

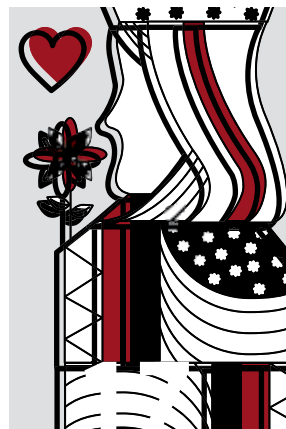
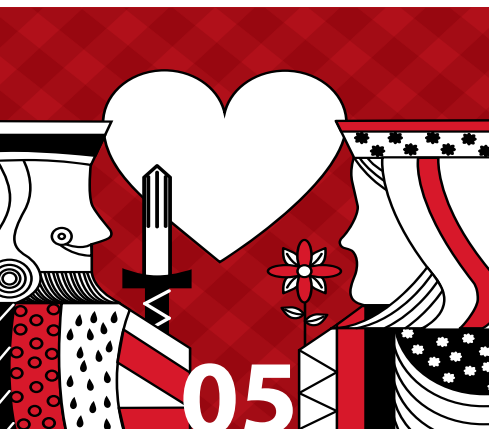
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CBF | FEBRUARY 2021

bridge *Canada*



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

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

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

2021 – Yes!!

The CBF will again hold the Canadian Bridge Championships online, but have added more events so that more of our members can participate. All events will be completed by the end of May. Check our website for details: cbf.ca

Welcome new board members, Susie Cooper from Zone 3 (Ontario) and Shelley Burns Zone 6 (BC), replacing Angela Fenton. Thank you Angela for your service!

A disciplinary code will be enacted in the near future to protect players, as well the integrity of our competitions. All members should read it to know their rights and responsibilities!

A word of advice – be careful walking outside on snow and ice, or you end up with a broken shoulder, like me!

Neil Kimelman

CBF President & Bridge Canada Managing Editor



PLAY or Defend?

In these problems you must determine who will prevail if all sides play perfectly, declarer or the defenders?

Contract: 6♣ by South

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

Answer on page 34.

The CBF and Twitch

The CBF has been broadcasting some playoff matches from our Championships and Online Team League on Twitch after they are played on BBO. These broadcasts include expert commentary.

We will announce upcoming broadcasts on our website and on Facebook. (Do you follow our facebook page? Look up Canadian Bridge Federation)

On Twitch we are CanadaBridge and you can watch recent broadcasts there. Or you can view older broadcasts on our YouTube channel – Canadian Bridge Federation.

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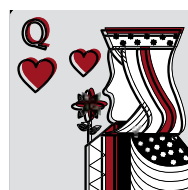
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meet ...

SUSIE COOPER

CBF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Susie is the newest CBF Board member, replacing Nader Hanna as the Zone 3, Ontario representative.

What drew you to start playing bridge and when did it happen?

My parents went to play at the local community centre. The game was being run by Ted and Audrey Horning. They were talking about how they were opening a club in the new mall at our corner. At that time kids worked at the clubs. They served coffee and tea and cleaned up after the game. My parents said they had 2 daughters that could use a job.

Within a couple of months working there, Ted decided that all of his staff needed to learn to play, and he gave free lessons to the kids that worked there. After 5 lessons, Ted was calling me in the evenings to fill in. At the time I was 14 and my sister Karen was 11. When I would show up to play, the adult I was set to play with often wasn't happy to see a kid, but Ted would look at them and say, "you wish you could play as well as her."

What is your most memorable bridge moment?

I have some great stories about my bridge life. My sister and I were playing at the club one night. We had no idea what we were doing, but in those days, a Friday night game was a very social time. The director came up to me and said the next pair were really good players. I didn't tell my sister anything. We played the round, and they left the table, when my sister leaned across and said to me "I think they are worse than us." We later found out that it was Ruth Gold and Franco Bandoni who we played with. When Franco heard what Karen had said, he decided he needed to play with

her, so every Friday night for the next year they played together.

Besides Ted Horning teaching and mentoring me, I had another great player take me under his wing - Mark Molson. In 1985, I travelled to Halifax to play in the CWTC's. I got to play a mixed pairs event with Mark, and we won - my first regional win. Since I was so young when I started, lots of great players decided they needed to look after me at tournaments. Also, in Halifax, the day before the women's event started, I got invited to sit by the pool for the day with a bunch of women playing in the event. All I can say is - with 12 women and myself around a pool with wine and an interesting conversation (not for all ears to hear), I was redder than my lobster that night.

My first bridge tournament without parents and guardians was the trip to the Montreal Regional. Karen and I hopped on a train with Mark and David Caplan and Fred Gitelman. We had such a great time. We switched around and everyone played with everyone, but no one wanted to play with Fred. We decided he wasn't as good as us! How wrong were we!

Other than Bridge

Bridge gave me the confidence to go back to school and get 2 diplomas. I have my Early Childhood and Autism Behavioural Science diplomas. This all led to me becoming a Special Needs Educational Assistant for the Toronto District School Board, but I am also qualified to be a Therapist for children with Autism.

meet ... SUSIE COOPER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Red or White?

I prefer white but very dry. My favourite is a Gewurztraminer. Or give me a Martini with lots of olives anytime.

As a new CBF Board member, do you have thoughts of how to increase membership?

I would like to see some of the players who have represented Canada in the past give back to the Canadian Bridge community that has supported them.

With online play now maybe we could use those international players to have a Masters - Non-masters game. It could be promoted by saying "buy your CBF membership and play/learn from a World Class Canadian player". This might show how the CBF is promoting grassroots bridge.

What advice would you give to a new young player?

Bridge is a great game to learn, but there is a time and a place for it. School comes first. Have an academic goal first, then learn bridge. There are so many avenues to be able to learn bridge, and now that bridge is easily accessible online, take the opportunities to watch the skilled players and great vugraphs that are on. Reading books about bridge was never my style because I'm a visual learner.

Mollo ON PLAY XIII

Contract: 4♠ by South at IMPs.

North

♠ 3 2

♥ 5 4

♦ A J 10 8 6 4

♣ A K Q

South

♠ A Q J 10 8 7 6

♥ Q 3

♦ 3

♣ J 10 9

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

Lead: ♦5. After winning the ace, you lead a spade from dummy, on which East discards the ♣3. Plan the play.

Answer on page 27.

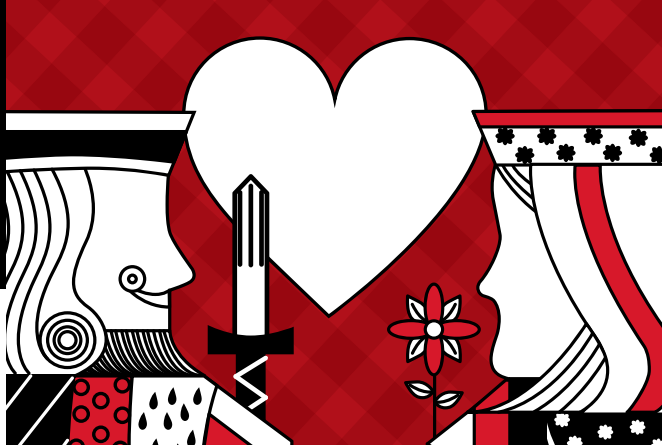


A player who can't defend accurately should try to become declarer (or dummy).

Alfred Sheinwold

2021 Canadian Bridge Championships
Online

PLAY BEGINS FEBRUARY 6, 2021 ON BBO



2020 CANADIAN BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS (CBC)

CWTC

Gold: Pamela Nisbet (Dunedin ON), Brenda Bryant (Ferndale MI), Julie Smith, (Vancouver, BC) Judy Harris (Salmon Arm BC).

Silver: Sondra Blank (L'Île Bizard QC), Hazel Wolpert & Lesley Thomson (North York ON), Linda Wynston (Toronto ON), Sylvia Summers (Ridgway, PA), Barbara Saltsman (Montreal QC).

Bronze: Alben Vassileva (North Bay ON), Olivia Laufer & Cindy He (Toronto ON), Jasmine Xiong (Markham ON).

Bronze: Joan Eaton (North York ON), Karen Cumpstone (Nanaimo BC), Katie Thorpe (Kingsville ON), Ina Demme (Maple, ON.)

CSTC

Gold: Kamel Fergani & Zygmunt Marcinski (Montreal QC), Gordon Campbell & Nicholas Gartaganis (Calgary AB).

Silver: Arno Hobart (deceased), George Mittelman (Thornhill ON), Boris Baran (Cote Saint-Luc QC), Pierre Daigneault (Montreal, QC), Drew Cannell (Ste Lazare QC).

Bronze: Dan Jacob & Gord McOrmond (Vancouver BC), Jurek Czyzowicz (Gatineau QC), Robert Lebi (Toronto ON), Michael Hargreaves (Victoria BC); Piotr Klimowicz (Edmonton AB).

Bronze: Bob Todd, Doug Fisher & Neil Kimelman (Winnipeg, MB); Paul Thurston (Wellington ON).

In the spring of 2020, the Canadian Bridge Federation (CBF) decided to change its Face-to-Face (F2F) 2020 Canadian Championships scheduled for May 2020 in Niagara Falls to an online competition. That BBO championship resulted in the largest ever number of teams ever (69 that I counted), even though the CBF could not run any of the Flight B or C teams. There were four categories: Open, Women, Senior and Mixed teams. The online CBC began on BBO in early June and was a marathon until October.

The 2020 CBC Medalists

CNTC - A

Gold: Kai Zhou (Burnaby, BC), Xinguo Chen, Lu Gan, Alex Hong & Sidney Yang (Vancouver, BC).

Silver: Don Kersey (Kingston, ON), William Koski (King City ON), John Duquette (Oshawa ON), Ron Bishop (Toronto, ON), Nicholas and Judith Gartaganis (Calgary, AB).

Bronze: Nader Hanna, John Rayner & Martin Kirr (Toronto ON), John Carruthers (Kingsville ON); Paul Thurston (Wellington ON); Keith Balcombe (Whitby ON).

Bronze: Ranald Davidson (Delray Beach, FL), Marc-André Fourcaudot (Montreal, QC), Kismet Fung (Edmonton AB), Michael Gamble (Shawinigan Lake, BC), Bruce Zhu & Danny Miles (Toronto ON).

The 2020 Online Championship resulted in the largest ever number of teams ever registered in a championship (69), even though the CBF did not run any of the Flight B or C teams.

CMTC

Gold: Eiji Kujirai (North York ON), Barbara Clinton (Aurora ON), Francine Asselin Cimon, Marc-André Fourcaudot, & Kamel Fergani (Montreal, QC), Louise Berthiaume (Terrebonne QC).

Silver: Wendy Krause & Arnold Krause (Markham ON), Julie Berdock & Mike Kenny (Aurora, ON).

Bronze: Andy Stark (Toronto ON), Katie Thorpe (Kingsville ON), Ina Demme & Bill Kertes (Nobleton ON), Roisin O'Hara & Paul O'Hara (Oakville ON).

Bronze: David Willis (Ottawa, ON), Pamela Nisbet (Dunedin ON), Jeff Blond (Brossard, QC), Brenda Bryant (Ferndale MI).

Some interesting tidbits from these championships:

- Kamel Fergani (Montréal) won two events (Mixed and Seniors); he now has 8 championship wins.
- Francine Cimon (Montréal) won her 16th Canadian Championship event.
- Nick Gartaganis (Calgary) is now a 7 time winner and an 8 time runner-up.
- Sadly, CSTC team captain Arno Hobart passed away unexpectedly during the championships.
- Danny Miles started Bridge Night in Canada broadcasts for the playoffs of the Open and Seniors' events. You can view on YouTube on the Canadian Bridge Federation channel.
- The CBF started the CBC Achievement Awards for the best played, best defended and best bid hands of the Championships.

• The CMTC (mixed teams) favourite to win, full of Canadian champions, lost by a lone IMP in the playoffs

• The CNTC champions were all first time winners, victorious in all their playoff matches by wide margins

• The CSTC (seniors) winner was decided by a slam swing on the third last hand after a see-saw final quarter. Here is that hand:

14		N Guppy2303	W N E S			
		♠ AKQJ65	P	1♠	P	1♥
		♥ K72	P	3♣	P	2♦
		♦ 93	P	3♠	P	3♥
		♣ 84	P	4♥	P	3NT
			P	4NT		
W mittmouse		E canooz				
♠ 10932		♠ 87				
♥ Q		♥ 965				
♦ J5		♦ AQ742				
♣ Q97632		♣ J105				
	S fergani					
	♠ 4					
	♥ AJ10843					
	♦ K1086					
	♣ AK					
			6♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0			

Fergani and Marcinski bid the good slam, but Baran and Daigneault only made a mild slam try. BARAN'S 5 IMP lead became FERGANI'S 6 IMP lead, the final margin. The Bridge Night in Canada broadcast, included an interview the winners – just like on its hockey namesake. Kamel Fergani stated something like "I drove to slam because I thought our opponents would bid it". Such was the margin of victory.



Regardless of what sadistic impulses we may harbor, winning bridge means helping partner avoid mistakes.

Frank Stewart

2020 Canadian Bridge Championships (CBC)

CANBRI ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

by Keith Balcombe

This year, the CBF created the CANBRI Achievement Awards, to recognize excellence during the 2020 Canadian Bridge Championships. I agreed to sit on the selection panel, which was tasked with choosing the most worthy of the nominations received from players. The categories were: Best Declarer Play; Best Defense; and Best Bidding. .

The selection panel was: Francine Asselin Cimon (Montréal), Aidan Ballantine (Vancouver) BC and yours truly.

There were 15 submissions from all over our fine country, and, in a Canadian way, five submissions from each category with winners from three provinces.

THE BEST PLAYED HAND

Winner: Gordon Campbell

3NT CSTC Round Robin

Runner-up: George Mittelman

5♦ CSTC Final

THE BEST DEFENDED HAND

Winners: Zygmunt Marcinski-Kamel Fergani

4♥ CSTC Final

Runner-up: Neil Kimelman-Paul Thurston

3NT CSTC Round Robin

THE BEST BID HAND

Winners: Alex Hong-Sydney Yang

7♠ CNTC Round Robin

Runner-up: Gordon Campbell-Nick Gartaganis

3NT CSTC Semi-final

THE BEST PLAYED HAND WINNER

Gordon Campbell

3NT CSTC Round Robin

Lead ♣4

South opened 1NT (11-13) and responded 2♠ to Stayman

♠ A 7 5
♥ A J 8
♦ 6 5 3 2
♣ K 6 3

♠ K J 4 3
♥ Q 9 5
♦ A Q J 8
♣ 8 2

My thanks to Judith and Nicholas Gartaganis (Calgary) for their descriptions about the hand used in my account.

Although the two hands have a combined 25 HCPs, there is a lot of work to be done as the starting trick total is only 4. Gordon played low on the initial club lead. East played the ♣Q and returned the ♣10. West covered with the ♣J and Gordon won the King.

Gordon's next play was the ♦2 from dummy and East played the ♦K. Gordon cashed the ♦Q and was relieved to see East follow with the ♦7. Declarer's trick count was up to eight (now four diamonds tricks, two spades, one heart and one club already in).

Without any information, declarer's best option for a ninth trick is to combine chances by cashing the two top spades hoping the Queen comes down and fall back on the finesse for the ♥K. This assumes clubs are 5-3 and that the opponents can defeat your contract when they get in. Another possibility is to hope clubs are 4-4 and finesse for the ♥K.

Best played hand, Best defended hand and Best bid hand during the online 2020 CBC, determined from player submissions.

Gordon did neither! He put the opponents on lead by leading back their suit, clubs. After carefully watching the discards, he correctly deduced that the ♥K was offside (with East) and that East has discarded down to two spades. At the end (trick 12), West started with only two spades, thus the doubleton ♠Q. Beautifully done.

Here is the full hand:

3		N North	
		♠A75	
		♥AJ8	
		♦6532	
		♣K63	
W West		W N E S	
♠Q9		1NT	
♥1062		Pass 2♣ Pass 2♠	
♦1094		Pass 2NT Pass 3NT	
♣AJ954		Pass Pass Pass	
		E East	
		♠10862	
		♥K743	
		♦K7	
		♣Q107	
		S South	
		♠KJ43	
		♥Q95	
		♦AQJ8	
		♣82	

Trick #	Play
Trick 5	♦ winner - J, 10, 3, ♥3 from E (encour.)
Trick 6	♦ winner - E & W both pitched hearts
Trick 7	♠ to Ace.
Trick 8	♣ throw in club from dummy, won by W
Trick 9	W: ♣A, spade discard by the other three hands.
Trick 10	W: ♣J, N: ♥8, E: ♠6, S: ♥Q.
Trick 11	Heart from W, Won by ♥A in dummy.
Trick 12	♠ from N, ♠ K by declarer, dropping ♠Q

You can play along with Gordon on the CBF website.

THE BEST PLAYED HAND RUNNER-UP

George Mittelman

5♦ CSTC Final

North Opening lead: ♠2 (3rd & 5th best)

How would YOU play 5♦? BTW, trumps are 4-0. Go to the CBF website to find out what George did.

W mittmouse	W N E S	E canooz
♠7	Pass 1NT 2♣	♠AK8
♥AJ762	Dbl 2♠ Pass Pas	♥84
♦AQ95	3♥ Pass 3♠ Pas	♦KJ1074
♣742	4♦ Pass 5♦ Pas	♣KJ5

THE BEST DEFENDED HAND WINNER

Zygmunt Marcinski-Kamel Fergani

4♥ CSTC Final

Board 13		N Guppy2303	
		♠Q82	
		♥1094	
		♦109853	
		♣102	
W mittmouse		W N E S	
♠J4		Pass Pass 1♠	
♥AK63		Dbl Pass 3♥ Pass	
♦Q72		4♥ Pass Pass Pass	
♣AJ95			
		E canooz	
		♠1093	
		♥Q752	
		♦KJ64	
		♣K8	
		S fergani	
		♠AK765	
		♥J8	
		♦A	
		♣Q7643	

The defense was:

Trick 1: ♠A, 4, 2 (U-D Att.) 9.

Trick 2 ♦A, 2, 10 (suit pref.), 6.

Trick 3 ♠7, J, Q, 10.

Trick 4 ♦5, 4, ♥8, 7.

Down one, win 13 IMPs.

THE BEST DEFENDED HAND RUNNER-UP

Neil Kimelman-Paul Thurston

3NT CSTC Round Robin

Board 3				
3				
N thegomlin 17				
♠873				
♥AJ				
♦Q532				
♣AK72				
W NDK 6+				
♠5				
♥876				
♦AKJ1076				
♣965				
W N E S				
1♥				
Pass 2♣ Pass 2♥				
Pass 3♦ Pass 3NT				
PassPassPass				
E thurston				
♠AQ1092				
♥105				
♦4				
♣QJ843				
S pierre da				
♠KJ64				
♥KQ9432				
♦98				
♣10				
3NT South				
0 0				

Trick 1: ♦J, 2, 4, 9

Trick 2: ♦10, 3, ♠2, 8

Result: +150, win 11 IMPs

THE BEST BID HAND WINNER

Alex Hong-Sydney Yang

7♠ CNTC Round Robin

Board 16				
16				
N primex 8				
♠5				
♥AK10975				
♦984				
♣1093				
W fhong 3+				
♠AKJ62				
♥Q63				
♦J6				
♣AQ4				
W N E S				
1NT 2♣ 2♥ Pass				
3♠ Pass 5♥ Pass				
5NT Pass 7♠ Pass				
PassPass				
E yysidney 2+				
♠Q10973				
♥				
♦AK10752				
♣52				
S eebtown 6+				
♠84				
♥J842				
♦Q3				
♣KJ876				
7♠ West				
0 0				

Strong notrump.

Jacoby Transfer (system on over 2♣).

Super accept.

Exclusion RKC (♥ void).

Conclusion.

Wow!

THE BEST BID HAND RUNNER-UP

Gordon Campbell-Nick Gartaganis

3NT CSTC Semi-final

Board 15				
15				
N DoctorJ				
♠AK				
♥KJ				
♦K984				
♣AKJ52				
W mittmouse				
♠9654				
♥A1098642				
♦A7				
♣				
W N E S				
1♥ Dbl Pass 1♠				
2♥ Dbl Pass 2♠				
Pass 3♣ Pass 3NT				
PassPassPass				
E canooz				
♠J87				
♥3				
♦Q1053				
♣Q9643				
S Doubler				
♠Q1032				
♥Q75				
♦J62				
♣1087				
3NT South				
0 0				

Takeout double.

Second takeout double.

Encouraging 3♣ (strong hand).

A different Wow.

We hope and expect that there will be 2021 Canbri awards.

Bridge Night in Canada Twitch broadcasts are expected to continue. Go to cbf.ca to get the schedule.





THE NEW PLAYER *Spot*



by Andy Stark

Underleading an Ace

Chances are you have heard these words from a bridge teacher or partner: “Never underlead an ace against a suit contract!”

Actually, your partner might not phrase it so kindly. That’s because underleading an ace is usually not your best opening salvo. It often reduces the number of tricks you take on defense against any contract— notrump or a suit!

Later in the article, I’ll show you how especially dangerous it is versus a suit contract.

Whenever you underlead an ace there is a good chance you are blowing a trick in the suit that you lead. For example, let’s say this is the heart layout around the table:

♥ 9 4 3
♥ A 8 7 6 ♥ Q J 10 2
♥ K 5

If you lead the 6 it will go 3 – 10 – king. Uh-oh. Declarer just won their king. That's a trick declarer should never win. If you don't break hearts, chances are someone else will. Now your ace gobbles up the king. Here's another layout that costs you:

♥ K 3 2
♥ A 10 9 8 ♥ J 7 6
♥ Q 5 4

Let's say you lead the 10, the top of an interior sequence. Looks good, right? But watch. It will go 2 – 7 – queen. Later, declarer will score the king because it is behind your ace. If you lay off hearts and wait until someone else breaks them, your ace can take the queen. Declarer is always entitled to one heart trick (the king), but that should be it, just the one trick.

One more problem. Let's say you are on lead versus a notrump contract and you have a choice between two suits. The auction goes 1♣ on your right, 1♠ on your left, 1NT on your right. You plan to lead a red suit. Here are your red suits. Which red deuce do you lead?

♥ A 10 5 2
♦ 10 8 6 2

Answer: the ♦2. It's not even close. While either 2 can work out on any given layout, the percentage play is to not break the heart suit. Stay patient with your suits headed by aces. Aces are meant to take kings. In an NABC Board-a-Match event (where every trick counts) the multi-national champion with umpteen million masterpoints led the ♦2. It led to down one. My teammate at the other table led the ♥2. It led to 1NT making. That was 21 years ago. I haven't forgotten.

Another way to look at the situation is this: if you have a suit headed by an ace then you have some strength in that suit. Good defense in bridge, involves taking declarer's strength with your strength. If you lead a low card away from your strength, you're at the mercy of partner having some strength to help you out. In

short, be patient. Wait for your opportunities. You want to capture material (to borrow a chess term), and not small cards, with your aces.

Now, let's see how bad underleading an ace versus a suit contract can be. Assume spades are trump and you hold the ace of hearts.

♥ 9 7 5 3
♥ A 8 6 4 ♥ Q J 10 2
♥ K

If you lead a low heart declarer scores the singleton king. I repeat: the singleton king. Ouch. Recall the Seinfeld character, the Soup Nazi, who said, "No soup for you!" Well, in this case, "No trick for you." Any future heart plays will be ruffed. Your ace went away. Similarly, the layout might look like this:

♥ 7
♥ A 8 6 4 ♥ Q J 10 2
♥ K 9 5 3

This time declarer wins their king but now dummy is void and hearts can be ruffed in dummy.

So taboo is it to underlead an ace that if and when you do, partner might not be alive to the situation. Partner's perfectly logical assumption, upon seeing your opening lead, will be along the lines of: "Ah, my partner is leading a heart. The ace of hearts is not in dummy or my hand. My excellent partner knows well enough not to underlead an ace, so it must be in declarer's hand. This can blow a trick (or tricks) when the layout looks like this:

♥ K J 10
♥ A 8 6 4 ♥ Q 7 3
♥ 9 5 2

If you lead the 4, declarer will call for the 10. Partner, assuming you are not underleading your ace, might play the 3, allowing the 10 to win. Why would partner do this? Because partner thinks declarer will play you for the missing queen and finesse the jack later on. Partner is envisioning this layout:

UNDERLEADING ACES ... CONTINUED

♥ 8 6 4 ♥ K J 10 ♥ Q 7 3
 ♥ A 9 5 2

By playing low, partner will cause declarer to think you hold the queen. So, later on, declarer might play a low heart towards dummy's jack, expecting it to win. The queen will score a trick after all. That's what partner is hoping will happen. Now, that's clearly not the case when you underlead your ace. Notice how partner is not in on your little joke and may not cooperate (by putting up their queen the first time).

Years ago, I was playing in the Canadian National Team Championships. I was in 6♠. My LHO had bid hearts on the hand. The opening lead was the ♥5. Dummy came down with the ♥73. I held the ♥6. I called low. My RHO played the ♥2 and I skillfully won the ♥6. Soon I was claiming. LHO leaned so far forward in his chair that he was standing, so curious was he to know his partner's holding in the suit.

It turns out that RHO held the ♥8 but chose not to play it. He thought it would be better to show his partner the count in the suit. He reasoned that I, declarer, held the ♥A. Since they played upside down carding, his ♥2 play showed an even number of hearts.

LHO was beside himself. "You had the 8? You had the 8 and didn't play it? I can't believe you wouldn't play the 8..." LHO was so irate he needed a break to go for a walk. Why was he so irate? He had made the only lead to beat the contract! He led the ♥5 from an original holding of ♥AKQJ10954. The reason he led the small heart was to get his partner on lead to play a diamond, the suit LHO was void in. (This is how my teammates beat 6♠ at the other table.) The point is, even when you are right to underlead an ace, your partner might not do the right thing and play their high card.

Before you can break the rules, you must first learn to follow the rules. And not underleading an ace against a suit contract is a pretty good rule. Best to play a few more years to learn when to break this particular rule.

QUIZ

INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

SOLUTION IS ON PAGE 33

Contract: 3NT IMPs

♠ 10 6 2
 ♥ 9 5
 ♦ 9 8 4 2
 ♣ K Q 9 5

♠ A 7 3
 ♥ K Q 6
 ♦ A K 6
 ♣ A J 10 7

Lead: ♥7

East plays the Jack. Plan the play.


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CONVENTIONS 4

This is the sixteenth 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 III



How high should you play negative doubles?

This is a partnership preference, but many expert partnerships play them through four hearts. When making a negative double at the three or four level, suit length is less defined. Instead, try to look at it as showing some values that are good for both offense and defense. At the three level I recommended at least 9 HCPs.

Quiz 1: So let's say the bidding starts:

West	North	East	South
-	1♣	3♦	?

1. ♠ AQx ♥ QJxx ♦ xx ♣ xxxx – Double. This is a minimum. Pass whatever partner bids.
2. ♠ AQx ♥ QJxx ♦ xxxx ♣ xx – Pass and double are both reasonable.
3. ♠ AQxx ♥ QJxx ♦ xxxx ♣ x – Double. Partner is short in diamonds so either has a major or a long club suit.
4. ♠ Axxx ♥ QJxx ♦ Qxx ♣ xx – Double, but pass is reasonable.
5. ♠ AQxxx ♥ QJx ♦ x ♣ xxxx – Double is best. 3♠ might work, but you are forcing to game with this bid.
6. ♠ AQx ♥ KJxx ♦ J10xx ♣ xx – bid 3NT. No guarantees but other options are worse!
7. ♠ Qx ♥ xxxx ♦ AJ10x ♣ xxx – Pass. You are hoping

partner can reopen with a double, which you will convert to penalties by passing.

That brings up an important point. When the bidding starts (N-S Vul):

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

North needs extra values, or some extra values with short diamonds, to reenter the auction.

Quiz 2 – What do you bid as North on the above auction?

1. ♠ AQx ♥ KJxx ♦ xx ♣ Kxxx – Pass with your balanced minimum.
2. ♠ AQx ♥ KJxx ♦ x ♣ KQxxx – Easy reopening double. I would also reopen without the ♣Q.
3. ♠ AKQx ♥ KJxx ♦ xx ♣ Kxx – double.
4. ♠ Ax ♥ Kx ♦ KJxx ♣ KJxxx – pass. Partner is short in diamonds, yet couldn't make a negative double.
5. ♠ Kx ♥ A ♦ Axx ♣ KQJ10xxx – bid 3NT. You are hoping that East cannot set up and cash diamonds before you get nine tricks. Axx (or Kxx) in diamonds is a much better holding than Ax (or Kx), as you can hold up, hoping to sever the opponents' communications.

BRIDGE BASICS ... CONTINUED

However when the bidding is forced to the four level, better values are needed.

Example 1:

West	North	East	South
-	1♣	3♠	?

1. ♠ Ax ♥ QJxx ♦ Qxx ♣ xxxx is not good enough to bid
2. ♠ xx ♥ Kxxx ♦ Axxx ♣ Kxx is just good enough to make a negative double.
3. ♠ xxx ♥ xx ♦ AQ10xx ♣ Kxx is a good hand, but too risky to force to the four level.

Not much changes when the auction starts:

Example 2:

West	North	East	South
-	1♣	4♠	?

♠ xx ♥ Kxxx ♦ Axxx ♣ Kxx is good enough to make a negative double. While ♠ xxx ♥ xx ♦ AQ10xx ♣ Kxx is a good hand, but I would still pass over 4♠.

RESPONSIVE DOUBLES

Responsive doubles work when the opponents have opened the bidding, and have raised a suit over partner's double or overcall. Similar rules apply to responsive doubles as negative doubles:

1. You can play them up to the four level or higher
2. The higher the level, the less precise is the support for unbid suits.
3. You must pass as advancer if you want to penalize the opponents, and hope partner reopens with a double.

Example 3.

West	North	East	South
-	1♣	1♠	2♣
Dbl			

West is showing at least 8 points, with the unbid suits, and usually tolerance for partner's overcalled suit. A typical example would be ♠ xx Q10xx AJxxx xx. (This

minimum is ok, as 2♠ should be playable.)

Example 4.

West	North	East	South
-	1♠	Dbl	3♠
Dbl			

In Ex4, the West hand shape is less well defined, but should have a good 10 point hand or equivalent, to force to the four level, and will deny five hearts. Some examples of what West could hold for his double:

1. ♠ xx ♥ Q10xx ♦ Axxxx ♣ Kx (4♥ is also reasonable).
2. ♠ xxx ♥ Q10x ♦ AQx ♣ Kxxx.
3. ♠ xxx ♥ KQxx ♦ Axxx ♣ Kx (4♥ is also reasonable).

So a responsive double operates whenever the opponents bid and raise a suit. And as in a negative double auction, there could be a wish to penalize the opponents, but it is rarer.

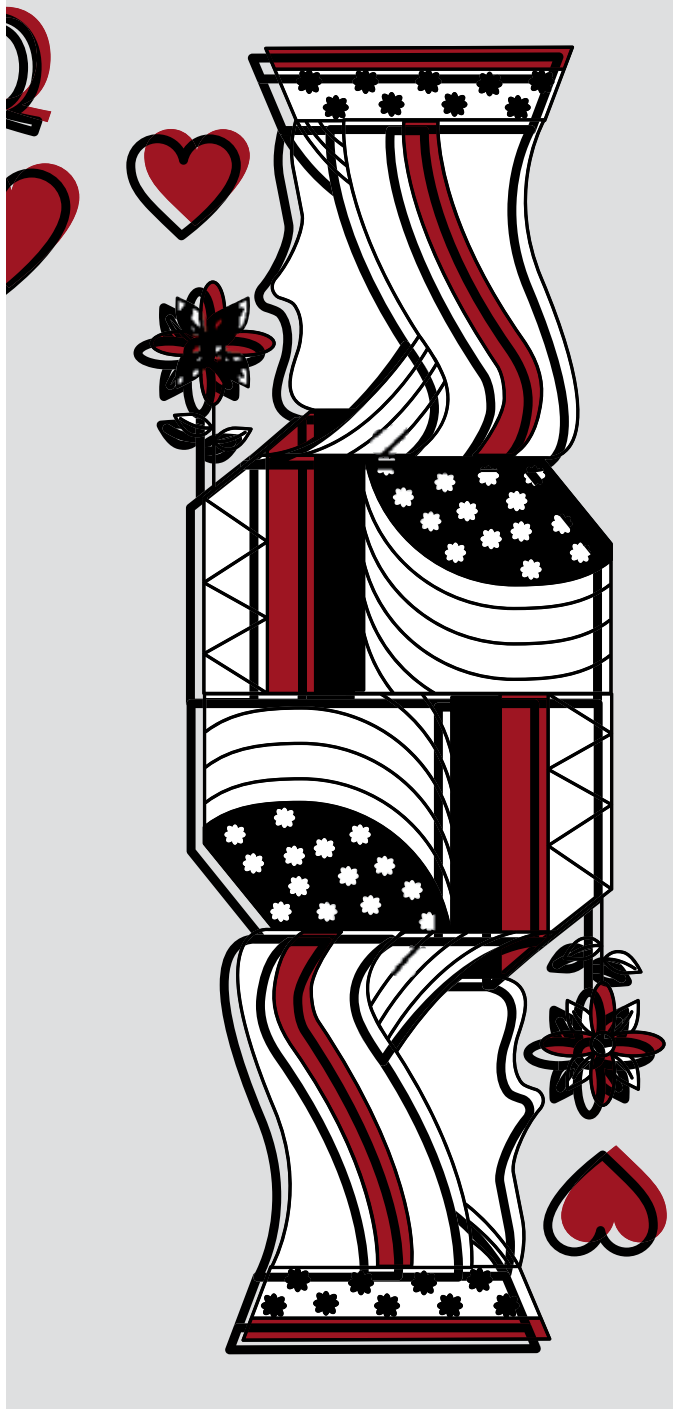
Example 5.

West	North	East	South
-	1♠	2♥	3♠
?			

♠ KQJ10 ♥ x ♦ QJx ♣ xxxxx. Here West is hoping for a reopening double, which they will convert to penalties by passing.

It is possible to have a hand you want to double the opponents but can't. It is up to partner to sniff these out, and protect you by reopening with a double. This is much more difficult when there are two bidding opponents.

Next article: *More double conventions!*



What Went Wrong?

by Paul Thurston

In a CBF ONLINE LEAGUE match, neither North-South pair solved their bidding challenge perfectly but it's a matter of record that Team A won 12 IMPs by making 5♣ on this layout while their teammates took three tricks against the same contract.

HAND 1

Dealer South. Vul. None.

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

Lead: ♠5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
Pass	1♥	1♠	2♣
3♣	Dbl	3♠	4♣
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

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WHAT WENT WRONG ... CONTINUED

The play was irrelevant after the opening spade lead as South had no practical way to avoid three losers: one in each non-trump suit. The post-match discussion found that perhaps South's 4♣ call was ill-advised as it precluded North from hitting the bull's eye by bidding three notrump – do you think that's really What Went Wrong?

At the other table, Team A's South uncluttered the bidding immediately as she opened and closed proceedings by bidding five clubs! That left West with a nasty set of choices for an opening lead. Against one of these high-level preemptive openings, many theorists advocate tabling an ace if you have one to see what comes down in dummy before committing yourself to a particular line of defense.

Of course, as we've all experienced this practice can result in disaster when dummy produces something of value in the suit led and declarer ruffs! In any event, West solved his lead problem by clicking on the diamond four: no harm done! Declarer played low from dummy and East won his king to have the contract's fate dependent on his next move! A spade return would be perfect while a heart switch at trick two would keep the defense in the game as long as West wins (he would!) and switches to a spade (possible but difficult). Eschewing a return of either major, East played back a diamond and that ended East-West's possibility of pushing the board.

West covered the Jack with his Queen but declarer simply mopped up trumps in one round with dummy's ten and continued with the diamond nine to make a loser-on-loser play of discarding her heart so the diamond eight remained for a discard of a small spade from the closed hand and that line of defense was really WHAT WENT WRONG!

Except, of course, for the bidding! Now I realize many players don't like the Gambling Three Notrump opening bid (solid 7-8 card suit, usually a minor, with no ace or King outside – at least in first or second seat.) but it can and often does serve a useful purpose. And while I don't know if either North-South pair involved

in this case had a Gambling Three Notrump opening available, it is clear that it would have scooped the pot this time: ten tricks with a non-heart lead and nine with that lead.

Also clear: the hand type shown by that Gambling Three Notrump is difficult to manage otherwise as accurate description can prove elusive and the opponents can easily get into the bidding to cloud the issue (as happened in the auction above) with a lower-level opening.

So WHAT REALLY WENT WRONG: deficient bidding systems that mandated opening bids of one club or five clubs! What better use could you make of Three Notrump?

HAND 2

As reported by Poland's Marek Wojcicki in the November International Bridge Press Association Bulletin, one team scooped a bonanza of IMPs when discipline triumphed on this deal from the online European Seniors Cup.

Dealer: North Vul: Both

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

Opening Lead: ♣10

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣*	Pass	1♦*
Pass	1♥*	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass

WHAT WENT WRONG ... CONTINUED

Beautiful scientific bidding: 1♣ was possibly as short as two cards if the hand was balanced and lacked five diamonds, 1♦ was a transfer response showing 4+ hearts and the 1♥ rebid showed 2-3 cards in the suit. South placed the contract and judging a club lead was his side's best chance. East contributed a lead-directing double just in time to avoid the diamond lead that West was surely about to try. Down two without great effort after West was able to find a club in his hand!

WHAT WENT WRONG was a common failing of light initial action systems when North had to open an undistinguished eleven point hand in a non-suit and South had no reason to look anywhere other than three notrump for a possible game bonus. The cost of an otherwise okay system? Maybe but I have a feeling passing that North collection with all of its blemishes will tend to produce better results in the long run. North did pass as dealer at the other table of the match but East decided he had a hand suitable for a three club preemptive opening! And played right there after none of the other players could find an excuse to bid.

Second seat, vulnerable, is usually considered to be the one time when initial preemptive action should be sound but in the modern arena, maybe what this East held is considered sound? I would vote "no" and I'm sure I'd be joined by West and teammates after the debacle that ensued. South cashed two high hearts and shifted to the Jack of diamonds to the King and ace. For a spade return to the ten, the ace of spades and the Queen. And a second round of diamonds through the ten for North to win and return a third round of the suit to breathe life into South's eight of clubs via a trump promotion. Have you been counting? Three spade tricks, two hearts, two diamonds and that well-deserved club for eight defensive winners and +500 for North-South to go with the +400 their teammates recorded: 14 IMPs without doing much of anything except staying disciplined in the bidding!

HAND 3

Always good to end with a bit of comic relief and at one table of a CBF online match that was available (in spades, of course!) from this deal.

Dealer South Vul: N/S

♠ K Q J 5
♥ K 8
♦ A K 10 3
♣ K J 8

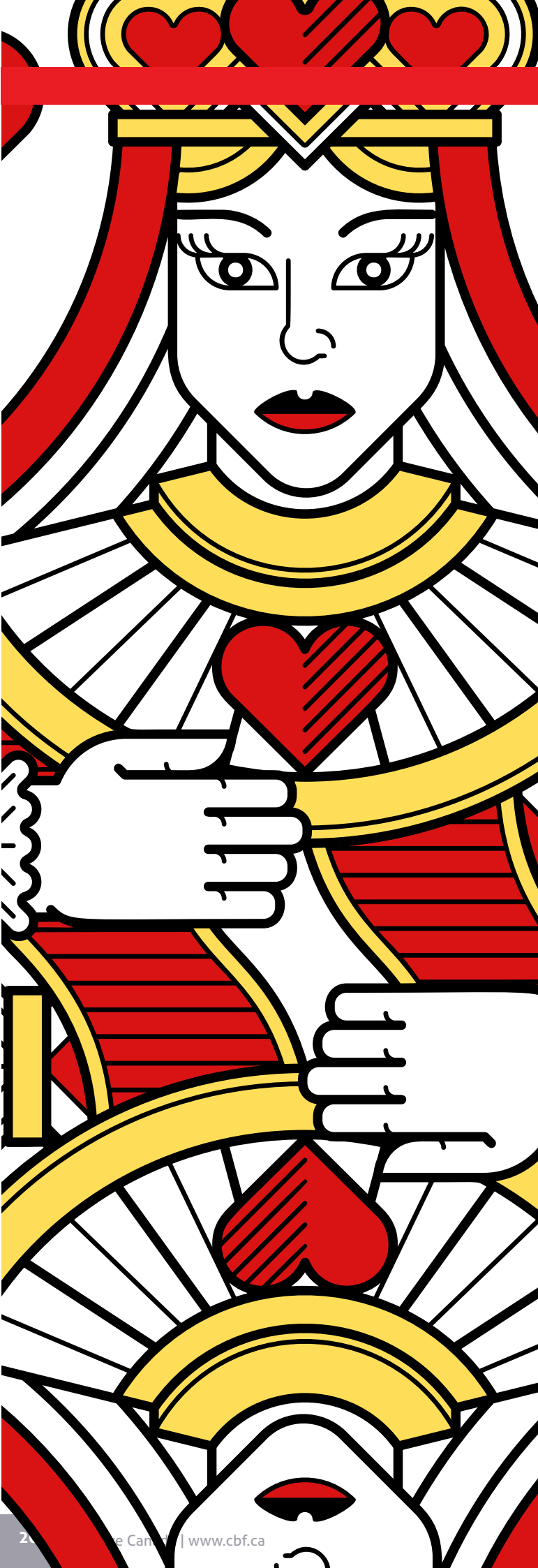
♠ A 9 7 3 2
♥ A Q 7 6
♦ 7
♣ A Q 2

The "funny" result was not recorded at the table where Martin Hunter and Lino De Souza held the North-South cards and bid their cards accurately to reach the grand slam that had fourteen tricks available. After one spade by South and an artificial forcing raise by North, South showed a non-minimum with shortness in a minor. That was enough encouragement for North to launch Key Card Blackwood, discover three aces opposite and continue to the grand. An auction of a slightly different sort at the other table:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♦
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	5♠	All Pass	

A similar start after which South showed diamond shortness specifically after the three heart relay and out came Blackwood. Five diamonds showed zero or three keycards so in normal Keycard Blackwood, North's five-level bid is a sign-off opposite zero Keycards and South is supposed to carry on to six if he actually has three.

I'm not sure WHAT WENT WRONG with South's thinking as he really was expected to bid six spades to at least avoid the ignominy of playing his side's laydown grand slam at the five-level! BUT, and it's a very significant BUT: if North had done the basic arithmetic and added his high-card points (a very nice 20!) to the 12 represented by the three aces he apparently feared might be missing (20+12=32), he would have realized that the only way South would have zero aces was if he had opened the bidding in first seat, vulnerable to boot, with eight high-card points! A lot of things WENT WRONG with this auction!



the GREAT CANADIAN BIDDING CONTEST



FEBRUARY 2021

Host: Bryan Maksymetz

For Panelists, see page 28

Editor's note: Congratulations to Julie Smith with a perfect score of 50 on these problems! Sandy McIlwain headed the solvers with 48 closely followed by Michael Dimich with 47. April TGCBC problems can be found on page 27.

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

West	North	East	South
-	Pass	1♥	?

ACTION	VOTES	SCORE
1♠	8	10
2♥	11	8

This is a relatively straightforward hand. You are going to bid. Is 1♠ or a Michaels 2♥ your choice?

Most of the time this is an easy decision – just bid Michaels with all 5-5 hands. However, there is that mushy middle range hand, like this one, that comes up from time to time. Is this hand strong enough to make a game try if all partner can bid is 2♠ over our Michaels bid? If you feel comfortable bidding on with this hand over 2♠, good luck. It is awkward – that is why it is in here. Let's hear what our experts have to say.

Many of the Michaels bidders will continue with 3♦ and feel that their hand justifies this sequence. If the King of ♥ was a Queen and Jack in the pointed suits, I would agree. The 1♠ bidders:

Balcombe: This hand is not as good as it seems.

Treble: I don't Michaels and take further action without better spot cards in my long suits.

Campbell: Game is unlikely without a Spade fit.

Smith: Natural bidding with this in between hand seems best.

Todd: I don't like Michaels on this hand because it has pure values, good for offense or defense and the suits are not exactly robust for Michaels.

L'Ecuyer: Not a big fan of 2♥ with heart K singleton – with so many high cards and facing a passed hand partner, I don't think there is a rush to show the 2-suited hand.

Cooper: I like Michaels as weak or strong. This is in between. If 2♥ identified both suits immediately, it would have more going for it. If you bid 2♥ and pard bids 2♠, continuing with 3♦ suggests 5-6 and extras.

Mackay: Either bid could work well.

Representing the 2♥ bidders:

Miles: 2♥. Despite the poor spot cards, my hand is pure enough that I don't need much to make game, even with north a passed hand. Showing some shape will make it easier to judge, and gives partner a clear avenue to bid 4♠ over 4♥ should it come to that. A final consideration is if we belong in game, either to make or as a sacrifice, having partner declare could be advantageous, protecting his club holding.

Marsinski: 2♥. What's not to like about immediately (i) describing 10 of my cards, (ii) a hand in my strength range [I'm towards its upper range, though the absence of an

11th card and terrible spot cards in my two suits suggest that some degree of restraint may be needed], and (iii) possible advantage from declaring it from partner's side? More importantly, (a) at these colors partner should never play me for a frivolous hand and (b) the only plausible alternative of 1♠ is far too one-dimensional, does not begin to describe this hand's offensive potential, and would leave us vulnerable to LHO's direct blast to 4♥ (even a 3♥ pre-emptive raise passed around to me would leave me with an uncomfortable guess).

Stark: 2♥. I bid 2♥ quicker than it takes me to write it. Going to quote Jeff Meckstroth here, who said, "Bid Michaels with any strength." I heard that 20 years ago and it's been working fine for me ever since. If partner has as little as ♠Qxx and ♦Qxx we should be in game. If I overcall 1♠ partner might pass.

Dalton: 2♥. Prefer an "any range" Michaels to just overcalling 1♠ in case we get pre-empted in hearts.

Bishop: 2♥. Yes, we understand (and appreciate) the lack of spot cards in our suits...but; we still have 6 controls and 4 'honour tricks' including the 'master' suit (and we have the 'right' shape -- not 5-6 where playing in our longer fit might be of paramount importance). We could EASILY make game opposite a fitting passed hand. Let's hope that our Michaels' advancement mechanisms include 3♣ as a desire to play there -- with a long weak suit [rather than some 'silly' pass/correct mechanism]. Advancer knows that I can see the equal colours and his passed hand status. Still haven't decided whether I will show substantial extras if he enquires with 2NT; or if I am 'unafraid' enough [of a 'set-up'] to try 3♦ (or double followed by a conversion to 3♦, if the auction continues 2♥ (by my LHO) – P – P back to me). Also, my Michaels call may increase the chance of scoring my heart king if we end up defending. And, NO; a takeout-double never entered my fantasies as a possibility.

Jacob: 2♥, It is an intermediate hand (HK is of questionable value on offense), but any other bid has also flaws.

Kimelman: 2♥. I prefer Michaels weak or strong, and this hand just qualifies as the latter. Will raise partner's response, and reopen with a double if the opponents compete. Actually I prefer playing Klinger where, the two suits are known from the outset.

2. MPs. 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♣ ¹
Pass	4♦	Pass	4NT ²
Pass	5♦ ³	Pass	?

1. Control
2. RKC
3. 0 or 3

ACTION	VOTES	SCORE
6NT	17	10
6♠	2	8

This hand came up in a World Teams competition in the summer between Poland and Italy. This is not as simple a choice as it may seem. On the surface, it appears that 6NT by partner is the best contract and will be cold from partner's side if they have the ♥Q or the ♣J in addition to the 3 kings they rate to hold for an opening bid.

However, 6♠ is probably the best contract as there will certainly be extra chances not available in 6NT, such as Jack doubleton of ♣, if partner has the 10, or less likely, Qx hearts. Here is how the panelists viewed this problem:

Editor's note: Only if you survive the diamond lead.

Miles: 6NT. There may be communication issues in the play, but protecting partner's diamond king takes precedence. If partner has x QJxxx KQ Kxxxx and they find a heart lead, I can always take up another game.

Several panelists mentioned the KQ of Diamonds possibility and therefore a potentially damaging Heart lead if partner does not have the King.

Campbell: Disappointingly we are off a Keycard. So, which is safer 6♠ or 6NT? In 6♠ the likely D-lead could be through dummy's king. In 6NT a club lead could gain a C and a D-trick, but then Pard's hearts might be KQJ5x for 4+ tricks. I prefer 6NT.

Treble: 6NT. I assume partner has the K of diamonds for his 4D cuebid. 4H rather than 4NT on my previous turn might have been a better choice, since I've never agreed hearts and that would have to be the Ace.

Zhou: 6NT. Luckily partner bid NT first, so with ♦K it will be right-sided. 6S will definitely be better if partner holds ♦KQ, but there is no room to find that out. Partner might hold ♣KJ10 or ♥KQJ which provides more potential by just replying on ♦KQ.

Willis: 6NT – would be good to know how light partner is willing to open shapely minor-suited hands and if 4♦ was a mandatory cue bid but most hands are going to have a play even on a heart lead which might only get made if the ♥K is not on lead. I guess Partner could have: - Qx KQ9xxx Kxxxx or maybe QJx KQxxx Kxxxx but they could also have KJTxx in clubs and the ♦K and that is all that you likely need. There may also be squeeze chances and who does not like an interesting play problem.

One panelist had a perfect score this month. Let's close with her comments:

Julie Smith: 6NT. Partner has no aces, and I infer that partner is probably 0-5-3-5. Hoping that partner's 3NT bid suggests a diamond honour, I bid 6NT to protect the hoped-for ♦K. I might be awfully wrong. I hope there will be enough tricks, as long as the opponents cannot

take the first two.

Partner's hand was ♠9 ♥KJ843 ♦K4 ♣K10985. Both tables played in six spades. How would you play on a diamond lead? (see answer at end of article)

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

West	North	East	South
-	-	3♠	Dbl
4♠	Dbl ¹	Pass	?

1. Responsive

ACTION	VOTES	SCORE
4NT	9	10
5NT	7	8
5♣	1	6
Pass	2	4

This is the first of three difficult competitive deals. Here we have a choice of Pass, 5♣, 4NT and 5NT leading the way. A lot depends on what you expect from partner. Here the double is strictly value showing, nothing about penalty and nothing about suits. Partner has a good hand but not a bid – so not a good 5 or 6 card suit. We have a king extra for our double and an extra club. Is this enough to insist on slam? If partner holds the Ace and King of Hearts, the King of Clubs and 5 cards in a minor, slam should be excellent. Partner's hand: ♠72 ♥AK95 ♦J10854 ♣K5.

Stark: 5NT. Pick a slam. No guarantee.

Marcinski: 4NT. When I pull rather than pass, especially at IMP's, I should be showing more than a minimum. With a minimum, Pass is a heavy favorite. Partner can look at their hand and decide to bid 5 or 6 of a minor.

Zhou: 5NT. This hand is between 4NT and 5NT, however, when partner makes a responsive double at the 4 level, I not only expect lengths in both minors from partner but also power or defensive value, otherwise, partner could have bid 4NT if just willing to compete.

Dalton: 4NT. Close decision. We rate to have a fit in one of the minor suits and while there is no guarantee 5 of a minor will make, I think the vulnerability swings the odds in favour of not defending and collecting only 300 or 500. At equal vulnerability I would probably pass.

Bishop: Bid 4NT now and let partner tell us where and how high to play... trusting in he/she doing something 'of-interest' with A AJx Jxxxx K10xx.

L'Ecuyer: 4NT keeping 2 suits in the picture – would love to bid 4NT and a half but I have shown a good hand by doubling 3♠, I will not do more than that with so many queens – if partner has only little spades then chances are we are making slam but why would that be? By pulling the double, I am already pretty much showing the singleton spade so he should know – let's hear partner's bid over 4NT.

Todd: 4NT – takeout. Not strong enough to bid 5♠. We could be off both major suit aces. Pre-empts in action again!

Lebi: 5NT, pick a slam.

One panelist was trying to encourage a high level sacrifice:

Campbell: 5NT pick a slam. Assuming we are off the ♠A, I hope Pard holds ♥AK and the ♣K. If not, possibly the ♥K is hookable or less likely the ♣K. Bidding slam opposite unknown cards is risky but pard is more likely to hold those 3 Keycards than not. If I bid confidently, they may sac in 6♠.

The lone 5♣ bidder:

Cooper: 5♣. Suggests a 5-card suit as I could scramble with 4NT otherwise. I have four losers. For slam, I would need partner to cover three of them, but he might only have two big cards. I have a nice hand, but I DID force my partner to bid at the 4 level! 4NT confuses the issue, as it might be a search for the best fit (with say a 2-4-3-4 or so) and I certainly don't want to play in a 4-3 heart fit.

Jacob: 4NT, the hand could play any of the 3 suits but I expect north to pick a minor. Slam is also possible if partner has the right cards.

And we close with two passers:

Kimelman: Pass. Partner could have an Ace and King only, or the King of Spades as part of their values: ♠Kxx ♥Axxx ♦J10xx ♣J10x.

Mackay: Pass or 4NT (assuming 4NT says bid up the line)? Pass seems safer but if I pass I do expect to lose IMP's to par and perhaps to what happens at the other table. I'm not worried about missing slam because, even if we have slam, I'm not sure we could get there. If partner bids 5♣ or 5♦ over 4NT, I would pass. OK. I will pass and try for a plus against 4♠.

4. MPs. Neither Vul., as South you hold ♠KJ76 ♥- ♦AJ742 ♣AQ52.

West	North	East	South
-	-	Pass	1♦
3♥	Dbl ¹	5♥	?

1. Negative

ACTION	VOTES	SCORE
Pass	6	10
6♥	1	9
5NT	4	8
5♠	7	4
Dbl	1	3

So these last two hands are at the 5 level – not much room. But, a Forcing Pass is available – or is it? This translates to: Double = I have a minimum and want to defend. Pass = I have some interest in bidding – partner must double or bid – I should have extras and certainly a control in the opponents suit. Bid = I have a useful hand – but minimum – and shortness

in the opponent's suit. Our panelists were all over the bidding (albeit limited) spectrum on this one:

Todd: Double. At both NV, I will take the plus but be happy if partner bids.

Miles: (Similar for Smith) Pass, forcing. And I will respect partner's double.

Campbell: (Similar for Balcombe) 5♠. Yes, of course we might be missing 6♠ or 7♠, but freely bidding 5♠ shows a good hand! 2nd choice is 5NT again.

Zhou: 5NT. Again not a very easy bid, bidding a number of spades is an option, but you do not know if 5♠ or 6♠ is correct. If dummy shows up with only 3 spades...

Kimelman: 5NT, pick a slam. Might get too high, but at least we will get to our best fit.

Jacob: Pass, forcing and then 5♠ should be a slam invite. Similar for Bishop.

This panelist chose the top bid for a different reason:

Smith: Pass. Not sure we can make 11 tricks in Spades, and suspecting that 5 Hearts will go down.

Marcinski: Pass. I am confident that Responder will recognize my pass as 100% forcing. I don't have enough to "drive" to slam. Instead, it's time to use the precious sliver of bidding room left to us by the nasty opponents and solicit partner's opinion while ambiguously showing uncertainty whether defending 5♥ is in our best interest. If partner "returns serve" with double I intend to issue a non-forcing slam try by bidding 5♠.

The interesting question that this raises is what distinction should be drawn between a direct 5♠ and "direct" 5♠ where I pass then pull Responder's expected double. This hand is arguably a good advertisement for so-called "Pass-Double Inversion" where a direct double is takeout.

Similar for Hornby.

Balcombe: 5♠. This should be forward going. Similar for Lebi, Dalton and Cooper, who assumes that pass is not forcing – it is.

L'Ecuyer: 5NT – committing the hand to slam – let's see what partner does – 6♥ is too much and dangerous without such weak diamonds missing the king – I expect to bid 6♠ next but let's hear from partner first.

Same for MacKay. Disagreeing:

Stark: 6♥. Here I can bid their suit to promise first-round heart control and imply a spade fit. Yes, partner might have a so-so 9-count for me, but what if partner has a nice 12-count consisting of the ♠AQ and the two minor suit kings? We might be on for a grand slam. So I shall make the big bid of 6♥ and see if pard can go beyond 6♠.

This aggressive bid will fetch a grand bid from, as partner held: ♠AQ98 ♥Q ♦KQ6 ♣K8732. Holding so many extras, I would expect partner to bid 7♦ over south's 5NT bid, trusting that they must have 1st round heart control to justify a slam forcing bid.

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

West	North	East	South
-	-	Pass	1♥
4♦	Db1	5♦	?

1. Negative

ACTION	VOTES	SCORE
5NT	10	10
6♣	1	9
Pass	4	8
6♦	3	6
6♥	1	4

This is the toughest of the set. You certainly want to be in at least slam and would like to invite 7 if partner has the right hand. Partner should have close to an opening bid at least. Partner didn't support hearts

so at most a doubleton. Because the opponents have pre-empted suits may not split. Partner rates to have at least four cards in each of the black suits. Pass is forcing and is probably the right start.

Editor's note: Thank you Bryan for focusing on high level decisions, and what partner's double shows at the four level. I think this is an important area for a partnership to discuss and have some agreements. I think the panelists doubling expectations are very lofty. Partner will strain to show values. Even a good 9 count, a working ace, king and queen are good enough for me. One of the most important reasons is that if you pass your partnership is in a much more difficult spot – does partner play you for 9 or 0 points? And you will never be able to catch up.

The other neglected discussion is the possibility that partner has the ace or king in the opponent's suit for their value showing double. Neither are worthwhile offensive assets opposite a void.

Todd: 5NT and I hope partner reads this as a choice with probably 6-4 shape. If I had 5 clubs I would bid 6♣. Several others like 5NT as well – Campbell, Smith, Balcombe.

Dalton: 5NT. Partner likely has at least two of the three missing key honours so I'm betting that we have a fit somewhere and can make a slam. A direct 6♣ should show at least a 5-card suit, so 5NT should suggest a 6-card heart suit along with four clubs. Partner should be well placed to pick where to play. Even a spade slam is still possible to get to if partner has a good 5-card suit.

Miles: 6♦. Let's finish with a bang! Finding the best strain may be tricky, but if partner is limited to 3 diamonds, we'll have a 9 card fit or two 8 card fits. Partner should bid 6♥ with a doubleton, given their failure to bid 4♥ over 4♦. This also lets partner focus on prime cards - ♠K, ♥A, ♣K. And viola! All 3 gives us excellent play for 13 tricks. If partner has Kxxx x Kxx KJxxx then we've bypassed our spot (6♣) but maybe we'll get lucky and 6♠ will fetch.

Willis: 6♦. Should show the diamond void and interest in a grand. Partner could have KJxx Ax xxx Kxxx with no diamond wastage. Hands with diamond wastage can play 6♥ or 6♠, although partner doubling with a stiff heart seems unlikely.

Kimelman: 6♣. Might miss a grand.

L'Ecuyer: Another 5NT! – would love to make a forcing pass here but I expect partner to double and then I am not sure I will improve my situation – I think 5NT here keeps clubs in the picture and possibly even spades, although getting to spades is unlikely – will bid 6♥ over 6♦ and will pass 6♣ – difficult problem. Similar for Marcinski, Cooper, Dalton and Lebi who will pass 6♣.

Bishop: Pass. Those who feel that a value-denoting double, (all the while 'screaming' for partner to take it out) would show this particular hand -- and its attendant values -- are spending too much time gazing at this particular set-up and their wish that the negative doubler be clairvoyant. Clearly opener needs to be able to combat preemptive techniques by the opponents when we don't wish to be shoved around but also don't want them to escape unpunished. Normal 3-5-2-3 shapes with Ax of diamonds may have no high intentions. Making a forcing pass on semi-balanced minimums is just playing into the hands of the preempting side. Occasionally we must pay the price of – 550 when the opponents have judged everything correctly and we have been caught with the aforementioned balanced minimum.

That said, we also vote that a PASS here must be forcing [and the correct action]... with every intention of removing partner's double to show a "multi-dimensional" hand. Forcing pass conditions again exist... East is a passed hand; West is preempting (although a 4♦ overcall opposite a passed partner can, admittedly, have a very wide scope); and our partner has entered the proceedings at the 4-level

(albeit just with a negative double). So, our feelings are this... single suiters with high-level playing strength announce their intentions immediately (if we just were suited to hearts, and weren't of the mind to sit-out 5♦ doubled when partner hits it, we would bid 5♥ now); while 'two-or-more places to play' hands force with PASS and then remove. Obviously even the best laid plans may go astray --- opposite Kxxx Tx x KTxxx, we may go down on a heart ruff in 6♣... while a spade lead from shortness may doom 6♥.

Hornby: Pass – forcing I assume once partner has shown values for the 4-level. This feels like déjà vu all over again... I'll pull a double to 5NT, hopefully partner will figure out I have something like this. I'll bid 6♦ over 5♠ by partner.

So this seems like a better gambit than bidding a direct 5NT. It is certainly forcing, partner will in all likelihood double. And it should bring seven into the picture.

Zhou: Pass. Partner's double of 4♦ is game forcing, and forcing pass is definitely on, you are too good for 5♥; I pass and ready to bid 6♦.

Jacob: Pass. Then 6♦ over 5♥.

Bishop: Pass, then 5♥ over partner's expected double.

This certainly is a stronger action than an immediate 5♥, but this strong?

Mackay: Yet again we have 5NT as an option but I don't see how that will solve the problem. OK, no imagination. I will bid 6♥.

Partner's Hand was ♠K1084 ♥A3 ♦93 ♣K9753.

Answer to number 2 on a Diamond lead: Play the KING! Why? RHO had a chance to double for a Diamond lead (twice) and did not. Both tables got the Ace of Diamonds lead against 6S and claimed.

APRIL PROBLEMS

Host: Andy Stark

1. IMPs. Neither Vul., as South you hold

♠J09642 ♥AK ♦K10 ♣984.

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

2. MP. E-W Vulnerable, as South you hold

♠5 ♥98 ♦AKJ84 ♣AK643.

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dbl	Pass	?

3. MP. N-S Vul., as South you hold

♠AQ4 ♥Q6 ♦7 ♣Q1097642.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	?

4. IMP. N-S Vul., as South you hold

♠K95 ♥A10972 ♦- ♣AQJ62.

- North, your partner, passes and East opens 1♦. Are you a 1♥ bidder or a 2NT bidder?
- Can you "live with" the alternative bid?
- Say you are a 1♥ bidder. The auction continues:

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

5. MP. Both Vul., as South you hold

♠J965 ♥J ♦32 ♣KQ10876.

West	North	East	South
-	1♠	2♦	?

Note to panelist: I suspect some of you may want to know N-S methods. But I'm more interested in you sharing your methods. Ex. Maybe you play that 2NT shows a limit raise or better, or maybe you play fit-showing jumps and bid 4♣. Or maybe you play 3♥ here or 4♥ as showing heart shortness. Or maybe you just bid 2♠ or 3♠ or 4♠ and do so for tactical reasons. A.S.

MOLLO On Play

Problem on page 6.

Contract: 4♠ by South at IMPs.

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

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

Lead: ♦5.

After winning the ace, you lead a spade from dummy, on which East discards the ♣3. Plan the play. There is danger of an uppercut if West is short in diamonds, as indicated from the bidding and play. In fact, if East has a high heart honour there is nothing you can do against accurate defense. So it is best to focus on other dangers – are there any?

Yes! Sloppy play can get you locked in dummy and uppercut yourself. First, lead a spade to the queen. Let's say West ducks this trick. NOW cash the ♣ AK. This should work as West can have at most six hearts on the bidding, thus two clubs. Next, lead the last spade from dummy, win the ace, and lead the ♠ J and discard the club queen. West can win, but must eventually put you in, to pull the last trump.



PANEL'S ANSWERS

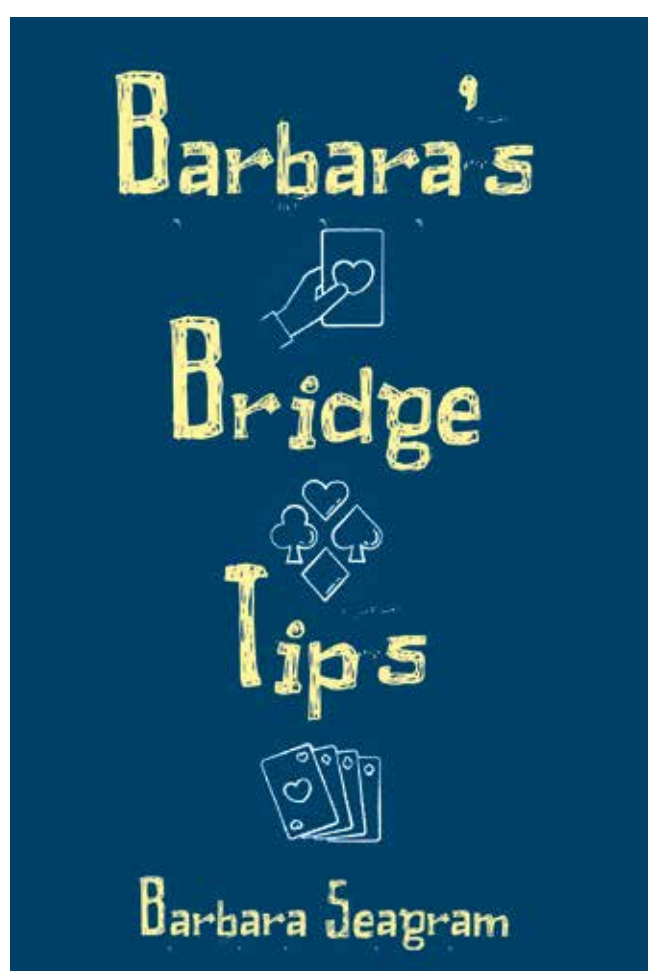
Panelists	<i>Hand 1</i>		<i>Hand 2</i>		<i>Hand 3</i>		<i>Hand 4</i>		<i>Hand 5</i>		<i>Total</i>
	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	
Balcombe, Keith	1♠	10	6NT	10	5NT	8	5♠	4	5NT	10	42
Bishop, Ron	2♥	8	6NT	10	4NT	10	Pass	10	Pass	8	46
Campbell, Gordon	1♠	10	6NT	10	5NT	8	5♠	4	5NT	10	42
Cooper, Stephen	1♠	10	6NT	10	5♣	6	5♠	4	5NT	10	40
Dalton, Roy	2♥	8	6NT	10	4NT	10	5♠	4	5NT	10	42
Hornby, Ray	2♥	8	6NT	10	4NT	10	Pass	10	Pass	8	46
Jacob, Dan	2♥	8	6NT	10	4NT	10	Pass	10	Pass	8	46
Kimelman, Neil	2♥	8	6NT	10	Pass	4	5NT	8	6♣	9	39
L'Ecuyer, Nic	1♠	10	6NT	10	4NT	10	5NT	8	5NT	10	48
Lebi, Robert	2♥	8	6NT	10	5NT	8	5♠	4	5NT	10	40
Mackay, Steve	2♥	8	6♠	8	pass	4	5NT	8	6♥	4	32
Marcinski, Zygmunt	2♥	8	6NT	10	4NT	10	Pass	10	5NT	10	48
Miles, Danny	2♥	8	6NT	10	5NT	8	Pass	10	6♦	6	42
Smith, Julie	1♠	10	6NT	10	4NT	10	Pass	10	5NT	10	50
Stark, Andy	2♥	8	6♠	8	5NT	8	6♥	9	6♦	6	39
Todd, Bob	1♠	10	6NT	10	4NT	10	Dbl	3	5NT	10	43
Treble, Bill	1♠	10	6NT	10	4NT	10	5♠	4	5NT	10	44
Willis, David	1♠	10	6NT	10	5NT	8	5♠	4	6♦	6	38
Zhou, Kai	2♥	8	6NT	10	5NT	8	5NT	8	Pass	8	42

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THE SWEDES SHINE

Mark Horton, Shrewsbury, Shrops., GBR.

Toine van Hoof, Utrecht, Pays-Bas

The Bridge Mind – van Hoof & Horton

Have you ever stopped to consider how a top-class player thinks? We are sometimes presented with a piece of play or defence where it seems that the individual concerned is playing a game with which we are not familiar. In Round 6 of a recent Alt Mixed, we witnessed a brilliant series of plays, so instructive that we took the opportunity to ask the player to describe her thoughts.

Board 2. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>E. Hessel</i>	<i>Donner</i>	<i>I. Hessel</i>	<i>C. Rimstedt</i>
—	—	1NT	Pass
3♣ ¹	Pass	3♦ ²	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Puppet Stayman
2. No five-card major

At every other table but one, the auction went one notrump-three notrump (one West going via an invitational three clubs) and South led a diamond, presenting declarer with a ninth trick.

At this table, Cecilia Rimstedt led the four of spades.

C.R.: Once West has not looked for a four-card major in partner's hand, this is like a one-notrump-three notrump auction and I tend to lead a major. Starting with a six-card minor when dummy is known to be without a four-card major catches partner with a singleton quite a lot.

North played the king and declarer won with the ace.

C. R.: Partner's king and declarer's ace could be good or bad news. Partner could still have king-jack-fourth or -fifth, but declarer could have had ace-jack-ten-fourth, so it was unclear if the lead had been good or bad.

Declarer continued with the ten of clubs for the three, queen, and six.

C.R.: Partner's spot was the highest out there which, unless it was a stiff (or a possible duck from king-six), it was a negative signal for the opening lead (a version of Reverse Smith).

Next, the three of diamonds was covered by the eight, queen, and king.

C.R.: We play UDCA, so partner should have either a stiff diamond or one higher card (it should be the jack). It seemed like declarer was looking for a ninth trick, having started with six club tricks and two aces. So the question was, if partner had the king-queen of hearts, so that we now had five tricks to cash, with declarer having the ace-queen-jack-fourth of diamonds or if partner indeed had a higher diamond, then I can safely play one back.

South returned the two of diamonds to the ten, jack, and six.

C.R.: It seemed more likely to hope for partner to have the jack of diamonds than both the king and queen of hearts, and some declarers might by habit, play the ten rather than low from ten-low opposite ace-queen-third when taking that finesse.

When declarer ducked the jack of diamonds on the second round of the suit, North returned the ten of spades, covered by the jack and queen.

C.R.: Now I knew declarer's ninth trick was set up with dummy's nine of spades, so I had to hope for partner to have the king of hearts.

South cashed the ace of hearts and North's king was the setting trick.

C.R.: It was the right defence, but a bit lucky with the spots for our carding (partner's club spot was easily read as was his diamond spot). However, if declarer had played a low club to the queen instead of the ten, my partner's six could have been low from ten-six, and things might have been harder.

Our thanks to Cecilia Rimstedt for sharing her thoughts.

The Flight of the Phoenix – Horton

I first encountered the concept of the Phoenix that rises from the ashes while reading a story about an amazing athlete called 'Wilson' who, amongst other things, had discovered the secret of eternal life. In bridge terms, it is sometimes possible to resurrect a contract that appears to be hopeless, although you may sometimes need to enlist the help of your opponents.

Have a look at the following cards from one of the Alt Invitationals:

Board 27. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

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

It was the penultimate deal of one of the semifinals in an Alt event.

West	North	East	South
Arts	Fredin	de Roos	Apteker
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	1♥	1♠	2NT1
Pass	3♣2	Pass	3♥3
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass

1. Four+ hearts, invitational
2. Any minimum
3. Non-forcing

Taking the view that his side was behind in the match (he was right), Peter Fredin decided to go on to game – if East happened to lead a spade declarer would be off to a good start. However, the opening lead was the queen of clubs. That offered declarer a glimmer of hope – perhaps East had started with the queen-jack-nine-third, in which case the suit would be good for four tricks.

Declarer won with the ace of clubs and played the ten of hearts. East's discard of the three of diamonds was a blow, and West won with the ace, then switched to the jack of spades. It was still possible to play East for the queen-jack-nine of clubs, but that now appeared to be well against the odds. The only thing in declarer's favour at this point was that he could be confident that the diamond honours would be split. He put in the queen of spades and, as expected, East produced the king and, after some thought, exited with the three of clubs. Having avoided immediate defeat, was there any hope for declarer?

Fredin could have secured an extra club trick by putting in dummy's ten, and if West had started with the jack-ten of spades, a spade finesse would have allowed declarer to dispose of one of dummy's diamonds. However, if West had the spade jack-ten, the ace of hearts and a diamond honour, might he not have bid three spades?

After considerable thought, declarer spotted an alternative line that, with a little help from East, might just work. Fredin went up with dummy's king of clubs, ruffed a club, played a heart to the king, ruffed a club

high, played a heart to the queen and cashed two hearts, discarding the six and jack of diamonds. This was the position:

♠ A 9
♥ —
♦ Q
♣ —

♠ 3
♥ —
♦ K 9
♣ —

♠ 10 7
♥ —
♦ A 10
♣ —

♠ 6
♥ —
♦ 7 5
♣ —

East still had to play and, imagining that declarer held the king of diamonds, he discarded the diamond ten. Now Fredin completed a stunning comeback by exiting with a diamond, forcing East to hand over the last two tricks to the ace and nine of spades.

This had been the full deal:

♠ A Q 9
♥ J 10 8 5 4
♦ Q J 6
♣ A 6

♠ J 8 3
♥ A 9 7
♦ K 9 8 2
♣ 9 4 2

♠ K 10 7 5 4
♥ —
♦ A 10 4 3
♣ Q J 5 3

♠ 6 2
♥ K Q 6 3 2
♦ 7 5
♣ K 10 8 7

In the other room, South was the declarer in four hearts and West led the three of spades. East took dummy's queen with the king and switched to the five of clubs for the eight, nine and ace. West ducked the first round of hearts, won the second and shifted to the two of diamonds, East winning with the ace and returning the suit for plus 50 and 10 IMPs.

QUIZ

INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

PROBLEM ON PAGE 14

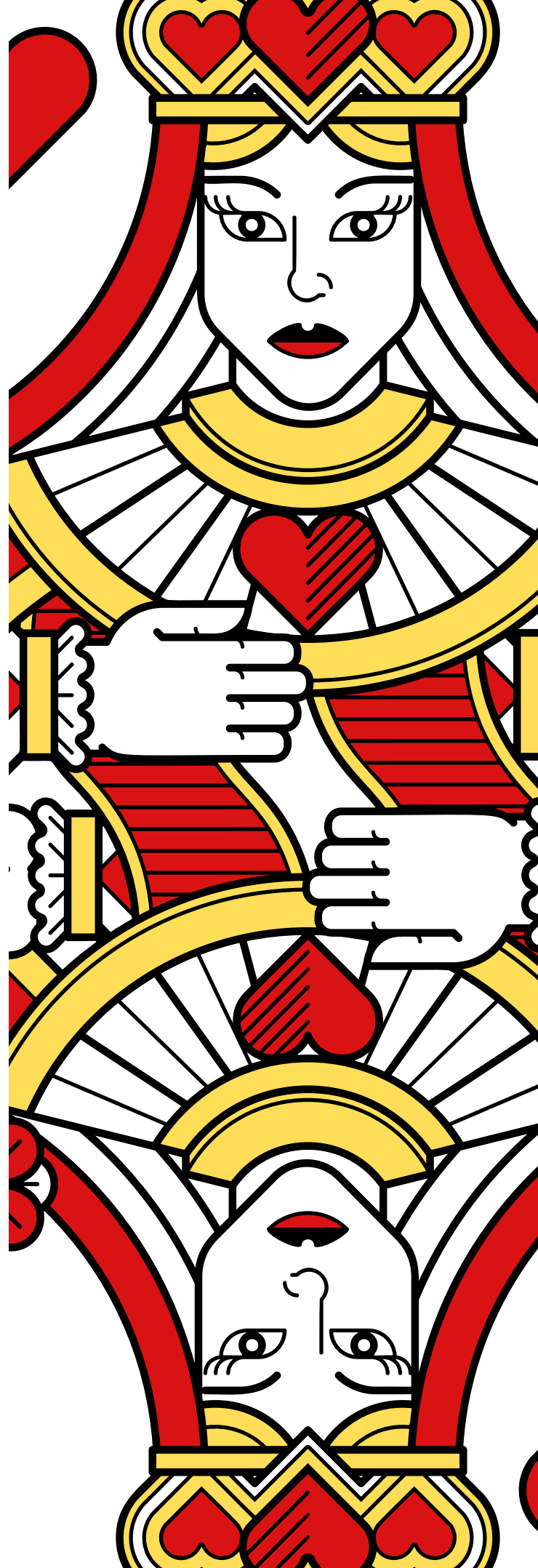
Contract: 3NT IMPs Lead ♥7. East plays the Jack.

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

Declarer should win the heart, preferably with the king, to leave some doubt as to the location of the heart queen. Declarer has eight tricks, and the best chance to develop a 9th trick is in diamonds, hoping the suit splits 3-3.

However, declarer cannot let East in to play a 2nd heart through. Thus, South should cash the ace of clubs and played the jack of clubs to the king to lead the nine of diamonds from the board. If East plays low declarer would duck, but East covered with the ten. Win the ace, and cross to dummy with a 3rd round of clubs and play the ♦8. If East ducks you duck. If East covers win the king, and hope West started with ♦Qxx. You still have a club entry in dummy to cash the 13th diamond.

One interesting note is that West could play the ♦7 on the first round of diamonds and the queen on the 2nd round, hoping that partner's original diamond holding was J106, and could win the 3rd round of diamonds.



PLAY or Defend?

Solution to page 3.

Contract: 6♣ by South

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

At first blush it looks like a simple Morton's Fork Coup. Assume a heart lead, play low from dummy, and East must put in the ten. You win the queen. If you now pitch the ♥K on the ♠AK, you cannot ruff the two diamond losers as east will ruff in. Nor can you pull trump as you have two diamond losers... or do you?

Declarer should win the heart, pull trump, take the diamond finesse and ♦A, and run trump to reach this ending:

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

On the lead of the ♣7 east is stymied. If he throws a spade, the nine will be declarer's 12th trick. If instead east discards the ♥J, declarer will throw a spade from his hand, lead the ♥K and score the heart as the 12th trick.

However, if you chose to declare you chose wrong, as a spade lead will destroy the communication to effect the squeeze. If declarer plays the ♥K early, East can win and must return the ♥J. If declarer runs their minor suit tricks this will be the ending:

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

On the lead of the last trump east can pitch the ♠J. If declarer discards the ♠9, East scores two heart tricks by force. If instead declarer throws the ♥5, east ducks the ♥K, and wins two hearts. If instead declarer tries a sneaky ♥6 east can rise with the ace and lock declarer in dummy with two diamond losers.

My partner is 20 years behind the times. He still thinks you need high cards to bid.

Author unknown

