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bridge



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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NOTE: Membership dues are waived for Canadian players under 25 years of age. Junior players can join the CBF by sending their information to info@cbf.ca.

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The Great Canadian Bidding Contest

Congratulations to John Bryden for having the top reader's score for the October -48. You can find the problems for the December contest on page 26.

The Ambassador Program

The CBF is reaching out to all Canadian bridge communities! We are looking for volunteers to act as Ambassadors, a dedicated network overseen by the CBF. It has the objective to promote bridge from coast to coast amongst actual and prospective members of all ages.

How does it promote bridge?

Through the year, Ambassadors have the task to share with the Community Manager pieces of content that he or she believes is important to be communicated to other people in its community or to all Canadian bridge players. The content shared with the community can be of any type. Funny or touching moments, tournament winners, testimonies, a tribute to a member of its community are all good ideas. But remember, all your content is good content, and we want you to share it with us and the CBF community!! This can be done through photos, articles, quotes, videos, testimonials, etc... This content will all be shared on the CBF Facebook page and newsletters.

The goal of the CBF in putting in place such a network is to build a sense of community for Canadian bridge, and Increase CBF membership.

For more information about this Program please contact Matthieu Dallaire, CBF Community Manager, at mdallaire@info.co

Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting will be held on November 7th. Further details will be found on the CBF homepage.

2020 CBCs Update

The Round Robin stage of the four main events has wrapped up. The playoffs are in process, with the CMTCs and CWTCs completed. Any vugraph or other broadcasts of playoff action will be posted on the CBF Website.

The CBF is looking for your assistance in identifying outstanding plays during the CBCs, whether on defence, in the bidding or on play. The CBC Achievement Awards will be announced at the end of all events. The first article in this issue is one of the nominees for Declarer Play excellence.

CBF Ethical Standards

The CBF currently has an Ethics Committee in place to ensure all events are conducted in a fair and respectful manner. We are in the process of developing further guidelines and rules to address inappropriate conduct, and will be shared once finalized.







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Here is a hand from the round robin of the Canadian Bridge Championships where Jim Priebe, playing with Mel Norton, made 4 doubled.

Dummy

V Q J 8

📌 A 7 2

Declarer

🕈 A K

9854

• 8

★KJ6532

Q 10 9 4 3

A A 8

spade, and West could only win and return a spade into declarer's tenace! Well done!

The full deal:



The	bidc	ling:
-----	------	-------

West	North	East	South
	Norton		Priebe
-	1♦	Pass	1 🗙
Pass	1NT	2 🛧	3 🛧
Pass	4 🛧	Pass	Pass
Dbl	All Pass		

West led the ****A.

West won the first trick and shifted to the ♣3. Jim played as follows: He won the ♣A at trick two, ruffed a diamond, East following with the ♦J. He then cashed the ♥AK, spade to the ace, East following with the ten, and then led the ♦Q, discarding the ♣5. West returned a heart. Jim won the queen, discarding the ♣8, cashed the ♦10, discarding the ♣9, and ruffed a diamond at trick 10. West and South were down to three spades each. Reading the ending perfectly, Jim led a small **Editor's note:** An interesting defense would have been available to West had his spade holding been \clubsuit Q972. When they won the \clubsuit K, a high spade exit beats the contract! Just as long as they unblock their spades, they can throw declarer in with the \bigstar 2, leaving declarer with two club losers, along with the two diamonds already lost! Too bad, as this defense would have been a strong nominee for Best Defense of the Championships!! Another wrinkle would be if West's spades had been the Q973, giving declarer KJ6542. When declarer plays a spade to dummy at trick 6, he would have to be careful to lead the \bigstar 4, not the \bigstar 2, otherwise good defense will prevail as above.

Please let us know if you become aware of other great plays, worthy of recognition.

New from Master Point Press



WINNING AT MATCHPOINTS



BILL TREBLE

WINNING AT MATCHPOINTS Bill Treble

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.

STRONG CLUB, UNBALANCED DIAMOND An Honors Book

Bruce Watson. Foreword by Eric Kokish

SCUD will appeal to any partnership interested in learning a very effective bidding system that is fun to play. Or, whether you currently favor a strong club or a more natural approach, you may find a treatment in SCUD that you can graft on to your favorite system.



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THE NEW PLAYER Spot



by Andy Stark

The Stayman Dialogue

One of the first conventions we learn, even if only progressing as far as the proverbial kitchen table, is Stayman. We give up the natural bid of 2 ver Opener's 1NT in order to search for something more important: discovering an 8-card major fit.

A slight complication arises for Responder when they have a 4-card major and a 5-card major. For example, let's say Responder holds:

▲ A J 9 4 3
♥ K Q 10 2
◆ J 8 7
▲ 4

Partner opens with 1NT. Should Responder transfer to spades and then bid 3♥? Or should Responder start with 2♣ Stayman? And the answer is Stayman. Why? Because as soon as Responder bids 2, as soon as the 2, bid hits the green baize (such as in happier, face-to-face times) or when the 2, bid appears on your BBO screen (still happy times, just less social), Responder is making a promise: I have a 4-card major. The rest of Responder's hand can be pretty well any distribution, including having a side 6-card suit, even if it is a major. The 2, bid promises four of a major. And by four of a major I mean specifically, exactly four. Not four plus one. Four.

One of the hardest things to do when bidding with your partner is to discover your 4-4 fits. It's easier to find your 5-3s and 6-2s because the person with the length can rebid their suit or transfer to it if partner opens with 1NT. But we kind of only get one crack at showing a 4-card suit. Therefore, try thinking of Stayman as a 2-for-1 bid: in that little ol' 2 bid, Responder is both making a promise and asking a question. The promise is I have a 4-card major, and the question is, do you?

Here are some sample dialogues:

Opener

1NT [I have 15-17 HCPs]

2 [No, I do not]

Opener 1NT [15-17 HCPs]

2 [Yes, I have 4 or 5 hearts]

Opener 1NT [15-17 HCPs]

2 [No, I do not]

4♠ [Okay, let's play here as I have a 3-card spade suit]

Responder 2♣ [I have at least one 4-card major, do you?] 3NT [Okay, let's play here]

Responder

2♣ [I have at least one
4-card major, do you?]
4♥ [Okay, let's play
here because I have
4 hearts]

Responder

2♣ [I have at least one 4-card major, do you?] 3♠ [I have 5 spades, 4 hearts and game-forcing values] Let's stop here and go over that last dialogue because it may be an eye-opener. The key to remember is that as soon as Responder bid 2 ti showed a hand with at least one 4-card major. That Stayman pledge once again: I have a four-card major, do you?

When Opener then denies a major, Responder's new suit bid at the 3-level is natural, (showing 5+ in the suit bid) and forcing to game (10+ HCPs). So, when Responder bids 3 after Opener denies a 4-card major, it must show 5 or more spades, and, here's the kicker: it promises exactly 4 hearts. How do we know? The 2 bid said as much: I have a four-card major, do you?

You might be wondering, "Why don't I ignore my four hearts and just transfer partner to spades?" You can do that, but if you do you lose the opportunity to discover your 4-4 fit in hearts. The field could be in 4♥ making while your partner goes down in 3NT. Just saying.

Let's take a look at two hands that have the same strength but have slightly different distribution:

a)	b)
🛧 K J 9 7	🛧 K J 9 7 2
🕈 A Q 9 5 4 2	💙 A Q 9 5 4
♦ 7 5	• 7 5
♣ 9	♣ 9

With a) you are 6-4 in the majors; with b) you are 5-5 in the majors. In order to properly describe your hands over partner's 1NT opening, you start with Stayman in one hand and a Jacoby transfer with the other. Everything will fall into place and Opener will know your distribution—there will be no ambiguity.

With a) start with 2 Stayman. Why Stayman? Answer: I have a four-card major, do you? It does not matter that we have a 6-card heart suit—let's find out if we have a 4-4 spade fit. We will not lose the heart fit, trust me. If partner rebids 2 , jump to 4 which is natural and to play. If partner rebids 2 (wow!) jump to 4 (although you might have a slam with your shapely hand). If partner rebids 2 , mission accomplished, jump to 4♠ (but again, if partner has the perfect cards, 6♠ may be on).

I'll explain the power of the 4-4 fit soon but first let's look at how best to describe hand b). With that hand (5-5 in the majors) you start with a transfer. You do not have a 4-card major so do not start with Stayman.

Typically, with game forcing values and 5-5 in the majors, you transfer to spades first, and then over partner's 2♠ acceptance, bid 3♥. This sequence is game-forcing because Responder is bidding a new suit at the 3-level. Here's the key: at this point in the auction Opener knows you are 5-5 or better (you might be 6-5 or 6-6). Opener will know Responder does not have a 4-card heart suit because with 5 spades and 4 hearts Responder would have started with Stayman. Here's the recommended start:

Opener	Responder
1NT [15-17 HCPs]	2 💙 [transfer to 🛧s]
2 🛧	3♥ [forcing, shows 5+♥s]

At this point, Opener is free to bid 3 to show 3-or 4-card spade support, thus saying spades are trump. Or Opener can bid 3NT with a concentration of values in the minors and a strong desire to play it there (rare). Or Opener can bid 4 to say, "Okay, let's play here because I have at least three hearts." Or, Opener can bid 4 or 4 to say, "Hearts are trump, I'm interested in slam if you are, and I have the ace in the suit I just bid." This helps you get to a good slam when Opener has fitting cards for your hand. For example:

Opener	Responder
🛧 A Q 3	🛧 K J 9 7 2
💙 K 10 8 7	💙 A Q 9 5 4
🔶 A K 9 2	♦ 7 5
뢒 J 8	♣ 9

Not too many folks at the club will get to this laydown slam on a combined 27 HCPs. Over your 3♥ bid, Opener would bid 4♦ to say, "I have a great hand for you with hearts as trump, I'm interested in slam, and I have the ♦A."

But let's get back to Stayman. With hand a) above, but repeated here, Responder should start with 2th over 1NT.

One might wonder, "Why don't I just insist on playing in 4♥? I know partner has at least two hearts for their 1NT opening and since I have six hearts, we have an 8-card fit. Why go looking for a spade fit?"

Granted, most of the time you are dealt 6-4 in the majors you do end up making your six-card suit trumps. But when we have a chance to have our cake and eat it, too, we should. Let's say you eschew searching for your 4-4 spade fit and jump to 4♥ or transfer to it with a Texas Transfer (4♦). If Opener does hold four spades, then both your hand and partner's hand will follow suit each time spades are played. That is, there will be no pitches forthcoming. But if on the same hand (when partner has four spades), and you make spades trump, then your heart suit may be used to pitch minor-suit losers in partner's hand. The two hands may be:

Opener	Responder
🛧 A Q 10 3	🛧 K J 9 7
🕈 K J 8	🕈 A Q 9 5 4 2
🕈 A 9 2	♦ 75
뢒 J 8 7	♣ 9

In a heart contract you must lose two tricks—a diamond and a club. There is no place to shake a loser. But in a spade contract, if the spades are divided 3-2, then you can pull trumps, and run your hearts and pitch away your diamonds. Making 12 tricks will be a top board. (Or a tie for the top board because the other pair read this article, too.)

In short, four-four fits allow you to pitch losers on side-suit length. How do you discover your 4-4 fits after partner opens with 1NT? Start with Stayman. It's right there in the Stayman pledge: I have a four-card major... do you?



CONVENTIONS 2

This is the fourteenth 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.

Negative Doubles

In the first instalment of the series the reader was introduced to the world of conventions, their plusses and their downsides. I encourage you to read this article if you missed it.

The first convention I will tackle is a big one – negative doubles.

A negative double is a way to show some values, and at least one major in a competitive auction, after your side has opened the bidding. Take the auction 1 by partner 1 overcall, and you hold xx AQxx xxx xxxx. Without a negative double you would not be able to describe this hand.

Negative doubles have cousins in the world of doubles, when a double is not for penalties, but instead shows values, and some support for the unbid suits. These include Responsive and Snapdragon doubles, to name two. And finally, there are many other doubles that are conventional. I plan to look at all of them during this series.

What does a negative double show?

The answer to this question is, it depends. Sometimes it shows only one suit of a specific length, sometimes two. Sometimes zero! The high card strength is also variable, mostly dependent on the level of the negative double:

- Negative double at the **one level** a hand you would normally respond to partner's opening bid. Always* shows four cards in an unbid major.
- Negative double at the **two level** since you are forcing the bidding to the two or three level, it is recommended to have at least 9+ points, and usually four cards in an unbid major.
- Negative double at the three level at least

10 points. Denies three card support if partner opened a major.

• Negative double at the **four or higher level** – at least 10 points. Denies three cards if partner opened a major. Points should be good for offense or defense.

*Recommended

Let's look at some different situations (you are always south):

EXAMPLE 1.

West	North	East	South
-	1 🙅	1 🛧	Dbl

A new suit at the two level by south would show five cards in the suit bid, and at least 10 HCPs. So if you don't have that, a negative double is the likely next best choice. Here a double shows at least four hearts and 6+ points.

If South has exactly four hearts, then their HCP strength is unlimited. South could even hold ♠ Ax ♥ AKxx ♠ AQxx ♣ Kxx! If they have five or more hearts, then they have less than 10 HCPs, otherwise would have bid 2♥.

Question: What if, in the above bidding sequence, South has enough points to make a negative double, but doesn't meet the suit requirements?

Answer: It depends. Some partnerships are strict on the four hearts minimum requirement, some are not. Some partnerships have the agreement it is ok to make a negative double with ♠ xxx ♥ Qxx ♠ AQxxx ♣ xx. Other partnerships will pass and hope partner will take further action.

EXAMPLE 2.

West	North	East	South
-	1 🙅	1♥	Dbl

Most partnerships play this shows exactly four spades, as with five South would bid $1 \clubsuit$.

EXAMPLE 3.

West	North	East	South
-	1 뢒	1♦	Dbl

Common practice is that a double on this auction shows at least 4-4 in the majors. With only one major, and at least 6 points, you bid it.

EXAMPLE 4.

West	North	East	South
-	1♥	1♠	Dbl

Most partnerships play this double shows at least 4-4 in the minors, and denies three card heart support.

Quiz – would you make a negative double, yes or no.

1. 🛧 K J 5 4 🎔 9	7 5 3 🔶 10 5 4 3	♣ 4	
West	North	East	South
-	1 🙅	1 🛧	?
2. 🛧 4 🎔 K J 3 🔶	KQ43 🛧 987	5 3	
West	North	East	South
-	1 🛧	3♥	?
3. 🛧 K 5 4 🎔 K 5	3 🔶 K 4 3 🙅 9 8	7 5	
West	North	East	South
-	1♦	1♥	?
4. 🛧 5 4 🎔 5 🔶 k	(J 7 5 3 뢒 Q J 5	43	
West	North	East	South
-	1 🛧	2♥	?

Answers

1. No, pass with only four high card points, with all of them in the overcaller' suit.

2. Pass (We will discuss this hand in more detail in the next Bridge Basics article).

3. No, as you only hold three spades. However you have a great option, 1NT. This shows 8-10 HCPs, with a stopper in the opponent's suit.

4. Yes. Despite only 7 HCPs, you have compensating distribution, and your doubleton is in partner's suit.

Next issue: Negative doubles Part 2.



THE INTERMEDIATE



BIDDING STRATEGIES 2

Hand Evaluation

By Neil Kimelman

One of the first things we learn is the point count system. Aces are four, kings are three, etc... Plus there are distributional points. When I started playing a void was worth three points, singleton two and a doubleton one. Then you added up all of your high card and distributional points, and bid accordingly. Some players treat this structure as gospel. Others have tried to improve it. For example, there is a 3-2-1 point system for high cards that is used by many experts. Plus there are many other guides that have been developed over the years, such as the rule of fifteen.

Whatever basic system you use should only be treated as a guide, and is the first step to evaluate how good your hand is, and eventually choosing the best bid(s). So the questions is what are other ways to better evaluate your holding?

Factors that affect the value of your hand

There are different ways to categorize these elements. I have chosen four broad themes:

Value of your high card points. Intermediate cards. Controls. Bidding.

VALUE OF YOUR HIGH CARDS

As I was suggesting above, this is not an absolute. There are good points and bad points. First aces and kings are better than queens and jacks. Duh! What I mean is that an ace is a better four count than one queen and two jacks. Your quacks might not take a trick, whether your side is declaring or defending, whereas an ace is always good for a trick. High cards are also overvalued when they are in short suits. If your holding in a suit is Qx, counting three points for that is too much. Same with Jx or a stiff King. Aces and kings can also be good or bad. Compare the following two hands:

▲Kxxx ♥A ◆Jxxxxx ♣Kx
▲Kxxx ♥x ◆AKJxxx ♣x

Both hands have 11 HCPs, with 4-1-6-2 shape. Yet the 2nd hand is much better. Having your high cards in your long suits is worth much more than not. Again we look at two different hands:

≜Qxx ♦Kxxxxx ♦AJ **♣**AK **≜**KQx ♥AKQxxx ♦xx **♣**Kx

Both 17 HCPs with a six card heart suit. Yet the 2nd hand is again, far superior compared to the first. 1♣ is worth opening with x Kxxx xx AKxxxx, but not K Qxxx Qx Kxxxx. Both hands have 10 HCPs with the same shape, but the location of the high cards makes all the difference. The last hand also demonstrates an important concept in opening bids. The expectation is that if partner opens the bidding they will have some defensive values. Opening without will often mislead partner, and may cause them to make a poor decision. Quite often this is doubling the opponents in a contract that makes as opener did not contribute their fair share to the defense.

Example 1: $\Phi QJx \Psi x \Phi KQJxxxx \Phi Qx.$

Despite having 11 HCPs and good distribution, this hand will likely not contribute much if defending. Should you open 1 with this hand?

If you asked a bunch of experts most would open 1 but not all. Some might open 3, some may pass. It is more important that you and your partner(s) have an agreement as to what hands you open.

INTERMEDIATE CARDS

This one is straight forward. Hands with strong intermediates should be upgraded. Looking at one of our previous examples: x Kxxx xx AKxxxx, compare with x K1098 xx AK10986. Intermediates are especially critical in evaluating hands for notrump contracts.

Example 2: You hold ♠K1098 ♥65 ♦Q109 ♣K1098.

Partner opens 1NT. What do you do? Without the good spot cards pass is reasonable, as the maximum total high card points combined is 25. Opposite Axx AJ109 Kxxx Ax any suit the opponents lead will set up an extra trick, and 3NT is an odds on favourite. Take away all of those 10s and 9s, and game is a terrible contract.

Good spot cards can also make the difference when suits are breaking badly, or sometimes will give you more options as declarer.

BIDDING STRATEGIES 2 ... CONTINUED

Example 3:

Dummy ▲ J 4 2 ▲ Q 10 9 8 7 Declarer ▲ A K 6 5 3

If this is the trump suit declarer will score two tricks, and the opponents three. However, give declarer the 1098, and RHO the 653, and declarer can score 5 trumps tricks!!

Example 4: The contract is $4 \clubsuit$ after East opened $1 \clubsuit$. Lead: \clubsuit 3.



If East had the \$1098, 4\$ would not make. However from the bidding declarer can win the lead, pull trump and lead the \$J, taking a ruffing finesse against East, making 11 tricks. On any lead 4\$ will make, as the bidding marks East with \$K.

Next issue: We will continue the examination of correctly valuing your holdings.

QUIZ

INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

SOLUTION IS ON PAGE 27

Contract: 6 🛧 IMPS



Lead: ♥2. Plan the play.



Mollo ON PLAY XI

Contract: 7 by South at IMPs. Lead: Q, East overtakes with the king. Plan the play. Solution on page 18.





THE EXPERT Spot



by Paul Thurston

What Went Wrong?

During a Canadian Senior Teams Championship (CSTC) online match, two competent declarers greeted the dummy with the same small club lead versus their three notrump contract. And all because of the play to the very first trick, there was huge disparity in the number of tricks taken: three notrump, just in, compared to down three! So WHAT WENT WRONG?

HAND 1

Dealer East. E-W Vul.



One declarer, Captain Nader Hanna clicked on (the "new normal" action replacing "called for") the club King and never had a problem. He continued with a high diamond from dummy for West to win and between the proverbial rock and the (very) hard place: he could continue clubs to force out the Queen or defend passively and have South establish his ninth trick in hearts.

Simple enough? Well, maybe, so WHAT DID GO WRONG? At the other table where your favourite National Post Bridge columnist went down three? Thank you CBF for this forum in which to explain how I managed to take three fewer tricks than Mr. Hanna. The trouble started with the auction:

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
2 🏚 1	2♦	Pass	3 📥
Pass2	3♥	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

10-15 6+ clubs. Encouraging a club lead.

John Carruthers opened 2♣ in his Precision style to show long clubs and a limited hand in the 10-15 HCP range. After my responsive cuebid (good hand, please tell me more partner), JC self-alerted his pass as suggesting a club lead would be welcome if his Partner (Marty Kirr ended up on lead) but Neil Kimelman introduced hearts "just in case" and South bid the third and final notrump.

Having invited a club lead from his partner, it was only fitting that West led one himself and it was going to be all about the location of the club Jack and the two red aces. If West had both red aces, then playing the club King (as Nader did) would work just fine. However if East had been dealt either one of the red aces, playing the club King would be disastrous as, before South could get to nine tricks, that nasty defender would get the lead to push a second round of clubs through the closed hand's Queen. Back to the club Jack and its whereabouts: West's opening bid would usually deliver six clubs to his partner's two so there was a compelling case for West being a prohibitive favourite to have the Jack of clubs. And for his opening bid, there were just enough high-cards lurking out there for 2 \clubsuit to be opened and for East to have a red ace. Except he didn't but what he did have was the Jack of clubs to cover the play of dummy's ten and effectively destroy South's chances at trick one. (Yes, I did duck just in case clubs were 7-1 but Marty Kirr was just cutthroat enough to play back his second club!).

Of note: the opening bid at the other table where Nader got the play right was a Standard one club where the slightly higher minimum point count for the opening made West a strong favourite to have both red aces and make the club Jack's location irrelevant.

SIGH! And if the magazine's Editor/CBF President have complaints about how long this section has been, next time he can bid three notrump from the North chair and save me all the anguish of guessing what to play and the pain of seeing the club Jack on my right at trick one!

HAND 2

Team matches provide an interesting laboratory for examining differences in bidding philosophies and systems. How this deal was handled at two tables of a recent CTSC match was instructive in a gruesome kind of way with, in William Blake's immortal words, "a fearful symmetry" framing the two results.

Teaching a signaling lesson, partner leads the ace (ace-from ace-king), dummy has Qxx and third hand has 9x. I tell them that third hand should start a high-low with the 9, the higher card from a doubleton. One lady asks: "How will my partner know it is my highest card, what if I have a ten or an eleven?"





Table one auction:

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

Opening lead \$10

East was apparently one of Blake's Tygers by starting the bidding with less than one might usually expect for a Standard system's opening bid. Once the spade fit was located, West was a tad over-awed by all of his low-card points and issued an artificial game invitation that East, also artificially, summarily rejected. But the card gods had arranged a nasty trump lie and West's three-level adventure eventually ended two tricks short. North-South +100.

Table two auction:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	2 뢒
Pass	2♦	Pass	27
Pass	3 🕈	All Pass	

Opening lead \$4

South's opening bid was Precision-style: 2 showed long clubs with 10-15 HCPs. North made an artificial inquiry to locate the heart fit and, as team players are wont to do, raised in search of a possible game bonus. Another invitation declined but also one level two high after West expertly fished out a diamond lead for down one. East-West +100.

So for sitting quietly and defending competently the team that contributed no active bids collected +200 and +5 IMPS after both pairs of opponents voluntarily bid themselves to the three-level.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

Far be it from me to criticize the undernourished opening bids at both tables as such bids do seem to be commonplace in the modern competitive bidding jungle. A curious layout for sure: it wouldn't be at all shocking to have the deal passed out by many foursomes! But one thing is clear: if the partnership has a system (Table Two) or an inclination (Table One) for opening such hands, the Responders need to be a bit more conservative in inviting game contracts lest plus scores end up too frequently on their table opponents' side of the ledger.

HAND 3

Far too many years ago to count, we used to go to the Saturday matinees that started with previews of coming attractions and had a cartoon before the feature of the day played. Here we'll have a slightly different order and finish with a bit of comic relief provided by this deal from a recent CSTC round robin match.

Dealer North. E-W Vul.



WHAT WENT WRONG ... CONTINUED

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2 뢒	Pass	2 🖤
All Pass			

A normal enough start to the bidding with North using Stayman to find the heart fit but then unaccountably passes when seemingly holding enough values to bid game.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

Did North misclick? A common enough occurrence in online bridge but unfortunately for misclickers, they are stuck with their errors in CBF online Championships: none of the infamous "undos" are allowed! A little research revealed that in fact North hadn't misclicked but that a case of PPE had occurred (and it had nothing to do with masks, gowns or any of the other paraphernalia usually associated with that term.) No, South was the culprit who authored the missed-game by a Pandemic Point-counting Error: in a partnership employing weak notrump openings (12-14 hcp), the opening bidder had missed an ace along the way.

Did I say this happened in a Senior match? Stay well!

In a novice game declarer calls the director over to the table and tells him he is playing a slam contract and he has won the opening lead and played the ace and ruffed a diamond, ruffed a heart, and ruffed a diamond. The director, impressed, asks him why he has been called over. The declarer tells him that the contract is actually 6NT.

Mollo ON PLAY XI

Solution from page 14

Contract: 7 by South at IMPs.

Lead: **•**Q, East overtakes with the king. Plan the play.



There are two possible plans: Ruff a heart in dummy, or try to take four spade tricks.

Ostensibly these offer similar chances of success. Line 1 needs 4-3 hearts, a 62% chance. Line two needs spades, 3-3 (36%), or a doubleton jack (16%), or singleton jack (9%), for a 61% total. However, line two is actually much better, as a squeeze may develop, either heart-spade or spade-diamond.

The best line is to ruff the diamond, pull trumps, discarding a heart from dummy, cash the spade ace, king, and ruff a diamond. Even if no squeeze develops, the defenders may have to help declarer. In the actual deal, what diamond does East play on the 2nd round of the suit? If they play the ace they set up their partner for a spade-diamond squeeze. If, instead, they play the seven, declarer can run trumps, and gets a complete count of the hand, due to the diamond plays.



OCTOBER 2020 Host: Paul Thurston For Panelists, see page 25

Editor's note: Hosts are given considerable leeway in assigning scores. Ideally, score assigned should reflect the best action in the judgement of the host, not the one that was necessary successful at the table.

Problem 1:

Vulnerable: N-S Dealer: East IMPs. As South, you hold: ♠ J8 ♥ J10854 ♦ Q942 ♣ 43

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
-	-	2 🛧	Pass
Pass	3 🛧	Pass	?

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. Favourite comments:

David Lindop: Hard to imagine doing anything else with this hand.

Stay tuned!

Robert Lebi: Pass. Please explain what I may be missing here.

Soon, Robert, soon!

Steve Cooper: Pass, seriously how did this problem get into the set?

A good prediction:

Zygmunt Marcinski: Pass. I confess I have difficulty seeing other than a unanimous panel.

And the best predictor of all:

Vince Oddy: Pass. The only reason this is a question must be because we have a heart fit. Still too rich for my blood.

Also tuned in:

David Turner: Pass. Partner must not be short in spades and have 2NT values with a red suit flaw.

The final word, at least from the panel:

Bob Todd: Pass. If I bid, partner would never trust me again.

What happened at the table?

A winner of multiple World Championships actually did bid 3♥ and was raised to 4♥ with, among other goodies, ♥AKx and the flawed 2NT hand suspected by David Turner. Single dummy, 4♥ was not a very good spot but on the actual lie of the cards, it was ice-cold. Trust? Maybe not but the bidders got to keep the IMPs!

For the record: the 3♣ bidder delivered ♠KQ93 ♥AK5 ♦8 and ♣AQ765. I'll leave it you to fill in the other side's cards, but trust me when I tell you there was no defense to beat 4♥.

And before we leave this intriguing exhibit, I'd like to extend a vote of thanks to all panelists for validating a statement I made about the deal. My student and I held these cards at the other table of an online match and he was disappointed we didn't reach and make 4♥ as well. I told him no player would ever make a voluntary response with the 3♥ bidders' hand.

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Action	Votes	Score
Pass	22	10
3 💙	0	1 *

* Only because a World Champion bid it!

Problem 2:

IMPs, neither Vul. Dealer: North. As South, you hold: ♠ 7 ♥ 108543 ♦ K76 ♣AK73

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
-	1 🛧	2 🖤	Pass
Pass	4	Pass	?

The good news is that not one panelist passed over partner's solo launch to the four-level. Perhaps some of the suggested calls reflect what's in their local drinking water?

Neil Kimelman: 6⁽¹⁾. Four spades shows a good hand so this must have a play. I'm not worried about missing a grand as partner would need a 2⁽¹⁾ opening for seven to be good.

Editor's note: I think I was too hasty to rule out seven, as AKQxxxxx - Ax = Qxx is close to what I expect partner to have.

In agreement, a fellow 'Pegger:

Bob Todd: 6. A practical bid that will make most of the time – we may have an unexpected loser somewhere.

Groping from various corners of the continent:

Kizmet Fung: 5^(A). Why did I pass the first time? (PT: maybe because no possible call was a perfect fit?) I do have four controls (A= 2, King = 1. PT) but now I'm stuck. (More on this thought later).

David Grainger: 5 Values but no heart control.

Ray Hornby: 5♠. (In almost-agreement with Kizmet). 5♠. I was very close to a negative double on the last round.

And then a veritable legion of delicate probers with various follow-ups in mind:

David Turner: 5 \clubsuit . I predict \bigstar AKJxxxx \heartsuit $x \diamondsuit$ Ax \clubsuit xx. (Very close on the prediction front but lacking a prescription for what might come next. PT).Thoughtful as always (maybe that's why it takes him so long to bid. PT)

Roy Dalton: 5^(*). Partner has about 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ – 9 playing tricks with solid or near-solid spades. But we need a heart control. If he comes back with 5^(*), then 5^(*) will point out the need for that heart control.

But Roy's regular partner is more optimistic:

Vince Oddy: 5♣. If partner rebids 5♦, then 6♠ by me. If he rebids 5♠ then pass!

Andy Stark: Partner has bid 4♠ to make. (YES!!! PT) while maybe playing me for one trick. I think I have three tricks so 9 or 10 of his plus my 3 = 12. That allows room for one on shrinkage.

That succinct analysis seems like it should motivate a Winnipeg-like raise directly to slam. Can it be that many Canadian experts are fearful of losing the post mortem?

Danny Miles: 5^{\clubsuit} . Partner can't expect this much so I have to do something. If he quits at 5^{\bigstar} and goes down, I'm ready to apologize.

What happened at the table?

Here's the full deal: (spot cards omitted)





While the various follow-ups to the majority choice of 5th are likely to lead to slam (unlike 5th which has serious chances of attracting a pass as partner may well believe you can't possibly have this much - so says Zygmunt Marcinski in concert with Kizmet and Ray).

Once again, the practical direct choice of 6^{-1} will work out just fine if partner plays carefully.

Actual play: declarer ruffed the heart lead, crossed to the \bigstar K and mopped up trumps in two rounds with the aid of a finesse. And finished with a flourish by executing a pseudo criss-cross squeeze against East for all thirteen tricks. And yes, the \bigstar 2 did take the thirteenth trick!

Action	Votes	Score
5 🙅	15	10
5🛧	5	5
6🛧	2	3
Pass	0	1

Problem 3:

IMPs. Both Vul. Dealer: North. As South, you hold:
▲ Q64 ♥ Q ♦ K9862 ♣ J1093

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
-	2 🙅	3♠	Pass ¹
Pass	3NT	Pass	?

1. South's pass showed values, somewhat undefined, but at least 5 HCPs and denies a one-loser 6+ card suit.

Maybe a straight forward evaluation problem coloured a bit by systemic constraints that the original bidders confessed were a bit vague in their case. One outlier who might hit the bullseye on occasion:

Julie Smith: 4. (No comment offered)

Take-the-money-and run types:

Dan Jacob: Pass. Where are we going? We might make a minor-suit slam but with only one control, I'm not moving.

Zygmunt Marcinski: Pass. My extras are only mild (others saw them as at least medium, if not hot. PT). With poor breaks in the red suits expected, we are as likely to fail in 4 NT as to succeed in a slam.

Ray Hornby: Pass. I have what I promised.

Steve Mackay: Pass. Are you going to tell me we should be in 7

Not this time Steve but Julie might be headed to at least 6 as happened at one table of this CSTC match. The majority opt for the middle-of-the-road forward move of 4NT with varying degrees of confidence:

Andy Stark: 4NT. Pass could be right but it feels like I have too much to pass.

Bill Treble: 4NT. Invitational while keeping clubs/ diamonds/Notrump open as options.

Recognizing those alternative strains:

Neil Kimelman: 4NT. Partner can accept by bidding 4-card suits at the 5-level and 5-card suits at the 6-level.

Recognizing at least one alternative strain but ironically not pursuing it:

Kizmet Fung: Pass. But $4 \triangleq$ is a close second choice – does partner have 6+ clubs and a spade stopper?

The majority of the 4NT bidders variously label their choice as "quantitative" or "invitational" while one 4NT bidder has a significant complaint about the conditions:

Ron Bishop: 4NT. Even if the footnoted agreement is

100% true, in my opinion it's completely unplayable. Still, I do have more than a minimum.

Ron points out what is a common failing with many expert partnerships: loose to non-existent agreements after a strong and artificial 2th attracts high-level interference.

What happened at the table?



At one table of a CSTC Round robin match, North did mention diamonds and eventually reached 6 after South may have expected greater length and/or strength from that mention.

Those who sought out and landed in a possible club slam would not be thrilled if West started with ace and a second spade – and why not? Passers over 3NT at least get a plus while the happy fall of the club Queen helps deliver twelve tricks in notrump - slam bonus if South accepts the invitation.

I was mildly surprised that no panelist put their faith in one or both of their minor suits as possible source(s) of tricks and launched directly to 6 NT.

Action	Votes	Score
4NT	14	10
Pass	6	5
4♦	2	1

Problem 4:

Pairs: E-W Vul. Dealer: East. As South, you hold: ♠ AJ4 ♥- ♦J73 ♣ KJ108653

The bidding:			
West	North	East	South
-	-	Pass	?

This deal came up in an online tournament and the results at various tables couldn't have been more dramatically different. Starting the ball rolling by not rolling the ball at all:

Marty Kirr: Pass (no comment).

Bob Kuz: Pass (also no comment).

Almost certainly misreading the problem:

Zygmunt Marcinski: 4^A. Third seat favourable vulnerable preempts cover a lot of ground. (Even more when they are in second seat maybe? PT)

Perhaps a slighter misread motivated:

Ray Hornby: 3^(*). About right for a second-seat vulnerable preempt.

In agreement but for "modern" reasons:

David Turner: 3^A. Ridiculous but Matchpoint appropriate, I should note that I often had 2 or 3 fewer clubs for this bid not long ago (The water in Peterborough was that bad? No wonder you moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake! PT) but age does catch up to us!

Steve Mackay: (who appears not to trust me). $3\clubsuit$. Another trick question as I know I'm not supposed to bid $3\clubsuit$ but being naive, I will!

The majority recognize their hand's potential and perhaps the fact that one opponent has already passed so there's one less reason for initial pre-emption.

Steve Cooper: 1th, of course a preempt always has



Pass4♦Pass4♥Pass4 NTPass6♦

some potential for mayhem but it cuts both ways. This hand has great potential for spades.

Bill Treble: 1. I might preempt with an outside ace OR a void but not with both.

Robert Lebi: 1^(*). I have two other suits that might be useful as trump.

Yes you do - stay tuned!

David Lindop: 1⁽¹⁾. Opening with borderline values seems to be the modern style so I don't want to be left behind. Never 3⁽²⁾ with an outside ace and a void.

What happened at the table?



The pre-emptors will be sorely disappointed when their partners can't take a joke and pass over 3. Maybe 4. will attract a raise to game? But the good scores will accrue to the 1. bidders if their partnership has the machinery to locate the diamond fit and bid one of the two laydown slams. This was one successful auction:

West	North	East	West
		Pass	1 뢒
1♥	2♦	3 💙	4 뢒

Maybe not all of the North-South calls would be to everyone's taste but one thing was crystal clear: opening 1♣ created a context in which South could put appropriate value on both his side ace and his void, features that would go by the wayside after a club preempt in second seat.

Action	Votes	Score
1 뢒	15	10
3 📥	4	4
4 秦	1	1
Pass	2	2

Problem 5:

IMPs. N-S Vul. Dealer: South. As South, you hold:
★ K8 ♥ Q52 ◆ 754 ♣ AQ982.

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	Pass ¹
1♦	Dbl	Pass	?

1. Please don't abstain if you would have opened with South's "great" hand!

This is a problem that combines a theoretical debate with at-the-table practicality. As will often be the case in competitive bidding situations where no answer may seem clear but the bidder thinks he has a good hand, a cuebid response attracts many.

Steve Cooper: 2♦. Seems obvious to cuebid with a maximum passed hand and then show clubs on the next round.

Who shares this philosophy and approach with:

Neil Kimelman: 2 ♦. Too strong for 3♣, will show clubs next. And:

David Turner: 2 Perfect – subsequent 3 swill be strongly invitational but not forcing.

After certain reactions to 2♦ from partner, 3♣ as a continuation might be something other than "perfect" - it might be insufficient! I once had a partner in a parallel situation whose rebid over the 2♦ response was 3♦ – he had lots of extras, at least for play in either major, and wanted me to choose which major as "obviously" I would have at least one 4-card major for the 2♦ response! There goes the planned 3 ♣ rebid! And I would expect a lot of disagreement with:

David Lindop: 2♦. Too strong for a passed-hand jump to 3♣.

But is 2♦ really stronger than 3♣ or merely different? Also seeing the pitfall of 2♦:

Bill Treble: 3♣. 2♦ would also show a good hand but focuses on majors. If he bids one major and I bid 3♣, he should expect me to have the other major.

And summarizing the systemic meaning of the popular 34:

Zygmunt Marcinski: 3^(*). The same as I would bid if not a passed hand. The passed hand cuebid should offer two possible places to play either major-minor or minor-notrump. (Maybe also one major and notrump? PT)

But this hand is "just clubs".

As agreed to by David Grainger: 3 divergence where you live," a potential source of tricks.

Also Robert Lebi: Natural and descriptive.

That says it all!

What happened at the table?

Neither action favoured by our illustrious panelists will hit the bullseye!

3♣ will attract an immediate 3NT from partner and that is the best contract for sure, just played from the wrong side of the table! 2♦ will also be likely to lead to 3NT after 2♠ from doubler and the planned 3♣ rebid from Advancer, also the right contract but also wrong-sided as you'll see.



After the practical 3 response and 3NT rebid by North, East decided a top-of-sequence VJ lead might be better than leading from three small diamonds – he was very, very right!

At the other table of this match, South found the vastly superior – in practice! - Response of three notrump! What vision! What foresight! What brilliance! Not only the right final contract but from the double dummy side of the table – no defense! Maybe such a diamondrich hand as North's wasn't perfect for the initial takeout double but both players chose that action.

As for three notrump? Stopper(s) in their bid-suit? "We don't need no d**n stoppers to bid notrump!" Once again my student sitting North and going down in three notrump asked how we could possibly get to play 3 NT by South. Having never won a World Championship like the other team's South, I confessed I had no idea.

And, yes, we have met this particular South before -the one and the same magician who bid 3[♥] on Problem One!

'Action	Votes	Score
3 🛧	12	10
2♦	10	8
3NT	0	1



PANEL'S ANSWERS

	Hand	1	Hand	2	Hand	3	Hand 4	Ļ	Hand	5	Total
Panelists	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Total
Balcombe, Keith	Pass	10	5 🛧	10	Pass	5	Pass	2	3♣	10	37
Bishop, Ron	Pass	10	5 🙅	10	4NT	10	1 🙅	10	3 🛧	10	50
Campbell, Gordon	Pass	10	5 秦	10	4NT	10	1 🙅	10	3 🙅	10	50
Cooper, Stephen	Pass	10	5 📥	10	4NT	10	1 🙅	10	2♦	8	48
Dalton, Roy	Pass	10	5 秦	10	4NT	10	1 🙅	10	3 🙅	10	50
Fung, Kismet	Pass	10	5 🛧	5	Pass	5	1 🙅	10	3 🙅	10	40
Grainger, David	Pass	10	5 🛧	5	Pass	5	1 뢒	10	3 🙅	10	40
Hornby, Ray	Pass	10	5 📥	10	Pass	5	3 🙅	4	2♦	8	37
Jacob, Dan	Pass	10	5 📥	10	Pass	5	1 뢒	10	2♦	8	43
Kimelman, Neil	Pass	10	6♠	3	4NT	10	1 뢒	10	2♦	8	41
Kirr, Martin	Pass	10	5 🛧	10	Pass	5	3 🛧	4	3 🛧	10	39
Kuz, Bob	Pass	10	5 🜩	10	4NT	10	Pass	2	2♦	8	40
Lebi, Robert	Pass	10	5 🜩	10	4NT	10	1 뢒	10	3 뢒	10	50
Lindop, David	Pass	10	5 🛧	10	4NT	10	1 뢒	10	2♦	8	48
Mackay, Steve	Pass	10	5 🜩	10	Pass	5	3 뢒	4	3 뢒	10	39
Marcinski, Zygmunt	Pass	10	5 🜩	10	Pass	5	4 🗭	1	3 뢒	10	36
Miles, Danny	Pass	10	5 🛧	10	4NT	10	1 뢒	10	3 🛧	10	50
Oddy, Vince	Pass	10	5 🛧	10	4NT	10	1 뢒	10	2♦	8	48
Smith, Julie	Pass	10	5 🛧	5	4♦	1	1 뢒	10	2♦	8	34
Stark, Andy	Pass	10	5 🛧	10	4NT	10	3 🛧	4	3 🛧	10	44
Todd, Bob	Pass	10	6♠	3	4NT	10	1 뢒	10	3 뢒	10	43
Treble, Bill	Pass	10	5 🜩	10	4NT	10	1 뢒	10	3 🛧	10	50
	Pass	10	5 🛧	10	4NT	10	3 🙅	4	2	8	42



December 2020 Problems

Host: Neil Kimelman

1. IMPS. Neither vul., you hold as South:



West	North	East	South
-	-	Pass	1♦
Pass	1 💙	Pass	?

What do you bid?

2. IMPS. Neither vul., you hold as South:



West	North	East	South
-	1♦	Pass	1 💙
4 🙅	Pass	Pass	?

What do you bid?

3. Matchpoints, Both vul., you, South, hold:

Q J 10 9 7 2 75 • K J 10 📌 J 6

West	North	
-	1 🔶	







4. IMPS. E-W vul., you, South hold:



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

What is the double? a)

What do you bid? b)

5. Matchpoints, neither vul., you, South, hold:



What do you lead?

This lady, Charlotte, plays very slowly. She is asked to speed it up a bit. She says: "I'm sorry, but I can't think and play bridge at the same time."

QUIZ

INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

SOLUTION, PROBLEM ON PAGE 14

Contract: 6♠. Lead: ♥2. IMPs. Plan the play.



You had ten cashable tricks before the lead, 6 spades, 2 red aces, and the ♠AK. The lead gave you a 11th trick, but no clear chance for a twelfth. You do have the ♦K in dummy, and hearts is the only possible entry to dummy.

Play the 3 from dummy and win the first trick with the \clubsuit A. Pull trump, cash the \bigstar A, and then lead the \clubsuit 6 to the ten (\clubsuit J to the queen works equally as well).

This guarantees a 2nd heart trick, and more importantly, a heart entry to cash your 12th trick, the $\blacklozenge K$, discarding the $\clubsuit 6$.

That is why that, when declaring, planning your play should be done before you play to trick one, not after.





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