

bridge *Canada*

Wishing *You a*
Fetching **holiday**



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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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.

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Jurek Czyzowicz (1948 – 2021)

Jurek passed away on November 13, 2021 after a three year battle with a serious illness. A full obituary can be found on the CBF website.

Gratitude

Recently I was part of an experience of giving back to the community. Helping others less fortunate through random acts of kindness. It was a very rewarding experience and reminded me of the importance of being kind to fellow Canadians, and not just focused on myself.

Covid has been hard on us all. We have all seen examples of behaviours that were not kind, but selfish and disrespectful. Perhaps some of us have been guilty of these type of actions. Kindness and caring should be forefront, and I believe is a prerequisite in strengthening our bridge community.

As a result, I have started a path of reflection, with the goal of being a better person. I invite you to also examine your own behaviours, and make any changes, to be the person you want to be.

As I step down from the CBF Board I am grateful for all the CBF related experiences I have enjoyed during the last 11 years. I will be continuing on as Editor of Bridge Canada.

Season greetings,
and all the best in
2022.

Neil Kimelman
Managing Editor,
Bridge Canada



Mollo ON PLAY XVIII

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

♠ 9 5
♥ K J 10 8
♦ K 7 5 4
♣ A Q 8

♠ A Q
♥ A Q 9 7 6
♦ A 8 3 2
♣ K 4



Answer on page 18



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September to December
COPC and CNTC qualifying games at
clubs

October to February
CBF Online Team league

CBF STaC
February 14-20, 2022

Canadian Bridge Championships
May 21-29, 2022
Saskatoon, SK



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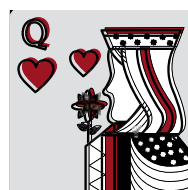
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Meet ...

Stephen Laufer

CBF Director - Zone III

Stephen, the new CBF Zone III Board Member, co-owns and operates a successful club in Toronto, Ontario. He brings a fresh grass roots perspective to the Federation focusing on beginners and intermediates, as well as, directing open players.

After being invited to assist Lee Daugharty with large open games, Stephen worked with B. Seagram and J. Hammill teaching bridge before embarking on his own bridge journey operating a Club with Robin Stephens.

Bridge is Stephen's third work life experience. He retired after public service as an Assistant Crown Attorney, prior to that he was a Chiropractor and Lecturer at institutions of Higher Learning. He holds degrees in chiropractic, law, and a Master of Education.

As Zone Director for Ontario Units 166, 246, 249, and 255, Stephen serves the largest concentration of players in the CBF. Please reach out to him at zone3@cbf.ca to welcome him, and advise of any important issues.



Alvin Roth, who was a very ethical player, is defending 7NT, vulnerable, in a money rubber bridge game where the declarer reduces to a three card ending. Dummy has the Axx of spades and declarer the KJ10. The lead is in declarer's hand and he leads the ♠J. Second hand has xxx and Roth Qxx. Second hand goes into an act trying to make declarer think he has the queen and finally plays low. Declarer, taken in by the hesitation, also plays low. Roth, holding the queen, also plays low allowing the jack to take the trick and the declarer to make 7NT. When Roth's partner asks him why he didn't take the ♠Q, Roth says: "Because I thought you had it!" - Edwin Kantar



BRIDGE MOVIE

An Early Christmas Gift

By Neil Kimelman

This is the opportunity you have been waiting for – playing in an online event filled with expert and world class participants.



Note: In a bridge movie questions are revealed one at a time to simulate real decision making at the table.

You have been practicing for months with your expert partner, who has been a solid performer. You have clear agreements in most common auctions, but often encounter ones that are new. The match has been close when this hand appears:

IMPs. Both Vul. You are South and the dealer, and pickup ♠Q ♥AQ9 ♦QJ3 ♣AKQJ53. It does look as Christmas has come early!

What do you open?

The point and loser count (four) is a bit low for a 2♣ opener. 1♣ seems best. Partner responds 1♠, as the opponents are silent.

What now?

There are two reasonable choices – 2♦ and 3NT. The latter is usually made with a long, solid suit and a stopper in the unbid suits. This hand qualifies, and is a decent option. However the extra high card strength suggests a slower approach. Bid 2♦. 2♥ should not be a consideration, with only three cards, when there are other equal, or better, options available.

Now partner rebids 2♥. Your agreements are that any other bid would have been natural and game forcing, except for 2NT, which would have been Lebensohl, initiating a sign off sequence.

What now?

Partner has a good hand, but not one where he wanted to rebid spades, or support one of your suits. When you

don't know what partner has in mind it is usually best to continue describing your hand. There are two bids that are worthy of consideration: 2NT and 3♥. They both show a heart stopper, and strongly imply short spades. 3♥ is the better choice, as it allows partner to declare notrump, avoiding a spade through your likely weakest suit. Partner now bids 3♠. Here is the auction so far:

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

What is 3♠?

This auction is one that most partnerships have not encountered. With no historical context we need to make sense of what partner has, both from their bids and what they have not bid. First, they have not supported a minor, neither directly over 2♦, nor over 3♥. They do not have a hand with primary or secondary minor support.

Do they have a hand with a spade single-suiter?

Unlikely. They could have bid 2♠ or 3♠ over 2♦. The former would be natural, maybe ♠K10xxxx ♥xxx ♦Kx ♣xx. Bidding 3♠ would show a good long suit with slam interest, and denying interest in other strains. Maybe ♠AK109xxx ♥xxx ♦Kx ♣x. By elimination, that leaves a hand with both majors, at least 5-5, but could be 6-5 or 6-6. With 5-4 in the majors they could have signed off in 3NT, or bid 4NT, invitational.



How strong is partner?

At least slam invitational. With only game aspirations they could have signed off in 3NT or 4♥.

What do you bid?

You have a very good hand for hearts. A 4NT key card ask would be aggressive, but not unreasonable. However I would shy away from this call for two reasons:

1. You do not have a diamond control, and
2. You may have partner's hand wrong.

A better approach is bidding 4♣. Ostensibly this is a club control agreeing hearts.

Partner bids 4♦. Now what?

Alright! Sounds like we are on the same wavelength, and partner is cue bidding the ♦A. The best choice now is to confirm the trump suit, bid 4♥. Partner knows you have a good hand, and will not pass 4♥ unless there is a very good reason to do so.

Partner bids 4NT. And you?

A lot of times a 4NT bid in an auction where there is no suit agreement is regressive, to play. This is not one of those times. You have agreed hearts. Show your two keycards and the ♥Q by bidding 5♠.

Partner now bids 5NT. What do you respond?

Partner has confirmed possession of all key cards, and is trying for a grand. You have a hand worthy of accepting. If partner has ♥Kxxxx and two outside aces, as they have shown, there are 13 tricks with normal breaks.

The choice is whether to bid 7♥ or 7NT. Which do you choose?

When facing such a decision it is usually better to bid notrump when you may have more than one option for a source of tricks. The other consideration is avoiding a potential ruff. Neither of these criteria seem to be present here. 7♥ is the better choice as declarer may be able to overcome mild bad breaks, and score tricks from other sources such as a spade ruff(s) or a diamond finesse. Had you bid notrump first, 7NT would also have the potentially important disadvantage of facing a diamond lead through the ace. 7♥ ends the auction. You get to play it from the North side.

♠ A 8 7 6 4

♥ K J 8 6 4

♦ A 8 5

♣ –

♠ Q

♥ A Q 9

♦ Q J 3

♣ A K Q J 5 3

East leads the ♠J. It goes queen, king and you wisely win the ace.

What is your plan?

As analysed earlier, there are 13 tricks available if hearts split 3-2, and clubs break 4-3. So the plan should be to pull trumps and run the clubs. The only wrinkle is that, because of your club void, you must ensure to win the 3rd round of hearts in dummy. So you play on trumps.

Does it matter the choice of cards during the 1st and 2nd round of trumps?

Yes, it could make a difference. For example if hearts go 4-1, you can no longer pull all of the opponent's trumps and run clubs. So the best order is to cash the ♥K at trick two, and at a trick three, lead a heart to dummy's ace. On this trick East discards the ♠2.

What now?

Time to recount your tricks. You have 1 spade, 5 hearts, 1 diamond, and 4 clubs. A 12th trick could come from an extra club. For example, if West ruffs the 4th or 5th round of clubs, you overruff, cross to the ♥K, pulling West's last trump. But eventually you will need West to hold the ♦K.

Do you take the diamond finesse now?

Yes. On the lead of the ♦Q it goes all small!

What now?

Play on clubs. You need West to have at least three clubs. When you play on clubs, East shows out on the 3rd round! Here is the six card ending after the 3rd round of clubs, with you pitching three spades from hand:



The full deal:

♠ 8
♥ J 8 6
♦ A 8
♣ –

West
♠ ?
♥ 10 7
♦ K ?
♣ 10 9

♠ –
♥ Q
♦ J 3
♣ J 5 3

♠ A 8 7 6 4
♥ K J 8 6 4
♦ A 8 5
♣ –

♠ K
♥ 10 7 5 3
♦ K 10 7
♣ 10 9 8 6 2

♠ J 10 9 5 3 2
♥ 2
♦ 9 6 4 2
♣ 7 4

♠ Q
♥ A Q 9
♦ Q J 3
♣ A K Q J 5 3

What now?

Almost there! Cash the last club, throwing away your losing diamond, and ruff a club to your hand. Cash the ♦A, and then ruff a spade in dummy. You are in dummy after trick 11. West is down to ♥ 10 7 and you have ♥ J 8 behind them! Making seven!!

Although it didn't look good for a while you navigated your way through a complex auction, and didn't lose your focus when bad breaks would have been the downfall of less effective declarers. The diamond finesse winning was truly an early Xmas gift. Season's greetings, and all the best in 2022!!



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UNLEASH THE HOLIDAY CHEER

MOVIES & PODCASTS *for the Holidays*

December is here and for many of us this means there will be more time to relax. And what better way to kick back, after the bridge game of course, than with a great movie or podcast! Here are a few good offerings.

MOVING PICTURE SHOWS

ACES & KNAVES

Director/Producer Jackie Pare. A documentary about mental gymnastics, competition, and cheating in bridge - the most complex game ever invented by the human mind. Watch it on Vimeo! vimeo.com/200434495

THE KIDS TABLE

A documentary from Beyond the Porch Productions and the ACBL Educational Foundation that follows four young friends as they navigate the highs and lows of competitive bridge. Available on a variety of digital platforms. bridgekidsdoc.com

DIRTY TRICKS

by Yes Studios. Its world premiere was at Hot Docs but if you missed it there hopefully you can watch it at upcoming festivals. You can find the trailer and more on the Yes Studios website.

yesstudios.tv/dirty-tricks



THE BRIDGE CHANNEL

No moving picture listing would be complete without TV! The Bridge Channel on Youtube describes itself as an *Umbrella Channel for all Bridge Channels on YouTube*. You can find it at this link. bit.ly/2YYXX7R

PODCASTS

A podcast is an audio programme, similar to talk radio, but you subscribe to it on your smartphone using an app such as Apple Podcasts or Spotify (note, there are many options), and listen to it whenever you like.

SORRY, PARTNER

Sorry, Partner is a bridge broadcast series presented by Catherine Harris and Jocelyn Startz in which they interviews bridge experts for their take on hot topics, bridge strategy, and current events. On the most recent episode, Canadian champion KISMET FUNG discusses the joy of problem-solving, matters of playing style, and the importance of having fun -- and shares her top tip for developing players.

shows.acast.com/sorry-partner/

THE SETTING TRICK

Presented by avid and excited bridge player John McAllister this podcast features interviews with prominent bridgeurs, players, and experts. Find out more on The Setting Trick official website.

thesettingtrick.com

THE BRIDGE ZONE

Barry Jones and Mereana Cullen are the presenters of the weekly Bridge Zone podcast from NZ which covers strategy, current international and local bridge events, and interviews with well-known bridge personalities and players. bit.ly/3CuFo9o

JACK'S DAILY BRIDGECAST

Presented by English bridge champion Jack Stocken this creative daily bridgecast is broadcast from Yorkshire Bridge Online (UK), with a focus on ACOL playing and the technical aspects of cutthroat bridge playing. bit.ly/3HDDuqW



THE NEW PLAYER *Spot*



by Andy Stark

The Count Signal

The count signal is not to be confused with the attitude signal. The attitude signal is given between the two defenders when one of them breaks a suit. Count is given between the two defenders when declarer breaks a suit. A common question amongst newcomers at this point is, "What does 'breaks' mean?" To break a suit is to be the first player to lead that suit.

When declarer breaks a suit, it is assumed that our attitude is no longer worth conveying. Logically, if declarer is breaking a suit it is a suit that they wish to develop. Therefore, our attitude towards it is irrelevant: we shall just take whatever we can take in the suit that declarer is working on. There is no need to tell partner if we like a suit (or not) that declarer is breaking.

However, our count may be relevant to partner. Partner may need to know exactly how many cards we started with in that suit (the suit that declarer is breaking) in

COUNT SIGNALS ... CONTINUED

order to know when to take their ace or king. The count signal is especially important to give (and recognize) when there is a good suit in the dummy and no entries outside the good suit. The count signal should be given in both suit contracts and notrump contracts.

When you are giving count, you look at the total number of cards you have in that suit and determine whether you have an even number or an odd number. As soon as declarer plays on this particular suit you show your even or odd count by the size of card you play. If you have an odd number of cards, play your lowest. If you have an even number of cards, play the highest you can afford. Here's a mnemonic: HIGH and EVEN each have 4 letters. LOW and ODD each have 3 letters.

For example, say you hold four cards in diamonds, the 10-8-6-3, and declarer plays on diamonds. Play the 8 if you can, but if it appears the 8 might be important, then play the 6 to show an original holding of an even number, here a total of four. If you hold the 10-8-3 in this suit (a total of three), play the 3 to show an original holding of an odd number. If you hold the 8-3 in this suit, play the 8 first to show an original holding of an even number, here two. And if you hold a singleton 3, play it! When partner sees you play the 3, she will infer you have an odd number in the suit – a total of either 1, 3, or 5.

Partner might be momentarily in the dark or partner will figure it out immediately—it depends on the bidding and the dummy and all the other diamonds around the table. If your three was indeed a singleton, partner will figure out it was a singleton when you show out of diamonds on the next round. Here is an example of the count signal in action.

In a novice game the wife leads a low club and her husband alerts. They ask about the alert. He says "She is leading a singleton." "How do you know", one opponent asks. "Because she led it with her left hand. If it were from a doubleton, she would have led it with her right hand."



South opened 2NT and North bid 3NT which ended the auction. You are West:

♠ 432
♥ 83
♦ KQJ109
♣ 864

(You)

♠ QJ109
♥ KJ72
♦ A32
♣ 53

♠ 765
♥ Q104
♦ 874
♣ 10972

♠ AK8
♥ A965
♦ 65
♣ AKQJ

You lead the spade queen versus 3NT. It goes low-low-low. (East's low one, the 5 says, "I can't help you much here, partner." This is the attitude signal because your side broke this suit. ('broke' = played it first.) You continue with the jack because you can see setting up another trick in spades. Plus, you know by continuing spades that you will be setting up one more spade trick in addition to the queen at trick one. Just because partner signalled that they could not help you in spades does not mean you have to stop playing spades.

Declarer wins the second trick and plays the ♦5. You correctly play the diamond 2 because there is no rush to grab the ace in dummy's best suit. You are eager to see what card partner plays on this trick. Turns out it is the ♦4—clearly their lowest one from an odd holding. If partner's only diamond is the 4, then declarer has a total of four diamonds and there is no stopping declarer from setting up dummy's diamonds. So, you will assume that partner has a total of three diamonds. Now, if East has three diamonds, then declarer has only two.

Therefore, when declarer plays another diamond you will grab your ace. Now dummy's diamonds are cut off. Dummy is dead! But if you ducked another diamond, then that would be declarer's ninth trick. By grabbing the ace at the right time, you defeat 3NT.

Let's revisit the hand only this time give East a doubleton diamond. Now let's watch how you can put it all together with the new information in order to not give any tricks away to declarer. Again, the bidding goes 2NT-3NT. West leads the ♠Q.

| | |
|----------|---------|
| ♠ 432 | ♠ 765 |
| ♥ 83 | ♥ Q1064 |
| ♦ KQJ109 | ♦ 84 |
| ♣ 864 | ♣ 10972 |
| ♠ QJ109 | ♠ AK8 |
| ♥ KJ72 | ♥ A95 |
| ♦ A32 | ♦ 765 |
| ♣ 53 | ♣ AKQJ |

After winning the first or second spade play, declarer once again attacks diamonds. The trick goes 5-2-K-8. You now know that partner has a singleton 8 or a doubleton 8. Partner cannot possibly have three or more diamonds. If partner has an even number, then declarer has an odd number. All signs are pointing to this scenario.

When declarer calls for the diamond queen and partner plays the 4, it is now a 100% certainty that declarer has the last diamond. Therefore, you must duck a second time. If West were to grab their ace on the second round, the dummy's diamond suit would be accessible. But by ducking the second diamond, and waiting patiently until the third round, you will be playing expert bridge. South will get two diamond tricks and only two diamond tricks. 9 tricks should be the limit and in the Matchpoint game, this is the best result possible for EW, (barring a NS accident).

Keeping the Right Cards

This seems to come up a lot in the Matchpoint game: declarer runs a bunch of tricks at you, and you have to figure out what cards to keep in the endgame.

(Dummy)

♠ Q103
♥ A2
♦ 8653
♣ 7632

(You)

♠ 54
♥ J1098
♦ KQJ
♣ KQJ10

South opens 2♣ and rebids 2♠ after North's 2♦ bid. North raises spades and this excites South who drives to 6♠ after finding out North holds the heart ace. You lead the club king. Partner plays the ♣4 and declarer wins the ace. Declarer proceeds to cash the ace and king of spades. Partner follows with the ♠9 on the first spade trick and discards the ♣5 on the second round of trumps. Assuming declarer has the ♥KQx, you can see 12 tricks. Can you hold them to those 12 tricks and prevent the overtrick?

Declarer plays a spade over to dummy's queen. You pitch the ♣10. Partner pitches the ♣9. Now declarer calls for the heart ace. Partner plays the ♥7, declarer follows with the ♥3, and you play the heart jack. Declarer now plays the ♥2 over to their king in hand as partner plays the lowest heart possible, the 4 while you follow with the ♥8. Under the heart queen, you play the ♥9 and partner the ♥6.

Declarer reverts to trumps and cashes the spade jack. What do you pitch? You can confidently pitch whatever you wish. Partner pitches the ♣8 and now you know the whole hand. If you'd like to test yourself, go back and follow the play up to now. Then answer this question. What is the last card you will keep in order to hold declarer to 12 tricks: the club queen or the diamond king?

Answer: ♦ K. Partner dumped all their clubs to help you get a read on that suit. Plus, they showed you how many hearts they had (an even number: 4 total). The full deal:

| | |
|-----------|--------|
| ♠ 54 | ♠ 9 |
| ♥ J1098 | ♥ 7654 |
| ♦ KQJ | ♦ 9742 |
| ♣ KQJ10 | ♣ 9854 |
| ♠ AKJ8762 | |
| ♥ KQ3 | |
| ♦ A10 | |
| ♣ A | |

Against a slam – small or grand – it's important to give count so that partner will know what to keep in the endgame. Imagine if declarer's ♦10 was switched with East's ♣8. Then East would signal differently, and you would know to keep a club for the 13th trick. Another good tactic is to void yourself in a suit so that partner, if watching closely, can see all of your cards in a suit. Then they'll know declarer's length with certainty. On this hand, East pitched all their clubs away and showed an even number of hearts. East would void themselves in hearts, too, on the run of the spades. So, it's easy for West to keep a diamond and not a club on the deal above.

Once you begin to get a count of one suit around the table, the other suits get easier to count. And once you start doing that, you're on your way to scoring more tricks on defense.



A club is led against a 7♦ contract and declarer has four clubs to the jack. His partner, the dummy, says: "I have some good and some bad news for you. The good news is that I am void in clubs, the bad news is that I am also void in diamonds."

QUIZ

INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

SOLUTION ON PAGE 37

Contract: 6♠ **Lead:** ♦Q. **IMPs.** Plan the play.

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



BRIDGE BASICS



MINOR SUIT CONVENTIONS

This is the 20th article in a New Player Bridge Canada series and Part II of Major Suit Raises Conventions. Some of these concepts may be a review for you, but this series will also cover more advanced techniques and ideas.

We now look at bidding over one of a minor. We will look at some choices of conventions to use that show difficult to describe hand types, and how to support partner's minor. But first let's start by going up the line:

ONE OF A MAJOR

This is usually straightforward – 6+ HCPs and at least four cards in the major bid. An option to this is a transfer system, whereas a one level bid is a transfer to the next suit. Reviewing this type of structure is beyond the scope of this column. Another variant (no not the Delta one) is the Montreal Relay. Playing this convention, a 1♦ response to 1♣ denies a five card or longer major, where bidding a major directly shows at least a five card suit.

1NT RESPONSE

This is often played as natural, 6-10, denying four cards in a major. Some partnerships play a 1NT response to 1♣ is 8-10, and respond 1♦ with 6-7 HCPs.

2 OF A MAJOR RESPONSE

These are bids that have a greater variety of meanings. Here are the primary choices:

Strong – in Standard, a jump shift shows at least five cards in the major and is game forcing. Some even have higher standards, either a six card suit, and/or 16+ HCPs.

Weak – six card suit, 3-6 HCPs.

Reverse Flannery – this has come into more common usage over recent years. It is used to show weaker hands with both majors. The reason, is if the bidding starts 1m-1♠, a 4-4 or even 4-5 heart fit can be lost when the partnership do not have sufficient extra values to bid hearts. So:

2♥ shows either 5-4 or 5-5 in the majors with about 6-8 HCPs.

2♠ also shows exactly 5-4 in the majors, with 9-11 HCPs.

A 2NT continuation over 2♥ is often played as artificial and at least invitational, asking responder to describe their hand further.

Responses:

- 3♣ – 5-4 minimum.
- 3♦ – 5-4 maximum.
- 3♥ – 5-5 minimum.
- 3♠ – 5-5 maximum.

2NT – natural, 11-12 HCPs.

3 of a major – game forcing splinter.

3NT – natural, 15-17 HCPs.

RAISING THE MINOR

Unlike the majors, there are not as many 'standard' agreements to differentiate minor support with different strengths. In fact many partnerships have their own custom made solutions. In the old days a single raise was 6-10 and double raise forcing. Now there are

many other choices. The key is for your partnership to have a way to describe all different ranges.

Forcing raises

Many partnerships play *Inverted Minors*. That means a single raise is a strong raise, whereas a jump raise to three of the minor is weak and preemptive. The forcing raise can either be played as game forcing or invitational or better. If you chose the latter, then a rebid of 2NT or 3 of the minor on your next turn shows the invitational hand type, while anything else becomes game forcing.

However if your single raise is game forcing then you need a way to show an invitational raise. Most partnerships use *Criss-Cross*. This is simply that a jump in the other minor is a limit raise.

One of the most important features to show after a forcing raise is shortness. For that reason many partnerships have ways to do this. One possible structure:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1♦-2♦ ¹ | 1. Game forcing raise with at least five card support. |
| 2♥/2♠/3♣ | Natural, at least 5-4 in two suits. |
| 3♦ | 6+ diamonds, no shortness. |
| 3♥/3♠/4♣ | Shortness in the suit bid. |

A similar structure is possible over a Criss-Cross auction.

ASKING FOR KEY CARDS

4NT is not a good choice to ask for key cards when in a game forcing auction, with a minor suit agreed. The reason is the response may indicate you are off two key cards, but are above 5 of the agreed minor! There are two mainstream options:

Minorwood – this is a bid of four of the agreed minor in a game forcing auction is Keycard.

Redwood – the bid immediately above four of the agreed suit is Keycard, diamonds for clubs and hearts for diamonds, ergo Redwood.

They are both decent choices. A weakness of Redwood is that is sometimes difficult to have a cue bidding

sequence when four of a red suit is not available for that purpose.

The other consideration is how to ask for kings, and the meaning of 4NT. My suggestion is that the cheapest bid is a specific king ask (unless the trump queen has not been clarified, then the king ask is the 2nd cheapest bid), and that 4NT, playing matchpoints, is to play. So:

Example 1, Matchpoints

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1♣ | 2♣ ¹ |
| 4♣ ² | 4♦ ³ |
| 4♥ ⁴ | 4♠ ⁵ |
| 4NT ⁶ | 5♣ ⁶ |

1. Game forcing raise.
2. Minorwood
3. 1 or 4.
4. Queen of trump ask.
5. Specific king ask.
6. Sign off.

GRAND SLAM FORCE

Although not a frequent bid, it is an important tool to have in your toolbox. Normally 5NT is the grand slam force. But again, this doesn't work well for a minor. A good alternative is to use a jump to 5♥ as a GSF when a minor is the agreed suit.

Partner's responses:

- 5♠ = A or K of agreed minor.
- 5NT = Queen of agreed minor, but no ace or king.
- 6 of agreed suit = no high honour.
- 7 of agreed suit = Two of the top three honours.

Over 5♠ there is one more step available. A bid of 5NT over the 5♠ response asks if you have extra length. First step (6♣) no, 2nd step (6♦) yes.

Let's say partner has promised four diamonds, the agreed suit, and your diamond holding is AJxxx. You have no losers outside of the trump suit. Over partner's 5♠ bid you can bid 5NT, asking partner if they have extra length. If they bid 6♦, showing Kxxxx(x), then you can bid 7♦, knowing that at worst the slam needs a 2-1 trump break.



THE INTERMEDIATE Spot



BIDDING STRATEGIES 6

Bidding over preempts Part III.

By Neil Kimelman

In our last instalment we looked at direct seat and 4th seat actions, and what different bids mean. We looked at some of the factors to consider when deciding whether to enter the auction, as well as the best choice when you choose to do so.

Let's now look at 4th seat actions over a weak two, what to do over high level preempts, and, finally, a handy convention to offset the difficulty in having to enter the bidding at a higher level.

LEBENSOTHL CONVENTION

As a review from October's column, a very valuable convention over weak twos is the Lebensohl convention. It allows you to differentiate your strength, when responding to a takeout double. The way it works is that with constructive values, around 7-11 HCPs, you would bid your best suit. If you have a weaker hand, you bid 2NT. This is a relay, forcing the doubler to rebid 3xCx with a normal takeout double, and you then bid your best suit as a sign off.

If partner had doubled with significant extra values, they would not accept the transfer to 3xCx, but instead make a natural bid. If you have a hand you would normally make an invitational 2NT bid, you must either bid 3NT, bid a suit, or pass for penalties.

Knowing that balancer can have less than opening values, the other hand has to be more cautious about getting excited when partner balances. The range of Lebensohl in this situation should be slightly expanded to. So, if partner balances with a double over a weak two bid in hearts, I would simply bid 3♦ with up to a 13 count, such as ♠Ax ♥xxx ♦KQxxx ♣QJx.

When do you enter the auction in fourth seat? Let's try a quiz. The bidding starts 2♥, pass, pass to you. Matchpoints, neither vulnerable.

1. ♠AKxxx ♥xx ♦Kxx ♣Kxx
2. ♠AKxxx ♥xx ♦xxx ♣Kxx
3. ♠AKxxx ♥xxx ♦xx ♣xxx
4. ♠Kxx ♥Kxxx ♦Kxx ♣Qxx
5. ♠AKxx ♥x ♦J10xx ♣xxxx
6. ♠Jx ♥xxx ♦KQxxx ♣Kxx
7. ♠AKxxx ♥AQ ♦Kxx ♣xxx
8. ♠xx ♥xxx ♦KQxx ♣AQJx
9. ♠AKQ10xx ♥AQ ♦xx ♣xxx
10. ♠x ♥Kxxx ♦KQxx ♣Axxx

Answers to Quiz:

1. ♠AKxxx ♥xx ♦Kxx ♣Kxx

Start with a warm up. 2♠, although double is an action bid, maybe when down in a team match and looking for a swing.

2. ♠AKxxx ♥xx ♦xxx ♣Kxx

Again 2♠ is clear. Notice that partner should invite with caution, as the 4th seat can bid with less than opening point values.

3. ♠AKxxx ♥xxx ♦xx ♣xxx

Pass. Partner couldn't bid, but will for sure bid now, which has potential to be bad. Conservative, but right.

4. ♠Kxx ♥Kxxx ♦Kxx ♣Qxx

Pass. Sterile distribution, soft 11 count, and 4 hearts all are warning signs to stay out of the auction.

5. ♠AKxx ♥x ♦J10xx ♣xxxx

Double. This is borderline, however Lebensohl will give you some comfort is partner should never jump with moderate opening bid values (see below).

6. ♠Jx ♥xxx ♦KQxxx ♣Kxx

Pass. One more point than last hand, but entering the auction is setting yourself up for disaster.

7. ♠AKxxx ♥AQ ♦Kxx ♣xxx

2♠ is ok, but I would prefer 2NT with your strong heart holding.

8. ♠xx ♥xxx ♦KQxx ♣AQJx.

Pass. Yes you have a good hand, but 2NT would be natural, double would promise more than two spades and overcalling on a four card suit...

9. ♠AKQ10xx ♥AQ ♦xx ♣xxx

Looks like you have eight tricks in your hand. 3NT is my first choice, with 2♠ my second.

10. ♠x ♥Kxxx ♦KQxx ♣Axxx

Pass. Similar to #8.

BIDDING OVER THREE LEVEL PREEMPTS

Not much has changed, however the values you need to bid goes up, considering you are one level higher. A suit overcall should generally be made with at least a decent six card suit, and a double is often more desirable than an overcall, with a moderate five card suit.

Overcalling 3NT is risk vs reward. It is great to bid 3NT and find partner with a balanced 12 HCP hand. However they could as easily have a 4 count! It is a little safer to do so in 4th seat, when you have heard the bid from the preempter's partner.

BIDDING OVER A FOUR LEVEL PREEMPT

There is nothing fun about bidding over an opening four level bid, especially when the other two hands have not yet had a chance to bid. You do the best you can. And remember the adage, 'You pay your money and take your chances.'

The traditional methods say that a double of 4♠ is penalties, while a double of lower ranking suit is takeout. The hand type and high card for a takeout double are higher than over lower level preempts. With good distribution (4-1-4-4 or 4-1-5-3) a solid opening bid is sufficient. However if the hand is more balanced, then the equivalent of a good 1NT opener is recommended. What if you have a penalty double of 4♥? Alas, the best you can do is pass, unless you have the strong notrump hand, with some support for the unbid suits. With ♠Kxx ♥AJ10x ♦Kxx ♣KQx pass and double over 4♥ are both reasonable. The vulnerability and other factors may influence your decision.

4NT is best played as a takeout. I prefer any two suiter, rather than just the minors. Another good option is to bid 4NT anytime you are void in preempter's suit, whether two suiter or three suiter. With this agreement, over 4♥ I would bid 4NT with any of the following shapes: 4-0-4-5, 5-0-5-3, 3-0-5-5 and 4-0-6-3. This is an important discussion to have with a regular partner.

LEAPING MICHAELS

This a convention to show two suits after the opponents open a weak two bid. A jump in a minor shows at least 5-5 with that minor and the unbid major. If the opener is 2♦ then 4♣ shows 5-5 in clubs and an unknown major, and a cuebid would show 5-5 in both majors. Strength should be at least a minimum opening bid, but some play as requiring a stronger hand.

Leaping Michaels can also be played over three level preempts, even though there is no 'leaping' involved.

Next issue: A comprehensive 'bidding over preempts' quiz.

MOLLO On Play XVIII

Contract: 6♥ by South at IMPs. Lead: ♥4, East follows. Plan the play.

♠ 9 5
♥ K J 10 8
♦ K 7 5 4
♣ A Q 8

♠ K J 8 6
♥ 4
♦ Q 10 9 6
♣ J 9 7 5

♠ 10 7 4 3 2
♥ 5 3 2
♦ J
♣ 10 6 3 2

♠ A Q
♥ A Q 9 7 6
♦ A 8 3 2
♣ K 4

There are two primary lines worthy of consideration:

Plan 1: Draw trump and play two top diamonds. If diamonds are 3-2, throw the ♠Q on a club and give up one diamond. If the diamonds break badly, throw a diamond on the long club and take the spade finesse.

Plan 2: Draw trumps, cash the ♠A, then cash three rounds of clubs discarding the ♠Q, ruff a spade and lead a diamond, finessing the seven if West plays the six, otherwise ducking.

Plan 1 works if diamonds are 3-2 (68%), or if diamonds are not 3-2, but the ♠K is onside (1/2 of the remaining 32%), or about 84%.

Plan 2 works unless one opponent holds all four top diamonds. This would give West ♦QJ1096, ♦QJ109, ♦6, or ♦-. There are only four such diamond combinations, which make the initial odds of making near 90%. However the odds increase significantly when you consider that with any of the first three holdings, West would have led a diamond. Therefore Plan 2 is much superior.



What Went Wrong?

by Paul Thurston

When teams loaded with Internationalists from Norway and Ireland met in an online encounter, there was sure to be some action as both teams aren't usually shy in the bidding and will often milk the cards for a trick or two more than might be obviously available. Let's inspect this deal for not being shy in the bidding!

HAND 1

Dealer: South Vul: Neither

| | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | ♠ Q1053 | |
| | | ♥ Q82 | |
| | | ♦ Q5 | |
| | | ♣ A1084 | |
| ♠ 97 | | | ♠ AKJ84 |
| ♥ A543 | | | ♥ 1096 |
| ♦ A1082 | | | ♦ J976 |
| ♣ J65 | | | ♣ 8 |
| | ♠ 62 | | |
| | ♥ KJ7 | | |
| | ♦ K43 | | |
| | ♣ KQ732 | | |

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

Lead: ♠9

After East's enterprising double got the spade lead he requested, the contract drifted three off for the loss of five spade tricks and the two red aces without ever having a

THE
EXPERT
Spot

WHAT WENT WRONG ... CONTINUED

chance of success, so What Went Wrong? Full marks to East for his double but what was North's overly optimistic raise to game all about?

The play was surgical: nine of spades covered by the ten for East to win the Jack and play back a heart for one more spade through dummy for four more defensive winners and the diamond ace yet to come for North-South to pay out 500 points for their ill-fated adventure.

Ten high-card points in a partnership that by observation opens all twelve point hands and many elevens seems like hyper-aggression carried to a mind-boggling extreme. The raise wasn't predicated on a desperate need to produce a positive swing out of thin air as Norway had a modest lead in the match at the time that this deal was played (but, as many prefer, the state of the match's score was not known by the players). Perhaps North was paying his partner a huge compliment for his potential declarer play skills (while hoping his combining tens would prove as useful as an extra king). And there's no doubt North wasn't expecting to get doubled after his confident-seeming jump to game, and may well have thought it would be a gamble worth taking. Not this time!

HAND 2

When your opponents more or less tell you a particular line of play won't work, it behooves you to search for a better one. Take the South cards and see if you might have done better than the actual online competitor.

Dealer: West Vul: Neither

| | |
|-----------|----------|
| ♠ A865 | ♠ 1094 |
| ♥ 3 | ♥ J9 |
| ♦ A93 | ♦ 1065 |
| ♣ 108765 | ♣ Q9432 |
| ♠ - | ♠ KQJ732 |
| ♥ AQ10864 | ♥ K752 |
| ♦ KJ87 | ♦ Q42 |
| ♣ AKJ | ♣ - |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|------|-------|
| 1♥ | Pass | Pass | 1♠ |
| DbI | 4♠ | Pass | Pass |
| DbI | All Pass | | |

Lead: ♣K

Declarer ruffed the opening club lead to play a low heart to East's nine. The defender played back a low spade that South won with dummy's five to ruff a club, ruff a heart and play a low diamond to his queen and West's king. For the declarer that left one more diamond to lose as well as some combination of another heart and/or an overruff by dummy for down one.

After closer inspection after play ended, North (a keen analyst but unfortunately confined to a role as dummy), suggested that the contract could have been made. If he was right (and I think he was), What Went Wrong?

To start with, having done his side's bidding, West could reasonably be counted on for the lion's share of the defense's high cards and that tally would seem to include the diamond king, all to make that play of a low diamond to the queen very unlikely to succeed. Instead, after declarer's first heart ruff in dummy, he could ruff one more club and then ruff one more heart, this time with North's trump ace. Finally, declarer plays a trump to his hand and runs off his final trumps while watching West's discards carefully. As long as this defender is known to have all of those high cards (and his two doubles said he did!) doesn't discard three diamonds, he will almost certainly reduce to ♥AQ and ♦KJ. Having lost but one trick, South can then exit with the ♥K and West can take one more heart trick before being compelled to breathe life into the ♦Q that South had so futilely tried to score earlier.

HAND 3

In a bygone era, when we'd go to Saturday's double feature at the local movie house (hands up if you remember what a double feature was?), the program often included cartoons or maybe The Three Stooges or Abbott and Costello for comic relief in between the two movies).

WHAT WENT WRONG ... CONTINUED

For this instalment of WWW, we've somewhat jumbled that order to finish with the comic content – and i trust you will agree it is comical!

Not intended that way for sure as this deal occurred during a match of one of those online tournaments for which competition was stiff, especially when, as here, the players were at or near the top of their respective country's ranking of Internationalists. You might wonder how after seeing what happened here!

Dealer: South Vul: E-W

| | | | |
|---------|---------|--------|--|
| | ♠ J653 | | |
| | ♥ KJ9 | | |
| | ♦ AJ96 | | |
| | ♣ K7 | | |
| ♠ Q87 | | ♠ 1094 | |
| ♥ 75 | | ♥ 6432 | |
| ♦ K53 | | ♦ Q5 | |
| ♣ J9862 | | ♣ AQ54 | |
| | ♠ AK2 | | |
| | ♥ AQ108 | | |
| | ♦ 10842 | | |
| | ♣ 103 | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| - | - | - | 1♦ |
| Pass | 1♠ | Pass | 1NT |
| Pass | 3NT | All Pass | |

Lead: TBA

After an unexceptional auction that many of us would duplicate, South ended in a perfectly normal contract that a quick check of the diagram would reveal is due to go down, likely two tricks, after a routine club lead, fourth best six for most, a fifth-best or attitude deuce for others. That was my quick analysis so it was off to the little room next door to my office to be ready for more action. But when I returned, North-South had somehow logged 11 IMPs for making three notrump with an overtrick! Note: Thanks to BBO for having the replay movie feature so you don't have to miss anything but still answer nature's call.

What Went Wrong on this deal might be the understated question for that entire event!

To start with, West (apparently known for his uber-creativity) went into the proverbial deep brown study before emerging with an opening lead of his fifth worst club: the jack!

Dummy's king was topped by East's ace and third hand might have saved the board for his side by cashing the queen next but he stopped to consider the possible club layouts. The actual lie didn't enter into his computations but he did think the lead might have been from J108 or something similar so that he'd need to not squander his partner's spot cards and /or block the suit by cashing the queen at trick two. So that, technically, his trick-two low club return was spot on, except when it most definitely wasn't.

South was amused, amazed, bedazzled, when he won the club ten but that manna from heaven only got his trick count up to eight. What to do? Run the long suit and see what happens. The "long" suit was hearts and only four cards long but that was enough to bring pressure on the west hand as he had to find two discards while hating to relinquish his established clubs. When his final discard was the spade seven, south cashed the ace and king of that suit and, having saved all of dummy's original spades, two more to round out a "routine" ten tricks!

So Christmas had come early to North-South – hope yours is Happy and Healthy!

THE IBPA FILES

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



USBF OPEN TEAM TRIALS

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

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

ROUND ROBIN 2A, MATCH 5. DONNER VS. BRAMLEY

Board 29. Dealer North. Both Vul.

| | | |
|---------|----------|----------|
| ♠ 1082 | ♠ Q754 | ♠ K96 |
| ♥ 983 | ♥ Q | ♥ AKJ764 |
| ♦ A10 | ♦ QJ9 | ♦ 8742 |
| ♣ AQ986 | ♣ 107543 | ♣ - |
| | ♠ AJ3 | |
| | ♥ 1052 | |
| | ♦ K863 | |
| | ♣ KJ2 | |

TABLE 1

| West | North | East | South |
|------------------|-------------|---------|-----------|
| Woolsey | F. Kolesnik | Bramley | Del'Monte |
| — | Pass | 1♥ | Pass |
| 2NT ¹ | Pass | 4♥ | Pass |
| Pass | | | |

1. Invitational-plus with 3 or more hearts

Bramley won Del'Monte's heart-five lead (three, queen, ace) and led the four of diamonds to the three, ten and jack. How should the defense handle the spades? Kolesnik led the five (third and lowest) to the six, jack and two. South cashed the ace. Curtains! Plus 620 for BRAMLEY.



TABLE 2

| West | North | East | South |
|------------------|----------|----------|-------|
| Donner | Weichsel | Rimstedt | Lall |
| — | Pass | 1♥ | Pass |
| 1NT ¹ | Pass | 4♥ | Pass |

Pass

1. Forcing for one round.

On the same lead, Rimstedt won with her ace of hearts, led a diamond (seven, ace, nine) to dummy and took a spade pitch on the ace of clubs, then played the king on Weichsel's spade-five switch. Lall won with his ace and led another trump. Declarer was left with a losing spade and a losing diamond for one off. Minus 100 meant 12 IMPs to BRAMLEY.

What went wrong at each table? At Table 1, should Kolesnik have shifted to the seven of spades? Should Del'Monte have won with the jack of spades and led another heart? At Table 2, should Rimstedt have played the way Bramley did? If she'd not had the nine of spades, would that have made a difference? (The defense could have given declarer a nasty guess by leading a spade quack from quack-nine-low if she'd not had the nine of spades.) The correct guess to these problems can be the difference between winning and losing a match or even an event.

Board 31. Dealer South. NS Vul.

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| ♠ 108 | ♠ 72 |
| ♥ AKJ954 | ♥ 1087 |
| ♦ 9532 | ♦ AQJ87 |
| ♣ A | ♣ KJ3 |
| ♠ KQJ9643 | |
| ♥ - | |
| ♦ K104 | |
| ♣ 742 | |
| ♠ A5 | |
| ♥ Q632 | |
| ♦ 6 | |
| ♣ Q109865 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|---------|-------------|---------|-----------|
| Woolsey | F. Kolesnik | Bramley | Del'Monte |
| 1♥ | 3♠ | 4♥ | 4♠ |
| Pass | Pass | Double | Pass |
| Pass | Pass | | |

Bramley led a trump. Kolesnik won and led a club: king, low, ace! Uh oh. Plus 790 to DONNER.

| West | North | East | South |
|--------|----------|----------|-------|
| Donner | Weichsel | Rimstedt | Lall |
| — | — | — | Pass |
| 1♥ | 3♠ | 4♥ | Pass |
| Pass | Pass | | |

On this auction, how would you have played four hearts if the defense had led the king of spades to the ace (ten from declarer) and another spade to the queen (psychic suit preference), then shifted to the ten of diamonds? Donner did as many of us would have: he rose with the ace. He recovered by running the ten of hearts for plus 420; 15 IMPs to DONNER. In a high-scoring affair, DONNER outscored BRAMLEY 38-22.

Photos: Gary Donner, Sandra Rimstedt, Bart Bramley, Kit Woolsey. Source: usbf.org



the GREAT CANADIAN BIDDING CONTEST



DECEMBER 2021 TGCBC

Host, Neil Kimelman

For Panelists, see page 36

Congrats to David Willis who was a perfect 50 this week! Close behind was Francine Cimon with 49. Our top reader for December was Ashot Harutyunyan with 45. Ed Zaluski is the winner of \$100, for the best October-December combined score. Second, receiving a \$50 prize, is Sheldon Spiers. The February TGCBC problems can be found after this article.

1. IMPs. Both Vul., as South you hold: ♠ QJ6 ♥ AQJ864 ♦ K32 ♣ A

| West | North | East | South |
|---------------|-----------------|------|-------|
| - | - | - | 1♥ |
| Dbl | 3♥ ¹ | 3NT | ? |
| 1. Preemptive | | | |

What do you bid?

| Action | Votes | Score |
|--------|-------|-------|
| Pass | 8 | 10 |
| 4♥ | 6 | 8 |
| Dbl | 6 | 6 |

Welcome to the Dec TGCBC. We have a very diverse set up of problems. However before we get started, I would like to thank all panelists for sharing their knowledge and expertise each and every issue. I like the first problem because there is a lot of information available to come up with the winning call. Let's start, and first see what the 4♥ bidders have to say:

Balcombe: 4♥. What else? Maybe they make 3NT (but unlikely) with 6 diamond tricks, heart stopper and ♠AK.

Todd: 4♥. They may be cold for 3NT. Partner could have

the long clubs. We could be cold for 4♥. Passing 3NT and hoping just seems wrong.

Some 4♥ bidders expressed concern of a double game swing, with both sides making. They were half right.

Grainger: 4♥. Partner should have something for a vulnerable 3 bid and the ♥K is onside. Yeah, they might bid 5 of a minor now while 3NT was down more, but it's not a favourite, and sometimes you go +790 when partner's card isn't the ♣K. Other days they have six diamonds, two spades and a heart off the top in 3NT too.

Cooper: 4♥. Could be a double-game swing. RHO might have: ♠Ax ♥Kx ♦J109xxx ♣xxx and LHO has ♠Kxxx ♥x ♦AQxx ♣Qxxx. Although I don't like a preemptive raise with nothing, partner could have ♠xxxx ♥xxx ♦- ♣Kxxx.

L'Ecuier: 4♥. It is tempting to double this (and maybe I should) but they will probably run and even bid a making 5 of a minor suit contract. I am most likely going to beat 3NT but there is no guarantee of this (say the diamond king is not a trick) when they have 5 tricks in diamonds because I will come under a lot of pressure (if partner is not dealt the spade 10 for example) when they run diamonds. Why gamble? It is likely that 4♥ has a play if the ♥K is onside - partner usually produces 1 card for a VUL pre-empt... when in doubt, bid...

Kuz: Double. Location of ♦A determines -1 or -2.

Turner: Double. Maurice Harrison-Gray: "Double the bid in front of your nose". If we can make 4♥ (not a surety for me) this will be a bloodbath. If this allows them to escape to 4 of a minor undoubled by partner, I'll chance

4♥. I don't think so little of our chances in 4♥ that I'll settle for the "sure" +200.

Thurston: Very tough problem to start! Partnership style as to what constitutes a preemptive raise here can vary and might affect the decision. We prefer no more than one prime card (ace or king) and 0-6 HCP with four+ trumps. Given that and East's certain possession of the ♥K makes our offensive prospects minimal – we'd be trying for a save against 3NT if I bid on so what about 3NT? Along with the king of our suit, RHO may have a long minor he's hoping to run but since that's most likely to be clubs, it's not immediately runnable and if his suit is diamonds, my holding will be problematic for him – maybe dummy hits with ♠A10xx ♥- ♦Axx ♣QJxxxx opposite ♠Kx ♥K10x ♦QJ109xx ♣xx and he'd win his gamble. Still I guess to double and maybe he'll run!

A couple of panelists tried to put together the other three hands.

Bishop: Double. I see this primarily as the first step in what might only be a two-step process. Yes, I expect to beat 3NT at least a trick or two (yes, admittedly, there is a possible layout on which my hand 'might' get squeezed after they manage to run diamonds through me a couple of times; something like K10xx - AQ9xx Kxxx opposite Axx Kxx J10x Jxxx; where everyone would 'sort of' have their bids) but, also I don't clearly see that there is a sure way to the dummy to pickle the onside heart king if I were to elect to bid 4♥ instead. But sometimes declarer's bid side-suit value in the minors is the diamond ace; or sometimes my partner side value will be the diamond queen or the spade king. And, yes, responder should have one value... *vulnerable and without a high trump honour*... in order to make his/her pre-emptive jump raise at IMPs. (Partners that raise --- vulnerable; at IMPs – preemptively on xxx 9xxx xxx Jxx are beasts quickly heading for extinction). With RHO's positioning in his range being an unknown quantity, I can't foresee LHO 'running' unilaterally from a contract that, from his/her perception, could be 'cold'. If LHO is 4-0-4-5 and RHO hasn't hidden a 5-card diamond suit... how could they possibly have enough tricks? And if

RHO has ventured 3NT with something akin to Kx Kxx Axxx J10xx; boy, are they ever in trouble! **Really?**

I agree with Cooper and Bishop that normally a preemptive raise has a card, and we should make this assumption, but only conditionally. We also need to look at what the opponents likely hold. West is short in hearts, and has at least 11 HCPs. East has Kx(x) in hearts, and around 10-11 HCPs. Yes, they could have at little less as Cooper suggests with a 6 card or longer minor. However the opponents have likely 22-23 HCPs...which leaves partner with nothing. Would you bid three hearts with xxxxx xxxxx x xx? I would. The next two panelist seem more open to partner holding a bust:

Hornby: Double. Let's see how bad partner's hand really is. Don't know exactly what's going on here with East, but I expect they're running. Double tells partner I have a good hand and lets them take part in any decision. If the opps bid on after we bid the inevitable 4♥ over a likely 4♣ runout. Passing 3NT and collecting a few 100's could be the winner here (assuming west passes) if 4♥ isn't making. A direct 4♥ means I have to guess if the opps land in 5♣ as also seems likely over a direct 4♥.

A number of panelists wisely consider the play in 3NT:

Cimon: Double. A lot of bidding, what does my partner have? Probably 5 hearts and a stiff, if it is in diamonds I have a chance to make 4♥ if he has only 3 spades. The problem with the double is if the dummy had ♦Axxxx and East ♦QJx or ♦Axx in dummy and ♦QJxxx in declarer hand with an entry in spades. I will be squeezed on the diamonds and they will make it.

Fergani: 4♥. With no adverse bidding, it's a close call. Now that we found out that partner does not hold the Heart King and that this card is onside (so no wasted values), prospects are even better. A lot of HCPs in this deal! From the bidding, it looks like West made a very light take out double based mainly on shape (singleton or heart void). Almost everything is on the Diamond situation: 3NT will make only if they can score 5 diamonds tricks and partner has nothing in spades:

we would be squeezed out of our winners. All of these conditions are unlikely to come out altogether, but that's not a reason to double as there is no doubt they can make a lot of tricks in a minor suit contract. On the other side, if diamonds are not friendly to them or partner is short (likely from the auction and our holding), chances to make 4♥ are more than fair.

Miles: Double. Hard to envision them making, I suppose 1 heart and 5 diamonds may put my hand under some pressure (or if dummy has ♠AK10x, but that would be unlucky). I will likely pass if they run, violating one of my own rules of always bidding four of a major with a 10 card fit.

...So if LHO has something like Kxxx – AQxx KJxxx and RHO Ax Kx J10xx Qxxxx it makes it now more compelling that partner is broke. If so the right bid becomes much clearer:

Lindop: Pass. We can definitely defeat 3NT but, if I double, they may retreat to clubs. I don't like my defense against a club contract and don't like my side cards for offense in 4♥. I'll settle for +200 if it goes all pass.

Lebi: Pass, I don't expect to make 4♥ and I don't expect the opponents to be able to make 3NT after I lead the ♥A.

We all get blinded by HCPs. But an attribute of a successful player is to always closely consider the auction, and the likely corresponding holding of the other three hands, to get an accurate estimate of the offensive, as well as the defensive, potential.

Campbell: Pass! Who knows? Maybe the last plus for our side. Lead: ♥A. Collect +200. Why double and defend four of a minor. They likely cannot make 3NT unless RHO holds 5+ diamonds AND LHO 4+ diamonds.

Willis: Pass. There are layouts where they could conceivably make by running 6 diamonds, 2 spades and 1 heart before I get back in. However, East is likely to not have that length and is more likely to have clubs. We are likely off at least 2 spades and a 2 diamonds in our contract and may have no way to dummy to take the heart hook. We have a likely plus – why jeopardize it.

Jacob: Pass. If I bid 4♥, very likely I'll get doubled and very likely I'll go for at least 200. So the key question is: can they make 3NT? If five diamond tricks are available and partner cannot help in spades they might, not percentage though; then there are also Barry Crane's words: Only Jesus saves!

Stark: Pass. And lead the ♥Q. If I double they may run to four of a minor and I don't think I can beat either one. Five of a minor might be on. I'll lose a trick to the ♥K, then get in with something and cash five hearts.

Treble: Pass. I expect 4♥ to go down, as will their 3NT. No point in doubling, though, as they will have a playable spot (maybe even game) in a minor suit.

How about a slam? This hand came up during a recent online event. The full deal:

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

At one table South bid 4♥, doubled, down two for -500. They must have been very surprised to win 10 IMPs! At the 2nd table south doubled and west redoubled, expressing doubt. East ran to 5♣, doubled by South, making six.

2. IMPs. Neither Vul., you hold as South: ♠ 75432 ♥ Q ♦ 63 ♣ 98763

| West | North | East | South |
|------|------------------|------|-------|
| | | 1♥ | Pass |
| 4♥ | 4NT ¹ | Pass | 5♣ |
| 5♥ | Dbl | Pass | ? |

1) Minors.

What do you bid?

| Action | Votes | Score |
|--------|-------|-------|
| 6♣ | 10 | 10 |
| Pass | 10 | 9 |

A very close vote for a follow-up problem to last issue's #3 construction. There are two main camps:

- 1. Partner has them beat (with or without a spade void), or**
- 2. Partner has a very good hand for offense and defense, and wants you to look at your hand, or DSI – Do something intelligent! Pass with slow major suit stuff and/or a moderate fit. However bid on with good fit and no defensive help.**

Grainger: Pass. Might get a plus score this way, surely will not if I bid.

Lindop: 6♣. Tough. We are likely getting a plus in 5♥ doubled if partner has two diamond tricks plus one more winner, but there's no certainty. Partner is perhaps doubling with a spade void, expecting me to figure it out, but it will be a big swing if I lead a spade and we needed to cash three minor-suit winners. If partner is void in spades, I don't expect to be down more than one in 6♣, and it might make, losing only a heart trick.

Yes, the difficulty in knowing what to lead can often deter an expert from choosing to defend. Our 'what else' specialist:

Balcombe: Pass. What else redux. Maybe partner has ♠♥xxx ♦AKQxx ♣AKQxx and we make 6♣, but partner might have bid 6♣.

Had north decided to bid, they are more likely to have chosen 5NT with that hand, as 6♣ should show extra club length.

Hornby: Pass. I have an oddly *deja vu* feeling here from problem 1, but another auction, another seat. -650 might be on the menu here, but a plus is also fairly likely. 6♣ feels like a phantom.

The next three panelists enlist a pragmatic/taking out insurance approach:

Miles: Nice spade suit for deuce-to-seven draw! 6♣. Who knows who's making what. My hand will be a disappointment to partner on defense, and 6♣ should be cheap. I'm not willing to chance a fancy 5♠ call hoping for an unlikely 3-0-5-5 and expecting partner to pull with 1 or 2 spades given I didn't overcall. Even with 3-0-5-5, 5♠ could lose control and be a bloodbath. **Yep. More optimistically are the next two panelists:**

Cooper: 6♣. Double says partner has some aces. I don't think it's Lightner for the spade lead. My hand is all offense and no defense, so I safety play by bidding one more. We could even make it!

Willis: 6♣. Taking out insurance. Our hand has significantly more offense than defense and we have next to no defense in our hand. Partner has indicated a good hand for a 4NT bid but Ax x KQJ10x AQJxx is only likely to produce 1 to 3 defensive tricks. Both 5♥ and 6♣ could be going down 1 but both could make and it tends to pay to take out insurance.

Kuz: 6♣. Sounds like partner has a strong hand with aces. Shouldn't be worse than a finesse.

Campbell: Pass! Who knows? Maybe the last plus for our side. **This sounds vaguely familiar (See problem #1).**

Lebi: Pass, unhappily, I don't expect to be able to make 6♣.

Cimon: Pass. The double shows a good hand for 4NT

with some defense. I have long clubs but that's it, I don't think I have enough for 6♣ to make, but may be a good sacrifice if 5♥ makes? It depends on the cards my partner has in diamonds.

L'Ecuyer introduces two other considerations in the decision making:

L'Ecuyer: Pass. This is a good one for the Law of total tricks. Say 21 trumps. If they make 11 tricks, we are down two in 6♣. Not worth bidding further. It would be automatic to pass with better spades but nobody dealt those to me. Partner heard the auction, knows we surely have a better than normal fit (West taking the push at equal to the five level) and rates to have the best hand at the table. I will trust partner and lead a diamond.

Turner: Pass. Feels like partner has a spade void and ♦AK, and maybe ♣A.

Stark: Pass and lead the ♠4. If partner is not void in spades they should have some high cards there so I am not blowing a trick. If I am giving partner a spade ruff, the spade four is a middle spade so I am not screaming for the return of a club (♠2) or a diamond (♠7).

Jacob: 6♣. After I said what I said on problem #1, I'll bid. This situation is quite different. If partner is sure that 5♥ doesn't make he/she should pass. Double should involve partner.

Treble: 6♣. I'll sit the double at pairs, but at teams it's too risky and there is an outside chance that 6♣ will make, especially if partner is void in spades. BTW, a spade is what I lead if I pass the double.

Todd: Pass. Why should I overrule partner.

And finally a panelists who makes an argument for bidding, but arrives at other considerations that sway them to pass:

Bishop: Pass. Are we likely to have a chance to make 6♣? If we can't reasonably make it, then do they have a chance to make 5♥ doubled as my club length (which I have never shown) and paucity of overall values may act to negate some of partner's defensive values? Those are clearly the questions to ask, in combination with working out some normal hands for partner's (admittedly unusual) action. Even if we have no chance to make the 6-level, it may be IMP-odds correct to pay out -100 (or -300) if there some percentage chance that 5♥ doubled will make (even considering partner's statement/their double to the contrary). It won't be the end of the world if we swap -100's; after all it is IMPs.

I have always believed that this is a DSI situation. Partner is prepared to bid on, and has good offensive values, but also has a lot of defense. This allows the partnership to defend when it is right, for example, when south has a hand like ♠QJ10 ♥QJ10 ♦xxx ♣xxxx. What happened at the table? This hand came up during an online event last year, with South sitting the double, -650, instead of -300 in 6♣. The full deal:

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

3. As South, you hold ♠A108 ♥J9 ♦AK1098532 ♣-. N-S Vul. matchpoints.

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| - | - | 3♠ | 3NT |
| 4♣ | 6NT | Pass | ? |

What do you bid?

| Action | Votes | Score |
|--------|-------|-------|
| 7♦ | 11 | 10 |
| Pass | 9 | 9 |

Another split vote. This hand came from a past South American championship. I found it unique (including the lopsided actual result), so I included it. There are 3 questions to ask?

1. Do you agree with 3NT?
2. What does 6NT show?
3. Do you pass or bid 7♦?

On the first question, there was a divergent of thoughts on the 3NT overcall:

Balcombe: Pass. Are you kidding me with 3NT?

Treble: Pass. I'm not in love with the 3NT bid, with my 8-card suit and outside ace. But not having bid the clear cut 4♦ in the first place, I'm not going to switch gears at this point...'

Hornby: This is your reward for bidding 3NT, though I don't know what's better. 7♦ telegraphs your club void to the defense and they will happily cash the ♥A if they have it. Anything other than passing is rolling the dice a 2nd time IMO.

Cooper: 7♦. Did non-leaping Michaels make me bid 3NT? I'm not as much of a genius as the original person who held this - I would have overcalled 5♦. I assume we can take the rest when we get the lead. So is West more likely to have AK of clubs or the ace of hearts? The only evidence is the club bid, so I will bid 7♦, feeling the clubs are the bigger risk. I'm such a genius, I should work in an Apple store! Also, since I'm just guessing, 7♦ is worth more than 6NT if I'm right.

Todd: Pass. 3NT is "interesting". Partner could have done something else over 4♣. Overruling is just guessing.

However the majority of panelists accepted the 3NT bid without comment, which suggests at least tolerance for 3NT. 3NT could work, I mean you likely have nine tricks on a spade lead. The other options are

4♦ and 5♦ which also could go minus, and do score less than notrump.

Next, what does 6NT show? Cimon was one of the few panelists that focused on HCPs.

Cimon: 7♦. I play him for ♠Kx ♥AKxx ♦Qx ♣AQxx. Or ♠QJ ♥AQxx ♦Qxx ♣AQxx and many others hands will be good for 7♦ and I can find only one hand that won't work because he doesn't have the ♥A.

Fergani: Pass, who knows.

Willis: 7♦. Who knows. They may be about to bid 7♠ and you should clue partner in on your source of tricks and distinct lack of defense. It is not unreasonable that they cover four losers and if a heart hook is required it is likely to be on through West. 3NT is wide ranging and there was lots of room for partner to investigate on the way so they should have a fairly solid hand. Also if your diamonds don't run for some reason, 7♦ will be down a lot less.

Stark: Pass. And pray. If West doubles me, I'll consider 7♦.

L'Ecuyer: Pass. Even though I like to bid 3NT usually, not sure I would have had on this one. Here this is a guess. What is it that partner found in his hand that justifies a jump to 6NT and no double of 4♣? Axx in clubs? One thing is sure, it cannot be 3rd control in clubs. This is a scary pass but usually it is easier to make 12 tricks than to make 13. If partner was not dealt 1st round control of clubs, we should have double 4♣ first I think.

I think that partner likely has the ♣K and not the ace. With the latter holding they surely would have bid 5♣ to confirm 1st round club control. Extending that logic, they very likely have the ♥A, as would they commit to slam missing all four aces? If I had to guess, I would think partner has the equivalent of 15-17 HCPs. I like using the following thinking process when deciding whether to bid on:

Jacob: 7♦. If partner believes that 6NT makes then 7♦ should have a reasonable play (unless we are missing the ♥A). *Similarly, but with tongue in cheek:*

Lebi: 7♦. I do hold the usual 15-19 HCP relatively balanced hand, I have 9 tricks in my own hand, and expect at least four more from partner.

Three panelists, Grainger, Cooper and Miles, decided once they were guessing, might as well guess the higher scoring contract. Grainger also took a different inference:

Grainger: 7♦. Difficult. Partner seems disinterested in my diamonds by not bidding 5NT to find out my hand type, and I expect them to have clubs under some control, but unless they have AK or AQ and we have a red loser, 7♦ will be better, and scores better. (Can't really imagine west having two spades on this auction, most likely zero).

Miles: 7♦. We must be a huge favourite to make if diamonds run - and just as important, 6NT becomes a much dicier proposition if diamonds don't run. If two bets are likely to both fail or both succeed, may as well play the one with the bigger payoff.

In contrast, the next two panelists saw the glass as half empty:

Kuz: 7♦. Worried about my club stopper, not partners. Seriously looking for smallest minus.

Turner: 7♦. I may have some explaining to do either way, but at least partner won't have to watch the ♣AK cash against 6NT while I show out.

Thurston: 7♦. Who said eight-card suits are meant to be trumps? All (including me!)

Lindop: Pass. I'm not doubled yet. Who knows? Partner doesn't have a lot in clubs since partner didn't double 4♣, but probably has a high honor to bid 6NT. I do have nine tricks, so partner can perhaps provide three. Bidding 7♦ would be taking a tremendous position ... although I might reconsider if West doubles.

Treble: cont... Partner's 6NT bid could easily be king of hearts and AKQxxx of clubs.

No, as they would have doubled 4♣. One panelist liked his answer and comment so much on #1 and #2, that they repeated it here!

Campbell: Pass! Who knows? Maybe the last plus for our side.

And I apologize to the following panelist for all the angst I caused him in responding to this problem:

Bishop: 7♦. I better get this right since I will have to announce my result to teammates later on after having made a round earlier the obvious (!) 3NT overcall, a call that *only* the late Marshall Miles would have any respect for. Although I may have been forced if my systemic agreements included 4m as showing that minor and hearts (quite a useful agreement, by the way); so my earlier choice would have just been between pass and 5♦. Since we will have little chance for 6NT if opening leader has ♣KQ and ♥A; or ♥KQ and ♣A... and will have a hope for 7♦ on many other layouts when the ♥A is not on lead; I think that I will make my SECOND masterminding decision on the SAME BOARD and convert to 7♦. Am writing my apology (in triplicate) as I type this; in case 6NT was possible and it turns out that 7♦ has no play. I am expecting good strong hearts in the dummy (what else can they have?) and some approximation of a balanced hand so that diamonds run. On second thought, I am tearing up my apology! (Let's see a dummy of Qx AKQxx Jxx Kxx). Think we will be okay unless 4♣ was an out-and-out psyche holding the heart Ace!

In the actual deal, there was a seven trick difference between 6NT and 7♦, believe it or not!! The actual deal:

♠ Q J 7
 ♥ A Q 10 7 3
 ♦ Q 6 4
 ♣ K J

♠ -
 ♥ K J 5 2
 ♦ J 7

♣ 10 9 8 7 6 3 2

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

♠ K 9 6 5 4 3 2

♥ 8 4
 ♦ -

♣ A Q 5 4

At the table the actual south passed - down 6!! 7♦ makes when the heart finesse wins.

4. As South you hold ♠A63 ♥AKQ984 ♦9 ♣A65. Neither Vul., matchpoints.

| West | North | East | South |
|------|------------------|------|-------|
| - | - | - | 1♥ |
| Pass | 1NT ¹ | Pass | ? |

1. Forcing

What do you bid?

| Action | Votes | Score |
|--------|-------|-------|
| 3NT | 4 | 10 |
| 3♣ | 3 | 9 |
| 2♠ | 4 | 8 |
| 2♣ | 1 | 8 |
| 3♥ | 7 | 7 |
| 4♥ | 1 | 6 |

Finally a more classic bidding problem, with the panelists opting for six different choices.

Thurston: 3NT – the source of tricks bid – with luck we start with eight tricks and one more on the go seems highly possible. Partner knows what this system bid might look like (as in “not balanced” - bid 2NT with 18-19 balanced) so is not barred from converting to four hearts or, gasp, contemplating a slam!

Grainger: 3NT. Implies 6 hearts (2NT with 17+-19 bal.), so partner can convert, but its matchpoints and I probably have 8 tricks, so I’ll suggest it. More options with Gazzilli.

Willis: 3NT should show something approximating this hand. Long good hearts, 7.5 to 8.5 tricks. I am a heart short but nothing else is particularly descriptive. Also very happy for partner to pass with any balanced hand rather than risk four losers in 4♥. Also at matchpoints the extra 10 points could score very well with no extra tricks being available in hearts.

Yes, Gazzilli is a useful convention. Alas, we do not have this agreement. Going high:

Lindop: 4♥. If we have nine tricks in notrump and don’t have ten in hearts, I’ll apologize to partner. I could go through a complicated sequence, bidding 2♠ and following with 3♣ if partner bids 2NT, but at matchpoints I think I’ll just go with the field. **How about low?**

L’Ecuyer: 2♣. I am too good for 3♥ and if partner passes my 2♣ rebid, we are probably not making 4♥ on a spade lead. So let’s try for the magic 6♣ contract (I think it is the only way to reach it – 3♣ rebid being too much for me). I don’t think there is too much risk on this one to hunt for magic. Good hand to open a strong club :)

Yes, the advantage of bidding clubs is getting more contracts in the mix, and going low gives us more room to investigate. However we will occasionally play in 2♣, which as Nick said, may be ok. The mainstream choice had the most support:

Balcombe: 3♥. Prefer not to get a minus playing matchpoints.

Hornby: 3♥, though I suspect something clever like 3NT is the MP answer with a mostly solid ♥ suit, 5 losers and what looks like 8 winners. A good hand for Gazzilli.

Bishop: 3♥. Don't see any reason to not make the value bid that is in front of our nose... might as well invite game while leaving partner an 'out'; as a wide range of things like lower diamond honours and one of the black queens will be of little use. It would be a rare layout that would give us a spade ruff in the dummy. Often this trump suit will have a loser with silent opponents (Jxxx out there somewhere).

Turner: 3♥. Tempting to bid 3NT of course, but partner can still bid that if it's the best spot.

Stark: 3♥. For once I'm heavy! But if we get in a time travel machine to 1949, I have a textbook 3♥ call, no?

Cooper: 3♥. Value bid. At IMPs might well force to game. Partner often bids 1NT semi-destructively. Or I'd use a convention such as Gazzili, where the 2♣ rebid is strong and forcing and artificial.

Lebi: Very close between 3♥ (non-forcing) and 3♣ (game forcing jump shift). Since its MPs, I will be conservative and bid 3♥.

Yes, this is matchpoints, where you want to go plus.

The two problems with bidding 3♥:

- You are going to play in hearts or notrump.
- Your hand is stronger than the high cards suggest, as the following panelists suggest:

Cimon: 3♣. Forcing to game, a little bit short in HCP but so many controls. The contract can be 3NT. I thought first too bid 2♣ but what next if partner bid 2♦?

Over 2♦ I would bid 2♠, but think 3♥ is ok too.

Todd: 3NT. This is a very nice five loser 17 count. Looks too good for an invite. My only guess is whether to bid 3NT, or force, or blast.

Kuz: 3♣. A very, very slight underbid, IMO.

I don't know of any stronger action than 3♣, since it is game forcing and shows a potentially stronger hand than 4♥ or 3NT.

Miles: 3♣. As much as I hate distorting, we are just too strong for 3♥, and wish to keep 3NT in the picture. Partner will pass 3♥ with many hands (such as KQ in either black suit with a doubleton heart) where game is very good. Kokish disciples may find themselves declaring 2♣.

And finally a different choice that has an upside that none of the other choices, except maybe 2♣ can offer:

Treble: 2♠. If we are playing Ingberman over reverses, I should be able to survive this and get to a reasonable spot.

Campbell: 2♠. Unclear whether we should be in 3♥ or 4♥ or 3NT. This keeps the auction low while we find out.

Fergani: 2♠, too strong for 3♥.

Jacob: 2♠. At IMPs it would be fairly clear (I would just bid 3NT) but at MP that's another story. With 2♠ I hope to get some more information from partner; 2NT should be a weak relay.

Yes we can still stop short of game, while showing our extra values. Nice! However it will cause partner to raise with four spades, which will be tough to get out of that strain. Plus clubs get lost, our most likely fitting strain. If partner does have five or more clubs, our offensive potential is massive.

What happened at the table? This hand came up at a pre-Covid duplicate game at Lorraine's Club in Winnipeg. The full deal:

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

♠ 7 4
 ♥ J 6 3 2
 ♦ A 10 8 7 3
 ♣ Q J

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

♠ A 6 3
 ♥ A K Q 9 8 4
 ♦ 9
 ♣ A 6 5

Rebidding hearts was not the winning choice, at least on this deal. Both 3NT (the table choice) and 3♣ works out.

5. As South you hold ♠Q ♥AK9 ♦Q53 ♣AKQJ64. Neither Vul., matchpoints.

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

1. Game Forcing (Over 2♦, 2NT would have been Lebensohl; all other bids would have been forcing).

a) What is 3♠?

| Action | Votes | Score |
|-------------------|-------|-------|
| Cuebid for hearts | 4 | 5 |
| Spades | 7 | 4 |
| Other | 9 | 4 |

b) What do you bid?

| Action | Votes | Score |
|--------|-------|-------|
| 4♣ | 8 | 5 |
| 4NT | 1 | 4 |
| 4♥ | 0 | 3 |
| 4♠ | 1 | 3 |
| 3NT | 10 | 2 |

Lots of meat on this reverse auction, one I suspect that does not normally get a lot of thought from many players. As to question a) the responses (underlined)

include both majors, 5-4; 6-3, 6-4 and 6-5, just spades, for sure not spades, scramble, shape, extra values. As Hornby suggests, a serious partnership should have some understandings in reverse auctions. Having said that, without specific agreements, bids should be natural and negative inferences available. To me, partner has extra values for sure, and possibly both majors.

And of course, the understanding of what partner has will determine our rebid choice. However I agree with the sentiment of Balcombe, we have a very good hand! Thus I find it surprising that so many opted for a regressive 3NT. As usual, I may be wrong.

Let's here from the panelists. On his own:

Stark: a) 3♠ is natural, probably 6+ since I am marked with at most a singleton spade. I'm probably a 3♣ bidder over 2♥. Since 3♥ takes up a lot of space, it *perhaps should show this hand!* b) 3NT. It's a 21-count, yes, but it's a soft 21. We could easily be off the ♦AK.

A couple of panelists were critical of opener's 2♦ rebid:

Turner: a) Long spades, I'm guessing, though the most reasonable explanation is "cuebid for hearts". Maybe partner was unsure exactly what 3♠ over 2♦ would have shown - as am I. b) 4♠. If I'm right he has spades this will be perfect. If he has hearts (and 3♠ was a cue for hearts, he'll bid 5♥ next and I'll jump to 6NT and watch them cash ♦AK. He could have A10xxx K10xxx Kx x couldn't he? By the way, this is a pretty delicate auction for MPs ... wouldn't 3NT over 1♠ be the field call? And emphasize my clubs rather better.

Thurston: 3♠ is one last try to have that suit as trump but with spades not as good as they would have been for 3♠ directly over 2♦. BTW, 3NT (source of tricks again with stoppers) seems like a more accurate rebid for opener and that's what I'd bid now.

Grainger: a) 3♠ sounds 6-4 (partner knows you don't have four hearts). Possibly 5431 and too good for 3NT with no clear direction and buying time. b) 3NT. My spade holding is quite good for this auction, but my

diamond and club holdings scream notrump. Have to drive to some slam if partner continues with 4♦.

Lindop: a) 3♠ is presumably a cuebid. Partner would have rebid spades rather than 2♥ with 6+ spades since my 2♦ denied four hearts and my 3♥ denied spade support. Partner should have the ♠A since the ♠K may be of no use opposite my likely singleton spade. Sounds like partner has some high cards – ♥K and ♠A – but is unsure where we are headed. b) 4♣. With a hand worth 23 points – 21 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card club suit, I'm too strong to settle for 3NT, even though it could be the best contract. However, I need a diamond control from partner for slam. If partner doesn't have one, we might be able to settle in 4NT.

Cooper: a) What is 3♠? It could just be a scramble. Partner may have nothing in either red suit, and is reluctant to say 3NT. b) What do you bid? 3NT. I have the stoppers. Partner could have ♠AKJx ♥xxx ♦xxxx ♣xx.

Wouldn't they just bid 3NT over 3♥ with all that spade wastage?

Treble: It's hard to say what 3♠ is. I expect responder to be two-suited and my guess is spades and hearts since he could have bid 3♣ or 3♦ on the round earlier. Since you've indicated that all second actions other than 2NT were forcing, responder would have bid some number of spades earlier with a long suit of quality. b) 3NT, based on the assumption I made about partner's 3♠ after his fourth-suit bid.

Miles: a) Feels natural, 5+ spades. I assume 2♠ would have been natural and a 1 round force; perhaps partner thought it better to game force immediately and also show hearts. b) 3NT. Someone has to bid it. I've over represented my hearts and under represented my clubs and trick taking ability.

Todd: a) Good question! Presumably opener does not have four hearts or he would have reversed there. So he is likely 0-3-4-6 or 1-3-4-5 with a good hand for hearts. Responder could easily be 6-4 in the majors and could be suggesting good spades and hand shape. On the other hand, it could be a cue bid. If that is not a specific agreement I think it is more useful to be shape showing (6-4). If 6-5, responder could just ask for key cards.

a) 3♠ shows shape – not necessarily a cue bid. b) 3NT. To make 6, partner needs either the K or A of diamonds. He also needs either the K or A of spades and probably the heart king. If he has that hand he should bid again. 4♠ is probably safe at IMPs but this is matchpoints.

Campbell: 3♠ cannot be spades as they would have bid 3♠ over 2♦. It also cannot suggest a big fit for opener, or responder would have simply shown it. It must be temporizing and unwilling to signoff in 3NT – likely because too strong. b) I bid 4♣, intending to reach at least 6♣. Responder could hold ♠A, ♥K, ♦AK. I suppose as it is matchpoints I should be in 6NT/7NT.

Lebi: a) 6+ Spades, non-solid. b) 4♣, hoping for a diamond cue, if not will try to get out in notrump.

Balcombe: Are you kidding me again? Why the phony reverse instead of rebidding 3NT? a) 3♠ could be a reasonable 6 card suit with a heart fragment, not suitable for 3♠ over 2♦. b) 3NT - what else redux again.

Kuz: a) Forcing, likely 6+ length in Spades. b) 3xNT. Lack of a Diamond control slows me down.

Let's hear from the top two scoring panelists for this TGCBC, and ones who echo closely my views:

Willis: a) 3♠ should be a cuebid of the SxAx with a slam suitable hand for hearts. b) 4♣. 2♥ should be natural, including extra values (as it is game forcing) and five hearts. With 0-4-4-5 South would presumably reverse into hearts and thus the only reason for North to bid hearts is with five. A typical hand AQxxx KJxxx xx x. You want to bid 4♣ to see if you can get a diamond cuebid as partner's minors might be reversed in which case you should have a slam.

Cimon: a) I think partner is 5-5 or 6-5 in the majors, he had no fit for the minors. If he had only a good 6 cards +suit in spades he can have bid on 2♦, 3♠ or 2♠ with a 5 card suit and 4♥ or less, because he knows I don't have 4♥. Now with a 5-4 in majors he can bid 3 or 4NT over 3♥. Partners know I don't have four hearts. b) 4♣ a cue-bid for hearts. I can't ask for key cards because I don't control the diamonds. I am too strong for only 4♥.

Let's hear from the 2021 CBCs Triple Crown winner!!

Fergani: It looks like partner is making a spade cue-bid with 5+-5+ in the Majors. The way we play is that, the 4th suit when available at the two level is the slow down, and the jump in the 4th suit is natural, 5-5, and forcing. b) 4♣.

This panelists had very strong negative view on the previous bids made.

L'Ecuyer: 4♣. I don't like and don't understand 3♥. I would have bid 3♣ which is where I live. I might even have bid 4♣ Minorwood if I could. Now I have to get back to showing my hand after preempting the three level which is a crime in these reverse auctions. Surely, at some point, I will jump to 6♣ but maybe I don't need to do it right now and maybe partner will tell me more about his hand. 3♥ and 3♠ both make little sense to me. To me 3♠ (not having originally jumped to it over 2♦), should be long weakish spades. I truly hate 3♥. Truly.

Jacob: a) 6+ Spades decent suit, good hand. What is 2♠ over 2♦ though? B) 3NT. Perhaps not high enough but I am missing too many controls to try 4NT.

Hornby: a) A try for notrump or an advance cue of some sort; defining these sequences is important in any serious partnership, otherwise you're down to guessing, especially with the other GF options available. Given that I've shown a 1-3-4-5 reverse, 3♠ feels like a punt, or attempt to have opener play notrump. b) What do you bid? 4NT. Should be natural and extras over and above the reverse, time to torture partner for a change.

Bishop: a) Cards/Values. This could easily be a last-ditch effort to let us subside in 3NT as his support for my primary suit may (clearly) be quite limited. Most play that 2♦ didn't promise game+ values so we could still be feeling out where to play [what he might do with KJ9xx of spades and one good red value]. Obviously if we were to bid 3NT (and we have a feeling that we are too good to do that) and responder continued past that level, we would know their intentions. They don't yet know that we started with almost a 2♣ opening. b) 4♣. Seems like the choices here are between just 4NT (IMHO natural; quantitative) and 4♣ (setting trumps...forcing). Think 4♣ better as we can ferret out some diamond control from partner. Would hate to get to slam when responder has AKJxx Kxx xx 10xx or something similar.

Yes, 4NT here would be quantitative, denying a known good fit in a suit.

For the full story on this hand please read the article, Bridge Movie: An Early Christmas Gift.



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PANEL'S ANSWERS

| | HAND 1 | | HAND 2 | | HAND 3 | | HAND 4 | | HAND 5 | | TOTAL |
|------------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------|
| | <i>Bid</i> | <i>Score</i> | <i>Bid</i> | <i>Score</i> | <i>Bid</i> | <i>Score</i> | <i>Bid</i> | <i>Score</i> | <i>Bid</i> | <i>Score</i> | |
| Balcombe, Keith | 4♥ | 8 | Pass | 9 | Pass | 9 | 3♥ | 7 | 3NT | 6 | 39 |
| Bishop, Ron | Dbl | 6 | Pass | 9 | 7♦ | 10 | 3♥ | 7 | 4♣ | 9 | 41 |
| Campbell, Gordon | Pass | 10 | Pass | 9 | Pass | 9 | 2♠ | 8 | 4♣ | 9 | 45 |
| Cooper, Stephen | 4♥ | 8 | 6♣ | 10 | 7♦ | 10 | 3♥ | 7 | 3NT | 6 | 41 |
| Cimon, Francine | Pass | 10 | 6♣ | 10 | 7♦ | 10 | 3♣ | 9 | 4♣ | 10 | 49 |
| Fergani, Kamel | 4♥ | 8 | Pass | 9 | Pass | 9 | 2♠ | 8 | 4♣ | 10 | 44 |
| Grainger, David | 4♥ | 8 | Pass | 9 | 7♦ | 10 | 3NT | 10 | 3NT | 7 | 44 |
| Hornby, Ray | Dbl | 6 | Pass | 9 | Pass | 9 | 3♥ | 7 | 4NT | 8 | 39 |
| Jacob, Dan | Pass | 10 | 6♣ | 10 | 7♦ | 10 | 2♠ | 8 | 3NT | 6 | 44 |
| Kuz, Bob | Dbl | 6 | 6♣ | 10 | 7♦ | 10 | 3♣ | 9 | 3NT | 6 | 41 |
| L'Ecuyer, Nic | 4♥ | 8 | Pass | 9 | Pass | 9 | 2♣ | 8 | 4♣ | 9 | 43 |
| Lebi, Robert | Pass | 10 | Pass | 9 | 7♦ | 10 | 3♥ | 7 | 4♣ | 9 | 45 |
| Lindop, David | Pass | 10 | 6♣ | 10 | Pass | 9 | 4♥ | 6 | 4♣ | 9 | 44 |
| Miles, Danny | Dbl | 6 | 6♣ | 10 | 7♦ | 10 | 3♣ | 9 | 3NT | 6 | 41 |
| Stark, Andy | Pass | 10 | Pass | 9 | Pass | 9 | 3♥ | 7 | 3NT | 6 | 41 |
| Thurston, Paul | Dbl | 6 | 6♣ | 10 | 7♦ | 10 | 3NT | 10 | 3NT | 6 | 42 |
| Todd, Bob | 4♥ | 8 | Pass | 9 | Pass | 9 | 3NT | 10 | 3NT | 6 | 42 |
| Treble, Bill | Pass | 10 | 6♣ | 10 | Pass | 9 | 2♠ | 8 | 3NT | 7 | 44 |
| Turner, David | Dbl | 6 | 6♣ | 10 | 7♦ | 10 | 3♥ | 7 | 4♠ | 7 | 40 |
| Willis, David | Pass | 10 | 6♣ | 10 | 7♦ | 10 | 3NT | 10 | 4♣ | 10 | 50 |

FEBRUARY 2022 PROBLEMS

Host □ Andy Stark

QUIZ

INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

PROBLEM ON PAGE 8

Contract: 6♠ Lead: ♦Q. IMPs. Plan the play.

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

The best chance for a twelfth trick is a simple finesse in clubs. However there is an additional chance if East started with ♥KQ. First, cash the ace of trumps at trick two. If trumps are 2-1, lead the ♠J to the queen, saving the four for a later re-entry to dummy.

Now lead a heart from dummy. If East plays low, play the ten. If it loses to an honour you still have the club finesse in reserve (or the other heart honour falling doubleton under the ace). However if East has both heart honours they must play one. Now you can force out the other heart honour with the ten, and the club five can be discarded on the ♥J, avoiding the club finesse entirely.



1. MPs, Neither Vul., as South you hold:

♠AK42 ♥6 ♦QJ8 ♣AKQJ10.

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

What do you bid?

2. MPs, N-S Vul., as South you hold:

♠107643 ♥4 ♦AJ7 ♣Q983.

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| 3♥ | 3NT | 4♥ | ? |

What do you bid?

3. IMPs, N-S Vul., as South you hold:

♠AK64 ♥QJ6 ♦K83 ♣A43.

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

What do you bid?

4. IMPs, Neither Vul., as South you hold:

♠K4 ♥KJ10753 ♦1094 ♣74.

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

What do you lead?

5. MPs, Both Vul., as South you hold:

♠J8 ♥Q107 ♦AK92 ♣KJ74.

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|-------|---------|
| | Pass | Pass | 1♦ |
| 1♠ | Pass | 1NT A | Il pass |

a) What do you lead?

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

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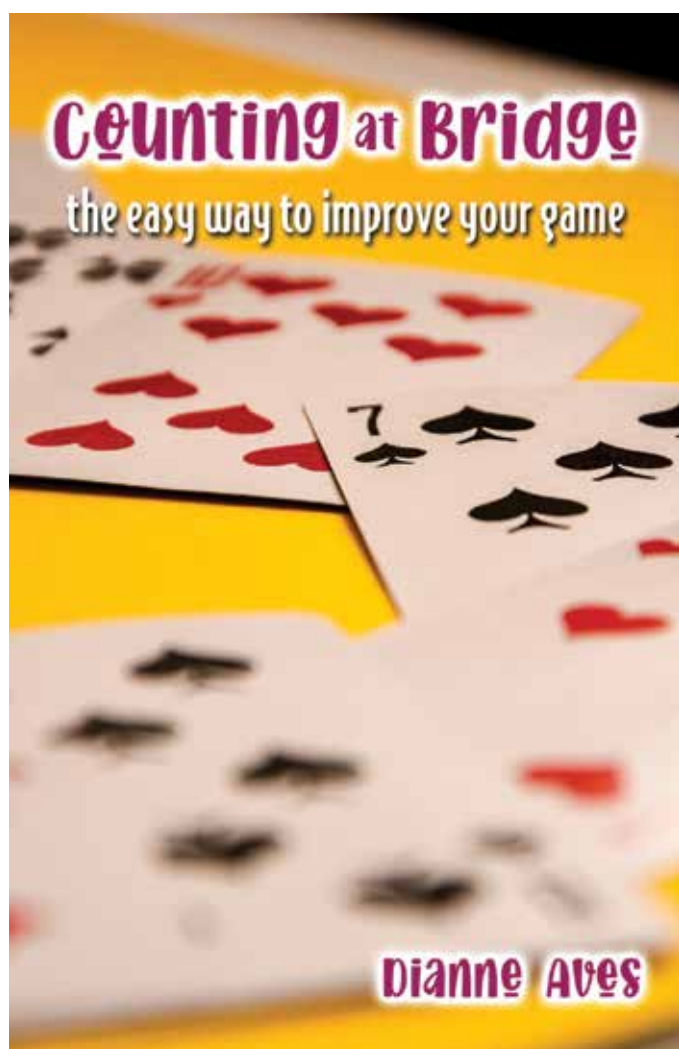
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Dianne Aves (Waterloo, Ontario) is a retired math teacher who is now a professional bridge teacher.

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