



# bridge *Canada*

*Seasons Greetings*  
from across the country



Happy Holidays from Edmonton AB

## 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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## MEMBERSHIP

Bridge Canada is available to members only.

If you know of anyone who wishes to become a member of the Canadian Bridge Federation please share with them these options:

1. Be sure to include CBF dues with your ACBL dues.
2. Visit [cbf.ca](http://cbf.ca) and click **Join The CBF**.
3. Email [info@cbf.ca](mailto: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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# EDITOR & PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As 2020 draws to an end we have all gone through a year like no other. Covid has impacted all aspects of our lives. It has caused additional stress and challenged our inner strength. The CBF has had it plusses and minuses during this unparalleled year.

## **The Minuses**

Cancellation of Canadian Bridge Championships scheduled for last June at Niagara Falls.

Passing of several Canadian bridge personalities including Bill Buttle and Arno Hobart.

Depletion of 50% of the CBF Board. A special acknowledgement to Nader Hanna. Nader has had a huge impact on Canadian Bridge throughout his tenure with the Board, and had devoted countless hours to improve the CBF.

Cancellation of other STAC and Rookie-Master games. Isolated incidents of online cheating.

## **The Plusses**

A very successful modified Canadian Bridge Championships held completely online.

Leadership in our bridge community. Danny Miles, with the condonation of the CBF, took the reins and coordinated a delayed Viewgraph of a number of CNTC and CSTC matches. The Canadian expert bridge community also stepped up, and volunteered their time and talents to offer top level commentary of the hands that made up of these matches. My thanks go out to Keith Balcombe, Michael Roche, David Turner, Bob Todd, Paul Thurston, Gordon Campbell, Ross Taylor and Daniel Korbel.

The addition of Matthieu Dallaire to our CBF community. Matthieu has taken on the role of Community Manager and has undertaken the role the CBF has tasked to him: to improve our relationship and communication with all Canadian bridge communities.

A quality Bridge Canada publication. Thank you to those who regularly make our magazine the success it is: Jude Goodwin, Francine Cimon, Louise Mascolo, Paul Thurston, Ina Demme, Andy Stark and Cathy Walsh.

As you can see, we have much to be thankful for.

## **Looking forward...**

The 2021 CBCs will again be held online, with the Round Robin of the four main events commencing in February. We are planning on holding the COPCs in January. We will return to in person bridge only when it is safe to do so. The CBF Board will continue to do the best we can to support Canadian bridge during these changing and challenging times. I encourage all to volunteer (AMBASSADOR PROGRAM) their time when the opportunity presents. We do have a great game!

***Season's greetings and  
all the best in the New Year!***



**Neil Kimelman**  
**Bridge Canada Managing Editor**  
**President, CBF**



Happy Holidays from Saskatoon, SK



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## Canadian National Open Team Championship

*By Neil Kimelman*

The 2020 Canadian Bridge Championships (CBCs) were like no other. Covid rules! After much debate, the CBF Board decided to go ahead and have the main events, the open, the mixed, the seniors and the women's. Entry fees would be drastically reduced, trying to get as many teams as possible for the four events. And it worked! 81 teams competed for the four titles.

In the open, 30 teams were split up into two divisions, with the top four in each moving on to the quarter finals. The qualifiers were roughly as expected, with the biggest upset being my Todd team playing under par, and coming nowhere close to qualifying.

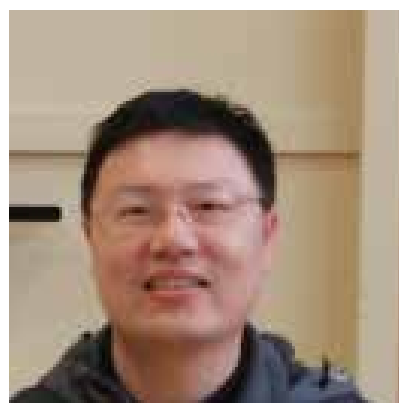
The big surprise in the quarter finals was the ousting of the favourite L'ECUYER (L'Ecuyer, Marcinski, Fergani, Pollack, Smith, Zaluski) by DAVIDSON (Davidson, Fourcaudout, Fung, Gamble, Miles, Zhu), 152-114. ROCHE (Roche, Lyder, Findlay, Campbell, Freeman, Lavee) went down to ZHOU (Zhou, Hong, Yang, Chen, Gan) 186-117. HANNA (Hanna, Rayner, Kirr, Carruthers, Thurston, Balcombe) eliminated ZHENG (Zheng, Chu, Wang, Hu, Ren), 194-116. Finally KERSEY (Kersey, Koski, Duquette, Bishop, J. Gartaganis, N. Gartaganis) over JANICKI (Janicki, Fok, Barna, Proden, Bender and Woodcock), 144-120. In the semis, ZHOU ousted HANNA 151-128 and KERSEY got the better of DAVIDSON, 152-97.



### 2020 CNTC GOLD MEDALISTS

(Top to Bottom,  
Left to Right):

**Xin Guo Chen, Sidney Yang,  
Alex Hong, Kai Zhou,  
Lu Gan.**



The final was anti-climactic. Zhou had it going and Kersey did not. Halfway through the final Zhou had built a 100 IMP lead and cruised through three more segments, maintaining that lead until Kersey withdrew.

The team, despite having successes in recent years, is mostly unknown to most Canadian players. Let's meet them:

**Kai Zhou** is originally from Shanghai, China and is currently working as a realtor in Vancouver. He represented Canada playing on the U28 team in the 1st world mind sports game which was held in Beijing in 2008.

**Alex Hong** is originally from Beijing, China and moved to Canada in 2000. He is currently working at a downtown Vancouver Casino, and he has been representing Beijing since 1990's.

## Canadian National Open Team Championship (cont)

**Sidney Yang.** Sydney represented his birth country Taiwan in the 43rd Bermuda Bowl, that was held in Lyon, France.

**Xinguo Chen** is originally from Shanghai, China. He is currently living in Vancouver. Starting in 2000 Hinguo represented his home club in various Chinese tournaments. He once came 2nd in the Chinese Nationals, and 3rd in the inaugural Yeh's Brothers Cup..

**Lu Gan** is a 30 year old software engineer. He was born and raised in China, started playing bridge when he was in high school, and played on the Beijing Youth Team. Relatively new to Canada, he moved to Vancouver in 2017. He has played in occasional tournaments since moving to Canada.

When asked for some hands, Kai provide the four examples of their team's effective bidding to reach contracts that earned them large swings in this event. Here they are:

## FINALS

Segment 4; Board 14. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

**Zhou**

♠ K Q 7  
♥ A  
♦ A Q J 10 8 5  
♣ K Q 5

**Gan**

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

Zhou	Nick G.	Gan	Judy G.
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
-	-	Pass	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦ <sup>1</sup>	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass
6♦	All Pass		

The key bid was 4♦, an action that was not replicated at the other table. After an identical start the Kersey pair rested in 3NT. This gave Zhou space to cue bid 4♥, finding partner cooperating with slam investigation.

This was a 10 IMP gain, the fourth double digit gain in four boards that greatly altered the complexion of the match!!

Segment 6; Board 6. Dealer East. E-W Vul.

**Hong**

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

**Yang**

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

	Hong		Yang
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
-	-	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Pass	5NT	Pass	7♥
All Pass			

1. Artificial, game force.

Yang, after limiting his strength, bid aggressively, spurring his side to the grand.

At the other table, the bidding proceeded the same for the first 3 bids, but South choose to bid 2NT (potentially denying 5 card club suit after North made a game forcing bid of 2♦). Instead of further investigating, North chose to jump to 6♥ after South cuebid the ♦K.

Segment 3; Board 8. West Dealer Neither Vul.

Hong		Nick G.	
♠	-	♠	K 8 7 6 2
♥	Q 6 5	♥	10 8 2
♦	A 10 9 3	♦	5 2
♣	Q J 10 9 7 2	♣	A K 8
Judy G.		Yang	
♠	Q J 10 9 5	♠	A 4 3
♥	J	♥	A K 9 7 4 3
♦	K 6 4	♦	Q J 8 7
♣	6 5 4 3	♣	-

Judy G	Hong	Nick G.	Yang
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
Pass	1♣	1♠	2♦ <sup>1</sup>
4♠	5♥	5♠	6♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass
All Pass			

1. Transfer showing hearts.

The interference allowed both Hong and Yang show their values and playing strength, arriving at a great contract! A 13 IMP gain when the Kersey pair stopped in 5♥. Finally:

An elderly gentleman goes to the Dr. for his annual checkup. The Dr. is impressed that this man is in even better health that he was the year before. Curious, he asks him what he does for mental stimulation. The man answers that he plays duplicate bridge. The doctor, a bridge player, tell him that's great. "And what do you do for physical stimulation?" "I sit East-West," is the reply.



ROUND ROBIN VS DFAULT

Board 16. Dealer West. E-W Vul.

	♠ 5	
	♥ AK10975	
	♦ 984	
	♣ 1093	
♠ AKJ62		♠ Q10973
♥ Q63		♥ -
♦ J6		♦ AK10752
♣ AQ4		♣ 52
	♠ 84	
	♥ J842	
	♦ Q3	
	♣ KJ876	



# meet ...

## JACOB FREEMAN

### CANADIAN BRIDGE CHAMPION

#### ***What drew you to start playing bridge and when did that happen?***

I've always had a propensity towards card games. I started playing Blackjack and Texas Hold 'em when I was very young. When I was about six years old my dad suggested that I would enjoy playing bridge, which several members of his family enjoyed playing competitively. I would watch him play on Bridge Base Online and eventually I created my own account.

#### ***What do you think the biggest differences are between then and now?***

For several years, I played bridge casually, partnering with my father in club games and local competitions. Recently, I have started playing with other junior players, which has allowed me to improve my game and compete against stronger competition. For me, the biggest difference between when I began and now is the competitiveness of the tournaments in which I participate. I have had the opportunity to compete against top players, which has allowed me to gain confidence and expand my knowledge of the game at a fast trajectory. It had been very rewarding to represent Canada in various tournaments.

#### ***What is your most memorable bridge moment?***

While there have been many memorable experiences participating in various junior competitions, by far my most memorable bridge moment occurred this past summer when I participated in the North American Online Bridge Championships knockout\*. In that event, my partner, Finn Kolesnik, and I invited Bob Hamman, Peter Weichsel, Kit Woosley, and Bart Bramley to team with us. Each of them was enthusiastic about the opportunity to mentor two aspiring junior players. This was certainly the best team Finn and I had ever been a part of, so we were excited but nervous. We entered

the event as the 7<sup>th</sup> seed. During our first two rounds we managed to accomplish convincing wins, but the level of competition continued to increase throughout. In the round of 16 we faced the Gupta team, which included a very strong Canadian player, Billy Cohen, along with several other top players. We secured the win and continued on to draw the Rosenthal team in the quarterfinals.

**\*Editor's note:** *The IBPA article is about the win by Jacob's team in this event.*

I had teamed with Andrew and Aaron for part of the New York City Regional, so I was excited to play against them! We had a solid start and led by 1 at the half. Our teammates managed to secure a convincing win in the fourth quarter. In the semis, we played against the Spector team composed of two ex-Canadian juniors, Gavin Wolpert and Vince Demuy. Our teammates once again had a remarkable fourth quarter, which helped to advance us to the finals, where we drew the Levine team.

The newly formed Team Levine consisted of Mike Levine, Eddie Wold, Jeff Meckstroth, Eric Rodwell, Geir Helgemo, and Tor Helness. They entered the event as the number four seed. Finn and I had a decent first half and the event remained close with the Levine team up by 8imps. As the second half, commenced the Levine team began to extend the lead. With four boards to go in the finals, we were down by 28imps. However, our teammates managed to rally to tie the match 113 to 113. Since it was 4:00 AM in Norway, we agreed to end the event in a tie for first place. Hamman thought this was a storybook result since his first National title in 1962 was also a two-way tie for first. It was a great learning opportunity to play on a team with such fantastic teammates and remarkable to accomplish such a great outcome!



### ***What about life away from the bridge table. You mentioned attending Western...***

I am currently attending the Ivey Business School at Western University. During my first two years at Western, I studied an Honours specialization in Economics along with minors in Philosophy and Political Science. I have aimed to share my interest in bridge with the Western community through co-founding a school bridge club. Last year, the executive team was successful in recruiting 25 students who were passionate about card games but had limited experience with bridge. Throughout the year, we offered training materials to members and hosted competitions. We plan to organize a team to participate in the Collegiate Bowl Qualifier this upcoming school year!

### ***What do you like to do besides bridge?***

One of my main interest outside of bridge is sports statistics. I enjoy applying my knowledge of statistics to developing hockey player and team projections. At Western, I am a conference and finance executive for the Western Sports Business Club. I am also very interested in the stock market and investment banking. I try to apply some of the similar statistical analysis concepts and my knowledge of macroeconomics to compete against my peers in investment simulators.

### ***What is your favourite bridge book?***

While I don't read nearly as many bridge books as I should, one that I really enjoyed is Killing Defence at Bridge by Hugh Kelsey.

### ***Cats or dogs?***

Dogs

### ***Red or white?***

Beer? ... I don't really drink wine, but I guess red.

### ***What advice would you give to a new player who wants to improve?***

One piece of advice that I received which really resonated with me is to remain open to and appreciate



everyone's input. No matter the skill level of the person, everyone has some valuable advice they can offer. Another area that I think can help new players is trying to reflect upon and analyze their mistakes. For me, I don't learn by reading but instead by doing so it was important that I aim to have constructive discussion about hands with partners, teammates, and mentors.

### ***Can you share any amusing stories with us?***

One of my first experiences playing against top level competition was during the Kingston Regional. Finn and his father, Alex, flew to Toronto to team with my Canadian junior partner, Bruce (Bo Han) Zhu, and I in that Regional. Jacob Morgan also offered to join the team too because it worked well with this schedule and he wanted to mentor us. We expected to be one of the favourites at the tournament but when we showed up at the tournament Finn recognized Jacek Kalita by the entry desk. The tournament aligned well logistically with the other regionals that Team Pepsi were participating in, so they decided to attend. We were lucky enough that we didn't need to face the team until the finals of the first knockout. While we were quite intimidated to face such strong competition, we played strong and got a bit lucky, so we managed to win. The next day each member of our team showed up with a bottle of Coca-Cola and changed our team name to Team Coca-Cola for the remainder of the tournament. We ended up beating them in each of the three events

## THE IBPA FILES

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



Happy Holidays from Kingsville, ON



## THE GREATS

*John Carruthers, Kingsville ON*

In an event run by the ACBL called the NAOBC Premier Knockout and intended to replace the Spingold, not played this year due to the pandemic, there was an incredibly unlikely (and ridiculous) ending.

The final, a 56-board match between KOLESNIK (Bart Bramley/Kit Woolsey, Jacob Freeman/Finn Kolesnik, Bob Hamman/Peter Weichsel) and LEVINE (Geir Helgemo/Tor Helness, Mike Levine/Eddie Wold, Jeff Meckstroth/Eric Rodwell) ended in a 113-113 tie. There was no carry-forward (since it was a knockout) and no provision for a playoff, so the match was declared a draw and both teams were declared winners. It was about the one-thousandth NABC win for Hamman and the first for Jacob and Finn.

Here was another unusual fact, this one about the KOLESNIK team: there were four senior citizens and two Juniors on the team – Finn Kolesnik is 17 years old and Bob Hamman is 82, perhaps the largest age span ever.

## TGBH

The immodest Bob Hamman, TGBH3 (The Great Bob Hamman III) on BBO, lived up to his moniker on the following deal:

Board 5. Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Hamman	Jansma	Weichsel	Willenken
—	2♣ <sup>1</sup>	Double	3♣
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. 6+ clubs, 10-15

The defence was a little unusual to say the least. Jansma led his two high clubs, receiving an odd-number signal from Willenken, then shifted to the intended-as-deceptive jack of diamonds. Hamman ducked and South overtook with the king, falling for the deception. Thinking that declarer had the queen of diamonds and his partner the jack-ten, Willenken went back to clubs, presenting Hamman with a ruff-sluff. Hamman also fell for the deception, thinking that South had the queen of diamonds and North something akin to jack-fourth, none, jack-third, ace-king-to-six. Declarer could have ruffed in hand, cashed one high heart, then crossed to dummy twice to pick up the trumps, later finessing the nine of diamonds. However, believing that South held the queen of diamonds, Hamman ruffed in the dummy and ran the seven of hearts, holding the trick!

Hamman: "Why are these guys giving me a ruff-sluff?"  
Answer: "Trumps are four-zero, Bob." Hamman: "Okay."

## TGBB

Bart Bramley (who works for Hamman's company, SCA Promotions, in Dallas) is much too modest to call himself the The Great Bart Bramley, as we do, but he is well-known as a fabulous technician in the play of the cards. Here he is in action against Meckwell in the final:

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

Board 13. Dealer North. Both Vul.

West	North	East	South
Woolsey	Meckstroth	Bramley	Rodwell
—	Pass	1NT <sup>1</sup>	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠ <sup>2</sup>	Double	2NT <sup>3</sup>	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

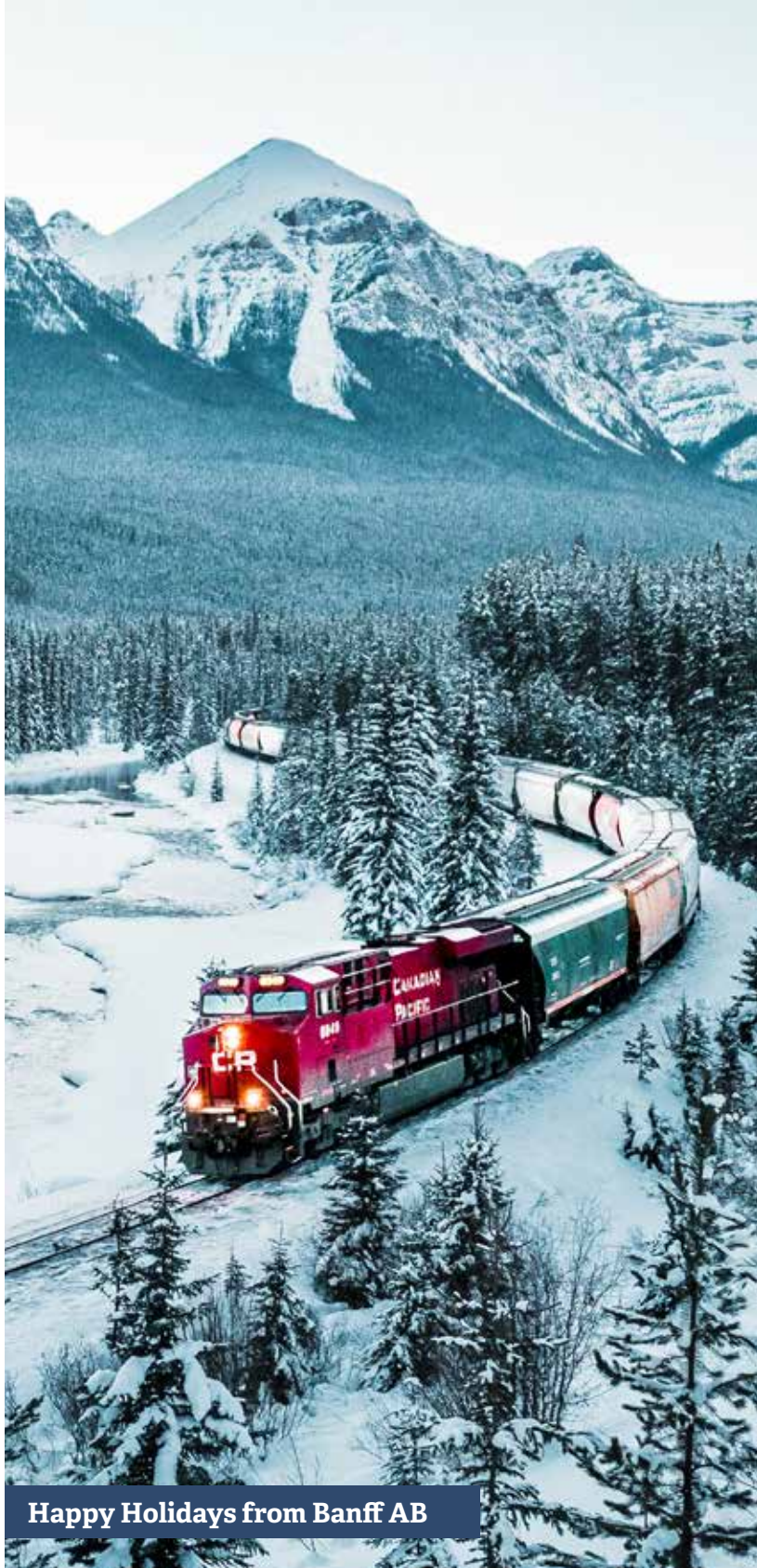
1. 14-16
2. Hearts, at least invitational
3. Rejects invitation

Rodwell led the five of spades and Meckstroth played the eight, attempting to maintain fluid transportation with the South hand. Bramley tried a sneaky three of diamonds: two, queen, ten. On the ace of clubs, Meck followed with the six, upside-down count, two, four. The jack of clubs was covered by the queen and king and the heart two (encouraging) discard. When Bramley crossed to the ace of spades and back to the ace of diamonds, he was pretty certain that North's original distribution had been 5=1=2=5. This was the end-position:

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

Bramley cashed the ace of hearts, removing North's exit card in that suit and got out with the queen of spades. Meckstroth showed a lot of class, claiming four tricks and conceding the contract. That was plus 600 for KOLESNIK.





Happy Holidays from Banff AB



by Andy Stark

# The Project Suit

First things first—just what is the project suit?

The first time I was introduced to the concept of the project suit was in the mid-70s when I was 11 years old and learning the game. My father's words were, "Okay, so now that you can see the dummy, you have to figure out a way to manufacture tricks." Manufacture—that's stayed with me. As if we're in a textile factory.

Then, throughout the years, upon reading Paul Thurston's excellent bridge column in the National Post, I would see Paul refer to the concept as "looking for nourishment," usually in a defensive trick-taking campaign, but still. Declarer's task is to make their contract. Sometimes it means ducking a trick in a suit, or sacrificing a high card, or taking a finesse, or taking a double finesse! The key is to focus on a

THE  
**NEW PLAYER**  
*Spot*

suit (sometimes two suits) where those tricks can be developed (i.e. nourished), thus acquiring enough tricks to make your contract, maybe even with overtricks.

Then along came one of the world's greatest bridge teachers, Barbara Seagram, who coined the term "project suit." This simple term gets her students to home in on the crux of a deal: what suit offers the greatest opportunity to declarer for developing tricks? It's a great habit to get into: upon seeing the dummy, ask yourself, "What is the project suit here?" And, "What do I need to do with the project suit?"

More often than not the project suit is the suit that needs the most work. In a trump contract it is often a side suit such as dummy's long suit, but it might be the trump suit itself. In a notrump contract the project suit is invariably not the suit you can cash winners off the top—because that does not require work. As declarer, consider yourself the project manager. Your project, should you wish to accept it, is to manage a key suit.

Here's a hand from a recent online game. West is declarer in 4♠. Which suit is the project suit?

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

Answer: Hearts. So, pitter patter, let's get at'er. If West can set up those lovely long hearts, this contract is practically cold. Many declarers went wrong trying to ruff clubs in the East hand. But if you focus on setting up the hearts the hand plays like a dream.

The opening lead from North was often the ♥10. Every declarer won the ♥A in dummy while following with the ♥9 from hand. First mistake. Declarers: as soon as you see the ♥10, your ♥J and ♥9 are now equals. So, play the card you are known to hold—the ♥J! South knows you have the ♥J because if North had the ♥J, along with the ♥10, they would have

led the ♥J, the top of touching honours. Here's your chance to muddy the waters and drop the jack. Now, South does not know where the ♥9 is. North might have the ♥9 for all South knows.

Next up—draw trumps; so, play a low spade to your king in hand. Say North grabs the ♠A and finds the diamond shift. South wins their ♦A but does not know what to do next. Best defense is to give partner a heart ruff, but that's not clear. South might play the ♣K. West can win the ♣A, draw trumps ending on the board (trumps split 3-2), cash the ♥K, and ruff a heart in hand. The board, as they say, reads. Here is the full deal:

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

The key is for West to focus on the heart suit. Set those hearts up and the East hand will become good. If the defense finds the heart ruff, good for them, but ten tricks will be there for the taking. Many Wests held themselves to nine or fewer tricks by not focusing on the project suit.

Here's another. West is declarer in 4♥. NS cash two high diamonds and switch to a spade. Which suit is the project suit?

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

Answer: Hearts is the main project; clubs is a side project. You'll see why in a second. The key is to win

## THE PROJECT SUIT ... CONTINUED

the spade shift in dummy with the king. This is not a time for “high card from the short side first.” You want to be in dummy to take the heart finesse, so be in the dummy to take the heart finesse—now! When you do, you discover good news and bad news. The good news is the ♥K is onside. The bad news is North has no hearts, so you have a heart loser after all.

Now what? Since you must lose a heart to South, because South started with ♥K1095, you must not lose any club tricks. Solution: take the club finesse. When you do, good news, it wins. Now repeat the heart finesse, cash your ♥A, and let South win their trump trick whenever they please.

Arguably the club suit was not really a project suit because there was one thing to do in the suit and that was take the club finesse. But the trump suit, hearts, needed attention. Many declarers went down because they didn’t do what was needed to prevent South from scoring two trump tricks. Note the diamonds were of no consequence because there was nothing for declarer to do except follow suit. Spades on this hand were not a project because there was only one thing to do in the suit and that was take the ♠A and ♠K whenever the declarer wanted. The full deal:

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

Here’s one more. West is declarer in 6♥. The opening lead from North is the ♣2. Which suit is the project suit? How early do you start playing on that suit?

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

If you give this hand to some top declarers there will be varying plans of attack. You could plan to ruff diamonds in the West hand. If the ♦K appears early, the East hand will be high. Another line, with just a tiny bit of risk, is to get rid of your clubs on West’s high spades and then take a diamond finesse. So, let’s try that. Let’s play on diamonds, the project suit, to get them set up.

Win the club ace and play a spade to hand. Cash two more spades and pitch dummy’s clubs. That works as the opponents follow throughout. Then take a diamond finesse. If the ♦10 loses to South’s ♦K you will need a friendly break in either diamonds or trumps. But if the ♦K is onside you are home free.

Here is the full deal:

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

Chances are North will cover the ♦10 with the king. Win the ♦A and ruff a diamond in hand with the ace. Then draw trumps ending on the board—it takes four rounds as North started with four trumps. You will take the first 12 tricks.

Next time you play bridge try to spot the project suit in every hand you declare. Success on the deal will depend on you not only recognizing the project suit but playing on it early. Go ahead: make my dad, Paul Thurston, Barbara Seagram, and me proud.





## CONVENTIONS 3

This is the fifteenth 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 II

In the first instalment the reader was introduced to negative doubles, and the general rules and guidelines on how to use.

This article will focus on:

- How high do you play negative doubles?
- What else do I need to think about when playing negative doubles?

### HOW HIGH DO YOU PLAY NEGATIVE DOUBLES?

This is a partnership preference. I have seen partnerships that play them through seven spades! Common is to play them through the three or four level. However if your side opens 1NT, and the opponents make a natural overcall, many partnerships play negative doubles only through two spades.

### IS THERE A DOWNSIDE TO PLAYING NEGATIVE DOUBLES?

Yes. A player can no longer make a penalty double. Let's say you hold ♠AJ1054 ♥K54 ♦A543 ♣3 and partner opened 1♣ and right hand opponent overcalls 2♠. In the old days it would easy – a penalty double.

Playing negative doubles, what can you do in this situation? There are two options:

- Bid 3NT.
- Pass and hope partner reopens with a double, which you will pass.

### IF I OPEN THE BIDDING AND MY LEFT HAND OPPONENT OVERCALLS, AND IT GOES PASS, PASS TO ME, WHAT DO I DO?

The important thing here is to be alert to partner having a penalty double. A strong indicator that this may be true is when you are short in the overcaller's suit.

## BRIDGE BASICS ... CONTINUED

Let's say the bidding started:

West	North	East	South
-	1♠	2♥	Pass
Pass	?		

You hold ♠ AKxxx ♥ x ♦ AQxx ♣ xxx. What do you do? There is a strong chance that partner has heart length, and may want to penalize the opponents. West would have raised with heart support, and you have shortness. Double. This says to partner, 'Pass if you have a hand where you want to penalize 2♥. If you don't, bid your best suit.'

### SHOULD I ALWAYS REOPEN WITH A DOUBLE IN THIS TYPE OF SITUATION?

It is recommended that opener reopens with a double with any hand that:

- Has shortness in the overcaller's suit
- Has relatively balanced distribution
- Has normal or better defensive values

If you are 6-5 or 6-6 it is recommended that you bid your 2nd suit. If you had a seven or eight card suit you would rebid it. The 3rd criteria is a little more unclear, and there is no unanimity amongst experts. Let's say you open 1♠ on ♠ QJxxx ♥ x ♦ KQxx ♣ KJx, and here the above auction. Many experts would not reopen with a double as the defensive values are below expectations for an opening bid. Some would simply rebid 2♠, but that is not perfect either. Pass is not an option.

**Quiz 1:** Should you reopen with double on the following auction?

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

1. ♠ xx ♥ KQ10xx ♦ AQxxx ♣ x.
2. ♠ QJ10 ♥ QJ10xxx ♦ Axxx ♣ -.
3. ♠ x ♥ AQxxx ♦ AQx ♣ xxxx.

4. ♠ xxx ♥ AKxxx ♦ Axxx ♣ x.
5. ♠ x ♥ AQxxx ♦ KQxx ♣ xxx.
6. ♠ x ♥ KJ10xxx ♦ AQxxxx ♣ -.

### Answers

1. Yes – you have a normal minimum opening bid with short clubs.
2. No – This is close, but defensive values and club void mitigate against. Bid 2♥. Having said that double could easily be the winning call.
3. No – too many clubs.
4. Absolutely.
5. No – but close. Three clubs makes it unlikely partner wants to penalize. And if that is true, then it is the opponent's hand, possibly in 4♠, as partner couldn't scrape up a negative double.
6. No – extreme distribution. If my small spade was the ace then it becomes a much closer decision. Bid 2♦.

### CAN I EVER PASS OUT THE OVERCALL?

If you have length in the overcaller's suit, yes. The reason is there are not enough cards in the suit for partner to have strength and length. However if you have less than three cards in the overcaller's suit pass is a no-no. If you decide not to reopen with a double, rebid your suit or bid a new suit.

### THE VULNERABILITY CONSIDERATION

One other variable is the vulnerability. Let's say in Quiz 1 above, South holds ♠ KJx ♥ Qx ♦ AJxx ♣ KJ108. If the vulnerability is either both or neither I would recommend passing and then penalizing. However vulnerable versus not, you will normally score better if you simply bid 3NT. The reason is +600 will score higher than the penalty of +300 or +500 if you defeat clubs 2 or 3 tricks.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF RESPONDER HAS UNDISCLOSED VALUES IN A NEGATIVE DOUBLE SITUATION?

Here is an example of this type of auction. As south you hold ♠ xxx ♥ xx ♦ AJ10xxx ♣ Qx. Partner opens 1♥ and RHO overcalls 1♠, what do you bid?

The answer is pass. You cannot make a negative double with only one minor, and you are not strong enough to bid 2♦. Now it goes pass, and partner doubles. What do you bid? Partner thinks you may have a trap pass, and is short in spades. Bid 3♦. This tells partner you have at least five diamonds, and around 7-9 points.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DO NOT HAVE EXTRA VALUES AND NO TRAP PASS (PENALTY DOUBLE)?

Simply choose a suit. Often you will go back to opener's major with a doubleton. Otherwise pick your longest suit.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF OPENER HAS UNDISCLOSED VALUES IN A NEGATIVE DOUBLE SITUATION?

Opener reopens with a double with shortness in the overcaller's suit as normal. If partner bids a suit opener will take another call, either a cue bid with a fit, notrump with a balanced strong hand or a new suit (a jump if you are very strong).

In the next issue we will look at high level negative doubles a little more closely, responsive doubles, and have a quiz.

# QUIZ

## INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

SOLUTION IS ON PAGE 20

Contract: 3NT IMPs

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

♠ A 9 5  
♥ A K 2  
♦ A 9 3  
♣ K Q 4 3

Lead: ♠2 (4th best). East plays the King. Plan the play.

One advantage of bad bidding is that you get practice at playing atrocious contracts.

-Alfred Sheinwold



Happy Holidays from St. John's, NL





## BIDDING STRATEGIES 3

### *Hand Evaluation* **PART II**

*By Neil Kimelman*

The first article in this series focused on two factors that affect the value of your hand:

- Value of your high card points.
- Intermediate cards.

I will now look at two other important considerations:

- Controls.
- The Bidding.

### **Controls**

This is a subtle area of hand evaluation. As we know, the play of a hand is often a race between the defense and declarer as to who can achieve their goals first. In notrump contracts the defenders try to set up their long suits, while declarer has the same goal with their long suit.

In a suit contract the strategies can be slightly different, setting up tricks and trying to score ruffs. In all cases controls,

THE  
**INTERMEDIATE**  
*Spot*

primarily aces, can make your goals easier, and should be given extra weight in the auction.

One common area where having aces versus kings is vital is when partner has preempted.

## Quiz 1:

Let's say no one is vulnerable at Matchpoints and partner has opened 3♦ in first seat, and RHO passes. Would you consider bidding more with any of the following hands:

1. ♠ KQJx ♥ KQx ♦ Axx ♣ Qxx.
2. ♠ AKJx ♥ QJx ♦ xx ♣ Kxxx.
3. ♠ Jxxx ♥ QJx ♦ KJx ♣ AKx.
4. ♠ xxxx ♥ AKJxx ♦ Ax ♣ xx.
5. ♠ QJxx ♥ xxxx ♦ Ax ♣ AKx.

Answers to Quiz

1. ♠ KQJx ♥ KQx ♦ Axx ♣ Qxx.

Despite having 17 HCPs you have no realistic hope of any game. Opposite a minimum hand like ♠ xx ♥ xxx ♦ KQJxxxx ♣ x you want to be in 3♦, and have a fair amount of defense if the opponents enter the auction. Even a maximum will make game an underdog:

- ♠ Ax ♥ xxx ♦ KQJxxxx ♣ x
- ♠ xxx ♥ xx ♦ KQJxxx ♣ Kx
- ♠ x ♥ Axx ♦ QJ10xxxx ♣ xx

2. ♠ AKJx ♥ QJx ♦ xx ♣ Kxxx.

This is closer, and probably 50-50. On a heart or club lead you will need to take six diamond tricks without giving up the lead. So partner needs a good suit, AQJxxx to make it close to 50%, or AKxxxx. Possible but all in all, a low likelihood of being a winner pass. Now if you had three or four small diamonds game would be a reasonable gamble.

3. ♠ Jxxx ♥ QJx ♦ KJx ♣ AKx.

Pass. If partner has AQxxxx and out then the opponents have five top tricks versus notrump, and likely three plus tricks against 5♦.

4. ♠ xxxx ♥ AKJxx ♦ Ax ♣ xx.

Here game prospects are better, despite only 11 HCPs. I would bid 3♥. Several good things could happen: The opponents could declare and partner will lead a heart, almost for sure the best start for the defense. Partner will raise hearts with x Qxx KQxxxx xx or similar. Partner will bid 3NT with Kx x KQ10xxx Qxxx.

5. ♠ QJxx ♥ xxxx ♦ Ax ♣ AKx.

3NT. Might not make, but it just might. You are hoping for K xxx KQxxxx xx, or xx Kx KQJxxx xxx.

Controls are equally important when evaluating hands in constructive auctions:

## Example 1:

♠ AK876 ♥ J8 ♦ QJ7 ♣ K65

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	1♠
P	2♦ <sup>1</sup>	P	?

1. Exactly three spades, 10-11 HCPs.

I would sign off in 2♠. Yes, you have 14 HCPs, but they are very soft. You have only one ace and no shortness. Visualizing a few hands partner can have is always a useful tool for bidding decision making:

1. ♠ 543 ♥ AK32 ♦ 1043 ♣ A98
2. ♠ J43 ♥ K32 ♦ A854 ♣ Q98
3. ♠ QJ3 ♥ AQ32 ♦ 1043 ♣ J98
4. ♠ Q43 ♥ A2 ♦ K10643 ♣ J98

Only 4 gives you close to a 50% chance at game.

## Example 2:

♠ K6 ♥ 5 ♦ AKJ987 ♣ A765

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	1♠
P	2♦	P	3♦
P	?		

## BIDDING STRATEGIES 2 ... CONTINUED

Here I love my hand. I have 1st round control of clubs and 2nd round control of hearts, plus a 6th diamond, plus the king in my partner's 1st bid suit. I can easily see seven making opposite a minimum opener such as ♠ AJ876 ♥ A43 ♦ Q1097 ♣ 9. Compare with ♠ 6 ♥ KJ5 ♦ AKJ987 ♣ QJ65.

### Example 3:

♠ AK6 ♥ 10875 ♦ A987 ♣ Q6

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♣	P	?

Bid 3NT. Easy. You envision six clubs and your three aces opposite even a bad 2♣ bid such as ♠ xxx Kx xx AKJ987. But give South one extra point: ♠ QJ6 ♥ KQJ5 ♦ KJ987 ♣ J6, and with no quick tricks only an invitation is warranted.

**Next issue:** We will continue the examination of correctly valuing your holdings, reevaluating as the bidding progresses.



Guy going out with this girl for some time and they play bridge regularly, but not much is happening romantically. Finally, she puts him in this God-awful slam and says: "If you make this contract, I'll sleep with you." He tries his hardest, but trumps don't break and a couple of finesses don't work and he winds up going down three! She says: "That's close enough".

# QUIZ

## INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

### PROBLEM ON PAGE 17

Contract: 3NT IMPs

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

Lead: ♠2 (4th best). East plays the King. Plan the play.

When East played the king of spades at trick one, declarer should place West with either ♠QJxx or ♠Q10xx, for surely they would have led the ♠Q if holding the jack and ten as well.

As declarer, you do not relish a heart switch, so you should take the first trick with the ♠A, and pause to consider. You can count seven top tricks. The best chance for two additional tricks is a 4<sup>th</sup> club trick, and a 2<sup>nd</sup> diamond trick, accomplished by taking two finesses. The problem with this is that you only have one sure entry to dummy, the ♣A. You can take one diamond finesse but can't get to dummy for a 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The best overall strategy is to hope that West has the ♣J. Therefore, the best line is to win the first trick, play the ♣K (in case East has a singleton jack) and lead a 2<sup>nd</sup> club, finessing the ten. When that wins, lead the ♦J to the 2, 3, and king. West can cash three spade tricks, and shift to a heart. You win, play a club to the ace, and a diamond, finessing the nine, your 9<sup>th</sup> trick.





# the **GREAT** **CANADIAN** **BIDDING** **CONTEST**



## DECEMBER 2020

Host: Neil Kimelman

For Panelists, see page 35

*Welcome to the December edition of the TGCBC! Congratulations to Jay Kriplani, who had the top reader score for December with 47. Michael Dimich was close behind with 46. Malcolm Millar had the highest combined scores for October/December, and will receive the \$100 first prize. Jay will receive \$50 for finishing 2nd. Zygmunt Marcinski and Stephen Cooper were the top scoring panelists with 48. February Problems can be found on page 34.*

*I will try to entertain and facilitate discussion among the expert panel as they discuss and dissect these 5 bridge decisions. As usual, I will be very assertive in sharing my views, and this will be reflected in the scoring. Ahhh, the power of the pen. Let's begin:*

### Hand 1.

As south, you hold ♠10 ♥1042 ♦AKJ1097 ♣AK5.  
Neither Vul, Matchpoints.

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

What do you bid?

Happy Holidays from Winnipeg MB

Action	Votes	Score
2♣	8	10
3♦	16	8
3♥	0	7
2♥	0	3
3♣	0	2
2♦	0	2

**This was a two horse raise. Let's start with the 2-1 majority 3♦ bidders, who seemed pretty smug in their choice:**

**Fergani:** 3♦. What else?

**Thurston:** 3♦ – medium hand, good diamonds, even a partial heart fit – what else?

**Treble:** 3♦. Too good a suit and fast winners to do anything else.

**Kuz:** 3♦. This should be unanimous.

**Campbell:** 3♦. Yes, Pard could hold xxxx AKxxx x xxx and not be able to bid again, but as the opps have not interfered, there is a better chance pard will not pass.

**Grainger:** 3♦ in standard. There is a trend to have a bid for this hand type it's so awkward, I have one myself.

**Yes, hands with good values, holding a good six card minor, and three cards in partner's major are hard, because there is a lot of info you want to share, and it is not clear as to where to place the emphasis.**

**Lindop:** 3♦. This shows an intermediate hand of about 17-18 points and a good six-card or longer suit, a good description of my hand, Sure, I might miss a 5-3 heart fit, but the auction isn't over. I'm not a Roth or Kokish 2♣ bidder ... "If only I can get by this round."

**Kirr:** 3♦, not enough for a GF, 2♣ does not solve my problems later.

**Jacob:** 3♦, partner can rebid 3♥ with 5+.

**Turner:** 3♦ is the value bid based on the heart fit. 3♥ by him now would be forcing, so that somewhat mitigates the chances of him having to bid 3NT with 5 hearts and an inadequate spade stopper.

**I would agree completely with the 3♦ bidders if I was 3-1 in the majors. Some panelists consider, and then discard also-ran bids.**

**Bishop:** 3♦. Yes, we can understand the thrill of rebidding a Kokish-inspired 2♣ but not at the expense of a value-showing and descriptive 3♦ bid. It's where I live and shows a good hand with a 'flaw' for a 2NT rebid [I've been known to make those on good suited 17's if the rest of the hand makes it feel right]. For those thinking of 3♣ as only a mild overbid; think again. The recent CNTC's had an auction start that way and opener's hand for the 3♣ rebid was KQx A AQJ10xx KQx which is more than just 'a slight bit better' than today's hand.

**Cimon:** 3♦ but I hate to jump in my suit when I have 3 card support in partner's major suit. If I had KJx in Heart and A109xxx in ♦. I will just bid 3 Hearts. This hand is too strong to bid only 2♥ or 2♦.

**I agree. If forced to raise hearts, I would bid three.**

**Willis:** 3♦. The value bid and likely to get us to a makeable game if there is one. Hearts may be good if partner has the tops but 2♥ is too light and 3♥ is too misdirected. 2♣ is a possibility but if you open hands that are 4-5 in minors 1♦ (4 card suit) the suit lengths start to get significantly skewed.

**Good point.**

**Todd:** 3♦. An interesting problem which begs how best to keep hearts in the picture and not distort your hand. 2♣ might work as you can bid hearts if partner retreats to diamonds. It can also backfire. I think a straightforward 3♦ doesn't close any doors and may get you to a good slam.

**Blond:** 3♦. The excellent quality of my diamonds, quick tricks and secondary heart support lead me to go for the more aggressive 3♦ bid rather than the wide-ranging 2♦ or the slightly misleading 2♥. Especially at IMPs, I would need partner to have a spade card to make 3NT from his side to be a pretty good shot. If he can rebid hearts over 3♦, my hand looks fantastic in support and slam is excellent opposite some perfect 9 or 10 counts Axx KQJxx xx xxx or xxx AKQxx xx xxx.

**L'Ecuyer:** 2♣. I have never been a big fan of three of a minor suit rebid with a side unbid shortness, partner is often cornered into an uncomfortable bid and may well bid 3NT with Jxx of spades or the like – since here hearts or diamonds may well be a better strain than notrump, I will try to go slow hoping to hear more from partner and trying to get to the right strain – the only danger of 2♣ is partner passing it which is not a big deal since game is surely not in the cards facing a hand that could not bid over 2♣.

**Exactly. Passing 2♣ is a possibility, however a typical hand for that bid, Kxxx Qxxx x xxx is likely down 2 in 2♣, but also down 1 or 2 in 3♦.**

**Dalton:** 2♣. Too good for 2♦ and 3♦ takes up a lot of space. Better to leave max room to find out if hearts is the right strain. 2♣ can be up to about 18 HCP and partner will usually try to find another bid. If partner gives preference to 2♦ I will follow up with 2♥, which of course shows extra values. If partner passes 2♣, well, perhaps I can scramble eight tricks.

**Stark:** 2♣. This feels like a close relative to the famous Bridge World death hand. I am mentally shifting the ♦7 into my clubs and bidding 2♣. From there I can bid hearts next. Over pard's 2♦ rebid, I will bid 2♥. Over 2♥, I can bid 3♥, maybe even 4♥ if an Ontario player is on lead. If I rebid 3♦, which is right on values, I might play it there; cold for 4♥.

**Marcinski:** 2♣. The classic chestnut of "if partner bids I'll be well-placed and if he passes it may not be our best spot but need not be terrible": of course I'll bid 2♥ (showing 1354 or 1363 with "a king extra") With silent opposition, I think that it's likelier that partner will find a bid rather than pass...and as responder should be aware of this hand type he should strain to make a false preference to 2♦ rather than pass. Pass is arguably a higher risk proposition at Pairs.

**Lebi:** 2♣, then if the auction allows, I can bid hearts at my next opportunity.

### **Starting on his pet theme:**

**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?

**Miles:** 2♣. The classic problem in standard bidding in which any seemingly sensible action could lead to a silly result (while enduring the laughter of the strong clubbers). If partner holds Axxx xxxx Q xxxx we may fail in 2♣ with 3NT laydown. The "value" bid is 3♦ but this seems to always lead to an uncomfortable decision over 3NT. At least all my values will be in the two suits I bid. I will jump in hearts next (or wait for the opening lead!).

**Cooper:** 2♣. Kokish would approve. Hope for another chance! Not without risk, but Partner will take a false preference with a constructive hand.

**I agree with these last panelists. 2♣ can win in so many ways. If partner takes a preference to 2♦ or raises clubs we can now show our three card heart support. If partner rebids hearts we will bid game in hearts. If they rebid 3♥ we can expect something like ♠ Ax ♥ AQ98xx ♦ xx ♣ xxx, and bid the odds on slam. Finally partner can hold ♠ x ♥ AJxx ♦ xx ♣ QJ10xxx. It would be embarrassing to play in 3♦ on a hand that you can make five or six clubs.**



**What happened at the table? This hand came up during the 2020 Canadian Bridge Championships. The full deal:**

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

**3NT went down on the natural spade lead, even with the diamonds sitting friendly. However it would have made if spades were 4-4. 4♥ and 5♦ will make with normal play.**

## Hand 2.

♠ 842 ♥ A109865 ♦ 106 ♣ A8, neither Vul,imps,

West	North	East	South
-	1♦	Pass	1♥
4♣	Pass	Pass	?

What do you bid?

Action	Votes	Score
DbI	14	10
Pass	7	8
4♥	3	6

**There are a number of issues on this surprisingly complex problem. Pass waves the white flag. Sure partner might bid again, but don't hold your breath. Let's hear what the passers have to say:**

**Campbell:** Pass. They probably got me!

**Fergani:** Pass. Luckily it is not a Matchpoint problem.  
**L'Ecuyer:** Pass. I would like to double this but partner will likely bid 4♦ which will probably lead to going minus – therefore I pass since game is unlikely to make

and I don't have enough values to act intelligently.

**Todd:** Pass. I'm torn between a sound pass and an aggressive 4♥. If I am playing weak notrump methods I would try 4♥, as partner will not have a balanced minimum. Opposite a standard 1♦ opener, I find many reconstructions have no play.

**Lindop:** Pass. With two quick tricks and partner opening the bidding, I'd like to double. However, I don't want to hear 4♦ or 4♠ from partner. I'll just have to hope 4♥ isn't laydown. It would be too risky to (overbid) 4♥ with this hand. At least we're not vulnerable.

**So the questions is: what will partner do opposite a double?**

**Bishop:** PASS! ...With two 'sure' defensive tricks opposite an opening bid from partner, at first glance it seems that we should rule out pass as a possible choice; leaving just 4♥ and double. Most players (we think) would have played opener's direct double over the 4♣ interference as 'extra values; takeout' – something at least like AQJ9 K10 KQ9xxx x, or perhaps KQ9x Kxx AQJx Kx (perhaps counting on the auction that our hand will deliver little in the way of club 'wastage'). But unless opener has one of those 'extra-value TKO' hands [or has a sound raise to 2♥ with 4-trumps, and has failed to act over 4♣]... the question then becomes what can we make opposite a normal light-to-medium opening [especially if it's balanced with a doubleton club – or, worse yet, with short hearts]!? If we are lucky enough (and opener is clairvoyant enough) to pull to 4♥, we may be okay, but with little play to make... but, if expecting us to have a more pure 'takeout of clubs' hand, opener pulls out to 4♠, then we may have real no landing spot. What pray tell is opener supposed to do with KJ10x Qx AQ9xx xx [which is in everyone's opening books nowadays]? ...'

**I think that a double at the four level shows at least invitational, convertible values. Shape is mostly unknown, and thus pulling the double will only be done with a hand that has a strong offensive bias. Therefore, on Ron's above example, partner will have**



**an easy pass with that 4-2-5-2 minimum.**

**Marcinski:** Pass. 4♣ undoubled may not be the best result possible but in my judgment it is the best possible result. Sure, I'd like to double to show extras and be content if opener either passes or rebids 4♥, but:

A. What if holding say 4-1-6-2 he rebids 4♦ and then pulls to 4♠ my attempt to get to 4♥, or

B. With a better hand he rebids 4♠. How do you like your chances for a plus score then? 4♥ instead of pass or double should deliver meatier hearts and is a solo flight that that carries no guarantees - though of course it could workout. Indeed, if I were barred from passing I would prefer 4♥ to double. Once again, a much tougher problem at Pairs than at IMPs where I could well conclude that I cannot satisfied with "collecting 50's" and must chance either X or 4♥ (my choice).

***The last two panelists make excellent points. There are bad things that can happen if you double. Partner will bid a suit with an offensive oriented hand, and you will trade a small plus for a minus. Take your sure, safe plus, and try to win the match on a different hand. The problem with that, is the opponents get to push you around on a hand that you know is yours. The aggressive Manitoba crowd (I guess I get it naturally):***

**Treble:** Double.

**Kuz:** Dbl. I have got my apology ready.

**Hornby:** Double. I have convertible values.

***Not many comments here. How about the non-Manitoban doubles?***

**Turner:** Double. In case we have a 10-card heart fit.

**Grainger:** Double and hope for the best.

**Stark:** Double. The trend these days is that West is bidding one more for good measure. Hey it works. It might work here, too, but I am hoping partner has a 4♥ bid or a pass. 4♥ is a tad unilateral.

**Dalton:** Double. The most flexible call – hoping partner can bid 4♥ or simply pass with no obvious action to take.

**Thurston:** Double – action!

**Blond:** This is close. 4♥ is too unilateral and while pass is my second choice, I think it's a bit too wimpy. I would double to show partner that I have defensive values. Happy if partner passes. Would correct 4♦ to 4♥ to show my extra length and possibly score a game bonus.

**Willis:** Double as the most flexible action – card showing. I am willing to defend with 2 aces and only 2 diamonds. I can correct 4♦ by pard to 4♥ and expect it to be playable. We (and they) are likely to have spade losers in our contracts (although West could be 7-4 or 8-4 in the blacks). I can handle most leads (including a trump) when partner chooses to defend. I think I remember this hand and am still doubling which shows you how hard I am to teach....

**Jacob:** Double. A bit slim but 4♥ is too one sided and I ain't passing. I just hope that partner doesn't bid 4♠.

**Mackay:** Double. I think I am hoping this will end the auction but maybe I am dreaming. Maybe pass would work better (given partner did not act over 4♣). That would end the auction.

**Cooper:** Double. Although partner will only pull to 4♥ with four of them, we're OK if he passes.

**Lebi:** Double, to show that the hand belongs to us.

*The questions I think you want to ask yourself before bidding are:*

**1. Can 4♣ make? No. West is trying to put pressure on us, and I would expect +300 as the average outcome when partner has a minimum balanced hand.**

**2. When will partner pull the double? Here the vulnerability is a key issue. Both white, partner will sit for the double unless they have extreme shape. Why try for +420 when +300 (or +500) is just fine, on a hand where you are starting to look for a fit at the four level? No I expect partner will pass all balanced hands, all hands with 2-3 small clubs, and all minimum 3-4-5-1, 4-2-6-1, 4-4-4-1, or the like.**

*No, on balance, I think pass is too conservative. Three panelists opt for bidding their long suit.*

**Kirr:** 4♥, its IMPs.

**Miles:** 4♥. No, I'm not thrilled about it, having been bullied there, but the upside is too juicy to pass up - partner can still hold 3 or 4 hearts and game could be laydown opposite a minimum. The downside of course is partner may have 0 or 1 heart, and we may even get doubled. There's some line about paying your entry fee and...

**Cimon:** 4♥. My spots in hearts are good. In that situation I prefer to bid than to pass. I can't double it should show more HCPs and fewer hearts. But yes I often go down.

*This is the bid that was made at the table – let's see how it turned out:*

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

Brink  
 ♠ 10 6 5  
 ♥ 3  
 ♦ Q 2  
 ♣ K Q J 6 4 3 2

BasDrijver  
 ♠ A J 9 3  
 ♥ K Q J  
 ♦ J 9 7 4  
 ♣ 9 7

Weinstein  
 ♠ 8 4 2  
 ♥ A 10 9 8 6 5  
 ♦ 10 6  
 ♣ A 8

*At the table during the final of the 2019 Soloway KO Pairs at the SF NABC, Weinstein bid 4♥. East doubled – 300 instead of +300 in 4♣ doubled, a 12 IMP swing.*

### Hand 3.

As east, you hold ♠QJ10972 ♥75 ♦KJ10 ♣J6. Both Vul, Matchpoints.

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♦	?	
Action	Votes	Score	
2♠	3	10	
4♠	19	9	
3♦	2	9	
3♠	0	7	

*Like problem one, there are a group of panelists who think the right bid is obvious:*

**Marcinski:** 4♠ I can't wait to see arguments in favour of any alternative.

*Zygmunt limiting his thoughts to once sentence is a rare occurrence.*

**Lebi:** 4♠, according to "The Law".

**Kirr:** 4♠, either they or us can make something.

**Miles:** 4♠. Perhaps partner can cover 4 of our 7 losers. Perhaps East will have a tough time finding the right lead. Perhaps the auction isn't even over yet! We have 11 (or more) spades and half (or more) of the deck? Let's quickly get to game.

**Blond:** 4♠ I like to put maximum pressure on the opponents. I have great defense if they choose to go on to 5♦, which I would happily double. If they have a heart or club fit, this bid makes it harder for them to find it. Yes I could construct hands where the opponents score two diamond ruffs when 3NT is cold, but with heart and clubs wide open from my point of view, I will eschew notrump to bid what I think I can make.

**Dalton:** 4♠. No need to give the opponents room to find a possible 4♥ game. Not interested in notrump despite the probable double stopper.

**Thurston:** 4♠. Not trash when vulnerable!

**Willis:** 4♠. Am unlikely to miss a slam. They are unlikely to bid 5♦ and we need to block out hearts and clubs quickly. I can also see 2NT and 2♠ as having various merits in slowing the auction down and/or walking the dog. 3♦ is likely to leave the opponents room and leave me with the 5-level guess and 3♠ understates my values significantly.

**Stark:** 4♠. Keeping it simple. The opps might be cold for 5♥, maybe even a slam in hearts or clubs.

**Turner:** 4♠. And double 5♦ in front of partner if necessary later.

**Grainger:** 4♠, what am I missing?

**Todd:** 4♠. Maximum pressure! I may have useful diamond values on offense and they are useful on defense.

*If your diamonds values may be useful on defense why speed up the auction?*

**Cooper:** 4♠. Spade honours are redundant, have one trick (and partner could be short there).

*Yes your spade values are redundant, and maybe your 6<sup>th</sup> spade as well, as your hand still has no short suit. I believe that five card support for a major in some 5-3-3-2 shapes is overvalued, and much different than let's say 5-1-4-3.*

**Lindop:** 4♠. A 3♦ cuebid is a possibility, but I'll just go with the call likely to be made by the rest of the field. I'm not afraid if the opponents want to compete further, and I don't think I have the right values to consider slam possibilities.

*We experts want to take advantage of our supposed extra knowledge and experience, and not necessarily bid with the field.*

**Bishop:** 4♠. A problem in evaluation combined with preemption. We would like to say we have a 'mixed raise' of sorts; some offense and some defense (if only against diamonds) with 4+trumps. We know some experts play a jump to 3 our major -1 (here, that would be 3♥), might show our hand, but don't believe it's in the arsenal for the moment. Hate to jump to 4♠ without a singleton, but it will generally leave the last guess up the opponents. Note: we have a nightmare scenario that comes to mind over 4♠: 4NT (takeout from LHO), pass from partner, 5♣ (from RHO)... do we pass having stampeded them into a game that will likely make or do we break partnership discipline by (a) hitting it; not dreaming how we could possibly beat it; or (b) save (?) at the 5-level hoping for -500 (-200, maybe) instead of -600.

*Then maybe it is better not to bid 4♠. If you bid 2♠ you can listen to what the opponents and partner have to say. Two of the 4♠ bidders were describing their hand, and leave things to partner and the opponents.*

**L'Ecuyer:** 4♠ – who knows who is making what? They may have a making game in 5♣ or 5♥ – they may have nothing making – but this is not my decision to try to guess – I will leave them this guess.

**Cimon:** 4♠. Despite the long spade, I don't much like this hand, but I don't think they can double for penalties, as we have too many spades. I am afraid they have a fit in hearts and they can find it easily if I don't jump to four.

### **Two panelists look past the fine six-card support:**

**Fergani:** 3♦. An obvious overbid. Unless we have some gadgets, the other alternative would be 4♠, but we've got some defensive values and we don't want to encourage partner to "phantom save" at the 5 level if opponents get involved.

**Treble:** 3♦. I'll stretch for a limit raise. I have some defense. 4♠ leaves our side on a guess later on.

### **Continuing on the defensive theme:**

**Campbell:** 2♠ then 3♠. I am more inclined to defend a possible 4♥ than bid 4♠.

### **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.

**The panelists didn't give this problem as much thought as I hoped. I suspect that we are going minus when partner has a normal minimum opening bid – ♠ AKxxx ♥ Kxx ♦ x ♣ Qxxx or ♠ AKxxx ♥ KQxx ♦ xx ♣ xx. What about the opponents, can they make anything? As L'Ecuyer said, we don't know for sure.**

### **But we do know two things:**

1. Partner has an opening bid, and
2. The diamonds are sitting poorly for the opponents.

**No, I am guessing that the opponents are usually going minus. What bad can happen if you bid 2♠? If partner makes a game try you will gladly accept. If instead, partner simply bids game you know it is your hand and the opponents will be less likely to bid on, as you have disguised your hand type well. If partner passes throughout then it is probably right to defend at the game level. I agree completely with Bob Kuz:**

**Kuz:** 2♠. This is the right call and I expect my zero for it.

**Fergani was the only panelist who considered the impact of bidding 4♠ on partner. If we bid 4♠, they may bid on, thinking the opponents are making or 5♠ will make. That is exactly what happened at the table? The full deal:**

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

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♦	4♠	5♥
5♠	All Pass		

**Down one. 5♥ goes down three.**

### **Hand 4.**

As South, you hold ♠A9 ♥KJ63 ♦A102 ♣A875. E-W Vul., IMPs.

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

1. What does the double mean?
2. What do you bid?



Action	Votes	Score
Pass	3	10
2♥	21	9

**Another problem I was hoping for a more detailed discussion. The vast majority of the panel chose bidding 2♥. Lebi, Campbell, Grainger, Thurston, Cooper, Fergani, Kuz all said takeout and bid 2♥ with few comments.**

**The questions I was hoping to address:**

1. What hands would North have to bid directly over 1NT?
2. What inference can we draw if North had chosen 2♥ or 2♠ instead of doubling?
3. Does North promise a specific HCP range?

**Let's take a look at a few comments which may aid our enlightenment. First what would have a direct bid meant:**

**Willis:** Double is values with a takeout orientation but limited by your failure to transfer to a 5-card major or bid "garbage stayman". Your style with respect to garbage stayman may have some bearing however a hand such as KJxx, Qxxx 9x Jxx or Qxxx Axxx Jx xxx is possible. Note that as you could bid 2♥ here as takeout for majors (you didn't transfer out originally) you should have a couple of diamonds and some willingness to defend. 2♥ – see the sample hands above which have 2 club losers, a diamond loser and something else. If you needed a swing in the match you could consider 3♥ but it is only a white game. Pass should not be considered unless East is a known complete lunatic.

**Stark:** a) Takeout; b) 2♥. Toughest one of the set. This is a situation where pard could have bid 2♥ (or 2♠) to say, "I have two places to play--pass or correct." So pard's double should be three places to play: typically,

a 6- or 7-count with 4=4=1=4 shape. Or possibly a 5- or 6- count with 4=4=0=5 shape. I can't see partner having as many as 8 HCPs or a 5-card major or else they would have bid differently last round. Good discussion hand!

**Lindop:** Partner's double is takeout. Partner can hardly have a penalty double in this auction. Partner could have bid 2♥ or 2♠ on a four-card suit in this auction, since partner would presumably have transferred with a five-card suit. So I assume partner has four cards in both majors and wants me to choose. 2♥. I'm not going to defend, even at this vulnerability. I assume East knows about the vulnerability also. If I'm wrong, and partner was doubling for penalty, I guess we'll play 2NT. If partner "corrects" to 2♠, I'll "correct" to 3♣.

**If North wanted to compete with a weaker hand with two or three places to play, they could have balanced with their lowest suit. Maybe ♠xx ♥Q10xx ♦xx ♣QJ10x or ♠KQxx ♥xxxx ♦x ♣xxxx. Since we know that North has denied a five card major, they will have two places to play, as it would make no sense balancing with a weak 4-3-3-3 hand. How about points? In a minority:**

**Jacob:** Weak TO; partner already passed 1NT. I bid 2♥.

**Most panelists gave a range. Miles 5-7, Stark 6-7, Turner 6-7, Todd and Cimon 5-8, Bishop 5-6. I agree that the double shows values, and I would go on to say a maximum non-invite hand. It gives partner the option of going for penalties.**

**Miles:** Take-out / competitive. Perhaps 5-7 points... with anywhere from 4-4-2-3 to 4-3-1-5 shape, give or take a card...'

**Turner:** a) Takeout, I guess. I assume 4-4 in the majors, 6-7 HCP. 2♥ only. We were in a partial a moment ago. But tempting to bid 3♥.

**Whatever partner may have, jumping to 3♥ feels to me like punishing partner.**

# Mollo ON PLAY XI

Contract: 3NT by South at IMPs.

North

♠ 5 3  
♥ A K Q  
♦ A J 10  
♣ A J 10 3 2

South

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

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

Lead: ♠9. East overtakes with the ten, which you allow to hold. East continues with the ♠K. Plan the play.

Answer on page 36.

**Blond:** I play double as enough values to compete and takeout. Partner can't have a penalty double of 2♦ here, he just doesn't want to sell out...'

**Here is the verbose Zyg that I know and love:**

**Marcinski:** Double shows:

- (i) just under invitational (to 3NT) strength;
- (ii) Never a diamond void, occasionally a singleton, but assumed to be exactly a doubleton.;
- (iii) The initial Pass precludes a 5+ major, hence likeliest shapes are 4=4=2=3, 3=4=2=4, 4=3=2=4, 2=4=2=5, and 4=2=2=5;
- (iv) Might even be (32)26 with poor clubs. ...

**If you buy what Zyg is selling I think passing the double is the odds-on best bet. However after making this analysis, he came to a different conclusion:**

'...Despite my diamond ten and mildly marked opening lead of ♠A, the chances of 2♦ doubled fetching are not negligible: if partner's certain fit in one (or worse, both!) round suit also holds the preponderance of his slender values AND hits declarer's shortness.'

**Possible, and we go -180. However if giving odds I would say 65% +200, 20% +500 and 15% -180.**

**Todd:** The double is takeout, probably with some defense. Not willing to sell out but no game interest. I bid 2♥. With this vulnerability and form of the game, I think it's a tough choice between 2♥ and pass. At Matchpoints I would pass. Partner rates to be something like 4423 with 5-8 HCP. If long in both majors our defensive prospects are less. He knows I have something in diamonds but doesn't know how much. His double instead of bidding, may be protecting, knowing it is our hand.

**So the question remains, what does the double mean? We (I mean me) have eliminated most hand types. So I think that it shows good values, at least ok with defending, if not outright suggesting it, otherwise they would have bid a suit. This too means at least two**



Happy Holidays from Quebec, Que

**kings. If you buy this, then their shape is a little more ambiguous.**

**Kirr:** I think at IMPs, this is takeout or optional. I bid 2♥.

**Treble:** Partner's double is willingness to compete, not 100% penalty.

**Simon:** a) Takeout, short diamonds and 5-8 HCP can be 4-3-2-4. b) 2♥. If I was certain he had 4 Hearts, I will jump to 3 Hearts. I don't want to hang him for reopening with a 4-3-2-4 or 4-3-1-5, even though I think my hand is gold in that sequence.

**I would bid 2♠ with 4-3-1-5 with non-defensive values. Something like J10xx J10xx x QJ10xx. Hoping for +110 or -50 versus a very likely -110 letting East play in 2♦.**

**Getting closer to my view:**

**Dalton:** Essentially takeout and showing values. Pass. I have a defensive-looking hand and I think there is a good chance of beating it - on a good day it will go down two. The diamond ten could be a big card. Partner doesn't guarantee four hearts so bidding and making 2♥ is not assured.

**Hornby:** Double is defense, not enough to invite game. Pass, no reason to bid. I'll try for +200. The question is what to lead? ♠A and try for a ruff or a trump and let declarer struggle away?

**L'Ecuyer:** Double should be some values with diamond shortness (partner should not act with diamond length - I don't see partner's idea to issue a penalty double when RHO freely competed, at UNFAV, in front of a 1NT overcall. I bid 2♥ - partner is probably 4423 or something like that with about 6-7 HCP, I am happy to bid my 4 card major.

**One of our reader's and regular submitters came very close to my own point of view:**

**Spiers:** This looks like a DSI (Do Something Intelligent) leaning towards penalty with 2-3 diamonds. I pass. We don't have a game. Pard knows what I have and did not stayman before. Pard may be 3-4 or 4-3 in the majors... which one? Hopefully he has a diamond honor. At least the double does not put them in game. Partner has 6 or 7 to a bad 8 HCP and I see 4 tricks in my hand. The problem is what to lead.

**What happened at the table? This hand came up during the Canadian Bridge Championships. The full deal:**

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

**South bid 2♥, down 1 for -50. East was enamored by their 14 HCPs, and rebid 2♦. On the ♠A lead this would have netted -800 (if not for the 109x of hearts it could have been -1100) if allowed to play there doubled.**

## Hand 5.

As south, you hold ♠943 ♥AK832 ♦10 ♣AQ54. Neither Vul, pairs.

West	North	East	South
-	-	1♠	2♥
2♠	Pass	4♥	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

What do you lead?

Action	Votes	Score
♠3/4	11	10
♦10	0	8
♥K/A	10	6
♣A	2	2
♥2	1	2

**The panel's energy on this problem was low, possibly deservedly. I think that East is 99% void in hearts, and is looking for a maximum with no heart wastage. It is unclear if East is one or two suited. Most panelists led a low spade. Kirr and Fergani with no comment.**

**Cooper:** Spade three. Sounds like they are bidding on distribution.

**You think? A couple of different predictions on the holdings around the table:**

**Treble:** Anything could be right. What could dummy have for the jump to 6♠? Who knows? Three-suited with values in one minor and shortness in the other? I would lead a trump and be prepared to wind up with egg on my face. Top heart is my second choice. I'm not going to be a hero with a club lead.

**Kuz:** Spade three. My spirit side tells me LHO is Kxxx QJT9xx AKx void. My practical side is laughing because this will allow them to take 12 or 13 tricks when I had 2 aces.

**Lindop:** ♠3. Strange auction. Where are the hearts if partner – holding spade shortness – didn't raise and East also has shortness? I expect dummy to have length in hearts and shortness in one or both minors. I don't expect my club winner(s) to go away on diamonds. I'll just try to cut down on declarer trying to ruff club losers in dummy.

**Blond:** For me, this comes down to a choice between a trump and the ♥A. Feels like LHO might have something like Kxx Jxxx AKQxxx —. A trump lead might be crucial to preventing club ruffs while partner hopefully has diamonds stopped at least once. While my gut tells me to lead a trump on the go, I am a realist

and think I would try to cash the HxAx first. On an auction like this, it is not unheard of for two aces to be cashing and I'd hate to make the "brilliant" lead of a trump only to watch them take 12 pointed-suit tricks when we had two tricks to take first.

**Miles:** ♠3. This won't win any polls and it's much less likely to be led at the table – at least here I only look stupid on paper. The auction is a bit strange – what does West have for the slam blast? Length and no wastage in hearts; good trumps (perhaps more than 3) with potentially a source of tricks in diamonds – Qxx xxxx AQxxx x? Maybe a club void for lack of Blackwood? We own a lot of HCP for the opponents to be in slam, and own control in two side suits. I'll lead a trump in case declarer is 6-0-3-4 or 5-0-4-4 opposite something like 3-4-5-1 and needs to ruff 2 clubs in dummy. Hopefully declarer doesn't have 12 off the top in spades and diamonds when we had 2!

**Marcinski:** ♠4. I expect a club void on my left, so ♣A is unlikely to cash before declarer's club losers get discarded on Dummy's diamonds. ♥A may not cash, and if it doesn't it may assist declarer's cause to set up dummy's hearts – yes hearts. My pointed suit distribution could prove to be a nasty thorn in declarer's side. Looks to me like a trump combines my best shot for a beat without compromising my chances of scoring at least a trick.

**L'Ecuyer:** I lead the ♠3. Not sure what is going on but this is a lot of bidding. Partner has nothing. I am hoping to play a second trump when winning a trick and I hope they don't have 12 tricks. Against known overbidders I might lead the heart A but I think here I will lose an important tempo facing decent players.

**Cimon:** 3♠. I hope 4♥ show a void. It is strange that jumps to 6 after having bid only 2. He should have a long suit on the side with 4 spades, shortness in clubs. Maybe I can lose my A of clubs and it is duplicate but I want to try to defeat them. I will feel very badly if I can cash the ♥A and the ♣A on the go.

**Campbell:** 3♠. I expect dummy is way more likely to



hold shortness in probably clubs, than to have a suit which declarer can pitch losers on.

**Back to the dog questions:**

**Mackay:** Who is west? Does he own a Great Dane? I will lead the heart king (asking for count). What great imagination I have.

**On this auction, 4♥ sounds like a void to me.**

**Bishop:** ♥K. The auction doesn't seem to make much sense UNLESS 4♥ was specifically a SLAM TRY and showed a Heart VOID... since without that, and combined with his earlier only mild competitive raise, our RHO's current precipitous leap to slam seems impossible. What can he have to motivate him... we have the heart ace and reasonable clubs, so what could he possibly have?? Since he has some spade support (can't be extreme length or his whole hand would have qualified for a stronger action on the previous round); he must have good values in diamonds combined with a trump honour in his supporting length.

Let's give him a reasonable hand that MIGHT qualify for his current jump... how about Qxx xxxxx AJ98x -. There, that seems about right?! Now we see why this hand was included in the problem set!! Obviously someone SAVED with our hand (no)... caught a miracle for play in clubs and either MADE it; or went down only 1! Our partner's hand would then be this (or something of the sort): - Qx Qxxx J10xxxxx. (Giving declarer AKJxxxx J Kxx Kx).

**I think with that hand East will either bid 4♠, giving up on the perfecto, or try 3♦.**

**Turner:** ♥A. Doesn't everyone hate leading against these kinds of auctions? My guess is dummy has some diamond length and a hand like: Qxx, Jxxx, KJxxx, J10, as I would expect declarer to have a high honour in both

minors. If the latter is true, the ♣A could easily give away the contract if declarer actually has a heart void. Since declarer might have bid 3♥ with a heart void, I'm going to try and cash my two aces. If giving partner a club ruff or his CK was the winner somehow, c'est la vie.

**Thurston:** Ace of hearts – more orthodox than LHO's bidding!

**Everyone is questioning West, but I am not sure why. East has shown heart shortness (void), and is asking partner with extra non-wasted values for their 2♠ bid to bid slam.**

**Willis:** Ace of Hearts. Unless the opponents imply a heart void by agreement I lead the Heart Ace as the most likely cashing trick while retaining some possibilities to beat things. Second choice is a trump. There are dummy's with long diamonds and a club stiff where a club could be right to take your trick but we are potentially getting a bad result if West has shot a slam with that hand. If they are in a normal slam with west having 4 trump and a club void then have likely done the right thing. Sample West Hand: Jxxx Jxxxx KQJx Void or 9xxx Qxxx KJT9xx Void. Would be good to understand if playing fit bids and the likelihood that 4♥ is void versus stiff.

**There were a small group of heart leaders, with nothing to say.**

**Grainger:** ♥K with no comment.

**Hornby:** ♥A.

**Dalton:** ♥A. I think it's unlikely that a club lead out of the gate is necessary. Starting with the club ace could be the only lead to allow declarer to make it.

**Todd:** ♣A. Is this from Bridge in the Menagerie? Is 4♥ a void or a self-splinter? My head hurts.

**Jacob:** Strange: first West is willing to play 2♠, but once partner shows a good hand with heart shortage the hand is good enough for six. ♣A.

*And we will end with some pizzazz:*

**Stark:** ♥2. The sexy play. Suit preference for clubs and all the Matchpoints! Pard either has the ♥Q or it's in dummy and declarer might call low. If declarer has the singleton ♥Q and this is the only lead to allow the contract to make...we'll all have a good laugh.

**Trump leads on distributional hands can be effective leads in three ways:**

- Cut down on ruffs.
- Affect declarer's timing, thus reducing lines of play.
- Give nothing away.

**The full deal:**

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

**On the actual deal the trump lead was the winner, accomplishing all three of the above goals. Diamond lead also works by prematurely removing a dummy entry. A heart (or a club) allows declarer to make the contract, by reversing the dummy. At a local duplicate game south led a diamond and declarer had no play once spades were 3-1. Season's greetings and thanks to all panelists, and all the best in the New Year!!**

## February 2021 Problems

Host: Bryan Maksymetz

1) Matchpoints. Neither vul., as South you hold  
♠AK532 ♥K ♦AK742 ♣85.

West	North	East	South
-	Pass	1♥	?

2) Matchpoints. E-W Vulnerable, as South you hold  
♠AKQJ1084 ♥A ♦J107 ♣AQ.

West	North	East	South
-	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣ <sup>1</sup>
Pass	4♦	Pass	4NT <sup>2</sup>
Pass	5♦ <sup>3</sup>	Pass	?

1. Control
2. RKC
3. 0 or 3

3) Imps. N-S vul., as South you hold  
♠Q ♥Q108 ♦AKQ6 ♣AQ963.

West	North	East	South
-	-	3♠	Dbl
4♠	Dbl <sup>1</sup>	Pass	?

1. Responsive

4) Matchpoints. Neither vul., as South you hold  
♠KJ76 ♥- ♦AJ742 ♣AQ52.

West	North	East	South
-	-	Pass	1♦
3♥	Dbl <sup>1</sup>	5♥	?

1. Negative

5) Imps. N-S vul., as South you hold  
♠AQ3 ♥KQJ852 ♦- ♣AQ82.

West	North	East	South
-	-	Pass	1♥
4♦	Dbl <sup>1</sup>	5♦	?

1. DBL is negative



## PANEL'S ANSWERS

Panelists	Hand 1		Hand 2		Hand 3		Hand 4		Hand 5		Total
	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	
Bishop, Ron	3♦	8	Pass	8	4♠	9	2♥	9	♥K	6	40
Blond, Jeff	3♦	8	Dbl	10	4♠	9	2♥	9	♥A	6	42
Campbell, Gordon	3♦	8	Pass	8	2♠	10	2♥	9	♠3	10	45
Cimon, Francine	3♦	8	4♥	6	4♠	9	2♥	9	♠3	10	42
Cooper, Stephen	2♣	10	Dbl	10	4♠	9	2♥	9	♠3	10	48
Dalton, Roy	2♣	10	Dbl	10	4♠	9	Pass	10	♥A	6	45
Fergani, Kamel	3♦	8	Pass	8	3♦	9	2♥	9	♠3	10	44
Grainger, David	3♦	8	Dbl	10	4♠	9	2♥	9	♥K	6	42
Hornby, Ray	3♦	8	Dbl	10	4♠	9	Pass	10	♥A	6	43
Jacob, Dan	3♦	8	Dbl	10	4♠	9	2♥	9	♣A	2	38
Kirr, Martin	3♦	8	4♥	6	4♠	9	2♥	9	♠3	10	42
Kuz, Bob	3♦	8	Dbl	10	2♠	10	2♥	9	♠3	10	47
L'Ecuier, Nic	2♣	10	Pass	8	4♠	9	2♥	9	♠3	10	46
Lebi, Robert	2♣	10	Dbl	10	4♠	9	2♥	9	♥K	6	44
Lindop, David	3♦	8	Pass	8	4♠	9	2♥	9	♠3.	10	44
Mackay, Steve	2♣	10	Dbl	10	2♠	10	2♥	9	♥K	6	45
Marcinski, Zygmunt	2♣	10	Pass	10	4♠	9	2♥	9	♠4	10	48
Miles, Danny	2♣	10	4♥	6	4♠	9	2♥	9	♠3	10	44
Stark, Andy	2♣	10	Dbl	10	4♠	9	2♥	9	♥2	2	40
Thurston, Paul	3♦	8	Dbl	10	4♠	9	2♥	9	♥A	6	42
Todd, Bob	3♦	8	Pass	8	4♠	9	2♥	9	♣A	2	36
Treble, Bill	3♦	8	Dbl	10	3♦	9	Pass	10	♠3	10	47
Turner, David	3♦	8	Dbl	10	4♠	9	2♥	9	♥A	6	42
Willis, David	3♦	8	Dbl	10	4♠	9	2♥	9	♥A	6	42

# MOLLO On Play

Problem on page 30.

Contract: 3NT by South at IMPs.

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

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

Lead: ♠9. East overtakes with the ten, which you allow to hold. East continues with the ♠K. Plan the play.

South must bring in the diamonds, and focus on 3-2 breaks as most 4-1 or 5-0 breaks are unmanageable. Fortunately there is a way to succeed, regardless of where the ♦Q is located. First, hold off spades for one more round, in case they are distributed 3-5. On the third round of spades discard the ♥Q! Now cash two rounds of hearts and play the ♦A, then the ♦J. If East plays small finesse and claim ten tricks. If East covers, blocking the suit, win and cash the ♥J, discarding the ♦10, scoring ten tricks that way. If the diamond finesse loses to West, they have no more spades to play, and you have nine tricks and your contract.



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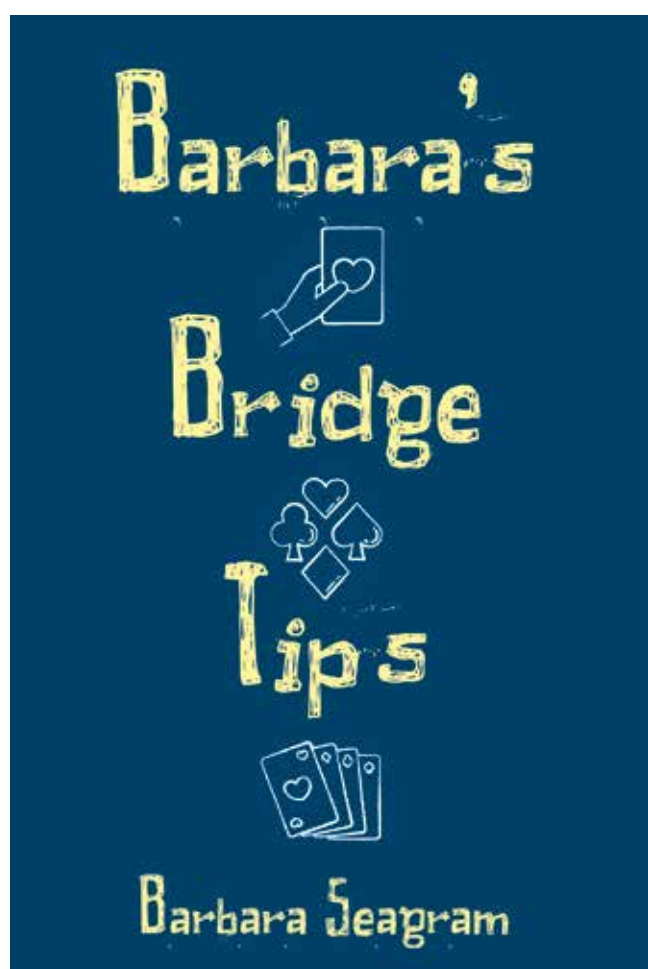


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