

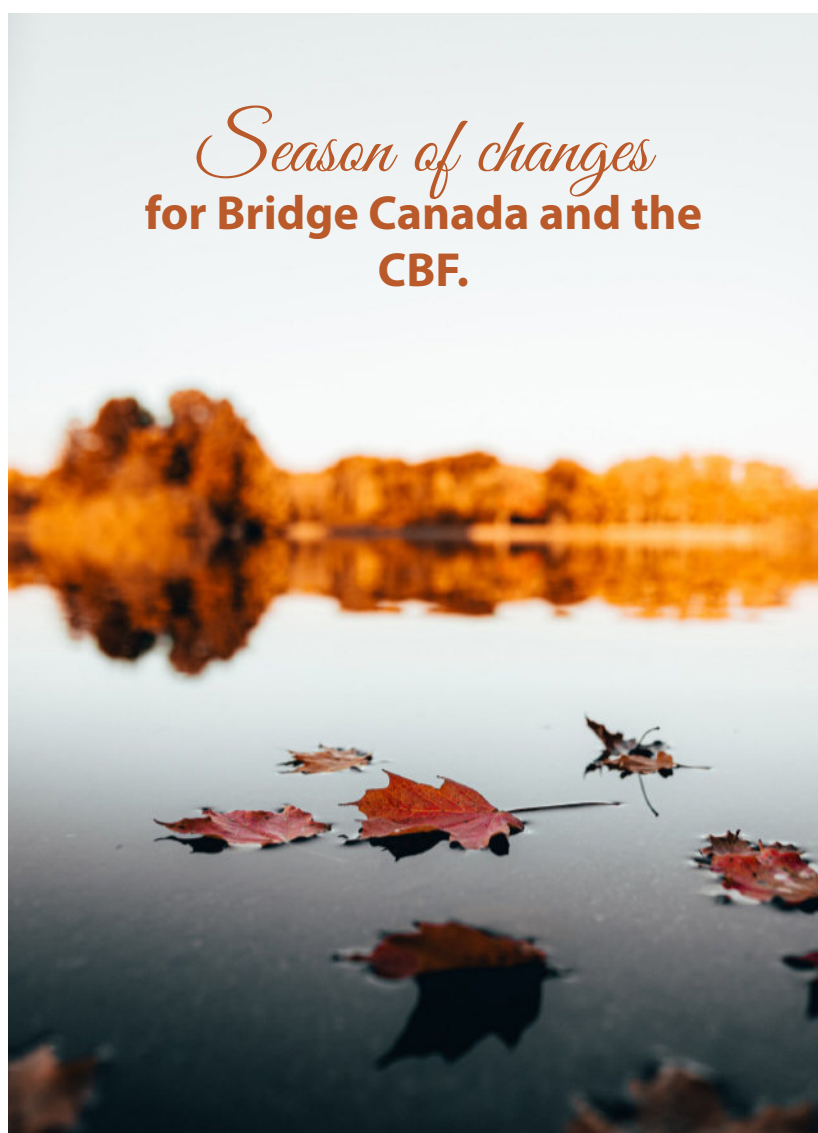
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CBF | OCTOBER 2023



bridge *Canada*



TGCBC
4th Anniversary



Season of changes
**for Bridge Canada and the
CBF.**

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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2. Visit cbf.ca and click **Join The CBF**.
3. Email info@cbf.ca for more information.

NOTE: Starting Jan 2021, membership dues for players 25 years of age and under are \$10 per year. When joining or renewing on the CBF website, use promo code JUNIOR to access the discount.

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Full page \$ 250 | Half page \$ 150

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PUBLISHED 6 TIMES A YEAR



EDITOR'S MESSAGE

The Goods

UPDATE: The Times, They Are A-Changin'

As mentioned in the last issue of 'The Goods', there are a number of changes going on in our bridge community.

CBF Financial Health - The CBF has a severe shortage of money. As a result, the following changes implemented by the Board have become necessary.

1. Change in the Bridge Canada Publication –

The next issue will be in **March 2024**. Also there will either be three or four issues next year. In addition, the practice of paying honorariums to contributing writers will stop, effective 2024.

2. TGCBC Reader Prizes – Alas, one more casualty of the CBF's shrinking assets.

3. Publication platform – As of 2024 we will likely be changing how you access your Bridge Canada magazine. More information will follow.

A good change!

The CBF has found a new Coordinator to replace the retiring Ina Demme. Her name is Katherine Kinsella, and she is currently being mentored by the current coordinator, Ina Demme, effecting a seamless transition, with no disruption to member services. More on Katherine in the next issue of *Bridge Canada*.

So what does that mean for the rest of Canadian Bridge Players?

It means that due to Covid, demographics of our aging membership, and lack of other support, we are in danger in losing the Canadian Bridge Federation. One might argue, why do we need the CBF? We have the ACBL, where I can go play in tournaments and earn masterpoints?

Well in my view **IT SHOULD MATTER**. Having a national organization where Canada is represented at all World Bridge Championship is something about which most of us feel very proud. We have had amazing Canadian Players who have succeeded against the very best the world has to offer! And all because there **IS** a CBF.

Most of us playing this wonderful game, and incurring the costs to do so, do not have many financial hardships. To be able to drop \$3-5,000 to go to a NABC, or \$2,500 for a regional is affordable for a large majority of players. Yet 10,000 of the 14,000 Canadians who belong to the ACBL, are not willing to pay a \$25 CDN annual membership to make a Canadian bridge identity a reality. Why?

What can I do?

1. You can make a donation right now. Yes, there is no income tax deduction unless giving to the CBF Junior Program, but do you really need one? Isn't giving about doing the right thing?

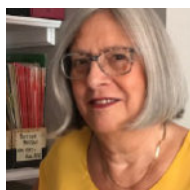
2. Tell your bridge friends about the CBF.

3. **Corporate sponsorship.** For those who owns a company, or are maybe related to someone who does, give. Countries like the Netherlands thrive as there is massive corporate sponsorship. And it is a win-win often, as it is advertising to a demographic with disposal income.

4. Make a donation through **your will**. You can't take it with you! Many of us can afford to take a modest amount from the amount your children will receive from your estate. I have chosen to do this. Think about what you can do to support Canadian Bridge.

Neil Kimelman
Bridge Canada Managing Editor

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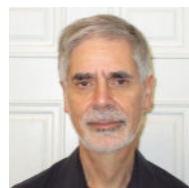
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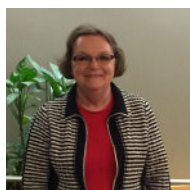
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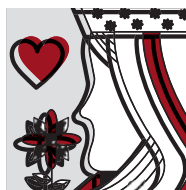
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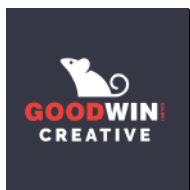
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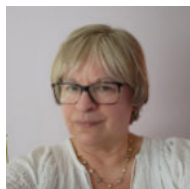
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TGCBC – Four Years Later

By Neil Kimelman



I am very pleased that Canadian Bridge has its own bidding contest with home grown experts. The vast majority of panellists have been very gracious and supportive of this **Bridge Canada** endeavour that I spearheaded four years ago. I would also like to specifically acknowledge and thank the different hosts during this time: Paul Thurston (first), Bryan Maksymetz, David Willis, Andy Stark, Ray Hornby, Stephen Cooper and David Turner. Without the support of all panelists this initiative would have died on the vine.

October 2019 was the very first TGCBC. I thought this would be an opportune time to celebrate this achievement and to recognize and take a lighter look at some of the highlights and 'award categories' for the past 24 TGCBC articles. Here goes nothing!

FIRST COMMENT BY PANELIST

Oct 19 issue, Eric Kokish, "Nice problem!"

HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY AWARD

Aug 23, problem 1 **L'Ecuyer**: 3NT – rustic but practical – might just be the last makeable game. ... I suspect this would be a more popular bid at the table than in a bidding contest but I try to give an honest answer. 😊

HOST THAT ELICITED THE MOST DIFFERENT RESPONSES AWARD

Ray Hornby, June 2020.

Problem 3 – **8** different bids made! Problem – **7** different bids made!

PANELIST WITH THE BEST 'LEFT FIELD' COMMENTS AWARD

In the Dec 2020 bidding contest, which I hosted, Steve Mackay embarked on a pet theme:

Problem 1... Mackay: The old Bridge World chestnut. We've all encountered it countless times. Bidding 2♣, I have lived more often than I have died so that is what I will do here. Cats have nine lives. Why shouldn't I?

...And problem #3... Kimelman (host): 'And for the dog lovers who can maybe decipher my pal Steve's comment:'

Mackay: I confess I would bid 2♠. My dog happens to be a Great Dane.

Later on in the same set:

...And problem 5: 'Back to the dog questions:'

Mackay: Who is West? Does he own a Great Dane?

SUCCINCTNESS AWARD – NOT!

Ron Bishop and Zyg Marcinski. Actually this is not a bad thing at all. Yes it makes the articles a little longer, but you get a full picture of why the experts bid what they do. It also reinforces the importance of fully analyzing the bidding and hand to come up with the bid that has the highest probability of success.

MOST DIFFERENT FONTS, PUNCTUATION, ET AL: THIS WAS NO CONTEST

Mr. Ron **Bishop** GRACES the (PODIUM.....) once....
{again}!!!!. Thanks for keeping things interesting Ron!



BEST GUESS OF PARTNER'S HAND DAVID LINDOP, #1, AUG 23

Lindop: ... partner might hold a hand such as ♠2
♥8654 ♦KQ632 ♣963 and we can make a slam in either
hearts or diamonds while 3NT goes down on a club
lead.

Actual North hand: ♠10 ♥10752 ♦KQ86 ♣10742.

BEST TRAVELLIN' QUOTES

Aug 22, #4, **Kuz:** 2♠. We are going somewhere. I just
don't know where.

Aug 22, #5, Cooper: 5♦. "If you don't know where you
are going any road can take you there."

DANNY MILES FAVOURITE WORD

Ugghh! **His 2nd favourite:** Blech!

THE GIFT OF VERSE AWARD

In the August 22 issue **Stephen Cooper** entertained
and delighted readers and panelists alike! Here is a
sampling:

Cooper: Pass.

You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever.

Yet, still I can see,
It's red, only we,
and that scares me
from being so clever!

Shaky hand, many losers, weak, short suit.

UNCLASSIFIED BEST OF THE BEST QUOTES.

Andy Stark, as host for Feb 23. On #5 he said: *'Alright.
I've heard enough. Time to hear from the larcenous,
the treacherous, and the downright insidious.'*

And later in same issue Andy finished up with: *'To wrap
up, life is short: Eat the pie, sleep till noon, and psyche
those opps!'*

Paul Thurston host, Dec 22, #1, in describing one of
the panelists bids: *'Undeterred by such mundane
considerations as having no real values and the
threatening auction...'*

Apr 22, #2, Danny Miles: 'Double. Another deal thrown
in the Bingo Ball Machine with anyone's guess what
comes out.'

Feb 2022, #3: **Bob 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.'

Feb 2022 **David Turner:** '4NT. As I like to say, "There are
bids between pass and slam..."'

Dec 2020, #5: Bob Todd: ♣A. Is this from Bridge in
the Menagerie? Is 4♥ a void or a self-splinter? My head
hurts.'

SELF-DEPRECATING HUMOUR AWARD

Danny Miles, Aug 2020 (went from 6 to 5
problems): "Another impossible set of problems. Do
they ever get easier? At least this month I only had a
chance to get five wrong instead of six."

MOST CREATIVE BID AWARD

Aug 2020, Problem 3. Zygmunt Marcinski. Zig comes up
with a thoughtful master:

3) Imps. Both Vul., you, South hold: ♠ 107642 ♥K
♦K1065 ♣A86.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦ ¹
Pass	3NT	Pass	?

Zygmunt Marcinski: 4♠. This bid is not intended
for small children. Its bid for success is predicated
on complete mutual confidence. I have categorically
denied a suit that wishes to suggest a 4♠ contract (no
spade preempt or rebid); I would have responded 2♣
Drury with hearts; 4♣ with primary club support; and I

cannot have slammish values with say 4 spades and six diamonds as I would now first rebid 4♦. I'm making an aggressive slam move....ergo by process of elimination, 4♠ "should" depict exactly 3 "working" slam values since I didn't open the bidding including a stiff top honor in hearts and likely not the ♠A which is of uncertain value. Partner should be able to place the contract - so I will "confidently" pass his next bid (other than 5♠!)

BEST QUOTE FROM OUTSIDE SOURCE, STEPHEN COOPER APR 23, #3

Cooper: Pass. Rabbi Hillel used to say, "And if not now, then when?"

Turner: Maurice Harrison-Gray: "Double the bid in front of your nose".

PARTNERSHIP ON THE SAME WAVELENGTH AWARD

Nick L'Ecuyer and Zig Marcinski – way to go guys!

PANELISTS WITH THE MOST TIMES HAVING THE TOP SCORE AWARD

Nick L'Ecuyer, Danny Milles and Zyg Marcinski with four.

PANELISTS WITH THE LEAST TIMES HAVING THE TOP SCORE AWARD

Neil Kimelman – 0 (tied with others)

MOST CONSISTENT READER WITH TOP SCORE - SHELDON SPIER

BID MADE MOST BY A PANELIST DURING ONE CONTEST

Aug 2022, **Bob Kuz** 3 bid two spades on three of the five problems.

MOST CONSISTENT PANELIST – BOB TODD

When **Andy Stark** used three of the same problems in Feb 22 TGCBC that was used in a 1981 CBF magazine bidding contest. Problem #1...

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.

...and #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.

Finally Problem #4. Stark: *'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.

Stark: *'Bob, you are the man.'*

Editor's note: I just wish he would consistently buy the beer when we go out :-) nk

BEST PREDICTIONS OF UNANIMITY

Apr 23, #4, **David Turner:** 2♥: Unanimous?

Apr 23, #4, **Lebi:** 2♥. Sure to be a unanimous panel bid.

Aug 22, #2, **Marcinski:** Pass. I'll hazard a guess that the panel will be unanimous or nearly so.

WORST UNANIMITY PREDICTION AWARD

Robert Lebi. In Aug 23, on #1, #5; Aug 22, #3 and others.

BROKEN RECORD AWARD

Dec 2021, on problems 1, 2, and 3 **Gordon Campbell** repeats the same words: *'Pass! Who knows? Maybe the last plus for our side.'*

ALWAYS HAS A QUESTION AWARD – KEITH BALCOMBE

Aug 22 #1, **Balcombe:** a) 2♠. Why complicate life?

Aug 22, #5, Balcombe: a) Pass. I mean really, what's the problem?

Jun 22, #3 **Balcombe:** Double. What else can you do with wasted HCP in diamonds and shortish clubs?

Dec, 2021, #1 Balcombe: 4♥. What else?

Feb 22 **Balcombe:** 4NT. I am unclear why we didn't rebid 3♥. Were we afraid that's not forcing?

Dec 2020, #3. Balcombe: Pass. Are you kidding me with 3NT?

Aug 2020, #5 Keith Balcombe: It's a bit heavy to bid 4♥, but you don't want to lay your cards down in dummy - right?

June 2020, #4 **Balcombe:** 3♠ - What else can you do? Having a questioning mind is a sign of a thinking player, right Keith?

WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT BID AWARD?

Dec 22, #3 host Thurston on David Willis' choice: *'But for my money the one call that does everything you might want to do was chosen by only one panelist (David Willis) and wasn't even mentioned by any other voter: three diamonds! Consider the virtues of this bid...'*

When I saw that bid I thought, why didn't I bid that? A no brainer!

WHO SAID 'ANOTHER TOUGH PROBLEM AWARD?'

Bob Todd 8 times.

UNANIMOUS PROBLEM AWARD

Paul Thurston host, Oct 20, #1.
For those who thought it couldn't be done, I did it! Posted a problem that ended with 100% unanimity from the panelists who all voted for Pass with varying degrees of assurance and suspicion.

PUNIEST REMARK AWARD

April 2020, #1 Andy Stark's problem one was: host

1) Imps. Neither vul., you, South, hold ♠AKQ984 ♥AKQ763 ♦A ♣–.

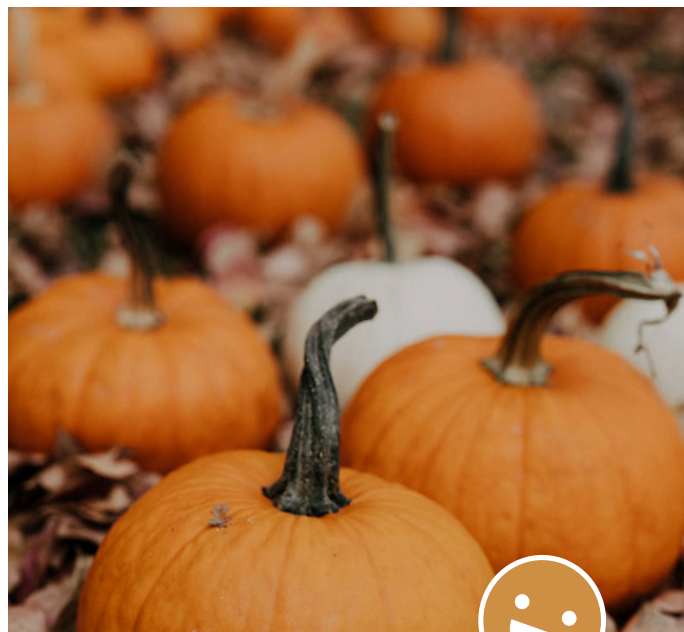
West	North	East	South
			2♣
Pass	2♦	2NT*	?

*Both minors

Ron Bishop: Double. Let's start with this; then we will have an easy cuebid which no one can get wrong. Let's leave the smallest amount of room for a major accident (pun intended).

Andy Stark: The Cardinal's bid (and pun) would make the Pope proud.

See what we can come up with over the next four years!



Bridge players will go to bid with anyone.

what

...does this bid mean?

1. E-W vul:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
3♦	5♥		

What does 5♥ mean?

2. E-W vul:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	3♥
Pass	5♥		

What does 5♥ mean?

Answers on page 27

QUIZ

INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

ANSWER ON PAGE 28

Contract: 3NT, IMPs. Lead: ♠J. Plan the play.

♠ Q42
♥ 72
♦ 9543
♣ K1095

♠ AK85
♥ AK8
♦ AK62
♣ Q8



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BRIDGE BASICS



SLAM CONVENTIONS 3

This is the 30th 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.

In the last instalment, we continued to look at various treatments and conventions available in the world of slam bidding, and how to improve your success in this area.

Investigating Slam when holding a void

1. EXCLUSION

This is a whole area upon itself. One of the most popular 'void' conventions is Exclusion Key Card, and also the one most prone to disaster! Be careful! As World Class player Larry Cohen says:

'I wouldn't recommend this convention to anyone other than a full-time expert with a full-time regular partner.'

When you would use it – When you have a void in a side suit, and want to ask for keycards.

How it works – A jump in a new suit at the five level asks for key cards as normal, but to exclude the ace of the jumped-in-suit.

Example 1: You hold ♠AKxx Qx QJx Axxx.

1♠ 2NT
5♣

This is exclusion. So the correct response is to show only key cards outside of the exclusion suit. In this

case, ignoring the ♣A. Other auctions that would be exclusion:

- 1♥-4♥-5♠
- 1♣-3NT-5♦¹
- 1♥-3♥-4♠
- 2♣-2♦-2♠-3♠-5♣

1. The presumed agreed suit is clubs.

These auctions are either NOT Exclusion Blackwood, or open to misinterpretation:

- 1♦-3♦-4♥ (unless you play this as regular key card)
- 1NT-2♣-2♠-5♣. 5♣ could just be a hand with 4 hearts and long clubs.
- 1♠-2♣-2♠-4♥. Many would play this as a splinter with 2-3 spades in support.
- 1♥-3♥-(3♠)-4♠. 4♠ is just a cuebid, showing a good hand with a spade control trying for a slam.
- 1♠-2♠-4♥. This is usually played as a splinter.

Cuebidding a void

This is a useful treatment to distinguish when a void is held. Basically when one or the other partner has shown shortness, then if they rebid the short suit on their next bid it shows a void, and does not deny the ability to cuebid in a different suit.

Example 2

1♠ 4♣¹
4♦ 5♣²

¹. Splinter.

². Void

Example 3

1♠ 2♠
4♣¹ 4♦²
5♣³

¹. Splinter

². Cue bid

³. Void

In both of these auctions, the shortness bidder is showing a void. The difference between them and bidding exclusion above, is that with exclusion you want to be in slam missing if the partnership has enough key cards. In Examples 2 and 3, you are just inviting slam. Here is another subtle difference to the above #3 auction:

Example 4

1♠ 2♠
4♣¹ 4♦²
4♥³ 4♠⁴
5♣⁵

¹. Splinter.

². Cue bid

³. Cue bid

⁴. Sign off

⁵. Singleton ♣A. With a void the opener would have 5♣ directly over 4♦.

2.ANSWERING KEY CARD RESPONSE WHEN HOLDING A VOID

Example 4

1♥ 2♣
2♦ 2♥
4NT

- 5NT – two key cards with an unspecified void.
- 6♦ – one key card and a diamond void.
- 6♥ – one key card and a spade void. A jump to six of the trump suit shows one key card and a void in a higher ranking suit.

One of the mainstream principles is that you only show a 'useful' void.

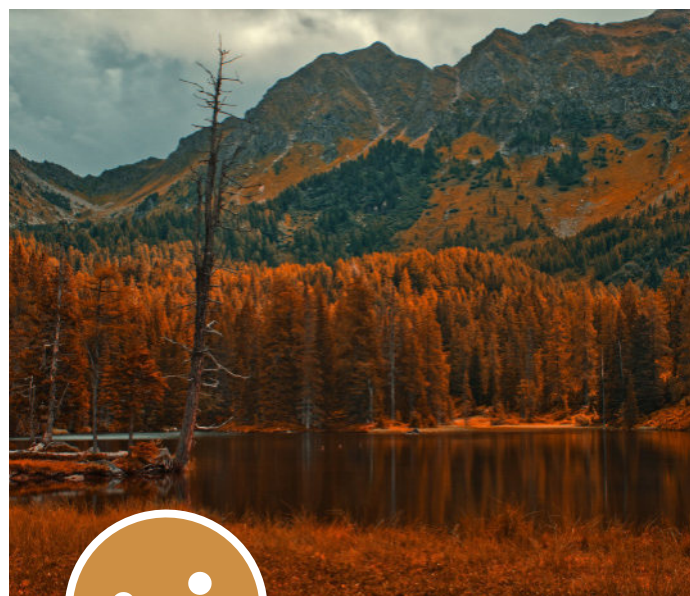
Example 5: You hold ♠-♥Axx ♦Kxx ♣AKJ10xxx

1♠ 2♣
2♠ 3♣
4♦¹ 4NT²

¹. Key card ask, agreeing clubs.

². Two key cards. Do not show void in partner's main suit, as it not useful.

Next issue: Bidding slams – conventions and treatments to assist in dealing with interference.



We had a partnership misunderstanding. My partner assumed I knew what I was doing.

Author unknown



THE INTERMEDIATE *Spot*



THE LISTENING POST III: SPY VS SPY

By Neil Kimelman

In the last Instalment of this series, *The Listening Post II*, we looked at hands where ‘the dog that didn’t bark’, or taking inferences from something that did not happen. Another situation where listening is more important than taking up bidding room happens when both sides are using this tool. Playing in the weekly IMP game at the Ambassador Club in Winnipeg I pick up this lovely hand as South:

♠AK9765 ♥5 ♦Q ♣A8765. Both vul, East, one of the top Winnipeg players, deals and opens 1♥. I see no reason not to make a normal 1♠ overcall. The bidding continues:

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

Partner’s call is preemptive. I pay attention to East’s 2nd bid. It may be a two suiter, or a cuebid trying for a heart slam. In either case, my club holding is a red flag, saying, ‘hmmm, I better listen because I don’t know what is going on’.

Practicing the Listening Post dictum I pass, to learn what I can about the hands of the other three players, instead of jumping to game, and then having to guess at the five level.

The bidding continues:

West	North	East	South
		1♥	1♠
2♥	3♠	4♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	6♥	?

Now what? It looks like East wanted to bid 6♥ all along, and only bid 4♣ as a 'lead inhibitor bid'. I cannot risk defending 6♥ so I bid 6♠, which East doubles, ending the auction. The full deal:

♠ QJ10432	
♥ J3	
♦ 86	
♣ QJ2	
♠ 8	♠ -
♥ K106	♥ AQ98742
♦ J97432	♦ AK105
♣ K109	♣ 43
	♠ AK9765
	♥ 5
	♦ Q
	♣ A8765

6♥ is cold, and I am -500 instead of -680 or -1430, a tie for a top. Had I bid 4♠ I am positive the bidding would have gone:

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

Now I might have quit, earning a bottom score.

Hand 2

Playing matchpoints in 3rd seat with neither vul you pick up as South ♠AK865 ♥K9 ♦K8 ♣K853. E-W vul. My nice hand turns better when partner opens 2♠! I relax and bid 4♠ and the bidding continued:

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	4♠
5♦	Pass	Pass	?

Not expecting the opponents to come at these colours, I guessed to double. This was full deal:

♠ Q109742	
♥ 43	
♦ 9	
♣ AJ102	
♠ -	♠ J3
♥ AJ106	♥ Q8752
♦ QJ1075432	♦ A6
♣ Q	♣ 9764
	♠ AK865
	♥ K9
	♦ K8
	♣ K853

Minus -750 did not look good on our 60+% game.

Had I instead gone slowly and bid 2NT feature asking, LHO would have likely bid 3♦ or 4♦, and we may have avoided this bottom. One final lesson on this hand: West's bid will probably not be made all tables, so even if we had beaten 5♦ one, +200 would still have been close to a bottom. I should have bid 5♠, hoping that it made.



Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make them all yourself.

Alfred Sheinwold



OCTOBER 2023 TGCBC

Host: Ray Hornby

For panelists, and their bids, see page 25

Editor's note: Welcome back my current partner Ray Hornby as host. Andy Stark and Dan Jacob tied for the top expert score with 46 – Congrats! On the reader's side Fred Lerner had the top score, followed closely by Richard Bickley. Well done! Let's start with problem #1, where our Host and the majority of the panelists did not see eye-to-eye:

1) IMPs, no one vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ 42

♥ AQ

♦ AKJ98

♣ AK82

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

¹ pre-emptive, typically with 5 trump

² responsive

Why you didn't open 2NT (or 2♣ followed by 2NT) is anybody's guess, but here you are. What call do you make?

Action	Votes	Score
5♦	2	10
Redouble	1	9
4♣	2	9
3NT	13	8
Pass	0	7
3♥	0	5

I was a little surprised at the number of 3NT bidders on this auction. Opener has half the deck, lots of defence, and a 10-card fit. One option is to redouble, getting partner involved:

Cooper: Redouble. It might be necessary to play 3NT from partner's side. Don't bid it but don't foreclose it. Probably suggests at least 18-19 balanced. I have extras. If I bid 3NT, I'd expect a spade lead trapping whatever hoped-for stopper North will put down. All higher contracts are still open.

Partner might also double whatever the opponents bid to show defence in context. Other minority opinions:

Turner: 4♣. Partner could have five clubs considering his apparent 0 count, in which case we want to bid 5♦ and may not defeat 4M. Otherwise, 4♦-1 might be par! I don't think I'd consider a 2NT opening for more than a moment at IMPs.

Stark: 4♣. While I think it's our hand, I doubt we have game, unless pard has some magical fitting hand. This bid is more of a lead director versus 4 of their major. Feels like we have at least 3 losers: two spades and one offside king of hearts.

Along with those of the "bid game in your 10-card fit" mindset:

Treble: 5♦. I'm not going to try and catch up from not having opened something different. We may not even have game our way, but I am more likely to get a favourable lead by avoiding no trump.

Smith (Julie, not Jeff): 5♦. I doubt we can make six, and I'm hoping to limit the opponents' chances to bid. I will double if they bid again, of course.

Various opinions from the majority:

Kimelman: 3NT. Slam is possible, but so is going down in 5♦ if partner holds something like xxx xx Qxxxx Qxx. Best chance it seems is to bid 3NT and hope they lead a heart (or a club). If they lead a spade I will survive if they cannot cash five spade tricks.

Grainger: 3NT and hope they don't take 5 spades. If they do, you're always going to lose 2 spades and the ♥K, anyway, and stopping short of game is craziness. Obviously opening 2♣, rebidding 2NT and getting a heart lead would have been better.

Kuz: 3NT. I hope ♠ are 4-4 and partner provides ♣Q.

Hargreaves: I think it highly likely that my opposite number will be in 3N without the opps bidding, and that we'd probably get a heart lead. So I have to hope that 3N makes....buy the club Queen and have a lucky spade lie, as one hope. Thus 3N and, while I rarely apologize to teammates (they know I know I screwed up, most of the time) I'll be ready here.

A cursory reading of the above finds the word "hope" mentioned by each panelist at least once. Several more remarks from the 3NT bidders (with some reservations):

L'Ecuyer: 3NT. Difficult to believe that 5♦ has more play than 3NT – even without a spade stopper, in 3NT they have not led one yet and they might be 44 – 5♦ looks down (2♠ and 1♥) when 3NT might make – bidding 3NT might even be a good dive against 3M – true that sometimes partner could have a stiff spade but so rarely...

Willis: 3NT although have some temptation to just bid 4♦. On a good day opponents' spades are 4-4 with partner holding 3 spades and the ♣Q. Would be useful to understand how partner defines preemptive. Definitely want to block a 3♠ bid off as they might make that or have a decent 4♠ sacrifice.

Miles: 3NT. More likely to get a heart lead in notrump than in 5♦. We may be in a pickle, if partner has a spade stop (say, Kxx) they'll lead through our stoppers depending which side declares. Maybe 3♥ is more

scientific, showing the stopper you hold when they've shown multiple suits.

What happened at the table?

♠ K83	
♥ 8763	
♦ 106432	
♣ 3	
♠ A965	♠ QJ107
♥ KJ1052	♥ 94
♦ -	♦ Q75
♣ J975	♣ Q1064
♠ 42	
♥ AQ	
♦ AKJ98	
♣ AK82	

This deal is from a weekly team game where a lot of the pairs/teams are regulars and know each other fairly well (regular post mortem at the local watering hole after the game). After 2NT-3C, 3D-3NT at one table, the lead of the ♥J forced declarer to make +430 once the diamond break was revealed. South at the other table chose a different path by opening 1♦, allowing West to intervene with 1♥, responder to offer 3♦ pre-emptively, and East to join the fray with a (perhaps ill considered) responsive double, which should have given opener pause to wonder if they were playing with a pinochle deck, at which point a redouble would seem appropriate. I think offering responder the option of "taking the money" at all white would have some merit at teams. Unfortunately South chose an ambiguous 3♥ call (no double by West), and a pass of responder's "I have a spade stopper" 3NT bid, resulting in a quick down 1 after the lead of the ♥9 through the AQ. (see Miles' comment on this).

3NT isn't a lock even if played by South as a spade lead punches out declarer's dummy entry (unless declarer ducks a low spade, then it's worse) before the 3-0 diamond break is revealed. 5♦ is child's play as declarer can enter dummy with a club ruff to pick up the ♦Q. A 2♣ or 2NT opener keeps EW in the dark and

is more likely to gather a favourable lead on this deal than the sequence actually chosen. That being said, opener had options after East's responsive double, some better than others. Redoubling and defending 3♠ doubled (by responder) for a likely +300, picking up 9 IMPs whenever the other declarer goes down in 3NT, or at least keeping the damage to 4 IMPs rather than 11 when 3NT makes seems like the most flexible choice by declarer. It involves partner, rather than just guessing.

2) IMPs, NS vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ A95
♥ A5
♦ K98532
♣ K6

West	North	East	South
2♠	Dbl	Pass	?

a) What call do you make?

Action	Votes	Score
4♦	4	5
3♠	10	4
3NT	3	3
2NT	1	3

b) What call would you make if RHO had bid 3♠ instead of passing?

Action	Votes	Score
6♦	4	5
4♠	8	4
4♦	1	4
Double	2	3
3NT	1	3
5♦	2	3

As in many competitive bidding problems, the continuation of a preempt can change the nature of bidding, but also supply inferences. To the first part (no 3♠ raise):

Thurston: 3♠ – laying the groundwork for a slam try in diamonds that I hope will be read as such by partner (bidding 5♦ over his likely 4♥). Echoed by Treble.

Turner: 3♠. Is there an alternative?

Apparently there is:

Lebi: 4♦, Forcing.

Hargreaves: Methods count. For me, 4♦ is forcing and I think that fairly normal, so 4♦. If the CofC say that 4♦ is not forcing (a footnote would have been nice) I bid 3♠, intending to move towards slam next time. **Variations on 4♦:**

Stark: 4♦ ... should be interpreted as forward going and not invitational, <but> if 4♦ is invitational, then I bid 3♠, which is nebulous, but definitely forward going.

Miles: 2NT. Tough problem! What's the difference between a direct 4♦ and going through 2NT (I guess a spade stopper). That's my plan. A direct 4♦ should be basically forcing as 3♦ contains hands just shy of a GF. Consequently so should relaying, then jumping.

Summing up 4♦ while casting a shadow on 3♠ and putting Miles' 2NT in context:

Cooper: 4♦ Forcing. With a weak hand and diamonds, bid 2NT (Lebensohl) first, then correct partner's 3♣ bid to 3♦. With a constructive, limited hand, bid 3♦ directly. With a strongly distributional hand, bid 2NT first then jump to 4♦. That leaves the direct jump to 4♦ as a forcing call. Probably bid RKCB next. A cue-bid response should focus on the unbid major, or have at least two places to play. **Half in, half out:**

Balcombe: 3♠. If I was sure 4♦ was forcing, I would bid that. I expect partner to bid 4♣ and I will then bid 5♦, which sounds like a slam try to me.

Willis: 3♠. Will raise 3NT if partner can bid that or play at least 5♦ if they cannot. Some risk that we lose a spade and another trick with no raise by RHO. Taking the low road:

L'Ecuyer: 3NT. Without methods, this is basically a decision I have to take on my own unless I can transfer to diamonds and then make a GF bid. My experience on these hands is to go low.

Grainger: 3NT in both. If I had one less spade I would do something else in b though. Probably double then 5♦ if partner didn't bid 3NT.

At odds with this approach:

Jacob: 3♠, too many controls (plus a long suit), for 3NT.

Kimelman: 3♠. Too strong for 3NT. Will bid 4♦ next, or keycard if partner bids 4♦. Will drive to slam with this pure hand. Also driving to slam (they hope):

Kuz: 3♠. Followed by 4♦ and force to 6♦ with at least one try for 7 in both cases.

Lindop: 3♠. Opposite a minimum takeout double such as ♠3 ♥K642 ♦A764 ♣A432 we are virtually cold for 7♦ so I at least want to start moving toward slam. I'll cuebid and then bid diamonds, forcing, to see how partner reacts. Since East didn't raise spades however, its likely partner has a doubleton, making a grand slam unlikely.

To the 2nd part (3rd hand raises to 3♠):

Cooper: That's a problem. Ok, I'd bid 6♦.

Stark: 6♦. What I think I can make, especially opposite partner's expected spade singleton.

Thurston: If RHO bids 3♠ so I can't, I'll take a stab at 6♦ and trust my guy to raise with what 7 needs if he has it (all!).

Balcombe: 6♦. Hope for the best. There's that word again ...

Followed by a little more science:

Todd: Double – partner has a good hand short in spades. It is extremely unlikely he will pass. If he does we will collect a big number anyway. Assuming he bids, I will be forcing to at least 6♦.

Lebi: Double, then correct to 5♦, would like to show a slam try.

Turner: Double. I think following double with 5♦ over 4♥ might be interpreted as I hope, but if partner bids 4♣ my intentions will be clear.

Expressing doubts about doubling:

Kimelman: I would bid 4♠, and then 6♦. Problem with double is that partner may pass when cold for 6 or 7 diamonds. Treble is also of this opinion.

Jacob: 4♠, excellent chance that we have a fit in diamonds.

Willis: 4♠ - likelihood that partner has a singleton spade has gone up considerably although not guaranteed with today's bidding excitement. Lots of hands make a small slam and perfect minimums can make a grand. (x Kxxx Axxx Axxx)

Lindop: 4♠. East's raise makes it more likely partner has a singleton spade and improves the odds we have a grand slam in diamonds. I'm going to drive to at least 6♦. Hopefully the auction will continue in a way that allows me to invite 7♦.

Treading more cautiously:

L'Ecuyer: over a 3♠ raise, I like my hand better but still difficult to get there – I might just bid 4♠ following it with 5♦ over the likely 5♣ response.

Miles: If RHO bids 3♠, we have an even better hand but less room. I'll try 5♦, prepared to apologize opposite the right tickets such as x, KQxx QJx Axxxx. Maybe I'm supposed to try 4♠ but that feels like a lot.

Smith: 5♦. Now I expect partner to have a singleton spade, and I will choose to play in diamonds instead of 3NT.

What happened at the table?

♠ 7	
♥ KJ964	
♦ AQ7	
♣ A752	
♠ KJ10632	♠ Q84
♥ 82	♥ Q1073
♦ 10	♦ J64
♣ QJ94	♣ 1083
♠ A95	
♥ A5	
♦ K98532	
♣ K6	

This deal was from a weekly friendly “mixed up mixed pairs” online team game where the pairs come from a pool of players and are different every week, many having little experience playing with their assigned partner. This is usually reflected in the match results, not always in a good way. Here East declined to raise to 3♠ and West (oddly) doubled South’s 3♠, handing North the option of passing which they promptly threw away by bidding 4♥ and end playing South into bidding 5♦ which was passed out. It was only the 2nd board of the 2nd of 3 matches, so alcohol shouldn’t have been a factor. In any event, NS lost 1 IMP when the other table flash bid 3NT over the double making five. Astute readers have probably noticed that 7♦ is possible here by ruffing out the hearts, but 6♦ should be the normal contract making easily.

Had East continued the preempt with 3♠ over the double, South would have to choose between double, 3NT, or the more aggressive 4♠ trying for slam. In this case the continuation of the preempt would actually

aid N-S in getting to slam should 4th hand try for slam with a 4♠ cuebid, or make the “all in” 6♦ as 4 of the panellists did).

3) MPs, both vulnerable. As South, you hold:

♠ -
♥ K876432
♦ AK8
♣ AK7

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	?

What call do you make?

Action	Votes	Score
3♣	6	10
2♣	3	9
2♥	1	8
3♥	7	7
4♥	1	7

Forcing to game (must have a fit, right?)

Cooper: 3♣. Game force, 3+ clubs. Gotta seek out a trump suit first. Not risking missing game. At matchpoints not risking playing in 2♣ and be the only one in that contract. 3♥ is correct on value, but should have a higher degree of confidence that hearts should be trump.

Jacob: 3♣ - An awkward hand to bid. It’s easier if 3♣ is artificial GF.

Grainger: 3♣. Must game force, but would like to know if partner can at least tolerate hearts in case there’s a slam. (Echoed by Smith).

Kimelman: 3♣. I am a big fan of bidding my lowest three card minor with a good hand with 6-3 in a major minor. However, if I bid 2♣ and partner bids 2♦ or 3♣, I still don’t know what is likely the best contract. I was originally going to bid 3♥, but we will miss a good game when partner has Jxxx Qx QJxx xxx., or some other bad hand that makes game great. I will take my

chances forcing to game, and converting any rebid by partner to 4♥.

Lindop: 3♣. I value this hand as 20 points – 17 high-card points plus 3 length points for the seven-card heart suit. I can't make a non-forcing rebid, so this is my only choice. I don't like my heart spots but, if we end up in 4♥ in a 7-0 fit, it may still come home.

Moving a bit more cautiously with an awkward hand:

L'Ecuyer: 2♣ hoping to get to bid again. (More hope for the future).

Stark: 2♣. Mostly for what it's not. Every bid is flawed, so I prefer to stay low and see if partner can bid again, and then catch up. **(RH: Alvin Roth anyone?)** 2♣ might not be a good score in a bidding poll, but it can do well at the table. If partner miraculously raises clubs, I'll try 3♦ next. Over pard's 2♠ rebid, I'll try 3♥.

Willis: 2♣ treating this as a good 6-4 and planning to raise 2♥ to 3♥ (would bid 4♥ at IMPs) while judging other options based on partner rebid. This hand is quite good opposite two hearts and has lots of holes otherwise. 2♣ gives maximum room to partner without overstating the hand and matchpoints favours trying to find a plus score. 2♥ would be a significant underbid while the suit quality is not good enough for 3♥.

Turner: 2♥. Natural, I think. Maybe I can hold it to 4 trump losers and a minor loser. I don't think I'll double next after their 2♠, but I'll think about that some more after everyone ponders what to do over my 2♥.

Followed by the obvious (?) value bid (lots of divergent opinions on the preceding calls):

Todd: 3♥. I need a little heart help. If LHO has the hearts, 4♥ will not be good. The opponents may still bid and I will then double.

Hargreaves: 3♥. Yes, the suit stinks but 2♣ is just too weird, unless playing Gazilli. Forcing to game is even weirder.

Treble: 3♥. Easier if we are non-vul, but I am not forcing game via 4♥ or a jump shift into a three-card suit.

Kuz: 3♥. I make my value bid. 7th trump makes up for the suit quality. I don't bid 2 or 3♣, which could get us to our ♣ slam (if I remember the hand correctly)

Thurston: I'll try 3♥ and hope the 7th heart subs for the missing suit texture I so dearly wish I had! Lebi & Balcombe also mention their concern about suit quality.

Finally, out there on his own:

Miles: 4♥. Practical, what I think I will make. Can't bid only 3♥; partner will never raise with xxxx Qx xxxx xxx. **(RH: partner likely would have passed with that hand).** Of course we could go down opposite something like KJxx x xx QJxxxx where 3NT (and even 5♣) may be better. Hope partner isn't Qxxx Ax QJxx xxx. I have some admiration for 5♥ but that could backfire spectacularly. I suspect the panel consensus will be 3♣.

What happened at the table?

♠ AK1085	
♥ Q95	
♦ 653	
♣ Q10	
♠ Q9643	♠ J72
♥ A	♥ J10
♦ J74	♦ Q1092
♣ J643	♣ 9852
♠ -	
♥ K876432	
♦ AK8	
♣ AK7	

This deal is from a semi-annual bridge social event that included a themed meal and cash bar followed by a shortened pair event. South decided to jump to 4♥ over North's 1♠ response and (surprise, surprise) got to play it there, missing an easy 6♥ slam in the process. Maybe it was the cash bar, but IMO responder would need to see both hands in order to continue over this sequence.

As mentioned by at least one panelist, an easy hand playing something like Gazilli. Here, 2♣ or 3♣ should get you to slam as responder will bid 3♥ in response to either. 2♥ or 4♥ will get you to the same 4♥, one a bit quicker than the other, while 3♥ ends up asking the question, "what is 3♠ over 3♥", a cue for hearts or game going with good spades not yet wanting to commit to a particular game? Expressing hand strength with poor suit quality is a major issue on this deal.

4) IMPs, both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ KQ10953
♥ QJ94
♦ A2
♣ 4

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

a) What call do you make?

Action	Votes	Score
Double	12	10
3♣	3	9
4♠	1	8
2♥	2	7

Another problem that doesn't seem to be that much of a problem for the majority of the panellists. First off, some minority views, some at odds with each other:

Smith: 2♥. I won't double 2♣, because I expect to score better by bidding the correct game contract.

Todd: 2♥, then spades. I will not trap partner (though it could be right) by doubling.

Grainger: No good way to deal with this. Heart bids are too poor descriptions to consider, which leaves 4♠ and double. 4♠ is unilateral, but double may well be passed

which could be bad. I think I would bid 4♠ because of the spots.

Treble: 3♣. Double would show extras with no clear direction. This hand can set up a game force and then show the extra spade length if opener rebids x3Dx.

Cooper: 3♣. I like a double here to be more defense oriented - change 6421 to 5422. 3♣ suggests a distributional game force.

Hargreaves: 3♣. Double will be passed too often, although once in a while that's ok.

For the majority:

Lebi: Double - the only other forcing bid is 3♣ (takes up too much space).

Turner: Double. Partner could well have a classic penalty double with a stiff spade.

Balcombe: Double. Some people play 2♥ as non-forcing, so I do not wish to bid that just in case. If partner is 1444 shape with decent clubs, then 2♣ doubled may be our best spot anyway.

Willis: Double - would be useful to know our agreements here - do we play support doubles (if yes, double is even more standout), would we treat 2♥ as forcing (I would not), etc. Second choice 3♠ although that gives up on hearts. Partner could easily have a misfit with both minors and we have them right where we want them. If partner rebids 2♦ denying a club penalty I can jump to 3♠ and get my hand off effectively while leaving 3NT in the picture and taking the opportunity to collect a penalty if one is there

Kimelman: Double. Easy for me. Must show partner I have 10+ HCPs, and better than bidding a suit in case partner has a hand with long clubs, that he will convert to penalty. This will yield a good score when this partial or large misfit may not even yield a N-S game.

Stark: Double. If partner rebids diamonds, I'll try 2♥ next. If partner leaves in the double, I expect to beat it.

Kuz: Double. If partner passes, I like it. If he bids something, I cuebid clubs next.

L'Ecuyer: Double – no problem yet – let's see after partner's rebid... **Summing up:**

Miles: Double. Partner will bid 2♠ with two, 2♥ with four, 2♦ with length there, and pass with clubs. Should cover all bases. I'll bid 3♣ over 2♦. But cheering for a pass and a decent penalty, maybe even with no game available our way.

Lindop: Double. Seems a clear-cut choice. If partner passes, we should collect a sizeable penalty. If partner bids something, we will be well-placed to decide what to do next. **The full deal:**

♠ 2	
♥ A3	
♦ Q10943	
♣ AJ1075	
♠ AJ4	♠ 876
♥ K5	♥ 108762
♦ J5	♦ K876
♣ KQ9832	♣ 6
♠ KQ10953	
♥ QJ94	
♦ A2	
♣ 4	

What happened at the table?

According to the record (or so I was told), South bid 3♥, and wound up in 4♠, down one. Their team lost 15 IMPs when their opponents reopened with a double and nipped 2♣ for +1100. More of our panellists were better at sniffing out "blood in the water" than others. The concept of doubling here is analogous to responder passing an overcall with a trump stack and waiting for opener to reopen with a takeout double.

5) IMPs, both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ K
♥ Q107
♦ A102
♣ AKQ874

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	?

a) What call do you make?

Action	Votes	Score
3♣	7	4
2NT	5	3
2♥	3	2
3♦	1	2
3NT	2	1

Once again, a broad range of opinions as to how to proceed. We've all held this hand in a similar auction, not sure whether to underbid or overbid, or ...

Kimelman: 2♥. Would have bid 3♣ over 1♠, but here there is too good a chance that we belong in diamonds. Will bid 3♦ next (except partner will raise to 3♥ giving you another headache).

Todd: 2♥. I don't like faking reverses but 3♣ doesn't seem enough and 3♦ seems so wrong. I don't like 2NT with such a good hand but a fragile spade holding.

Miles: 2♥. At first I misread the problem and made a "fake reverse" of 2♥. It was so fake that it wasn't even called a reverse! But I'll stick with that choice, realizing that most will choose 2NT, 3♣ or even 3♦. Should survive a 4-3 heart fit if partner insists on that denomination

Treble: 3♦ (a lone wolf choice, made without comment).

Cooper: I'd bid 3NT. 6+solid clubs stoppers outside.

Balcombe: 3NT. Hamman's rule redux. I presume this bid shows a strong hand with stoppers and long clubs.

There's just this little problem with the spade stopper. Also playing with fire:

Stark: 2NT. While 3♣ could hit a homerun, let's show the strength. Also, 2NT keeps alive a club or diamond contract, whereas a rebid of 3NT probably does not.

Hargreaves: 2NT. 3♣ is too much of an underbid.

Lindop: 2NT. This seems to be the modern style. At least the lead is coming up to my hand if west has the ♠A and elects to lead the suit.

L'Ecuyer: 2NT is probably the least of evils – I don't like it but sometimes one is stuck – maybe 1♥, 2♥ or 3♣ are better but they all have flaws

Willis: 2NT – nothing else particularly fits. **A plurality disagrees with the previous observation:**

Grainger: 3♣ Partner either has a GF or no major. 3♣ is plenty if partner is weak and opps have 9+ spades. (Echoed by Kuz, Jacob & Smith without comment)

Thurston: 3♣ seems ok if a tad misdirectional.

Lebi: 3♣, (in spite of being just a touch too strong).

Turner: 3♣. A bit on the heavy side. It's a bit hypocritical after my comment on #1, but I might have opened 2NT on this one!

b) If you rebid 3♣, partner bids 3♥ natural. Now what?

Action	Votes	Score
4♦	11	3
3♠	6	2
4♠	1	2

A majority of the panel are ready to support diamonds in this variation while some are still chasing that 3NT dream (a bidding card that any number of players might be better off without):

Smith: 3♠, hoping partner is able to bid 3NT.

Lindop: 3♠. This allows partner to bid 3NT with something in spades and club shortness. Partner knows I can't suddenly be cuebidding in support of hearts having failed to bid hearts on the previous round. If partner can't bid notrump, I'm happy to support diamonds.

Willis: 3♠ - a punt to see what action partner takes and decide from there. See comment on Walsh in c). **3♠ bidders with more in mind:**

Treble: 3♠ for now then probably diamond support (also Kuz without comment)

L'Ecuyer: I would probably bid 3♠ again trying to keep both minors in the picture and would follow with 4♦ (over a likely 4♣ bid).

For the majority:

Kimelman: 4♦. Setting trumps I would have preferred to bid 3♠ then 4♦ over partner's next bid, but this sequence should set diamonds as trumps. To me, this is analogous to this auction: 1NT-2♦-2♥-3♦. 3♥ shows three hearts and interested in slam, and a black suit shows a control in support of responder's 2nd suit.

Grainger: Partner has GF with long diamonds and most likely 0-1 clubs, so 4♦.

Turner: 4♦. Partner doesn't expect me to have 4 hearts, so with 4-5 in the reds and something in spades he might've just bid 3N. Accordingly I could "safely" raise to 4♥ here, and that was my first thought, but are there many hands where 4♥ is better than 5♦ with dummy being tapped at T2?

Balcombe, Lebi & Todd are also in the 4♦ camp, as are:

Hargreaves: 4♦. Methods, as usual, matter. Playing a Walsh style, 3♥ (if natural, but I wouldn't play it as

such...for me it's initially a probe for 3N) shows a good hand and we're definitely in the slam zone. But even if, for the first time in 40 years, I'm playing non Walsh, this hand is slamming anyway...just not as definitively.

Miles: don't like 3♣ or 2NT at all. Could easily miss a game (Qxx Jxx Kxxxx xx) or go down in 3NT with 6 of a minor decent (Jxx Axx KQxxx xx). I would bid 4♦ over 3♥.

Just to be different (and possibly torturing partner):

Cooper: 4♠. I'd splinter raise the diamonds. 3♠ could still be a NT probe. This is unambiguous, descriptive, and the hand is full value.

c) If you instead choose a 2NT rebid, partner bids 3♥ showing 5 diamonds and 4 hearts. And now?

Action	Votes	Score
4♦	12	3
4♣	3	2
3♠	2	2
3NT	1	1

And one for the road:

Turner: 3NT. The 3♠ "punt" is no good here as partner may be 4450 and raise me. His 3♥ in this situation says nothing about spades as he may be simply looking for a 4-4 heart fit with the likes of Axx, Jxxx, Kxxxx, x so I think I'm stuck with the ugly 3N. Time to put the Partnership Desk on speed dial.

Smith: 3♠, hoping partner is able to bid 3NT (still chasing that 3NT dream).

Cooper: Having exposed the spade weakness, 3NT is out. I control bid 3♠ as a strong diamond raise. (Here I've already bid notrump, and partner side-stepped into hearts).

Let's hope (there's that word again) partner doesn't take 3♠ for a good heart raise. Other thoughts on moving forward:

Stark: 4♣. A spade lead is coming versus 3NT and I don't think a bid of 3♠ solves anything except for the

opps. If pard bids 4♦ next, I'll bid 4♥ as a suggestion to play the Moysian.

L'Ecuyer: I would bid 4♣ – trying to keep clubs in the picture – who knows in which strain the hand should play...

Willis: 4♣. I have a good hand for partner in diamonds particularly if partner wants to show both suits. Need to get across the source of tricks and controls (partner will not necessarily know there is a parking spot for all his hearts or that clubs is a potential trump suit (with my hearts going on their diamonds. Would be useful to know what this says about partner's values - in a strong Walsh style you are definitely in the slam zone. If not playing a firm Walsh style on what hand types would partner take this approach? Expect is likely we do not have wasted spade values or would have been a strong incentive to bid.

A majority opt to make things clearer for responder, some more optimistic than others:

Lindop: 4♦. I assume we are in a game-forcing auction and I'll show the diamond fit. I would actually like to bid 4♠ to show a diamond fit and spade shortness, but that is likely to confuse partner after my 2NT rebid.

Kimelman: 4♦. Setting trump suit. Despite only having 15 working HCPs, this hand is very powerful and I will cooperate investigating slam.

Treble: 4♦. If responder bids 4♥ or 4♠, I'll then jump to 6♣.

Todd: 4♦ – off to the races (echoed by Balcombe, Jacob, Lebi, Miles, & Thurston).

Agreeing, but having issues with the basic premise:

Grainger: Dislike 2NT for reasons above, but 4♦ if you are stuck there.

Kuz: 4♦. 2NT is a distortion.

Hargreaves: 4♦. See answer to B. Again, I don't play these methods; transfers over 2N are far superior.

The full deal:

♠ 943	
♥ AJ94	
♦ KJ964	
♣ J	
♠ QJ76	♠ A10852
♥ K6532	♥ 8
♦ 753	♦ Q8
♣ 3	♣ 109652
♠ K	
♥ Q107	
♦ A102	
♣ AKQ874	

What happened at the table?

This deal arose at a weekly Unit run team game where (mostly) established pairs were arranged into teams in order to try to make the game as competitive as possible. At one table the non-expert N-S pair made the practical decision to play in 5♦ once they discovered they had no spade stopper for 3NT and chalked up +640 on a non-spade lead. At this table, a similar revealing auction (1♣-1♦, 2NT-3♥) didn't deter South from imagining some spade help from responder, landing the pair in 3NT. The opponents were listening however and led the obvious spade for +100, being careful to not block the suit. 6♦ is more than a bit aggressive in that declarer needs to find the ♥K onside and the trump Queen (no more than 3rd if onside), plus navigate the entry positions for that. However, at teams, playing in 5♦ seems to be the best choice once the auction reveals the spade weakness for 3NT.



Your play was better tonight. So were your excuses.

Author unknown

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PANELIST ANSWERS

August 2023 Bidding Contest

Name	Hand 1		Hand 2		Hand 3		Hand 4		Hand 5		Overall
	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	
Keith Balcombe	3NT	8	3♠/6♦	9	3♥	7	Dbl	10	3NT/4♦/4♦	7	41
Stephen Cooper	Rdbl	9	4♦/6♦	10	3♣	10	3♣	9	3NT/4♠/3♠	5	43
David Grainger	3NT	8	3NT/3NT	6	3♣	10	4♠	8	3♣/4♦/4♦	10	42
Mike Hargreaves	3NT	8	4♦/4♠	9	3♥	7	3♣	9	2NT/4♦/4♦	9	42
Dan Jacob	3NT	8	3♠/4♠	8	3♣	10	Dbl	10	3♣/4♦/4♦	10	46
Neil Kimelman	3NT	8	3♠/4♠	8	3♣	10	Dbl	10	2♥/4♦/4♦	8	44
Bob Kuz	3NT	8	3♠/4♠	8	3♥	7	Dbl	10	3♣/3♠/4♦	9	42
Nick L'Ecuyer	3NT	8	3NT/4♠	7	2♣	9	Dbl	10	2NT/3♠/4♣	8	42
Robert Lebi	3NT	8	4♦/Dbl	8	3♥	7	Dbl	10	3♣/4♦/4♦	10	43
David Lindop	3NT	8	3♠/4♠	8	3♣	10	Dbl	10	2NT/3♠/4♦	9	45
Danny Miles	3NT	8	2NT/5♦	6	4♥	7	Dbl	10	2♥/4♦/4♦	8	39
Julie Smith	5♦	10	3NT/5♦	6	3♣	10	2♥	7	3♣/3♠/3♠	9	42
Andy Stark	4♣	9	4♦/6♦	10	2♣	9	Dbl	10	2NT/4♦/4♣	8	46
Paul Thurston	3NT	8	3♠/6♦	9	3♥	7	Dbl	10	3♣/4♦/4♦	10	44
Bob Todd	3NT	8	3♠/4♦	8	3♥	7	2♥	7	2♥/4♦/4♦	8	38
Bill Treble	5♦	10	3♠/4♠	8	3♥	7	3♣	9	3♦/3♠/4♦	7	41
David Turner	4♣	9	3♠/Dbl	7	2♥	8	Dbl	10	3♣/4♦/3NT	8	42
David Willis	3NT	8	3♠/4♠	8	2♣	9	Dbl	10	2NT/3♠/4♣	7	42

MARCH 2024 PROBLEMS

Host: David Willis

Readers: Answers due February 10th.

1. Matchpoints. Dealer: West, both Vul, as South you hold: ♠A8 ♥1073 ♦A104 ♣KQJ96.

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♠	3♠	?

- a) What do you bid now?
b) What is your plan if you are planning to bid beyond the four level.

2. Matchpoints. Dealer: West, N-S Vul, as South you hold: ♠AKQ ♥9863 ♦AKx ♣AKJ.

West	North	East	South
2♥	Pass	Pass	?

You play Lebensohl.

- a) What do you bid now?
b) What is your plan?

3. Matchpoints. Dealer: North, N-S Vul, as South you hold: ♠KJ10842 ♥8 ♦AJ3 ♣A84.

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♠
2♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	3♣	Pass	?

- a) What do you bid now?
b) Would you have done something different at your second turn to bid?

4. IMPs. Dealer North, both Vul, as South you hold: ♠KQ64 ♥Q9542 ♦Q4 ♣K7.

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

- ¹. Shows five, one round force.
². Solid reverse, Game Forcing.

- a) What do you bid now?
b) How high do you intend to bid.

5. Matchpoints. Dealer North N-S Vul, as South you hold: ♠KJ7 ♥AQ843 ♦KJ7 ♣A5.

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	?

What now?



Ethan: How about a friendly game of cards?

Samantha: No, let's play bridge.

what

...does this bid mean?

1. E-W vul:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
3♦	5♥		

What does 5♥ mean?

5♥ asks partner to bid 6♦ with a 2nd round diamond control. With a first round control South will usually cuebid 6♦, with a normal minimum opening bid or better. It does not promise extra values – North is the one who has those!

2. E-W vul:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	3♥
Pass	5♥		

What does 5♥ mean?

This situation is different in two respects than problem one. First, the opponents have not bid. Also, South has shown a weak hand. Therefore 5♥ asks partner to bid 6♥ with a good heart suit. The normal interpretation is a one loser suit. KQJxxxx would be the likely minimum holding to accept the invite. Typically North will have a strong hand with all first round controls in the outside suits, and one or two small hearts.

QUIZ

INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

PUZZLE ON PAGE 9

Contract: 3NT, IMPs. Lead: ♠J. Plan the play. The full deal:

♠ Q42	♠ 63
♥ 72	♥ Q1095
♦ 9543	♦ QJ108
♣ K1095	♣ AJ2
♠ J1097	♠ AK85
♥ J643	♥ AK8
♦ 7	♦ AK62
♣ 7643	♣ Q8

Win the first round of spades with the ace. You have seven top tricks. Since diamonds do not split, so you must look to the club suit for two more tricks. The only winning play is to lead the ♣8, and play the ♣5.

What can the defence do? If they win the ♣J and return a spade, you can win the 2nd spade with the king, and play the ♣Q, overtaking with the King, forcing two club tricks. If instead they let your ♣8 win, you simply play the ♣Q, setting up the ♣K as your 9th trick.



The average defender operates in a fog of uncertainty.

H.W. Kelsey

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WINNING AT MATCHPOINTS



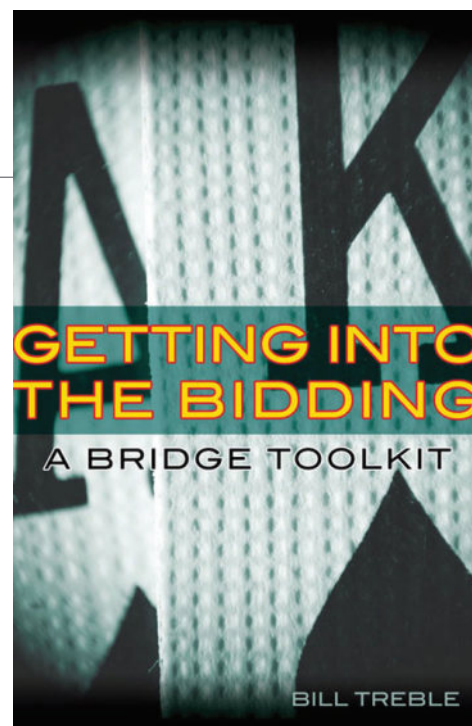
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WINNING AT MATCHPOINTS

Most players would agree that matchpoints is harder than IMPs – it's certainly different. Yet many players approach the two forms of scoring in the same way. In this book, the author explains the differences in approach, the whys and wherefores of the right way to bid, play and defend at matchpoint scoring for optimum results.

GETTING INTO THE BIDDING

This text covers the basic building blocks of competitive bidding (takeout and negative doubles, preempts, overcalls, forcing pass auctions, and others). It describes a number of useful conventions and gadgets with which the reader needs to be familiar, and suggests other optional treatments for partnership discussion. Each chapter ends with reviews and quizzes, and the final chapter is a summary quiz covering all the material.



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