

bridge *Canada*

Eric Kekish
A Tribute



Gold Medal
2023 CNTC

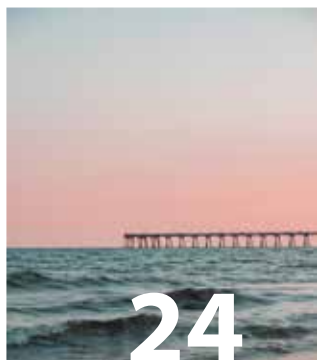


Jude Goodwin
A Farewell

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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3. Email info@cbf.ca for more information.

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE



The Goods

Time for a new name to my message. Not sure it was time but my son Kyle took this great pic last month while we were having a beer on a patio, so why not?

Focus on B and C Players

Next year the Board are planning on having some incentives to get more 'B and C' players participating at the 2024 CBCs. If you have some ideas or feedback, please pass it along (editor@cbf.ca), and I will ensure it gets to the CBF Board.

The Times, They Are A-Changin'

Lots of things are changing, and some quickly. Even bridge. It's time for us all to try and contribute to maintaining Canadian Bridge. In that vein, the 2023 Canadian Bridge Championships (CBCs) was a great success. In this issue the winners of the major events share what happened in Niagara Falls.

Speaking of change, Bridge Canada might be doing a bit of makeover in how we present the content. Stay tuned.

Another change – the retirement of **Jude Goodwin**. Jude has been a valuable resource and advocate for the CBF, and specifically the Canadian bridge publications. Jude, it has always been a pleasure working together to publish Bridge Canada. Enjoy!!

Goodwin Creative Ltd will continue as publishers of the magazine in the capable hands of Audrey Thizy and Sky Goodwin.

Eric Kokish 1947-2023

It is with great sadness that I share that Eric Kokish recently passed away. Eric, #3 inductee into the Canadian Bridge Hall of Fame excelled at all aspect of our game:

- World, NABC and CNTC Champion many times over.
- One of the all-time greatest bidding theoretician.
- Considered by most experts to be the top bridge Coach in the world, and the very best teams asked Eric to coach their players.
- Tireless volunteer and advocate for our game. For many years he tirelessly gave his time to help train and coach Canadian Junior teams, and lobby for better rules and conditions of contest.

It seem all too often I am hearing of several bridge players passing away each month. I guess that is the way. All I know it is a lesson to get out and play bridge as much as possible while we can, enjoying both the intellectual challenge, as well as the interaction with other players!

Neil Kinelman
Bridge Canada Managing Editor

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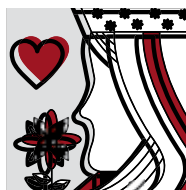
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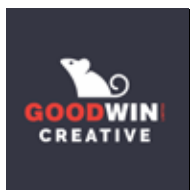
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The 2023 Canadian National Teams Championships (CNTC)

By Fred Gitelman



L to r: Darren Wolpert, Mark Caplan, Fred Gitelman, Jacob Freeman, Captain Jason Feldman, and Daniel Lavee

The 47th running of the CNTC was held May 10-15 in Niagara Falls. 15 teams would play a complete round robin with the top 8 advancing to the knockout stage. The CNTC winners would qualify to represent Canada at the upcoming Bermuda Bowl in Marrakech, Morocco.

Team Feldman (Jason Feldman-Darren Wolpert, Jacob Freeman-Daniel Lavee, Mark Caplan-Fred Gitelman) went undefeated to win the round robin and then beat Janicki in the Quarter-Finals to face Hanna (who had just won the Canadian Seniors Teams) in the Semi-Finals. Watch Jason Feldman as declarer on this deal from the first quarter of the Semis:

After West overcalled 1♠, Jason played 3NT and received a low spade lead. East produced the Queen of spades and Jason won the Ace. Declarer continued with a club to dummy's Queen, unblocked the Queen of diamonds, and got out with a low club. West won the King of clubs but then found himself endplayed into giving Jason access to the closed hand for +400.

Note that, had West played the King of clubs on the first round of the suit, declarer would have been left without recourse. Kudos to Jason for selecting the 7 of clubs as his trick two lead - it would have been more natural for West to cover with the King had Jason led the 10 or 9 of clubs instead of the 7.

To make 3NT legitimately on the actual layout, declarer must either lead a heart at trick two or play a diamond to dummy's Queen before leading the King of hearts to the third trick. Hanna's North-South pair stopped in 1NT at the other table which failed by a trick when declarer badly misguessed the play - 10 IMPs to Feldman.

In the third quarter of the Feldman-Hanna Semi-Final I was dealt this strange hand: ♠♥KQJ98 ♦- ♣AJ1087532. We were at favorable vulnerability and, after my partner Mark Caplan passed, John Rayner on my right opened 1♦. Obviously I planned to do a lot of bidding and chose to start with 2NT (showing hearts

		<i>Darren</i>	
		♠	982
		♥	K982
		♦	Q
		♣	AQ643
<i>West</i>			
♠	K10763		
♥	A10		
♦	9854		
♣	K8		
		<i>East</i>	
		♠	Q5
		♥	J753
		♦	J1032
		♣	J52
		<i>Jason</i>	
		♠	AJ4
		♥	Q64
		♦	AK76
		♣	1097

and clubs) in an attempt to keep the heart suit in play. My LHO, Nader Hanna, made an artificial bid to show at least invitational values with long spades and then Mark surprised me by bidding 4♣! John bid 4♦ and it was my turn again.

While I 'knew' that 6♣ had to be a good contract, it struck me as tactically wise to bid only 5♣ - I thought this would increase our chances of buying the contract. Nader tried 5♦, passed around to me and I bid 6♣ as planned. When Nader then went on to 6♦ and Mark couldn't double, it seemed clear to take out cheap insurance by sacrificing in 7♣. Nader doubled and all passed. The full auction:

West	North	East	South
Hanna	Caplan	Rayner	Gitelman
	Pass	1♦	2NT
3♦ ¹	4♣	4♦	5♣
5♦	Pass	Pass	6♣
6♦	Pass	Pass	7♣
Dbl	All pass		

This was the complete deal:

♠	109754	♠	A
♥	1054	♥	A7632
♦	Q	♦	AJ86543
♣	Q964	♣	-
♠	KQJ8632	♠	-
♥	-	♥	KQJ98
♦	K10972	♦	-
♣	K	♣	AJ1087532

I wasn't the only player at the table with a strange hand. Mark lost only the Ace of hearts for -100. Roy Dalton, playing with Vince Oddy, held my cards for Team Hanna at the other table. Instead of my choice of 2NT, Roy opted for 5♣, hoping to put maximum pressure on the opponents. As it turned out, both Daniel Lavee and Jacob Freeman judged well after that to quickly reach their laydown grand slam:

West	North	East	South
Lavee	Oddy	Freeman	Dalton
	Pass	1♦	5♣
6♦	7♣	7♦	All pass

The 19 IMPs Feldman won on this board turned out to be pivotal in the match. Feldman went on to win 147-109 IMPs thereby reaching the Finals.

The other Finalists were the defending CNTC champions, Team L'Ecuyer (Nick L'Ecuyer-Zygmunt Marcinski, Kamel Fergani-Marc-André Fourcaudot, Nicholas Gartaganis Michel Lorber), a team with 35(!) combined CNTC titles. L'Ecuyer finished second in the round robin and subsequently defeated Chen followed by Jacobs to advance to the Finals.

Feldman had a big first quarter, getting off to a 49-4 IMP lead. Here is one key deal with both sides vulnerable:

♠	QJ105	♠	843
♥	AK4	♥	10753
♦	1052	♦	A974
♣	1054	♣	K7
♠	A762	♠	K9
♥	6	♥	QJ982
♦	KJ6	♦	Q83
♣	Q9862	♣	AJ3

West	North	East	South
Gartaganis	Gitelman	Lorber	Caplan
		Pass	1♥
Dbl	Rdbl	2♦	Pass
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All pass	

Mark judged well to continue with 2NT over my 2♥. Despite the known heart fit, my hand also looked like notrump so I raised Mark to game. With all the cards in view it is easy to see that the defense can win five tricks (three diamonds, a club, and the Ace of spades) before declarer can win nine. But one of the defenders' tricks went away when Nick reasonably chose to lead the

King of diamonds in an attempt to start unblocking the suit. The King of diamonds would have been best on various other layouts, but it was the end of the defense on the actual lie of the cards. Nick continued with the Jack of diamonds, ducked by Michel to Mark's Queen. After Mark knocked out the Ace of spades, the defense took two diamond tricks and Mark claimed the rest for +600.

The auction at the other table started the same way, but Zygmunt Marcinski holding Mark's cards, opted to pass where Mark had bid 2NT. 2♥ was +110 - 10 IMPs to Feldman.

Feldman added another 18 IMPs to their lead in the second quarter and was ahead 95-32 at the half. The third quarter, however, was all L'Ecuyer who won the set 68-19 thereby cutting Feldman's once big lead to only 14 IMPs. The second board played by Daniel and Jacob in the fourth quarter gave Feldman some much-needed breathing room. Both sides were vulnerable:

	♠ Q1087		
	♥ A2		
	♦ 9		
	♣ A76543		
♠ K96		♠ J32	
♥ KQ98753		♥ 10	
♦ 8		♦ KJ10732	
♣ J9		♣ KQ2	
	♠ A54		
	♥ J64		
	♦ AQ654		
	♣ 108		

West	North	East	South
Fourcadout	Freeman	Fergani	Lavee
	1♣	1♦	Pass
1♥	2♣	2♦	3NT
All pass			

Marc-André's 8 of diamonds lead went to the 9, 10, and Ace. Daniel advanced the 10 of clubs, covered, ducked in dummy, and overtaken by Kamel. Kamel continued a top diamond to Daniel's Queen as a spade was discarded from the dummy. Daniel then played Ace and another club and, after winning the Queen of clubs, Kamel cashed a diamond winner (another spade was pitched from dummy) leaving this position:

	♠ Q10	
	♥ A2	
	♦ -	
	♣ 765	
♠ K96		♠ J32
♥ KQ98		♥ 10
♦ -		♦ 732
♣ -		♣ -
	♠ A54	
	♥ J6	
	♦ 65	
	♣ -	

At the table Kamel chose to cash the 7 of diamonds and Daniel claimed the rest for +600. A heart switch instead by East would not have helped - Daniel would win in dummy and run the clubs to strip squeeze Marc-André. In the above position only a spade lead from East sets the contract. Declarer is forced to duck to West's King who now must now be careful to continue spades - a heart return would result in a double squeeze for declarer.

It is interesting to note the (non-material) squeezing effect that the third round of diamonds had on the dummy. At the other table, North-South for L'Ecuyer reached an unlikely contract, 3♠, which failed by two tricks for -200 and 13 IMPs to Feldman. Feldman had regained the momentum and went on to pull away in the fourth quarter, winning the set 40-15. The final score was Feldman 154 L'Ecuyer 115.

Allow me to introduce you to the Feldman Team who will be representing Canada in the 2023 Bermuda Bowl World Championships:

Captain **Jason Feldman**, 42, is a recent immigrant to Canada. Jason, formerly of San Diego, and his family (wife Erin and three children) will be making Revelstoke, BC their new home. Jason is a fantastic and accomplished bridge player as well as a Canadian at heart and by marriage. Please join me in welcoming Jason to our country!

His partner, Toronto's **Darren Wolpert**, 47, has now won the CNTC an incredible seven times and is one of only a handful of Canadians to have ever won the Vanderbilt. Darren's family is bridge royalty in Canada - both his

mother Hazel and his brother Gavin are accomplished bridge teachers who have enjoyed multiple trips to various winners' circles.

Jacob Freeman is only 22 but he is already setting the bridge world on fire. He currently lives in Toronto but will soon be moving to New York City for his first full time job (with Jane Street Capital). Jacob is a remarkable talent - he is certainly a much stronger player than I was when I was at his age. While 2023 was Jacob's first CNTC win, I am willing to bet that it will be far from his last.

Jacob plays with **Daniel Lavee**, 39, a full time bridge teacher and player (and a new father) from Toronto. Although Daniel had never previously won the CNTC, he already has a World Championship under his belt (the 2010 World Mixed Teams). Daniel is a fierce competitor at the table and a hugely positive force away from the table.

Mark Caplan, 57, currently lives and works in Dublin, Ireland. Mark and his late brother David introduced me to bridge in the early 1980s. Mark and I won Silver Medals together playing for Canada in the 1991 World Junior Championships, but Mark largely retired from bridge shortly thereafter, taking a 20+ year hiatus to focus on his career and family. Mark and David let Canada know they were back by winning both the Canadian Open Pairs and Canadian IMP Pairs Championships in 2019.

The last time I won the CNTC was in 1995 when, at 30, I was the youngest player on my team. Now, 28 years later at 58, I am the senior member of Team Canada. I spent most of the years between those CNTC wins playing bridge for the USA (I still live in Las Vegas) while working full time for the company that runs Canada-invented BBO. I have been retired since 2019.


All I can say now that I am back in Canada bridgewise is that Dorothy was right: there is no place like home. I was really impressed but hardly surprised at the level of camaraderie and sportsmanship on display in Niagara Falls - I have played high-level bridge all over the world, and you don't exactly see that everywhere.

Thanks to the CBF, the tournament staff, and my great teammates for providing a real high point for me in Niagara Falls. We are thrilled and honored that Katie Thorpe will be our Non-Playing Captain in Marrakech. We hope to do Canada proud.

Canadian Team Update

When **Jacob Freeman** subsequently learned that he would be unavailable to play in Morocco, the team replaced him with **Piotr Klimowicz** to partner Daniel Lavee in the upcoming Bermuda Bowl. We are happy to welcome him to the team.

Piotr Klimowicz - Piotr, 66 and recently retired after a career in IT, was born in Poland but his home has been Canada and Edmonton since 1989. He is a veteran of both national- and international-level bridge who brings both strong skills and a winning attitude to the table. Piotr has won two CNTCs, two NABC events, and represented Canada three times in the World Championships.



My partner is 20 years behind the times.
Nowadays you pay your money to bid; my
partner still thinks you need cards.

Author unknown

The Marrakech Express

2023 CANADIAN MIXED TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

By Judith and Nicholas Gartaganis

Finally, face-to-face bridge for the Canadian Championships returned in 2023. This year the prize for the winners was a trip to Marrakech, Morocco to compete in the 46th World Bridge Teams Championships. In theory there were four opportunities to punch a ticket to the world championships (Women's Team, Seniors Team, Open Team and Mixed Team), but in reality the playing schedule meant that three opportunities were the maximum, with the Canadian Mixed Teams being the last major championship on the schedule. Our mixed team (Sondra Blank, Louise Berthiaume, Kamel Fergani, Marc-Andre Fourcaudot) was optimistic about our prospects, but anything can happen in a competition.

A field of 12 teams played a round robin of 10-board matches, with four of the 12 advancing to the playoffs. At the end of the first day **Davidson** (Susan Culham, Kismet Fung, Randal Davidson and Robert Lebi) led the field by more than half a match while our team sat in second place a bit more than 20 VPs ahead of the cut. On Day 2 of play the field tightened up considerably. Heading into the last two rounds, **Davidson** and **Gartaganis** were near locks, while most of the remaining competitors still had mathematical chances to qualify.

Although we defeated Davidson 15.75 VPs to 4.25 VPs in the penultimate round, they still had the edge going into the last match. As often happens, there were a number of surprises at the end. **Edwards-Davies** (Tim Edwards-Davies, Sandra Macpherson, Deborah Harper and Keith Heckley) spanked Davidson, picking up 18.71 VPs, to squeak into the last qualifying position by 0.28

VPs! The unlucky team languishing in fifth was one of last year's finalists, **O'Hara** (Paul O'Hara, Roisin O'Hara, Ina Demme, Bill Kertes, Hazel Wolpert and Andy Stark). They had suffered a small loss against Cowan in their last match.

As the first place team at the end of the round robin we had a choice of opponent between Edwards-Davies and Wang (Michael Wang, Candace Huang, Zhenghui Hu, Yuan Chen, Cindy He and Jianfeng Luo). We chose Edwards-Davies, who had scrambled into fourth by a hair. On playoff day, they suffered a reversal of fortune and withdrew after the third set. The other semifinal battle was incredibly close with Davidson leading by 9 IMPs at the half and only 6 IMPs with 14 boards to go. Wang prevailed in the fourth set to pull out a 109-105 win.

In the finals Wang demonstrated that its win over Davidson was no fluke. Wang led by 8 at the half. Deal 29:

♠ A3
♥ A98
♦ A86
♣ AJ974

♠ J742
♥ 7
♦ Q972
♣ Q1063

♠ 106
♥ Q1065
♦ KJ1053
♣ K2

♠ KQ985
♥ KJ432
♦ 4
♣ 85

On the first deal of the third set both North-South pairs reached the inferior contract of 3NT after the opponents competed aggressively in diamonds. When declarer played three rounds of spades both East players fatally pitched a heart. Berthiaume did not let that dissuade her from finessing East for the ♥Q, but her counterpart tried to drop the ♥Q offside and scored only seven tricks. Plus 630 at one table and plus 200 at the other gave 13 IMPs to Gartaganis.

Another 13 IMPs went to Gartaganis on the very next deal, when Blank-Fourcaudot bid a slam in a competitive auction with rather skimpy values.

♠ Q	♠ J652	♠ 1093
♥ KQ73	♥ 62	♥ AJ1095
♦ AKQ73	♦ 64	♦ 98
♣ A106	♣ KQ972	♣ 543
	♠ AK874	
	♥ 84	
	♦ J1052	
	♣ J8	

West	North	East	South
Blank	Luo	Fourcaudot	He
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
3♠ ¹	4♠	Pass ²	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣ ³	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

1. Heart fit with short spades.
2. Still interested in slam.
3. One keycard.

South led the ♠K and switched to the ♣J. Fourcaudot could see that the slam depended on either a 2-2 heart break with diamonds no worse than a 4-2 break, or a 3-1 heart break with diamonds 3-3. When the first possibility came in, he scored his 12 tricks. Unfortunately for Wang, Gartaganis continued to gain IMPs and won this set 66 IMPs to 19 IMPs. Their lead (39 IMPs) looked comfortable with 14 boards to go.

The first eight boards of the last set were tame with Gartaganis increasing its lead to 43 IMPs. On the last six boards Wang demonstrated that it did not consider the match to be over. On the 51st deal of the final, Michael Wang and Candice Huang bid to a delicate 3NT after Nicholas opened 1♠:

♠ AKJ105	♠ 72
♥ 6	♥ A753
♦ K954	♦ AQ107
♣ J103	♣ AK4
♠ Q96	♠ 843
♥ K104	♥ QJ982
♦ J863	♦ 2
♣ Q95	♣ 8762

Huang (West) justified the auction by end playing Nicholas for her ninth trick. After the ♠A lead and a club switch, Huang won in hand to lead a diamond to the ♦10. True, this catered to a singleton ♥K with North, but it also meant four diamond tricks were no longer available. No matter. North's fourth diamond only served to endplay him later. 10 IMPs for Wang. These were the East-West cards on the 53rd board:

East	West
♠ KJ962	♠ A1084
♥ 7	♥ AKQ53
♦ 92	♦ -
♣ J10862	♣ A975

Blank-Fourcaudot were doubled in 5♠ after one opponent had opened 1♦ and the other opponent had responded 1♥. Blank made 11 tricks for +750 which should have been a good result, but Wang-Huang bid to 6♠ and Huang guessed to play for clubs 2-2 (trumps were 2-2 and the ♣KQ sat doubleton offside). That was 6 IMPs to Wang.

THE MARRAKECH EXPRESS ... CONTINUED

Cindy He and Jianfeng Luo made their contribution by bidding to an aggressive 6♠ contract missed at the other table. Luo navigated the play correctly to bring home 12 tricks, generating another 13 IMP swing. Wang had outscored Gartaganis 37-2, but simply ran out of boards. The final score was 136 IMPs to 128 IMPs in favour of the Gartaganis team.

Although we had managed to catch the last train to Marrakech, our trip to the world championships took an unfortunate turn when two of our members were unable to continue with our mixed team. That meant our worthy opponent (Wang) snared the chance to represent Canada in August of this year in the World Mixed Teams.



The difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits.

Author unknown



A FOND FAREWELL TO JUDE GOODWIN!

In the fall of 1990 Jude was approached by Editor Aidan Ballantyne who asked if she could help with production of Bridge Canada (formerly Bridge Digest) for the Canadian Bridge Federation.

That was the beginning of Jude's long history with the CBF's magazine. Jude took over as Editor in the winter of 1993 and produced and managed the magazine for 20 years. In the summer of 2013 Neil Kimelman took over as Managing Editor and Jude stayed on as Production Editor for another 10 years.

During Jude's time the magazine had many forms. Originally paper, it was mailed to CBF members. For a while, it was delivered as an insert in the ACBL's Bridge Bulletin. As costs skyrocketed, however, it was decided eventually that the magazine would be produced as a PDF, and mailed by request only. Today the magazine is a PDF only, can be read online at ISSUU, and is produced six times a year. You can find a delightful archive of all these old issues on the CBF website under Magazine.

The CBF would like to thank Jude for all her great designs and themes and cartoons. The magazine will continue to be produced by Jude's company Goodwin Creative Ltd., but she herself will be retiring.

"I'm 70 now," Jude points out. "As much as I have loved designing and producing Bridge Canada all these years, it's time for me to step back from work in general. I plan to spend time on legacy projects, enjoy my family, and who knows, I might even be able to play more bridge!"

Thank you Jude for your excellent efforts over all these years! Enjoy retirement!!

2023 Canadian Women's Team Championship

By Susan Culham



Kismet Fung and I were most pleased to form a women's team for the Canadian Women's Team Championships 2023 with Montrealer's Sondra Blank and Louise Berthiaume. The round robin took place online in January and earned us the right to compete in the semi-final and, if successful, final in Niagara Falls in May.

Sondra related this amusing story which happened on the train ride into Niagara Falls.

Discussing leads and carding from the ace or ace-king. Sondra asked Louise, would you like attitude or count? What if you lead an ace without the king? Louise replied emphatically I never, ever would lead an ace without the king! Well, the first session of the semi-final Louise led an ace without the king. This happened not once but twice!

And, it was successful both times, the only lead to defeat the contracts.

In the semi-final I had the pleasure of sharing my side of the screen with Joy Phillips.

Joy, always pleasant, carefully wrote thorough explanations of their system, and smiled and nodded at mine. She consistently played well through the long match. What is remarkable is the lady is 90 years old. Joy still has the drive, intellect, and stamina for such an intense event. She was the first to rush over and congratulate me on the win. Joy, you have my greatest admiration.

Every so often an extremely distributional hand comes along.

♠ 109754

♥ 1054

♦ Q

♣ Q964

♠ KQJ8632

♥ -

♦ K10972

♣ K

♠ A

♥ A7432

♦ AJ86543

♣ -

♠ -

♥ KQJ98

♦ -

♣ AJ1087532

At our table, we had the following spirited auction:

Susan

Kiz

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♦	1♥
1♠	Pass	2♦	3♣
4♣	5♣	5♥	6♣
6♦	7♣ ¹	7♦	All pass

1. Persistent opponents!

Kiz judged exceedingly well and bid 7♦ for a 13 Imp pick up. 6♦ was the final contract at the other table.

Judy Gartaganis entertained us with another lively auction on this board.

After opponents reached 7♦ Nick found a great sac bidding 7♥ on ♥10xx.

The unlucky opponents bid on to 7♠ which cannot make on the 5-0 trump break. The opening lead of the ♣A must be ruffed with dummy's stiff ♠A promoting the ♠10 for the 2nd undertrick. Whew! I am glad these weirdly distributional hands don't come along too often.

The World Championships take place in Marrakesh, Morocco late August. How amazing will it be to have the opportunity to share this experience with my team.

Won by One - 2023

CANADIAN SENIOR TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

By John Rayner

The first stage of this year's CSTC was held with an online round robin contested by ten teams early in January. The top four finishers qualified for the knockout stage. Those four advancing teams were, in order:

1. Findlay - Ian Findlay, Gordon Campbell, Waldemar Frukacz, Paul Janicki, Eiji Kujirai, Lewis Richardson.

2. Gartaganis - Nick Gartaganis, Michel Lorber, Kamel Fergani, Zygmunt Marchinski.

3. Jacob - Dan Jacob, Piotr Klimowicz, Les Amoils, Robert Lebi.

4. Hanna - Nader Hanna, John Rayner, Doug Baxter, David Lindop, Roy Dalton, Vince Oddy.

The semi-finals and final were played face-to-face in Niagara Falls on May 9th and 10th, with Findlay vs. Hanna and Jacob vs. Gartaganis.

The Semi-final

Unfortunately, a member of the Gartaganis team fell ill on the eve of the event and the team forfeited its match, sending the Jacob team directly to the final. Our semi-final match against Findlay saw the Hanna team take a 22 IMP lead after the 1st quarter of 14 boards. Findlay stormed back in the 2nd quarter to take a 12 IMP lead. We gained back 4 IMPs in the 3rd quarter to trail by 8 IMPs going into the last quarter. In that final quarter Hanna prevailed by the score of 24 - 3, to emerge victorious by 13. The final tally was Hanna 102 - Findlay 89. I found the following deal from the semi-final to be quite interesting. Dealer: West. E-W vulnerable.

♠ A
♥ AK7
♦ AKQ7
♣ J8643

♠ 84
♥ 92
♦ 52
♣ AKQ10752

♠ Q652
♥ Q8543
♦ 8643
♣ -

♠ KJ10973
♥ J106
♦ J109
♣ 9

West	North	East	South
Hanna	Richardson	Rayner	Kujirai
3♣	Pass	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♠
Pass	5♠	All Pass	

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
3♣	All Pass		

There are interesting decisions to be made by West, North and South. Note that both Wests chose to open 3♣ rather than a "Gambling" 3NT, which would have been my choice. Some of my peers suggest that your 7+ card suit must be headed by the AKQJ, but I believe a more practical approach is to assume your suit will run when headed by the AKQ, as partner will not elect to play 3NT unless holding at least one card in your long minor. My expectation is that the long suit is likely to run in that scenario, but of course there are

no guarantees. Each partnership needs to set its own parameters.

Both Richardson, and at the other table, Lindop, chose to pass over 3♣. Double is pretty much out of the question. The other option is to overcall 3NT, which has dangers of its own. Certainly the prevailing vulnerability makes pass more attractive and keeps open the very faint hope that partner will reopen with a double. Kujirai, very aggressively, bid 3♠ in the pass out seat. Richardson was now faced with some very tough decisions. He took the low road with his bid of 3NT since no other option looked attractive. When Kujirai now bid 4♠ Richardson was faced with yet another decision. After lengthy thought he bid 5♠, which was most likely asking Kujirai to bid slam with good trumps. Kujirai was having nothing to do with it and Passed for +450. Very well judged by our opponents. Baxter did not reopen with his 6 HCP hand - scoring +400 against 3♣. The outcome of all this excitement was a loss of 2 IMPs for Hanna. I suspect both Richardson and Lindop would have bid 3NT over the 3♣ opening if their side had been vulnerable and the opponents not vulnerable.

Opening leads are so critical at the bridge table. It has been said that if you were able to find the best lead every time that you are on lead, you would virtually always win. Of course that is not attainable, but the importance of the opening lead can not be overstated. This is an example from our semi-final. ♠95 ♥J98 ♦10852 ♣KJ83.

West	East
1NT	2♥
2♠	3NT
4♠	

Lindop, as North, found himself on lead against 4♠ holding the hand shown above. What would you choose as your opening lead? Lindop chose to lead a club - specifically the ♣8 (3rd and 5th best vs. trump contracts). This is the way the club suit lay:

♣ 975	♣ KJ82	♣ Q63
	♣ A104	

When declarer played the ♣3 from dummy, Baxter made the fine play of the ♣10 at trick one. This enabled N-S to take the first three club tricks. Along with an unavoidable loser in hearts, the contract was defeated. At the other table a trump was led. This allowed Hanna to discard of one of the club losers in dummy on an extra winner in his hand. I asked Lindop later why he chose a club lead and his answer was that in general he likes to make "aggressive" leads: often leading away from a King or Queen. This was the only double digit swing in an otherwise low scoring 4th quarter and provided our team with its margin of victory over Findlay. Well done by David and Doug.

The Final

Once again the opening lead was critical to the result of a deal:

West	North	East	South
<i>Amoils</i>	<i>Rayner</i>	<i>Lebi</i>	<i>Hanna</i>
			1♣
Pass	1♦	1♠	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

After Lebi's 1♠ overcall, Amoils found himself on lead vs. 3NT holding ♠53 ♥J10983 ♦K98 ♣J106. Amoils, most understandably, led Lebi's suit and 3NT was made by Hanna with an overtrick. This was the full deal:

	♠ Q10	
	♥ 654	
	♦ AJ432	
	♣ A42	
♠ 53		♠ A9874
♥ J10983		♥ KQ2
♦ K98		♦ Q105
♣ J106		♣ 85
	♠ KJ62	
	♥ A7	
	♦ 76	
	♣ KQ973	

WON BY ONE ... CONTINUED

At the other table West led the ♥J. Dalton and Oddy defeated the contract on that lead, with East making sure to unblock the hearts by playing the ♥Q on the first trick and then the ♥K. The result on this deal shows how the opening lead can have such a profound effect. (Full disclosure - I was unable to ascertain if the auction was the same at the other table.) Amoils' spade lead could certainly have been the winner. This was 12 IMPs to our team and helped Hanna team get off to a 24 - 2 IMP lead.

As was the case in the semi-final, we had a bit of a let down in the second session, losing 14 of our lead, to sit only 8 IMPs up. After the 3rd quarter our lead had evaporated and Amoils was now leading by 1 IMP.

The 4th quarter was a very low scoring affair, with our team winning by a score of 19-17. Final score: Hanna 85 - Amoils 84. We had won by one! Thanks to the Findlay and Amoils teams for enjoyable, close and well played matches. The Hanna team will be off to represent Canada in the D'Orsi Cup at the World Bridge Championships to be played in Marrakech, Morocco in August of this year.



REMEMBERING ERIC KOKISH

Though Eric was perhaps most well known as a coach and writer, he was also a truly great player - something I witnessed many times as both his partner and his teammate. Eric's focus at the table was extraordinary, even for a top expert - he almost never made careless errors. His bidding judgment was also exceptional.

I was Eric's partner in what I believe was his last major tournament as a player - the star-studded 2017 Yeh Brothers Cup. At the time Eric was 70 and hadn't played seriously in close to a decade. I somehow convinced him we should play Precision which was something Eric hadn't done for over 25 years.

In preparation for the tournament Eric expanded my roughly 80 pages of system notes to roughly 400 pages! It took me weeks of intense study to absorb it all. This is the way.

Eric was amazing and we won the event.

Fred Gitelman





THE NEW PLAYER *Spot*



by Andy Stark

Fit-showing Jumps

After Stayman and Blackwood most duplicate players take on conventions such as Drury and Splinters. Seasoned players usually have a system over the opponents' 1NT opening bid such as DONT or Woolsey. We can toss into the mix Inverted Minors and New Minor Forcing. So many conventions to choose from!

Here's one convention I highly recommend you and your partner try: Fit-showing Jumps (FSJs).

What is an FSJ?

Exactly as it sounds! That is, when you make the bid, you have 4-card support for partner's suit, and you have a 5 plus-card suit of your own. You are therefore showing nine of your cards. Here are four auctions where the last bid is an FSJ:

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

Notice that each of the last bids is a jump. It does not matter if partner's original bid is an opening bid or overcall, major or minor. Take the first example. After North's 1♣ opening and interference by East, South can jump to 2♠ to show five or more spades and four or more clubs.

When do FSJs apply?

Fit-showing jumps are most handy when the auction gets competitive because it allows the opener (or overcaller) to better judge the hand. So, if you agree to play FSJs with partner, they will serve you best in competitive auctions and/or by a passed hand. This way, you can keep your regular methods for whatever jump bids mean in non-competitive auctions. Some play jumps as natural and strong or natural and very weak. Others play Bergen Raises. You can keep all of those meanings for when you own the auction. But as soon as the auction gets competitive, you have cuebids to show general support, and you have new suits to bid to show that suit only. This frees up the ability to make a fit-showing jump.

What strength does an FSJ show?

Typically, the jump bid shows at least limit raise values for partner's suit. But you can be aggressive with your jumps because of the distributional value of your hand, especially if you have shortness in one of the two other suits. At a recent regional event my partner opened 1♦ and I jumped to 3♣ holding ♠5 ♥J3 ♦K864 ♣KJ9865.

I might have made the same bid if one of my clubs was a small heart. But if I held two spades and two hearts, I might have just raised partner's diamonds with only 7 working HCPs. Having a sixth club increases the offensive value of your hand, so you can be aggressive with 6-4 shape hands. The bottom line is you should have a hand worth 9 or more support points in partner's suit.

Here's another example with a slightly stronger hand. Say partner opens 1♣ and RHO bids 1♥. You can jump to 2♠ holding:

♠ AJ1083
♥ K92
♦ 4
♣ KJ97

Since a FSJ is forcing for one round you will have another bid to make sure you get to game. Partner will keep describing their hand. Maybe partner has a third spade so will raise spades and you can bid 4♠. Or maybe partner has a hand that increases in value knowing you have the shape you have. Say partner holds a shapely 13-count:

♠ KQ72
♥ 4
♦ A8
♣ A106432

Look at how the hands mesh! 13 HCPs opposite 12 HCPs. Most, if not all, pairs will subside in game, but you may reach the very good contract of 6♠ (or 6♣). Partner should cuebid hearts to indicate slam interest with that hand and off you go.

Can I make an FSJ at the 4-level?

Yes—the more you bid, the more you have. It's only logical that if you are forcing your partner to the level of game, then you should have enough values to be in the game contract.

Say partner opens 1♠ and your RHO overcalls 3♣. If you now jump to 4♦ or 4♥ those bids should be fit-showing jumps. Obviously, since you are at the 4-level your bid is game-forcing. We make these bids because they are so descriptive and, perhaps even more importantly, *they help partner judge what to do if the auction gets to the 5-level*. For example, say you hold ♠J1074 ♠A2 ♦AQJ54 ♣53. Clearly you want to be in the spade game. But along the way you can show your 5-card diamond suit and bid 4♦. If your LHO bids 5♣ (a sacrifice most likely) partner will be better placed to make the correct call. Maybe partner holds:

♠ AK9652
♥ J97
♦ K107
♣ 7

Look at how much information partner has at their disposal: a known 10-card spade fit, a source of tricks in diamonds, especially with that supporting ♦K, and a second-round club control. The heart situation might cause partner to not look for a slam but notice that 12 tricks are there if the spades behave, and they are likely to behave. The spades rate to split 2-1, or, if they are 3-0, the queen rates to be onside. Partner will either bid 5♠ or make a slam try in spades. Compare partner's hand to another possible hand, one without a diamond honour:

♠ AK952
♥ K972
♦ 107
♣ Q2

With the above hand, knowing responder has five diamonds, opener should not bid 5♠, but will probably double instead—also the right decision. 5♠ will need a lot of luck. Fit-showing jumps need to be alerted because it is an agreement you have with your partner. And they are not taxing on the ol' memory bank because they are a natural bid—you have 5 or more in the suit you bid, plus you have 4 or more in partner's suit. What's not to like?

what ...does this bid mean?

1.

West	North	South	East
Pass	5♠		

What does 5♠ mean?

2.

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	2♣	Dbl
3♣	5♠		

What does 5♠ mean?

Answers on page 20

QUIZ

INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

ANSWER ON PAGE 23

Contract: 3NT. **Lead:** ♥4. If you play low from dummy, East plays the ♥J. Plan the play.

♠ QJ4
♥ A75
♦ 1053
♣ K1094

♠ K85
♥ Q108
♦ KQJ4
♣ A53



A knowledge of the mechanics will suffice to put a player in a commanding position in the post-mortem.

To become a member of the upper crust calls for more, much more – resilience, imagination, and occasional flashes of inspiration: these are the hallmarks of quality. And this transcends the realm of science.

Victor Mollo

BRIDGE BASICS



SLAM CONVENTIONS 2

This is the 29th article in a New Player Bridge Canada series. Some of these concepts may be a review for you, but this series will also cover more advanced techniques and ideas.

In the last instalment, we looked into the world of slam bidding, and the various treatments and conventions available to improve your success in this area. We continue looking at other ways to help you become more accurate in your slam building.

The Grand Slam Force (GSF) – this can be a useful tool when all you need to know is what high honours partner has in the trump suit. Asking for key cards may not work, often because you have a void.

How it works – A jump to 5NT is the Grand Slam Force. Let's say spades is the agreed suit. Responses are:

- 6♣ – Ace or King, no queen.
- 6♦ – Queen, no Ace or King.
- 6♠ – no high honour.
- 7♠ – Two of the top three honours.

Example 1: You hold ♠A10xxx ♥AKQxx ♦- ♣Axx

1♠ – 2NT¹

5NT² 6♣²

6♠

1. Game forcing raise with at least four trumps.
2. Grand Slam Force.
3. A or K, but no queen.

A worthwhile improvement to this structure is, opposite a 6♣ response, 6♦ asks for responder if they have extra length in their suit. Responder returns to the trump suit

with the minimum length, and bids anything else with extra length. So in this example, the 2NT has promised four spades, so the bidding would continue:

1♠ – 2NT¹

5NT² 6♣³

6♦⁴ 6♠⁵

6♥⁶

1. Game forcing raise with at least four trumps.
2. Grand Slam Force.
3. A or K, but no queen.
4. Do you have extra length?
5. No, only four spades.
6. Yes, five or more spades.

Over 6♥, you can now confidently bid 7♠, knowing partner has ♠Kxxxx or longer.

Grand Slam Force when a minor is the agreed trump suit

Let's say you hold ♠- ♥AKx ♣AKQ10 ♣K109xxx. You open 1♣ and partner bids 2♣, a game forcing raise. All you need to know is how many club honours partner has. You can't ask for key cards because of your void, so you trot out 5NT. Partner responds 6♦! Disaster. You are off the ace of trumps, and are past 6♣.

The solution is to have a better way to make a Grand Slam Force when a minor is the agreed suit. A very

good solution is to use a jump to 5♥ as the GSF for a minor. All the step responses remain the same:

Example 2:

1♣ – 2♣¹
 5♥² 5♠³
 5NT⁴
 7♣⁵

1. Game forcing raise.
2. Grand Slam Force.
3. Ace or king, no queen of clubs.
4. Queen of clubs, no Ace or King.
5. Two of the top three honours.

And you can ask for extra length, just like over a major, without getting too high.

Baron Grand Slam Try – this is a not a well-known treatment, but has its place. A jump to the six level of the suit **directly below** the agreed trump suit, asks partner to bid seven if their trumps are better than promised. Once again, an example is the best way to illustrate its value:

Example 3:

South: ♠xx ♥AKJ10xx ♦KQJ10x ♣-

North: ♠Ax ♥xxxx ♦Ax ♣Jxxxx

South North

1♥ – 2♥¹
 3♣² 3♦³
 3♥⁴ 3♠⁵
 6♦⁶ 7♥⁷

1. Constructive raise, 8-10.
2. Short suit game or slam try.
3. I am accepting your game invitation (two aces, four trumps and two ruffing values, with little wasted in clubs) and I have the ace of diamonds.
4. Waiting bid, to see if North has the spade ace.
5. Ace of spades.
6. Baron Grand Slam Try, looking for Qxx or xxxx in trumps.
7. My minimum holding is xxx so I trust partner and bid the grand.

Next issue: Exclusion and more slam conventions.

what

...does this bid mean?

1.

West	North	South	East
Pass	5♠		

What does 5♠ mean?

5♠ opening bid asks partner to bid 6♠ with the ace or king of spades, and bid 7♠ with both of them (North should be so lucky!) A typical hand: ♠QJ1097543 ♥AK ♦- ♣AKQ.

2.

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	2♣	Dbl
3♣	5♠		

What does 5♠ mean?

This hand was posed in Bridge Winners, with a multitude of answers about its meaning. I think the most logical and simplest answer is that the negative double has made North's hand enough to force to slam if partner has a club control. Perhaps ♠AKQJxxx ♥AKx ♦- ♣xxx.



Success is a matter of luck – just ask any failure.

Anonymous



BIDDING STRATEGIES 14

When their side preempts

QUIZ 2

By Neil Kimelman

Here is a series of situations to test your judgement when the opponents preempt. This issue will focus solely on matchpoint decisions, as last issue did on IMP decisions.

1. Neither vul. Matchpoints. ♠AK987 ♥975 ♦1092 ♣A4

West	North	East	South
2♥	Pass	3♥	?

2. Both vul. Matchpoints. ♠AJ5 ♥Q87 ♦1085 ♣AK95

West	North	East	South
3♦	Pass	Pass	?

3. E-W vul. Matchpoints. ♠Q65 ♥K107 ♦AQ987 ♣985

West	North	East	South
		2♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	?

4. Both vul. Matchpoints. ♠8 ♥A92 ♦KQ95 ♣QJ1092

West	North	East	South
3♥	Pass	4♥	?

5. Both vul. Matchpoints. ♠- ♥KQJ87 ♦AKJ752 ♣109

West	North	East	South
		4♠	?

6. Both vul. Matchpoints. ♠QJ1083 ♥- ♦AKJ752 ♣109

West	North	East	South
		4♥	?

7. 5. Both vul. Matchpoints. ♠- ♥KQJ87 ♦AKJ752 ♣109

West	North	East	South
		4♠	4NT
Pass	6♣	Pass	?

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8. E-W vul. Matchpoints. ♠4 ♥AJ109 ♦KJ10873 ♣A9

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	Pass	?

9. E-W vul. Matchpoints. ♠54 ♥AJ1097 ♦Q109 ♣AK9

West	North	East	South
		2♠	?

10. N-S vul. Matchpoints. ♠- ♥95 ♦AK10943 ♣QJ742

West	North	East	South
		2♠	Pass
3♠	4♥	Pass	?

Solutions

1. Neither vul. Matchpoints. ♠AK987 ♥975 ♦1092 ♣A4

West	North	East	South
2♥	Pass	3♥	?

Pass. My first inclination was to bid 3♠. The rationale is that even if partner raises to game, I can afford to go down for -100 and still get a good score if they can make 3♥. However partner did not make a takeout double despite short hearts. And we could get doubled if East has a good hand with a doubleton heart. Partner can still balance with the right shape, and not quite enough to bid the first time.

2. Both vul. Matchpoints. ♠AJ5 ♥Q87 ♦1085 ♣AK95

West	North	East	South
3♦	Pass	Pass	?

Pass. Yes you have a good minimum opening bid, but the worse shape. Double is right when partner has ♦Kxx or the like, and around a minimum opening bid. But that is a very small target to shoot for. Besides, 3NT may go down as the vulnerable dealer may have an outside entry to go along with their diamonds suit.

3. E-W vul. Matchpoints. ♠Q65 ♥K107 ♦AQ987 ♣985

West	North	East	South
		2♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	?

You have a good hand and a good suit. 3NT is a possibility as is 2NT. But a double in balancing seat may have less values than normal. 3♦ is a good bid if playing Lebensohl. It shows 7-11 points, and allows the partnership to stay low when balancer has less than an opener. However with good defence, the good, aggressive matchpoint bid is **pass**, going for the magic +200 number.

4. Both vul. Matchpoints. ♠8 ♥A92 ♦KQ95 ♣QJ1092

West	North	East	South
3♥	Pass	4♥	?

4NT. You are not sure who can make what, but partner has heart shortness and did not bid spades. North is likely to have a good fit for at least one minor. Their pass on the first round makes it possible that 4♥ has a good chance of making. Picture partner with Axxxx x xx Kxxxx and 5♣ makes.

5. Both vul. Matchpoints. ♠- ♥KQJ87 ♦AKJ752 ♣109

West	North	East	South
		4♠	?

Bid 4NT. This shows two or three suits. Over 5♣ by partner, correct to 5♦. This shows a red two suiter, and allows partner to choose the trump suit.

6. Both vul. Matchpoints. ♠QJ1083 ♥- ♦AKJ752 ♣109

West	North	East	South
		4♥	?

Bid 4♠. Here is an example of a different choice if playing teams. AT IMPs I would bid 4NT, a two or three suit takeout. But matchpoints you have to try a play in a major whenever reasonably possible. If West doubles I may reconsider, and bid 5♦. Either way, it is only one board if wrong.

7. 5. Both vul. Matchpoints. ♠- ♥KQJ87 ♦AKJ752 ♣109

West	North	East	South
		4♠	4NT
Pass	6♣	Pass	?

Look familiar? Does partner have a good hand with a good long club suit, or do they have both minors

and enough values for slam? My suggestion is that 6♣ should be natural. **Therefore, pass** is the best theoretical call. If partner wanted to play in slam in one of your suits, then they should bid 5NT. A good discussion for a serious partnership.

8. E-W vul. Matchpoints. ♠4 ♥AJ109 ♦KJ10873 ♣A9

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	Pass	?

Double. Yes, you do not have club support. However if your distribution is close, it is almost always better to double, in case partner can convert to penalties.

9. E-W vul. Matchpoints. ♠54 ♥AJ1097 ♦Q109 ♣AK9

West	North	East	South
		2♠	?

Double. Yes, you have a good suit, but double caters to more hands for partner, than a raise in hearts. They can pass with ♠KQ10982 ♥x ♦Kxx ♣xxx or bid 5♦ with ♠Axxx ♥x ♦AJxxxx ♣xxx. If partner bids three of a minor, showing 7-11, you have enough values to bid game, and can now introduce your five card suit.

10. N-S vul. Matchpoints. ♠- ♥95 ♦AK10943 ♣QJ742

West	North	East	South
		2♠	Pass
3♠	4♥	Pass	?

Here is a hand from the IMP Quiz one, in last issue, with my suggested answer: ***'You have a great hand opposite an average 4♥ bid. Tell partner you are interested in slam by cue bidding 4♠. Incidentally, this hand was not quite good enough for a 3♦ bid. 4NT would have been reasonable, although partner will likely play you for a better hand.'***

However playing matchpoints partner may more likely bidding with not perfect values. **Pass** and don't hang them for being enterprising. Even if slam makes, +480 should be near average.

QUIZ

INTERMEDIATE DECLARER PLAY

PUZZLE ON PAGE 18

Contract: 3NT. **Lead:** ♥4. If you play low from dummy, East plays the ♥J. Plan the play. The full deal:

♠	QJ4	♠	9732
♥	A75	♥	J3
♦	1053	♦	A76
♣	K1094	♣	QJ87
♠	A106		
♥	K9642		
♦	982		
♣	62		
		♠	K85
		♥	Q108
		♦	KQJ4
		♣	A53

This hand takes a bit of work. As you only have 3 top tricks, and a 4th after the heart lead. Potentially you have 9 tricks, 2 spades, 2 hearts, 3 diamonds and 2 clubs. However you have to knock out two aces, and the opponents may set up at least one long heart trick.

The key play, as it does often is at trick one. Play the ♥8 under the Jack! The purpose of this play is to try and reduce the communication between the hands. When East wins the ♦A, they do not have a heart to play. They could put West in with the ♠A to set up their suit, but now there is no entry to cash the two long hearts.

Had you won the first heart and forced out the ace of diamonds, East would have returned their second heart, setting up West's suit, while West still had the space ace as an entry.



What Went Wrong?

by Paul Thurston

In an online multiple teams' event scored at IMPs, more than one table chose to go head-hunting against their vulnerable opponents only to find the heads mounted on the post-deal stakes were their own so, of course, we ask WHAT WENT WRONG? Dealer is North, N-S vul:

Hand 1

	♠ 93	
	♥ 932	
	♦ K832	
	♣ 10985	
♠ QJ5		♠ K764
♥ QJ865		♥ K10
♦ AQ7		♦ 5
♣ 42		♣ AQJ763
	♠ A1062	
	♥ A74	
	♦ J10964	
	♣ K	

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♣	Dbl
Rdbl	Pass	Pass	1♦
Dbl	All Pass		

Opening lead: ♣4

Despite the defenders' best efforts – East won his ace of clubs to shift to a diamond to limit the offense's

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ruffing potential – South did manage to bring home his contract with one overtrick for the uncommon score of +340! UGH! A big loss for East-West's team when their counterparts declared 3NT and didn't quite manage to find the required nine tricks – more on that result to follow.

Partnership methods may vary but the auction here was more or less Standard stuff: redouble to show 10+ HCPs and the second double of South's escape effort being for penalty. Standard? Maybe, but obviously not optimal with West's second call perhaps being great grist for the mill of our magazine's The Great Canadian Bidding Challenge. After all, AQx could hardly be considered as a compelling trump stack so maybe that penalty-seeking effort by West was the source of What Went Wrong?

Alternatives? I'm sure the panel of top Canadian experts would contribute votes for 1♥, 2NT or even 3NT over South's rebid with any one of those choices inexorably leading to West declaring three notrump.

With that West collection being ill-suited for many possible follow-ups to the omnibus redouble, I'd have another suggestion for West's first call in the auction: how about a natural and forcing (for one round) one heart over the takeout double? Particularly with the non-classical hands opponents seem to be holding for their immediate takeout doubles, I would hate to lose a possible heart fit (5-3 or even 5-4) in the melee that might ensue after that redouble.

No heart fit so back to the play problem in 3NT after an opening diamond lead to the nine and queen. As happened at multiple tables in the event, this West took the losing club finesse at trick two and couldn't recover when South won his lone king and continued diamonds, the second round ducked by West but North then artfully unblocked the king on the third round to leave declarer without reply.

Note that even if the club finesse had succeeded, declarer wouldn't have been guaranteed success as a 3-2 club split would still have been required.

Without really being double dummy, an improved approach might well be for West to work on hearts at trick two – low to the king appeals. Assuming South wins and continues diamonds, it will strongly appear

to declarer that North will not have been dealt the ♣K. Despite modern trends to devaluing virtually any and all competitive bids, would you really expect the vulnerable South to make a takeout double opposite a passed-hand partner with something like ♠A10xx ♥Axx ♦J109xx ♣x? Ruling out that possibility one other chance for success might come to West: why take a finesse that seems doomed to fail? Cash the hearts and play a club to the ace! And add one more case to the abundant examples validating the so-called "urban myth" that the ♣K is singleton far more often than any of the other three monarchs!

Hand 2

There's nothing that will warm the cockles of this crusty curmudgeon's heart quite like how the contrasting results on this deal from the final of the 2015 Bermuda Bowl were generated. Both teams declared four hearts by South after East opened the bidding and South intervened with a notrump overcall that attracted a heart-showing transfer from North and a choice-of-games continuation.

But the final results were dramatically different as the Polish declarer brought home his game while the Swedish South failed! With the spade ace and King and diamond ace were inescapable losers for the offense it was all about the trump Queen – read on! Dealer East. E-W vul.

♠	87	♠	AKJ642
♥	KJ1097	♥	Q32
♦	1043	♦	85
♣	KQ9	♣	54
♠	103	♠	Q95
♥	86	♥	A54
♦	A972	♦	KQJ6
♣	J10732	♣	A86

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	2♦	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Opening lead: ♠10

At this table, East's opening was a MULTI showing a weak two-bid in an unspecified major or a very strong balanced hand with 21-22 HCP. The Swedes sitting North-South countered this opening quite simply and soon arrived in four hearts. Spade lead for East to win his two top cards and continue with a third round, a dangerous move in context as West might have ruffed to deny South a trick with his ♠Q at the risk of giving a fatal clue to the lie of the heart suit. But West discarded a club and declarer followed up as I'm sure most would by cashing the heart ace and finessing through West for the missing queen: down one. This was the auction at the other table:

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

Once again the opening spade lead was taken by East to cash a second spade but then shift to a low diamond to the king and ace. When a second round of diamonds came back, Declarer won with dummy's ten to lead and pass the Jack of hearts: after all, if East valued his hand as an opening one-bid, vulnerable no less, how could he do so without at least the ♥Q to bolster his meagre point count? Whatever you might think of ultra-light opening bids, it's indisputable that East's effort here greatly contributed to WHAT WENT WRONG for Sweden's team loss of 10 IMPs.

Hand 3

When the famous NICKELL TEAM completed their record trifecta of winning three SPINGOLD Championships in a row by annexing the 1995 title this deal was actually the first of the third quarter but could reasonably be considered as the match-breaker as the 14 IMPs turned over established a lead that was never overcome. The card-play at both tables was largely irrelevant (although one table's defense was quite effective!) so, not uncommonly, it was the bidding that was WHAT WENT WRONG for the trailing team. Take a look and see if you would have done better!

Table 1; Dealer East. N-S vul.

♠	A83	♠	K9
♥	964	♥	A3
♦	AKQJ	♦	109876432
♣	J53	♣	7
♠	QJ76	♠	10542
♥	Q108	♥	KJ752
♦	-	♦	5
♣	A109864	♣	KQ2

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
2♣	Dbl	3♦	4♥
All Pass			

Opening lead: ♣A

West's opening showed a limited hand (usually 10-15 hcp) with long clubs and East's natural response after the takeout double was preemptive. South's leap to four hearts? Maybe a bit rich but he certainly bought about the most ill-suited dummy he could ever have envisioned! After cashing the ♣A, West shifted to the ♠Q for declarer to win in dummy and immediately start on trump extraction. But East was having none of that as he went right in with his trump ace and the ensuing

combination of cashing spade winners and defensive cross ruffing left poor South with but six tricks and gave the defenders the unusual (at least for defense!) score of +400 for down four.

Table 2 bidding:

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

Opening lead: ♠2

This time, West's third-seat effort was a temporarily subdued one-bid but then the auction took off with South's jump to the heart game more or less duplicating his counterpart's decision. But then the bidding went back to East who did have some defensive potential (the major-suit honours and shortness in his partner's suit) but also had a lot of unexpressed diamond length plus favourable vulnerability, factors that coaxed him to take the sacrificial plunge to five diamonds. North had one of the easiest penalty doubles of all time and despite the opening spade lead that allowed East to eventually discard his heart loser, the sacrifice turned over 500 points to NICKELL to add to the 400 from the other table and that translated into 14 IMPS for the eventual champions.

WHAT WENT WRONG? With varying degrees of conviction, you might find fault with several calls but what is true is that TEAM NICKELL made decision-making difficult for their opponents and reaped the benefits.



Most people think only once or twice a year. I have made myself an international reputation by thinking once or twice a week.

George Bernard Shaw



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ONLINE SINCE 1995



AUGUST 2023 TGCBC

Host: Neil Kimelman

For panelists, and their bids, see page 38

Ashot Harutyunyan and Fred Lerner had the top reader scores for August, with 45, followed closely by **Brian Delong** with 44. **Fred** also had the top combined June-August scores, and will receive \$100. **Ashot and Sheldon Spier** tied for 2nd and will split \$50. Ray Hornby will be hosting the October contest, and readers can enter, with the chance of winning cash prizes. Play along and see how your game matches up!

The panelists also did very well on a tough set, with **Andy Stark** and **Nick L'Ecuier** leading the field with 48.

Ok, time to take my Editor hat off, and put on my Host one. Yeh! Thank you all for again for participating in this Canadian grown bidding forum. Stay tuned, as in the **October BC** where I take a mostly light-hearted look at the first four years of **TGCBC**!

1. As South you hold ♠AQ9 ♥AKQ93 ♦A754 ♣J. Both vul, IMPs.

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	3♠	?

1. 4+ hearts, limit raise or better.
What do you bid?

Call	Score	Panelists
4♥	10	8
3NT	9	6
Dble	8	7

Lebi: 3NT, the first unanimous vote of the set.

No, in fact pretty well divided between 4♥, double and 3NT. It seems there is a lot of meat to this decision. Let's look first at the 3NT supporters:

Thurston: Seems a coin toss between 4♥ and 3NT with a nagging suspicion that getting to diamonds might be best – seeing no odds-on way to do that, I try 3NT and hope West isn't turned off a spade lead and accidentally finds a club start! (UGH!).

Hargreaves: 3NT. Someone has to bid it, if it is the best contract, and it won't be partner if I double. 4♥ is my second choice with double a long way behind.

Marcinski: 3NT. Yes, there are flaws: (a) up to a Q or so stronger than it might be, (b) no club stopper, and (c) very much red-suit oriented. But its flaws are less severe than the next-best alternative of double, which has no sensible continuation over Lurker's not unlikely 5♣. The hand is far too strong and flexible (as opposed to heart-oriented) for the distant third horse in the race, 4♥.

L'Ecuier: 3NT – rustic but practical – might just be the last makeable game – who knows where we will end up after double? Of course, getting to slam will now be difficult (we will probably be guessing after Double – 4♣ – 4♥ also). I suspect this would be a more popular bid at the table than in a bidding contest but I try to give an honest answer.

Probably true Nick. It is always reassuring to a partnership to see both players on the same wavelength. Some doublers only had game aspirations:

Balcombe: Double. My usual go-to bid of 3NT could result in a stupid contract with 4♥ cold.

The key argument for the doublers is that this hand is very good opposite a red suit fit. This is further indicated with partner likely having a singleton spade.

Treble: Double, then 4♥ if partner bids 4♣. 3NT and 4♥ could turn out well, but are both underbids IMO.

Kuz: Double. Too strong...

Grainger: Double followed by 4♥. Hand is too good to pick between 3NT and 4♥ direct.

Carruthers: 4♥. Either 3NT or double may work out as well but, if West has a secondary club suit and tries a sneak attack, 3NT may fail with 4♥ cold. Since partner is short in spades, I'll play him for some heart length. I don't like double - I see partner jumping to 5♣ over that.

Yes, 3NT risks a club lead and a minus, where game or slam in another domination may be there, while double might get awkward.

Turner: 4♥. This is an appropriate double at the one level in my methods in terms of strength and distribution, but I don't want to be discussing strain at the five level. Pard seems to be short in spades, so I'm expecting him to have a few hearts at least. I admit partner could pass 4♥ cold for a red suit slam or grand slam, but not at all sure we could get there even if I double.

Just for the record, over 4♥, a five level minor suit bid is a cuebid for hearts, not offering a place to play, as South has already made that determination.

Stark: 4♥. Good problem. If I double and then bid 4♥, partner might expect longer hearts. Even bidding 4♥ directly I should have at least a 6th heart, but I'm under pressure here. True, I might be missing a laydown 6♦.

A panelist mentions a different bid in passing (pun intended 😊):

Cimon: 4♥. The choice is between 3NT, pass and 4♥. I have too much to pass, and I don't see nine tricks unless partner has a fit in hearts and/or diamonds. I choose 4♥ because partner has short spades, thus a good chance that he will have a fit in for one or both of my red suits.

Jacob: 4♥. 3NT is my second choice.

Todd: 4♥. Interesting hand. I could bid 3NT and worry about missing slam. I could double but then the spades are wrong sided if partner bids diamonds or clubs. If I knew partner was bidding 4NT, two suited, **(is it, or is 4NT over 3NT quantitative?? nk)** I could bid 6♦, but this never happens in real life – except in bidding contests and what went wrong scenarios. Since partner has some spade shortness, I am going for safety. If partner is short in hearts he might have enough diamond help that I can ram diamonds at East to pull his trump.

Hornby: 4♥. Partner rates to be short in spades so should have some hearts. Double might find a diamond fit, but might also find a 5♣ bid. 3NT needs a spade lead to get to eight (fingers crossed) tricks.

Miles: Double. Keeps options open for diamonds as well. I will bid 4♥ over 4♣. I will however, pass 4♥. Guessing the majority vote will be for 3NT; I suspect if a club lead is the killer, having West on lead makes it less likely they'll find it as East rates to be longer.

Lindop: Double. While 3NT may be the winning call, I think I'm strong enough to look for better things. I'm willing to double and bid 4♥ if partner bids 4♣ (although I'll be unhappy if partner jumps to 5♣). The trouble with 3NT is partner might hold a hand such as ♠2 ♥8654 ♦KQ632 ♣963 and we can make a slam in either hearts or diamonds while 3NT goes down on a club lead.

Mr. Lindop almost exactly nailed North's actual hand!

The full deal:

♠	10	♠	642
♥	10752	♥	864
♦	KQ86	♦	J2
♣	10742	♣	AQ963
♠	KJ8753	♠	AQ9
♥	J	♥	AKQ93
♦	1093	♦	A754
♣	K85	♣	J

To sum up the panel:

3NT Plusses:

- Practical, even if there is a better contract, it will be very tough to find.
- Avoids an auction where partner jumps in clubs.

3NT Minuses:

- No club stopper.
- Underbid.

4♥ Plusses:

- Rates to find heart support from partner.
- Realistic chance to find slam.

4♥ minuses:

- Loses the diamond suit.
- Overstates the heart suit.

Double plusses:

- Avoids getting to the wrong suit.

Double minuses:

- Partner may jump in clubs.
- May get too high trying for slam.

I still don't know which bid is best. If looking for safety maybe 3NT. However, 4♥ seems to have the advantage over the other calls of getting to the best game, while keeping the doors open to a heart slam. If looking for a swing, double and 4♥ might deliver.

2. IMPs. Both Vul., you hold as South: ♠AK7 ♥64
♦A109852 ♣84.

West	North	East	South
1NT ¹	Dbl ²	Pass	?

1. 15-17

2. 5 cards in a minor, 4 cards in a major.

What do you bid?

Call	Score	Panelists
Pass	10	11
2♣	8	2
2♦	8	5
2NT	7	2
3NT	6	1

Thank you to the various panelists who pointed out the more mainstream ways to play this convention. Also some panelists talked about partnership agreements. These are all very valid points, but are not directly germane as to what we bid with the agreements we have, with our expert, but unfamiliar partner.

There are three main options:

1. Go for safety.
2. Convert to penalties.
3. Try for game.

Representing Option 1: Cooper, Thurston, Lindop Balcombe Marcinski Kuz and Carruthers.

Carruthers: 2♦. Unless advancer has an extraordinary hand, which this is not, we are just looking to remove the notrump declaration from the opposition and find our best part score. I suppose I could pass, but I don't want to see a club lead, which could blow the whole deal up for us.

Thurston: 2♦. You just know if you pass, you're not going to like partner's opening lead. And, after all, partner can easily have two diamonds with his nine cards outside spades and clubs (likely) so I'd rate two diamonds as most likely to avoid a disaster while also giving up on a possible bonanza versus 1NT doubled. We'll win the match on the other boards!

Lindop: 2♦. Even if partner has a singleton diamond, this is likely to be a better contract than 2♣ or 2♥. Depending on the partnership methods, this might also allow partner to bid again with extra values or distribution.

Balcombe: 2♦. I would not agree to play this convention without significant discussion. I thought standard responses to this sort of bid were 2♣ to play in the minor and 2♦ [artificial] to play in overcaller's major with a major suit advance as natural with a longish suit.

A different way to go for safety:

Marcinski: 2♣. The faint hope of a game, coupled with the unhelpful near-certain 3 of a minor rebid should

I try with 2NT, does not warrant a 2NT try which risks failure at the three level: yes failure in three of a minor is unlikely, but it is also indubitably more likely than a successful 4♠ or five of a minor. As an aside, Advancer's methods foisted upon us are inferior: it is better to play 2♦ = "please bid your 4M" and 2M = "here is my own 5+ M".

Kuz: 2♣. IMO...anything else is guessing.

As you are. Option 2 panelists:

Grainger: Pass. Partner coming in vul and I have AK-A. Very unusual to play 2♥ as p/c for major; usually 2♦ is bid your major and two major is natural. Aside from being able to bid majors naturally, it lets you ask for the major with a forcing call so you can have a good hand of many types.

L'Ecuyer: Pass: I expect a club lead and it figures I will come in enough times to set up our tricks.

Jacob: Pass, a good chance for a plus.

Miles: Pass. If the opponents stick it out, partner is likely 3-4-1-5. I'll take my chances defending. A vul partner should have enough values to beat this and maybe get rich if dummy is broke.

Smith: Pass. Why should we go down, when they can go down?

Stark: Pass. Automatic. Feels like partner has clubs and hearts. If it's a misfit for us, it's a misfit for declarer. This Woolsey double that partner made should not be bid on air. I like to have at least a good 10 HCPs to make this double, so let's go get +500!

Cimon: Pass. I have a pretty good hand, and pard is vulnerable so their suits should be good. I think we can easily have +500 or more.

Hargreaves: Pass. This may end up looking silly but partner should not be stretching red at imps, and while the club lead may blow a trick, we rate to have time to recover. On a good day this is a big number.

Hornby: Pass - partner likely has the round suits so let's try for +200 or +500 here.

Turner: Pass. It looks like declarer will be playing from his hand and there's no reason to presume anything but a normal balanced hand there. If partner has spades and clubs, and declarer big hearts, my diamond ace should save the day.

Option 3 panelists:

Treble: 2NT. I assume this to be forcing with at least mild game interest. I will then bid 3♠ over the expected 3♣ from partner. No doubt I will be the only person voting for this course of action.

Lebi: The convention also comes with a 2NT advance, asking for suits (which minor) and strength, I bid 2NT.

Most partnerships have the agreement that a 2NT bid (unless asking for the minor) by advancer after partner competes over 1NT is invitational plus. My long time teammate and good friend, Bob Todd, is a lone wolf on this problem. He bids 3NT without comment. This hand came up during a casual online match. The full deal:

♠	J4	♠	9652
♥	KQ107	♥	J532
♦	63	♦	J
♣	AQ1063	♣	J952
♠	Q1083	♠	AK7
♥	A98	♥	64
♦	KQ74	♦	A109852
♣	K7	♣	84

South converted the double to penalties and passed. 1NT was likely slated for at least +500, but West got fancy and ran to 2♦! South knew what to do! +1400 when the smoke cleared.

3. As South, you hold ♠-♥QJ952 ♦J653 ♣A863. Both vul, teams.

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

1. Positive response, but artificial.

a) What do you bid?

Call	Score	Panelists
3♥	10	16
2NT	9	4
3NT	5	1

All the strong clubbers don't have to deal with this type of problem. However for the rest of us, constructive bidding over a 2♣ opener is very challenging, and one where surprisingly, many partnerships do not have clear, sound understandings. Because of the room taken inherently in 2♣ auctions, you cannot do it all. To me, the priority should be for the strong hand be given the room to describe their hand.

Problem #3 is another example of this issue- is the value of showing a mediocre (in the context of a 2♣ opening) five card suit worth the space it consumes? I say no. Only a handful agree with me:

Marcinski: 2NT. It leaves room to easily find an 8-card or longer fit if we have one, albeit, (possibly) risks losing an 8-card heart fit. Depending on responder's other initial response options, 3♥ instead may well not only preclude finding a minor fit but also overstate the hearts.

Yes, in the context of the room taken by a 3♥ bid, I think this suit is just not good enough. I also live in Keith's world:

Balcombe: 2NT. This 2NT is semi-artificial in Keith's world so that opener can show her second suit.

Hornby: 2NT. Good illustration of why being able to respond 2♥ on these hands is a superior treatment. I'll bid 3NT over 3♠.

Stark: 2NT. Staying out of partner's way and hoping they bid 3 of a minor. I will raise that bid to 4. If they rebid spades, I'll try 3NT. And if they rebid 3♥, I'll make sure we get to 6♥.

However the majority of the panel feel differently:

Lebi: 3♥, my longest and strongest suit (imagine that, bidding a natural suit, who could have thought of that?).

Todd: 3♥ – partner can still bid a minor or 3NT. **Yes but what then?**

Thurston: 3♥. I did count five cards in that suit that lacked the defined requirements for an immediate natural positive response (5+ cards with 2 of top 3 and 8+ hcp for traditionalists – count me in!) but can't leave the suit in storage.

Hargreaves: 3♥. Why not? 2NT should not bid on a spade void, and the hearts are pretty good given that I have presumably denied a 5+ suit with 2/3 top honours. If partner bids 3♠, I can now bid 3NT without implying any kind of support (I'd never grab notrump if I had any support at all).

Miles: 3♥. Not thrilled that we are sorting out our suits at the 3-level. 2nd choice is 2NT which lets us hear of partner's side suit (if any). If partner is something like 5-1-(4/3 or even 5/2) they may be endplayed into 3NT when we have a better game or even slam in a minor. Then I'll wish I'd have bid 2NT.

If you don't like sorting out suits at the three level, over 4♦ you will be doing your sorting at the four and five level!

Cimon: 3♥. I don't like bidding 3♥ as it takes up a lot of room. My other choice is 2NT, giving a chance to partner to bid another suit, but I am afraid he will take me for a balanced or semi-balanced hand with at least one spade.

Smith: 3♥. I would like to have six hearts for this bid, but how will we ever find a heart fit, if I don't bid them now?

Good point, you can't unless partner has their own heart suit. However, very often, it is about weighing the advantages and disadvantages of a particular choice.

Lindop: 3♥. Can't really see anything better to do. Since I didn't show an immediate positive in hearts (if the system allows that), partner isn't going to expect a better suit. If partner rebids spades, I'll bid 3NT. If partner bids 3NT, I'll pass. If partner bids a minor suit, I'll raise.

Yes, but you are raising at the five level with neither partner having any idea whether this is high enough or seven is gin!

Treble: 3♥. 2NT would conserve space but I think the hearts are reasonable enough to introduce at my second turn. I would not expect partner's long suit to be solid as he hasn't jumped to 3♠ over my 2♦.

Jumping in a major to set trumps and ask for cuebids seems like a reasonable treatment. Does anyone else play this? I usually play a rebid of a suit by the strong hand sets trump, and asks the weak hand to cuebid their cheapest 1st or 2nd round control in support of opener's suit.

L'Ecuyer: 3♥. I hate these auctions but what else can I do? 2NT with a club void might work well facing a spade-minor two suiter (which I tend to open 1♠ instead of 2♣) but it might be difficult to get to hearts if we need to get to them.

Ironically this reminds of a different hand where an expert bid 3♥ on this exact same heart holding, and the pair eventually wound up in 6♥ opposite Ax.

Grainger: 3♥. What can I do? It takes up a lot of space and will make finding a minor harder should we need to, but I really don't like 2NT with a void in spades.

Turner: 3♥. What else? 2NT would save space, but may cause partner to over-rate his spade suit for slam purposes.

Carruthers: 3♥. My hearts are good enough (barely) and I do NOT want to bid notrump with a void in partner's suit.

In my opinion, notrump bids in 2♣ auctions are not about stoppers and shape, but just deny primary support for opener's first suit, and allows the strong hand to continue describing their hand. One other agreement I like – If partner raise your 3♥ to 4♥, this is forcing, and responder is obligated to cuebid their lowest 1st or 2nd round control.

Kuz: 3NT. Off shape, yes. If partner bids a 2nd suit I raise clubs and bid 5♣ over diamonds or hearts and then bid 6♥ over a 5♥ signoff.

I don't get taking up space unnecessarily in a game forcing auction when you have no clue what strain to play in, or how high. What happened at the table? North held ♠AKQ653♥-♦AKQ7♣Q95. At the table South bid 3♥ and the bidding continue:

North	South
2♣	2♦ ¹
2♠	3♥
4♦	5♦
5♥!	6♣
7♦	

On a heart lead a 4-1 diamond break will likely hold declarer to 8-10 tricks. A better auction maybe?

North	South
2♣	2♦ ¹
2♠	2NT
3♦	4♦
4♠	Pass

4. As South you hold ♠2♥AQ432♦J9532♣K6. E-W vul, matchpoints.

West	North	East	South
			1♥
1♠	2NT ¹	Pass	3♥
3♠	Dbl	Pass	?

1. 4+ hearts, limit raise or better.

What do you bid?

Call	Score	Panelists
Pass	10	13
4♥	7	8

A number of panelists are unhappy, for various reasons:

Lebi: 4♥, not leaving this double in.

Jacob: 4♥, is this a trick question? 10 HCPs for an opener, a 5-4 fit, and very little defense. I certainly won't introduce the second suit.

Cimon: 4♥. I have little defence for my opening bid. The double from partners show some cards and not a lot of spades.

Cooper: 4♥. I don't like the 3♥. Must bid natural 3♦ game try. Now a guess. Pass is top/bottom. 4♥ should be a normal contract.

Thurston: If ever there was a problem I'd abstain from answering this is it! By what standards is 1♥ and opening bid? Now? Trusting the vulnerable West has recognized the situation and could be very close to nine tricks in his own hand, I scamper out to 4♥ while preparing my apology for overruling partner's penalty double. For what's it's worth, I recently had a 9-10 trick hand in West's position and "walked the dog" until the double came one round earlier than I expected – one overtrick!

Hornby: Assuming I'm South here, tell me why I opened this hand rather than wait to come into the auction with a two suiter. Then tell me why I didn't bid 4♥ with 6 losers opposite a limit raise. All this aside, I'm bidding 4♥ because my LHO knows the vulnerability also.

Turner: 4♥. No confidence at all. Partner either has got them or more likely is just showing GF values. The old

story: when you don't show your second suit they keep bidding, when you do they were bid out and get to defend double-dummy.

If partner just has game forcing values, then why did they not bid game, or a new suit? There were some panelists who thought North's double was penalty oriented:

L'Ecuyer: Pass. I have what I am supposed to have (3 controls and a weak opening hand, we did bid 3♥) – I have to say I would have bid 4♥ over 2NT.

Todd: Partner is unlimited. I refused the game try. What's the problem? Trust partner. I pass.

Yes trust partner. You have shown a weak hand with your 3♥ bid yet partner doubles. You don't understand but you can trust. If partner is wrong, then you have kept partnership morale. But if you wrongly pull after describing your hand...

Miles: Pass. Its matchpoints and only one board if they make it. Usually trust vulnerable opponents, but we've all been in West's seat not wanting to sellout with something like AQ10xxx(x) of the boss suit. Why can't partner have a "normal" minimum such as ♠K10x ♥J10xx ♦Kx ♣Axxx with declarer ♠AQJxxxx ♥x ♦Ax ♣Qxx which looks like an easy +500.

Stark: Pass. Partner has a lot of information and still doubled 3♠, so I shall abide.

Lindop: Pass. At least it's matchpoints. I'll go for the magic +200 number. I have my two defensive tricks – 1½ in hearts and ½ in clubs. I've turned down partner's game invitation, so partner's double should be penalty-oriented. Partner could simply bid 4♥ or a minor suit if uninterested in defending. And ever articulate and comprehensive Zyg:

Marcinski: Pass:

- Partner's spade values are of no help to me in a 4♥ contract.
- My already announced minimum hand is better defensively than it might have been.
- 4♥ is unlikely to fetch, and will almost certainly be doubled.

- I see nowhere close to sufficient evidence to override responder's judgment.

... but most were very clear on the meaning of the double.

Balcombe: Pass. Is my partner's double not 100% penalty? Whether or not East passed or doubled would probably not affect my opinion.

Treble: I'd pass the double. Our side has a confirmed nine-card or better fit and responder would just bid 4♥ if he had more than a limit raise. Partner's double is for blood, IMO, and my defensive tricks expectancy is normal or close to it.

Grainger: Pass. This is a penalty double.

Hargreaves: Pass: it's MPs. In real life I tend to be chicken but this double is penalty (with the caveat that he knows that I know he has 4 hearts). I expect spades to be 7411 around the table (or he has 3 good ones). At imps I bid 4♥, although at imps I would have bid 4♥ last time. BTW, if one is not driving to game, and I agree with not doing so at MPs, I don't understand why I didn't bid 3♦ to show where I need help. Bidding 3♥ is a good way to miss a good game if he has a useful diamond holding, plus (if he has diamond length, which is unlikely but not impossible) 3♦ would warn him off a close double. I wouldn't make a game try at imps...the information leakage is too costly.

Good points, but then it wouldn't be as much of a problem.

Kuz: Pass, I don't agree with 3♥. I have told my story.

I agree. There are a family of auctions where we have bid and raised a suit where a double should be penalties. Another example: 1♠ (Pass) 2♠ (3♣) Dbl. Partner could have bid 3♦ or 3♥ to make a game try. Plus there is another important consideration, partnership morale, mentioned by this Canadian Hall-of-Famer:

Carruthers: Pass. Partner knows more about my hand than I do his. Anything else is insulting to partner IMO.

The full deal:

♠	QJ1064	♠	3
♥	KJ76	♥	1098
♦	Q8	♦	K76
♣	J107	♣	Q3542
♠	AK9875	♠	2
♥	5	♥	AQ432
♦	A103	♦	J9542
♣	A98	♣	K6

At the table South bid 4♥, down one, instead of going plus versus 3♠ doubled.

5. As South, you hold ♠AK4 ♥AK753 ♦J9 ♣1098. N-S vul, IMPs.

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

What do you bid (**out of five**)?

Call	Score	Panelists
2♦	5	7
2♠	4	14

This hand created some discussion one night. There was a split of opinion as to whether to bid 2♦ or 2♠. In answering a), all but one of the panelists (Hargreaves) seemed to be in their own world, not mentioning the other main alternative, and the merit of one over the other:

Hargreaves: 2♠. Got to force and I want to bid where I have values. This usually begets 2NT, which I'd happily raise. 2♦, instead of 2♠, is best only when partner has three hearts. Most of the time he doesn't and over 3♣ then, we are guessing. It's not as if he's favoured to hold spade stoppers!

First for the majority, some of whom felt very confident in their choice:

Lebi: a) 2♠, 2nd unanimous vote.

Turner: a) 2♠. Unanimous panel?

Treble: a) 2♠. Seems clear-cut, keeping both hearts and notrump in the picture.

Cimon: 2♠ I have to make a forcing bid. I would have bid 3♣ had partner rebid 2NT.

Kuz: 2♠. Seems straightforward.

One professional player and two Canadian Bridge Hall of Famers feel differently:

Grainger: a) 2♦. Artificial force. No other choice.

Jacob: 2♦. Forcing.

L'Ecuier: 2♦ (forcing). *As also do:*

Miles: 2♦. Somewhat artificial. 2♠ is tempting but I hate distorting major length, especially the boss suit.

Smith: 2♦. I will bid two diamonds, forcing, and not necessarily natural. If partner cannot support hearts, then we may play 3NT.

2♠ is clearly game forcing, but what about 2♦? I agree with the above panelists that 2♦ should create a game force, otherwise constructive bidding is just too difficult. Again not addressed by the panel, if the spade and diamond suits were reversed would the majority choose 2♦, bidding where they live? We don't know.

Stark: 2♦. If partner raises me to 3♦ I'll bid 3NT.

I don't get this. Partner has shown a good hand, with maybe 4-6 in the minors, and you have yet to show your slam interest in clubs.

Thurston: 2♠. (Game force).

Lindop: 2♠. Since partner denied holding four spades, this is a – likely artificial – forcing bid.

Hornby: 2♠ trying for 3NT.

Cooper: 2♠.

Carruthers: 2♠. Initially hoping for heart preference or 2NT. Partner cannot raise spades since he cannot have four of them, not having rebid 1♠.

Balcombe: 2♠. Seems pretty obvious to me, but, as noted above, I live in my own small world.

Keith's World – maybe this should be a regular feature in Bridge Canada?

Marcinski: 2♠. This is a risk-free and space-efficient means of keeping all balls in the air - should be close to unanimous.

Doesn't 2♦ save more space? Partner can now show 3 card heart support at the two level, and maybe two card heart support later on. Also if partner does bid 2♥, 2♠ (maximum, spade fragment with values) or 2NT, now you can bid 3♣ allowing partner to revaluated under the level of 3NT. Alas, 3♣ was foisted upon you in this example, so the two spade bidders didn't lose anything. Let's now look at b):

b) Over your answer to a), North rebids 3♣. Now what (out of five)?

Call	Score	Panelists
4♣	5	5
3♠	4	7
3♦	4	5
5♣	3	3
4♥	1	1

I find it interesting that all five 4♣ bidders started off with 2♠, while none of the two diamond bidders did. Three panelists bid directly, to what they think should be best contract:

Lebi: 5♣, not 3♦ over which partner might bid 3NT with Qx of diamonds.

Hargreaves: 5♣. May need a 2-2 break or a hook but he surely has at most one diamond stopper and possibly none, so if we have a club loser we're down in 3NT even if he has that one stopper.

Treble: 5♣. All other game possibilities have been exhausted, and I'm not about to try and be a genius by passing.

This approach might be giving up on an easy slam – picture partner with ♠Qx ♥x ♦Kx ♣AKxxxxx. Many panelists thought the prospects for a club slam were worth going past 3NT:

Turner: 4♣. Refer last month's comment: "4m is always forcing in constructive auctions".

Cimon: 4♣. We have a good chance to make a slam if partner can cue-bid 4♦.

Thurston: 4♣ – not giving up on slam when partner has ♠QJx ♥Qx ♦x ♣AKQxxxx.

Kuz: 4♣. Seems straightforward.

Hornby: Feels like a trap hand, but I'll bid 4♣ giving partner a chance to suggest 4♥ as a game. Maybe they have something like Qx QJ 10xx AKJxxx. Hand looks somewhat familiar.

Lindop: 4♣. This should be forcing. I'm hoping partner can show a control in diamonds, in which case slam becomes a possibility.

Then there were the 3♦ bidders, not willing to give up on 3NT, willing to sacrifice 'the clear try for slam in clubs' message:

Cooper: 3♦ scramble. One last chance for 3NT.

Carruthers: Over 3♣, I'd bid 3♦. The last suit in all these auctions is always a try for 3NT, unless you pull it when partner bids it. If you'd had a diamond stopper, you'd bid 3NT yourself. As it is, if partner does not bid 3NT, I'll head for 5♣ (or even 6♣ if he has a diamond control).

Balcombe: 3♦. I dunno what else to bid, but maybe partner has some variation of ♠32 ♥Q3 ♦A32 ♣AK8765

and didn't want to bid notrump from her side or didn't have a diamond stopper and can now bid 3♥ or 3NT.

Marcinski: 3♦. Perfect:

- Rebidding 3♥ would show 6+ hearts.
- Rebidding 3♠ would show five spades and 6+ hearts.
- Rebidding 3NT would show solid pointed suit stops and 5♥'s (since no 3NT rebid on the previous round).

So 3♦ is a default that: i) Is assumed to be approximately this hand - no/partial diamond stop, 3=5=3=2/4=5=3=1/4=4=3=2/4=5=2=2; ii) but could turn out to be a club slam try.

3♦ does give you one more shot at 3NT, but muddies the waters on South's hand type, sort of stated by Mr. Marcinski. Another approach:

Grainger: 3♠. Shows the diamond weakness. Should get an idea of what to do next from partner's next call.

Jacob: 3♠. I am not sure yet what I would do over 3NT, but I would likely pass.

Stark: 3♠. If partner rebids their clubs, I'll bid 3♠-- maybe we have a club slam. This bid should imply clubs because if I didn't have clubs I would most likely be bidding 3NT over 3♣.

L'Ecuyer: 2♦ (forcing) followed by 3♠ which should emphasize the diamond problem while keeping all game possibilities in the picture.

I am a simple bidder. I think this hand is worth an unambiguous slam try of 4♣ on your 3rd bid. At IMPs I am not afraid of playing in five of a minor versus 3NT, especially when the latter could be a much better contract, as on the actual deal:

North held ♠J5 ♥J6 ♦A42 ♣AQ7543. The bidding:

North	South
1♣	1♥
2♣	2♠
3♥	3NT

N-S did not sniff at the average minus club slam, but 5♣ is a virtually cold. 3NT is in jeopardy on a diamond lead, especially with the partial club blockage and shortage of entries.

PANELIST ANSWERS

August 2023 Bidding Contest

Name	Hand 1		Hand 2		Hand 3		Hand 4		Hand 5		Overall
	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	
Balcombe	Dbl	8	2♦	8	2NT	9	Pass	10	2♠/3♦	8	43
John Carruthers	4♥	10	2♦	8	3♥	10	Pass	10	2♠/3♦	8	46
Francine Cimon	4♥	10	Pass	10	3♥	10	4♥	7	2♠/4♣	9	46
Stephen Cooper	4♥	10	2♦	8	3♥	10	4♥	7	2♠/3♦	8	43
David Grainger	Dbl	8	Pass	10	3♥	10	Pass	10	2♦/3♠	9	47
Mike Hargreaves	3NT	9	Pass	10	3♥	10	Pass	10	2♠/5♣	7	46
Ray Hornby	4♥	10	Pass	10	2NT	9	4♥	7	2♠/4♣	9	45
Dan Jacob	4♥	10	Pass	10	3♥	10	4♥	7	2♦/3♠	9	46
Bob Kuz	Dbl	8	2♣	8	3NT	5	Pass	10	2♠/4♥	5	36
Nick L'Ecuyer	3NT	9	Pass	10	3♥	10	Pass	10	2♦/3♠	9	48
Robert Lebi	3NT	9	2NT	7	3♥	10	4♥	7	2♠/5♣	7	40
David Lindop	Dbl	8	2♦	8	3♥	10	Pass	10	2♠/4♣	9	45
Zyg Marcinski	3NT	9	2♣	8	2NT	9	Pass	10	2♠/3♦	8	44
Danny Miles	Dbl	8	Pass	10	3♥	10	Pass	10	2♦/3♠	9	47
Julie Smith	Dbl	8	Pass	10	3♥	10	Pass	10	2♦/3♠	9	47
Andy Stark	4♥	10	Pass	10	2NT	9	Pass	10	2♦/3♠	9	48
Paul Thurston	3NT	9	2♦	8	3♥	10	4♥	7	2♠/4♣	9	43
Bob Todd	4♥	10	3NT	6	3♥	10	Pass	10	2♦/3♠	9	45
Bill Treble	Dbl	8	2NT	7	3♥	10	Pass	10	2♠/5♣	7	42
David Turner	4♥	10	Pass	10	3♥	10	4♥	7	2♠/4♣	9	46
David Willis	3NT	9	Pass	10	3♥	10	4♥	7	2♠/3♦	8	44



Ethan: I went to see my cardiologist today and she says I can't play bridge.

Samantha: Oh no! Is it your heart?

Ethan: No, I told her about my declarer play line in four spades from Tuesday night.

OCTOBER PROBLEMS

Host: Ray Hornby

Readers: Please submit your answers by September 7th.

1) IMPs, neither vul., as South, you hold:

♠ 42
♥ AQ
♦ AKJ98
♣ AK82

West	North	East	South
			1♦
1♥	3♦ ¹	DbI ²	?

¹ Preemptive, typically with 5 trump

² Responsive

Why you didn't open 2NT (or 2♣ followed by 2NT) is anybody's guess, but here you are. What call do you make?

2) IMPs, N-S vul. As South, you hold:

♠ A95
♥ A5
♦ K98532
♣ K6

West	North	East	South
2♠	DbI	Pass	?

a) What call do you make?

b) What call would you make if RHO had bid 3♠ instead of passing?

3) Matchpoints, both vul. As South, you hold:

♠ -
♥ K876432
♦ AK8
♣ AK7

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	?	

What call do you make?

4) IMPs, both vul. As South, you hold:

♠ KQ10953
♥ QJ94
♦ A2
♣ 4

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

What call do you make?

5) IMPs, both vul. As South, you hold:

♠ K
♥ Q107
♦ A102
♣ AKQ874

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	?

a) What call do you make?

b) If you rebid 3♣, partner bids 3♥ natural. Now what?

c) If you instead choose a 2NT rebid, partner bids 3♥ showing 5 diamonds and 4 hearts. And now?

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WINNING AT MATCHPOINTS



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WINNING AT MATCHPOINTS

Most players would agree that matchpoints is harder than IMPs – it's certainly different. Yet many players approach the two forms of scoring in the same way. In this book, the author explains the differences in approach, the whys and wherefores of the right way to bid, play and defend at matchpoint scoring for optimum results.

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