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Gifts

for cold nights



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Season's Greetings

FROM THE EDITOR



The End of 2022

More Covid in the rear view mirror, though a much better year than 2021. In 2022 we slowly shifted our bridge playing time from online to Face to Face. The CBF made strides in the quality of recent online competition for its members, and it remains a viable alternative for many future events and games. Although it cannot replace face to face play, it has some very desirable advantages not found with in-person play.

...and the Beginning of 2023

We continue to age gracefully, and enjoy the game we love. In-person tournaments are back and the CBCs are scheduled for May 9-19, at a wonderful venue, Niagara Falls! I encourage all to renew your relationships with bridge acquaintances and friends, and enjoy the camaraderie and special kinship found in our wonderful game. Season's greetings, and all the best in the New Year!

Neil Kimelman
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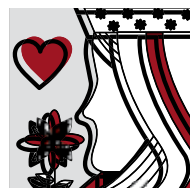
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A Quizzical POTPOURRI

MOLLO *On play*

Contract: 4♥ by South at IMPs. after East opens a 15-17 1NT. Lead: ♦7. You put in the jack and East plays the ace. Plan the play.

♠ 9 6 5

♥ 3

♦ K J 6 5 2

♣ Q 7 5 2

♠ A J

♥ K Q J 10 9 8 2

♦ -

♣ K 6 4 3

what
... does this bid mean?

1.

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	3♣	Dbl
3♠			

What does 3♠ mean?

2.

West	North	East	South
2♥	Dbl	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣

What does 4♣ mean?

QUIZ

Intermediate Declarer Play

Contract: 4♠. Lead: West leads the ♥9. Plan the play.

♠ 10 5 3

♥ A Q 3

♦ K 8 6

♣ Q 10 4 2

♠ A Q J 8 7 2

♥ 7 6 4

♦ 10 3

♣ A K

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

1♥ 1♠

Pass 2♥ Pass 4♠

All Pass





Solutions

QUIZZICAL POTPOURRI

MOLLO

On play

Solution to problem on page 5

Contract: 4♥ by South at IMPs, after East opens a 15-17 1NT. **Lead:** ♦7. You put in the jack and East plays the ace. Plan the play.

♠ 965	
♥ 3	
♦ KJ652	
♣ Q752	
♠ 8743	♠ KQ102
♥ 54	♥ A76
♦ Q987	♦ A1043
♣ J98	♣ A10
♠ AJ	
♥ KQJ10982	
♦ -	
♣ K643	

You have four losers, assuming clubs split 3-2. Since West has shown inferentially the ♦Q, then East is marked with the ♣A. Your only legitimate chance is to play East for exactly two clubs. Lead the ♣K at trick two! If RHO wins, then you have a quick entry to dummy to discard the ♠J on the ♦K. You only lose two clubs and a heart. If instead East ducks the ♣K play, play on trump, eventually ducking the 2nd round of clubs, restricting your losers in that suit to one.

what

... does this bid mean?

1.

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	3♣	Dbl
3♠			

What does 3♠ mean?

Without a specific agreement this bid is natural and forcing by an unpassed hand. Here that is not the case, and West cannot possibly have a forcing bid as a passed hand, opposite a preempt. 3♠ is a lead directing bid, as you will almost for sure be on lead if defending. It asks you as East to return to 4♣, and lead a spade if defending.

2.

West	North	East	South
2♥	Dbl	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣

What does 4♣ mean?

Ok...what is going on? South made the weakest sounding bid on their first turn. You have now invited game and partner bid a new suit at the four level?! The answer is partner has a very good hand with a lot of spades and some good values to invite slam. Something like ♠1098xxxx ♥10xxx ♦- ♣Ax. They didn't want to jump to three or four spades on the first round of bidding as they were afraid you had a very good hand without spade support, such as ♠A ♥Jx ♦AKQ ♣AQJ10986.

QUIZ

Intermediate Declarer Play

Contract: 4♠.

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

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

Lead: West leads the ♥9. Plan the play.

The bidding indicates that East has all the material high cards, so you should play accordingly. Even with that caveat, the play is a little tricky. Win the ♥A at trick one and lead a small spade and finesse the ♠Q. Assuming that lives, cash the ♠A.

If trumps are 2-2 you have 10 tricks, 6 spades, 1 heart and 3 clubs. The spade 10 is the entry for the ♣Q. If East started with three trumps then cash the ♣AK at tricks 4 and 5, and then exit with a spade to East's king.

East is now end played because, no matter what suit he plays now, the result would be that dummy would score at least two winners. Declarer would make five trumps, a heart, three clubs and one winner from the queen of hearts, the king of diamonds or the ten of clubs.

Editor's note: *If this were an expert game, East might find a counter to this line. They can play the ♠6 and ♠K to tricks two and three!! That gives declarer 6 spade tricks, but now there is no entry to the good ♣Q. As often is the case, declarer can thwart this defense with careful play. On the 1st round of spade they would lead the ♠5 to the queen, and play the ♠10 when they cash the ace! Now after they cash the club ace and king, they lead the spade 2, to dummy's 3 and East's 4!! The endplay operates as above.*

ETHAN AND SAMANTHA

Ethan, after an afternoon session at the club with Samantha:
Have you notice any improvement in me since last year?

Samantha: You changed your hair style, didn't you?





by Andy Stark

GET IT OUT OF THE WAY!

One of the first maxims we learn as declarer is to play the high card from the short side first. For example, if you have the ♠Q4 in dummy and the ♠AKJ93 in hand it's usually best to start running this suit by playing the queen first. The queen is the high card in the hand with shorter length than the other hand. If we start with the ace or king first, where the length is, then we must win the queen on the second trick. But now we would need to burn an entry to get back to hand. Sometimes it doesn't matter because we have the needed entry, but it's good technique. In essence, you play the queen first to get it out of the way.

Did you know the same maxim applies on defence? Another word for it is unblocking. A typical situation can be seen in this layout:

♥863
♥KQ1092 ♥A7
♥J54

Against South's contract of 3NT West leads the ♥K. What should East play—the ace or 7? East should overtake with the ace and return the suit. In this way E-W will take the first five tricks. If East gets frugal and elects not to play the ace, then it's quite possible West will switch, and the defence will not get the five heart tricks that they deserve. Or maybe West continues hearts. Then East wins the ace and has no way to get partner back on lead.

the
NEW PLAYER
Spot

In short, play the high card from the short side first—even if partner starts with an honour. (Yes, there are exceptions, but we'll save that for another day.)

Here's an unblocking lesson from legendary bridge teacher and author Bill Root. See how you would fare as East on the lead of the ♠6 versus 3NT.

Dummy
 ♠A2
 ♥AQ8
 ♦QJ1043
 ♣765

East
 ♠KQ7
 ♥J1043
 ♦A82
 ♣J109

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

On partner's lead of the ♠6 declarer plays low from dummy as you win your queen. Now what? Do you switch or continue spades?

The answer is to play your ♠K next! First you need partner to have led from the jack and you can figure out that indeed partner is leading from the jack. Using the Rule of 11 you subtract the 6 from 11 and you get 5. Five is the number of higher cards out around the table against your partner. You can see four of them, leaving declarer with one. If declarer held the jack, then partner would have the 1098 and that holding calls for the lead of the 10. If you do not lead your king now, and you save it for later, you will lose communication with partner. If you keep the king, you block the suit. Better to unblock.

Root makes another key point for third hand technique. If declarer rose with the ace in dummy at trick one, then your play should be the king. This play shows the queen. (If you do not have the queen then you have a singleton king.) Later when you get in with the ♦A, you will cash your ♠Q, and then have the ♠7 to get over to partner to enjoy the rest of the spades.

Again, your far-sighted unblocking saves the day.

Here's another common situation that can leave a defender red-faced if they do not wake up in time to make the right play. Say you decide to lead your fourth best from this holding: ♥J965. The dummy comes down with the ♥Q2. It goes 5 – 2 – ace – 10. Partner returns the ♥4 and declarer plays the king. Which card do you play? Hint: unblock!

This time it is partner who has the length. You can deduce this by the high cards that fell on the first two tricks. Declarer must have been dealt the ♥K10 or else their plays make no sense. Therefore, ditch your ♥9 (or jack) and keep your ♥6 in order to get over to partner later on. Here were the hearts around the table:

♥J965 ♥Q2 ♥A8743
 ♥K10

You might survive if partner has an entry, but if they do not, then you must play your hearts in this order. This way, when you get in with a trick, because you have the defence's entry, you will have fluid communications with partner to take the rest of the hearts. Here's one more situation to add to your repertoire of unblocking plays. The layout is:

♦QJ107 ♦954 ♦K83
 ♦A62

On the lead of the Queen from West, East should play the eight, encouraging (If you play upside down signals, East would encourage with the three). At trick two, West should lead their ♦10 and East can now unblock the king and return the suit. When should West lead their jack after their queen holds the first trick? When West suspects they are short in the suit, so from a holding of ♦QJx.

Good defence requires vision. To improve your defence, take the time to envision the layout of a suit around the table. When you know or think you know that you have a potentially blocking honour, try to play it as early as possible and get it out of your partner's way!

BRIDGE BASICS₂₅



CONVENTIONAL RESPONSES WHEN THE OPPONENTS OVERCALL 1NT

This is the 25th article in our 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.

Editor's note: *This article deals with the choice of conventions for this situation, while this issue's **Intermediate Spot** deals with the strategic issue of when to bid in these contexts.*

It is important to be able to effectively compete in various situations when the opponents bid. This is one of them. We will differentiate when partner's opening is a minor, and when it is a major.

In both situations a double is penalty, usually showing 9+ HCPs. Please look at the Intermediate Spot to best judge how to apply this criterion, and what you and your partner's bids mean after the double.

MINOR OPENING

One of the simplest and most effective agreements is a combination of stayman and transfers:

1m (1NT)	Double = penalties, usually 9+ HCPs.
	2♣ = majors, at least 4-4 either way.
	2♦ = hearts
	2♥ = spades
	2♠ = clubs*
	2NT = diamonds*
	3♣ = both minors, five plus in new minor and three plus in partner's.

*Transfer promised 5+ in length, unless you are transferring into partner's minor, where you need at least 4 card support. Assuming the partner of the overcaller passes, the opening bidder will usually accept the transfer with any 'normal' hand. With extra values then can jump in the transfer suit, or bid a new/different suit with extreme distribution.

MAJOR OPENING

1M (1NT)	Double = penalties, with 9+ HCPs.
	2♣ = Stayman, usually with 5-2 or 5-3 shape in the majors.
	2♦ = hearts*
	2♥ = spades*
	2♠ = clubs
	2NT = diamonds

*If this is partner's major, then this bid promises three card support. If not, then at least five card length. So transferring into the other major either shows one of two hand types: 1) At least a six card suit, or 2) Exactly a five card suit, with less than two cards in partner's major.

A jump in a new suit could be a fit jump, showing at least five cards in suit bid and four cards in partner's major, and constructive values (6-9).

Example 1:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	1NT	3♣*

*Would show something like ♠Kxxx ♥xx ♦xx ♣A109xx.

MEANINGS OF OTHER BIDS

Often the bidding will develop when responder has not bid, but opener has extra values or distribution. Bidding by opener shows good values, as there is 15-18 HCPs behind them. Here are some example hands and the best way to handle them:

Example 2:

North holds ♠AKxxx ♥x ♦J10xx ♣AKx

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	1NT	Pass

2♦¹ ?

1. 5+ hearts.

North should double. This shows shortness in RHO's suit, and extra values.

Example 3:

North holds ♠KQJ10xxx ♥- ♦J10x ♣AKx

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	1NT	Pass

2♦¹ ?

1. 5+ hearts.

North should bid 3♠. This shows a long good suit, with the expectation of making 8-9 tricks in their own hand.



Example 4:

North holds ♠AKxxxx ♥x ♦QJ109x ♣A

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	1NT	Pass

2♦¹ ?

1. 5+ hearts.

North should bid 4♦. All north needs is Kxxx in diamonds to make 5♦, or even 4♠, odds on favourite.

Example 5:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	1NT	Pass

Pass Dbl ?

North will normally bid a 2nd suit when they have one, so double should be for penalties, asking partner to lead North's suit. A possible holding:

♠AQJ10xxx ♥A ♦KJ ♣QJx.

Next issue: More defensive conventions. all



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INTERMEDIATE
Spot



BIDDING STRATEGIES 12

Bidding After the Opponents Overcall 1NT.

By Neil Kimelman

Bidding after the opponents' overcall 1NT is not something we think about too much. Primarily because it is dangerous! However there are times when it is right. Once you decide to compete what are the options? Let's try to categorize these opportunities:

***Editor's note:** *Conventions used when overcalling is covered in Bridge Basics, found elsewhere in this issue.*

You might have lots of high card points.

Occasionally responder will have a good hand (9+ HCPs). When you do the math this doesn't leave a lot for the partner of the 1NT overcaller; 12 from partner, plus 16 from the 1NT bidder plus 9 from you leaves only 1-2 for the fourth hand. Therefore 1NT will likely go down a few, having only 18 or so HCPs, and having to play everything out of the overcaller's hand, as dummy will usually not be accessible. So, as a rule, double with this hand. But there are hand types where this rule should not be followed. Let's look at some examples:

Example 1: The bidding starts off:

West	North	East	South
1♦	1NT	?	

1. ♠Axx ♥Kxx ♦xx ♣QJxx – double.
2. ♠A10x ♥J109x ♦xx ♣QJxx – double.

This hand can be upgraded because of the good spots.

You might have a decent hand, with good distribution.

Here you want to invite game, or sometimes try to penalize the opponents. Again it depends on your hand type, and to a lesser extent, the form of scoring and vulnerability (discussed below).

Example 2: The bidding starts off:

West	North	East	South
1♥	1NT	?	

1. ♠AJ10xxx ♥Kx ♦Jx ♣xxx – double at matchpoints, especially if the opponents are vul. At teams I would bid spades. You have a heart fit. You may even have game! Let's look at a theoretical full deal:

♠ 43	♠ Q96	♠ K2
♥ J54	♥ A10983	♥ Q76
♦ 9876	♦ KQ105	♦ A43
♣ Q987	♣ 10	♣ AKJ52
	♠ AJ10875	
	♥ K2	
	♦ J2	
	♣ 643	

2. ♠AQJxxxx ♥Jx ♦xx ♣Jx – Bid 2♥. If hearts don't run then you may not defeat 1NT as dummy will have a long suit to go with declarer's and partner will be defending on their own.

3. ♠QJx ♥Jx ♦x ♣KQxxxx – Do not double. If partner has a stiff club 1NT might easily make, while 2♣ will often make three.

4. ♠xxx ♥AK ♦QJ10xxxx ♣x – Double could work but bidding diamonds is better.

The problem with any of these hand types is that you cannot easily find game. Opener should consider raising with a good fit and playing strength.

You might have a weak hand, with good distribution.

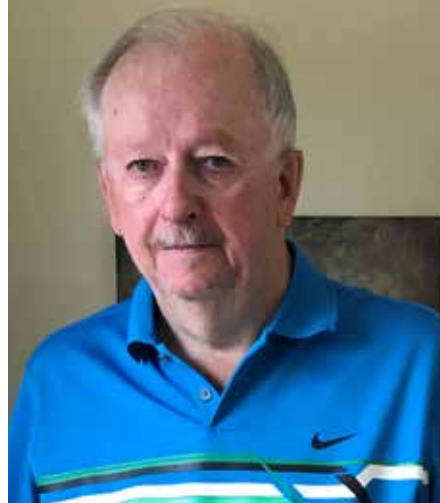
Another factor that may mitigate bidding (or not bidding) after a 1NT overcall is the vulnerability. Let's look at this with a little wider perspective:

The scoring Issue. This is more important at matchpoints. First if you are not vulnerable, playing in let's say 2♦ scoring +90 or -50 is better than -90 or -120. When the opponents are vulnerable there is more of a temptation to pass, as if they go down it is +100, or down two the magic +200. A final angle: when the opponents overcall 1NT not vulnerable they may not have an ideal bid. I have seen 1NT overcalls with ♠xx ♥Kx ♦J103 ♣AKQJxx or similar.

Next issue: Bidding after your side overcalls.



Man and woman who have never played before get involved in a heart-spade war each trying to outbid the other. Finally the woman who has a terrific hand, bids 7♥. Not enough, her partner bids 7♠. When the dummy comes down he sees that 7♥ is cold and 7♠ doesn't have a prayer. He knows there is going to be trouble after the hand so he begins his apologies early by saying: "Sorry, I should have withdrawn." "You should have withdrawn?" says the lady, "Your father should have withdrawn!"



WHAT WENT WRONG?

by Paul Thurston

If you aspire to raise the level of your game a notch or two (and, if not, why not?), checking out What Went Wrong with expert players and their partnerships will often be a big help.

On the subject of "big", the two results on our first deal certainly qualify for that adjective as the final tally was +17 IMPs for one team in a match when more accuracy on defense would have produced +12 IMPs for the other side.

Hand 1

♠ AJ1065
♥ 8
♦ J6
♣ Q10742

♠ 7
♥ 53
♦ AK109432
♣ KJ3

♠ 842
♥ AJ2
♦ Q8
♣ A9865

♠ KQ93
♥ KQ109764
♦ 75
♣ -

The
EXPERT
Spot

Table One Bidding, with both vul:

West	North	East	South
		1♣	1♥
5♦	Dbl	Pass	5♥
Dbl	All Pass		

Opening lead: ♠7

Apparently shy about leading his Ace-King combination, West went in search of a spade ruff or two as a possible way to maintain the equity he assessed might have been available in five diamonds, a contract he thought might have had good chances of success despite North's vote to the contrary. North's double might also have persuaded West that a diamond winner or two might not have been available against five hearts, a condition that would have been revealed by leading a diamond in the first place! As it was, South's wildly undisciplined removal of his partner's penalty double to five hearts was due to turn over -500 for two diamond tricks, the heart ace and that one spade ruff West so desperately lusted after. But that hypothetical +500 for East-West soon became -850, so **What Went Wrong?**

South won the spade ace (nine from his hand) to advance dummy's lone heart and, apparently asleep at the switch, East played low and South exploited that faux pas by playing his ten to continue with the King to the defender's ace. Deciding that he'd cash his club ace before seeing what was available in diamonds, East was disappointed to say the least when South ruffed the club ace, drew the last trump and ran spades to discard one of his small diamonds.

To get the defense right, East might have asked himself why his partner, having bid diamonds and seeing East bid clubs, had led a spade? I loved the phrasing of an analyst from yesteryear who, when noting the lead was a "stiff", announced a certain "mortuarial odour" at the table!

Up with the ace of hearts to deliver the spade ruff and, two diamond tricks later, East-West would at least have had +500!

Meanwhile, over at the match's other table this was the auction:

West	North	East	South
		1♣	4♥
5♦	Dbl	All Pass	

This time South, having more or less described his offensive potential with one call, maintained discipline by passing his partner's penalty double, a double based more on "where will this declarer find side suit tricks?" than from any ironclad belief that five diamonds was going down. But going down it was for the loss of one trick in each of spades, hearts and clubs but going down it didn't as one of those tricks disappeared so

What Went Wrong?

North started by leading his partner's suit to the ace, ten and three. Declarer mopped up the trump lurkers in two rounds before playing the club King followed by the Jack and covered by the Queen, ducked in dummy. North shifted to spades as he had to but when his first spade was the ace, declarer could ruff the second spade (ironically enjoying the spade ruff that his counterpart at the other table had so devoutly hoped for against five hearts doubled!), to play a club and finesse against North's ten to provide a discard for the last heart in the closed hand.

North had two compelling clues about the winning defense of underleading his spade holding to put his partner on lead for a heart winner: the heart ten at trick one really should have been read as it was intended to be: suit preference showing a good spade holding. Further, if South didn't have the King of spades, West was always going to be able to make five diamonds so better to assume the spade King with South, underlead the ace and let South decide whether a second spade or a high heart would provide the setting trick.

You'd really have to believe South would (should?) get that "small" problem right as North doubling five diamonds when holding two hearts would be a bit "out there"! Moral of these two results: defending can be tougher than declaring so don't be shy in the bidding when holding a freakish hand!

Hand 2

Nothing overly freakish about this next deal but the record shows that one expert declarer in a match delivered his diamond contract while the other failed so What Went Wrong? Offense or defense? That is the question with the common answer: a little bit of both with a significant contribution from the bidding!

	♠ K5		
	♥ AJ1093		
	♦ KJ106		
	♣ 54		
♠ J76		♠ Q1083	
♥ Q654		♥ K82	
♦ 4		♦ Q93	
♣ AQJ76		♣ 1092	
	♠ A942		
	♥ 7		
	♦ A8752		
	♣ K83		

Dealer: South. Vul: Both. Table One:

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣ ¹	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

1. Fourth suit artificial and forcing to game.

Opening lead: ♠6.

North-South got their money's worth in the bidding before settling in the diamond game that, despite all the overtures about a possible slam, was no sure thing for even eleven tricks. Deciding that setting up hearts was his best chance, declarer won the spade ace to play to the heart ace and advance the Jack, covered by East and ruffed. Ace and a diamond to dummy for another heart ruff but, after that start, the 3-1 diamond break and the club ace offside was more than declarer could cope with and he had to concede defeat.

Table Two:

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♦	Pass	5♦
Dbl	All Pass		

Opening lead: ♠6.

Despite South passing as dealer, this pair also reached five diamonds, one very significant difference being West's final double. When North didn't try three notrump over three spades, West assumed the club King wasn't going to show up in dummy and that, combined with poor splits in the red suits, might make taking eleven tricks a real struggle for South. Right on analysis by the defender but as you'll see, not quite as good on defensive play. Of course, there was also a high degree of information leakage available to this South that his counterpart didn't have: the ace of clubs was virtually 100% to be with West for his double and since no expert defender would be likely to double when holding the trump Queen, East was the likely owner of that crucial card.

South started on a similar path by winning the spade ace, heart to the ace and the heart Jack, covered and ruffed for a spade to the King for the ten of hearts but rather than ruffing that, South pitched a club for West to win the heart Queen. Fearing losing the club ace if he didn't take it immediately, West did cash that winner and his moment of truth had arrived: play a fourth round of hearts and East would be able to promote a trump trick (look at that delectable nine of diamonds accompanying the Queen!) for down one but trying a second round of clubs wasn't nearly as good as South won, mopped up three rounds of trumps by including a finesse against East's Queen and claimed his doubled contract! Moral: loose lips, like West's speculative penalty double, can indeed sink ships UNLESS the defense is perfectly leak-proof!

Hand 3

In the dog-eat-dog world of competitive bidding, an often useful way of thinking is to try to decide which breed of canine you might want to emulate when considering any one particular decision.

♠	AKQ8	♠	753
♥	A	♥	KJ742
♦	QJ109	♦	K42
♣	KJ63	♣	Q10
♠	4	♠	J10962
♥	Q109863	♥	5
♦	A73	♦	865
♣	A84	♣	9752

Table one bidding, N-S vul:

West	North	East	South
1♣ ¹	1♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	Pass	1♠
Dbl	All Pass		

1. More or less forcing in the Polish style but not always strong.

Opening lead: ♥A

South donned his Saint Bernard fur to try a low-level rescue after East passed West's strength-showing double to seek a penalty: "after all" thought South, "my spades may be worth a trick or two while nothing else in my hand will be worth anything in one heart doubled".

Not a totally inaccurate assessment but of no help in the play as even the second possible spade trick was wiped out by West's spades, including that truly consequential eight, in the play. Final tally: in his vainglorious rescue attempt, South took dummy's two aces and one (!!!) spade in his hand for down four and

the dreaded sticks and circles to East-West – 1100 - all to win 7 IMPs!!! Win 7 IMPs for -1100 with no slam available to East-West? So then the question that must come to mind is What Went Wrong at Table Two?

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	Pass	1♠
Dbl	Rdbl	Pass	2♣
Dbl	All pass		

Opening lead: ♥A

After South showed kinship with his counterpart at the other table, North decided to get into the rescue act as well, his redouble seeking magic in one of the minors. Well that did locate a 4-3 fit in clubs but there was no magic to be found as the defense that involved early and often trump extraction by the defenders (usually a winning approach when holding the bulk of the high cards) held the club declarer to three tricks (the two aces and one extra club trick) for down five and -1400 as the reward for North's enterprise.

When growing up back home in Tweed, we had a Black Lab who was anything but a shrinking violet but when stormy weather arrived, he liked to hide under the kitchen table until the thunder and lightning ended. East's pass of his partner's double could certainly be considered as "stormy weather" from South's perspective so why not be a Black Lab and hide away under the table and let North fend for himself? Is anyone surprised that North would have had little to no problem taking five tricks in one heart doubled? North did, after all, make a vulnerable overcall, and if he were to go down more than the -1100 scored at Table 1, he might tighten up the quality of his overcalls in the future.

Bottom line: Saint Bernard's – 1100 or -1400; Black Labs – 500. And please don't suggest this analogy confirms I'm barking mad for even suggesting no bid by South juts because he has nothing!



Lead Directing Bids

BY ED ZALUSKI

In ongoing auctions, opportunities to make lead-directing bids do arise and should be used to help partner find the best opening lead against an opponent's possibly yet-to-be-determined contract. Identified below are six such situations. (This article does not discuss opportunities for making lead-directing doubles or redoubles.)

SITUATION 1:

After two passes and holding less than opening values in third seat, a common tactic is a "light" opening bid in a major suit to suggest what suit partner should lead if the next opponent to bid become declarer in any contract. When holding a fit and limit-raise values for opener's major, responder can show those features and remain at the two level by using the Drury convention.

SITUATION 2:

After an opponent's major-suit opening on your left and a Jacoby forcing raise on your right, any simple overcall should now be strictly a lead-directional bid, the purpose being to help partner find the best opening lead. A raise is not solicited unless advancer holds at least four cards in overcaller's suit. If one wants to suggest a sacrifice, one should jump to the four level. Because the opponents are in a game-forcing major-suit fit of at least nine cards, it is unlikely that either will double your bid at the three or four level for penalties, particularly if you are not vulnerable.

SITUATION 3:

After an opponent's major-suit opening bid on your left and partner's unusual 2NT jump overcall to show the

minors, advancer can identify the suit of the sacrifice while suggesting that partner's opening lead be made in the other minor suit.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1M	2NT	3M	?

- 3/4NT shows a fit for clubs but asks for a diamond lead against the opponent's major-suit contract.

- 4/5♣ is natural, but may be lead directing in clubs with the intention to later sacrifice in diamonds.

- 4M is a cue bid of LHO's suit, forces a sacrifice, shows equal lengths in the minors, and asks partner to identify his or her longest minor at the five level.

SITUATION 4:

After partner's preempt at any level is doubled, responder can use a convention called the "McCabe Adjunct." This convention states that responder's bids in any new suit over the opponent's takeout double is not an attempt to play a contract in that suit, but rather is a fit-showing and lead-directing bid that is made with the expectation that the doubler's partner will bid and likely become declarer in a yet-unknown contract. If responder wants to play a contract with another suit as trump, responder must redouble. An example of how the McCabe Adjunct works is shown below:

Opener	LHO	Responder	RHO
2♥	DbI	?	

Passing implies that responder is willing to play 2♥ doubled if the takeout doubler's partner passes for penalties.



A new suit can be natural and show a strong hand. But these bids can also be lead-directional bids that 1) show a fit for opener's suit, 2) force to three of opener's suit, and 3) express the belief that the bid suit is likely to be the best opening lead should RHO becomes declarer.

Redouble states that responder holds length in a different suit and wants to play a contract with that suit as trump. If RHO passes the redouble, opener must bid the next step. Responder will pass or bid a new suit to play.

SITUATION 5:

In every second hand that is played, one partner or the other is the dealer who might open the bidding with a weak two bid. If the next opponent to bid passes, responder, with a fit, a weak hand, and one strong side suit, may make a lead-directing bid whose purpose is to help opener find the likely best opening lead, anticipating that the opponent in fourth seat holds a strong hand, will likely bid, and, in many cases, will become declarer in a yet-unknown contract. Such bids -- let us conventionally call them Extended McCabe -- are forcing to the three level of dealer's suit.

Another major advantage is that responder's bids in a new suit can be treated as "asking bids," where structured responses to such bids, in two out of three cases, the exception being partner's bid of the suit immediately below opener's suit -- will determine if opener holds three-card support for responder's suit without going beyond the three level of opener's suit. This treatment is particularly useful in finding 5-3 fits in suits other than the suit of the preempt.

Let us assume that dealer opens 2♥ in first seat, the next opponent passes, and you, as responder, hold xx Jxx Jxxx KQJx. Using the Law of Total Tricks, a preemptive raise to 3♥ on the known nine-card fit seem warranted. But if RHO declares a yet-to-be determined contract, this raise may cause opener to make a disastrous heart lead away from K10xxxx. Even as an unpassed hand, do you not instead want to bid a forcing 3♣ to suggest a club lead against

any contract that the opponents may declare? You know that the opponent on your left is strong and will almost certainly bid if you pass, and will likely bid if you preemptively raise hearts.

In such situations, responder should pretend that the opener's preempt was doubled (as shown previously in Situation 4), thereby placing the conventional Extended-McCabe fit bids into play. On the next round, responder either 1) passes or returns to dealer's suit to identify that the initial response only suggested an opening lead, or 2) bids again when the initial response was natural and strong. In either case, opener must have a rebidding structure that caters to both strong-hand and lead-directing possibilities.

SITUATION 5A:

Let us assume that LHO passes dealer's opening weak two bid in a major suit and responder bids a new suit. If RHO also passes, it is likely that partner is the one who holds the strong hand. In this case, dealer rebids as follows:

- Rebidding opener's major is the weakest action and denies three cards in partner's suit.
- Bidding the suit immediately below opener's suit, if that suit is available to be bid, artificial and shows three cards in partner's suit.
- Raising partner's suit shows four-card support and a minimum.
- Bidding another suit above opener's suit shows not only a singleton or void with four-card support for partner's suit, but also a maximum.

A player had made a bad bid and went for -1400. "I'm sorry," he said to his partner, "I had a card misplaced." Asked their partner innocently, "Only one card?"

Charles Goren



Example: Dealer opens with a weak 2♥, partner responds 2♠, and both opponents pass.

Dealer	LHO	Partner	RHO	
2♥	P	2♠	P	If RHO passes, partner likely holds a strong hand.

- 2NT Maximum, denies three spades, but shows values in diamonds.
- 3♣ Maximum, denies three spades, but shows values in clubs.
- 3♦ Bidding the suit immediately below the suit of the preempt shows three cards in responder's spade suit.
- 3♥ Rebidding dealer's suit is the weakest action and denies three cards in responder's suit.
- 3♠ Raising responder's suit shows four cards in support and a minimum. If responder returns to 4♥ on the next round, it is to play.
- 4♣/♦ Maximum, shows four spades and a singleton or void in the bid suit.

SITUATION 5B:

Instead of passing, RHO doubles or overcalls. In this case, it is likely that partner has made a lead-directing bid. Continuations now have available two additional bids, as shown in points 1 and 2 below:

- Pass is the weakest action and denies three cards in partner's suit.
- Double or redouble is artificial and confirms holding three cards in partner's suit.
- Rather than passing, a free rebid of opener's suit shows a good suit and a maximum, but denies three cards in partner's suit.

SITUATION 5C:

Partner opens a weak 2♦ in first or second seat, responder bids 2♠ (but not 2♥ because that bid has a conventional purpose, as described in the next

paragraph), and RHO passes or doubles.

In this case, if RHO passes, opener's 3♣ -- the suit below opener's diamond suit -- shows three-card support for spades. Other rebids follow the methods previously described.

The reason 2♥ was excluded from the previous paragraph was because some partnerships treat 2♥ as a forcing transfer to 2♠, whereupon a following 2NT is a conventional forcing bid, such as Ogust, that asks for more information. This allows the immediate 2NT response to be a not forcing bid that suggests playing in a higher-scoring part-score contract. With a maximum and a good suit, opener can raise to 3NT. With weakness, opener can pass, or rebid 3♦ to play. Other responses:

SITUATION 5D:

Opener	Partner
2♥	2NT Ogust, asking for more information.
	3♥ Preemptive, and likely shows a high honour in that suit.
	3♠ Natural. Jumps to three of a major are invitational, and prevent a cheap and possibly lead-directing overcall in a minor-suit over a forcing 2♠.
	4♣ This jump response over any weak-two bid is a Key Card Asking Bid, with opener's suit agreed as trump.
	4♥ To play. May be either strong or preemptive. If the opponents bid over 4♥, opener is not invited to make a penalty double, nor to bid on to 5♥.
	All jumps to game are to play.

SITUATION 6:

With partnership agreement, Extended McCabe can be played after 3♣ and 3♦ preempts in first or second seat, where a three-level bid response in a new suit can be used either as a lead-directing bid with a fit, or as an "asking bid" to determine if opener has three or four cards in support. In either case, the bidding does not go beyond four of opener's suit unless opener has four cards in responder's suit. This treatment is particularly

Lead Directing Bids

useful in finding a major-suit game whenever partner holds a strong hand with a fit for opener's suit and five cards in either major.

Using methods previously described, the example below shows the meaning of opener's rebids after partner's 3♥ or 3♠ response to opener's 3♣ preempt.

Opener	LHO	Responder	RHO
3♣	P	3♥/♠	P
3♠	Over 3♥, 3♠ shows a maximum, denies three cards in hearts, and shows values in spades.		
3NT	Bidding the strain immediately below opener's suit is always artificial and shows three cards in partner's suit.		
4♣	Rebidding opener's suit is the weakest action, and denies three cards in responder's suit.		
4♦	Bidding above opener's suit shows a maximum, four-card support for responder's suit, and a singleton or void in diamonds.		
4♥	Over 3♠, shows a maximum, four-card support for responder's spades, and a singleton or void in hearts. Over 3♥, a raise shows four cards in hearts and possibly shortness in spades.		

These treatments do not apply to preempts of 3♥ and above.

In a recent game, I held ♠AQJxx ♥QJ ♦xx ♣xxxx and partner opened a weak 2♥. After a pass by RHO, I thought about bidding 2♠ as a lead director that would force the auction to 3♥, but I did not make this bid because the agreements described in this article were not yet in place. LHO next bid 5♦. Partner did not find a spade lead that was needed to defeat the contract, so 5♦ made.

It is not the handling of difficult hands that makes the winning player. There are not enough of them. It is the ability to avoid messing up the easy ones.

Alan Sontag



Calendar of Events

DECEMBER

Qualifiers for COPC and CNTC at in person clubs. Check with your local club.

- 15 Registration deadline CSTC
- 17 CBF Canada Wide Online Game on BBO – Open and 999er. These games are qualifiers for the CNTC and COPC at the Canadian Bridge Championships.
- 30 Registration deadline CWTC

JANUARY

- 7/8 CSTC Round robin on Realbridge
- (12) 13 & 14 CWTC Round Robin on Realbridge
- (TBA) PBU&CBF co-sponsored Trans Atlantic seniors
- 21 CBF Canada Wide Online Game on BBO – Open and 999er. These games are qualifiers for the CNTC and COPC at the Canadian Bridge Championships.
- 27 (am) ACBL wide Junior fund game
- Feb 4 ACBL wide International fund game
- March 28 (aft) ACBL wide charity game
- April Charity month at clubs
- April 13 Helen Shields Rookie Master Game at in person clubs

**May 9-19 Canadian Bridge Championships
Niagara Falls**

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.



OZ (AUSTRALIA) BRIDGE

by Ron Klinger

1. From the New South Wales Open Team Selection. Dealer South. EW Vul.

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Double ¹
?			

1. Asking for a spade lead.

What would you bid as West, E-W vul, with ♠Q ♥AK72 ♦AJ8 ♣AK1032?

The full hand:

♠7632
♥10943
♦Q1093
♣7

♠Q
♥AK72
♦AJ8
♣AK1032

♠A985
♥J65
♦K76
♣964

♠KJ104
♥Q8
♦542
♣QJ85

The winner was to pass or redouble. Tony Nunn, West in three notrump undoubled, made 12 tricks by winning the diamond lead and playing the ace of clubs and another to the nine. In the problem where south, a passed hand, doubled three notrump for a spade lead, West ran to five clubs. This went two off.

With extra strength for the two-heart reverse and the queen of spades as a bolster for East's spades, West might have passed the double and left the decision to East. There are enough tricks as long as declarer takes the precaution play in clubs.





2. In the 2022 New South Wales Seniors' Team Selection, after three passes, West opens one notrump (15-17). Neither side is vulnerable. What would you do as North with ♠QJ532 ♥1097542 ♦8 ♣Q?

Here's what happened:

	♠QJ532 ♥1097542 ♦8 ♣Q		♠K96 ♥8 ♦KJ1032 ♣10653
♠874 ♥KJ ♦AQ76 ♣AK82	♠A10 ♥AQ63 ♦954 ♣J974		

West	North	East	South
	<i>Buchen</i>		<i>Kanetkar</i>
—	Pass	Pass	Pass
1NT	2♦ ¹	Double	3♥
3NT	4♥	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass
1. Majors			

With the spade king onside, declarer lost only a heart, a diamond and a club, North/South plus 590.

3. This deal arose in the qualifying rounds of the Autumn National Open Teams. As South you hold ♠Q1087 ♥AKQ92 ♦64 ♣106, with E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
—	1♠	2♦	?

What would you do?

This was the full deal:

♠AK654 ♥J763 ♦7 ♣AJ8		♠J3 ♥54 ♦AKQJ102 ♣K53
♠92 ♥108 ♦9853 ♣Q9742	♠Q1087 ♥AKQ92 ♦64 ♣106	

Most Souths supported spades in some way or other.

Options include:

- 1♠ : (2♦) : 3♦ – limit raise or better in spades; or
- 1♠ : (2♦) : 3♥ – fit-showing; or
- 1♠ : (2♦) : 3♠ (or 2NT) – limit raise, if that is available as such.

The deal is fascinating because North/South have a nine-card spade fit and a nine-card heart fit, but the limit in spades is 11 tricks, while you can make 12 tricks with hearts as trumps. With the instant support for spades, it is no great surprise that the vast majority were in a spade contract, but it was mildly surprising that only one pair, Bill Nash and Jim Wallis, found their way to six hearts.

West	North	East	South
	<i>Nash</i>		<i>Wallis</i>
—	1♠	2♦	2♥
Pass	4♦ ¹	Pass	4NT ²
Pass	5♥ ²	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 4-plus hearts, 0-1 diamond
2. RKCB
3. Two key cards, no heart queen

That was worth 11 IMPs against four spades, plus 450, at the other table.



DECEMBER 2022 TGCBC

Host: Paul Thurston

For Panelists, see page 29

Editor's note: Congrats to Ashot Harutyunyan, top reader for December, and winner of \$100 for having the best combined Oct-Dec score. Way to go Ashot! A close 2nd was Sheldon Spiers, who gets \$50 in Xmas shopping money. The top panelist, with a perfect score, was Dan Jacob. The February 23 problems can be found later in this issue. Play along!

These problems were all encountered by some of my advancing students and I thought it might be interesting for them to see experts' solutions and read some of the insightful reasoning behind those solutions.

1. As South you hold at IMP scoring with Neither Vul:
 ♠942 ♥82 ♦A98 ♣AQ973.

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

What is your call?

Calls	Votes	Scores
3♣	6	10
3♥	3	8
2♠	2	5
Pass	2	2

As the majority felt some positive action was required, the votes for inaction were demoted even though pass and 2♠ each attracted two votes- as they seem at totally opposite extremes, maybe the scores are just? Speaking for the majority:

Neil Kimelman: Too many values to pass a 2-level overcall and this new suit bid implies some tolerance for partner's suit.

Dan Jacob: Would like another club but no choice for a passed-hand.

David Lindop: Have to show some values and as I didn't open 3♣, I should have something like this for 3♣ now.

That about sums it up nicely: too much to pass, no great fit but some tolerance for partner's hearts. After all, how much abuse can we heap on the poor beleaguered club suit by constantly ignoring bidding it naturally? More than you might think according to:

Zygmunt Marcinski: Pass (**Paul: he did at least concede passing would be easier at pairs**) as partner is limited and I have a pathetic spade holding and don't even have a higher heart spot card to prevent RHO from ruffing a spade in front of dummy.

No mention of those better than average clubs – is that "abuse"?

Stephen Cooper: 3♥. It is IMPs and game is possible, not 2♠ as that would be a stronger heart raise.

We can all agree with Mr. Cooper's reasoning for bidding but where did his clubs go?

David Grainger: 2♠. My values being aces will compensate for a missing heart. Nothing else is palatable.

See, not only are clubs not worth bidding but they aren't even "palatable".

David Willis: 2♠. Some action is required and when stuck with bad alternatives, providing maximum room for partner is useful.

Yes, maybe he won't consider bidding his clubs a "bad alternative" and an "unpalatable" choice but he might just opt for concealment and blast straight ahead to 4♥ at least partly because 2♠ would normally deliver more than xx in hearts.

THE LAST WORD

As for the clubs, Partner actually held ♠10 ♥AQJ763 ♦K5 ♣KJ54 and I'd be willing to bet the 3♣ bidders might just reach that slam while leaving out the club suit in the bidding will for sure miss the slam as the rule says "you can't play in a particular strain unless one of the partners bids it"

2. As North, at IMP scoring with both vulnerable, you hold: ♠J742 ♥QJ543 ♦3 ♣J72.

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

What is your call?

Calls	Votes	Scores
Pass	10	10
2♠	3	3

For this relatively mild problem, the panel voted overwhelmingly in favour of ceasing and desisting despite having found a 4-4 spade fit and this in the context of IMP scoring where seeking game bonuses is akin to the quest for the Holy Grail! So what's up with that second round pass?

Neil Kimelman: Pass! We are high enough!

Andy Stark: With East showing a likely four spades, let's slow the auction down to a grinding halt!

Really hitting the nail on the head:

Mike Hargreaves: Pass. Game is a long way away and any move might over-excite partner.

Ay, there's the rub – partner, an expert as well, might get excited enough to bid game and will he then be more excited by the sight of dummy or by the final double card contributed by East? As is often the case, Stephen Cooper sums up the situation briefly and, I believe, accurately:

Cooper: Pass. I scraped up a response, suits are not splitting and I have no ace(s) or king(s).

Undeterred by such mundane considerations as having no real values and the threatening auction:

David Lindop: Maybe a game if partner had ♠AQ103 ♥Kx ♦A7654 ♣62.

Without comment (and he always has Doug to blame if raising the ante comes to grief).

Bob Todd: 2♠.

As does Nick L'Ecuyer who raises citing "the lure of the game bonus". And prepares for the post mortem by adding: "Partner should be 6-4 to introduce a suit they have shown when doubling".

Now that's a wrinkle I wouldn't have thought of since my partner with 0-2 hearts (no support redouble) wouldn't be expected to pass when he has a descriptive bid to make and, see above, if we do belong in spades because he has four, wouldn't it be dereliction of duty not to introduce the suit?

THE LAST WORD

The one-level was the last safe port in a brewing storm so the panel (mostly) got it right by passing – any

further move will start to attract another double, this one for penalty, and the number will be a minimum of -500 with no more than a partial available to East-West.

As David Willis summarized when passing: We have gotten out of diamonds and found a spot and partner did not Jump Shift. Exactly!

3. As South at matchpoint scoring with neither vul, you hold ♠AQJ107 ♥J83 ♦A9 ♣652.

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

What is your call?

Calls	Votes	Scores
2♥	4	10
3♦	1	8
3♣	3	7
2NT	2	7
3♠	2	4
2♠	1	2

The Bridge World Hosts for their Masters Solvers Bidding quiz always calls a problem “excellent” when there are lots of choices touted by the panelists so by that standard, this must be an excellent problem! The panelists variously want to either force to game or invite game with their choice of how to do either being intriguing.

Neil Kimelman: this is a choice between 2♠ and 3♠ but I have too much for 2♠ (agree) and I will not force to game by bidding 3♣ so my choice is 3♠.

We can all agree that 2♠ isn’t nearly enough (except for Mike Hargreaves) but 3♠ appears to be lacking a spade or two.

So how about 2♥? Not forcing to game but also a bit short in the bid-suit department as partner will be expecting a four-card suit and might raise to game when he also has four. We all fudge minor suit bids as a matter of convenience but even a white lie about a major can foment disaster not to mention the effect it can have on partnership harmony.

Two notrump? That is Andy Stark’s choice as he suggests pass or 2♠ or 3♣ or 3♠ or 3NT are all possible answers for what he designates a “good problem”! Two notrump may seem about right on overall values but seems misdirected as to having this hand declare with exactly zero of value in the unbid suits.

Two spades? Maybe right on the spade suit but decidedly inadequate for the hand’s values even though Mike Hargreaves bids two spades while hedging by saying “partner is allowed to bid again”. Maybe but I’d be very uncomfortable about making this bid, having partner go into the tank and eventually passing!

Three clubs? As David Grainger emphasizes, this call is an artificial game force and does seem a bit much given the heart and club holdings but will turn out okay if we somehow manage to extract a spade preference. Alluding to a previous theme (see above), David Lindop chooses three clubs and writes that “clubs is rarely clubs these days and might even deter a club lead if partner bids three notrump”.

But for my money the one call that does everything you might want to do was chosen by only one panelist (David Willis) and wasn’t even mentioned by any other voter: three diamonds! Consider the virtues of this bid: If our destination should be three notrump, partner will need extras and something in both unbid suits and at least in theory should have the lead coming to his hand. If he has the dog many open these days, we will stop in three diamonds and at least score a (likely) plus. (You really want to force to game when partner holds ♠6 ♥A54 ♦Q107654 ♣KQ4?) On the rare occasion when he has three-card spade support

and enough to accept the invitation, he is welcome to show the spade help “on the way”.

THE LAST WORD

There really wasn't a losing choice except for possibly two spades (partner fearing a misfit might pass in spite of Mike Hargrave's granting permission for his partner to bid again over this putative weak rebid) or even three spades as he might raise to the spade game (encountering a 5-2 split) or pass (again the possible misfit) and miss an easy three notrump as Opener held: ♠9 ♥A94 ♦KQ10876 ♣AJ10 and knowing of diamond help opposite, will bid the nine-trick game with confidence.

4. As North at IMP scoring, neither vulnerable, you hold ♠AJ6 ♥86532 ♦J ♣AKJ4.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♥
Pass	2NT ¹	3♦	Pass
Pass	?		

1. Game-forcing Jacoby Major Suit Raise

a) What meaning, if any, does your favourite partnership assign to Opener's second round pass?

b) What is your call?

Calls	Votes	Scores
3♠	8	10
3♥	3	6
4NT	2	5

Of course, the answer to B will depend to a certain extent on A and I thought most partnerships would be on firm ground about what continuations would mean over such modest interference. Seems the terra might not be quite as firma as I expected as there wasn't a lot of uniformity about what South's pass meant.

David Grainger says the standard meaning for pass is no diamond control so that his rebid of 3♠ would show the ace and imply diamond control.

Neil Kimelman plays that double shows shortness in the suit bid. Otherwise you bid your shortness at the three level if you can, and pass when your shortness is in a lower ranking suit. All other bids remain the same. So here, pass by South would show short clubs in his partnerships. So that for him, like it is for Grainger, 3♠ by North shows the spade ace and implies a diamond control, as they have denied one.

Personally. I'm always a bit leery about any bid that says one thing while also “implying” something else in addition, as mentioned elsewhere these are the kinds of bids that might win the post mortem at the post-session pub but can easily lose points at the table! I would more readily agree with Mike Hargreaves that the pass would deny a stiff diamond that would be shown via double, any new suit would show shortness in that suit but, (deep waters now) also guarantee at least the diamond King.

David Lindop is also among the multi-meaning crew as his pass by opener would deny any diamond control while everything else would “imply” some diamond control – all that without specifying what “everything else” might mean.

Closer to my personal belief about the pass: Dan Jacob says it denies any control in diamonds while showing a non-minimum. Unfortunately that says nothing about shortness in either black suit, information that might be crucial to North's assessment of how and how high to move forward. Try this summary on for size:

- Pass = no shortness anywhere while showing a non-minimum
- Double = diamond shortness.
- 3♠ or 4♣ = shortness in the bid suit without saying anything about diamonds.
- 3♥ = some diamond control with no shortness in a non-minimum.
- 4♥ = no shortness, minimum
- 3NT = non-minimum with about 1 ½ -2 diamond stoppers in case partner has weak diamond length and we want to avoid diamond ruffs in 4♥. ♠Kx • ♥KJxxx ♦KJxx ♣Ax would fit the bill nicely.

Lots of believers in a continuation of 3♠ as the way to the promised land but I'm not so sure – it didn't work out for the students when Opener had ♠Kx ♥AKJ109 ♦10x ♣Q10xx and had passed over the double (good!) but had nothing to control bid over 3♠ so subsided in 4♥ and, again with the terra established by the second-round pass not quite as firma as might have been desirable, Responder also passed and the excellent slam was missed.

Long-time partner back in the previous century Rick Delogu would have called Responder's 3♠ as "bidding round the mulberry bush"! Once you accept that the pivotal pass shows a non-minimum what more does responder need to find out that he can't find out with Blackwood?

That puts Ron Bishop, Bob Todd and I in the same camp as, control-rich and having an extra trump to soak up a possibly-missing ♥Q, we launch RKC, leaving all those delicate implications on the shelf, find two and bid the slam. Taking a simple approach doesn't mean 100% accuracy but, taking a careful look at responder's hand, what would you expect partner to offer as a control-bid over 3♠, especially as he's already advertised a non-minimum?

The 3♥ "stall" chosen by Marcinski, Cooper and Willis does a fair job of dodging that particular bullet by leaving room for opener to control bid the spade King if he has it and deigns to show it (he should) but remember Rick's warning that mulberry bushes do have thorns!

5. As South at IMP scoring, neither vulnerable, you hold ♠AQ84 ♥10 ♦AQ5 ♣KJ862.

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

What is your call?

Calls	Votes	Scores
2♦	9	10
2NT	2	5
Pass	1	2
2♣	1	1

This time the panel did very well by making a call that seemed extremely "out there" by the students who are generally averse to breaking ground by showing a new suit when holding only three cards in that suit. (For example, most advancing students wouldn't dream of the top vote-getters of 2♥ or 3♣ in 3. David Lindop said it very well:

David Lindop: 2♦ to pattern out and show extra values as a way to invite game. (He further stipulated that this isn't Fourth-Suit Forcing as he couldn't have enough HCPs to force to game in this sequence).

Zygmunt Marcinski concurred and amplified the potential effectiveness of the chosen call a bit further: "game is still possible as we need a maximum with partner and values in the right place". And the "right place" is key! Also showcasing the "right places" was David Grainger who wrote: "I have to show an extra ace above minimum and 2NT will do that as well as leaving partner entitled to expect heart weakness". Not sure about why 2NT shows heart weakness (another subtle implication?) What would opener bid over 1NT with ♠AQxx ♥Qx ♦Kx ♣AQxxx?

THE LAST WORD

Responder held ♠KJ5 ♥J652 ♦K108 ♣Q95. And once told by his partner's patterning out rebid of 2♦, he could directly (no implications required!) realize he had all working cards and the heart weakness was no deterrent to bidding and making game – as long as that game was 5♣! Pass and 2♣ will preserve a plus score – enough said!

The students thank you all!



The Panelists

ANSWERS FOR DECEMBER PROBLEMS

Name	Hand 1		Hand 2		Hand 3		Hand 4		Hand 5		Total
	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	
Ron Bishop	3♣	10	Pass	10	3♠	4	4NT	5	2♦	10	39
Stephen Cooper	3♥	8	Pass	10	2♥	10	3♥	6	2♦	10	44
David Grainger	2♠	6	Pass	10	3♣	7	3♠	10	2NT	5	37
Mike Hargraves	Pass	2	Pass	10	2♠	4	3♠	10	2♦	10	36
Dan Jacob	3♣	10	Pass	10	2♥	10	3♠	10	2♦	10	50
Nick L'Ecuyer	3♣	10	2♠	3	2♥	10	3♠	10	2♦	10	43
Neil Kimelman	3♣	10	Pass	10	3♠	4	3♠	10	2♦	10	44
David Lindop	3♣	10	2♠	3	3♣	4	3♠	10	2♦	10	37
Zyg Marcinski	Pass	2	Pass	10	2♥	10	3♥	6	2♦	10	38
Julie Smith	3♣	10	Pass	10	3♣	7	3♠	10	2♣	1	38
Andy Stark	3♥	8	Pass	10	2NT	7	3♠	10	2♦	10	45
Bob Todd	3♥	8	2♠	3	2NT	7	4NT	5	2NT	5	28
David Willis	2♠	6	Pass	10	3♦	8	3♥	6	Pass	2	31

FEBRUARY PROBLEMS

Host: Andy Stark

Entries from readers must be submitted by Jan 15 2023 to editor@cbf.ca

1. IMPs. Dealer: West, both vul. As South, you hold
♠9653 ♥8 ♦AK76 ♣10742.

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♠	2♠	?

What is your call?

2. MPs. Dealer: North, neither vul. As South, you hold
♠AJ8 ♥K983 ♦AJ ♣J973.

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

Do you agree with South's passes? If not, please explain.
What is your opening lead?

3. MPs. Dealer: South, both vul. As South, you hold:
♠10983 ♥KQ98 ♦AQ ♣KQ10.

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

What is your call?

4. IMPs. Dealer: South, neither vul. As South, you hold:
♠AQ84 ♥Q104 ♦AQ983 ♣7.

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

What is your call?

5) IMPs. Dealer: North, E-W vul. As South, you hold:
♠K8752 ♥87 ♦4 ♣Q9542

West	North	East	South
-	2♠	Pass	?

What is your call?



The Humour of George I. Kaufman

In a game which was played at three cents a point, Kaufman once said, "I'd like to have a review of the bidding – with the original intonations."



2022 ABTA INTERMEDIATE BOOK OF THE YEAR

PLAY IT SAFE!

Barbara Seagram & David Bird



At rubber bridge or teams scoring, declarer's objective is to make his contract — nothing else matters. Playing it safe is of vital importance. Yet playing safe can take many forms — it might involve simply choosing the best percentage line of play, or keeping one opponent off lead, preserving entries, or even giving up a trick you don't have to lose, all in the cause of bringing that contract home securely. Even at matchpoints, there are times when safety is more important than anything else. Recognizing all these situations, and knowing what to do when you encounter them, will improve your bridge scores by leaps and bounds.

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