6♥ might be there if

partner had the right number of minor-suit fillers. He decided to pass, forcing on this auction. When Juster bid 5♥, it was easy for East to bid six. Had West doubled instead, East’s removal to 5♥ would be read as invitational. This was the bidding at the other table:

West	North	East	South
Versace	Schermer	Sementa	Chambers
2♦ ^A	4♠	1♦	1♠
5♥	All Pass	4NT	Pass

After 1♣/1♦ – 1♠, the Italians play transfer responses. It’s a good method, but it did not reward them here. Sementa had no idea whether Versace had a normal 2♥ response, or a weak hand where he intended to pass a subsequent 2♥ from partner. Their convention card says they play RKCB on non-cuebid auctions, but Versace’s 5♥ response does not match this interpretation. 13 IMPs were lost.
Awards: 6♥ (10), 5♥ (5).

4. E/W Game. Dealer West

♠ 8 7 6 5 4		♠ A 9
♥ 6 3		♥ Q 9 8 4
♦ 7 4 3		♦ Q 10 9 5
♣ A J 10		♣ K 7 6
♠ K Q		
♥ A K J 7		
♦ A K		
♣ Q 9 8 5 4		
♠ J 10 3 2		
♥ 10 5 2		
♦ J 8 6 2		
♣ 3 2		

West	North	East	South
Percario	Wolfson	Donati	Garner
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣ ^A	Pass
3♦ ^A	Pass	3♠ ^A	Pass
4♦	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Pass	6♥	All Pass

3♣ was Puppet Stayman and 3♦ said: no 5-card major, one or both 4-card majors. Donati’s 3♠ showed the major that he did

not hold (to allow the strong hand to play a heart contract). Percario thwarted this intention by cue-bidding 4♦ to show a great hand for hearts. Donati then headed for 6♥, using RKCB.
To make the slam, declarer needs to lead through ♣Ax with a chosen defender. No such luck, and the slam was doomed. Or was it? Garner led the ♣3 and Wolfson conceded the slam by winning with the ace! This was a demonstrable error. If the lead was a singleton and a club ruff was available, declarer would hold ♣K762. He would then be almost certain to lose two club tricks if North put in the jack or 10 at trick one.

West	North	East	South
Moss	Passell	Grue	Goodman
1♣ ^A	Pass	2♣ ^A	Pass
2♦ ^A	Pass	2♠ ^A	Pass
2NT ^A	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♦ ^A	Pass	4♥	All Pass

1♣ was Precision and 2♣ showed 8-11 balanced. 2♦ was a relay and 2♠ showed hearts. 2NT was a further relay, hearing of four diamonds opposite, and 4♦ was preparation for a sign-off. Very well bid!
Awards: 5♥/4NT/4♥/3NT (10), 6NT/6♥ (4).

5. Game All. Dealer North

♠ 8 3 2	♠ 7 4	♠ A 5
♥ K 8 7 4	♥ 10 5 3 2	♥ Q
♦ A 9 7	♦ 10 8 6 3	♦ K Q J 5 2
♣ A 7 4	♣ 9 5 2	♣ K J 10 8 6

♠ K Q J 10 9 6	♠ A 5
♥ A J 9 6	♥ Q
♦ 4	♦ K Q J 5 2
♣ Q 3	♣ K J 10 8 6

West	North	East	South
Duboin	Gold	Cima	Zia
	Pass	1♦	1♠
Dble	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♦	All Pass		

We move to the Vanderbilt final, between Bernal and Wolfson. These guys are world-class players and I am a humble scribe. Even so, you may agree with me that the bidding was poor at both tables. Why does East waste space, for no good reason, with 2♣? He could have described his hand with 2♣, or (if he feels his hand is too good) 3♣. West seemingly expected

something better opposite when he advanced to 6♦ via a heart cue-bid and RKCB.

Zia led the ♠K to the ace. Declarer drew trumps and did well to guess the clubs, running the jack. He had five club tricks but was still one down.

West	North	East	South
Garner	Kamil	Wolfson	Bernal
	Pass	1♦	2♦ ^A
Dble	3♥	4♣	4♥
Dble	All Pass		

With six excellent spades and only four hearts, it was very ill-advised to use Michaels, showing both majors. North pre-empted to 3♥ and Wolfson showed his clubs. South's 4♥ was doubled and four down – minus 800 and 14 IMPs away.

Awards: 5♦/5♣/3NT (10), 5NT/4NT (8), 6♦/6♣ (3).

6. N/S Game. Dealer East

♠ A 9 8 6 4 2	♠ Q J 5	♠ K 7
♥ K 8 5 4 2	♥ Q J 10 3	♥ 7 6
♦ –	♦ J 10 9 5	♦ A K 6 2
♣ K 4	♣ J 5	♣ A Q 10 8 6

♠ 10 3	♠ K 7
♥ A 9	♥ 7 6
♦ Q 8 7 4 3	♦ A K 6 2
♣ 9 7 3 2	♣ A Q 10 8 6

West	North	East	South
Zia	Duboin	Gold	Cima
		1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♥ ^A	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♠	All Pass

Another deal from the final where a below-par slam was reached. We should inspect the auction carefully. It's popular to open 1NT on the East hand, which is marginally weak for a reverse. How should Zia bid his 6-5 hand now?

One method is to respond 2♥, showing the spades, and then rebid 3♥. This promises at least 5-5 shape, if you bid all 5-4

major hands via Stayman and Smolen. When East shows no interest with 3NT, West could sign off in 4♣. Zia's 2♣, then 3♥, presumably showed at least 5-5 shape. Partner's refusal to choose a major must suggest he has high cards wasted in diamonds – not good news facing Zia's void. Even when trumps broke 3-2, 6♣ had two unavoidable losers. In fact, declarer went two down.

At the other table, Sementa and Versace bid: 1♣ – 1♥ (spades), 1NT (14-16) – 2♦ (GF checkback), 3♣ – 3♥, 3♠ – 4♥, 4♠. They gained 11 IMPs.

Awards: 4♠/3NT (10), 5♠/4NT (6), slams (2).

Our Vanderbilt experts faltered somewhat, on a difficult set. Well done if you managed to beat their total of 31/60. Let's look for some tips.

TIPS TO REMEMBER

- ❖ Don't waste space by bidding the opponent's suit when you have a descriptive natural bid available.
- ❖ A forcing pass, followed by a bid at the five level, is a stronger sequence than bidding immediately. □

2023 Summer Meeting at Eastbourne

Mixed Pairs for the London Duplicate Club Cup

10 August 2023

- 1 Eric Cummings & Ceri Pierce
- 2 Tim Chanter & Helen Wildsmith
- 3 Chris Jagger & Jane Jensen

GCH Fox Championship Pairs

10 August 2023

- 1 Croz Crosswell & Ravi Athwal
- 2 Joe Fawcett & Alastair Gidman
- 3 John Dennis & Adrian Chapelle

Swiss Teams for the Brighton Bowl

11 August 2023

- 1 Tom Paske, Sara Moran, Diana Nettleton, Andrew McIntosh
- 2 Kieran Dyke, Michael Byrne, Stefano Tommasini, Ben Norton
- 3 Mike Bell, Marion Robertson, Paul Barton, Antone Huang
- 4 Celia Oram, Derek Oram, Dee Lindon, Peter Lindon

Top Senior Team (John Carter Trophy)

- 4 Derek Oram, Celia Oram, Dee Lindon, Peter Lindon

Highest B&C stratification teams

- 25=Jonathan Lillycrop, Sonel Mehta, Paul Nicholas, Rachel Lillycrop
- 25=Phillip Taylor, Peter Grauer, Senthur Shenmugarasa, Patrick Gaudart

Swiss Pairs for the Harold Poster Cup

12-13 August 2023

- 1 Ben Norton & Stefano Tommasini
 - 2 Eran Assaraf & Lee Rosenthal
 - 3 John Noonan & Maria Whelan
 - 4 Alastair Gidman & Joe Fawcett
 - 5= Tom Paske & Diana Nettleton
 - 5= John Sansom & Jason Hackett
- Top Senior Pair (Mercian Bridge Trophy)**
- 3 John Noonan & Maria Whelan
- Highest B stratification pair**
- 34= Phillip Taylor & Peter Grauer
 - 34= Peter Rowell & Francis Kelly
- Highest C stratification pair (Brighton Plate)**
- 57 Grzegorz Blicharz & Maks Blicharz

Friday Fast Pairs

11 August 2023

- 1 Anthony Golding & Francis Morton
- 2 Nigel Lancaster & David Benjamin
- 3 Gideon Harvey & Daniel Winter

Saturday Fast Pairs

12 August 2023

- 1 Kostadin Vasilev & Anton Mauve
- 2 Gordon Rainsford & Jonathan Lillycrop
- 3 Grzegorz Blicharz & Maks Blicharz

Sat Swiss Pairs Lite (1 day)

12 August 2023

- 1 Evelyne Thomas & Stephen Martin
- 2 Peter Randall & Liza Furnival
- 3 Eddie Williams & Sue Millard

Sun Swiss Pairs Lite (1 day)

13 August 2023

- 1= Simon Porter & Anthony Collins
- 1= Cathy Macnaughton & Maureen Walker
- 3= Franco Civello & Andy Osborn
- 3= John Austin & Ron Seymour

Swiss Pairs Lite combined

12 & 13 August 2023

- 1 Evelyne Thomas & Stephen Martin
- 2 John Austin & Ron Seymour
- 3 Anthony Collins & Simon Porter

GCH Fox Champ Pairs



Swiss Teams - Brighton Bowl



John Carter Seniors



Brighton Plate



Mixed Pairs



Mercian Trophy



Saturday Swiss Pairs Lite



Harold Poster Cup



Play under way



DISCUSS IT WITH AN EXPERT -
CHRIS JAGGER ONLINE, PAGE 72

PORTLAND BOWL



The Portland Bowl Finals took place in late April at the Portland Club in London. In the final, Cambridge A beat Imperial A. The Cambridge line-up (pictured, from left to right), included Alberto Racca, Lily Kearney (captain), Theo Sinclair & Oscar Selby. The cup was presented by Christopher Kemp (centre). This is Cambridge's first win since 2020, and Imperial's first appearance in the final of the Portland Bowl since 2014. Imperial A was represented by Ervin Wee, Zitai Wang, Lee Ann Maddison & Ben Lewis.

In the Portland Bowl Plate final (the consolation event), UCL A beat Durham A.

PACHABO CUP



The Pachabo Cup, in mid-June, was won by Gloucestershire which was represented by Robert Myers, Daniel McIntosh,

Paul Denning & Garry Watson. The event is for the winners of the county teams championship of each County Association of the EBU.

Suffolk (Rick Hanley, Mike Sherer, Chris Green & Christopher Chambers) were second and Manchester (John Hassett, Jeff Morris, Andrew Woodcock & Catherine Draper) were third.

GERARD FAULKNER SALVER

The final of the 2022-23 Seniors Knockout was held on RealBridge in mid-June. In the match, the team of Sandy Davies, Tom Gisborne, Dave Robinson & Tony Sowter beat the team of Miles Cowling, David S Jones, Rob Lawy & Robert Stevens by 39 IMPS.

SPRING BANK HOLIDAY CONGRESS



The Spring Bank Holiday Congress was held in Reading, F2F, for the first time since 2019. The Swiss Teams was won by Simon Cope, Sara Moran, Diana Nettleton and Andrew McIntosh. In second place were Simon Hult, Gunnar Hallberg, Tracy Sherman and Stefan Lindfors.

SWISS PAIRS

The Swiss Pairs was won by Simon Hult & Gunnar Hallberg. Just behind, in second place were Mike Bell & Sally Young.



TWO STAR PAIRS

David Gold & Catherine Seale won the Two-Star Pairs. In second place were Paul Barden & Claire Robinson, with Simon Cope & Diana Nettleton in third place



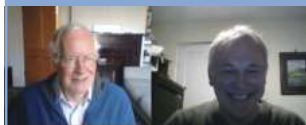
JACK HIGH SWISS PAIRS

In the Jack High Swiss Pairs, Billie MacCarthy & Sara Chiappara finished in first place. Very close, and joint second, were Paul Spencer & Ian Sidgwick and Alan Oliver & Sue Oliver.



The online **9-High Improvers Pairs**, was won by Bernadette Mathias & Colin Seabridge, with Marcia Scane & Robert Scane taking second place.

CORWEN TROPHY



John Liebeschuetz & Rod Oakford of Cambs & Hunts won the Corwen

Trophy in early June. The event is for the leading pairs from the most recent pairs championship of each County Association of the EBU. In second place were Christine Dyer & David Dawson from Surrey, with Jeremy Willans & Jill Skinner from Kent in third place.

GARDEN CITIES TROPHY



Cambridge BC from Cambs & Hunts won the Garden Cities Trophy, the competition for each county's 'teams-of-eight club champions'. Last year's winners, Mayfield BC, finished in second place and Manchester BC was third.

Cambridge BC was represented by Paul Barden, Julian Wightwick, Catherine Curtis, Graham Hazel, Claire Robinson, Paul Fegarty, Julian Wightwick and David Kendrick (not pictured).

HUBERT PHILIPS

The Hubert Phillips Bowl, the National Championship for Mixed Pivot Teams, has been won by the *Leslie* team (Mike Bell, Sarah Bell, Ollie Burgess, Tim Leslie & Ben Norton), who beat Paul Hackett's team (Barbara Hackett, Jason Hackett, Justin Hackett, Paul Hackett & Martin Taylor) at the end of July.

HUBERT PHILLIPS PLATE

The Hubert Phillips Plate - the consolation event - was won by the *Thrower* team of Croz Crosswell, Aleksandar Lishkov, Sara Moran, Helen Rose, Henry Rose & James Thrower. They beat Marusa Gold, Jonathan Harris, Niall Igoe & Steve Root in the final.

SCHAPIRO SPRING FOURSOMES



The *Plackett* team of Peter Crouch, Peter Bertheau, Espen Erichsen, Richard Plackett, Andrew Robson and Alexander Allfrey won the Schapiro Spring Foursomes.

In a tense final the Plackett team finished ahead of the Dyson team (Erik Berg, Andrew Dyson, Tor Eivind Grude & Glyn Liggins) after using their prerogative to play eight extra boards as the undefeated team. The Dyson team had a narrow lead after 32 boards. The defeated semi-finalists were the *Tommasini* and *Black* teams.

PUNCHBOWL



The Punchbowl, the secondary knockout event, was won by Linus Dahlstrom, Simon Ekenberg, Oliver Lawrence, Patrick Lawrence & Ulf Nilsson. They beat the *Predgy* team in the final.

HAMILTON CUP



The winners of the Hamilton Cup, for the Swiss Teams on Monday, were the team of Guido Hopfenheit, Diana Hopfenheit, Barbara Hackett & Sebastian Reim.

INTER-COUNTY LEAGUE

The National Finals of the Inter-County Leagues took place online in June. Champions from each of the five regional Inter-County competed alongside last year's national champions.

Kent successfully defended their 'A' division title; Congratulations also to Warwickshire 'B' and Northants 'C' who won their respective divisions.

The winning Kent team was: Norman Selway & Kay Preddy, Jeremy Willans & Peter Law, Michael Prior & Mike Hampton, Gerald Soper & Colin Wilson.

SCARBOROUGH CONGRESS



Sara Moran & Andrew McIntosh were the victors in the **Swiss Pairs** at the Scarborough Summer Congress which took place in mid-July. In joint second place were Mike Bell & Sarah Bell and Neeraj Tanna & Jon Thoresen.

The **Multiple Teams A** final was won by Catherine Draper, Andrew Woodcock, John Holland & Jackie Pye. They finished ahead of the team of Jeff Wilkins, Ann Wilkins, Michael Tomlinson & Linda Smith.

The **Multiple Teams B** final was won by Cath Fox, Ann Owen, Jon North, David Arundel. The team of Sue Woodcock, Stuart Clarke, Susan Fjortoft & Nick Woodcock finished second.

A new two-session **Category Pairs** event took place on the first day. The overall winners were Daniel Baines & Robert Miller. The competition incorporated the Patrick Jourdain Trophy for the top Seniors Pair which went to Jackie Davies & Derek Maggs. There were also prizes for the top Mens Pair (barring the overall winners) which went to second-placed Alan Jarvis & Alan Hayward; the best Womens Pair – Sue Pell & Agnes Baxter; and the best Mixed Pair – Sarah Jones & Andy Baruch.

ONLINE ONE-DAY GREEN-POINTED SERIES

Swiss Pairs - March – Robert Plumley & Tony Verran triumphed in the inaugural event, ahead of Warner Solomon & Ian Walsh.

Swiss Teams - May – The winners were Trevor Ward, Rob Cliffe, Dave Robinson & Tony Sowter. In a close finish, the team of Patrick Shields, Rob Lawy, Andy Cope and Giles Ip finished just 2 VPs behind.

Swiss Pairs - June – Rod Hose & David Adams finished in first place, ahead of joint second Giles Ip & Andy Cope and Richard Hillman & Stefano Tommasini.

Swiss Teams - July – The winning team comprised Adriano Rodrigues, Marcos Toma, Ben Norton & Stefan Tommasini. In second place were the team of Paul Murray, Andrew Woodcock, David Debbage & Paul Hackett.

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Willie Coyle
1937 – 2023

Willie Coyle was widely considered to be Scotland's greatest ever bridge player. In partnership with Victor Silverstone he played in the Camrose Trophy from the mid-1960s to the late 70s, winning six times and drawing twice.

In the days before devolution, Willie played six times in the Great Britain Open team. In 1976 in Monte Carlo, he won a World Bridge Federation bronze medal in the fifth Bridge Olympiad.

Willie won the Bridge Great Britain Gold Cup four times, three with a Scottish team and finally with an English team in 1993, beating a Scottish team captained by Les Steel in the final.

Initially a maths teacher, he became involved in school administration and performance measurement, earning an MBE for services to education in 2003.



Philip Poulter
1937 – 2023

Philip Poulter was twice the NPC (non-playing captain) of the English Lady Milne team in the early 1990s, both times securing victory.

Philip was an accomplished bridge player who, with Duncan Quibell, won the Sussex County Championship Teams 20 times, over six decades (a record) from 1967-2017. They also triumphed in the Schapiro Spring Fours in 1988 playing with Peter Czerniewski & Sandra Landy.

EBU Chair Ian Payn said, 'Whenever one played against Philip Poulter and his long-term partner Duncan Quibell, one was not only in the presence of two fine players, but also enjoying the company of two of nature's gentlemen.'



Brian Crack
1940 – 2023

Brian Crack made a considerable and lengthy contribution to bridge administration at club, county and national level. He received the EBU Silver Award in 2014 for his work on many of its committees, in particular the introduction of blue points, and Pay to Play.

An accountant by trade, he was also a fine bridge player and won many national events, particularly with his wife, Pat Spear, who predeceased him, and subsequently with Shirley Goldwin.

Brian was a stalwart of the Kent bridge scene, taking roles within the KCBA and clubs. He was known as a 'superb player and a welcoming and encouraging teacher.'



David Burgess
1935 – 2023

David and his late wife Joan were keen bridge players and contributed both expertise and administrative skills to Nottinghamshire CBA. They received the EBU's Dimmie Fleming Award in 2014 for services to the county. David had served on the county board from 2000 to 2015 taking the role of Events Secretary and Secretary.

He was also a member of the EBU Panel of Referees from 2006 to 2011 and chaired appeals panels at EBU congresses in the Midlands during that time.

Aside from bridge he nursed many interests in natural history, wildlife and latterly in 19th century literature.



EBED hits double figures

2023 marks the tenth anniversary of EBED, to which many bridge players might respond – what does it do exactly? If they manage to recall that it's something to with teaching, they probably won't unscramble the acronym beyond English Bridge *something* Education? *Something*? Brand awareness may not be its forté but it has been doing some vital work rather quietly and this is certainly worth celebrating.

English Bridge Education and Development separated from the English Bridge Union in 2013. It took with it responsibility for promoting bridge teaching throughout England including the training of teachers and directors. It took ownership of the ACOL system and conducts research (the 'development' bit of its title) such as looking at the effect of the game on memory and ageing. To look at its impact, I talked to three EBED graduates about how the organisation has helped them on their bridge journeys.

I WISH I'D LEARNT EARLIER!



Gary Jennison was one of the first students to test out **EBED's Fast Track Course** for beginners. Targeting those who wanted to develop a basic level of competency swiftly, it launched a book with the ambitious subtitle of 'Learn and Play in 24 Hours'. Gary joined a class run by the Tessa Templeton School of Bridge in South Buckinghamshire and

was soon addicted. He recalls the teaching as being 'punchy and purposeful'. The teacher really ensured she got her point across and was understood before we moved on. She was an experienced teacher and that was key – much more than the level of bridge knowledge. I've always been confident with figures and this also helped me greatly.

'I signed up on retirement so I could play with my wife who had learnt five years earlier. The course was great and I couldn't wait for the second term. I also spent a lot of time reading about bridge and particularly articles by Andrew Robson as he teaches the same system as the Fast Track course.'

Within five months Gary braved the clubroom at the Phyllis Court Club where the warm welcome ensured he never looked back. He now plays regularly online and face-to-face always taking his development seriously. He continues to dedicate time to reading and improving his game and is now being tutored by Charlie Bucknell.

Reflecting on his experience of EBED's Fast Track programme, he has only one regret. 'I wish I learnt earlier!

TEACHING OPENED UP A NEW LIFE FOR ME

John Barker took **EBED's Teacher Training Course** at a crossroads in his life. Newly retired and



separated, he jumped at the offer to take over the teaching at his local club in Great Yarmouth. He recalls approaching the course with some confidence. 'In my past life I'd had a very successful business where I'd trained a lot of people and I'd also been a hockey coach. I was looking for a new

challenge in my life.' He responded well to the coaching of Club Teacher Trainer Harold Schogger. 'It was excellent – he taught us about different learning styles, and we had to teach a short lesson to the other students. I came away very enthused.'

It wasn't long before he had a client base sufficient that he needed to build a house extension for teaching space. He reflects ruefully, 'I spent more on that than I will ever earn from bridge teaching!'

For John it's about the reward of seeing his students develop and enjoying the lifestyle it offers. He now spends several weeks of the year hosting for *First For Bridge* and travels have ranged from the more quotidian Telford to the rather brighter shores of Tenerife. His romantic life has picked up too and he's busy bringing his new wife up to speed on his favourite game. She realised only a few days after their blind date that bridge would be part of the deal! Sarah has also trained under EBED and now teaches in her own right.

Like Gary, John takes his own game seriously and through his travels has struck up a friendship and bridge partnership with Andrew Kambites – something that would not have been possible if he hadn't become a teacher. Now they play regularly and Andrew helps him devise teaching hands. John describes Andrew as 'an absolute inspiration'.

Covid put a halt to normal proceedings and John spent the months teaching bridge online which he said, 'kept me sane – I didn't charge a penny – just did it for love.' He now offers a range of online sessions and classes, as well as face-to-face lessons.

John sets high expectations for his students regularly reminding them that, 'Beckham didn't play for England because he just kicked a ball round a bit'. He sees a need for more stratified events and recognizes that his students will have a diversity of bridge paths ahead of them with only a few aiming for the top.

I'D NEVER OPENED THE RULE BOOK

Megan Jones' bridge journey is one that will lift the hearts of those lamenting the decline in our game and the increase in the average age of its players. At just 22, she is not only an accomplished player but an experienced County Director.



With both her parents serious players, she found herself with cards in her hands at a very young age. By eleven she had learned the

game but not the laws. Her bronze Duke of Edinburgh course requirement to learn a new skill prompted Megan to sign up to **EBED's Director's Training Course** at the age of 15.

'I thought it would be a good idea because it's sort of a weird thing that a lot of people know how to play but they don't know the laws at all.'

She took the challenge in her stride freely admitting, 'I don't think I'd even opened the rule book before going on that course.' She swiftly gained experience directing in Stratford-Upon-Avon. 'That worked well after school as I could take my homework and direct at the same time.' By the time Megan came to do her Gold Duke of Edinburgh, she felt confident enough to undertake **EBED's County Director course**. She admits this was more of a challenge. 'We would go through a law and role play which was a great way of learning how to deal with something at the table. It's not easy when four players are talking to you all at the same time and trying to get their own points across. It was about judgements – not being right or wrong – but we had to back them up with evidence.'

Megan worked for county events in Coventry where she met quite a few 'interesting difficult people.' In particular, 'there was one pair... yeah...' The unfinished sentence speaks volumes about her tact and maturity.

Lockdown meant, as for many others, a shift to online and Megan directed for BBO. 'We get a lot of calls over hesitations. It's hard because people have issues with their Wi-Fi, they might be making a cup of tea or have gone to the loo – you have to give people a bit more leeway – be a bit kinder.'

Megan reflects that directing has 'helped me to be a better bridge player because I know more about the game.' It's inspiring to hear Megan talk – young energy and talent like this is the fairy dust that might just revive the fortunes of bridge – so when she makes suggestions, we should listen. Hear this. 'I would have loved to have played at school and I tried really hard to get a bridge club going but it was difficult without a teacher. I sort of half taught a couple of friends. If only I could have had a place that would have been fantastic.'

EBED's work has enabled many of us to find new and exciting bridge journeys. Here's to the next ten years. If you are interested in an EBED training course, please contact lisa@ebedcio.org.uk. □

18th YOUTH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 18th World Youth Championships took place in early August in Veldhoven, in the Netherlands. The main events were the teams categories and England sent players for the U26 Open, U26 Women, U21 and U16. Several of the players also took part in the 15th European Youth Pairs Championships directly before the World Championships at the same venue.

In the teams events the U26 Women and the U21 teams reached the top eight places to qualify for the quarter-finals, but were knocked out by strong opposition. The other two teams had mixed results in the round robin, and failed to reach the QFs.

There were some notable successes in the Pairs Championships. Imogen La Chapelle & Charlotte Bedford won the bronze medal in the U26W Pairs event. In the Open IMP Pairs, Lucy Norman & Kim Hudson finished 4th and received a trophy for the highest-placed U21 pair in the event. Kim & Lucy also finished in 6th place in the U21 Pairs final and were the highest placed pair of the four English pairs who qualified for the final.



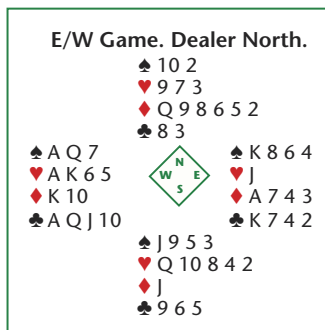
Left: Imogen La Chapelle & Charlotte Bedford
Right: Lucy Norman & Kim Hudson

YOUTH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS – U26 TEAM By Michael Byrne

The U26 team was represented by Daniel Winter & Sam Anoyrkatis, Harry Madden & Joseph Clark, Liam Sanderson & Aaron Hutton with Michael Byrne as NPC and Stephen Kennedy the remote coach.

England's U26 team received a late invite to the Youth World Championships and sadly we finished in 18th position out of 24 teams.

There weren't many high spots in the bridge, but this was our biggest gain of the tournament. With England sitting N/S, North passed and East opened 1♦ (the traditional approach – suit below the



singleton). The South hand looks like a load of rubbish but, facing a partner that couldn't open the bidding, Liam Sanderson knew there was a lot on for his opponents, so he overcalled with a pre-emptive jump to 2♥. West doubled and North jumped to 4♥ to crowd the auction. There was now no chance that E/W would find the grand slam in clubs, and when 4♥ came around to West he closed proceedings with a crude jump to 6NT. (A double of 4♥ looks to produce around 1400, with N/S making three trump tricks, a spade and a diamond).

6NT is cold but only on accurate play - West must duck a heart (called 'rectifying the count') and then cash their 11 tricks. The pressure will be too much for South to bear, as they have to guard both the spade and the heart. Whatever they throw will give you 12 tricks. Declarer was not up to this and went one down, but that only served to increase the size of our swing.

At the other table Daniel Winter & Sam Anoyrkatis, sitting E/W, bid and made 7♣ with a careful and controlled auction for +2140 and 19 IMPs to England.

Although we didn't feature on the podium this time, all of my team are determined to put in the hard work and dedication to ensure that we qualify by right at next year's European Championships.



U26 Youth World Championship team, from left: Joseph Clark, Liam Sanderson, Aaron Hutton, Harry Madden, Michael Byrne (NPC), Sam Anoyrkatis and Daniel Winter

YOUTH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS – U26W TEAM By Lily Kearney

The U26 Women's team was represented by Imogen La Chapelle & Charlotte Bedford, Kim Hudson & Lucy Norman and Dido Coley playing with me, Lily Kearney. Claire Robinson was our NPC.

Going into the last match of the first round robin the England U26W team was in second plac, with USA2 to play. By a quirk of the scheduling system, we had the more difficult teams to play towards the end, so needed a good result in the set to secure a solid position going into the knock-out stages. Board 8 of the set proved to be interesting: it was Game All, dealer West and Kim Hudson, sitting East, picked up this hand:

♠ 10 8 7 5 3 2
♥ K 8
♦ J 5
♣ 9 8 6

After two passes Kim opened a trash multi 2♦, showing a (very!) weak two in a major. This was a rather courageous bid, but ultimately successful when N/S

quickly lighted in 3NT and easily brought in 11 tricks. This was the auction:

West	North	East	South
Norman	Erlichman	Hudson	Hwang
Pass	Pass	2♦ ¹	Dble
2♠ ²	Pass	Pass	3NT
All Pass			
¹ Multi 2♦, ² pass or correct			

At the other table I sat South and picked up this rather tasty hand:

♠ A Q
♥ A Q J 10 7
♦ K 3
♣ A K 10 4

West	North	East	South
Sullivan	Coley	Johnstone	Kearney
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♣ ¹
Pass	2♦ ²	Pass	2♥ ³
Pass	2♠ ⁴	Pass	3♣ ⁵
Pass	3♥ ⁶	Pass	4♥ ⁷
Pass	4♠ ⁸	Pass	4NT ⁹
Pass	5♣ ¹⁰	Pass	6♥

All Pass

¹ game forcing or 22-23 balanced,

² waiting, ³ Kokish, 24+ balanced or natural, ⁴ forced relay, ⁵ 5+ hearts & 4+ clubs, ⁶ setting hearts, some extras,

⁷ minimum, ⁸ cue, ⁹ RKCB, ¹⁰ one or four keycards

The American East decided she might want at least one honour for a weak 2, so passed. After I had shown my shape Dido showed slam interest with a forcing 3♥, and we headed slamwards. West led the ♠J and Dido tabled a rather beautiful hand:

♠ K 6 3
♥ 5 4 3
♦ A 10 9 6
♣ J 3 2

We had bid to a good slam ... but for the small issue of actually making it.

There is a potential loser in hearts and clubs, with finessing positions in both suits. However, there is a dearth of entries to dummy: the ♦A for sure, and the ♠Q can be overtaken but that would give up on the chances of discarding my fourth club.

I decided to play hearts from the top, hoping for a singleton king(!) or the ♥K on my left where it would lose anyway, and fall back on the clubs (finesse or drop) if necessary. I won the spade lead with the ace, cashed ♥A and played ♥Q, dismayed to see the ♥K appear doubleton on my right – I had eschewed a making line for one that could go very wrong!

East returned a spade to my queen, and I cashed the rest of the hearts from the top throwing a diamond and the ♣J from dummy, then played the ♣A (just in case the ♣Q was singleton and solved my issues – alas it was not!) Next came the ♦K and a diamond to the ace, under which East dropped the ♦J. Now I needed East to hold the ♣Q, or West to hold the ♦Q and guarded ♣Q and find herself squeezed on the ♠K.

When I cashed the ♠K (throwing a club from hand), West gave all the telltale signs of someone



U26 Women Youth World Championship team, from left: Charlotte Bedford, Imogen La Chapelle, Kim Hudson, Claire Robinson (NPC), Lucy Norman, Dido Coley, Lily Kearney

being squeezed: she quite literally squirmed in her chair, pulling out different cards before returning them to her hand, finally discarding a club. Knowing where the missing cards were, I played the last club towards my king, crashed the queen and won the last trick with the ♣10. A lesson to us all: if you tell declarer you're being squeezed, she'll get the position right!

Helped along by this board, we won the match by 40 IMPs, putting us in first place overnight. Unfortunately, we couldn't hold this, and ended the round robin stage in 4th, drawing Poland in the quarterfinal. Sadly the Poles thoroughly outplayed us, and ended our journey. Poland went on to beat Norway and France and win the event.

For a team competing in an U26 category where none of us is older than 21, we were very pleased with our performance, and we'll be using our experience to propel us onwards and upwards – look for us (hopefully towards the top of the rankings!) at the YC Ladies Teams in November and the Junior Channel Trophy in December.

YOUTH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS – U21 TEAM By Tom Furness

The Youth World Championships featured some very strong teams. The England U21s came 8th at the end of the 5-day round robin, just ousting the Netherlands after an extremely close finish. We were to play Israel the next day, who had finished second.

There were swings all match for both sides, and it was impossible to predict the winner. For the first half of the day we were definitely the better side, outplaying Israel on many boards. An example of one of our good boards is shown below:

Game All. Dealer South.			
<div> ♠ Q 5 2 ♥ 9 8 2 ♦ A 7 6 5 3 ♣ Q 5 </div>			
<div> ♠ K 10 8 6 4 3 ♥ J 10 7 3 ♦ Q J ♣ 4 </div>	<div> N W E S </div>	<div> ♠ J 9 7 ♥ A K 6 5 4 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ 8 2 </div>	
<div> ♠ A ♥ Q ♦ K 10 9 ♣ A K J 10 9 7 6 3 </div>			

West	North	East	South
Moskovitz	Rose	Msika	Furness
1♠	1NT	2♣	1♣
Pass	5♣	All Pass	4♣

I (Tom Furness) was sitting South and was pleased to notice that not only was I the dealer, but I had a fairly nice hand! I started with a simple better minor 1♣, West noticed they had some spades and overcalled 1♠ and Henry Rose bid 1NT. East promptly raised to 2♣ and it was now my bid again. I briefly considered 3NT, but having only one heart, combined with the lack of a negative double from Henry, I strongly suspected that the opponents had a secret large heart fit, and we might not have them stopped! If Henry had as little as ♠K and ♦A, we could be making 6♣ and going down in 3NT, which would be far from ideal.

Having discarded 3NT, I bid a suit-setting 4♣, which was forcing in our agreements. Henry judged well not to cue bid 4♦ with a wasted ♠Q, and settled for a raise to 5♣, which ended the auction. As it was, the friendly diamond layout enabled us to take 12 tricks, but we weren't too worried about Israel bidding 6♣. Expecting a flat board, we were pleased when scoring up to find that this was the auction at the other table:

West	North	East	South
L. Fegarty	Sabbah	J. Fegarty	Sliowicz
1♠	1NT	2♣	1♣
All Pass			3NT

The Israeli South confidently bid 3NT over 2♣, and counted nine top tricks but perhaps forgot that he would be unable to trump his heart losers in 3NT. Our wonderful teammate Jamie Fegarty found the ♥A lead and declarer was probably not too pleased at the sight of the dummy. Despite playing reverse attitude (a low card would be encouraging), Liam Fegarty, sitting West, clarified the position by throwing the jack under the ace! Now it was simple for Jamie to underlead his ♥K to the ♥10 and for Liam to return the ♥7 to unblock the heart suit and take declarer one down.

Unfortunately, despite winning for much of the match, Israel pulled back with ten boards to go and

narrowly ended up knocking us out by 19 IMPs. This didn't stop it from being a great tournament all round and we were proud to hold the European champions to such a close match.

We joined the Point-a-Board (also known as BAM) match after the QF and came 4th in the final, narrowly missing out on the top three. Everyone had better watch out for us next year!



U21 Youth World Championship team, from left: Charlie Bucknell (coach), Jamie Fegarty & Liam Fegarty, Andy Cope & Thomas Gardner, Tom Furness & Henry Rose, Ewa Wieczorek (NPC)

YOUTH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS – U16 TEAM By Paul Barden

The U16 team was represented by Aman Parekh & William Battersby, Thomas Bradkin & Harriet Cork, Aleks Birdsall & Maks Blicharz with Paul Barden, as NPC.

I was impressed with the defence found by Harriet & Thomas on the first board of our match against Chinese Taipei.

Harriet, North, opened 1♦ – I thoroughly approve of opening 11-counts at Love All – East overcalled 1NT, then West transferred to spades and bid 3NT, which became the final contract.

Love All. Dealer North.

♠ K 4

♥ Q 8 4

♦ Q 7 5 4

♣ J 10 5

♠ A Q 7 5 3

♥ 10 7 2

♦ 10 2

♣ A 9 8

♠ J 10

♥ A K J 6

♦ K J 6

♣ Q 7 6 2

♠ 9 8 6 2

♥ 9 5 3

♦ A 9 8 3

♣ 4 3

N

E

W

S

West	North	East	South
Cheng	Cork	Chan	Bradkin
	1♦	1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Thomas Bradkin naturally led his partner's suit and intelligently chose the nine, which had the effect of taking an 'intra-finesse'. The defence can now establish the diamonds for only one loser.

Declarer won the first trick with the jack and tried the spade finesse, which lost, and now Harriet played her part by returning the ♦Q to the king and ace, pinning dummy's ♦10. Thomas cashed the ♦8 then continued the fine defence by switching to a club, rather than leading a fourth diamond which his partner would have had to win, leaving her with no effective exit card. Declarer had to take dummy's ace to avoid going off at once but, with the spades blocked, he could make only two tricks in the suit and, despite the friendly lie of the hearts, could come to only eight in all.

At the other table, the ♦3 lead went to the queen and king (North could have brought off the same intra finesse by playing the ♦7, but couldn't possibly know to do that). Will Battersby took the spade finesse, the defence played more diamonds, and so declarer made 11 tricks. That was 11 IMPs to England, and an eventual narrow win in the match.

In the end the team fell short of the top eight positions, missing out on the quarter-finals. But they won almost half their matches, including a good win against Poland, the eventual champions and a narrow win against USA1 who came third. I hope to see these players in the knock-out stages of future competitions. □



U16 Youth World Championship team, from left: Will Battersby, Aleks Birdsall, Harriet Cork, Maks Blicharz, Thomas Bradkin, Aman Parekh, Paul Barden (NPC)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send your letters to the editor, Lou Hobhouse, Raggett House, Bowdens, TA10 0DD, 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.

OFFENSIVE/DEFENSIVE

I wonder what decision Sarah Bell would have made in a recent moderate club pairs game given her comments (*May 2023*) on whether hands are offensive or defensive. Put yourself South.

N/S Game. Dealer South

♠ –
♥ 10 8 4 2
♦ Q 10 9 5
♣ J 10 9 5 3

♠ AK 8 7 4 2
♥ AQ J 7 3
♦ K 2
♣ –

♠ Q J 10 9
♥ K 9 6 5
♦ J 7 6
♣ 8 4

♠ 6 5 3
♥ –
♦ A 8 4 3
♣ AK Q 7 6 2

W	N	E	S
1♠	5♣	Pass	Pass
5♣ ¹	Pass	Pass	?

¹ After a long squirm

In play 6♣ is cold, as is 6♥ by the opposition, and 6♠ only fails if the heart ruff is found.

Ian Climie

I'd have raised 5♣ to 6♣ directly and am definitely bidding on the auctions given.

Sarah Bell

CORONATION COVER

I must register my disappointment at the choice of cover on the *May English Bridge*.



I love bridge. I love my country. But as a republican atheist, I find the sentiments expressed on the cover completely counter to what I think is good about our country.

You and the EBU may not consider it to be a particularly controversial cover, but in being overtly monarchist and religious you have made a political statement on what is supposed to be a bridge magazine.

Jim Fletcher

SCORING FLAW

During play, the Bridgmate's actual score on each board is assessed based on the number of times each board has been played, and the interim percentage shown reflects this method. However, at the end the computer scores are altered for the boards which have been played one fewer time due to the sit-out, with one point added to each score and two points to the maximum. I suspect many players have wondered why their predicted percentage after the final board suddenly becomes less (or more) when the final result is published. Please explain.

Nick White

It is not the Bridgmate program but the scoring system (EBUScore Pairs or Scorebridge). The way to score boards with fewer scores than some other boards, is to factor the frequencies using the neuberg formula – which is the default method. The method you have described above is called 'simple matchpoints' and is an option in various scoring programs but is not recommended.

Robin Barker

ACE HIGH

A letter in *May's English Bridge* asks when the ace was moved from being the lowest card to the highest in a suit. This was already the order in 1665 in the game of

Ruff and Trump, a forerunner of whist and hence bridge. One of the earliest references to ace ranking above king is a description of the Italian game of Trappola in 1564. But it might be separate from whist and bridge, as promoting the lowest card to top seems to have happened independently in several games, sometimes with twos and threes promoted as well.

Before the 18th century it was rare for rules of card games to be written down, and information is sparse. Games were being played with a 52 card pack with four suits of three court cards and 10 pip cards in 1377. From this date on there are references to card playing across most of Europe, but almost nothing earlier. If you are interested in knowing more about other card games, have a look at my friend's site pagat.com, which has rules for over 1,000 different card games.

Noel Leaver

HEADMASTER'S NAME

I very much enjoy David Bird's *Bridge Fiction* covering the bridge battles at the public school. I have built up an image of the Headmaster whose name (like Inspector Morse) remained a mystery over a number of years. When his wife joined to partner him fairly recently, I'm sure she called him Alfred. But in the *May 2023* edition, she called him Arthur. Now is Norma forgetful or is it me?

I do hope in the future the ever patient Stefan Götel will get the better of Percy Cutforth and Bertie Bellis.

Gillian Leaver

I blame the editor

Ed

CAPTION COMPETITION

CROSSWORD NO 40

Compiled by MERMAN

Answers online, p73

1	2		3	4	5		6	7	8
9	10								
11						12			
13		14							
15				16					
17	18			19			20		
					21			22	
23				24					
	25								
26									

ACROSS

- 1 Four of them occasionally disregarded ace's scrambled confidential conversations (10 hyphenated)
- 10 Worldly locum spoken for (8)
- 11 With cover in two of the suits being established by investigation (6)
- 12 Odd diamond lead — it will take a lot of beating (4)
- 13 Plant life first ingested by wild dog, by the sound of it (5)
- 15 Lost the front of race card (3)
- 16 Jump raise then left in a state (6)
- 17 Ruler of green party's first triumph (6)
- 20 About to get hold of Yankee whisky (3)
- 21 Iridescent half-track (5)
- 23 Lumps in throats? No, before that (4)
- 24 Design that uses 12a in recital (6)
- 25 Finish work when King's company is back in power (8, two words)
- 26 Protected the interests of reps he'd twice had trouble with (10)

DOWN

- 2 Eat away at some gourmet cheese (4)
- 3 Authorises the installation of more pews (8)
- 4 Tip that's made primate cross (4)
- 5 Stood out in bustles (5)
- 6 Player in pursuit of sailors dressing (7)
- 7 Purify with chemicals a player's musical instrument (5)
- 8 One in a suit's no good for member of parliament — he's stupid (9)
- 9 Vegetable served with a sauce during Passover (9)
- 12 Referee's on board (8)
- 14 Label big election coverage as easy to read about (7)
- 18 About to manage hearts at this particular point in time (5)
- 19 Old zookeeper getting caught up for a score (5)
- 21 The purpose of alcoholic drink (4)
- 22 Pay attention — one's presumably playing West (4)



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

Thank you for all the captions I received for the one below. Congratulations to Rosella Emanuel for my favourite, shown beneath the picture. Other close contenders were Lydia Stanford's 'Yes, I know we are off in six darling'; Andrew Shillam's 'Turn that bloody thing orf or you'll be a singleton king!'; and Brian Gladman's 'I'm a king, Camilla, a king!'. 'Yes, Charles, I'm perfectly aware of your new NGS rating.'



He's come to ruff the king and queen

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Club Bidding Quiz

by Julian Pottage



Julian's answers to questions from page 18



Hand 1
 ♠ A Q 9 5 3
 ♥ 9
 ♦ A Q 3
 ♣ K J 6 2

W	N	E	S
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
?			

Hand 4
 ♠ K J 7
 ♥ A 10 8
 ♦ K 2
 ♣ Q 8 6 5 2

W	N	E	S
?	1♠	Pass	2♥

3♣. This hand with 16 high card points and a singleton is not quite good enough to jump to 4♣. One way to invite game is to bid a side suit or fragment in which help would be useful. Partner can sign off with a minimum, bid game with a maximum and take the club situation into account with an in-between hand.

Pass. You would have been reluctant to overcall at the two level with a poor suit like Qxxxx. You should feel even more uncomfortable about overcalling at the three level. Other reasons for going quietly are that your spade honours are poorly placed under the spade bid and that your hand is balanced.

Hand 2
 ♠ 7 6 5
 ♥ 9 7
 ♦ Q J 7 4
 ♣ A 10 8 2

W	N	E	S
?		1♦	Dble

Hand 5
 ♠ Q 8 5 2
 ♥ 7 3
 ♦ 10 4
 ♣ A J 8 6 4

W	N	E	S
?		1♠	3♦

3♦. Without the opposing double, unless you play inverted raises, you would have raised to 2♦. With the double it is worth bidding one level higher in an attempt to keep your left hand opponent out of the auction. If all your side can make is 2♦, it is unlikely that the opponents would let you play there.

3♠. If South had not overcalled, you would raised 1♠ to 2♠. After the overcall, it is worth bidding one level higher than you were planning to so as to show your spade support. Partner should allow for this in deciding whether to go on to 4♠.

Hand 3
 ♠ A K 8 6 3
 ♥ K 8 6
 ♦ Q 7 4
 ♣ 7 3

W	N	E	S
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

Hand 6
 ♠ A 9 4
 ♥ K 10 6
 ♦ A K Q J 6 5
 ♣ J

W	N	E	S
?			3♥

3♥. Partner's two level change of suit response in a major promises a 5-card or longer suit. Three-card heart support is therefore perfectly adequate. With a minimum opening bid, you raise hearts to the minimum sufficient level, inviting partner to bid game with extras.

3NT. Although your hand is unbalanced, you can count eight tricks on a heart lead and would be hopeful of some values opposite. While it would be nice not to have a singleton club, any help from partner in the suit should give your side a stopper. You are not expecting a club lead anyway. □

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Mary Williams

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Pat Holmes

Sue Horscroft

Alan Hughes

Carol Hughes

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Keith MacInnes

Tony Sandford

David Underhill

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David Rutter

Master

Faiz Bannourah

Andrew Cox

Anna Jaffey

Richard Parham

Peter Slater

Jean Wilson

Helen Woodcock

Westmorland

Master

Carl Penson

Wiltshire

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Keith Philpott

Master

Steve Brackenbury

Worcester

Master

Candy Shelley

Yorkshire

Life Master

Bob Brown

Regional Master

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Martyn James

Master

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Mar 4	8	EBU Tunisia Congress	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Chris Benneworth	£895
Mar 6	8	Bridge & Bowls in Paphos	★ ★ ★ ★	Mark Hooper	£795

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FIRST FOR
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George's expert lead

Cumbria's George Borwick took an opportunity to make an expert lead in one of the daily IMP Pairs tournaments in Bridge Club Live recently. As West he held:

♠ 8 6 3	W	N	E	S
♥ –	1♦	1♥	2♦	2♠
♦ A K J 9 7 3	Pass	3♠	Pass	4NT
♣ A 9 8 3	Pass	5♦	Pass	5♣
	All Pass			

George carefully selected the ♦7 in order for his partner to take with ♦Q. On being surprised to win with ♦Q, partner would read the seven as suit preference and lead a heart back for West to ruff and simply cash ♣A for one off. Here's the full deal:

♠ 8 6 3	♠ Q J 9	♠ 5
♥ –	♥ A Q J 9 8	♥ 10 7 5 4 2
♦ A K J 9 7 3	♦ 10 5	♦ 8 6 4 2
♣ A 9 8 3	♣ 6 4 2	♣ Q J 10
		♠ A K 10 7 4 2
		♥ K 6 3
		♦ Q
		♣ K 7 5

I had to feel slightly sorry for George as my partner took ♦Q and gobbled up her 11 tricks for a zero IMP swing. Leading off ♦A and ♦K would have been sufficient provided East retains her hearts and one club on the run of trumps, and provided that South doesn't have the inspiration to run ♥8 after three rounds of trumps.

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Persistence pays

If at first you don't succeed, try and try again. I am sure we were all told this many times when we were young, but the concept can also apply to declarer play. On this deal from a Funbridge IMP game, declarer needs to discard a loser on one of dummy's winners. The problem is that one of the defenders ruffs dummy's winners. It is perhaps surprising how often you can find that there is a second string to your bow as long as you never give up. Persistence is the key:

Game All. Dealer North. IMPs

♠ 10 9 4	♠ A Q J	♠ 8 7 5 2
♥ K	♥ 3	♥ A 7 6 4
♦ 9 6 4 3 2	♦ A K Q J 10 7	♦ 8
♣ Q 8 5 2	♣ 9 7 6	♣ A K J 3
		♠ K 6 3
		♥ Q J 10 9 8 5 2
		♦ 5
		♣ 10 4

Diagram showing a diamond lead from North to East, with a cross back to North.

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Dble	1♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Despite East's takeout double, suggesting majors, it is hard to see how this South hand will be of much use unless hearts are trumps. Once partner shows a better than minimum opening bid by jumping at his second turn, you take the bull by the horns and jump to game in your long suit.

West leads the ♠10 and the first thing you notice is that the defenders hold the ace-king of both clubs and hearts. The silver lining in this cloud, though, is

that they have not cashed their club winners. West's spade lead at least offers some hope that you can pitch one of your club losers on dummy's excellent diamond suit. East's takeout double suggests he will be short in diamonds, but all will be well as long as he has to follow twice. You clearly have to take your discard(s) before touching trumps, as the opponents will surely not miss a second opportunity to cash their winners.

So, you win the opening lead in dummy with the ♠J and immediately start on diamonds. East follows with the ♦8 when you cash the ace but, when you then continue with the ♦K, he ruffs with the ♥4. That's annoying but not fatal. Perhaps East started with a heart holding of ♥AK4. When you lead another top diamond from dummy, he will only be able to ruff with one of his trump winners, and you will then be able to pitch a club. So, cross back to dummy with the ♠Q and advance the ♦Q. Again, though, East produces a low trump, the ♥6.

Again, you overruff. Perhaps East started with ♥AK64 and he will only have high trumps left to ruff with next time. So, you return to dummy with a third round of spades, glad to see everyone following suit, and lead the ♦J. Frustratingly, though, East finds yet another low trump, the ♥7. That seems to be the end of your chances to dispose of a club loser.

There just seems to be one chance remaining, so you overruff for the third time and lead a trump. Lo and behold, West's ♥K and East's ♥A come crashing down on the same trick. East cashes his ♣A-K but the rest are then yours. Ten tricks made!

What a remarkable deal: you lost two club tricks and yet still made 4♥ despite missing five trumps including the ace and king. What's even more amazing is that after the opening lead there was nothing the defence could have done to stop you. All you needed was a big dollop of persistence. □

Michael Byrne's Quiz from page 13

You are sitting East. On each of these hands partner opens 1♠ and the next hand passes. What do you do now?

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	?	

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3	Hand 4
♠ – ♥ J 7 ♦ K J 10 7 6 3 2 ♣ 10 5 3 2	♠ A Q 7 ♥ A K 6 5 ♦ 7 6 5 ♣ 7 3 2	♠ Q 5 4 ♥ K J 3 ♦ J 7 6 3 ♣ A Q J	♠ 8 7 4 ♥ Q J 4 3 ♦ A 5 4 ♣ K J 4

ANSWERS

Hand 1 should respond 1NT, however much it seems a strange bid. Every fibre of your being will want to bid those diamonds, but if you do so you will have to go to the two level and this will excite partner too much. The way to show this sort of hand is to bid 1NT and then rebid diamonds at your next go. It is very unlikely 1NT will be passed out, as when you are very shapely the other players will be as well, and by limiting your hand before you bid your long suit will dampen partner's enthusiasms.

Hand 2 should respond 2♣. A 2♥ response would show five cards remember, and 2♣ allows partner to get their hand off their chest. You expect to end up in 4♠ if partner is shapely, or 3NT from partner's side if they hold a strong balanced hand.

A response of 3NT would not be wrong in a classical sense, but the fact you have two suits wide open may cause partner to leave you there when 4♠ is better, for example if partner holds:

♠Jxxxx ♥QJ ♦AKxx ♣Jx

Hand 3 can respond 3NT, showing 13-15 and three card support for partner, who will remove to 4♠ if they have a 5-card suit and are not suitable for no trumps. (Remember, most 5-3-3-2 minimum hands would have opened 1NT.)

Ignoring the diamond suit may help partner to judge better if it is a slam hand, for example partner has:

♠AKJxx ♥AQxx ♦x ♣Kxx

whereas a response of 2♦ might make him think you have wasted values there.

Hand 4 should respond 2♣, as a 2NT response is best played as conventional. If partner rebids 2NT then we can raise them to 3NT, if they rebid spades or a new suit then a jump to 3♠ shows this strength of hand. 2♣ may seem like an ugly bid, but it has the advantage of leaving lots of bidding space to let partner define their hand. □

Paul Bowyer's Quiz from page 11

Q1

Hand 1
South plays in 4♠.
West leads the ♦A.

W	N	E	S
	1♣	Pass	1♠
Dble	2♣	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

♠ A J 8
♥ 5 3
♦ Q 9
♣ A J 7 5 3 2



♠ K Q 10 9 7 4
♥ K J 9 8
♦ J 10
♣ 4

How might you play in 4♠? You may not care for North's 2♣ raise but this author considers it superior to rebidding those feeble clubs, allowing East a potential entry into the auction. Anyway, 4♠ it is, with West marked with most of the honours in the red suits.

Your *Count and Plan* reveals just six spades, and the ♠A. You might try your luck in hearts, but that must be against the odds after West's takeout double.

West cashes the two top diamonds and switches to the ♣10. How should you play the hand?

ANSWER

No long suit in dummy should ever be ignored.

With such a paucity of winners you just have to hope that clubs split evenly. It might not be a great shot, but it's the only one you have. Take the ♣A, ruff a club, return to dummy with a spade to the ♠8, and ruff a club. If the suit has split evenly, you can draw trumps and throw three heart losers on the established clubs. Ten winners come from six spades and *four* clubs. Here's the full deal:

Question 2 overleaf

♠ A J 8
♥ 5 3
♦ Q 9
♣ A J 7 5 3 2

[click to
play
online](#)

♠ 5
♥ A Q 10 2
♦ A K 7 6 4
♣ 10 9 8



♠ 6 3 2
♥ 7 6 4
♦ 8 5 3 2
♣ K Q 6

♠ K Q 10 9 7 4
♥ K J 9 8
♦ J 10
♣ 4

Paul Bowyer's Quiz from page 11

Q2

Hand 2
South plays in 4♥.
West leads the ♣K,

W	N	E	S
			1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

♠ J 7 6 4 2
♥ 10 9
♦ A 6 5
♣ A 5 2



♠ A 3
♥ A K Q J 4 2
♦ J 10 3
♣ J 8

How might you play 4♥ as South with the hand above? Your **Count and Plan** shows nine easy winners (six hearts and three aces). How might you play to avoid losing two diamonds, a spade and a club?

ANSWERS

No long suit in dummy should ever be ignored.

On the sight of dummy, you may note that 3NT is an idiot-proof contract with nine top tricks (six hearts and three aces). Unfortunately, you cannot rewind the bidding and have to do your best to make ten tricks in hearts.

You take the ♣A and must play off the ♠A and another spade, hoping to ruff the suit out. The defence play two more clubs and it's here you have to play with care and attention. You must ruff the third club high so that the ♥10 9 are entries to the dummy.

Now, a heart to dummy's ♥9, a spade ruffed high, a heart to dummy's ♥10 and the penultimate spade ruffed in hand. At this point the fifth spade on table is a winner, so you can see the harbour lights and can row for home.

You draw the last trump, cross to the ♦A and triumphantly cash the last spade, dumping a diamond loser. A tricky hand. Here's the full deal:

♠ J 7 6 4 2
♥ 10 9
♦ A 6 5
♣ A 5 2

♠ 8 5
♥ 7 5 3
♦ Q 9 4
♣ K Q 10 9 3

♠ A 3
♥ A K Q J 4 2
♦ J 10 3
♣ J 8

♠ K Q 10 9
♥ 8 6
♦ K 8 7 2
♣ 7 6 4

[click to
play
online](#)

Note that the diamond suit is *frozen* – neither side can lead the suit to their advantage. □

COMPUTER SIMULATION OF MAY LEADS QUIZ RESULTS

By Nathan Piper

Hand 1

♠ A 7 5 3 2
♥ Q 9 7 4 2
♦ A K 5
♣ –

South	West	North	East
1NT ¹	2♣ ²	3NT	All Pass

¹ 12-14. ² Majors

ASSUMPTIONS

South has 12-14 HCP and a balanced or semi-balanced hand (5M, 6m and 5-4-2-2 allowed).

North has 12+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 10+HCP with a 6+-card minor.

East has no 5-card major and not 5+HCP with a 4-card major and a singleton.

Best lead in each suit:

♦A/K 41.9%, 4.50 tricks *

♠A 40.7%, 4.45 tricks

♥4 32.5%, 4.10 tricks

Other leads:

♥2 32.5%, 4.10 tricks

♥7 32.2%, 4.09 tricks

♥9 31.5%, 4.07 tricks

♠3 27.7%, 3.96 tricks

♠2 27.7%, 3.96 tricks

♠5 27.6%, 3.95 tricks

♠7 27.4%, 3.95 tricks

♥Q 27.2%, 3.94 tricks

♦5 10.2%, 3.51 tricks

Comments:

The computer really loves AK leads so no surprises that ♦A was top. ♠A coming 2nd is also not surprising as, when holding two aces, it almost invariably thinks that they are the top two leads. A low spade is worst because there are hands where, thanks to a long club suit in dummy, declarer has eight round suit tricks and can claim immediately on a low spade. Furthermore, on the rare hands where a low spade achieves something productive, the ace would probably have worked too.

The constraints used allow the 1NT opener to have any 5-4-2-2 hand in the range and any 6-3-2-2 with a 6-card minor. That style is quite extreme, but

I put in the opposite extreme style of disallowing all 5-4-2-2s and all 6-3-2-2s and found the results essentially unchanged. Intermediate styles will therefore yield similar results too.

Hand 2

♠ 8 5
♥ A 8 6 5 3
♦ 9 5 4
♣ Q 8 3

South	West	North	East
1NT ¹	Pass	2♥ ²	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♥ ³	Pass
4♣	Pass	4NT ⁴	Pass
5♣ ⁵	Pass	6♣	All Pass

¹ 15-17, ² transfer, ³ natural, ⁴ RKCB, ⁵ 2 KCs & ♠Q

ASSUMPTIONS

South has 15-17 HCP and a balanced or semi-balanced hand. South has three spades, two to three hearts and is allowed a six-card minor.

North has at least five spades and four hearts, at least 16 HCP if only 5-4 in the majors, or at least 13 HCP if more shapely, two keycards in spades.

East doesn't have an 8-card minor.

Best lead in each suit:

♥A 52.9%, 1.53 tricks *

♦5 1.5%, 0.87 tricks

♠5 1.5%, 0.88 tricks

♣Q 1.2%, 0.81 tricks

Other leads:

♥5 9.0%, 0.71 tricks

♥3 9.0%, 0.71 tricks

♥6 9.0%, 0.71 tricks

♥8 8.8%, 0.71 tricks

♦4 1.5%, 0.87 tricks

♦9 1.5%, 0.87 tricks

♠8 1.5%, 0.88 tricks

♣8 1.0%, 0.81 tricks

♣3 1.0%, 0.81 tricks

Comments:

I've never seen a clearer result! Not only is the ♥A by far the best lead but all the low hearts are much

more likely to beat the contract than leading either side suit. A little mental adjustment of these heart results is necessary, however. It's possible that leading the ♥A saves declarer a guess (for instance if KJ are in dummy) while leading a low heart causes declarer to misguess. The double-dummy declarer used by the simulator never guesses wrong. This reduces the success rate for the ♥A and increases the success rate for the low hearts – but not by nearly enough to change the ordering of the result.

I was interested to see how a club fared. There is a very pervasive idea that one should lead aggressively against slams. Mightn't partner have the ♣K allowing us to establish a second winner which we can cash when in with the ♥A? It's possible but fanciful. The simulator usually selects a passive lead against slams just as against games. Leading a club is actually worse than the numbers above suggest because, if we lead them, we may save declarer a guess. Why is the ♣Q better than a low club? Because we expect dummy to be shorter in clubs than declarer. Suppose declarer has AJ10x opposite x – leading low sets up a ruffing finesse.

Hand 3

♠ 8 7 5 3
♥ 8 7 5
♦ 7 6 5 3
♣ A 10

South	West	North	East
1NT ¹	Pass	2♦ ²	Pass
2♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass

¹ 15-17, ² transfer

ASSUMPTIONS

South 15-17 HCP and a balanced or semi-balanced hand (5M, 6m and 5·4·2·2 allowed). South has two hearts (or three hearts in a 4·3·3·3 shape).

North has 12-18 HCP, exactly five hearts, 5·3·3·2 shape or 2·5·4·2 with a 4-card minor..

East has no 8-card minor.

Best lead in each suit:

♣A 14.3%, 2.95 tricks *

♠7 10.3%, 2.86 tricks

♦6 9.2%, 2.83 tricks

♥7 5.8%, 2.68 tricks

Other leads:

♠3 10.3%, 2.86 tricks

5 10.3%, 2.86 tricks

♠8 10.3%, 2.86 tricks

♦7 9.2%, 2.83 tricks

♦5 9.2%, 2.83 tricks

♦3 9.2%, 2.83 tricks

♥5 5.8%, 2.68 tricks

♥8 5.8%, 2.68 tricks

♣10 5.4%, 2.53 tricks

Comments:

Predictably the computer wants to lead the ♣A. There are three reasons for this:

- 1 Our doubleton means partner is likely to have length in clubs (4.23 on average with 41% chance of 5+).
- 2 The strength of our doubleton means we need relatively little in partner's hand for this to work out well (compared to the other suits)
- 3 If partner discourages we still have time to inspect the dummy and then choose a different suit. Better than guessing blindly at trick one.

The order of the other suits is simply because, given the auction, partner has on average 3.13 spades, 2.92 diamonds and 2.72 hearts.

Anyone sceptical about all these unsupported ace leads might be interested to know what happens if you swap the ♣A for the ♣K. This eliminates factor 3 above. The results are shown overleaf.

♣K 10.5%, 2.38 tricks *

♠7 8.2%, 2.57 tricks *

♦6 7.2%, 2.53 tricks

♥7 4.8%, 2.39 tricks

Leading clubs is still clear-cut at teams but is now worst at pairs. All leads have taken a 2% hit because defensive prospects are poorer without the ace but the top club lead has taken a significant extra hit. This is because leading the ace saves a human declarer a guess when he has KJ whereas the double-dummy declarer used in the simulator always gets this guess right. This effect should have equal weight at both pairs and teams but we see that the ♣K is vastly worse than the ♣A at pairs in a way which can't be explained away by the vagaries of double-dummy analysers. This, I believe, is the power of factor 3 above. Control. It's potency isn't felt much at teams on this deal because if partner doesn't have good clubs we probably can't beat the contract. At pairs, though, there are still many matchpoints to fight for if we can switch well at trick two. □



A boring hand from Eastbourne?

It was great to be playing at Eastbourne again, and fantastic to see so many old friends there. If anybody reading this hasn't played there, it is a lovely place for a bridge event, being small and compact, a pretty coastline, and lots of good and relatively cheap accommodation and dining options. The bridge is great, with four days of teams and pairs events, as well as novice events and some evening speedballs.

It was a pleasure to be leading the *Discuss it with an Expert* session on the Saturday morning, and the first hand we discussed was a seemingly ordinary hand which I am sure passed without much comment at many tables. It came from the Mixed Pairs on Thursday evening:

Game All. Dealer East			
<div> <p>♠ 10 3</p> <p>♥ Q 10 7</p> <p>♦ K Q 8 3</p> <p>♣ 10 8 5 2</p> </div>			
<div> <p>♠ Q 7 4 2</p> <p>♥ 8 3</p> <p>♦ J 7 6 5 2</p> <p>♣ J 4</p> </div>	<div> <p>♠ A K J 8</p> <p>♥ J 9 5 4 2</p> <p>♦ 10</p> <p>♣ 7 6 3</p> </div>	<div> <p>♠ 9 6 5</p> <p>♥ A K 6</p> <p>♦ A 9 4</p> <p>♣ A K Q 9</p> </div>	<div> <p>W N</p> <p>E S</p> </div>

At many tables South opened 2NT, raised to 3NT, with 11 tricks made on a diamond lead. I can imagine comments of 'flattest board all day'. At other tables, the auction may well have been similar, but only making nine tricks on a spade lead. The comments may still have been 'flattest board all day'.

But at our table this was a rather interesting hand for our opponents. It was my partner's fault (as she chooses our system). I was just about to make a pass on the East cards when I recalled we were playing

2♦ as showing a weak hand with both majors (at least 5-4 at this vulnerability).

South doubled, as who would not, and East bid 2♠. This came back to South who had something of a problem. With 15-18 points she could have overcalled 2NT directly over 2♦, so it was the perfect strength to start with a double and then rebid 2NT. Just one issue – that 965 of spades was not the greatest stop.

There is much to be said for bidding 2NT. It shows the strength and nature of the hand, and if the spades are 4-4, even without a stop this might be the best thing. Even without that, with Axxx of spades, West may well be deterred from leading a spade, fearing it will give a cheap trick away to declarer's hypothetical king.

On the other hand, it could be plain silly, particularly if partner has a singleton. For example, take one of North's spades away and make it a diamond, and six of either minor is making, while 3NT is going off.

South decided to double, and this gave North something of an issue. What does 2NT mean? I suspect few people have discussed this sequence. If you have discussed the superficially similar sequence when opponents are playing a multi 2♦ opener, then I suggest the meaning should be the same (not because it is necessarily the right agreement, but simply for practical reasons).

Fortunately opponents were clear they were playing it as Lebensohl, but how strong do you need to be to show a 'good' hand by Lebensohl when partner is doubling for a second time? I don't think the second double shows the earth, there are too many hands you want to compete on. On the other hand, North could have bid over 2♠ directly. So I think this hand is in fact good enough to show as 'good'. Having said this I would prefer to play it as both minors – 'scrambling' since you had a chance to use Lebensohl on the round before (this is a good principle in general – that if you have Lebensohl

available and don't use it, you don't have it available next time around).

North decided to bid 2NT, South bid 3♣, and then North thought for some time before bidding 3♦. The thought could have shown a number of things, and might have conveyed 'unauthorised' information to his partner (a good tip is to do your thinking before bidding 2NT – which is likely to be simply deciding what 2NT means so unlikely to convey any information to partner).

South gave serious consideration to passing 3♦, but eventually moved with 3♠ (perhaps a little inconsistent with the 3♣ bid which could have been

and the double will not net any more. While if you are making it, they need to hope some other people are bidding it, and realistically, it is hard to know in the auction if anyone else is bidding a game!)

So, how do you make 3♦? You might think of discarding on the third spade, but this is not actually right. Instead, ruff it, and then cash the ace of diamonds. At this point there are four outstanding trumps, and you have only lost two tricks. So you can afford to lose two trump tricks, but you cannot afford another spade trick. So without touching further trumps, start playing on your winners, keeping the low trumps in dummy to ruff a fourth spade when it comes. □

West	North	East	South
		2♦	Dble
2♠	Pass	Pass	Dble
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	5♦
All Pass			

passed), and then over her partner's 4♣ bid, jumped to 5♦. So the full auction was:

The defence started with three rounds of spades, the third one being ruffed by North. Declarer played three rounds of trumps but then had to lose two trumps and a fourth spade. Three down.

North suggested South might have tried 5♠ over 4♣, which would have been as easy make.

So the play isn't interesting. Or is it? Suppose South had passed 3♦? Presumably that would have been eight tricks for one down. Have a look and plan the play.

The important thing here is to consider what other tables will be doing. With 27 points, and opponents playing an unusual method, it looks unlikely that many people are going to be missing game. If game is making you are getting a bad score, so the only hope of a good score is opponents going down in a contract. Therefore you should forget the overtricks and simply concentrate on trying to make your contract.

(You should be very careful with this thinking – the number of times I hear people incorrectly saying they doubled you in game because nobody else is bidding it always amazes me. What they should be thinking is that if you are going down and nobody else is bidding it, they are doing well anyway

CROSSWORD NO 40									
Compiled by MERMAN					Answers from p61				
1 T	2 E	3 T	4 E	5 A	6 T	7 E	8 S		
9 A	10 T								
11 S					12 D				
13 P	14 H								
15 A					16 I				
17 R	18 E				19 N				
					20 R				
A	P	I	R	O	21 S				
23 G					24 T				
	25 C								
26 S									

