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Education, in ascending difficulty:

EBU News Quiz Features Laws & Ethics Reports



INSIDE GUIDE

Editorial	5	■
Highs, Lows and Statistics	8	■
EBU Awards 2024	10	■
Channel Trophy	14	■
National Results	17	■
Events Calendar & Competition News	20	■
Love for the Director – Peter Clinch	22	■
Crossword & Caption Competition	23	■
Holding online numbers – Sandra Nicholson	24	■
Teaching Bridge – Mary Sharp	25	■
Bridge-training.com – Lorna Watson	26	■
Christmas Quiz – Michael Byrne's answers	28	■
ACOLytes – India Natt	34	●
Prize Leads Quiz – Mould's questions	37	■
Traps for the Unwary – Michael Byrne	38	●
Basic Cardplay – Paul Bowyer	40	●
Crocs on Defence – Stephen Kennedy	42	●
EBED Quiz – Lorna Watson	44	■
Heffalump Traps – Bakhshi's questions	45	■
Club Bidding Quiz – Pottage's questions	45	■
Great Bridge Disasters – David Burn	46	■
Heather's Hints – Heather Dhondy	47	●
Bridge Fiction – David Bird	48	■
Beat Today's Experts – Bird's questions	51	■
Ask Robin – Robin Barker	52	■
Heffalump Traps – Bakhshi's answers	54	■
December's Leads Quiz – Mould's answers	56	■
Beat Today's Experts – Bird's answers	58	■
Club Bidding Quiz – Pottage's answers	61	■
Letters to the Editor	62	■
Landmark Promotions	63	■

ONLINE EXTRA

Bridge Club Live	65	■
Funbridge	66	■
India's extra quiz	67	■
Bowyer's extra quiz	68	■
Byrne's extra quiz	70	■
Computer lead simulations	71	■

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Steering the EBU

A lot has been happening since the AGM at the end of November. The meeting approved the changes to the Articles which the Board had proposed and we have been busy implementing the new structure.

In particular we have embarked upon forming the new committees, especially the Conduct, Regulation, and Selection Committees. The Board leads on these committees will be, respectively, Debbie Sandford, Paul Gibbons and Michael Hornung. The committees' members, as appointed by the Board, and their terms of reference, are all in hand and most of this work will have been finalised at the board meeting on January 16th (just after this editorial was written).

GROWING MEMBERSHIP BY 5%

Alongside these important changes to our processes, structures and governance, we all recognise that the priority for 2025 is the imperative to attract new players to the game. To this end we have adopted a new strategy which was shared with Shareholders immediately before the AGM.

Unafraid to establish an ambitious target, the goal is to work with and through county associations and clubs to enlarge the EBU membership by 5% during the coming year. This is a serious challenge and will be achieved through a variety of routes which include a new national social media marketing campaign and enhanced engagement with counties, enhanced support for clubs (both affiliated and non-affiliated) and working closely with EBED, with teachers (whether EBTA registered or not) and with universities.

NEW POST FOR 2025

We have created a new post of County and Membership Development Officer which will complement the efforts of our existing staff and which will add significant capacity.

Of course, it is you – our clubs, our county associations and our members across the country – who know the uniqueness and special circumstances of each local situation in a way that we in Aylesbury cannot. Our new staff member will proactively engage with counties in the first instance to lead, develop and implement our membership drive. We are under no illusion: there is no one-size-fits-all solution to the challenges but we are confident that to arrive at a solution demands some new thinking and some new resources; hence this new post.

100 YEARS OF CONTRACT BRIDGE!

Running alongside this, 2025 sees the centenary of contract bridge as the game we know today, and we are planning commemorative events. While these events will celebrate bridge they will also form part of a marketing strategy to reinforce our membership drive.

GOOD LUCK TO ALL OUR TEAMS

Finally, while this is 'old' news it is well worth repeating the fact that all five of our junior teams (U16, U21, U26, U26 Women and U31) played so well at the 2024 European Championships that they universally qualified for the World Championships next year; similarly, all four of our adult teams (Open, Women, Seniors and Mixed) have qualified. This is a fantastic set of performances and we all wish our teams every success in the Worlds.

There really is a lot to look forward to in 2025.

My very best wishes,

Adrian

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HIGHS, LOWS AND STATISTICS



The EBU's terrific tech team has pulled together great facts and figures showing the amazing feats some players achieved in 2024.

For games with 20 or more boards, Alan Brown & Ian Lewis (*below*) achieved the highest score with a whopping 86.25% at Yateley & Hawley BC in early August.



In all, 99 pairs managed to score 80%+ in sessions with 12+ boards, and this fell to just 40 pairs in sessions with 20+ boards, so if you were one of those pairs – you're in rare company!



Here is a player we'd all want to partner. In 2024 Alan Patel won more sessions than any other member – an incredible feat. He came first 134 times – well over twice a week – congratulations!

How about the biggest gain on a pair's expected grade, based on their NGS? This honour went to Chris Linnell & Chris Longthorn (*below*) who played together in November for the first time at Heart of England BC and scored a thumping 38.53 above par. This particular game, over 12 boards, also provided the highest score in games of fewer than 20 boards. They hit 91.67%!



And if there has to be a biggest gain, there has to be a biggest drop ... We won't name and shame, but in games with at least 12 boards, one pair scored 40.74 below par during a 20-board session. Oops.



You might recognise this pair – Jill Hassan & Ken Ford played in the greatest number of clubs and counties – 42 and 43 respectively. They tell me that it's actually an amazing 55 including games in Scotland and abroad – that's somewhere new every week!



Alan Aaronson can proudly boast of playing with the highest number of unique partners during the year. Aged 95 he twirled 111 different people around the virtual tables, over the ether, in 2024.

The strongest sessions by Strength of Field (SOF) were:

1	European Open Trials	66.68
2	Premier League Division 1	65.84
3	Crockfords Cup Final	64.23
4	European Seniors Trials	64.07
5	European Mixed Trials	64.00

Outside of national events, the strongest bridge was the Young Chelsea Super League Division 1 with SOF 63.13 and only just behind was the TGR Super League Division 1 fielding an SOF of 63.10.

The strongest normal club session was a Friday X-IMPs pairs session at Young Chelsea BC with an SOF of 60.84 on December 20th. The runner up was a Tuesday evening pairs session at Tunbridge Wells BC with an SOF of 60.71 in early September. This was a direct reversal from 2023's results.

Richmond BC ran the most sessions, totalling 729. Oliver Cowan BC drew the highest number of unique players – 1,431. The largest club session was Bridport Café Bridge 2024 with 160 players in mid-November (*and jolly good fun it was too. Ed*)

How many boards were played across all sessions? Over 1.3 million. Imagine that at seven minutes a board! □

EBU BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The EBU AGM was held on 27 November. There were eight nominations for five positions. Diana Nettleton, Michael Hornung and Debbie Sandford were elected for three year terms. Abbey Smith (Vice Chair) and Patrick Shields were re-elected for three-year terms. The current elected Board of Directors are as follows: Adrian Darnell (Chairman), Paul Gibbons, Michael Hornung, Diana Nettleton (Treasurer), Debbie Sandford, Patrick Shields, Ian Sidgwick and Abbey Smith (Vice-Chair). In addition to those elected, the Board of Directors may also appoint three Directors for one year at a time.

SIMS PRIZE DRAW ~ Cash prizes!

Each club hosting a Sim Pairs event is entered into a prize draw, with the opportunity to win £200. The winners at the draw, which took place in November at the Annual General Meeting, were:

Prizes from the Sims

Maidstone BC, Kent
Northleach BC, Gloucestershire
Leighton Buzzard BC, Bedfordshire
Stamford BC, Northamptonshire
Oakfield BC, Lancashire
Whitby BC, North East
CICBA (Jersey) BC, Channel Islands
Godalming BC, Surrey.

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NEW EBED TRUSTEE



Milly Sutton has joined EBED's board of trustees. Milly is relatively new to the game, but she is keeping up with her two children who are learning too. She brings a wealth of event planning expertise to the role.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN BRIDGE

Would you like to promote women's bridge? Do you think we should make more accommodations for neurodiversity in our games? Do we do enough to help players with physical disabilities? If you care about any of these or other related issues, please have your say – we need you!

All of these are questions that relate to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Equity in this context means making adjustments such that we have a level playing field where identity is not predictive of outcome. Diversity and inclusion means welcoming all players with different backgrounds and needs to the game so that everyone feels that they belong.

Most of you reading this will be aware that these questions are being addressed more explicitly nowadays by most organisations, including companies, the public sector, charities, and sporting associations. The EBU would like to invite any members interested in helping us address these issues in bridge to have your say, in the true spirit of EDI. All ideas are welcome. Contact Debbie Sandford at debbie@ebu.co.uk to get involved. We really do need you, so please get in touch today.



EBU Awards 2024

These awards were announced at the 2024 AGM at the end of November. The Gold Award given in recognition of a sustained and exceptional contribution to the development, administration and management of all aspects of the game of bridge. The Silver Award is given in recognition of long service and an outstanding contribution to the administration of bridge. The Dimmie Fleming Awards are given in recognition of hard work for bridge as volunteers in administration at county level, typically giving 10 or more years of service.

IAN PAYN

Gold Award



Ian has been involved in bridge administration for two decades: locally he was Chair of the Young Chelsea Bridge Club and oversaw the transition of the club from a proprietary club to a members' club; at county level when he was Chair of the LCCBA; and at national level as an EBU board member, as Chair of the then Tournaments Committee, and as Vice-Chair and then Chair of the EBU board, steering the organisation through Covid and responding to the online cheating issues that ensued; finally at international level as the EBU's representative on Bridge Great Britain and then as a member of the Executive of the European Bridge League, for which he is now the Secretary. The board is delighted to recognise this outstanding and long-term contribution to bridge by awarding Ian its highest honour, the Gold Award.

MICHAEL BYRNE

Silver Award



Despite his relative youth, Michael has been involved in junior bridge for close to two decades, first as a player, then as squad leader for the U21s and then the U26s, as well as captaining numerous junior teams in the Junior Camrose, Peggy Bayer and Channel Trophy, and many European and World Championships – all while pursuing a successful career as a professional bridge teacher and player.

Michael's contribution has involved him giving up a large number of his weekends to run junior training weekends, making all the arrangements for them and ensuring all the squad members had a place to stay when they got there. Michael's part in helping run junior bridge in this country has been vital to the success of players over the years and it is a great pleasure to reflect this with the Silver Award.



ALAN SHILLITOE ~ Silver Award

Almost from the time he stopped being a junior bridge player himself, Alan has been involved in supporting junior bridge. He helped others to run squads, and later became captain of numerous junior teams and then squad leader of various age categories – including the U26s and currently the U16 squad. His young family means he now has less time to give to this, but still he continues to support our young players at the expense of spending time playing bridge himself. The Board is happy to recognise Alan's long-standing contribution to junior bridge with the Silver Award.



EBU Awards 2024



TONY RUSS
Silver Award

Tony was given the Silver Award for outstanding contributions to the promotion, development and administration of bridge, and was presented with his award in July.



**IRENE DAVIES
(MANCHESTER)**
Dimmie Fleming

Irene has made a major contribution to the success of Manchester County Bridge Association over the last 15 years.

Initially, she joined the Executive Committee as Tournament Secretary, organising and managing the county's major competitions. In conjunction with this, she also took on the job of Congress Secretary – attracting, prior to Covid, up to 400 players during the weekend – and including innovative events designed to encourage non-experts into competitive bridge.

For the last nine years Irene has been an exemplary Chair of MCBA, showing outstanding leadership qualities. During lockdowns, she led the drive to encourage members into online bridge and since then has been instrumental in encouraging players back to face-to-face bridge, both locally and further afield. She made a conscious

effort to visit and play in as many of the county's clubs as she could.

Irene has been an active member of the County Chairs' group with a special interest in attracting newcomers. Her commitment and teaching has been a major asset in the development and growth of several clubs.

She has also been successful in encouraging non-affiliated clubs to engage with the county and the EBU and four such clubs have affiliated during her tenure.



**JEFF SMITH
(LANCASHIRE)**
Dimmie Fleming

Jeff has been involved with bridge in both Lancashire and Manchester for the best part of 30 years and has given unstintingly of his time to help counties, clubs and members. His contributions are numerous and include selection, congresses, Laws & Conduct and a new Constitution Committee in Manchester, Secretary for Manchester CBA, Chairman for Manchester and the Manchester Shareholder. He joined Lancashire in 2004 and was Chairman from 2010-13, on the Selection and Tournament committees and the County Shareholder. He is a County Qualified TD and has run numerous competitions for both counties. He was Secretary of the Northern Bridge League (NBL) at its inception in 2020 and is now Chairman. He is also Chief TD at Bolton BC.



**TREVOR
THROWER
(NORTHANTS)**
Dimmie Fleming

For 35 years Trevor has been a stalwart for Stamford Bridge Club and Northants CBA. He is also a regular player at Kettering, Spalding and Peterborough BCs.

Trevor has served on the County Committee for well over two decades, and continues as the County Selector – running the county's three teams, – EBU Shareholder and in a role updating the county calendar. He directs the county's home fixtures and served as its Chair from 2004 to 2016.

At Stamford BC he is the Chief TD and the committee member with responsibility for behaviour and incident management. He is the go-to person for expertise on the Laws and the use of technology. He has been a mentor for improvers both online during the pandemic and now at weekly club sessions.

As a 'buddy' in the Stamford Youth Bridge Academy, Trevor coached a group of students at Uppingham School on a weekday evening over a number of years finishing when Covid struck.

Trevor is a man who devotes a great deal of his life to ensure the smooth running of bridge at both county and club level. He is most generous with his time, selflessly serving club and county as well as encouraging and helping weaker players to improve.

MORE AWARDS OVERLEAF



EBU/EBED Awards 2024



DARREN EVETTS (WARWICKSHIRE)

Dimmie Fleming

Over the past 25 years, no one has made a more significant contribution to Warwickshire County Bridge Association than Darren Evetts.

First Secretary and then Chairman of WCBA for more than twenty years, Darren has been the driving force and inspiration behind the management of the county's affairs. This included the transition to P2P, when he devised a system to ensure county financial support for clubs. He has organised the county website, drawn up the calendar, arranged competitions and venues and frequently acted as TD. His encouragement of the youth in the county has resulted in England representation at Junior level.

During the pandemic, he was instrumental in ensuring that the Warwickshire Pairs and Teams Leagues and a number of other county events continued to run. Darren has been the cornerstone of the continued success of the Midland Counties Congress, organising venues, entries and administration over many years. He also expanded the reach of the county nationally by bringing a number of national events to Warwickshire at various times.

YOUNG PLAYER OF THE YEAR



Jamie Fegarty has been an integral part of the England U21 team for the last few years, leading by example with stunning technique. His performance in the 2024 European Youth Championships was excellent with a X-IMP score

of +0.51 in partnership with Tom Gardner. He also plays frequently in the EBL Online 2024 European Bridge League where England U21 currently have the most Victory Points. Jamie also won the Harrogate Spring Congress Swiss Teams partnering his brother, Liam. Jamie's ability is reflected in his recent Ace of Spades NGS grade after an excellent recent showing at the Tollemache Qualifier with his county.

YOUNG PAIR OF THE YEAR



Maks Blicharz and Thomas Bradkin had an outstanding year with major international success. In the space of just two weeks they won

medals in two major championships and were placed highly in another.

They began by anchoring the England U16 team to a last gasp bronze medal in the European Championships, playing every deal and finishing second on the overall X-IMP scores. They narrowly missed the final of the World Transnational teams, but finished third in the consolation. Finally, they gained bronze in the World Transnational Pairs, breaking up the otherwise total Polish domination of the event.

Maks is 14 and a pupil at King's College School in Wimbledon. Thomas is 15 and entering his GCSE year at Eton.





STUART HARING (HABERDASHER'S BOYS' SCHOOL)

Alec Salisbury Award

This award is given in recognition of a schoolteacher who has made a significant contribution to youth bridge.

Stuart is a previous recipient of this award, having received the 2015 prize. He continues to have a huge impact on youth bridge and was a long-time contributor to EBED's Youth Advisory Group.

Stuart was instrumental in the creation of the Inter Schools League and his school regularly fields five teams in this event. Stuart's teams perform to the highest level, the Habs team has won the National Schools Cup in five of the last seven years.

Stuart has also recently reinstated the Hertfordshire Schools Cup. Held in November 2023 it was the first time for 30 years. This face-to-face teams competition attracted 80 players from eight different schools and will be run again this autumn.



SUE JOHNSON (LONDON)

Tom Bradley Award

Sue's dedication to youth bridge is well known. She is the founder of New Tricks Bridge. New Tricks have created a number of popular video series on YouTube for bridge players and they also run a 'Bridge for Schools' programme which aims to develop the next generation of young players by teaching the game and running clubs in schools.

What sets Sue apart from many others in the youth bridge world is the success that she has with really young players and the fact that she inspires so many girls to play bridge. Many of those that she introduces to bridge are still at primary school but often progress quickly to compete very successfully in youth tournaments against much older players from the most well-known bridge playing schools. Many of her young players progress to be coached with the England U16 squad.

Sue took twenty-six very young players (between nine and 11 years old) to the National Schools Championship in 2023 and a similar number this year. Her group of students is the largest single group participating in this event from any club or school. In the 2024 competition two of her group were part of the team that won the Harry Scully Cup, finishing ahead of the team from Eton.



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IBPA PERSONALITIES OF THE YEAR for 2023

RealBridge entrepreneurs Graham Hazel (founder & software developer), Andy Bowles and Shireen Mohandes have been awarded the International Bridge Press Association's 2023 Personalities of the Year awards. Graham used his extensive background in technology and gaming to develop RealBridge – an online bridge platform that aped playing at the table. Through a process of testing and improvement it has collectively been accepted by directors, clubs and national bridge organisations across the world, and it has changed the face of the online game. Shireen and Andy have helped with the testing and commercialisation, allowing it to flourish.



Mixed results for England

The Young Chelsea Bridge Club hosted the Channel Trophy, an annual competition between England, France, The Netherlands and Belgium. The first three of those teams traditionally battle it out for the trophy while Belgium takes a few scalps each year from teams that underestimate them.

partner off to the killing club lead at trick one. Now East could cash two clubs, switch to a diamond and there were four losers.

At every table where a club was led 4♥ failed, and at every table where a spade or diamond was led 4♥ made – except in our match. The bidding, with England sitting E/W, was as follows:

U26 Team



U26 Team, back row from left: Sam Anoyrkatis, Liam Fegarty, Michael Byrne (NPC), Daniel Winter; front row: Andy Cope, Liam Sanderson, Oscar Selby

In the U26 category it was France that made the early running, taking a lead which they never relinquished. This hand was typical of the late night errors that crept up on the English team from our first match against the French:

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

A typical auction saw South declare 4♥. Some East players had opened with 3♣, which got their

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

The French North bid 2NT to show 10+ and 4-card support, a popular treatment these days for five-card major players (the cue bid showing a 3-card raise). 3♦ was gratuitous but South must have been surprised at all the bidding and worried the ♠K wasn't pulling its full weight.

West led the ♣2 (3rd and 5th in partner's suit) and East won the king and only had to cash a second club to beat the game. Sadly he switched to the singleton diamond and now South could rise with the ace, unblock the ♠K, cross to the ♥K, take a club discard and give up two diamond tricks.

At the other table we had a gadget, and boy were we going to use it. With England sitting N/S:

West	North	East	South
	2♦ ^A	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

The initial 2♦ showed a weak hand with both majors, and at this vulnerability should describe a shapely hand with little defence and some playing strength – not this hand at all!

The operation appeared to be a success as West had no reason to start with a club, and the ♦K was duly led. Declarer had only to take this and unblock in spades before crossing to a trump to make ten tricks as the French declarer did in the other room,

but our declarer sadly drew three rounds of trumps first. This meant that when a diamond was led from dummy West could revert to the black suits, forcing declarer, and he couldn't enjoy the long diamond.

The result was 12 IMPs to the French, contributing to a sound beating in the first match, leaving us out of the trophy. The wild Dutch team was second, England third and Belgium fourth.



The U21s came tantalisingly close to the winners, France, losing by less than 3 VPs. The Netherlands came third and Belgium fourth.

This was a hand from our first match against France, where I (Holden Clark) was holding the South cards with my partner (Dina Bennett) sitting North.

Love All. Dealer West.		
♠ A K 7 5 4 2	♠ 6 3	
♥ A 8 3	♥ J 5 2	
♦ 8 7 5	♦ A K 9 6	
♣ Q	♣ 9 7 5 4	
♠ Q 10 9	♠ J 8	N
♥ 7 6	♥ K Q 10 9 4	W
♦ Q J 10 4 3 2	♦ -	E
♣ 6 2	♣ A K J 10 8 3	S

West opened 2♦ and Dina overcalled 2♠. The opponents play that 2♦ may only be a 5-card suit, so East was only able to confidently raise to 3♦, which left me with a variety of options to bid with the South cards. After a long think, I settled on 4♦ as a cuebid agreeing spades – deciding

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that it was our most likely strain for slam. Dina 'took the positive action' – as our squad leader Charlie Bucknell always tells us to do! – and evaluated her sharp values and singleton club as enough to cuebid 4♥. My next bid – 6♠ – may not have been entirely scientific, but it got a good reaction from my screenmate when I put it on the tray!

This left Dina declaring 6♠ on the lead of the ♦K. Even with a 3-2 trump break, she needed to dispose of her diamond losers in hand before conceding a trick to the master trump. After ruffing the opening lead in the dummy, she crossed back to hand with the ♣Q to ruff another diamond. She then disposed of her last diamond on a top club, crossed back to hand with the ♥A and, when trumps broke 3-2, claimed 12 tricks for +980.

At the other table our teammates were defending 6♣, for a score of -940. We may have only scored 1 IMP from this rather eventful board but, especially against the French, every IMP counts! We went on to win the match by 8 IMPs for 12-8 VPs against France – a great start to the weekend.

Continued overleaf

U26 Women's Team



U26 Women's Team: Dido Coley, Liz Gahan, Lily Kearney, Sally Brock (NPC), Harriet Cork, Raphaella Sinclair, Charlotte Bedford

In the Women's section Belgium was replaced by Denmark. Going into our final match against them, we knew we were unfortunately no longer competing for the win, but our match could still decide whether Denmark or the Netherlands took the event.

I (Lily Kearney) was playing with Dido Coley. Early on in the first half, Dido picked up the following hand. Sitting North, Dido was dealer at unfavourable vulnerability and opened 1♣. For us this shows either a balanced hand with 15+ points or natural and 14+ points, and forcing. East overcalled 1♦, I bid a possibly 4-card 1♠ and West raised preemptively to 3♦. Here we see a benefit of the methods – having already shown a quality hand with her opening bid, she felt no pressure to find a bid, and could pass. Her next decision came when the auction followed this path:

♠ K 6 4
♥ Q 9 7
♦ 7
♣ A K Q 6 5 2

West	North	East	South
	1♣	1♦	1♠
3♦	Pass	Pass	4NT ^A
Pass	?		

The 4NT bid was quantitative and Dido's hand is worth accepting this – with a lovely 6-card suit on the side – but could it be possible that I held ♠AJxx ♥AJx ♦AKx ♣xxx? There are only 11 tricks off the top here, and the fate of the slam relies on finding either the ♠Q or the ♥K. If, however, spades were trumps, the 12th trick could come from ruffing a diamond in her hand (note that the trump suit must be spades and not clubs for this to generate an extra trick). To offer this, she chose to bid 5♥ – responding to 4NT as if it were keycard,

despite us both knowing we don't have a spade fit (with a maximum and 4-card spade support she would certainly have bid 3♠ over 3♦). Looking at almost exactly the hand she was worried I might have, I raised this to 6♠, electing to play in the Moysian fit (a 4-3 fit).

The ♦10 was led and the play is not too difficult:

♠ K 6 4
♥ Q 9 7
♦ 7
♣ A K Q 6 5 2

♠ A J 10 7
♥ A 8 4
♦ A Q 2
♣ 10 8 7

Assuming the clubs break, there will be six clubs, two diamonds, and a heart, so bringing the trumps in for the three tricks will suffice. A reasonable line, then, is to win the opening lead, and simply cross to the ♠K and take a spade finesse. If this holds, you can cash the ♠A before conceding the final spade to the ♠Q (if it is still out). The return cannot harm you, and you end up with 12 tricks as planned. If the spade finesse fails, you can win any return, draw the remainder of the trumps, and still make the same 12 tricks.

As it happens, the ♠Q3 is inside, so 13 tricks come in without any difficulty whatsoever.

In the other room, the Danish N/S arrived in the somewhat unambitious contract of 3NT, giving a handy 13 IMPs to the good guys.

Denmark and The Netherlands had a very close fight for first place. Denmark triumphed on the VP scale (but not on the raw IMP scale). We landed in third place with France well behind us.



LORDS V COMMONS



The annual Lords v Commons bridge match took place in the Houses of Parliament at the end of November and was won by the Lords team, representing their 28th win. 2025 will be the 50th anniversary of the matches. Congratulations to the team comprising, from left, Lord Howard, Lord Mendoza, James Cooper, Baroness Blackstone (playing captain), Lord Hamilton, Richard Cumming-Bruce, Lord Baker and the Earl of Caithness.

The Sir Anthony Berry Bowl for the best-played hand was awarded to Lord Mendoza and Lord Howard who were the only pair to bid and make 6♦ on board 5. Results can be found on:

<https://tinyurl.com/2502LvCom>

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS' CUP



Congratulations to the England Women's team who won the Gold medal at the recent 2nd Women's Champions' Cup, which took place in mid-November and was run by the European Bridge League.

England were represented by Fiona Brown, Sally Brock, Nevena Senior, Nicola Smith, Diana Nettleton and Helen Erichsen (playing captain).

They faced an Italian team (Gsad Idea Bridge Torino) in the final. It was a nail biting finish, with England finishing ahead by just 1 IMP to claim the trophy.

The 22nd European Open Champions Cup took place at the same time. England were represented by Andrew Black, Simon Cope, David Gold (playing captain), Andrew McIntosh, Tom Paske & Tom Townsend. They finished 5th in the round robin.



SPRING FOURSOMES



This year, in memory of Jeffrey Allerton, there will be some extra prizes aimed at less experienced teams. We will also have free tea and coffee throughout, and caddies to help reduce the effect of overhearing things from nearby tables.

2ND - 6TH MAY

**DOUBLETREE BY HILTON HOTEL
BRISTOL CITY CENTRE**

NOTE: PLAY STARTS FRIDAY AFTERNOON AT 15:30

WWW.EBU.CO.UK/COMPETITIONS/SPRING-FOURS

NICKO



The National Interclub Knockout (NICKO) was won by *Petersfield Bridge Club A*. The team comprised (from left) Mike Kinsey, Owen Leigh, James Clark and Steve Preston. They beat *Milton Keynes Bridge Club A* (Alan Oddie, David Woulds, David Harris and Iain Roberts) in the final.

The NICKO plate was won by *Sheffield Bridge Club A* (Dave Robinson, Tony Sowter, Sandy Davies, Tom Gisborne, Richard Pike and Dave Banks). They beat the *Oxford Bridge Club CIO A* team of Kathy Talbot, Denis Talbot, Graham Orsmond and Jackie Fairclough.

OVER THE POND



English internationals Tom Paske & Simon Cope won the prestigious Kaplan Blue Ribbon Pairs, a three-day event run by the American Contract Bridge League and held in Las Vegas, USA in early December.

The pair were leading after the semifinal sessions and scored 62.10% in the first part of the final to maintain that lead by a board and a half going into the final session.

Interviewed after the event, 'It's great to win,' said Simon, who was 'pretty tired from seven days of pairs games. And it's good to win with him,' referring to Tom. The two play with each other at the NABCs but not in the UK. 'I'm already looking forward to the Reisinger,' said Paske.

PREMIER LEAGUE



The 2024 Premier League was won by the *Hinden* team of Graham Osborne, Frances Hinden, Chris Jagger and Neil Rosen. John Atthey also played in the *Hinden* team over the first and second weekends.

In second place were the *Black* team of Andrew Black, David Gold, Andrew McIntosh, Tom Paske, Simon Cope and Peter Crouch. The *Sandfia* team finished in third place.

The *Hinden* team and the *Black* team are subsequently asked to represent England in one weekend each of the 2025 Camrose Trophy series.

In the Second Division, *Team De Botton* (Janet de Botton, Thor Erik Hoftaniska, Espen Erichsen, Artur Malinowski, David Bakhshi and Tony Forrester) finished first. The *Penfold* team (Sandra Penfold, Brian Senior, John Holland, Alan Mould, Norman Selway and Kay Preddy) finished in second place.

In the Third Division, team *Cope* (Andy Cope, Giles Ip, Adam Hickman and Martin Jones) finished in first place, ahead of the *Aardvarks* (Paul Barden, Claire Robinson, Jonathan Mestel, Ewa Wiczorek, Graham Hazel, and David Kendrick).

In the Fourth Division the *Madden* team (Harry Madden, Daniel Winter, Oscar Selby, Jack Ronayne, Paul Madden and Alex Hogg) finished first, with the *Miller* team (Robert Miller, Ufuk Cotuk, David Eddleston and Tugrul Kaban) in second place.



YEAR END CONGRESS 2024



The winners in the Swiss Teams were Frances Hinden, Sarah Bell, Ben Norton and Graham Osborne. The team was 13 VPs ahead of second-placed Veri Kiljan, Anam Tebha, Signe Buus Thomsen, Selena Pepic and Stefano Tommasini.



Congratulations to Oscar Nijssen & Anam Tebha who won the Swiss Pairs. In second place were Selena Pepic & Tim Van De Paverd, with Oscar Selby & Andy Cope in third place.

The Mixed Pairs was won by Sally Brock & Sasha Wernle. Michael Byrne & Jovi Smederevac came second and Sara Moran & John Atthey came third.



The Open Pairs was won by Veri Kiljan & Luc Tijssen. Second were Jason Hackett & John Sansom with Philip Town & Neill Harcus in third place.

The Jack High Swiss Pairs was won by Martin Taylor & Ruth Merson, ahead of Annabel Burrows & Lyn Poole.

The winners of the final day Improvers Pairs were Paul Winstone & Roger Harris, with Andrew Ward & David Shore in second place.



PREMIER GRAND MASTER

Congratulations to
Adrian Fontes, Hants & IOW
on becoming a
Premier Grand Master
the English Bridge Union's highest rank,
requiring a minimum 1,500 Green Points

CAMROSE WEEKEND ONE

The first weekend of the Camrose Trophy took place in early January. The game is between the home nations, and takes place over two weekends. In a very tight finish, *England* finished in second place, just behind *Ireland*, with *Scotland* on our coat tails. The second weekend takes place in Belfast, from 7-9 March.

ONLINE ONE-DAY GREEN-POINTED SERIES

Swiss Teams - December – Giles Ip & Alan Oddie with Patrick Shields & Rob Lawy won, with Clive Owen & Nick Stevens and Jason Hackett & John Sansom in second place.

Swiss Pairs - November – Kostadin Vasilev & Anton Mauve won the event, with Tony Yip & Pak-Hin Lee in second place. In third place were Alan Sia & Derek Maggs.

ONLINE KNOCK-OUT TEAMS

The *Royce A* team of Royce Alexander, Jeffrey Smith, Irving Blakey, Joy Blakey, David Barton and Alec Smalley defeated the team of John Sansom, Clive Owen, Jason Hackett & Brian Senior in the final to win the Online Knockout Teams competition.

The Plate competition was won by Malcolm Pryor, Ed Scerri, Trevor Ward and Rob Cliffe who defeated the team of Nick Doe, Simon Husband, Tim Stanley-Clamp, John Wilmott and Steve Noble in the final.



COMPETITION NEWS

NATIONAL PAIRS

In 2025, the National Pairs will again be played in the exciting three-stage format that has proven popular in recent years. To qualify for the regional finals on 23rd March, play in any of your regular club games and achieve a score of over 55% between the 2nd and 15th February. We will contact all qualifying members via email with an invite to play in the Regional Finals. There will be five Regional Finals, run by counties on both BBO and RealBridge, with trophies awarded for each region.

Combined scores will determine the top 50 pairs who will be entitled to play in the National Pairs Final on the 12th-13th April on RealBridge.

SPRING FOURSOMES

This year the Spring Foursomes returns to the DoubleTree by Hilton Bristol. This popular venue sits in the heart of Bristol city centre and within walking distance of the train station, shops and restaurants. Bristol also has its own airport if you are travelling from further afield.

The event takes place from the 2nd to 6th May and is one of the most prestigious and toughest events in the EBU calendar. The Spring Foursomes Trophy is played on a double-elimination lines basis over nine sessions consisting of 32 boards each, with a secondary event, the Punchbowl, open to teams eliminated before Saturday evening. For a more relaxed event teams can participate in the Hamilton Cup on the Monday.

This year, in memory of Jeffrey Allerton, there will be some extra prizes aimed at less experienced teams, free tea and coffee throughout, and caddies to help reduce the effect of overhearing things from nearby tables. For more details: www.ebu.co.uk/competitions/spring-fours

EASTER FESTIVAL, LONDON

Join us for this fun Easter Bank Holiday bridge competition for everyone! This year's Easter Festival will take place in London, at the Marlborough Primary School, South Kensington, London.

The format will remain very similar to 2024, with Championship Pairs taking place on Friday and Saturday, Swiss Pairs on Sunday and Stratified Swiss Teams on Monday. For full information see: www.ebu.co.uk/competitions/easter-london.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Red – Anticipated F2F Events

■ FEBRUARY 2025

- 7-9 Harrogate Spring Congress, Harrogate
- 14-20 2nd European Winter Transnationals, Prague
- 14-16 Junior Camrose & Peggy Bayer, Wales
- 16 OODGP Swiss Pairs, RealBridge
- 22-23 Ranked Masters Pairs, RealBridge
- 23 Masters Pairs, F2F, BBO, RealBridge
- 28-2 North Devon Congress, Barnstaple

■ MARCH 2025

- 1 Leicestershire GP Swiss Pairs, Leicester
- 1 Manchester Swiss Pairs, Altrincham
- 1 National Schools Championship, Loughborough Grammar School
- 1-2 Norfolk GP Congress, Norwich
- 1-2 Wiltshire GP Congress, Bath
- 2 Herts GP Swiss Pairs, St Albans
- 2 Kent GP Swiss Pairs, Tunbridge Wells
- 3-6 Club Stratified Sim Pairs, F2F, BBO, RealBridge
- 7-9 Camrose Trophy, 2nd weekend, Belfast
- 8-9 Hampshire GP Congress, Winchester
- 10-14 ECATS Charity Challenge, BBO, RealBridge
- 15 OODGP Swiss Teams, RealBridge
- 23 National Pairs Regional Finals, BBO, RealBridge

■ APRIL 2025

- 5-6 Portland Bowl Finals, London
- 6 Portland Pairs, RealBridge
- 7-10 British Spring Sim Pairs
- 11-13 Devon GP Congress, Torquay
- 11-13 Lady Milne Trophy, Bristol
- 12-13 National Pairs Final, RealBridge
- 18-21 Easter Festival, London
- 26 OODGP Swiss Pairs, RealBridge
- 28-4 Lambourne Jersey Festival, Jersey

■ MAY 2025

- 2-6 Spring Foursomes, Bristol
- 10 Garden Cities Regional Finals, various
- 11 OODGP Swiss Pairs, RealBridge
- 12-15 EBED Spring SIMS Pairs, various clubs
- 16-18 Teltscher Trophy, Gormanston, Ireland
- 17 Merseyside & Cheshire GP Swiss Pairs, Christleton, Cheshire
- 18 Derbyshire GP Swiss Pairs, Spondon
- 24-26 Spring Bank Holiday Congress, Reading
- 31 9-High Corwen Trophy, BBO, RealBridge
- 31-1 Corwen Trophy, RealBridge

■ JUNE 2025

- 7 Garden Cities Final, Coventry
- 7 OODGP Swiss Teams, RealBridge
- 8 National Inter-County League Final, Realbridge
- 14-15 Pachabo Cup, Milton Keynes



EBU CONGRESSES AND COMPETITIONS

All events are Green Pointed (GP) unless stated. BP – Blue Points, LP – Local Points

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

Harrogate Spring Congress

7 – 9 February

Cedar Court Hotel, Harrogate



Really Easy Pairs – LP
Swiss Pairs
Swiss Teams

Pairs
POTYA

Ranked Masters Pairs

22 – 23 February
RealBridge

Separate competitions for:

Premier Grand Masters
Grand Masters
Premier Life Masters
Life Masters
National Masters
Regional Masters

Masters Pairs

23 February

For players below Regional Master
Hosted by clubs and online

Portland Pairs

6 April
RealBridge



The EBU Mixed Pairs
Championships.
Scored over the entire field

EBU National Pairs

Regional Finals 24 March
National Pairs Final 13 – 14 April

Any pair that gets over 55% in a club game between 2nd Feb and 15th Feb is entitled to play in one of the five Regional Finals on 23rd March, with trophies awarded.

Combined scores will determine the top 50 pairs who will be entitled to play in the National Pairs Final on RealBridge.

Pairs
POTYA

Easter Festival

18 – 21 April, London
Marlborough Primary
School, SW3



Championship Pairs
Stratified Swiss Teams
Swiss Pairs
Improvers Pairs – BBO – BP

Lambourne Jersey Festival

28 April – 4 May
Westhill Country Hotel, Jersey



Swiss Pairs, Senior Pairs
Swiss Teams
Pre-Congress, Open
& Mixed Pairs – BP
Multiple Teams – BP

Autumn Overseas Congress

5 – 12 October
5* Sense De Luxe Hotel, Side



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

LOVE FOR THE DIRECTOR

By Peter Clinch, Chair,
Tournament Directors Development Group



SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION

In a tale oft-told by the late Joe Amsbury, the tournament director is called to the table and is surprised to see that the floor is strewn with the shards of torn-up playing cards. On enquiry, it appears that when declarer first saw dummy he shook his head in despair and slowly began to rip up his cards, one by one. Asked for an explanation by the director, declarer simply says, 'I dropped them, and they broke'.

As St Valentine's Day approaches consider the poor director, who never knows what to expect when called to the table, but who has to cope with everything and anything. A lead out of turn, a revoke, an online opponent that has not produced a bid for three minutes, an unwashed player who smells like a dead badger. A disputed claim here, a telling hesitation there. And – always – four players baying for a favourable ruling.

I am myself at best a casual TD, but I recently attended the biennial meeting of all directors on the EBU panel, and I was so impressed that I was moved to write these words. Every member of the TD panel is passionate about serving their players to the best of their abilities – nothing gives a director greater pleasure than to hear that people have enjoyed themselves, that the event ran smoothly. The forensic care with which directors apply the nuances of the laws and conditions of contest (not to mention the sometimes bewildering and arcane elements of the scoring programs) is staggering and detailed. And they do it all to please the EBU members who are playing.

I hope you agree we should love our directors, but how can we show them our love? Here are some simple tips: there's nothing new here, and goodness knows I haven't always followed my own advice.

- ♥ Call for the director as soon as anything untoward happens. It is why they are there. The sooner a director is apprised of an issue, the more likely an equitable outcome will be reached.
- ♥ When the director arrives, follow their advice – don't talk across them, argue with them or try to ingratiate yourself with them. You might think you can make the ruling yourself, but it's best not to. Believe me, these folks know the laws better than any of us. Just listen as respectfully as you can. Sit on your ego.
- ♥ If the ruling isn't to your liking, you will have the right to appeal it without shame for anyone. There's no need to try to exercise that right by bawling at the director immediately, like a footballer futilely wagging his finger at the referee.
- ♥ It is always enormously appreciated by directors when players help them maintain the physical environment. We all like to see how we are doing, but it is so helpful to pick boards off the floor at the end of a round, to dispose of rubbish, to help put equipment away at the end of a session.
- ♥ Thank them for their endeavours! They have worked their socks off to make life more comfortable for the players, and it feels good to show them appreciation.
- ♥ It's nearly Valentine's Day, and I've stopped short of suggesting you buy your directors flowers, but why not? Chances are they were first to arrive and last to leave. They deserve our love.

CROSSWORD NO 46

Compiled by MERMEN

Answers p43

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 The convicted sexual predators and those who might then help them (10)
- 10 The panache a player's weapon assumes, for example (8)
- 11 Stop talking about the summary (6, two words)
- 12 Local accent that Blackburn and Bury have in common? That's right (4)
- 13 What is the matter with children? (5)
- 15 The waste that mine's built up (3)
- 16 Roll up to recruit tournament director — accommodation quickly provided (6)
- 17 Desperate search for a national hunt horse (6)
- 20 Lots of batters start with a knock up (3)
- 21 We help a lot to provide instruction to marchers, for instance (5)
- 23 Bits without the pieces (4)
- 24 Light reading? (6)
- 25 Concerning the locations of income streams (8)
- 26 Puzzled, went off and danced (10)

DOWN

- 2 Beneficiaries — one's taken what she had (4)
- 3 Checks the less pure sort (8)
- 4 Not initially lacking precision, so fits (4)
- 5 Partnership exercise for one taken daily, perhaps (5)
- 6 Struggle to change taps in mix up (7)
- 7 Turtles with no legs on earth (5)
- 8 Wrote barely legible notes — player's copy leaked (9)
- 9 Scoff with abandon and stop concentrating for a moment (9, two words)
- 12 One loving sunbathing, building sandcastles, etc., heard to be a fruit (8, two words)
- 14 Bridge cards announced in stretchy fabric (7)
- 18 Sort of hotel to dry out with — it takes time (5)
- 19 Arnold didn't start ridge (5)
- 21 Gain success over heavy drinker (4)
- 22 Other player joins college (4)

CAPTION COMPETITION



The front cover provides the catalyst for your imagination this issue. Send your entries for the cartoon above to lou@ebu.co.uk or Editor, Raggett House, Langport, Somerset, TA10 0DD by 15th March.

Thank you for all the captions I received for the one below. Congratulations to Graham Bennett for my favourite, shown beside the picture. Other close contenders were Alan Evans' *'I've found them! There's no sit-out after all'*; and Alison Wall's *'Aghhh, it's the weak twos again'*.



I was expecting better support than a small doubleton

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KEEPING ONLINE NUMBERS UP

Does your club get low table numbers at your online sessions? Then perhaps you could consider joining up with another similar club. *Sandra Nicholson, from Summertown BC in Oxfordshire*, tells us about her experience.

In early 2020, Summertown averaged 11 or 12 tables per session. Then came the pandemic and, like many clubs, we never really recovered.

By mid-2024 our RealBridge numbers were reduced to three or four tables of loyal members, but a dozen people isn't really enough for a satisfactory game of duplicate pairs, and we were on the verge of throwing in the towel.

Our Chair Erica Sheppard looked on Bridgewebs to find other clubs playing on the same evening as ours, and contacted several. We struck lucky with an immediate positive response from Dorset's Dorchester Bridge Club, and very quickly agreed to set up a month's trial of a joint arrangement, with alternate sessions being run by each club. The members at both clubs were very much in favour and three months later, with table numbers running at around seven or eight each week, we've happily agreed to continue for the foreseeable future.

Fortunately Ian Laing, Dorchester's Chair, is an experienced RealBridge director who has been able to smooth the way with technical issues, and it's been reassuring to find that their players, like ours, include a wide mix of ability and experience.

Of course, with any such combination, there are issues to be resolved. Among the ones we've discussed are: What should we charge as table money, who will collect it, and how? Who will run the RealBridge sessions, do the directing, and submit the results to the EBU? What time should we start and how many boards should we play? Will it always be pairs, or should there sometimes be a teams evening? Will there be a host available, or some other arrangement for finding a partner? What will happen about club competitions such as ladders and annual events?

But so far we're delighted that any question has been quickly resolved, with an enormous amount of goodwill on both sides. Most importantly, with the support of the committees and members of both clubs, we've found a way forward so we can continue to enjoy our regular weekly sessions playing the game we all love so much!



LICENSED BRIDGE

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

- The organisers of the holiday have applied for, and received, a licence from the EBU.
- They may choose to give Master Points in accordance with EBU scales.
- These Master Points will be accepted and added to player records.
- The bridge will be played in line with EBU regulations and bye-laws, thus affording all players the protection of playing within the jurisdiction of the EBU.

All county events advertised have an EBU licence.

NOTE: Members playing in events licensed by another National Bridge Organisation will not be able to have Master Points credited to their records save for events in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, New Zealand and Australia. The conversion of Green Points to Gold Points will only happen at English events, the BGB Gold Cup and Home Internationals.

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Flipping the learning



To make a pancake you gather the ingredients, sieve the flour, mix in the egg before the milk and water and finally fry. These are essential stages. Learning a bridge technique also has ingredients – you understand the mechanism of Stayman, then you mix it into your game, contextualise it, learn when you can and can't use it and what to do with a weak take-out in clubs. It's cooked when you get the right contract. Learning has non-negotiable phases as does the pancake – acquiring of knowledge before synthesis. Most lessons follow this pattern by conveying knowledge first then the synthesis is achieved by students playing hands and reading the notes. Or is it? In my experience the final result is too often half-baked.

Students are lucky in class to get maybe two tries at testing out the new learning and the rest of the time are defending or dummy. Worse though is that students can be unreliable (and that's being polite) about doing the follow-up homework. Some – not all – will walk through the bridge door and not think about the class until they walk back through it a week later. Teaching finesses recently at a couple's house, I lent them Andrew Robson's excellent booklet on the subject for consolidation. When I returned a week later it was lying in the same position – untouched. People have busy lives and bridge is not always the priority.

Flip learning is an approach that tries something different. It asks the students to acquire the knowledge on their own and use a greater part of the lesson for synthesis. It means directing your students to the learning resources ahead of the class and not afterwards. Take scoring as an easy example. You can ask your students to prepare for the lesson by learning the basics and practice scoring some results. The lesson time is used to work with that learning, sorting out misunderstandings and starting to explain when and why it matters. Not only does it enable the teacher to use their skills at a higher level but it means that the start of the class can be more active for students.

Scoring is an easy example so what about something more complex? Take the lesson I find the very hardest – reverses. It is strangely abstract, overturns prior learning and has two names. It is hard to stop students glazing over or looking befuddled, and the name is misleading as it's not going backwards – it's a positive acceleration. I certainly do not think that all students could understand this concept without support. What they can understand though is the problem it solves. They can bid and play some hands prior to the lesson to work out what goes wrong when the bidding gets too high or too low. They can try to come up with their own solutions. They can look at some bidding sequences using reverses and see if they can work out the rules. They can actively engage with the topic ahead of the lesson and thereby make much better use of the teacher's time and experience.

What if the class don't do it? Or just one student doesn't do it? This could hijack your lesson. The nub here is that a little private study is not a nice extra (does handing out notes at the end of the lesson rather imply it is? Just an extra for reference?) but a crucial step in the learning process. Flip learning enables you to raise expectations and this is crucial. We need to switch our viewpoint from worrying about effective teaching to focusing on effective learning. The more traditional model may work better for the teacher but it doesn't always serve the student sufficiently.

You can't do this all the time and everywhere – not on a cruise ship for example when you have a shifting cohort and little time between lessons. If your class motivation is for more kitchen than club bridge, then they may resist more strongly. The clincher for me is that this approach encourages exactly the kind of independent and active thinking that is itself a skill we need to play bridge well. Good luck flipping this Shrove Tuesday. □

What's the Buzz

Imagine, as students enter your classroom, you hear a couple discussing the homework you gave them. A few more enter and join the conversation, 'I couldn't do it but then after a few goes I worked it out'. Those who got it are explaining that you must cross twice to dummy and finesse twice against the East hand. One student has the problem deal on her phone to show a friend at her table. Another has brought his iPad in and so a few gather around to look at the problem.

This is all before the lesson starts and the power of practice, sharing and learning is in almost everyone's pocket. How often does homework cause this much excitement? The hand they are talking about is one which you sent to them after the previous lesson. It exactly demonstrates the aspect of bridge you were teaching. It is similar to some deals they may have found difficult in class and need a bit more practice on. We are talking about Bridge-training.com which is a new practice platform which makes creating deals easy for teachers and then easy for your students to play and replay.

What makes it simple and effective is that it is a free resource online with no need to join or log in. We all want students to be enthused about their bridge right from the start and playing just a couple of boards to reinforce the learning from your lesson is of untold value. In years gone by students played in class and then perhaps didn't pick up a pack of cards from week to week. It isn't always feasible for students to meet up and they can't always get to grips with online play. Reading about a deal and having the ability to 'see' how the whole thing hangs together is a skill that bridge players hone over years. But, having a board from your teacher, with an easy click link or QR code, that you can play and try again if you don't get it right first time. What's not to like?

HOW BRIDGE-TRAINING.COM WORKS

The website is simple and intuitive. On Bridge-training.com the teacher chooses 'create your deal'. Students can also choose 'play' for random deals. Teachers, however, are taken to the deal entry page

- ❖ The teacher interface screen allows you to upload a set of deals or single deals of your own, or to enter a deal card by card.
- ❖ Boxes for 'extra data' are where you can open the bidding box to enter a pre-determined or suggested auction and also select score type and vulnerability for the board.
- ❖ You will state the expected number of tricks and this will show as a target number of tricks when the students plays the board. A nice aspect of this feature is that for defence deals, the target shows the defender's target to defeat the contract.
- ❖ Small question icons give instructions for the extra information you can add to your deals. For example, you can enter a comment against a specific bid, or to suggest what a specific played card may show. These comments and extra information will show when the student plays the board.
- ❖ Feedback on the solution can be shown on screen after play or the student can choose to replay to try again.
- ❖ Any declarer hand should be South, so you can rotate the board to ensure that happens. However, for defence boards, you can choose to be declarer's LHO or RHO.
- ❖ More options exist for students to play the board with a preset auction and some preset card play actions. These features are good for actions further into the play of the hand such as making or acting on a signal.
- ❖ Finally, you click 'generate' to start the magic!

Continued

SHARING YOUR DEAL:

Your fully created deal can be shared easily as a url link or a QR code with any method of your choice. Here are a few ideas:

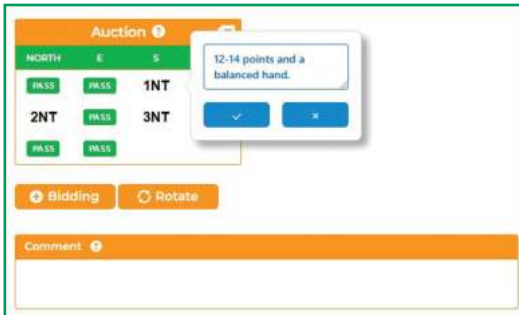
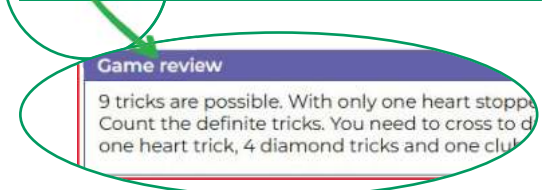
- ♣ A mailing group
- ♣ In a Google Classroom, post your deal link. You can even schedule it to go out immediately after the lesson
- ♣ In a Whatsapp group - send the link out
- ♣ Print the QR code for students to scan the link as they leave the lesson

Deals can be easily played on any PC or tablet. Phone screens may be a little on the small side, but it is a matter of personal preference.

With any deals which are not your own, you also need to observe a few conditions. A bridge hand cannot be copyrighted but you cannot copy auction/commentary without an author's permission or use their material outside of any terms of use they have stipulated.

Go on – try a board:

<https://tinyurl.com/2502bridgetraining> □





Christmas Quiz Answers

by Michael Byrne

Bidding. The questions on bidding assume standard Acol with a weak NT and 4-card majors. Imagine you sat down to play a duplicate with me and we had no further discussion. Part of the fun will be deciding what 'standard' bidding means. My decision is final!

For the first set of questions, say whether these sequences are plausible (P) or inconsistent (I). A *plausible* auction would be one where you could construct a hand that would sensibly bid in this fashion, and an *inconsistent* one would be one where the bidding only makes sense if someone has made an error or mis-sorted their hand!

1	W	E	2	W	E	3	W	E
	1♠	2♠		3♥	3♠		1♣	1♠
	2NT	4♥		4♣	5♦		2♠	2NT
				6♣			3♣	3NT

4	W	E	5	W	E
	1♦	1♠		1♣	3♣
	2♦	3NT		3♥	4♦
	4♥	6♦		5♣	6♣

A1 Plausible: Responder might have something like ♠KQ4 ♥J1076532 ♦97 ♣2

Marks: 2

A2 Inconsistent: If the pre-emptor held a good hand for spades and a club control (as responder has denied one) then they should not have bid 4♠. The correct call would be 4♣.

Marks: 2

A3 Inconsistent: 2NT is a natural non-forcing limit bid and 3♣ is a sign-off. It makes no sense for responder to then bid a game, since opener is showing something like three spades, six clubs and a minimum.

Marks: 2

A4 Plausible: : Opener's removal to 4♥ shows six diamonds and five hearts and responder now feels they have enough to try for a slam – perhaps something like:

♠10865 ♥AJ, ♦AQ6 ♣AQ8.

Marks: 2

A5 Inconsistent: Responder has made a limit bid showing 10 or 11 points and four clubs. Opener has shown a hand looking for game and a second suit of hearts (perhaps just a heart stopper with something like:

♠852 ♥AQ7 ♦865 ♣AKQ5

Responder can't possibly have enough to bid a slam. If they do, then 3♣ was the wrong bid.

Marks: 2

A6 Look at the auction below and see how many of the sets of hands would bid this way. For those hands that should bid differently, point out the mistakes in the auction.

W	E
1♥	1NT
2♣	3♣
Pass	

a

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

b

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

c

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

A6a Responder is too strong for 1NT, which shows 5-9 points. (1♥-2♦, 3♦ is the right auction playing Acol).

Marks: 3

A6b Opener should start with 1♦, the middle of three touching suits (Black-Middle-Weak=BMW).

Marks: 3

A6c Responder should not bid 1NT with heart support. The correct auction is 1♥-2♥, Pass.

Marks: 3

Cont/...

A6 Look at the auction below and see how many of the sets of hands would bid this way. For those hands that should bid differently, point out the mistakes in the auction.

W	E
1♥	1NT
2♣	3♣
Pass	

d

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

e

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

A6d This is the right auction! Responder's raise to 3♣ is a courtesy raise, helping to keep the opponents out of spades and perhaps locate a game if the 2♣ bidder is very shapely. It shows about 7-8 points and club support, but not a perfecto, as we will see below.

Marks: 3

A6e Here responder should bid 2♠ over 2♣, the so called 'impossible cuebid' to show a great hand for clubs and a maximum 1NT response. Opener would sign off as they have a load of old rhubarb.

Marks: 3

7 Below are four hands for East. Choose which ones match the auction, and how any remaining hands would have bid differently.

W	E	Hand a	Hand b
1♦	1NT	♠ J 7 5	♠ K 9 2
3♥	3NT	♥ K Q J	♥ J 3 2
		♦ 9 7 6 4	♦ Q J 4
		♣ J 7 4	♣ 10 7 4 3
		Hand c	Hand d
		♠ A Q 4	♠ 6 5 4
		♥ Q 4 2	♥ 9 3 2
		♦ 7 6	♦ A 10 6
		♣ 9 8 7 4 3	♣ A 10 7 3

A7a I'm ready for the barrage of complaints when I tell you that 3♥ is a splinter, since 2♥ would be a reverse, and thus forcing. Hence the 3NT bidder will have the hearts well covered, and the only hand that fits the bill is Hand a.

Marks: 2

A7b This hand should bid 4♦ to show support.

Marks: 1

A7c This hand should bid 3♠ as a cuebid, to show strength and let partner decide where to go.

Marks: 1

A7d This hand is great for diamonds and should bid 4♣ as a cuebid, perhaps with the aim of reaching slam.

Marks: 1

8 Below are four hands for East. Which hands match which auctions?

a	W	E	b	W	E	c	W	E
	2♣	2♦		2♣	2♦		2♣	2♦
	3♠	4♠		3♠	3NT		3♠	4♣

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

A8a A 2♣ opener and then a jump to three of a major shows a solid suit and asks partner to cuebid if they have the ace, raise to game with nothing or bid 3NT with a few useful bits and pieces. (3NT is *not* an offer to play).

For Auction a, Hand i is correct

For Auction b, Hand ii is correct

For Auction c, Hand iii is correct

Hand iv should have started with a positive response of 3♣.

Marks: 4 for each

Cont/...

Card play. What is the correct way to play these suit combinations for the number of tricks shown?



9a Four tricks are needed. Should you:

- Cash the king then finesse the jack if nothing of interest has happened?
- Cash the ace then run the jack if nothing of interest has happened?
- Lead low to the jack on the first round unless the queen makes a guest appearance?

A9a Option i is correct. This is a fascinating combination as if you take away the eight then it is right to start with low to the jack, gaining when they are 3-2 with the finesse working, or a singleton queen with West. However holding the eight as well you can afford to cash the king first as if the queen drops singleton from East then you can pick up 107xx with West.

Note that since the singleton queen with East is as likely as a singleton queen with West, the deciding factor is that cashing the king first gains when they are 5-0 onside and West has ♥Q10752. Mind you, this is more likely to be helpful if this is not the trump suit.

Marks: 3

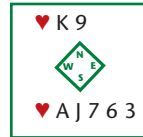


9b Three tricks are needed. Should you:

- Lead low to the queen then low to the ten?
- Lead low to the ten then cash the ace?
- Cash the ace then lead low to the queen?

A9b Option i is correct. Effectively you take two finesses and hope one is right and that the suits split well.

Marks: 3



9c Four tricks are needed. Should you:

- Play king, ace and another?
- Play the king, then the nine to the jack?
- Lead low to the nine?
- Run the jack?

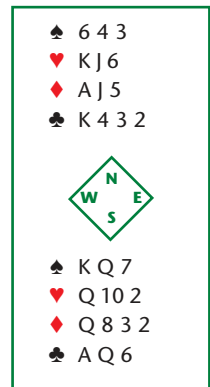
A9c Option iii is correct. Low to the nine is a straight forward finesse of the ten. It is slightly better than leading the king and the nine to the jack, since if the nine loses to the ten then you still make four tricks when the queen drops doubleton. Contrast this with 10x with East where when the finesse of the jack fails the drop of the ten doesn't help you as you don't have the eight.

(If you needed all the tricks you would cash the king and lead low to the jack).

Marks: 4

10 West leads the ♠10 in response to partner's overcall and East overtakes with the jack. You win the king and must plan to make nine tricks.

W	N	E	S
	1♣	1♠	3NT
All Pass			



A10 You are missing the ♥A and the ♦K and there is a temptation to start with one of these suits. If you lead a heart though, they might jump in and clear spades, leaving you at the mercy of the diamond finesse (unless clubs break).

It's better to take the diamond finesse first. If it loses there is still a chance to find the ♥A with West, but the best play of all involves checking on the club suit first. Cash the ♣K, ♣A and ♣Q and see if the suit is 3-3. If it is then you can guarantee you contract by knocking out the ♥A. If clubs are 4-2 then take the diamond finesse, if it loses you can fall back on the ♥A being well placed.

Marks: 8

Cont/...

11 The ♦4 is led to the queen and East's king. East continues with the ♦A and another diamond which you win with the ♦J, West playing the ♦6 and ♦9. You throw a club and heart from table. You lead a heart to the ♥K and ♥A. East leads the ♣2. What is your play to make nine tricks?

W	N	E	S
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

♠ K Q J
♥ K Q 10 9 7 6
♦ Q
♣ K 4 3



♠ A 10 2
♥ 5 2
♦ J 8 5 3 2
♣ A 6 2

A11 Since you can afford another heart loser it must be right to finesse the ten into East, the safe hand, but it would be a mistake to win the club switch in hand and lead one straight away. If East has the singleton ♥A (not that unlikely after playing it on the first round) then you will have no further play for the contract. Instead you should let the club run to dummy, cross to your hand with the ♠A and lead a heart to the ten. If it loses you can claim your contract, while if it wins you have a second string to your bow. West is marked with four diamonds and four hearts, and looks to have two spades and three clubs (from East's switch to a low club). In that case you can cash two further spades and watch West squirm. If they throw a diamond then your diamonds are winners, likewise a heart. They must throw their clubs and now you have them. Cross back to the carefully preserved ♣A and exit with your diamond. You take the last two hearts on a throw-in. West will have something like: ♠76 ♥J843 ♦10964 ♣J95.

Marks: 8

12 Partner leaves you in 4♣ after their 2NT enquiry, despite you promising a minimum. The defence take two top diamonds and switch to a trump. You play low from dummy, East plays low and you win with the ♠8 in hand. What is your play to make ten tricks?

W	N	E	S
			2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♣	All Pass	

♠ A 3
♥ A K 3
♦ Q 5
♣ A K Q 10 7 3



♠ Q J 10 9 8 5
♥ 6 4
♦ 8 4 3
♣ 5 2

A12 If everything breaks you can stand on your head, sing *Away in a Manger* and make ten tricks with your eyes closed, but let's reserve Christmas miracles for those that actually need them. Both clubs and spades might break badly and we need to make sure we make the contract however they may lie.

The sensible thing to do with your diamond loser is to ruff it with the ace of trumps, then come back to your hand with a heart ruff and carry on with top trumps. However, this line of play will not be successful if the clubs are 4-1 as they will win the king of trumps and exit with a club, locking you on table and forcing you to concede a club ruff. The best line of play is to ruff your diamond on table, cash one top club and then ruff your way back to hand with hearts. When you exit with the ♠Q the opponents can win but must give you the lead to your hand and let you draw trumps.

Marks: 8

Fun Stuff.

13 Bridge idioms – which bridge expressions are these, cleverly disguised? Some of the expressions are useful, others less so.

13a *'When the opponents do not immediately find agreement with each other (but eventually settle down together) you may begin your campaign of defence by using their chief weapon against them.'*

Second suit agreed, trump lead.

This sound maxim refers to something like 1♣-1♥, 1♠-3♣, 4♣ where a trump lead will stop the impending cross ruff. **Marks: 4**

13b *'When 76.92% of your hand is split unequally yet both are considered biddable, then a rosy view should be taken in the auction, this can also apply when you and partner are in total agreement with each other.'*

Six and four – bid one more'.

76.92% of 13 is ten, and ten can only be split unequally (yet giving two biddable suits) 6 and 4. This refers to 6-4 shapes having lots of playing strength, and also 6-4 fits being very powerful.

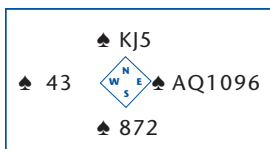
Marks: 4

Cont/...

13c 'Equally valid in Cluedo as well as bridge, seemingly giving your opponents a present of information, equivalent to showing the same photo from your holiday that you showed previously in order that they learn no more.'

Play the card you are known to hold.

In either defence or declarer play you should try and reveal information to the opponents that they already have, so that they can't use the information they know to their advantage. This is a classic layout in defence where West is declarer:



Declarer leads low to the queen and cashes the ace, North must drop the king (the card they are known to hold) to give West the losing option of running the ten to North's jack.

Marks: 4

13d 'Confusion casts a spell over the start of play, and rather than try and solve it with a guess you begin with a temporary way to delay the decision.'

When in doubt lead a trump.

Marks: 4

13e 'The cupboard runs dry when you see something both refactorable and square.'

There's no more where the nine is.

Nine is both a square number (3^2) and a refactorable one (divisible by the **count** of its divisors 1, 3 and 9).

It refers to the fact that a nine lead is normally a singleton or doubleton.

Marks: 4

13f 'A dark cloud falls over somewhere that is close in a way to Slovakia and Lebanon.'

The Curse of Scotland

The $\spadesuit 9$ is known as *The Curse of Scotland*. Those of you familiar with basic geography may be surprised that I consider Scotland to be close to Slovakia and Lebanon – it is, but only in the table of countries by population.

Marks: 4



CONGRATULATIONS!

**First place
Ian Pagan**

**Second place
Dominic Cooke**

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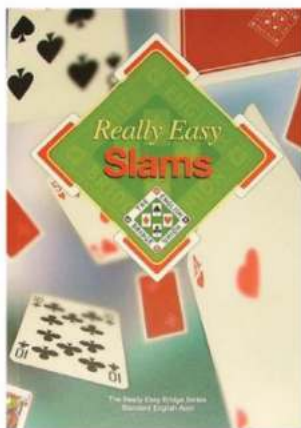
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Responder's rebids when opener is super-maximum

To complete this series on the principles of bidding when auctions are split into strength categories, we must now focus on auctions where opener has shown an opening hand which is right at the top end of the normal opening range or where responder's response has made opener's rebid game-forcing. A hand with any more strength than this would not have opened one of a suit at all.

Opener will therefore be 18-19 points if the response was at the one level but 15-19 if the response was at the two level (if balanced); or game-forcing two-suiters. Game-forcing single-suiters are beyond the scope of this series.

And some general rules to help you decide what to do when rebidding as responder:

- ❖ Previously-bid suits are non-forcing (unless the auction is already game-forcing).
- ❖ NT bids are non-forcing (unless you are already known to have 25+ points combined).
- ❖ New suits are forcing (though sometimes not if your partner just bid NT).
- ❖ New suits at the three level are forcing to game.
- ❖ Responder's reverse is forcing to game.

Let's look at some examples. As you look through them, you will start to notice patterns. Don't worry about memorising what all of the bids mean! Just understanding the general principles about forcing and non-forcing bids will take you a long way.

OPENER SHOWS A 15 POINT HAND AFTER A 2-LEVEL RESPONSE

When we previously looked at a 2-level response, we noted that the strength requirement for bidding a new suit at the two level is that you want to go to game opposite a 15-point balanced hand. In the following example, you have already responded at the two level, so opener's 2NT shows at least 15 HCP, and is game-forcing.

West	East
1♥	2♣
2NT	?

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

Hands 1 and **3** would bid 3♣, while **Hand 2** would bid 3♦. These bids show slam interest or very unbalanced, as hands with length in the minors generally want to play in no trumps wherever possible. The only times a minor would be preferable would be if twelve tricks were available in the minor but not in no trumps, or 11 available in a minor but fewer than nine in no trumps.

Hands 1 and **2** would bid the minor to investigate slam, whereas **Hand 3** would do badly in no trumps if any of the outside suits had just one stop, especially considering the club suit is not guaranteed to run opposite two small cards.

Hand 4 should bid 3♥ in case opener has a hand with five hearts. As majors take priority over no trumps it is still only game-forcing rather than suggestive of slam.

Hand 5 would bid 3♠ in case opener is 4-4 in the majors. Note that this hand is strong enough to force to game (13+ points) even if opener were a weak opener. With a hand such as this:

♠QJ107 ♥2 ♦A42 ♣KJ986

responder would first bid 1♠ rather than 2♣.

Hand 6 would bid 3NT, to play. This is a very frequent conclusion to such an auction. A spade stop is not required as you are likely to have one when partner has shown 15-19 points, plus the opponents have two unbid suits to choose from and you don't want to expose your weaknesses to them.

PATTERNS

- ♣ Bidding three of opener's major offers a choice between 3NT and 4♥/♠; bidding three of a new major is looking for a fit; bidding three of a minor shows slam interest.
- ♣ To stop opener from bidding again, the cheapest non-forcing bid is 3NT.

OPENER SHOWS AN 18-19 POINT HAND AFTER A 1-LEVEL RESPONSE

When opener rebids 2NT after a 1-level response the auction is not forcing to game. Responder has probably shown 6+ points but may have chosen to respond with a trick or likely trick instead so they may choose to pass opposite 18-19 points.

West	East
1♥	1♠
2NT	?

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

Hand 7 should pass. It applies to any hand that has chosen to bid with a sub-minimum or a very poor 6-count such as this one.

Hands 8 and 9 would both bid 3♣ which is natural(ish) and game-forcing (because it wasn't 'Pass'). In both cases responder wants to know if opener has 3-card spade support.

Hand 10 would bid 3♥ – natural and forcing – to check if opener has five hearts.

Hand 11 would bid 3♠ to show a 6+-card suit and slam interest. There is a spade fit as opener has promised two or three of the suit. A weaker hand should jump straight to 4♠.

Hand 12 bids 3NT, to play. This might be any hand where there is no major fit and no slam potential.

PATTERNS

- ♣ All bids are natural and forcing as there is a lot to do and very little space left below 3NT. Responder may bid a dummy minor to search for 3-card support for their own major. (There are conventions one can use to improve these auctions but those are best saved for a later article!)
- ♣ To stop opener from bidding again, the cheapest non-forcing bids are 3NT or 4♥/♠.

OPENER MAKES A GAME-FORCING JUMP SHIFT

When opener jump shifts into a second suit, the auction is forced to game. As such, it promises 19+ points, or potentially a good 18. Usual principles now apply.

Since it is forcing to game responder rebids at the game level are weaker than lower ranking bids in the same strain. There is a big complication, however: without space to play with, responder may be forced to give preference (or even false preference) to opener's first suit, meaning that it cannot promise three cards in the first bid suit 100% of the time. This means opener, with only a 5-card suit and a stop in the fourth suit should follow up with 3NT. This is tricky to remember! Let's look at an example:

West	East
1♥	1♠
3♦	?

Hand 13	Hand 14
♠ K J 6 3	♠ A K 7 4
♥ 6 4	♥ Q 5 4
♦ Q J 7	♦ 10 4
♣ 7 6 3 2	♣ K 5 4 3

Hand 13 is badly compromised by the 3♦ rebid. If opener had rebid 3♣ you could have used 3♦ as fourth suit forcing to handle hands without a diamond stop, so 3♥ would always promise three hearts. Here you can't afford to go above 3NT so you must bid 3♥ (a preference bid which could

also be a slam try with hearts!). With only five hearts, opener must bid 3NT with a club stop which you can pass without true support.

Hand 14 is also going to bid 3♥, and would bid 4♥ when opener next bids 3NT to check whether it is 2- or 3-card support.

West	East
1♥	1♠
3♦	?

Hand 15	Hand 16
♠ K J 7 4 3	♠ K 4 3 2
♥ 7	♥ 9
♦ Q 9 3	♦ 8 7 4
♣ J 7 5 4	♣ Q J 10 6 3

Hand 15 must bid 3♠, showing 5+ spades. It is another tricky bid in this auction. Your aim is to find a 3-card spade fit. If opener denies three spades and you have a 6-card suit you must make a judgement call about whether the hand is playable in 4♠ opposite what could be a singleton. A hand such as:

♠KQJ975 ♥8 ♦1098 ♣765

will play better in 4♠ than 3NT, even opposite a singleton (perhaps you bid 3♠ rather than 4♠ in case partner has a fifth diamond), whereas:

♠J98764 ♥8 ♦K76 ♣Q105

is better suited to no trumps.

Hand 16 can bid 3NT with a club stop and no undisclosed major-suit length.

West	East
1♥	1♠
3♦	?

Hand 17	Hand 18
♠ K Q J 10 6	♠ A 8 7 6
♥ 5	♥ 8 7
♦ 10 4	♦ K Q J 8
♣ A Q 10 9 4	♣ 10 8 7

Hand 17 bids 4♣ – natural – showing no desire to play in 3NT. Even if partner has no fit you could be making a slam in no trumps if partner holds:

♠A3 ♥AK1097 ♦KQJ6 ♣K7.

Hand 18 would bid 4♦, a slam try. 6♦ would be easy opposite:

♠7 ♥AK1095 ♦A1096 ♣AK5.

West	East
1♥	1♠
3♦	?

Hand 19	Hand 20
♠ K 5 4 3	♠ K Q J 8 6 5 4
♥ J 7 5	♥ 7
♦ 8 2	♦ 8 3
♣ Q 7 4 3	♣ 5 4 3

Hand 19 would bid 4♥ showing no interest in slam – a real minimum.

Hand 20 would bid 4♠ to play.

PATTERNS

- ❖ All bids below game are natural and forcing as there is a lot to do and very little space left below 3NT. Responder may go back to opener's first suit for preference rather than just to show support, depending on how much space is available.
- ❖ To discourage opener from bidding again, responder can bid straight to a game. □

Have you got it? India's quiz is online p67



New Prize Leads Quiz

by Alan Mould

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 (including a 10), unless there's a good reason to make a non-standard lead.

Remember, if you think it matters you need to specify which card of a suit you are leading.

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](#).



A twin-pack of Piatnik playing cards, kindly donated by **Gibson Games** is the prize on offer. For information visit

www.gibsonsgames.co.uk/collections/all-cards

There are TWO categories in our competition: up to and including Master, and those with higher ranking. Please indicate the category for which you are entering with your answers. In the event of a tie, the winner from each category will be randomly selected. The editor's decision is final.

Entries to the Editor, Leads Quiz,
Raggett House, Bowdens, Langport, Somerset,
TA10 0DD
or e-mail lou@ebu.co.uk
by 7 March 2025.

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

ANSWERS TO DECEMBER'S QUIZ: page 56

TWO answers - Teams & Pairs

Hand 1

♠ Q J 6 5
♥ A K 10 9
♦ 10 6 5 2
♣ 2

South	West	North	East
2NT ¹	Pass	3NT	All Pass
¹ 20-22, not that this is very relevant.			

What is your lead playing teams, and playing pairs?

Hand 2

♠ K 9 6
♥ A K Q 10 9 4
♦ 9 7
♣ Q 5

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

¹ Minors, at least 5-5; ² Splinter, short clubs and heart support, enough for game; ³ Last Train (to Clarkesville – the old Monkees song for those old enough to remember). Last train is a convention invented by the ever fertile mind of Eric Rodwell. It shows mild slam interest and says nothing else.

What is your lead playing teams, and playing pairs?

Hand 3

♠ J 8 6
♥ 9 8 6 4 3 2
♦ K J
♣ 8 3

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

What is your lead playing teams, and playing pairs?



Is a 3-level opening right for me?

Our exploration of pre-empting continues this issue with a look at which hands should open at the three level.

A 3-level pre-empt is a straight forward 'in-and-out-bid'. You make one bid on the hand to tell your partner what you have, then let them make all the decisions. In order for that to be the right thing to do you must make sure you have the hand you describe. A 3-level pre-empt should contain:

- ❖ a 7-card suit if vulnerable. If non-vulnerable you can get away with six cards if you have a shapely hand (that means having a singleton) and all of your points in your suit;
- ❖ a reasonable suit, with some intermediate cards backing up the honours. This is more important in 1st or 2nd seat when partner might be about to raise you to game, rather than 3rd seat when partner has already passed and should be staying quiet. Remember that on normal breaks a suit of Q1098643 will have only 3 losers even if partner is void, but a suit of QJ75432 might well lose four tricks;
- ❖ a lack of defensive tricks, which will mean that if you do get caught for a penalty (or your pre-empt is passed out and you go a lot down) then the opponents will have a making contract their way;
- ❖ a single-suited hand, without four cards in another major (but see the point about being in 3rd seat later on).

Let's see if we can imagine the worst possible hands on which some people mistakenly pre-empt:

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

The bad suits, defensive strength in the majors, terrible intermediates and soft values in the short suits mean that you might go for a terrible penalty when the opponents can't even make a game! These are absolutely not suitable hands to open the bidding.

And now some more suitable ones:

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

Note that the first hand may not appear in many textbooks or beginners lessons on pre-empting, but it is actually highly suitable. You have fair playing strength, a respectable suit, good intermediate cards, and no defensive tricks whatsoever.

The second hand is purely offensive, and 3♥ is likely to cause more of a problem than a weak two although, as mentioned above, it is only advisable when non-vulnerable. (Opening 3♥ will also save partner a problem when they hold a decent hand with two small or a singleton heart, as they will now have an easy raise to game).

There are two huge factors we have only touched upon however and they both deserve a lot of discussion – they are **Position** and **Vulnerability**.

Position is something that many less experienced players know nothing about, and why should they? It's not something that traditional teaching covers, but it's absolutely vital to understand if you ever want to progress at the game.

If you are in first position (dealer) then you have two opponents and one partner with unknown hands. An aggressive pre-empt has good odds that it will catch the points in the opponents' hands and if you mess up the auction it will most likely work to

your advantage. A first position pre-empt can be bold, but not suicidal.

If you are in second position after a pass, then you have already got past one opponent, and the odds are roughly 50:50 as to which side ‘owns’ the hand. It’s all well and good disrupting the auction but half the time it will be your partner that has the good hand. A second in seat pre-empt should be respectable and traditional.

If you are the third person to bid after two passes then the situation has changed completely. If your partner has already passed and you hold a weakish hand then you know the opponents can make a game, and possibly a slam. By all means pre-empt on thin air, you need little more than good thoughts to open with a bold pre-empt and you can be as profligate and wild as you fancy. (You may also pre-empt when you hold a 4-card major on the side, as you won’t miss a game by failing to find a fit in the side suit.)

In the fourth seat a pre-empt is a rare thing, as you won’t hold a weak hand if the other three players have failed to open the bidding. It is normally played as showing about 8-12 points, but they are as rare as hen’s teeth so it’s not worth losing much sleep over them.

The vulnerability is also worth bearing in mind, not just yours but theirs as well. If you pre-empt and are doubled for 500 against an enemy game, then you show a profit if the opponents are vulnerable, but have a small loss if they are non-vulnerable.

At ‘green’ (non-vul vs vul) you should be as aggressive as possible. Open at the three level on hands you might otherwise open a weak two on, or would have passed if vulnerable.

At ‘white’ (love all) you can be bold, though not quite as brave as when you are at green.

At ‘amber’ (game all) you should be a little cautious, but not cowed into submission.

At ‘red’ (vul vs non-vul) you should be extra careful and make sure you have the good pips and a side singleton. (To pre-empt with 7·2·2·2 shape at red you’d need a really top drawer suit such as KQJ10652 or AQJ9743)

The observations about position and vulnerability are cumulative – a 3rd in hand pre-empt at green will be the trashiest hand you can imagine, and a second in seat ‘red’ pre-empt would

be an ultra cautious and careful ‘insured by Lloyds of London’ effort.

Note that when we talk about being careful and cautious, we are not referring to having a load of high card points. We are talking about a strong suit, a shapely hand (7·3·2·1 is a much better shape than the dreaded 7·2·2·2) and few defensive tricks (ideally none) outside.

Let’s review the dos and don’ts of pre-empting at the three level:

Some Dos and Don’ts of 3-level pre-empts

Do look carefully at your intermediate cards when considering the strength of your suit and whether or not to pre-empt.

Do make sure you carefully take note of the position and vulnerability which are far more important than most people understand.

Don’t be afraid to bid the full value of your hand if you are shapely and have good playing strength – that is far more important than the number of points you hold.

Don’t pre-empt on a 7-card suit when you hold a 4-card major on the side (unless you are in the 3rd seat in which case all bets are off). □

TRY MICHAEL’S QUIZ, ONLINE PAGE 70





Ducking ~ 2

This article continues the theme of developing tricks in long suits in hands played in no trumps, by ducking an early round of the suit. The reason for losing an early trick rather than cashing early tricks is usually because there is a lack of entries.

Let's consider an example, established in a previous article. You are South, declarer, in Hand 1 below, played in 3NT after the uncontested auction: 1♦ – 2♣ – 3NT. West fishes out the ♠10 as the opening lead and you can see the following:

Hand 1
South plays in 3NT.
West leads the ♠10.

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

South plays 3NT. West leads the ♠10

♠ J 7 4		Online readers can click here
♥ J 8 5		
♦ J 7		
♣ A K 7 6 3		
♠ 10 9 8 2		♠ Q 6 3
♥ 9 4 2		♥ Q 10 7 6
♦ Q 8 4		♦ K 10 5 2
♣ Q J 8		♣ 10 5
♠ A K 5		
♥ A K 3		
♦ A 9 6 3		
♣ 9 4 2		

What, though, if the ♠J had won the first trick? How would that have affected matters?


As before, your initial *Count and Plan* reveals two spades, two hearts, one diamond and two clubs on top. You try the ♠J from dummy at trick one and, slightly to your surprise, it holds the trick. Now what?

With eight on top, you only need to develop one extra in clubs. As with Hand 1, you duck a club at trick two. East takes the trick and returns a second round of spades. How has this affected matters? Well, when you lead another club towards dummy, West shows out, revealing a 4-1 split. What now?

The answer is to duck a second round of clubs. East can play anything he likes now but you have enough tricks – three spades, two hearts, one diamond and, crucially, three clubs. The full deal is shown overleaf:



Hand 2. South plays 3NT. West leads the ♠10

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

Online readers can click here

On Hand 1 you could have cashed a top club before ducking one. Here, such a play would have been fatal; you must duck the first club and then duck a second round when the bad split becomes apparent.

As a footnote to this deal – what should you do if West were to follow suit on the second round of clubs? Playing matchpoint pairs it is reasonable to take the ♣K, playing for a decent club break with good prospects of an overtrick in 3NT. Playing with a form of scoring where overtricks are a frippery (teams bridge or rubber/Chicago bridge, perhaps) the safety play is to duck again in case it is East who has the singleton club.

Pushing on...

With some deals you have to show some patience to establish your suit. How might you go about playing 3NT as South on this next one? The bidding isn't important, but I'll provide it anyway. You open 1NT and partner applies Stayman, going to 3NT after you show your 4-card spade suit.

West decides to lead the ♠J, despite your spade bid, and you contemplate the dummy:

Hand 3
South plays in 3NT.
West leads the ♠J.

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




Your preliminary *Count and Plan* reveals three spades, three diamonds and one club in top tricks. Where are the extra two tricks coming from?

The diamonds might break, the club finesse might work, clubs might split 3-3.

The diamonds can wait; it looks best to play on clubs first. However, with a certain club loser, best technique is to cross to hand with a diamond and to play a club to the ♣9. This costs nothing (you can try a club to the ♣Q in due course) and may bring home the bacon on a layout such as this:

Hand 3. South plays 3NT. West leads the ♠J

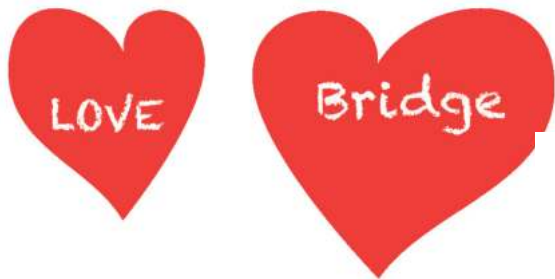
♠ K		♠ 7 6 2
♥ Q 8 6 3		♥ A 10 7 4
♦ K 7 4		♦ 9 6 5 3
♣ A Q 9 6 3		♣ K 7
♠ J 10 9 8 4		
♥ K 9		
♦ J 2		
♣ J 10 8 4		
		♠ A Q 5 3
		♥ J 5 2
		♦ A Q 10 8
		♣ 5 2

Online readers can click here

Once the ♣9 forces the ♣K, the rest is plain sailing as you can either set up the long club or can rely on diamonds to play for four tricks. You can always make three spades, four diamonds and two clubs or a variation on that.

The principle? If you are going to duck a round, it often pays to duck high (as it were). □

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





Avoiding embarrassment

One of the best things about bridge afterwards is getting to discuss the boards with all your friends. This of course means that I need to play as well as possible so that I don't have any embarrassing stories to tell. It's all non-vulnerable when I pick up:

♠	Q 4
♥	A Q 9 7 3
♦	10 4
♣	J 7 6 2

My right hand opponent deals and opens 1NT (15-17). Partner and I play a 2♥ overcall as natural, but I'm afraid my hand isn't nearly good enough to bid here. I pass and my left hand opponent surprises me by calling 2♦ which is announced as hearts. Phew! Good thing I didn't overcall 2♥.

Partner passes and my right hand opponent dutifully completes with 2♥. I pass and my left hand opponent bids 2NT as invitational. Partner passes and my right hand opponent thinks for a little bit before bidding 3NT. I have nothing to say to that and everyone passes.

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

Now I need to find a lead. Ordinarily, I would lead a heart against 3NT, but this isn't such a good idea now that dummy has shown hearts. I shall have to settle for my second best suit.

I lead the ♣2 (4th highest) and dummy goes down with a not unreasonable eight count.

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

Declarer plays low from dummy and partner takes the ♣K. As partner considers his play at trick two, it occurs to me that this lead has worked out very well. To make 3NT, declarer is likely to need to make something of the heart suit. The ♣A represents an entry to dummy and the heart suit, so knocking it out before the hearts are established is definitely for the best.

What a good lead – at least it will be if partner continues the suit. Come on, partner! I know you can do it! Partner eventually returns the ♣8, and declarer takes the ♣A in dummy. Next, declarer plays a spade to the ace in their hand in order to lead a heart towards dummy.

I was expecting this and I'm ready to duck. If I play my ace, declarer will have an entry to dummy in the heart suit itself, so my plan is to duck until declarer is out of hearts. Holding up the ♥A for one round will allow declarer to score one heart trick, but that should be all.

A heart to the ♥10 holds the trick (partner following with the ♥5) and declarer comes back to hand with the ♦A to play another heart.

Partner followed to the last heart so it's clear that this is declarer's final heart. I go up with the ace, cutting off declarer from his heart tricks. Now I just need to find an exit. Should I play another club? I'm not so sure.

My partner can't have the ♣Q because he would have played that card at trick one, and partner's ♣8 returned looks like top of a doubleton to me, so I think declarer has ♣Q9 remaining. Playing another club would give a trick away. Having limited declarer's tricks in hearts, I want to exit as passively as possible, so I put the ♠Q on the table.

Declarer takes this with the ♠K and rather dejectedly cashes the ♦K. I follow with my final diamond, pretty happy about how the defence has gone, and declarer cashes the ♣Q, his final winner. It looks like declarer has only seven winners and that 3NT will drift two off. But something terrible occurs to me just before I follow to this trick. This is the position:

Online readers can click here

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

The ending to this hand was a little spectacular (it's not every day that you get to unblock to avoid an endplay) but we were only able to reach that ending because of our thoughtful defence up to that point. Keeping declarer off dummy to limit declarer's tricks was an excellent start, and we did well not to continue clubs when in with the ♥A. Had we returned a club, declarer could have made his contract by winning with the ♣Q rather than the ♣9 – preserving the low club to ensure the endplay against us. Now that would have been embarrassing! □

♠ 7 ♥ K J 6 ♦ 7 ♣		♠ J 10 ♥ ♦ Q J ♣ 3
♠ Q 9 7 ♥ ♦ J 7 ♣	♠ 9 2 ♥ ♦ 9 ♣ Q 9	



Yikes! I'm about to get endplayed.

I may have worked very hard to keep declarer away from his heart tricks in dummy, but all of that work is about to come crumbling down! After cashing the ♣Q, declarer will exit with the ♣9 and I will be forced to win with my ♣J. With no spades or diamonds left in hand, I will have to exit in hearts, allowing declarer to take another heart finesse and score two extra heart tricks for nine in total!

Clearly, I cannot allow this to happen. To avoid the endplay, I must throw the ♣J under the ♣Q! This gives a trick away to the ♣9, but that is a small price to pay when keeping the ♣J would give two tricks away to dummy's hearts.

After scoring the ♣Q, declarer cashes the ♣9. But that is all – my partner takes the rest of the tricks. Here's the full deal:

CROSSWORD NO 46							
Compiled by MERMAN				Clues and grid, p23			
1	T	2	H	3	E	4	R
5	A	6	P	7	I	8	S
9	S	10	E	11	L	12	E
13	G	14	A	15	N	16	C
17	W	18	R	19	A	20	P
21	U	22	P	23	B	24	U
25	R	26	R	27	R	28	R
29	I	30	S	31	S	32	U
33	E	34	E	35	E	36	E
37	F	38	R	39	I	40	I
41	T	42	I	43	P	44	L
45	P	46	R	47	E	48	F
49	A	50	B	51	A	52	B
53	C	54	H	55	A	56	S
57	E	58	R	59	C	60	L
61	O	62	B	63	H	64	Y
65	N	66	E	67	S	68	W
69	H	70	E	71	W	72	H
73	E	74	E	75	L	76	L
77	O	78	D	79	D	80	S
81	K	82	I	83	N	84	D
85	L	86	E	87	F	88	R
89	F	90	R	91	E	92	V
93	E	94	N	95	U	96	E
97	S	98	D	99	F	100	R
101	O	102	X	103	T	104	R
105	O	106	T	107	T	108	E
109	D	110	E	111	D	112	D



Always open your longest suit! Learners should get the message loud and clear from their teachers and will begin to understand the power of a long trump suit. But the message on trump length really hits home when pre-emptive bids are used. *Beginning Bridge Book One* introduces weak twos and pre-emptive bids at higher levels as well as weak jump overcalls. Here are a few examples:



BRIDGE FOR ALL TEXTBOOKS

The **Bridge for All** textbooks have exercises and practice hands, and you can see preview pages on our website. Books can be purchased directly from EBED with discounts available for all members of English Bridge Teachers Association.

Contact Lisa Miller:
Tel: 01296 317217, Email:
lisa@ebedcio.org.uk

Q 1a) As dealer what is your opening bid?
1b) RHO opens 1♥. What is your bid?

♠	K Q 10 4 3 2
♥	8 7
♦	10 5
♣	Q J 2

Q 2a) What is your opening bid. Opps are vul?
2b) What is your opening bid. All vul?

♠	8
♥	6 3
♦	A Q 10 9 7 6 5 4 2
♣	7

Q 3 What is your opening bid?

♠	A K J 10 8 7 6 5 2
♥	K Q
♦	A 6
♣	—

Q 4 Which score is best for you at love all? Should you let your opponents have the contract or bid over them?

- Your contract is 3♠ and you go down by two tricks; or
- Your opponents play in 3♦ making their contract

have game in your own hand, even if partner has no points. This one is not a pre-emptive hand. It is too strong.
Going two down non-vulnerable is minus 100 so it is a better score than the opponents making 3♦ which is minus 110.


1a Open 2♥.
1b Overcall 2♥ – a weak jump overcall.
2a Open 5♦ (8 tricks likely in diamonds).
2b Open 4♦.
3 2♣ – use your strong opening bid when you

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 7
♥ K Q 8 5
♦ A 8 4
♣ Q J 6




♠ Q J 10 8 4 3
♥ 4 2
♦ K 5 3
♣ K 7

You are in 4♠. West leads the ♦Q. Plan your play.

Hand 2

♠ 7 3
♥ K 2
♦ A Q J 10 6 4
♣ K 7 4




♠ K J 6
♥ A 7 3
♦ 9 8 5
♣ A J 9 2

You are in 3NT after West opened a weak 2♠. West leads the ♠10 and East plays the ♠Q. Plan your play.

Hand 3

♠ 10 7 4 3
♥ Q 8 3
♦ A 9
♣ A Q 5 2




♠ 6
♥ A K J 9 6 4
♦ Q 7
♣ K 10 4 3

You are in 6♥. West opened 1♠ and East passed. West leads the ♠A, then ♠K, East following to both rounds. Plan your play.

Hand 4

♠ 8 7 6
♥ 4 3 2
♦ Q J 5
♣ A J 10 5



♠ A 5 3
♥ A K Q 7 6 5
♦ 7 3
♣ K Q

You are in 4♥ after West made a 2♦ overcall. West leads the ♦AK, then a third diamond trumped with the ♥9 by East. Plan your play.

David Bakhshi gives the answers on page 54

CLUB PLAYER'S BIDDING QUIZ

You are sitting West at **Love All**. What should you bid with each hand below on the given auction at matchpoint pairs?

Hand 1

♠ AK 5 2	W	N	E	S
♥ J	2♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
♦ AK J 10 5	?		2♥	Pass
♣ A 10 5				

Hand 2

♠ A 10 6 2	W	N	E	S
♥ A Q J	?		1♣	1♦
♦ J 7 6 4 3				
♣ 3				

Hand 3

♠ 10 5 3	W	N	E	S
♥ Q J 5 4	1♥	Pass	1♣	Pass
♦ A 4 3	?		1♠	Pass
♣ Q 10 7				

Hand 4

♠ A 4	W	N	E	S
♥ A J 7 4	1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
♦ 9 3	?			
♣ A Q J 7 3				

Hand 5

♠ 10 3 2	W	N	E	S
♥ K Q 6 5 4	1♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
♦ A Q	?		1♠	Pass
♣ 10 7 6				

Hand 6

♠ K Q 6 5	W	N	E	S
♥ Q 7 5 3	1♥	Pass	1♦	Pass
♦ A 8 5	?		1♠	Pass
♣ 8 2				

Julian Pottage gives his answers on page 61



Stepping in

This is your captain speaking – conditions in Madeira are a bit blustery and there’s some rain around, so if we can’t see the runway we may have to fly around for a while until we get a break in the clouds.’ This didn’t sound too promising, but a few moments later came the announcement ‘We’re in luck – there it is’.

I had arrived in Madeira to contribute to the bulletin at the annual bridge festival there – one of the best tournaments I have ever played in and one you should certainly try to visit next November. I had not been intending to play, but a young German international didn’t have a partner, and the fortuitous appearance of the airport runway meant that I was able to remedy the deficiency.

Love All. Dlr East

♠ A K 5 3 2
♥ A 10 4
♦ 10 8 4 3
♣ A

♠ –
♥ K J 9 8 6 5 2
♦ A 7 5
♣ K Q 9

- 1 Splinter, not ideal with singleton ace but nothing else looked particularly sensible – 3♥ would not be forcing;
- 2 Keycard Blackwood for hearts;
- 3 Two key cards and the ♥Q – South’s 2♥ had promised six cards, but the seventh was worth treating as the queen;
- 4 We have all the key cards – do you have anything else?;
- 5 Plenty.

Many books have been written on the percentage plays with various suit combinations, but the trump suit here does not feature in them. That is because there is no ‘percentage play’ as such – you will avoid a loser when the suit divides 2-1 or when you can guess which opponent has three cards. The opening lead is the ♦K. How do you play?

I had put the dummy down and gone to the bar, and when I came back shortly afterwards my partner was looking rather more in need of beer than usual. Even if a position seems to be a pure toss-up, there may be some inference from the lack of bidding to guide you in determining which opponent is more likely to have a void. East-West don’t have all that many high cards, so the chances are good that East would not open the bidding even with a heart void. There is a much greater chance that West would overcall if he had a void, so you should play him (if anyone) for three.

At trick two my partner laid down the ♥K. Disaster struck when West showed out, having insouciantly passed over the 1♥ opening with:

♠QJ9764 ♥– ♦KQ2 ♣J542.

I have no idea why he didn’t bid, but his pass was a stroke of genius – not only did he make it easy for us to bid a grand slam that most of the field missed, but he had ensured that we would go down in it when my poor partner followed a well-reasoned and desperately unlucky line of play. In passing, note that if no inference at all can be drawn from

Continued on p49

The new partnership had a decent enough auction:

West	North <i>Burn</i>	East	South <i>Farwig</i>
		Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♣ ¹	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♠ ²	Pass	5♥ ³
Pass	5NT ⁴	Pass	7♥ ⁵
All Pass			



Clever play

Playing teams, South opens 1♥ and West overcalls 1♠. What call do you make with the North cards?

suits, so you need to find a way to apply some pressure. This is where you have got to:

N/S Game. Dlr South

♠ 5 3
♥ A 8 5
♦ 8 4
♣ K J 10 7 4 2

♠ Q J 10
♥ K 9 6 3
♦ A K 7 5
♣ A 3

♠ 5
♥ A 8 5
♦ 8 4
♣ K 10 7 4

♠ Q J
♥ K 9 6 3
♦ A K 7 5
♣ –

W	N	E	S
1♠	2♣	2♠	1♥
All Pass			3NT

You are borderline for a 2-level response, but you have a good suit, and a partial fit for partner's suit so it is practical to upgrade your hand and respond 2♣. South ends the auction with 3NT.

West leads the ♠6 which you win in hand, East following with the two. How do you plan the play?

You will need the club finesse so play the ace of clubs and try a club to the jack. This holds the trick, but East discards the ♥4. You are up to eight tricks, but you cannot establish clubs for your ninth since West will have four spades to cash, and this will give you five losers.

Instead you should consider East's hand. It seems certain that East began with five hearts given the discard, so you cannot establish a long heart. East has only four black cards, one club and three spades, and therefore must be guarding both red

Play a spade now. If West cashes all the spades, East is squeezed, This is known as a suicide squeeze, where one defender gets squeezed by their own partner! If West returns a red suit without cashing the spades, you need to win and play another spade. West is now on lead for the last time. Again, cashing the spades will squeeze East.

Say West has got off lead with a red card (let's imagine a heart) and you have played another spade. If West cashes just one of the remaining two spades before getting off lead with a diamond the count is not rectified for the squeeze.

How do you overcome this problem? Simply duck this trick to rectify the count. What West needs to do to defeat the contract is to get off lead on the second occasion without attempting to cash any spades at all. That's not easy!

The full deal is on page 49 and it's worth playing it online to see the squeezes in action. If you are reading this online you can click the link and BBO will let you play it through and go back to watch other endings. You can also see me play it.

Continued on p49



Tough Opponents

Unlike many of his contemporaries, John Hutson drew little satisfaction from scoring well against weak opponents. Some of the new batch of third-formers were barely able to follow suit. As for their defence, well, they opened a new suit at every opportunity.

The two pairs really worth facing were Bertie Bellis and Percy Cutforth, of course, and the Headmaster and his wife, Norma. The German master, Stefan Götel, was a good player, but his partner, the Matron, was rather unreliable.

‘Good evening, boys!’ said Norma Doulton, taking her place in the West seat. ‘We always like playing against you, don’t we Alfred?’

The Headmaster managed a non-committal nod. He reached for his cards, not overjoyed to see two jacks staring back at him. This was the deal before them:

N/S Game. Dealer North.

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

West	North	East	South
Norma Doulton	Neil Phillips	The Headmaster	John Hutson
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦ ¹	Pass	6♣
All Pass			
¹ 0 or 3 aces			

Giving the matter no apparent thought, Norma Doulton led the ♥8.

‘Thanks, Neil,’ said Hutson, as the dummy was laid out. He noted that thirteen tricks would be cold if trumps broke 3-2. Perhaps he should have bid more on his hand. ‘Ace, please,’ he said

The ace of trumps was followed by a diamond to the ace and a diamond ruff. When declarer returned to his hand with the ♣Q and played another top trump, good news arrived. The trumps were 4-1, so any ambitious pairs in 7♠ would go down. He drew a third round of trumps and crossed to the ♣A to discard his heart loser. That was his intention, anyway, but Norma Doulton ruffed the second round of clubs.

John Hutson winced at this setback. ‘I have to lose a heart, too,’ he said. ‘Sorry, partner, everything was wrong.’

The Headmaster leaned forward, a rare smile on his face. ‘Not quite everything,’ he said, pointing out that his partner had just faced the ♥K.


The two boys blinked in amazement. How on earth had Norma found such a diabolical lead? Twelve tricks would otherwise have been easy.

‘It seemed an obvious lead,’ Norma declared. ‘I had to put you to a decision in hearts before you knew about the trump break.’

‘Indeed,’ added the Headmaster. ‘Mind you, I rather think that 6NT was a better contract. The way the hearts were, they would have made an overtrick.’

The next five rounds restored an air of respectability to the Hutson scorecard. The masters’ top pair then arrived at the table. This was the next board:


Love All. Dealer North.

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

West	North	East	South
Percy	Neil	Bertie	John
Cutforth	Phillips	Bellis	Hutson
All Pass	Pass	3♠	4♥

HEATHER'S HINTS CONT FROM P47

South plays 3NT. West leads the ♠6

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

Online readers can click here

HEATHER'S HINTS

- ❖ When considering a borderline 2-level response to partner's opening bid, a partial fit with opener's suit, or a useful holding such as honour doubleton might persuade you to upgrade.
- ❖ In a situation where you are short of a trick in 3NT and the defence have four tricks to cash in their suit, it can be a good idea to give them those tricks immediately. Even if there is no genuine squeeze, cashing the suit will force their partner to make an uncomfortable number of discards before receiving any information about other suits, and they may just unguard a crucial suit due to lack of information. □

GREAT BRIDGE DISASTER, CONT FROM P46

the bidding – the opponents have so little that they would not bid even with a void – the percentage play is to cash the ace first. West would not lead from ♥Q73 on purpose, but there is a small but finite chance that he would lead from it by accident, while the chance is zero that he would do so with no hearts at all. □





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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.

FEBRUARY 2025 WEST HANDS

(IMP scoring on every deal)

1. N/S Game ♠ A K J 10
Dealer South ♥ A 7 3
 ♦ A J 6 5 3
(Ola Rimstedt) ♣ 10
* South passes
2. Game All ♠ 9 8 3 2
Dealer North ♥ 9 3
 ♦ A K 7 6 5
(Lian Ruoyang) ♣ A 3
* North bids 1♠
3. E/W Game ♠ Q 9 4 3 2
Dealer East ♥ Q J 5 2
 ♦ J 5
(Meyers) ♣ Q 3
* South bids 4♣
4. Game All ♠ K J 10 4
Dealer South ♥ K J 10 8
 ♦ Q 5
(Percario) ♣ J 7 2
* South passes
5. Game All ♠ A Q J 9 6
Dealer East ♥ A 7 3
 ♦ J 9
(Sementa) ♣ K J 7
6. Game All ♠ A 9 8 2
Dealer South ♥ A J 6 4
 ♦ J
(Ercan) ♣ A 5 4 3
* South passes

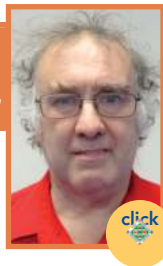
Beat Today's Experts

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.

FEBRUARY 2025 EAST HANDS

(IMP scoring on every deal)

1. N/S Game ♠ 5 4
Dealer South ♥ K Q J 5
 ♦ 10 9 7 2
(Mikael Rimstedt) ♣ A 7 2
* South passes
2. Game All ♠ A 6
Dealer North ♥ K J 10 8 4 2
 ♦ –
(Lian Yong) ♣ Q J 8 7 5
* North bids 1♠
3. E/W Game ♠ –
Dealer East ♥ A K 9 3
 ♦ A K Q 8 7 4
(Sanborn) ♣ A 8 7
* South bids 4♣
4. Game All ♠ 2
Dealer South ♥ A 9 7 6 4 3
 ♦ K 2
(Donati) ♣ A K 9 3
* South passes
5. Game All ♠ K 8 7 3
Dealer East ♥ 9 8 5
 ♦ K 6 2
(Versace) ♣ 10 8 5
6. Game All ♠ K 10 4 3
Dealer South ♥ 10 5
 ♦ 10 7 3
(Acar) ♣ K Q 8 6
* South passes



Trouble at the table

Tom Owen asked whether it is legal to deal five hands, then four hands, when making up the boards for play?

It depends on what you mean by ‘deal five hands then four hands’.

The law (Law 6B): *No two adjacent cards from the deck shall be dealt into the same hand ... The recommended procedure is that the cards be dealt in rotation, clockwise.*

- If you deal a shuffled pack into five piles and then pick them up and deal into four piles, then the first dealing into five piles is part of the shuffle, and the dealing into four piles is a legal deal.
- If you deal a shuffled pack into five piles going back and forth (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, ...) then merge piles 1 and 5, then you have four hands with 13 cards, and this is a legal deal.
- If you deal a shuffled pack into five piles and then pick up one pile and deal it onto the other four then it must happen that two adjacent cards from the shuffled pack will end up in the same hand, so this is not a legal deal.

John Taylor asked about an artificial 2NT response to a weak 2♥/♠ opening: Is it legal to play the 2NT responses as very weak; and is it sufficient to explain ‘asking for more information’ – and if pressed on strength ‘wide range’.

Any meaning of a 2NT response is permitted. In describing a 2NT response to a weak 2♥/♠, the partnership should explain what the bid asks for and what the bid shows (and what it does not show). The player who explains 2NT should not explain what the responses are, and you should not use names (like *Ogust*) – which may not be understood.

If the bid is strong then (something like):

‘Artificial, strong, asking for min/max and suit quality’ or

‘Artificial, strong, asking for min/max and features’

If the bid is not necessarily strong, and responder may be just bidding 2NT to amuse themselves, the explainer should be careful to say so, otherwise the opponents may be deceived into thinking the bid is strong:

‘Artificial, asking for min/max or suit quality [or a feature] – does not show a good hand, and the asker may not be interested in the answer.’

If the bid is not necessarily strong and could be any strength, then ‘wide range’ is a reasonable answer to ‘how strong?’.

A club TD asked: One of our members slipped and fell after about round three of a 12-round session. Her table did not play that round. She decided to play on, despite her injuries, until her son came to collect her just before the final two rounds, which her pair also could not play.

No one, it seems, was at fault, so how should we score those boards? If the verdict is different from scoring a sit-out (where clearly no-one is at fault), why is it different?

White Book 2.4.4 says that if a pair completes half the boards in the session, then the scores for the boards they did play count, and for the boards they did not play, the opponents get AVE+.

It is true that no one is ‘at fault’ for boards being lost due to accidents/illness but the EBU interpretation is that Law 12C2 should be read as if ‘at fault’ is replaced by ‘responsible’. With this interpretation, the pair who withdrew should get AVE- for the boards they missed (White Book 2.4.5) – but no one in a club is going to mind if the

boards are scored more generously for the withdrawn pair (AVE=).

The treatment of sit-outs is different. For a sit-out the boards were never scheduled to be played so no result is expected, and pairs who sit-out get a percentage score based on the boards they were scheduled to play. But when a board that is scheduled to be played is nevertheless not played, no result can be obtained and Law 12C2 applies – the pair not at all at fault get 60% as compensation for not being able to play a board they were due to play.

Mel Young asks a (hopefully) simple question:

Do you have to alert an opening bid of 1♣/1♦, which could be 3 cards, but not less, playing strong NT and 5-card majors? There seems to be a difference of opinion among directors!

Simple answer: 3-card 1♣/1♦ opening bids are not alerted or announced.

Longer answer: The Blue Book says (Blue Book 4B1) to alert a bid if it: (a) is not natural; or (b) is natural but has a potentially unexpected meaning.

Blue Book 4C1 explains that a 1-level opening in clubs or diamonds is natural if it only shows 3+ cards; and 3-card suits are not unexpected, so these opening bids are not alerted (or announced).

A player asked about bridge etiquette: On one deal the hand was passed out. North duly recorded the hand as 'passed out' and all the cards were returned to the board.

Then North reached over and took my cards out and started looking at them. I questioned this saying I thought it was not good etiquette but he ignored my protestations saying 'it makes no difference as the hand is over'. I was not happy about it but felt there was no action I could take (incidentally the person sitting North was the tournament director).

Handling another player's card is rude and against the law (Laws 7) and is subject to penalty (Law 90). If a player wants to see another player's cards, they must ask.

If a player suspects there has been a revoke or questions how many tricks have been made, they are entitled to see the other hands, but to not touch them. But this does not apply when the board is passed out!

LAW 7 - CONTROL OF BOARD AND CARDS

B. Removal of Cards from Board

3. *During play each player retains possession of his own cards, not permitting them to be mixed with those of any other player. No player shall touch any cards other than his own (but declarer may play dummy's cards in accordance with Law 45) during or after play except by permission of an opponent or the director.*

LAW 90 - PROCEDURAL PENALTIES

B. Offences Subject to Procedural Penalty

5. *touching or handling of cards belonging to another player (see Law 7).*

Jim Dunn asked about McKendrick, having been told it is restricted to Level 5 and was not permitted at Level 4.

McKendrick is a 2♠ response to a 1NT opening bid: showing a balanced invitation or a weak minor-suit hand. Level 4 is the permitted agreements allowed in most EBU competitions; Level 5 is the next level up, and is allowed in only a very few events (Tollemache, Spring Foursomes, Crockfords).

At Level 4, McKendrick is permitted because all responses are permitted; see Blue Book 7A2:

From responder's first call onwards all partnership understandings are permitted. □

If you have a question for Robin please email him at robin@ebu.co.uk

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

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

Heffalump Traps

Answers from page 45

by David Bakshi



Hand 1

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

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

	N	
W	S	E

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

Hand 2

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

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

	N	
W	S	E

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

4♠. West leads the ♦Q.

You have three top tricks, but can make at least four extra tricks in spades, and two in clubs and at least one in hearts. However, you need to avoid losing four tricks in the process despite the possibility that you will lose a trick in each suit.

If you decide to draw trumps immediately, then you can win the ♦K in hand and lead the ♠Q, intending to finesse if West plays low. If West has the ♠K, ♠Kx or ♠Kxx then you will easily make your contract, but if East wins the ♠K and returns a diamond, you should now expect to be defeated, losing a trick in each suit.

If you can avoid losing a diamond trick, then you can afford to lose to ♠K, so you should seek to establish two club winners before drawing trumps. With only two clubs in hand, the third club winner will provide a discard for your potential diamond loser. Therefore, you can win the ♦K at trick one and lead the ♣K (If West ducks, then you lead the ♣7).

When West wins the ♣A, the best continuation will involve forcing out your ♦A, but you can now cash dummy's remaining club(s), throwing the ♦5.

At this point, you can trump the ♦8, and lead the ♠Q in the hope of making an overtrick. If East wins the ♠K, the defenders can still win the ♥A, but that will be their third trick, and you make your game.

3NT after West opened a weak 2♠. West leads the ♠10 and East plays the ♠Q.

You have enough points to expect 3NT to be the contract at the other table, so making 3NT might be necessary to avoid losing a swing.

You have five top tricks, and can make at least four more tricks from diamonds (in addition to a trick in spades), but you need to ensure that you do not lose five spade tricks in the process.

West is assumed to have six spades, and the play to trick one suggests that East started with ♠Qx. If you win the first trick with the ♠K, then play on diamonds, your best plan is to finesse by leading the ♦9 from your hand. If West has the ♦K you will win six diamond tricks, but if East has the ♦K, then upon winning the ♦K, a spade return will leave you with five spade losers, thereby defeating your contract. Can this be avoided?

When East plays the ♠Q, the ♠KJx represent a certain stopper, so rather than winning the ♠K, you can play low at trick one. East can return a spade which West can win with the ♠A. If West plays another spade, then it is now safe to lose a diamond to East (since East has no spades remaining). If West switches to the ♥9, you can win in hand, and safely finesse diamonds into East's hand.

Heffalump Traps

by David Bakhshi

Hand 3

<p>♠ 10 7 4 3 ♥ Q 8 3 ♦ A 9 ♣ A Q 5 2</p>	<p>♠ J 9 5 ♥ 5 ♦ J 8 5 4 3 ♣ J 9 7 6</p>	<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <tr><td>N</td></tr> <tr><td>W E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S
N					
W E					
S					
<p>♠ A K Q 8 2 ♥ 10 7 2 ♦ K 10 6 2 ♣ 8</p>	<p>♠ 6 ♥ A K J 9 6 4 ♦ Q 7 ♣ K 10 4 3</p>				

Hand 4

<p>♠ K 9 4 ♥ J 10 8 ♦ A K 9 8 6 4 ♣ 9</p>	<p>♠ Q J 10 2 ♥ 9 ♦ 10 2 ♣ 8 7 6 4 3 2</p>	<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <tr><td>N</td></tr> <tr><td>W E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S
N					
W E					
S					
<p>♠ 8 7 6 ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ Q J 5 ♣ A J 10 5</p>	<p>♠ A 5 3 ♥ A K Q 7 6 5 ♦ 7 3 ♣ K Q</p>				

6♥. West opened 1♠ and leads the ♠A, then ♠K, East following.

You have 10 top tricks, and hope to win an extra in clubs, but where will another trick come from?

The only possibilities are to win with dummy's ♠10 or your ♦Q, even though neither may seem likely. You trump the second spade and draw trumps in three rounds, as East discards diamonds. You turn to clubs. If they split 3-2, then you will have top winners, but if they are 4-1, and the ♠J is not singleton, then it will be necessary to promote the ♣10. This will only be possible if East started with ♠Jxxx, so you should plan to cash the ♣AQ then lead towards the ♣K10, finessing if necessary.

You will still need an extra trick. From the bidding, you can expect West to hold the ♦K, but unless it is singleton, you will have to lose a diamond trick at some point. You could try cashing your last hearts, but West can discard the ♠Q8, and you will still lose to the ♦K, since East can keep the ♠J to beat dummy's ♠10. But what if East did not have the ♠J left? West would face an impossible discarding problem. You should therefore trump a spade after drawing trumps. Now when you cash four rounds of clubs, West can discard two diamonds and one spades as before, but with three cards remaining, you play your last trump, and West will be squeezed.

If West throws the ♠Q, then dummy's ♠10 will be good, and if West throws a third diamond, then when you lead the ♦7 at trick 12, West will have to play the ♦K, and your ♦Q will win the final trick.

4♥ after West made a 2♦ overcall. West leads the ♦AK, then a third diamond trumped with the ♥9 by East.

You have eight top tricks, and can win at least two extra tricks through length in hearts, but you need to make sure that you do not lose a further two tricks, having lost to the ♦AK. If hearts split 2-2, you can overtrump, draw trumps, then cash four clubs (overtaking your second club with dummy's ♣A). Discarding the ♠53 will see you winning 11 tricks.

However, if you overtrump, and play the ♥AK, East will discard on the second round, leaving West with a winning trump (♥J).

With a master trump outstanding, you might now turn to clubs, intending to throw two spades, but is this a risk free strategy? If West started with a singleton club, then your second club winner will be trumped, at which point a spade exit by West will see you stranded from your club winners.

This can be avoided by playing a third round of trumps immediately. West can exit with a spade, or a diamond, but you can win in hand, and cash four rounds of clubs, throwing your two losing spades.

This line of play ensured 10 tricks, while retaining the possibility of an overtrick. An alternative line would be to throw the ♠3 when the third diamond is ruffed by the ♥9, intending to win any return, then draw trumps. Though this would work on this layout, you would not only give up the chance of an overtrick, but would also run the (small) risk that East could give West a club ruff if West started with a club void. □



Answers to December's Problems

The first hand came up in a recent Gold Cup match, and the remaining two were from BBO play and sent in by my increasingly frequent local Manchester correspondent Espen Gisvold (thanks Espen).

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

South	West	North	East
		Pass	Pass
1NT ¹	All Pass		
¹ 15-17, not that this is very relevant.			

(a) ♠2: 10 marks, ♠Q: 7 marks, ♠J/3: 1 mark.

Sticking with my theme of 4th highest of your longest and strongest I will go with that – if for no other reason than I don't have a wildly attractive alternative. The ♠2 was chosen at both tables in a high standard Gold Cup match which shows what we all know as it is one of only three cards in your hand that lets the contract through (another being the ♠3). Declarer had ♠AKx in hand and 109x on the dummy so that was three tricks and seven in all. So the ♠Q is fine this time and maybe it is better a lot of the time.

(b) ♥2: 5 marks, ♥J/9: 1 mark. A lead other than a spade is trying to hit partner's hopefully 5-card suit. For that reason I think a heart is worse than a diamond. Partner, particularly having passed, will strain to bid with a 5-card major. They didn't, so they are less likely to have one. So, if I was leading a red suit, I would lead...

(c) ♦4: 9 marks, ♦J/7: 1 mark. For the reasons above.

(d) ♣3: 4 marks, ♣A: 2 marks, ♣7: 1 mark. I don't like a club lead as it is just too likely to give away a trick and really is all eggs in one basket. If it is

wrong then you will get one led back at you and it is now likely too late. The question is will Nathan's computer flash out the ♣A? At the table, this was the third card that lets the contract through 😊 – either of the low clubs are theoretically OK, though partner will have to recover from your odd lead.

Pairs Bonus: ♦4: 5 marks. I wouldn't like to lead from this hand at pairs as you don't know whether you are looking to beat the contract or just cut down on the overtricks. I think I'd go with the diamond as the best combination of the two.

Computer simulations:

♠Q/J: 27.1% highest chance of defeating the contract (teams) and providing average of 5.75 tricks proving to be the best lead at pairs.

I am astonished to see the computer lead a spade here - I thought it was a banker for a red lead. Shows what I know 😊. It's interesting the analysis says to lead an honour from two touching honours and no fillers. If right, then we will have to train ourselves not to routinely overtake (as we always do) with Kx or Ax to avoid blocking the suit. I wonder if a lot of the advantage is lost with a human declarer rather than a computer declarer?

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

South	West	North	East
		2♠ ¹	Pass
2NT ²	Pass	3♣ ³	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
¹ Five spades and 4+ in a minor, weak; ² Enquiry; ³ Natural.			

I think this a horrible hand to lead from and the marking reflects this.

- (a) ♠5: 2 marks, ♠other: 1 mark. I definitely would not lead this suit. It is very likely declarer will be playing on this suit, so why do their work for them?
- (b) ♥Q: 6 marks, ♥7: 1 mark. This is flat out gambling that partner has good hearts, and when it is wrong it will be very wrong. Also partner may well do the wrong thing and return a heart when they are in.
- (c) ♦3: 10 marks, ♦A: 3 marks, ♦7/6 1 mark. In the absence of anything more attractive I lead this and hope it is right.
- (d) ♣7: 9 marks, ♣3: 1 mark. I have said before that people do not lead dummy's second suit anywhere near enough and this could well be right for all sorts of reasons. However, unless declarer has a big misfit with dummy (in which case you have struck gold) they may well be playing on it for tricks on this hand as they don't have any great spade fit, so it is not so clear here.

At the table this time, it was about overtricks. A heart is best and makes declarer work a bit, a diamond is worst and a club little better.

Pairs Bonus ♣7: 5 marks. The case for a club is stronger at pairs as it is less likely to give away anything, so I go with that.

Computer simulations:

♥Q: 16.8% highest chance of defeating the contract (teams), and making the highest average of 3.35 tricks (pairs).

I am astonished that the computer has the spade lead second – dummy's longest and strongest. It seems so anti-intuitive to me. Why lead from a bad 5-card suit when you know five better ones are coming down in dummy?

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

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	2♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
The auction is old-fashioned Acol style, so 2♣ was 9+, natural and 3NT showed 17-19 balanced.			

- (a) ♠4: 6 marks, ♠Q/9/4: 1 mark. How are we going to beat this hand? We need five tricks. We have no entry, so partner will need at least four spades to set the suit up and cash it. And then we still need tricks from elsewhere. A better chance is to find partner with a 5-card suit and to set that up. Partner has all the values and hence hopefully can set it up and cash it. Hence, I much prefer:
- (b) ♥8/6/3: 10 marks. If partner has a 5-card suit, it needs to be hearts. Which again shows what I know. At the table it was all about overtricks. A spade lead gets two spade tricks and a club, any other lead results in just the club trick.
- (c) ♦10: 3 marks, ♦other: 1 mark. I suppose the ♦10 is passive, but what on earth is it going to achieve? You are never setting this suit up.
- (d) ♣8: 1 mark. It is almost never right to lead a singleton against no trumps (unless partner has bid the suit) and definitely not when the opposition have – you are just doing declarer's work for them.

Pairs Bonus: ♥8/6/3: 5 marks. Nothing but a heart would occur to me at pairs.

Computer simulations:

♥6: 5.3% chance of defeating the contract (teams) while the ♠6/4 scores the highest average of 2.17 tricks (pairs).

I am again amazed that the computer leads a spade rather than a heart at pairs. I take the point that declarer is likely to have a lot of tricks, so we need to set up whatever we can quickly. I am pleased to see that the computer agrees on a heart lead at teams. □

Full details of the computer simulations can be found online, p71

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS:

Master: Andrew Peel, Horsforth
Open: Geoff Foster, Cheltenham

Sponsored by





Beat Today's Experts

1. N/S Game. Dealer South

	♠ 8 6 3 2		
	♥ 9 4 2		
	♦ Q		
	♣ K 8 6 4 3		
♠ AKJ10		♥ 5 4	
♥ A 7 3		♦ K Q J 5	
♦ A J 6 5 3		♣ 10 9 7 2	
♣ 10		♣ A 7 2	
	♠ Q 9 7		
	♥ 10 8 6		
	♦ K 8 4		
	♣ Q J 9 5		

West	North	East	South
<i>O. Rimstedt</i>	<i>McIntosh</i>	<i>M. Rimstedt</i>	<i>Paske</i>
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♦	All Pass		

England's Open team faces Sweden in the World Bridge Games. Mikael Rimstedt had a perfect hand (good trumps) to accept the suggestion of playing in a 4-3 fit. At the other table, after the same first five bids, East's 4♥ ended the auction. Here, East did not forget to cuebid, in case partner had values to spare. West's 4♦ showed a spade control as well, since East had denied one. With a hand that could hardly be better after his limit bid, East came again with 5♣ and the slam was reached. After a club lead, declarer took two trump finesses for +920 and a gain of 10 IMPs.

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

2. Game All. Dealer North

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Lian R.</i>	<i>Bacalu</i>	<i>Lian Y.</i>	<i>Coldea</i>
3♥	1♠	2♥	Pass
	Pass	4♥	All Pass

auction to the top spot. West was deterred from cuebidding 2♠ because of his low doubleton trump. Lian Yang won the ♠K lead, crossed to the ♣A and cashed the ♦AK, ditching a spade and a club. North won the club continuation and led the ♠7, ruffed with the ♥10 and overruffed by South's queen. The ♣9 was ruffed with dummy's ♥9, North overruffing with the ♥A to lead another spade. Lian ruffed high, drew South's trumps, and claimed his +620. Well bid and well played.

West	North	East	South
<i>Donciu</i>	<i>J Li</i>	<i>Grigoriu</i>	<i>Y Zhang</i>
2NT ^A	1♠	2♠ ^A	Pass
	Pass	3♣	All Pass

Mihai Grigoriu had a Michaels 2♠ available to show hearts and a minor. You can use it on a hand with a 5-card major and a 6-card minor, by all means, but NOT when you have a 6-card major. They missed the excellent heart game, scoring +110 for the loss of 11 IMPs. Their loss is our gain. Bid 2♥ instead!

Awards: 4♥(10), part scores (4), 5♣(3).

China face Romania in the Open round-of-16, and produce a simple yet effective

3. E/W Game. Dealer East

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

West <i>Meyers</i>	North <i>Leleu</i>	East <i>Sanborn</i>	South <i>Kurek Beaulieu</i>
		2♣	4♣
Pass	Pass	4NT ^A	Pass
5♣	Pass	5♦	Pass
5♥	Pass	5♠	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♥	All Pass

France face the USA in the Women's round-of-16. Kerri Sanborn has a clear-cut 2♣ opening, and Margaux Kurek Beaulieu pre-

empts at favourable vulnerability. A double by Jill Meyers would suggest a weak hand, dissuading her partner from aiming too high. Sanborn's 4NT is not Blackwood; it shows two places to play. Expecting East to hold the minors, West bids her lower doubleton. The 5♦ rebid announces the red suits and West duly bids 5♥.

Needing very little for a grand slam, Sanborn cuebids 5♠. West's 5NT means 'I have some useful cards, but no cuebid to make.' They come to rest in 6♥, making +980. (A trump lead would beat 6♦, in practice).

West <i>Puillet</i>	North <i>Schireson</i>	East <i>Huberschwiller</i>	South <i>Baker</i>
		1♦	3♠
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

How can you ever catch up if you start with 1♦? South's 3♠ runs back to East, who re-opens with a take-out double. There is every chance that West will leave this in, while East is cold for a slam opposite both the West and North hands! She should have rebid 4♠ to announce her giant hand. France pick up just 500 and lose 14 IMPs.

Awards: 6♥ (10), 6♦ (7), 4♠ Dbl'd by South (5), games (3).

4. Game All. Dealer South

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

West <i>Percario</i>	North <i>Buras</i>	East <i>Donati</i>	South <i>Nowak</i>
		1♥	Pass
1♣	Pass	2NT ^A	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
3♥	Pass	5♣	Pass
4♥	Pass		
5♥	All Pass		

Italy face Poland in the Open final. The West hand rates as an opening bid nowadays, but responder must be wary of taking the bidding too high. 2NT was a forcing relay, asking for more information. West's 3♥ confirmed 4-card support, and 3♠ was a slam suggestion. West's 4♥ was then the weakest possible continuation. Should East still have slam ambitions?

West clearly does not hold the ♦A. If he held the ♠A and ♥K, he had the option of bidding 3NT, leaving some space for partner. Even if the trumps are solid, East can see potential losers in all three side suits. I think he should pass. He bid again and Nowak led the ♠6 against 5♥, drawing the jack and ace. Buras then played ace and another diamond. Declarer eventually led the ♣J from dummy. North covered, and South's ♣10 was the setting trick.

At the other table, Gawel and Jagniewski bid 1♣ – 1♦^A, 2♥ – 2♠, 3♥ – 3♠, 4♥. 1♦ was a transfer, and 2♥ showed a minimum with 4-card support. Ironically, eleven tricks were made when Sementa (North) underled his ♠A.

Awards: 4♥ (10), 5♥ (4), 6♥ (1).

Continued overleaf

5. Game All. Dealer East

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Toledano</i>	<i>Versace</i>	<i>Zamir</i>
1♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
4♠	All Pass	3♣ ^A	Pass

Italy face Israel in the quarter-finals. When vulnerable, Antonio Sementa and Alfredo Versace play a 14+-17 1NT, with a '5-card major always possible'. He chose to open 1♠ instead, and Versace then had to value his hand in support. His 3♣ response showed a 'mixed raise'. What does that mean? Typically, 4-card support and 6-9 HCP with some defensive strength.

With 4-3-3-3 shape and 10 losers, even if you don't add one for no aces, the East hand is worth no more than a raise to 2♠. Sementa raised to the vulnerable game, and the contract was hopeless, going two down.

At the other table. Asaf Yekutieli opened 1NT and scored +90, for a chunky 7 IMPs.

Awards: 2♠ (10), 1NT (8), 3♣ (3), 4♠ (1).

6. Game All. Dealer South

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Ercan</i>	<i>Liao</i>	<i>Acar</i>	<i>Wang</i>
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Türkiye face China in the Women's semi-finals. You can count seven losers in the West hand, which normally suggests a 2♠ raise. Yes, but she has three aces! That is so much better than, say, an ace, king and queen. She was full value for her 3♣ raise. Well bid! Now look at the East hand. Nine losers, if you add one for no aces. Yes, but the ♣KQ86 are in the suit that partner opened. Switch East's diamonds and clubs and the fit would be horrible. So Türkiye reach an excellent 4♠ on just 22 HCP, scoring +620. At the other table Zuo opened an eccentric 1NT on the West cards, for +120 and 11 IMPs away.

Awards: 4♠ (10), part scores (4).

Our World Championship stars score 45/60, which will be difficult to beat.

TIPS TO REMEMBER

- ❖ Do not use a two-suited overcall when you have a 6-card major.
- ❖ When calculating a major-suit raise, do not apply the Losing Trick Count without considering adjustments.





Julian's answers to questions from page 45

Hand 1

♠ AK 5 2
♥ J
♦ AKJ 10 5
♣ A 10 5

W	N	E	S
		1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

2♠. A reverse by responder is forcing. There is no need to jump in spades to create a force or to bash 6NT, which probably is the most likely final contract. If partner has four decent spades (remember a reverse by opener would show extra values) or queen and two other diamonds, you might do better in a suit contract.

Hand 2

♠ A 10 6 2
♥ A Q J
♦ J 7 6 4 3
♣ 3

W	N	E	S
		1♣	1♦
?			

1♠. Your diamonds are too weak to look to extract a penalty at the one level. They are also a bit weak to bypass looking for a major-suit fit with 2NT. You can plan to rebid 2NT – no need to bid it now. It is usual to play that a double here shows four cards in each major, so having only one 4-card major you simply bid it.

Hand 3

♠ 10 5 3
♥ Q J 5 4
♦ A 4 3
♣ Q 10 7

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

2♣. Although you do have a diamond stopper, ace and two very low cards is a better holding as dummy. Your partner almost certainly has at least five clubs on this sequence (assuming you open 1♦ with 4-1-4-4 shape and you either open or rebid in no trumps with balanced hands). You plan to cooperate if partner bids on.

Hand 4

♠ A 4
♥ A J 7 4
♦ 9 3
♣ A Q J 7 3

W	N	E	S
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
?			

3♥. Holding 4-card heart support, you should definitely raise hearts. With 16 HCP and a bit of shape, a simple raise to 2♥ would not get the job done. Your hand is closer to a raise to 4♥ than it is to a simple raise. The Goldilocks bid of 3♥ is the right choice, allowing partner to pass with a minimum responding hand.

Hand 5

♠ 10 3 2
♥ K Q 6 5 4
♦ A Q
♣ 10 7 6

W	N	E	S
		Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

Pass. Did you notice that partner passed as dealer? This relieves you of the obligation to find a rebid. With a very minimum opening and tolerance for spades, you should be happy to pass when that is an option. You do not want to rebid 2♥ without a 6-card suit if you can help it or raise spades with three to the ten.

Hand 6

♠ K Q 6 5
♥ Q 7 5 3
♦ A 8 5
♣ 8 2

W	N	E	S
		1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

3♠. Your partner's rebid has quite a wide range – anything from minimum opening values up to a hand not quite worth a game-forcing 2♠ jump rebid. In case partner is maximum, you might make a simple raise with as few as seven or eight points, so that is not right. You should make a single jump raise, inviting game as on hand 4. □

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

BEAT THE EXPERTS

E/W Game. Dir North. S opens 1♥			
♠ 8 4 3	♠ A J 10 6		♥ 8 7 6 5 3
♥ A 4	♦ J 5		
♦ A K 8 3	♣ J 5		
♣ A K 9 8			

I was staggered on hand 5 of *Beat The Experts* in December that when David Bird scored the hand, he overlooked the making 2♣ E/W which my partner and I bid. You have two major suit aces, AK and a ruff in both minors – an easy make on any lead. Surely this should have scored 10. Inexplicably it wasn't even mentioned, though even a modest plus would have enabled us to do what the title of the article encouraged us to do.

Dave Pollard

It seems that you can reach 2♣ only if West raises to 2♠ at his second turn. This would show nothing like his actual 18-count. Anyway, he has only three spades. It is not correct to raise on 3-card support on such a strong hand. So, I didn't consider that this contract would be reached.

You are right that 2Sx can be made by following the reverse-dummy line of ruffing a diamond and a club in the long trump hand. South has three cards in each of those suits and cannot overruff. 2NT can also be made, and 1NT makes with an overtrick. If I had given an award to 2♣, it would not be your suggested 10.

David Bird

IS THIS LANDY?

At a friendly Cafe Bridge event the following happened:

Game E/W. Dealer West.

W	N	E	S
Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass
2♣			

My partner, West, initially passed with nine points. North had 14 points and five poor spades. I passed with eight points.

On partner's second bid she bid 2♣ North asked if this was *Landy*. I said that as she had passed initially I assumed it meant clubs. North then bid 2♣ which was passed out. This went two off. North pointed out (very nicely) that she had been disadvantaged by my explanation. However, this was my honest interpretation, given that partner had passed initially when she might have opened with 5/4 and 11 HCP.

Should I have realised in the circumstances that it could have been *Landy* (my partner had nine points and four spades and five hearts)?

Vicky Bevan

If your agreements are that you play Landy, and as a partnership you have not specifically agreed to turn it off for passed hands, your explanation is incorrect, and therefore your opponents are entitled to redress.

Certainly, non-vulnerable, in such an auction I would be very keen to use Landy, even with 4-4. Allowing the opponents to play in 1NT at pairs when they are n/v will not normally result in a good score, and it pays to protect with minimal hands. At Game All, I would be less inclined to compete in the position you describe, but I might do so with, for example,

♠KJ654 ♥QJ432 ♦54 ♣4.

It would be more accurate to say 'we have agreed to play Landy, but we have not discussed it if still applies by a passed hand.' Guessing an interpretation out loud can unfairly influence your partner's subsequent bidding.

Richard Croot, CEO, EBED

LOVELY VISITORS

We had a delightful couple visit our club recently: Mr & Mrs Malaprop. Our rivals' Contentious Card showed that they played Bungee with a weak President Trump and, O Gosh, red-hair transplants, for three weeks, too. Additionally: Lemon Sole, Unassisted Cupid, Multi-Lardy, Splatters, Quay-card Blackberry, Cheque-back, Grumbling 3NT and Italian Discos.

Kevin Carter

SAVING TIME

Over a session of 24 boards I reckon at least 12 minutes is wasted by players inputting information into Bridgemates or writing details on scorecards **before** leading. **Name withheld**

The White Book (1.6.7) gives Bridgemate protocol and there is an article about Slow Play for TDs which advises players to enter the main details in the Bridgemate while play is ongoing. It also suggests making the lead before entering information, not discussing hands if behind, and putting slow movers in stationary positions. It is only advisory but might be useful.

<https://tinyurl.com/SPlyrs>.

Gordon Rainsford CEO, EBU

Landmark Promotions November – December 2024

**Congratulations to the newly-promoted
Premier Grand Master
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Boris Nedev
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Master

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John Davenport

Pascale Hakim
Graham Long

Domimic Wallace

Ros Yearley

Manchester

Master

Tessa Connolly
Gillian James

Merseyside/Cheshire

Life Master

Colin Humphrey

Master

Mike Dennis
Pamela Fish

Middlesex

Regional Master

Eshan Singhal

Master

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Norfolk

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Regional Master

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Master

Alan Hauxwell
Liz Jackson

Northamptonshire

Master

Phil Evans
Andrew Farnham
Eric Hope
David Millichip

Notts

Regional Master

Jane Holdrick

Oxfordshire

Grand Master

Krys Kazmierczak

Master

Roger Elliot
Danny Hearty
Neil Higginbottom
Dorothy Knox
Martin McClean
Pamela Smith

Somerset

Life Master

Pip Duncan

Master

Sylvia Fearon
Paul Fine
Sandra Jones
Marilyn Sheppard
Terry Yearsley

Staffs & Shropshire

Master

John Bridge
Pat Williams

Suffolk

Master

David Bruce

Surrey

Master

David Albert
Derek Buckle
Anne Clifford
Joy Davidson
Sandra Hemming
David Kirkpatrick
Robbie Limbach
Sally Mill
Mikaela Parker
Dick Strattan
Andrew Ward

Sussex

Master

Colin Campbell
rachel mackriell
Jane May
Vincent Mitchell
Susie Swadling

Warwickshire

Master

Gordon Dennis
Kostas Droulias
Sheila Drummond
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Wiltshire

Regional Master

Rani Sinnak

Worcester

Master

Andrew Scott Meredith
Felicity Somervell

Yorkshire

Life Master

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Master

Alison Bloxham
Sue Boden
Adrian Dubel
Rosemary Fraser
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Springtime Bridge Holidays

As the days grow longer and lighter, and the brightest and most beautiful season appears on the horizon, time will soon run out to book a lovely spring bridge holiday! Combine the mild temperatures and blooming landscapes with a fantastic programme of bridge sessions – what could be better?

Hurry – the countdown to spring is on!



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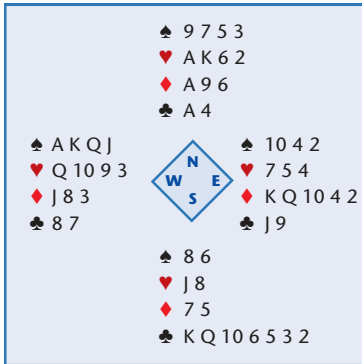
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A vital overtrick!

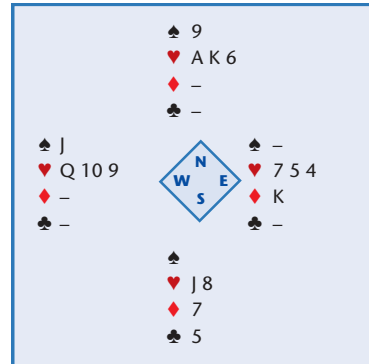
Bridge Club Live members celebrated in November when our Serious Ethics Consultant and leading player, Ed Scerri, playing with Malcolm Pryor, won silver for England in the Seniors Pairs in the recent World Bridge Games in Buenos Aires.

Meanwhile, back at home, Hertfordshire's Nick Hodsdon found a vital matchpoint overtrick in a 4♣ contract after his partner had freely raised his 3♣ opening to 4♣, when there seemed just 10 obvious tricks:



West started off with three rounds of spades, the third being ruffed by declarer.

Before starting on trumps, declarer had the foresight to make the key play of cashing the ♦A. Then, after five rounds of trumps, throwing dummy's remaining diamonds, we had arrived here:



When declarer led the ♣5, West was squeezed. He had to keep the ♠J to avoid promoting the ♠9 in dummy, so he parted with the ♥9. Now East was in the spotlight as he had to keep the ♦K to avoid promoting the ♦7 and he had to keep the ♥754, but he couldn't do both, so away went the ♥4 and declarer enjoyed three rounds of hearts in dummy. □

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To finesse, or not to finesse

Declarer has finesse positions in both black suits on this deal from a Funbridge team game. If one of the finesses wins, the contract will make. Can you see how you can improve on those odds?

Game All. Dealer South. IMPs

♠ J 10 5 2
♥ K J 9 5 2
♦ K 7
♣ K 4

♠ Q 6
♥ 8
♦ J 10 9 5 4
♣ Q 9 6 3 2

♠ 9 8 4 3
♥ 10 4
♦ A 8 3
♣ A J 8 5

♠ A K 7
♥ A Q 7 6 3
♦ Q 6 2
♣ 10 7

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

You open 1NT and, surprise surprise, partner transfers to your 5-card major. You jump to 3♥ to tell them you have a good fit, and they advance to game.

West leads the ♦J, which runs around to your queen. You draw trumps in two rounds and then exit with a diamond to dummy's bare king. East wins and returns a third round of diamonds, ruffed in dummy. How should you now play to give yourself the best chance of avoiding three losers in the black suits?

The odds are very much in your favour. You could simply take the spade finesse and, if that loses, rely on finding the ♣A onside. That's one of two finesses, which is about a 75% chance. Not bad odds, but can you improve them even more?

Conan Doyle might have written about this deal as the 'Mysterious Case of the Missing Finesse'. Take another look at the end position, and you will see that the spade finesse is actually an illusion.

Taking the spade suit in isolation, the best way to avoid losing a spade trick is to run the jack after first cashing one of the high honours. However, avoiding a spade loser is not your objective on this deal. You are trying to avoid losing both a spade *and* two clubs.

The vital point on this deal is to realise that, if the spade finesse is winning, you don't need to take it. Suppose you simply play spades from the top. If East holds, say, ♠Qxx or ♠Qxxx, you will still make your contract. East will win the third round of spades with their queen, but cannot attack clubs from that side of the table. Whatever East does after winning with the ♠Q, you will be able to discard a club from your hand on dummy's established spade winner.

The only way you can go down in this end position is if you lose a spade trick to West before you have set up a discard for one of your clubs. By playing the spades from the top, you give yourself the additional chance of dropping a doubleton queen from the West hand, which is what happened on this layout at the table.

If you can afford to lose a trick to one defender but not the other, look for ways to play a suit as safely as possible to ensure that they are the only one who can win. □

India's Quiz from page 34

Q What is your rebid as responder in the auctions below with each of the following hands?

A

West	East
1♠	2♣
2NT	?

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

B

West	East
1♦	1♥
2NT	?

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

C

West	East
1♦	1♥
2♠	?

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

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

Hand 1 – 3♠. Yes, you are balanced; but you might still have a spade fit if opener has five spades, so use the fact that all bids are forcing to your advantage and try 3♠. If opener only has four spades, 3NT will come back and you will be able to pass that.

Hand 2 – 3NT. A perfectly sensible contract when you have this hand. It is unlikely that 5♣ would be an improvement over 3NT and slam is not on the table, so no need to give the opponents more information about your hand or put partner off 3NT unnecessarily.

Hand 3 – 3NT. I hope you didn't choose 3♥... when partner opened 1♠, that denied 4-4 in the majors. You don't have a heart fit, so don't tell the opponents you have hearts!

Hand 4 – 3♣. With no second suit to bid, you invent one to see whether partner can show three hearts. If not, you can fall back on 3NT.

Hand 5 – Pass. You have already done a lot by responding in the first place. As 3♦ would be forcing and only 23-24 HCP combined, you should stay as low as possible and pass.

Hand 6 – 4♥. There is nothing to be gained by bidding 3♥ here: you already know you have a heart fit and you do not have enough strength for slam. Just bid the contract you would like to be in.

Hand 7 – 4♠. No point bidding 3♠ when you are not interested in a slam, so go straight to game.

Hand 8 – 3♠. You can envisage making a slam here; 3♠ gives you more room for a conversation.

Hand 9 – 3♣. No need to give preference here as you have fourth suit forcing available. Partner will bid 3NT with a club stop.

Hand 10 – 3♣. Fourth suit forcing again, in the hope partner can now give you 3-card heart support, or bid no trumps with a club stop, or perhaps rebid spades showing six diamonds and five spades, in which case you will go 4♠, glad at least to offer an honour. □

Paul Bowyer's Quiz from page 40

Q1

Hand 1
South plays in 3NT.
West leads the ♥Q.

W	N	E	S
Pass	3NT	All Pass	1NT

♠ A 7 3
♥ K 5
♦ 8 6 2
♣ A K 7 5 3



♠ 10 9 8
♥ A 8 2
♦ A K J 4
♣ 10 6 4

Preliminary analysis: You have seven tricks on top (one spade, two hearts, two diamonds and two clubs). Where should you go for the extra two tricks?

First, does it matter where you win trick one?

Second, suppose you win the ♥A at trick one in hand and play a club. West produces the ♣Q – how does that affect matters? What is your plan?

ANSWER

Your mandatory **Count and Plan** shows seven tricks on top. There are chances for four diamond tricks with a finesse and a 3-3 split but why should you be that lucky? A 3-2 club break is all that you really need as that would give you four winners in that suit to go with five outside.

Now, it is important to take the first trick with the ♥A, rather than with the ♥K, and to play a club towards the table. Here, when West plays the ♣Q, you can take the ♣K and lead a club towards the ♣10, making four club tricks even with a 4-1 split. East has no answer to this play, whether he takes the ♣J or ducks the trick.

Now, suppose you have taken the ♥K at trick one. Leading a low club off the table now would have given up two club tricks and the defence would have beaten you. Even had you come to hand with a diamond and played a club you would have gone down. Taking the ♣Q with the ♣K and playing another club is no good – East could take the ♣J

and could have removed the ♠A (dummy's last entry) with a spade lead. Now there would be no way to unblock the clubs. Here's the full deal:

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

Question 2 overleaf

Paul Bowyer's Quiz from page 40

Q2

Hand 2
South plays in 3NT.
West leads the ♥10.

W	N	E	S
Pass	3NT	All Pass	1NT

♠ J 8
♥ A J
♦ A Q 7 6 5 3
♣ J 6 4



♠ A K 6 4
♥ Q 5 4
♦ 8 4
♣ A 9 5 3

Preliminary analysis: Partner thought his diamond suit would produce a useful source of tricks in no trumps but the hands do not fit well.

West leads the ♥10 to dummy's ♥J and East's ♥K. East returns a heart at trick two to take out dummy's ace. You can count just six easy winners (two spades, two hearts, one diamond and one club). What chance do you have now? What is your plan?

ANSWER

Your obligatory **Count and Plan** shows just six available winners (two spades, two hearts, one diamond and one club).

Your only realistic chance is to bring in the diamond suit and for that you are going to need some luck. You'll need a 3-2 split with the ♦K lying on the right side (with West, in other words).

Taking the ♥A at trick two, you should lead a low diamond from dummy at trick three. A weak defender in the East seat might rush in with the ♦K if he held it, but here the ♦9 holds the trick. You take the next heart lead and, holding your breath, play a diamond to the ♦Q. Should that lose you'd be going a lot off, but here – on this layout – your contract makes an overtrick. Here's the full deal:

[click to play online](#)

♠ J 8
♥ A J
♦ A Q 7 6 5 3
♣ J 6 4

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

♠ A K 6 4
♥ Q 5 4
♦ 8 4
♣ A 9 5 3

Michael Byrne's Quiz from page 38

You are dealer at game all (amber). What do you open with each of these hands?

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

You are in the third seat at love all (white). Do you open the bidding, and with what?

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

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

ANSWERS

Hand 1 – 3♠. The suit is respectable (the ♠10 makes a lot of difference to the number of trump losers) and you have a void on the side which will come in handy. The ♥K is a possible defensive trick but it will also help you as declarer, which you are more likely to be if you open 3♠.

Hand 2 – 2♠. The poor suit and 7-2-2-2 shape mean that this hand lacks the playing strength for a full blooded pre-empt. It's fine to open 2♠ though, as the extra spade makes up for the modest suit.

Hand 3 – Pass. There is little point putting your neck on the line when there is a strong possibility you will end up in the wrong suit. Your strong spades mean that if you open 3♥ you might end up playing in 3♥ when you can make a game (or slam!) in spades. What is partner supposed to do with:

♠AQxx ♥x ♦Qxxx ♣AQx?

They will pass 3♥ and yet 4♠ is a walk in the park.

Hand 4 – 3♠. No this isn't a misprint, you have a completely normal 2♠ opener but 3rd in hand you should strive to make life as hard as possible for the opponents. The more room you take away the better and your strong suit will reduce the risk of a large penalty.

Hand 5 – 3♠. This time you have a bit of strength to spare (in fact normally you would open 1♠ so that you wouldn't miss a game, 11 points is far too strong for a pre-empt) but facing a passed hand you can jam the bidding up and mess them around. Perhaps you will jockey the opponents into a contract they can't make or stop them reaching one they can.

Hand 6 – 4♣. Let the heart suit on the side be damned! You have a weak hand and know the opponents almost certainly have a game on, and you want to get in their way. You might well talk them out of the right game by opening 4♣ whereas 3♣ would not. If the opponents belong in 3NT then they can't bid it over 4♣ and will have to double, this may get them to a silly heart or diamond contract!

Hand 7 – 3♠. The opponents might well have a slam on and it is your duty to rob them of the space to find it. 3♠ will probably go a lot down if they can leave a double in, but surely that won't be too bad against their 980 or 990?

When you are the third person to speak, think of the number you would normally pre-empt at, add a few on and open at this level. If it goes wrong, blame me, although that will be of little comfort to your partner. □

COMPUTER SIMULATION FOR MAY LEADS QUIZ RESULTS

By Nathan Piper

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

South	West	North	East
		Pass	Pass
1NT	All Pass		
¹ 15-17, not that this is very relevant.			

ASSUMPTIONS

South has 15-17 HCP and a balanced hand (including 5·4·2·2 or 6·3·2·2 with a minor)

North has 0-7 HCP, no 5-card major nor 6-card minor unless 6·3·2·2, not 4·4·4·1, 4·4·5·0, nor 5·4·x·x.

East does not have 5+ HCP with a 6-card major, six diamonds or seven clubs. Nor 6+ HCP with 5·4·x·x or five of a major and four of a minor.

Best lead in each suit:

♠Q/J 27.1%, 5.75 tricks *

♥2 24.8%, 5.68 tricks

♦4 24.7%, 5.65 tricks

♣3 23.1%, 5.60 tricks

Other leads:

♠3 26.4%, 5.74 tricks

♠2 26.4%, 5.74 tricks

♥9 24.8%, 5.67 tricks

♦7 24.7%, 5.65 tricks

♣7 23.1%, 5.60 tricks

♥J 22.8%, 5.57 tricks

♦J 21.5%, 5.48 tricks

♣A 19.3%, 5.48 tricks

Comments:

A very clear win for spades and a very clear win within the spade suit in favour of the queen.

Regular readers (apparently there are some!) may be surprised that the computer led from a 4-card suit containing honours against no trumps. Indeed, if the auction were 1NT-3NT then both hearts and diamonds would have been much better than spades – trying to set up partner's hoped-for 5-card suit while avoiding giving away a trick. Against 1NT,

though, five tricks won't be enough. To get to seven tricks we'll almost surely need something out of the spade suit – so there's no reason to delay that attack. Additionally, if we don't lead spades now, then we will have to guess which red suit to lead – a decision best made later when we have more info.

Why the ♠Q? When I was taught to defend against no trumps, I learnt that one should only lead an honour when one has three touching cards or the next card down such as QJ9x. I'm not sure where that idea came from but the computers have totally debunked it. The way I see it:

- ❖ If partner has no honour then (irrespective of their length) we must lead an honour to avoid giving away a cheap trick
- ❖ If partner has an honour and some length then our lead doesn't matter
- ❖ If partner is short with an honour then it may work better to lead low - but we haven't struck gold with this lead and will struggle to establish tricks and beat the contract anyway. On the given hand, for example, declarer could duck partner's stiff king and then we lack the entries to establish and cash a second trick in the suit.

A point of interest for me was how close the 2nd place spot was between hearts and diamonds. I expected this to be clear-cut in favour of hearts because dummy didn't transfer or use Stayman and therefore should have minor suit length more often (leaving more major suit cards for partner). In fact on many of the variations I tried, diamonds came second with hearts third (if we aren't playing a weak 2♦ then partner could have six diamonds making a diamond lead better).

The reason it's close is that Alan is assuming that we are playing the (fairly ubiquitous these days) Multi Landy defence – which allows us to show hands with both majors or with 5M4m but not hands with only diamonds or with, for example, five diamonds and four clubs. Alan also assures me that it's right to protect very aggressively in this auction. So if we hope for partner to have five hearts and a moderate hand, then we are specifically hoping for 5·3·3·2 shape.

Many Multi Landy players also use a double

Continued overleaf

(especially by a passed hand) to introduce hands with 4M5m. I haven't assumed that but, if we are playing that, or some other defence that allowed us to show diamonds (DONT, Cappelletti etc) then it would make the case for a heart stronger by removing more hand types involving diamonds from partner's range.

As a final observation, I'm sure that Alan will be delighted that the ♣A was last!

Hand 2

♠ 10 8 6 5 2
♥ Q 7
♦ A 7 6 3
♣ 7 3

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

¹ Five spades and 4+ in a minor, weak; ² Enquiry;
³ Natural.

ASSUMPTIONS

North has 1-9 HCP with exactly five spades, at least four clubs and at most three hearts.

South has 16-22 HCP with at most two spades, at most five clubs, a stopper in both red suits and not a good 6-card heart suit.

East has no suit overcall or take-out double.

Best lead in each suit:

♥Q 16.8%, 3.35 tricks *

♠5 16.1%, 3.32 tricks

♦7 14.8%, 3.23 tricks

♣7 14.6%, 3.23 tricks

Other leads:

♠6 16.1%, 3.32 tricks

♠2 16.0%, 3.32 tricks

♠8 15.3%, 3.28 tricks

♦6 14.8%, 3.23 tricks

♣3 14.6%, 3.23 tricks

♦3 14.5%, 3.22 tricks

♥7 13.1%, 3.19 tricks

♦A 12.2%, 3.10 tricks

♠10 11.3%, 3.03 tricks

Comments:

As I'm involved in the article, I can't compete in the competition. That's a good thing as I had no idea at all which of the four suits would be best. Reassuringly the computer has the leads all quite

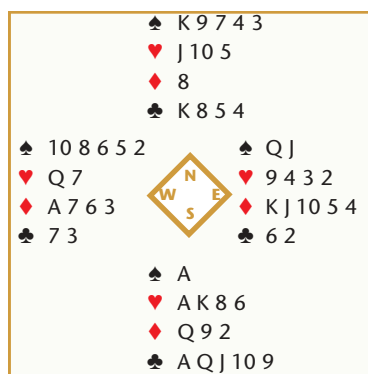
close as well.

Simulating the problem is difficult because of the broad range of hands that South could have. It's not clear to me the exact requirements for South to introduce their own suit or to try for 5♣ rather than 3NT. Deciding what to do with a given hand is easier than making a rule to cover all hands! I tried a few variations of possible constraints and always found that majors were better than diamonds which were better than clubs. If I allow South to have good/long hearts then spades come out top, but disallowing South to have six good hearts or 7+ hearts is enough to tip the balance towards the attacking ♥Q lead rather than a passive spade.

The computer does overstate the value of leads like queen from Qx. That's because the double-dummy declarer will always drop the queen offside holding, for instance, AKJ and will always get any 2-way finesse right. Therefore some of the disadvantages experienced by human defenders aren't factored in.

I'm left thinking that if we thought of more inferences from the auction then the results may change. For instance why did declarer not just bid 3NT? Was 2NT to investigate the possibility of a diamond slam or to check if clubs were stopped ... or something else?

Why is the ♦7 noticeably better than the standard ♦3? Mainly because there are a surprising number of hands like this one where, if we start with the ♦3, then the suit gets blocked.



For the double-dummy aficionados there were also a few deals like this one:

Continued overleaf



LINDA THOMAS
1949 – 2024

LINDA THOMAS was involved at Little Clacton and Frinton Bridge Clubs for many many years. She worked tirelessly to support and run the clubs, find partners, direct and score as well as make her own cakes and refreshments. She ran Little Clacton successfully for over 10 years which included organising many socials for the club.

Over the years she supported various charity bridge events and has helped to raised thousands for the many good causes involved. She has also encouraged many club members, hleping them to improve their playing standards and to get involved with running the club. During lockdown Linda even organised social gatherings (strictly within the rules!) and helped restart the club thereafter.

Linda was also involved with Suffolk county bridge, attending annual meetings and various county events over the years.

