

bridge *Canada*

**Look deep into nature, and then you
will understand everything better
~ Albert Einstein**

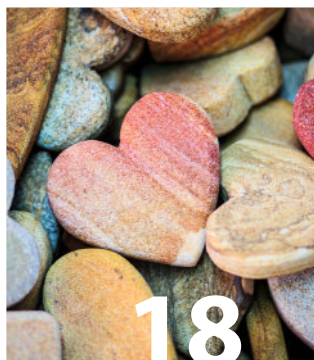
(even your bridge game)

**A DECK
OF VOLUMES!**
This year's magazine
is Volume 52.

THE CANADIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION

The mission of the Canadian Bridge Federation is to promote bridge within Canada and protect and advance the national interests of Canadian bridge, including the selection and support of Canadian bridge teams and players for international bridge competition.

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Now we are in 2022, I wish to thank all that make this publication possible.

First, I would like to recognize Jude Goodwin and Goodwin Creative Ltd for their long time dedication to Bridge Canada.

Francine Cimon is the French Editor responsible for all translation and French issue accuracy, assists in checking all issues for necessary corrections.

Ina Demme also provides a 2nd look on content, and ensures all CBF news is included in issues, including the Calendar of Events.

Cathy Walsh provides not only financial and budgetary support, but I rely on her incisive feedback on Bridge Canada related issues.

Finally, Louise Mascolo ensures that Bridge Canada issues, and related homepage information, is posted onto our website in a timely manner. She also provides backup translation and feedback support.

Thank you all for your contributions!

Neil Kimelman
Bridge Canada
Managing Editor



Mollo ON PLAY XX

Contract: 6♠ by South at IMPs. Lead:
♥J, East follows. Plan the play.

♠ 4 3 2
♥ A K Q
♦ Q 8 7 6
♣ K 10 2

♠ A K 9 7 6 5
♥ -
♦ A K
♣ A Q 6 5 3

Answer on page 9

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CNTC Open	April 23/24 and Apr 30/May 1
CNTC B	Apr 30/May 1
CNTC C	April 23/24
CWTC	May 6/7
CMTC	May 13/14 and May 20/21
CSTC	May 28/29
COPC	June 4/5
CIPC	June 11/12

CANADIANS WIN VS MEXICO

In January, the Canadian Womens' team — Pamela Nisbet, Brenda Bryant, Julie Smith, Judy Harris, Joan Eaton and Karen Cumpstone, played off against the Mexican Womens' team for the right to play in the 2021 World Bridge Team Championships in Salsamaggiore Terme, Italy March 27 – April 9, 2022. The Canadians won 313 to 206.

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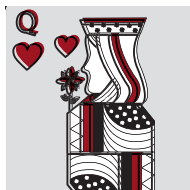
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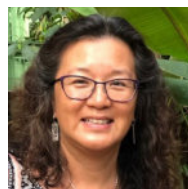
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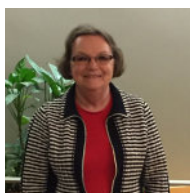
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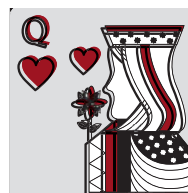
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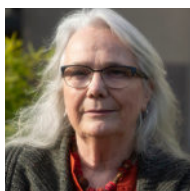
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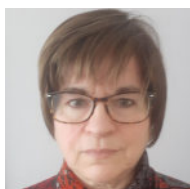
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2020 IBPA Awards

Justin Lall Memorial - Declarer Play of the Year

Winner: Sartaj Hans (Australia)
Journalist: Ron Klinger (Australia)
Event: The 2019 Asia Pacific Open Teams,
Singapore, June 11-20, 2019,

The 2019 Asia Pacific Bridge Federation Championships were held in Singapore from June 11-20. The Australian Open Team did rather well on this problem deal from their match against China Hong Kong:

Round 22. Dealer North. Neither Vul.

	♠ J642		
	♥ K1095		
	♦ A852		
	♣ Q		
♠ 973		♠ K1085	
♥ A762		♥ 8	
♦ -		♦ QJ1073	
♣ J108732		♣ K95	
	♠ AQ		
	♥ QJ43		
	♦ K964		
	♣ A64		

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

With Australia East/West and Hong Kong North/South, Andy Hung (West) led the three of clubs to the queen, king and ace. Declarer ruffed a club, finessed the queen of spades, ruffed his last club and played the king of hearts: eight – three – two and the nine of hearts: diamond three – heart four – heart ace. Hung continued with clubs and had trump control. The result was one down, East/West plus 50. At the other table:

West	North	East	South
	Gill		Hans
	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣ ¹	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

West led the jack of clubs: queen – king – ace. Sartaj Hans (South) also ruffed a club, led a spade to his queen and ruffed his last club. However, when the king of hearts held, Hans continued with a diamond from dummy. East followed with the ten, Hans played his king and West ruffed in. West cashed the ace of hearts and led another club for Hans to ruff, East discarding a diamond on the heart and a spade on the club. These cards remained:

♠ J6		
♥ -		
♦ A85		
♣ -		
♠ 97		♠ K10
♥ 7		♥ -
♦ -		♦ QJ7
♣ 103		♣ -
	♠ A	
	♥ Q	
	♦ 964	
	♣ -	

When South played the queen of hearts to draw West's last trump and discarded the six of spades from dummy, East was squeezed in an odd way. While East was considering his discard, Hans claimed, stating, "If you ditch a diamond, I shall play the ace of diamonds and another diamond. If you pitch a spade, I'll cash the ace of spades and then endplay you with the nine of diamonds." When Hans discarded a spade from the dummy, he was left with just one threat suit, diamonds. However, East still had two material suits and had to unguard one of them. That was ten tricks, plus 420 and 10 IMPs to Australia.

Additionally, had declarer discarded a diamond on the queen of hearts, East would still have been squeezed, but in that situation, it would have been a criss-cross squeeze without the count, another oddity. A diamond discard would have allowed Hans to set up his fourth diamond as a winner, with the ace of spades as an entry, while a spade discard would have meant that the ace of that suit would then have dropped the king. The ace of diamonds would have been the entry for the established jack of spades. In either case, it was very nice card-reading, a very-well-played deal and an elegant ending.

Why did Sartaj Hans play as he did? The natural move, after the king of hearts held the trick, was to continue hearts. That would have succeeded if hearts had

been 3-2; if they'd been 4-1 and diamonds 3-2, Hans would still have been alright. However, after South had opened one notrump West, his screen-mate, had thought for some time before passing. Hans commented: "Since West held at most the ace of hearts, the queen-jack of diamonds and the jack of clubs in high-cards, a 5=4=2=2 or a 5=4=3=1 shape would not have warranted such a pause. He must have had six clubs and four hearts for the hesitation. The absence of a singleton diamond lead suggested to me that he was 3=4=0=6. To cater for my legitimate make when he had 2=4=1=6 shape, I led a diamond to my king. If both opponents had followed, I'd need to have continued with the ace of spades and then another diamond through West before playing any more trumps."

I had watched the play on BBO and the next day I asked Hans, "Would you have played the diamond nine if East had played low on the two of diamonds from dummy?" He replied: "Not sure what I would have done. There was some chance LHO had a singleton queen or jack that he did not elect to lead. Playing the nine of diamonds would have worked very well on the actual deal (if East had not split) as I could then have neutralized his trumps, whatever defence he chose. In practice, however, players always split the queen-jack-ten, so perhaps the discussion is academic." East's rising with a diamond honour on the diamond two from dummy was not fatal to the defence. However, after West ruffed South's king and cashed the heart ace, a spade shift instead of a club would have laid declarer low.

Gidwani Family Trust - Defence of the Year

Winner: Brad Bart (Canada)
Journalist: Danny Miles (Canada)
Event: Las Vegas Summer NABC,
Spingold KO Teams, first round

Dealer South. NS Vul.

♠ KJ1097
♥ 109
♦ Q62
♣ 1086

♠ AQ
♥ 6
♦ AKJ9875
♣ A97

West	North	East	South
Bart		Todd	
			1♥
Dbl	Rdbl ¹	Pass	3♥
4♦	Pass	Pass	4♥
Dbl	All Pass		

1. Spades

This deal is from the opening round of the Spingold Knockout Teams where Brad Bart and Bob Todd were defenders. Take the West seat where Bart sat and see how you do. As West, you lead the king of diamonds and, of course, the spot cards (two, three, ten, upside-down) leave you in doubt as to what to do next. Decide what you would do before looking at the full deal. Here is the full deal:

	♠ KJ1097	
	♥ 109	
	♦ Q62	
	♣ 1086	
♠ AQ		♠ 6543
♥ 6		♥ Q72
♦ AKJ9875		♦ 43
♣ A97		♣ Q543
	♠ 82	
	♥ AKJ8543	
	♦ 10	
	♣ KJ2	

If you try to cash a second diamond, declarer ruffs, cashed one trump, then leads a spade, putting you in a Morton's Fork. If you duck, declarer pitches the second spade on a diamond. If you win, declarer is home on a good guess. A trump switch or a club switch is equally ineffective. Bart found the winning defence at the table: he played declarer for precisely two spades and shifted to the queen of spades. Dummy's king won. Declarer took the trump finesse and played a second spade, but Bart won with his ace and played the ace of diamonds, collecting two clubs at the end for down one.

To be continued...



by Andy Stark

The Balancing Act

Let's start off this decidedly unbalanced year by righting the ship, getting back on track, and getting some balance in our lives, so to speak, pardon the pun. Let's look at balancing in the bidding.

The auction might go numerous ways but the last player to pass is considered to be in the balancing seat, especially when the auction is about to end in a partscore. Balancing is also known as re-opening the bidding because you are continuing the auction. Here is a typical balancing situation:

West	North	East	South(You)
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	?

You are in the balancing seat. The opponents have exchanged some information and are contracting for 2♣. If you pass, 2♣ becomes the final contract. If you bid or double, then you are keeping

THE
NEW PLAYER
Spot

the bidding open and fighting for the partscore. Usually, it is right to fight for the partscore. That is, do not let the opponents play in this comfortable two-level contract. By keeping the auction alive, your side may end up declaring the contract or perhaps you will push the opponents to a higher level, one that you hope to beat.

What do you need to balance?

13 cards. Kidding. You need a bit more than that, but not much more. If anything, you need only the right shape, and the right shape is an unbid 5+ card suit of your own or shortness in their suit in which case you will make a re-opening double. For example, say you hold ♠K54 ♥AJ86 ♦Q1083 ♣54.

If this is your hand for the example auction above, you should double in the balancing seat. Your double is takeout showing support for the unbid suits. Why did you not double at your first opportunity? Because you did not have quite enough points. Why do you have enough points now? Because partner is marked with high cards. What is this—some kind of conjuring trick? No, it's bridge logic. Think of it: the opponents are settling for 2♣. Why? Because they do not have enough points for game. Therefore, partner is marked with anywhere between 6-13 points. The whole deal might be:

♠ A1082		
♥ KQ92		
♦ J94		
♣ 92		
♠ J6	♠ Q973	
♥ 107	♥ 543	
♦ K52	♦ A73	
♣ AKJ863	♣ Q107	
♠ K54		
♥ AJ86		
♦ Q1086		
♣ 54		

The bidding should go:

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	Dbf
Pass	2♥	All Pass	

Notice that E-W can make 2♣. They lose two spades, two hearts and one diamond. Notice also that N-S can make 2♥. They lose one spade, two diamonds and two clubs. If anyone competes over 2♥ it will probably be East as they have 3-card club support. But that contract will go down one, so N-S should get a plus score on this deal.

When the opponents are about to stop at a low level, you do not need a full 12 or 13 points to re-open the bidding. In order to keep the bidding alive, you have to sometimes mentally 'borrow' a king from your partner. This means, you can be as light as 7 or 8 points. For example, say you hold ♠93 ♥AJ76 ♦K10762 ♣7. If the auction goes as above with the opponents willing to play in 2♣, you should double in the balancing seat with this 8-point hand in order to get partner to bid their best red suit. It is quite possible that partner has some values but did not have a convenient bid to make at their turn(s) earlier in the auction.

Advancing a Balancing Bid

The Advancer in the auction is the partner of the Intervenor (Overcaller). So, if you make a balancing bid, your partner is the Advancer. Advancers must be aware that partner is proverbially bidding some of Advancer's high cards, so Advancer should de-value their hand "by a king," and bid accordingly. Here's a sample auction, with you as North:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	Dbf
Pass	?		

Clearly partner is making a takeout bid of diamonds and hearts. Partner is hoping you have spades or clubs to bid. If you happen to have 13 points, do not think that suddenly you have game. Most likely you do not. (The points are roughly divided 20-20 between the two sides.) So, pretend that your 12 points are only 9 points (partner borrowed those 3 points in order to make their bid) and just bid your best black suit at the cheapest level. Your hand: ♠KJ9 ♥9 ♦AJ862 ♣K10.

Just bid 2♠ after partner balances. Partner is fighting to keep the bidding open because good ol' partner knows you are marked with some high card points because the opponents are trying to buy the contract at the two-level. If the opponents compete to the three-level in hearts, you can then bid 3♠, but that is as high as you want to compete. Only if partner acts at their first opportunity might you play partner for some values approaching a full 12 or 13 points.

As you can see, when West opened 1♦, North (you) did not have a convenient bid. You could not double—no heart support, no club support—and you could not bid 1♠—no 5-card suit—and you have no interest in bidding diamonds as that is West's best minor. Moreover, if you play Michaels, you do not have a way of showing diamonds even if you wanted to.

If partner happens to make a balancing bid of 2♠ in the above auction, then they are showing a 5+ spade suit. Again, your side probably does not have game because partner could not compete with 1♠ at their first opportunity to bid. So just pass 2♠ and compete to the 3-level only if EW compete to 3♥.

Can I pass my partner's re-opening double?

Yes, you can. To be clear, partner's double is takeout, so you are expected to bid. But if you are dealt a trump stack of four decent trumps you can go for penalties. Down one will probably be a good board and down two will be a top board.

What does a balancing bid of 1NT show?

12-14 HCPs, although many partnerships use 10-14 HCPs. If you and your partner prefer, you can just play your system as if partner opened the bidding 1NT. So, Stayman and Transfers would apply.

MOLLO On Play XX

Contract: 6♠ by South at IMPs. Lead: ♥J, East follows. Plan the play.

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

Unless trumps are 4-0 the contract is easy. There is nothing you can do if West has the four trumps. Therefore, the focus should be on East having four spades.

The best line is to win the heart lead, and cash a 2nd heart, discarding the ♦AK. Now lead a trump. If East plays the eight, cover with the nine. If East plays an honour duck! Now East must either lead a trump, or give dummy the extra entry it needs to lead trumps twice from dummy.

This line is not without risks, but better than other options.



BRIDGE BASICS



TWO CLUB CONVENTION

This is the 21st article in a New Player Bridge Canada series. Some of these concepts may be a review for you, but this series will also cover more advanced techniques and ideas.

We continue our review of the Convention Card, and useful conventions available. We now look at two bids, starting with two clubs. The focus will be limited to the standard treatment for this call, strong artificial and forcing.

Opening requirements

Although not a convention per se, there is some uniformity as to the minimum requirements to open 2♣.

1. 22+ HCPs.
2. Usually a three loser hand, but some four losers are ok, such as ♠AK ♥Ax ♦AKJ10 ♣AJ10xx.
3. Game in your own hand, or very close to game in your own hand. This allows less than 22 HCPs. Per the ACBL website a two club bid has to be very strong which is defined as a hand that meets one of the following conditions:
 - At least 20 HCP; or
 - At least 14 HCP and is within one trick of game assuming suits break evenly among the other hands.
 - At least 5 Control Points and is within one trick of game assuming suits break evenly among the other hands.

Forcing to game?

Most partnerships play that a 2♣ opener is game forcing, unless opener shows the 22-23 balanced hand type. Alternatively, you can play it that responder can pass opener's third bid.

Responses to 2♣

Most partnerships define these bids. A popular structure:

- 2♥ is artificial and a double negative, with at most 2 HCPs.
- 2♦ is a waiting bid* having some values as they did not respond 2♥.
- A new suit (with 2NT showing hearts), promises a five card or longer suit, with minimum strength requirements in the suit bid, often 2 or the top 3 honours. Some partnerships also play a minimum high card requirement for this bid, but it is not recommended.

*A slight variation is to have the 2♦ bid dedicated for all hands that do not meet the suit requirement, and responder must next bid 3♣, to show the double negative hand:

Example 1:

2♣ 2♦¹
2♠² 3♣³

1. Artificial, waiting, any strength.
2. Natural
3. Second negative denying three or more points.

Point count response

Some partnerships use a tiered system, with a 2♦ response showing 0-3, 2♥ = 4-6 and 2♠ = 7-9, and 2NT 10+.

Control responses

Another common approach is to have responses show the number of controls, with a king equal to one control, and ace showing two controls. In this structure responses to 2♣ mean:

- 2♦ – 2 or more controls.
- 2♥ – negative, with no controls.
- 2♠ – one control.

Alternatively, you could just use an up the line system with 2♦ showing 0-1 control, 2♥ showing two controls, etc...

Kokish relay

The Kokish Relay allows opener to differentiate the strength for balanced hands.

2♣ 2♦¹
2♥² 2♠³
2NT⁴

1. Waiting
2. Artificial forcing 2♠.
3. Good partner.
4. 22-23 HCPs.

As a corollary, an immediate 2NT rebid by opener over 2♦ shows a balanced hand with 24+ HCP. The benefit is the ability to save bidding level in the latter scenario. Over any notrump rebid, it is easiest to treat as if partner had opened with 2NT, taking into account the difference in high cards strengths.

Because the Kokish Relay sacrifices the natural 2♥ rebid by the strong 2♣ bidder, a 3♥ bid over 2♦ is used to show a natural heart suit. Or, you must start with a Kokish Relay and then rebid 3♥. Depending on partnership agreement, an immediate 3♥ rebid over responder's 2♦ can be invitational while a 3♥ rebid via the Kokish Relay is game-forcing.

The Kokish Relay can also be used to show two-suited hands with hearts and a minor. Opener can show these hand types by rebidding 3♣/♦ after the relay to show clubs or diamonds, respectively.

The complete Kokish Relay system is as follows.

2♣ 2♦¹
2♥² 2♠
2NT³
3♣⁴
3♦⁴
3♥⁵
3♠⁶

1. Waiting
2. Forces 2♠
3. 22-23 HCPs (system on).
4. Natural, showing at least five hearts and at least four cards in the minor bid.
5. Natural, promising five hearts (a direct 3♥ bid over 2♦ would show at least a six card suit).
6. Natural, showing at least five hearts and at least four spades.

Next issue: We will examine other popular conventions used in a 2♣ structure.

Lady and her partner take my counting lesson and then play in the duplicate that follows. After the game she tells me that they both loved the lesson and they had a big game finishing 2nd overall. They are now both so excited that they are going to start counting next week.

Edwin Kantar





BIDDING STRATEGIES 6

Bidding over preempts QUIZ.

By Neil Kimelman

Here is a quiz to test your overall decision making when the opponents preempt.

1. Both vul., IMPs. East opens 5♣. As South, you hold ♠AK8762 ♥AK4 ♦KJ9 ♣Q. What do you bid?

2. Both vul., IMPs. East opens 5♣. As South, you hold ♠AK8762 ♥A ♦KJ10932 ♣-. What do you bid?

3. Neither vul., IMPs. As South, you hold ♠KQ8 ♥A105 ♦32 ♣AQ1085.

West	North	East	South
-	1♣ ¹	5♦	6♥
Pass	?		

1. 1NT opener is 12-14

What do you bid?

4. Neither vul., IMPs. As South, you hold ♠92 ♥J10 ♦KJ96 ♣K10763. West opens 4♠, partner doubles, and it goes pass. What do you bid?

5. Vul vs not, IMPs. As South, you hold ♠KQ108 ♥1053 ♦AJ93 ♣95. West opens 4♥, partner doubles. What do you bid?

6. Vul vs not, IMPs. As South, you hold ♠K108 ♥- ♦AJ943 ♣KQ965. West opens 4♥, and it goes pass, pass. What do you bid?

7. Vul vs not, IMPs. As South, you hold ♠K10 ♥5 ♦AJ943 ♣KQ965. West opens 4♥, and it goes pass,

THE
INTERMEDIATE
Spot

pass. What do you bid?

8. Neither vul., matchpoints. As South, you hold ♠K103 ♥K103 ♦A943 ♣965. West opens 3♣, and it goes pass, pass. What do you bid?

9. Neither vul., matchpoints. As South, you hold ♠AK873 ♥J103 ♦A93 ♣65. East opens 3♥. What do you bid?

10. Neither vul., IMPs. As South, you hold ♠AK3 ♥3 ♦953 ♣AQJ987. East opens 3♥. What do you bid?

11. Neither vul., IMPs. As South, you hold ♠AKJ10953 ♥QJ3 ♦A ♣Q7. East opens 2♥. What do you bid?

12. Both vul., matchpoints. As South, you hold ♠K1093 ♥103 ♦AJ102 ♣QJ7. West opens 2♥, and it goes pass, pass. What do you bid?

13. Both vul., matchpoints. As South, you hold ♠1093 ♥3 ♦AKJ1082 ♣QJ7. West opens 2♥, and it goes pass, pass. What do you bid? Would you have bid if instead East had opened 2♥?

14. N-S vul., IMPs. As South, you hold ♠K109 ♥AJ10 ♦KJ10 ♣QJ87. West opens 3♥, and it goes pass, pass. What do you bid?

15. N-S vul., IMPs. As South, you hold ♠KJ9 ♥109 ♦KJ10872 ♣A10. East opens 3♥. What do you bid?

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Both vul., IMPs. East opens 5♣. As South, you hold ♠AK8762 ♥AK4 ♦KJ9 ♣Q. What do you bid?

Double. East rates to have 9 clubs, since they are missing the queen. 5♣ is probably down 1 or 2. May make on a good day. Bidding 5♠ is not unreasonable, but remember that both LHO and partner will have length in other suits, and on a bad day you could be down -800 when West holds ♠QJ10xx.

2. Both vul., IMPs. East opens 5♣. As South, you hold ♠AK8762 ♥A ♦KJ10932 ♣-. What do you bid?

Bid 5NT. This shows any two suiter. Partner will bid the lowest suit they can support. So if their distribution is 1-7-3-2 they will 'know' your two suits are spades and

diamonds, and will bid 6♦. A good general principle: it is better to show both suits, even though it may take you one level higher than you might have bid otherwise. Here you have full values for a 5NT call.

3. Neither vul., IMPs. As South, you hold ♠KQ8 ♥A105 ♦32 ♣AQ1085. The bidding starts:

West	North	East	South
	1♣ ¹	5♦	6♥

Pass ?

1. Playing a 12-14 notrump system.

What do you bid?

Bid 7♥. Partner has a very good hand. Can you be off an ace? No. If partner held ♠Ax ♥KQJ109765 ♦x ♣Kx, they would simply bid 5♥. On the actual hand, North had this hand, but with a 3rd spade and a diamond void. It is always wise to envision what partner should have for the bids they make.

4. Neither vul., IMPs. As South, you hold ♠92 ♥J10 ♦KJ96 ♣K10763. West opens 4♠, partner doubles, and it goes pass. What do you bid?

Pass. A double of 4♠ is penalty oriented. Yes you might make five or six of a minor, but bidding is too much of a gamble. Partner likely has a balanced hand with 16-18, and could easily be 3-2 in the minors.

5. Vul vs not, IMPs. As South, you hold ♠KQ108 ♥1053 ♦AJ93 ♣95. West opens 4♥, partner doubles. What do you bid?

Unlike a double of 4♠ a double of 4♥ is a bit more for takeout. It looks like you may have a good fitting hand, and opposite a strong notrump 4♠ should have good play, even if partner has only three good spades, like ♠AJ7 ♥A3 ♦K109 ♣ KQ1043. Bid 4♠.

6. Vul vs not, IMPs. As South, you hold ♠K108 ♥- ♦AJ943 ♣KQ965. West opens 4♥, and it goes pass, pass. What do you bid?

Yes, you should bid. Double. Yes, 4NT is also a good bid, but double caters to partner having a heart stack behind West. Sometimes suits split 7-6-0-0 or 8-5-0-0. If partner takes out to 4♠ you should pass, but reconsider if it gets doubled.

7. Vul vs not, IMPs. As South, you hold ♠K10 ♥5 ♦AJ943 ♣KQ965. West opens 4♥, and it goes pass, pass. What do you bid?

Double. The only thing that has changed is that if partner bids 4♠, pull to 5♣ which shows a two suited minor hand, as with a good single suiter club hand you would have bid 5♣ directly over 4♥.

8. Neither vul., matchpoints. As South, you hold ♠K103 ♥K103 ♦A943 ♣965. West opens 3♣, and it goes pass, pass. What do you bid? Pass. Partner cannot have a good strong notrump as they would have overcalled 3NT. If they were short in clubs, and close to an opening bid they would double. Therefore they rate to either have a poor hand, or some club length or both. It wouldn't surprise me if East has a 4-4-4-1 with around 15 HCPs.

9. Neither vul., matchpoints. As South, you hold ♠AK873 ♥J103 ♦A93 ♣65. East opens 3♥. What do you bid?

3♠ is ok, but pass is better. The problem with 3♠ is you have a modest hand with a modest suit. Partner will raise to game with a fit and any good nine count. Likely you don't want to be in a close game with bad splits likely. If partner balances with 3NT I would pass. If they double I would bid 4♠. The other possible disadvantage of passing is the LHO will bid 3NT and partner will not lead a spade.

10. Neither vul., IMPs. As South, you hold ♠AK3 ♥3 ♦953 ♣AQJ987. East opens 3♥. What do you bid?

You have enough to bid and the choice is between 4♣ and double. 4♣ is ok, and I would bid that if I had two doubletons in the red suits. But here double is better. You will be happy if partner can bid 3NT. As little as ♠xx ♥K10x ♦KQxxx ♣Kxx will make it cold. You will equally be happy if partner passes or bids 4♠. If instead, North bids 3♠, you should pass.

11. Neither vul., IMPs. As South, you hold ♠AKJ10653 ♥QJ3 ♦A ♣Q7. East opens 2♥. What do you bid?

3NT. Nine tricks are easier than 10. Here there is a real danger of a heart ruff against 4♠. Partner held ♠942 ♥1052 ♦K874 ♣J103 and 3NT turned to be unbeatable. 4♠ is down two!

12. Both vul., matchpoints. As South, you hold ♠K1093 ♥103 ♦AJ102 ♣QJ7. West opens 2♥. It goes pass, pass to you. What do you bid?

Double. You have the right shape to compete, and enough high card points. Balancing doubles against weak twos can be as light as a good nine count. Partner can show up to a minimum opening bid by bidding three of a suit, assuming you are playing Lebensohl.

13. Both vul., matchpoints. As South, you hold ♠1093 ♥3 ♦AKJ1082 ♣QJ7. West opens 2♥, and it goes pass, pass. What do you bid?

Would you have bid if instead East had opened 2♥? Balancing is correct, and I slightly prefer 3♦ on this one, as you have such a good suit and modest support for the other two. Had East opened 2♥ instead I would have passed with this minimum, afraid of getting overboard.

14. N-S vul., IMPs. As South, you hold ♠K109 ♥AJ10 ♦KJ10 ♣QJ87. West opens 3♥, and it goes pass, pass. What do you bid?

I would bid 3NT. You have a minimum in high cards, but have a lot of spots and good high card structure. Plus the bidding will be of great help in the play.

15. N-S vul., IMPs. As South, you hold ♠KJ9 ♥109 ♦KJ10872 ♣A10. East opens 3♥. What do you bid?

Pass. I would not commit this hand to the four level. Had I been in 4th seat, and it went 3♥, pass, pass, I would have balanced with 4♦.

Next issue: *When to preempt.*



What Went Wrong?

by Paul Thurston

Even a cursory study of the layout on Hand 1 will show East-West appear to have 4 tricks coming against South's spade game but the play record shows they only took three of those four so we open with our usual question: WHAT WENT WRONG?

Dealer: South. Both vulnerable.

	♠ QJ85	
	♥ KQJ6	
	♦ KQ5	
	♣ 104	
♠ 102		♠ 7
♥ A10842		♥ 53
♦ 102		♦ AJ97
♣ A762		♣ KQJ985
	♠ AK9643	
	♥ 97	
	♦ 8643	
	♣ 3	

The Bidding:

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

Lead: ♣2!!!

SUBTEXT: Hard to show on paper but be advised that before his final pass, East gave the matter a great deal of thought – reasonable as his hand offered a lot of offensive potential with not so much in the way of defense. Only a jury of his peers might judge whether that Break-in-tempo influenced West's choice of opening lead but the deuce

THE
EXPERT
Spot

of clubs does look suspiciously like an attempt to find partner! And he did! Now when East’s eight of clubs held the first trick, he might have saved the day for the defense by shifting to a low diamond but, lacking the hand record to consult, that seems like an awfully big play for East to find. As might we all, having been “found” by his partner, East continued with the King of clubs at trick two. From that point, South needed to time the play perfectly while finding one crucial card onside. He did and it was! Declarer ruffed the second round of clubs to play a low heart towards dummy. West played low and after dummy won a high heart, South cashed the spade Queen and played a second round back to the closed hand for a second round of hearts. West could take that trick or lose it without having any material effect on the outcome – that had been decided after the first two tricks had been played! In the mop-up, South discarded two diamond losers on the good hearts set up after West took his ace and ended with ten tricks for the loss of three aces only. Your choice of opening lead?

A trump seems like wasting a turn on lead while we all know this columnist’s disdain for either leading or underleading unsupported aces against suit contracts to leave the diamond ten by the process of elimination of undesirable options – and, no surprise here, it works! As so often happens, an attempt to be brilliant on opening lead turned out to be anything but!

HAND 2

Finesses are certainly our stock in trade for many play problems but even simple-seeming card combinations like the N-S diamond holding can offer more than one way to execute a finesse. This time, South was in a makeable slam but picked the wrong way to finesse and ended down one – let’s see WHAT WENT WRONG!



I’m not sure whether glory or masterpoints is first on the list of beginning tournament players, but I know learning to play better is definitely last. ~ Edwin Kantar

Dealer: South Vulnerable: Both

	♠ J32	
	♥ AQ1085	
	♦ J74	
	♣ AK	
♠ 10875		♠ AKQ964
♥ K7432		♥ J6
♦ K5		♦ 10832
♣ 32		♣ 5
	♠ -	
	♥ 9	
	♦ AQ96	
	♣ QJ1098764	

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	5♣
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

Lead: ♠5

Hands worth opening five of a minor don’t come down the pike every day but if ever one deserved that call, South’s would be near the top of the list: huge offensive potential in the minor(s) with almost a total lack of defensive prospects against the majors – what else but five clubs? This time, the high-level opening greatly simplified matters for responder as holding the top two trumps plus some other good values made the raise to the small slam virtually automatic with only some thoughts about possibly missing a grand slam causing some concern. West fished out a spade lead that South ruffed to cross to dummy’s high trumps to extract the lurkers. Conveniently in dummy (or so South thought!), he deemed it appropriate to broach his side suit by clicking on a low diamond with his Queen losing to West’s king. When the heart seven came back, that posed a serious problem for South: he could finesse and have a parking spot for his smallest diamond if the heart King was onside or he could win the ace and hope the diamond ten would arrive in one or two more rounds.

As might we all, South hated the thought of relying on one of those treacherous finesses when the diamonds were going to cooperate so up went the ace of hearts and down went the slam when jack and a diamond to the closed hand didn’t bring forth the ten. Full marks to West

for that heart shift that seriously limited South's options but there was a better way. Instead of that diamond play to the queen, South could ruff a spade to lead a low diamond towards dummy. If the king popped up (as it likely would this time), claiming time. And if it went low to the ♦J and a hypothetical ♦K from East, nothing the defender could do would limit South's choices. Even a diamond back (or another spade for South to ruff) would give declarer time to win, maybe play off lots and lots of trumps for a possible squeeze and once again eventually claim if two more rounds of diamonds dropped the ten with the heart finesse in reserve for a last-gasp chance to bring home the slam.

HAND 3

There are a lot of truly enjoyable aspects to playing team bridge that just aren't the same for the virtual game we've been making do with for the last two years or so. When playing with compatible teammates that you like as friends, the post-match score comparisons and post-mortems can be a lot of fun, but maybe not for all the results – like having to explain how the team lost 14 IMPs on this ordinary-looking layout:

Dealer West. North-South Vulnerable.

	♠ AKQ	
	♥ KJ2	
	♦ K92	
	♣ KJ102	
♠ J102		♠ 864
♥ 53		♥ AQ104
♦ 85		♦ J764
♣ AQ8754		♣ 63
	♠ 9753	
	♥ 9876	
	♦ AQ103	
	♣ 9	

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

1. 2NT opener shows 21-23 HCP, so North started with his almost-forcing one club and the rest was predictable.

Lead: ♦4

"With a reasonable holding in the unbid minor, I chose a fourth-best diamond for my opening lead and unfortunately that was more than enough help for declarer as he had no trouble getting one club trick, discovered the 3-3 spade split and coasted home – didn't you do roughly the same?" asked an inquiring mind from one team's East-West partnership.

"Not quite the same, starting with the bidding" replied North as a start to explaining WHAT WENT WRONG.

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Dbl	Rdbl	All Pass	

"When West made that lead-directing double of partner's Stayman response, we use redouble to show a very good four-card club holding so that Responder doesn't have to worry about that suit for notrump purposes. We can also play three clubs redoubled when Responder has a few clubs along with enough other high-card points to make seeking nine tricks in the suit West has warned us about a practical undertaking". Just from the comfort of a kibitzer's chair, I'd say South's hand is lacking on both counts – would you want to voluntarily play in three clubs with a lonely singleton in trumps? A direct violation of David Burn's First Law of Bridge: "when picking a trump suit, be sure you have more combined cards in that suit than the defenders will have".

Now the play in three clubs didn't have to go quite as badly for declarer as it did after he won a high spade to cross to the diamond ace for a low heart to the Jack and Queen. A spade came back from East as South won in dummy to play King and a diamond to get back to his hand. Except that West's ruff of the third round of diamonds stalled that plan in its tracks and a heart exit from West was more bad news as East could win the ace and ten to let his partner dump his last spade and get a spade ruff on the way back. Ace and a club to give dummy the lead left West poised to take one more club trick for down three and the unusual but tasty score of +1600 for the defense. And that's how you lose 14 IMPs by playing in and making three notrump on the North-South cards! Even with the post-mortem being conducted via Zoom, it was painful for some of the players!

THE IBPA FILES

The International Bridge Press Association (IBPA) is a world-wide bridge organization of more than 300 members in all corners of the world. Its main objective is to assist bridge journalists in their bridge related professional activities. The IBPA publishes a monthly online Bulletin, which consists of interesting deals involving some of the best players of the world, competing in key international tournaments.



USBF OPEN TEAM TRIALS

John Carruthers, Kingsville, ON Suzi Subeck, Chicago, Ill.

Editor's note: Over the next few issues we will feature hands from the 2021 USBF Team trials.

RR2A – Match 6. FLEISHER vs. Nickell.

Board 38. Dealer East. EW Vul.

♠ 743	♠ KJ105	♠ -
♥ -	♥ K53	♥ Q1087642
♦ KQ8763	♦ J10	♦ A954
♣ AKJ9	♣ Q1086	♣ 32
	♠ AQ9862	
	♥ AJ9	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 754	

West	North	East	South
Moss	Weinstein	Grue	Greco
Weinstein	Lee	Levin	Korbel
-	Pass	3♥	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Here we had two of the best pairs in the world (all World Champions) on defence against four spades (we'll get to the bidding in a moment).

Brad Moss led the king of clubs (king from ace-king and others) and received the three from Joe Grue (upside-down count and attitude) and the four from Geoff Hampson. With no spades, Grue did not want to encourage Moss to play three rounds of clubs, so gave false count. Moss knew that another club was cashing (Grue would not have played the three from seven-five-three-two, whether he'd had a trump or not), so took it at trick two, receiving the eight, two and seven. When Moss cashed the king

of clubs and Grue followed with the two, ostensibly showing an odd number, all was revealed: had he really held the five-three-two, Grue would have played the five at trick one, so Moss 'knew' Grue had just two clubs, but no trumps for the third round of the suit. Moss shifted to the queen of diamonds. Grue won that with his ace and knowing there were no more tricks available in the minors, led a heart as his only hope; Moss ruffed for one off. Was that defence brilliant, workmanlike or merely routine? Before you answer, let's look at what happened at the other table...

Stevie Weinstein led the ace of clubs (ace from ace-king and others), receiving the deuce from Bobby Levin (discouraging, but with no reference to count). Weinstein shifted to the king of diamonds, receiving the nine, encouraging, from Levin. When Weinstein followed up with a diamond continuation, Korbel was home and FLEISHER had won 10 IMPs. Would Levin have played the two from seven-five-three-two of clubs at trick one? Like Grue, he had given false count/attitude with no trumps and the more-likely holding might have been seven-three-two or five-three-two. I'm certain this deal has come up for a post-mortem. Anyone for ace asks for attitude and king asks for count?

Back to the bidding...perhaps I'm getting old, but three hearts seems crazy to me, vulnerable against not, with that ratty suit, a good-four card side suit, an ace and a void. Ask yourself, before you commit such an act, how you'd feel if it went pass, pass, double. Not all pass after that double yet, but simply pass, pass, double. You'd be ill, waiting to see what West did. In any case, fully seven of the 12 players who held this hand opened three hearts; three passed, one opened two hearts and one player from Cuckoo-land (Adam Grossack) opened four hearts! He received plus 50 defending four spades for his sins. I don't suppose that will prevent him from being a recidivist. His brother Zachary, at the other table, raised South's three-spade overcall to game and redoubled when West chanced a double. The defence played two rounds of diamonds too early, so Zach scored up plus 880. Quite a combo, those Grossacks!

Of the ten times the deal was played in spades, declarer made 10 tricks six times and nine tricks four times. The other two times the deal was played, East/West declared in five diamonds doubled. One North held declarer to 11 tricks by leading a trump; the other led a spade, allowing an overtrick.



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the GREAT CANADIAN BIDDING CONTEST



FEBRUARY 2022 TGCBC Host: Andy Stark

For Panelists, see page 36

A lot of good scores, but Nic L'Ecuyer and Kamel Fergani topped the experts scoring with 49 out of 50. Our top reader for February was Kai Zhou with 49, followed by Ashot Harutyunyan with 47. The April TGCBC problems can be found after this article.

1. MPs, Neither Vul., as South you hold: ♠AK42 ♥6
♦QJ8 ♣AKQJ10

West	North	East	South
-	Pass	Pass	1♣
1♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	2♦	2♥	?

What do you bid?

Action	Votes	Score
Double	15	10
3♥	1	9
2♠	2	8
3♦	1	7
3♣	1	7

This hand came up in a massive online pairs event and was played by one of Canada's top pairs Nader Hanna and John Rayner. Not every South faced the delayed heart raise by East, but surely at this juncture doubling is the most flexible call for South: it shows strength, implies three diamonds, and caters to a penalty pass. Making the case for doubling:

Lindop: Double. So far, I haven't shown any extra strength. The initial reopening double could have been on a minimum hand with heart shortness. I now have to show some values. Partner presumably doesn't hold four spades; I don't hold four-card diamond support.

Double seems most flexible. Partner might even pass with a hand suitable for defense against 2♥ doubled.

Hornby: Double. 3-card support and extras for the previous double. Caters to penalty pass, 3NT or 3♦.

Kimelman: Double. Second double shows 18-20, and allows partner to convert to penalty, or bid 3♦ or notrump.

Miles: Double. If partner is not passing, they should choose a 3-card black suit before repeating a 4-card diamond suit at the 3-level. Over 2NT, I will bid 3♣.

Danny is right as North at the table did bid spades at their next turn, to show a 3-bagger. Stay tuned.

Fergani: Double. If, as I suspect, we are playing methods where partner can't show the other minor and moderate values over 1♥, he could still have enough for game.

Willis: Double. Significant extra values, no fourth diamond, good defensive values outside of diamonds. Very likely that partner will know my shape and values and know what to do. Tougher question might be what to do over partner's 3♦ bid.

If double shows a good hand, surely a cuebid of hearts shows an even stronger hand.

Thurston: 3♥. Need to find out if partner has the one card that we need to make 5♦ playable – not sure if this will do it, but it's a warm happy positive noise that at least seeks information and maybe solve the problem.

Todd: 3♥. Partner may have 4 or 5 hearts but not enough to bid 1NT the first or second time around. He doesn't have 4 spades and may not have 3. His shape is likely 3442 or 2542 but hopefully 2452. I am going to strongly invite game in diamonds and will not sit for 3NT as he can't have two heart stoppers and one top diamond, or two top diamonds and one heart stopper.

Good guesses, Bob, but North's actual shape was 3451. And right you are not sitting for 3NT as that will be down two before you get in. Then again, North would never bid notrump as they don't have a heart stopper. Making a good case for 2♠:

Turner: 2♠: This sequence of bids must show a really big hand with 5+ clubs and 4 spades. I think double here would show an 18-19 'balanced' hand with only 3 diamonds. Hopefully pard will give me 3NT with: ♠xxx ♥J10xx ♦Axxx ♣xx.

Simon: 2♠. The double doesn't necessarily show a good hand because he will almost always reopen with double if he has shortness in the heart suit. I think that 2♠ now shows a good hand with longer clubs and probably a partial fit in diamonds. I am not sure 3♣ will show such a strong hand.

The outliers:

Treble: 3♣. I suppose I could double again, but 3♣ feels more like "where I live."

Bishop: 3♦. I don't see how we can have mechanisms to find a reasonable game if responder should happen to have ♦A109xx and out without getting overboard when they (instead) have almost nothing and just a 4-card suit. Would like to have the agreement that 2NT here is a choice between the minors but my pages of notes for competitive auctions, and/or sufficiently detailed "meta-agreements," don't have that situation covered. We are just assured that responder doesn't have 4 spades; and with his limited (from the auction) heart length, we hope that with 4-3 in diamonds/clubs he would have had the good sense to try 3♣.

Bidding three of a minor will work out well if partner is completely bust, but as it turns out, good ol' pard had a little something. The full deal:

♠	QJ5		
♥	9853		
♦	K10975		
♣	2		
♠	963	♠	1087
♥	KQJ104	♥	A72
♦	A64	♦	32
♣	54	♣	98763
	♠	AK42	
	♥	6	
	♦	QJ8	
	♣	AKQJ10	

At the table Rayner (South) doubled East's 2♥ and Hanna made the expert bid of 2♠ to show a three-card suit. Logically he will not have four spades because if he did, he would have bid spades the first time around, probably even if looking at longer diamonds.

Rayner made the matchpoint decision to take the plus, so he passed 2♠, which, as you can see, plays well. Hanna made 11 tricks for an average plus result. The top N-S score went to 5♦ doubled making and there were a few pairs who bid and made 4♠ or 5♦. 3NT was not a happy spot.

Is there anything else to learn on this deal? Well, let's start by parsing Fergani's comment, that partner was not able to take action at their first turn to bid because of our methods. Wouldn't it be nice if there was a bid responder could make after 1m (1H) to show this hand type? Turns out there is! But it requires you and partner to have the following agreement:

Opener/Overcaller	Responder
1♣/1♦ 1♥	?
Pass	= Not enough values to respond
Double	= 2 or 3-card spade suit, 6+ points
1♠	= 4+ spades, 6+ points

The rest of the bids (1NT, 2 of-a-minor, etc.) can be whatever you and your partner play. No, you don't know precisely how many spades partner has when they respond 1♠, (as you would playing normal negative doubles) but you don't know partner's spade count when they respond 1♠ after no interference. Plus, if Advancer bids, Opener's double can still be a Support Double to show 3-card spade support. So, you can still sort out whether you have a playable spade fit.

What you gain is the ability to show a modicum of values and no convenient bid. And when you do that you get to your 20-opposite-6 game contracts. On our problem deal, after North's double, South could (say) cuebid hearts and learn about North's diamond length, and then drive to 5♦. Easy peasy.

2. MPs, N-S Vul., as South you hold: ♠107643 ♥4 ♦AJ7 ♣Q983

West	North	East	South
3♥	3NT	4♥	?

What do you bid?

Action	Votes	Score
Double	13	10
Pass	3	9
4NT	2	8
4♠	2	7

Disclaimer: Sometime last November I was de-cluttering and I happened upon a stash of old ACBL Bulletins, including one from November 1981. In it was the Canadian Bridge Digest, a pre-cursor of the magazine you are reading right now. Allan Simon directed the Canadian Bidding Contest. It would not surprise me in the least if back then our editor Neil Kimelman was taking it all in, plotting how he would run the bidding contest. What did surprise me was that

one of our present-day contributors, Bob Todd, was a panelist back then. I thought, what the heck! Let's use the next three problem deals from 1981, just to see if Bob's bidding has ... evolved.

1981 Bob Todd: 4NT. Natural—what's the problem?

2022 Bob Todd: 4NT. We may have a spade fit but 4NT should also work. I have just enough fillers that 4NT should be fairly easy.

Bonus points for consistency! The only difference is the word count: 4 in 1981, 22 in 2022. One other difference is that in 1981 one third of the panel vehemently agreed with the 4NT call. But in 2022, only one tenth of the panel bid 4NT: Bob Todd & Ron Bishop. Maybe that is because 4NT can have different meanings. Still, if 4NT is natural and to play, it is a reasonable call and +630 could beat all those defending 4♥ doubled.

Incidentally, you know you have advanced in bridge when you even think about 4NT as a contract at the table. What do I mean by this? It's just that 3NT has such a sense of finality to it that advancing players don't even consider bidding 4NT to play. Also, we equate 4NT as an ace-asking bid. In this deal, a 4NT bid by South is clearly to play, going for 10 or more tricks. Two panelists bid 4♠ in 2022, while only one did in 1981.

Lebi: 4♠. Not happy about it.

Cimon: 4♠. 3NT can be based on HCPs or a long solid suit—we don't know. If partner had short spades and a long solid minor, they might just bid 4NT or five of his minor.

True, we could construct hands where partner has ♠AKQJ in amongst their 18 - 19 HCPs and heart stopper, thus rendering a 4♠ contract the big winner. But we could also construct hands where partner has ♠J(x). So, you can see why Robert Lebi is not happy about bidding 4♠. It's one of those calls where you put the dummy down and excuse yourself for a bathroom break. As expected, the winning call with the majority

of votes in both 1981 and 2022 was double.

L'Ecuyer: Double. This sort of buries the 5th spade but keeps all suits in the picture including the possibility of 4♥ doubled being the right place to play. It is on the light side, but surely I cannot pass 4♥.

Kuz: Double. I have cards and places to play. Partner should have an easy decision.

Lindop: Double. I have no idea what we can make, but I do have some values. Partner isn't going to expect me to have anything in hearts on this auction, so partner can expect me to have support if partner has overcalled 3NT with a long suit – even though that looks unlikely from my holdings in the minors. Partner didn't make a takeout double, so guessing to bid spades is out.

Kimelman: Double. Minimum high cards, but likely getting +300. 4♠ is too unilateral with a weak suit. Partner can still convert if they have a long suit.

Turner: Double. Opposite partner's very wide range overcall, any bid other than pass or double would be too speculative. Partner won't expect me to have anything in hearts and perhaps if he has a "source of tricks" overcall he'll bid 4♠ or 4NT once he hears I have something. No quarrel with pass, but 4♠ or 4NT would be punishing partner for his enterprise.

Jacob: Double. Some cards, desire to compete. With four spades partner may bid 4♠.

Grainger: Double. Give partner another chance to show some life.

As you can see, lots of good things may come with double, including finding our spade fit if it exists. But here's the interesting thing about bidding today and bidding 40 years ago: the concept of the forcing pass. Nobody passed in 1981, but three panelists did today.

Balcombe: Pass. As long as my partner thinks that pass is forcing. We bid a vulnerable game with power and the opponents are likely saving, thus

pass should be forcing. If partner has something like ♠AJxx ♥Axx ♦KQx ♣Kxx then they will double but we could maybe make 4♠. I don't see bidding 4♠ with such a weak suit.

Cooper: Pass. Forcing. Partner did not jump to 3NT, so it covers a wide range of hand types and strengths. I have no surprising or unusual features nor strength. (Partner was hoping I had at least this much.)

Willis: Pass. Am assuming this is a forcing pass scenario at these colours even if partner could have been gambling. My offence to defense ratio suggests bidding something could be correct and will be happy with whatever partner does. Partner's double now becomes defensive oriented. Pass and pull should not be stronger here as bidding directly would show significant offence but a worthwhile discussion to have with partner.

I'm convinced Pass is a great call and have rewarded the passers in the scoring. Sorry I can't show you the full deal—the 1981 bidding contest didn't provide them. You could ask Bob Todd; surely, he remembers the other hand.

3. IMPs, N-S Vul., As South you hold: ♠AK64 ♥QJ6 ♦K83 ♣A43

West	North	East	South
-	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♠	Pass	?

What do you bid?

Action	Votes	Score
4NT	11	10
5C	2	9
5D	1	9
Pass	6	8

To go slamming or not to go slamming, that is the question. Before we get to the slammers, let's hear from the passers:

Kuz: Pass. I needed a different auction from partner to feel safe bidding on. Pawk, Pawk, Pawk is the best chicken impression I can do.

Cooper: Pass. The system is awkward. I prefer that a bid announces either a game try, or a slam try, but not “could be either.” With these methods, Opener must cooperate with a feature bid (which only helps the opening leader) with a hand that could potentially be slam-worthy. Meanwhile, Responder might only have game interest. But that is the price. Since opener merely jumped to game, the “game-try” was accepted, but the slam interest was not there.

Cimon: Pass. They didn’t cue-bid, so partners think they have the hand to accept the game, but not try for slam. I need good spades and hearts; they may have that, but I don’t want to gamble.

Thurston: Pass. This problem really hinges on what message 3♣ was meant to transmit. If it was, as most play, some kind of naturalish Game Try, then partner had the option of showing serious stuffing in one red suit or the other “on the way” to 4♠ – they didn’t so I’m assuming they don’t have what’s needed for slam such as ♠QJxx ♥Axxxx ♦Qx ♣KQ.

Bishop: Pass. We asked partner for club help in a spade raise hand; we didn’t say, “I also need quite good trumps and top hearts” as well. Here are a couple of hands that fit the auction so far and also have little play for slam: ♠Jxxx ♥AKxxx ♦xx ♣KJ; or ♠QJxx ♥K10xxx ♦x ♣KQx; or ♠109xx ♥AKxxx ♦Qx ♣KQ. If opener had the perfect hand (ie. ♠1098x ♥AKxxx ♦Ax ♣Kx) they surely would have bid more than 2♠ at their previous turn; and with something like ♠QJxx ♥AKxxx ♦x ♣KJx, they certainly should have considered ‘splintering’ over 3♣.

Both passers and slammers do not like partner’s jump to 4♠ and even more panelists do not like the 3♣ bid

as 3♥ is more descriptive and shows partner the heart fillers: another indicator that bidding has evolved over the past 40 years. Or so we like to think. The control showing bidders:

Freeman: 5♣. I would have started with 2♣ to avoid this problem. If I bid it like this, I’m kind of stuck guessing whether to bid at this point. If I bid keycard, and partner shows one with the queen or two without they could still go down in slam. They also didn’t bid 3♦ or 4♣ over 3♣ so it’s unlikely they have a great hand. I’ll bid 5♣ in case partner has something like ♠QJxx ♥Kxxxx ♦AQx ♣x and they can then drive to slam.

Miles: 5♣. Starting with 2♣ likely would have led to a smoother auction; no jumping around needed to show strength, and let partner introduce spades to discover if we belong in that strain (yes, I know protecting the ♦K may be important). I need to continue after partner accepts my “game” try. Of course, numerous useful minimums will produce a slam: ♠QJxx ♥AKxxx ♦Qx ♣xx. I wish I could keycard in hearts but it’s too late for that - the ♥K is crucial. Slam could be silly opposite ♠QJxx ♥Axxxx ♦x ♣KQx and partner will love their hand when I bid again. As it is, if partner bypasses 5♦, that increases the odds they have all the major suit fillers I need. Partner will also slow down with bad trumps.

Grainger: 5♦. ♠Qxxx ♥AKxxx ♦xx ♣Kx is a slam, so I need to bid. Partner should not have a great hand in context, but an okay one will do. I’m not a fan of jumping to four of a major over ambiguous game tries that could actually be slam tries for this reason.

It appears Grainger is bidding the suit below the suit he most wants partner to show a control in, which is hearts. Control bidding towards slam is a skill and takes discussion with your regular partner. The majority go for everyone’s favourite ace-asking bid of 4NT.

Lindop: 4NT. I’ll take a chance on slam if we have enough key cards. As little as ♠Q532 ♥AK432 ♦542 ♣2 – 9 high-card points – gives me a good play. If we’re

missing the ♥K, I'll have to hope partner holds the ♥10.

Balcombe: 4NT. I am unclear why we didn't rebid 3♥. Were we afraid that's not forcing? Partner has something like ♠QJxx ♥AKxxx ♦x ♣Kxx or even ♠QJxx ♥AKxxx ♦Axx ♣x which makes 7♠ very good. This last hand is a 3♠ rebid to me, but perhaps not to my partner.

Turner: 4NT. As I like to say, "there are bids between pass and slam," and this hand would seem to call for another effort. What I'd like to bid is 5♠, general slam invitation, but on this auction, it would ask for a diamond control. My idea on this hand is to pass 5♥ and bid 6♠ over 5♠. This hand type is a nightmare for standard bidding, and where partners agree, I like to play that a 2♣ response to a 1♥/1♠ opening bid shows either clubs or a 16+ balanced relay.

Hornby: 4NT. Might be wrong, but the auction got out of control in a hurry. I would have preferred 3♥ over 3♣ if it were forcing but I don't think it is. 3♦ would have been my second choice of game/slam try. My minor suit primes, good trumps, and heart fillers make slam worth a try.

Fergani: 4NT. I really don't agree with 3♣. Partner looks to have a decent minimum (they would bid 3♠ with a bad minimum and cue bid with a good hand) so they can still have the right cards for slam. I thought about 5♦, which should alert partner (and the opps) about hearts, but if partner really has nothing in hearts, we may even lose the first three tricks in 5♥.

L'Ecuyer: 4NT. Good old RKCB – looks like 6M is a lock, but let's try for 7 – no reason partner is not dealt ♠QJxx ♥AKxxx ♦Ax ♣xx – although some might jump to 3♠ (too light for me). Not sure that I would have bid 3♣ with that hand although I don't dislike it.

Willis: 4NT. Keycard Blackwood. Not sure what partner has but this bid should be able to get us to the right spot from here. Partner might have cuebid here as 3♣ is often a slam try with game tries being bid the game. Will drive to slam unless (surprisingly) missing 2

Keycards. Will bid a Grand with all the key cards and ♥K.

Going 2 for 2:

1981 Bob Todd: 4NT. Looks like 6♠ might depend on a 3-2 spade break or a spade finesse if partner holds one ace.

2022 Bob Todd: 4NT. Tough hand. Passing 4♠ or bidding 4NT could be right. Partner's shape could be 45xx or 46xx with some king, but a minimum after accepting the game try. I would have bid 3♥ instead of 3♣ but that still may not solve my further problems.

4. IMPs, Neither Vul., As South you hold: ♠K4 ♥KJ10753 ♦1094 ♣74

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	2♥
Pass	Pass	3NT	All Pass

What do you lead?

Action	Votes	Score
♠K	11	10
♥J	2	8
♥7	2	8
♥	1	8
♦10	4	7

It sure feels like declarer is ready for a heart lead, so the majority go for the sneak attack.

Kimelman: ♠K. Partner could have asked for a heart lead with double. Might as well attack in the unbid major, where I have values to boot.

Balcombe: ♠K. I suspect that this lead will get the hand over with quickly, one way or the other. This kind of "Zia" lead is easier in print or even on BBO rather than in person. My partner can groan or otherwise disapprove without me knowing (but certainly suspecting).

Cimon: ♠K. 3NT here usually shows a long solid minor and a stopper in hearts. I don't know which minor, so I want to lead a spade and hope to find partner. I thought to lead the ♠2, so partner can play hearts through the declarer, but declarer might have nine tricks anyway so better to find partner with a good spade suit.

Kamel Fergani and David Turner should have a game. To wit:

Fergani: ♠K. Looks attractive at imps, and in a bidding poll. Will be ready with a quick, "Sorry, partner."

Turner: ♠K. Declarer's least likely long suit. Apology at the ready.

And just why might we be apologizing after the ♠K lead? Because we are Canadian, yes, but also because it might hand declarer their ninth trick. Making the case for the standard lead:

Lindop: ♥J. Partner presumably has at most two hearts. Otherwise, partner would have raised to 3♥, following The Law. However, I do have a potential entry with the ♠K if we can establish my hearts before declarer has nine tricks. I might be giving declarer a ninth trick but leading anything else might also present declarer with the contract. I'll go with the standard lead rather than trying to guess the winning one.

Treble: ♥J. The ♦10 is my second choice while the ♠K could strike gold but doesn't feel right in my bones.

Cooper: ♥7. Partner may have ♥Ax (or ♥Qx) and declarer ♥Q98x (or ♥A98x), and I hope my side king is an entry.

Grainger: ♥7. Maybe partner will have Qx for once. No reason to lead the J/10, but a diamond could easily be best, or even the ♥K.

Of note, Grainger and Miles are the only ones in 2022 to mention the ♥K lead. In 1981, two panelists actually voted for the ♥K lead. It really is a newspaper lead.

Miles: ♦10. Anything could be right (including the ♥K). Sounds like declarer is convinced 3NT is the right contract (no double to start). Of course, partner probably has the spade suit locked up but that is a bit too speculative for me. Did I just uncover declarer's 7-card suit?

Kuz: ♦10. I don't want to give a trick away on the opening lead. I expect partners to raise with ♥Qx or ♥Ax.

Thurston: ♦10. Partner didn't squeak so not hearts. Hope to find partner at home with diamonds – or at least do no harm.

The final word goes to Bob:

1981 Bob Todd: ♠K. Either minor is a guess. At least I have something that may help partner.

2022 Bob Todd: ♠K. Either minor is a guess. At least I have something that may help partner.

Bob, you are the man.

5. MPs, Both Vul., As South you hold: ♠ J8 ♥ Q107 ♦ AK92 ♣ KJ74

West	North	East	South
-	Pass	Pass	1♦
1♠	Pass	1NT	All pass

5a) What do you lead?

Action	Votes	Score
♦K	3	10
♣4	12	9
♠J	5	7
Heart	0	3

This lead came up against two nefarious opponents. They bid and play quickly; they never say 'boo' and they're better than Bob Hamman at leaving the last hand behind and getting on with the next. I'm talking about, of course, the robots on BBO. Most panelists make Chuck Goren proud and vote for the ♣4 lead.

Freeman: ♣4. Kind of random. The ♦A lets me see the hand but could hurt the tempo. Spade is pretty passive but could hurt the tempo. I will go with a low club and hope for the best.

Cooper: ♣4. Partner probably has 3-4 HCPs and could have some club length.

Cimon: ♣4. My second-best suit.

Miles: ♣4. Tough problem, any suit could be right. A spade could find partner but is more likely to compromise something like Qxxx and give declarer a tempo. A heart could find a 4-5 card suit opposite and get out of our way (I would lead the Q or 10, probably the 10) to avoid endplays and get partner in. The ♦9 looks important enough to want that suit being led up to me. What else is left? Let's hope partner has a little something in the suit. We know dummy should be balanced with 5 spades. Hope clubs isn't declarer's suit! Even so we may recover.

Treble: ♣4. Partner can't have a lot. I'm hoping for the ♣Q or ♣10 from partner and an eventual spade trick.

L'Ecuyer: ♣4. No negative double – looks normal to lead my long second suit. Diamond does not sound too appealing with no raise from partner. ♠J might be right but may lose a tempo.

Willis: ♣4. Partner is likely to have spades (no raise by opponents), not hearts (no negative double), likely not diamonds (no raise), and thus potential for clubs (possibly even 5) and as likely as anything else to start building tricks.

As it turns out, the ♣4 is the winner on this day because partner holds the ♣Q. But what if declarer held the ♣Q? Then you've not only blown a

trick but failed to attack dummy's entry. Keep reading for the Big Reveal...

Kimelman: ♠J. Could backfire, but don't like breaking other suits.

Bishop: ♠J. With only a modest opening bid and the opponents not even trying for game, we know that partner has some values, so why didn't they bid? No negative double, nor raise of our suit, nor any balancing action. Hence, they must have length in the overcalled suit.

Balcombe: ♠J. The ♣4 could be right. Partner has some HCPs and, from the auction, 4 or 5 spades. Declarer often has clubs with that 1NT rebid. If my partner was not going to like an unsuccessful lead of the opponent's suit, I would lead clubs. However, I guess to lead spades.

Kuz: ♠J. Partner has something. Again, don't want to kick a trick on the lead. Secretly admire ♥10.

Yes, the ♠J could be the big winner, especially if partner's spade spots are bigger than dummy's but alas, they are not on this day. And while the ♦K could be the big loser, as it blows an all-important tempo, on this day it is not. Only three panelists, (including Hornby) lead the ♦K which means only three panelists will get the opportunity to pull off a certain coup.

Lindop: ♦K. I'd like to see dummy and partner's first signal before deciding what to do next. Leading clubs could be necessary, but I think I'll still have time after leading a high diamond. Continuing diamonds could also be best.

Grainger: ♦K. (Or the ♦A if that is our non-power high diamond agreement.) Trying to find which of clubs or hearts I should be leading.

Exactly! Take a peek and figure out what to do next. What to do next is sacrifice your club king to knock out dummy's outside entry to the spades. The full deal:

♠ AK10943	♠ Q652	♠ 7
♥ 432	♥ 965	♥ AKJ8
♦ 74	♦ J106	♦ Q853
♣ A8	♣ Q95	♣ 10632
	♠ J8	
	♥ Q107	
	♦ AK92	
	♣ KJ74	

To be clear, the ♣4 is a winner also. But if declarer has the ♣Q, then the ♣4 lead will ride around to the ♣Q and declarer will set up dummy's spades for one loser. The smaller spades will later be accessed via the ♣A. Best is to lead a high diamond—preferably the honour that asks for attitude and not an unblock—then play on clubs, ideally your ♣K in order to force declarer to play the ♣A before spades have been set up. This is the Merrimac Coup: attacking a hand's entry (usually the dummy's) by sacrificing an unsupported high card.

Down one is a galaxy wide top. It appears the club leaders will tie this result but a funny thing happened to the players who led the ♣4. Their partner won the ♣Q at trick one, then shifted to the ♦J. Declarer played low. Partner (a robot, remember) now played the ♦10 on which declarer (a robot, remember) played low! Now that darn robot partner shifted not to clubs, but to hearts! Arghh. That gave declarer the timing to set up spades for five tricks. Of course, in real life your human partner will know what to do after your masterful lead of a club.

As you can see any heart gives up overtricks as it goes right into the mashed potatoes. If you do lead

a heart, the ten is correct as it begins to unblock the suit. Picture partner with ♥ K9xxx. If you lead your ♥7 and partner puts up their ♥K you might never get to partner again. But if you retain your ♥7, then you have a chance to later get to partner's hand for them to cash their small hearts.

On the back of your convention card are suggested standard leads in bold. You are free to circle your partnership's agreed upon lead. With AKJx, standard is to lead the K because you want attitude. If partner discourages you will know declarer has the queen, so you can switch to a new suit. But if you were to strengthen your holding to AKJ10x, then the standard lead is the ace asking partner to unblock their queen (if they have it) or give count so that you will know what to do. This is the so-called "power lead." It's like going it alone in Euchre—you do not need or want partner's attitude—you want them to get out of your way. Bringing us to ...

5b) Which of the two high diamond honours is your preferred method asking for attitude?

Our panel is somewhat split on this:

Cooper (along with **Bishop** and **Hornby**): With no agreement, I consider the king to be "standard," or, perhaps more accurately, "old-fashioned."

Lindop: Against a notrump contract, I currently play that the ace (of my bid suit) asks for an unblock or count and the king asks for attitude.

Turner: I like to play "K for attitude (showing KQ), the A is either 'solid missing the queen,' or 'shopping' for partner's suit." Having opened 1♦, partner may not know which type I have, but the 1NT bid may persuade them I have the 'shopping' hand, in which case they'll signal attitude for diamonds.

Willis: K for attitude here, reserving Q and A for count/unblock.



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QUIZ

INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

ANSWER ON PAGE 31

Contract: 3NT Lead: ♥J. IMPs. Plan the play.

♠ K 7 4
♥ Q 5 4
♦ Q J 7 4 2
♣ Q 2

♠ J 8
♥ A K 8
♦ A K 6 5 3
♣ J 5 4

Treble: I've always played K as the card that looks for attitude but know that a growing number of pairs play that K requests the unblock and A wants attitude from partner. I see the merit of it but colour me old-fashioned.

Bill is right. Here are the opposing views:

Kimelman: I prefer the ace, with the king as the strong count/unblock lead.

Miles: Ace. I like King to be the powerful lead. Q can be from KQx or QJ10.

Fergani: Ace. Ace for attitude; king for unblock or count.

L'Ecuyer: Ace. I like best when the king is the strong lead. A is an attitude ask for the Q. Period.

Grainger: Ace. I usually play the king as count/unblock and ace for attitude.

Of course, the question is why—why is the king now considered to be the superior “power lead” versus notrump? The answer is beyond the scope of this article. Look for an article on this topic later this year. Or you could watch this YouTube video by Tony Staw: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zwXI_f3iaA. Suffice to say, in the past 40 years, there has been a change in thinking on the power lead versus notrump. Right, Bob?

1981 Bob Todd: King for attitude.

2022 Bob Todd: Ace for attitude.

PANEL'S ANSWERS

	HAND 1		HAND 2		HAND 3		HAND 4		HAND 5		TOTAL
	<i>Bid</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Bid</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Bid</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Bid</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Bid</i>	<i>Score</i>	
Balcombe, Keith	Dbl	10	Pass	9	4NT	10	♠K	10	♠J	7	46
Bishop, Ron	3♦	7	4NT	8	Pass	8	♠K	10	♠J	7	40
Cooper, Stephen	Dbl	10	Pass	9	Pass	8	♥7	8	♣4	9	44
Cimon, Francine	2♠	8	4♠	7	Pass	8	♠K	10	♣4	9	42
Fergani, Kamel	Dbl	10	Dbl	10	4NT	10	♠K	10	♣4	9	49
Freeman, Jacob	Dbl	10	Dbl	10	5♣	9	♥5	8	♣4	9	46
Grainger, David	Dbl	10	Dbl	10	5♦	9	♥7	8	♦K	10	47
Hornby, Ray	Dbl	10	Dbl	10	4NT	10	♦10	7	♦K	10	47
Jacob, Dan	Dbl	10	Dbl	10	Pass	8	♠K	10	♣4	9	47
Kimelman, Neil	Dbl	10	Dbl	10	4NT	10	♠K	10	♠J	7	47
Kuz, Bob	Dbl	10	Dbl	10	Pass	8	♦10	7	♠J	7	42
L'Ecuyer, Nic	Dbl	10	Dbl	10	4NT	10	♠K	10	♣4	9	49
Lebi, Robert	Dbl	10	4♠	7	4NT	10	♠K	10	♣4	9	46
Lindop, David	Dbl	10	Dbl	10	4NT	10	♥J	8	♦K	10	48
Miles, Danny	Dbl	10	Dbl	10	5♣	9	♦10	7	♣4	9	45
Thurston, Paul	3♥	9	Dbl	10	Pass	8	♦10	7	♣4	9	43
Todd, Bob	Dbl	9	4NT	8	4NT	10	♠K	10	♠J	7	44
Treble, Bill	3♣	7	Dbl	10	4NT	10	♥J	8	♣4	9	44
Turner, David	2♠	8	Dbl	10	4NT	10	♠K	10	♣4	9	47
Willis, David	Dbl	10	Pass	9	4NT	10	♠K	10	♣4	9	48

Mike Lawrence, a new partner, insists I learn a new convention. I agree. The convention is that after a major suit opening bid, a jump to the three level of the other major is an artificial bid, showing an opening hand with at least four card support for partner's major plus an UNKNOWN singleton. Opener can ask for the singleton by bidding the next step.

Everything is going fine (because the convention has never come up) until we are playing in the Nationals Men's Pairs in Houston surrounded by kibitzers.

Mike opens 1♠, next hand passes, and I have: ♠ - ♥ AKJ10xxxx ♦ QJ ♣ AKx. I completely forget our

new convention and respond 3♥ to show my great hand. Mike alerts. They ask and he tells them I have spades with an unknown singleton. He jumps to 4♠ which means he doesn't care where my singleton is. I bid 5♥. He alerts. They ask. He says: "I have a VOID IN HEARTS" and then bids 6♠! I bid 7♥! He alerts again. They ask. He says: "Cancel all the other alerts, I'm passing!" Mike had ♠ AKQ10x ♥ xxx ♦ xx ♣ QJx. They lead a club and I make it! The kibitzers are so disgusted that they all leave!

Edwin Kantar



APRIL 2022 PROBLEMS

Host: David Willis

Deadline for readers to submit their answers:
March 15

1. IMPs, NS vul, East deals. South holds:
♠QJ96 ♥5 ♦AK975 ♣Q43

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

1. Forcing

What do you bid?

2. IMPs, neither vul. South holds:
♠K1093 ♥- ♦J103 ♣AKQJ98

West	North	East	South
2♦ ¹	Pass	3♥ ²	?

1. Weak two in a major.

2. Pass or correct.

What do you bid?

3. IMPs, both vul, West deals. South holds:
♠A94 ♥- ♦Q7543 ♣QJ1064

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1NT ¹	2♦ ²	?

1. 14+-17.

2. One major.

Lebensohl applies, double is takeout. What call do you make? What is your plan?

4. IMPs, E-W vul, West deals. South holds:
♠10873 ♥7432 ♦K ♣A975

West	North	East	South
1NT ¹	2♥ ²	Dbl	?

1. 14+-17.

2. Five plus hearts, four plus in a minor.

What do you bid?

5. Matchpoints, neither vul, East Deals. South holds:
♠A7 ♥A105 ♦10 ♣AQJ9843

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	?

What do you bid? Please comment if you would bid differently at IMPs.

QUIZ

INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

PROBLEM ON PAGE 29

Contract: 3NT Lead: ♥J. IMPs. Plan the play.

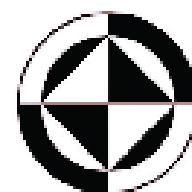
♠ K 7 4	
♥ Q 5 4	
♦ Q J 7 4 2	
♣ Q 2	
♠ J 9 5 3 2	♠ A Q 10 6
♥ J 10 9 7	♥ 6 3 2
♦ 9	♦ 10 8
♣ A 10 8 7	♣ K 9 6 3
♠ J 8	
♥ A K 8	
♦ A K 6 5 3	
♣ J 5 4	

You have eight tricks and the best chance for a ninth trick is the ace of spades with West. However, when East has the ♠Q, you can guarantee making regardless of who holds the ace.

Win the heart in your hand and run the diamonds, ending in dummy and lead the ♠4. If it loses to West's queen, you can still lead a spade to the ace. However on the actual layout, East must rise with the queen. Win the heart continuation with the king and simply play the ♠J, setting up the king, and you still have the ♥Q as an entry. And the defense can only win two club tricks and the two spade tricks.

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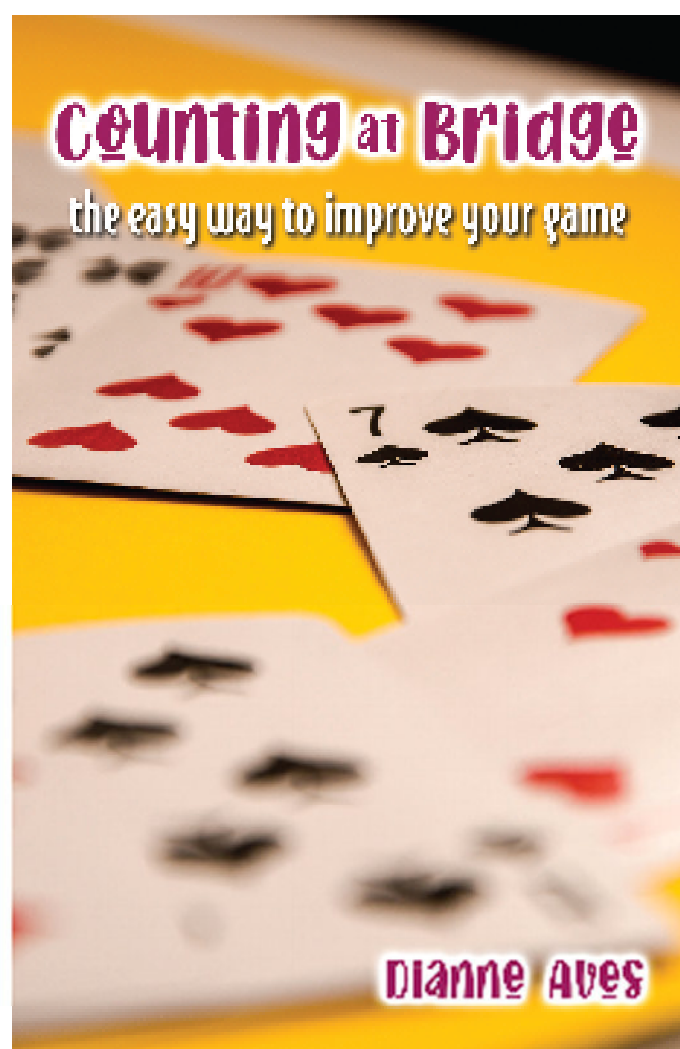
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Dianne Aves (Waterloo, Ontario) is a retired math teacher who is now a professional bridge teacher.

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