

LE BRIDGEUR PRESENTS

BRIDGE

RAMA+

THE MAGAZINE THAT IMPROVES YOUR GAME!

ISSUE 72

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WHOSE FAULT IS IT?

BY ALAIN LÉVY

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EDITORIAL

BY MARK HORTON

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RENAISSANCE

AS BUDS BEGIN TO DEVELOP, INDICATING A TRANSITION FROM THE DORMANCY OF WINTER TO THE ACTIVE GROWTH OF THE SPRING AND SUMMER,

encouraging signs are also starting to appear in the bridge world. The English Bridge Union has announced that entries for its flagship event, the Spring Foursomes, have already reached the maximum of 64 teams and there is now a waiting list.

The United States Bridge Federation's 2026 trials for Open and Mixed Teams that will represent them in the 2027 Bermuda Bowl and Wuhan Cup are taking place this month. In the Open series the number of entries was such that a preliminary Round Robin was required in order to reduce the field to sixteen teams. Meanwhile, 15 teams are currently registered for the Mixed event.

The 57th European Championships – the qualifying contest for the 2027 World Team Championships) – will take place in Riga at the end of June and there are indications that all four team events (Open, Women, Seniors and Mixed) will attract more entries than the 2024 championships in Herning.

This year the European Bridge League is also staging Pairs Championships in the Women, Seniors and Mixed categories. This initiative allows everyone to rub shoulders with Europe's finest, at the same time enjoying the unrivalled atmosphere of a major championship. The registration page for the pairs events is now open. (57th European Team Championships – Registration and Participants).

These are encouraging signs, but as an indicator of what can be achieved, contrast these numbers with those of the recently concluded Grenke Chess Open in Karlsruhe, Germany, which attracted a world record 3658 players! The tournament also boasted a prize fund of EUR 285000! The secrets of its success are major sponsorship deals with *Freestyle Chess* and *Grenke* and the creation of an event where world-class players and amateurs meet on an equal footing.

Can anyone find the sponsorship deal that would give bridge a significant boost?

LEARN!

BIDDING BASICS DOUBLES

In his new series Larry Cohen takes an in-depth look at the basic principles of bidding.

Direct-seat doubles at the one level

The takeout double is the oldest convention in bridge. Soon after the concept of the double was introduced in 1925, the theorists realized that it didn't have to be used only to double the score (the original purpose). In today's game, it is rare that a double is used as penalty ("let's play for double the points").

The basic takeout double

This month we will deal only with the situation where your RHO opens the bidding with one of a suit and you double. So, this month it will go: 1♣(♦,♥,♠) on your right, and you double.

In future articles, we will explore the possibility that this double might be made with 18 or more HCP. How will partner know if it is 12-17 or 18+? With 18+, the doubler will bid again.

For now, we will assume the double is in the 12-17 range. We will home in on exactly what is meant by 12-17 a few paragraphs down.

The double guarantees support for the other three suits

What is meant by support? Ideally it would be four cards in each of the unbid suits, but we can't wait around for that. It is acceptable to double if we have *at least three cards in each of the other suits*. Or put another way, don't have a doubleton (or shorter) in one of the unbid suits.

So, let's say RHO opens 1♦. You would make a takeout double with any of these hands:

1	2	3
♠ KQ10	♠ AQ87	♠ K1087
♥ A1054	♥ KJ76	♥ Q1065
♦ 32	♦ 92	♦ 2
♣ K1087	♣ A65	♣ AJ54

We count all these hands as 12-17 total points. When partner takes out to a suit, we will be the dummy, so we can add 1 for a doubleton, 2 for a singleton and 3 for a void. Accordingly, example **1** is 13 (12HCP plus 1 for the doubleton), example **2** is 15 (14HCP and 1 for the doubleton), example **3** is 12 (10HCP plus 2 for the singleton). Don't be a slave to these exact point counts. Holding lots of 10s and 9s, you might double with only 11 total points. Vulnerability (be more aggressive if not vulnerable) is also a factor. A double of 1♣ need not be as stout as a double of 1♠ (where partner would have to answer with a suit at the two-level). I would double 1♣ not vulnerable with: ♠J1098 ♥QJ107 ♦AJ108 ♣3, even though it technically isn't "12-17".

Where your honors are located is also relevant in close decisions. If RHO opens 1♠, I'd gladly double with: ♠54 ♥QJ65 ♦AK7 ♣K1076. All my points are outside of Spades. Conversely, I'd choose to pass over their 1♠ with: ♠QJ8 ♥J54 ♦KJ76 ♣KJ2. That meets the definition of "12-17", but it is ugly, with the ♠QJ8 much better suited for defense than offense. One other factor on borderline decisions is your holding in the other major(s). Partner will strive to take out your double to a major, so if borderline, prefer to have four (as opposed to three) in the major(s).

Don't double 1♦ with the following hands, because they don't have support for all three unbid suits:

4	5	6
♠ K2	♠ KQ2	♠ K
♥ QJ87	♥ A2	♥ Q765
♦ A32	♦ K102	♦ A876
♣ K542	♣ J7654	♣ A654

You should pass with all three of those hands (don't overcall a so-so four-card suit). Why not double? After

BRIDGE WITH LARRY COHEN

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all, you have an opening hand. We will see down the road that you would be stuck if partner answered your double by bidding the suit you have shortness in (and that's the way partners are). Partner might have only four cards to take out the double and your side could have fewer trumps than the opponents (not a good idea). For example, if you double with example **4** and partner bids 1♠, he could have ♠J874 and would not be happy in a 4-2 fit. If you are thinking that you will just bid something else if partner chooses Spades, stay tuned (we will learn later in this series that if you double and then bid again, you are promising a BIG hand, roughly 18 points or more). With example **5**, don't overcall at the two-level with such a lousy suit. With example **6**, you have no suit worthy of an overcall and can't double, so you should pass.

If you have 12-17HCP and the other three suits, but one of those suits is a five-card major, prefer to overcall in the major rather than make a takeout double. For example, if RHO opens 1♥ and you hold: ♠KQJ87 ♥32 ♦A102 ♣K92, you do have 12-17 total points and at least three in all the unbid suits, but it is more descriptive to overcall 1♠ rather than to make a takeout double. Also, if you have their suit stopped and the strength for INT (roughly 15-18 HCP), prefer the INT overcall. Over RHO's 1♥, bid INT (not double) with: ♠KJ2 ♥KQ2 ♦A1098 ♣KJ2.

QUIZ

RHO opens 1♣. What is your call with:

1	2	3	4
♠ KQ107	♠ J2	♠ KJ2	♠ AQ1076
♥ AJ98	♥ K876	♥ KQ10	♥ A43
♦ J765	♦ A765	♦ J76	♦ 32
♣ 2	♣ A102	♣ AQ108	♣ Q76

RHO opens 1♦. What is your call with:

5	6	7	8
♠ K2	♠ AQ10	♠ QJ9	♠ 2
♥ J654	♥ AQJ	♥ Q76	♥ A1087
♦ AK2	♦ 54	♦ Q654	♦ A1086
♣ Q1087	♣ J8765	♣ KQJ	♣ K1085

Answers

- 1** Double Perfect.
2 Pass You can't support Spades. Don't overcall in a lousy four-card suit.
3 INT A INT opening with Clubs stopped.
4 1♠ The five-card major is the main priority.
5 Pass You don't have support for Spades.
6 Double Prefer to bring all three suits into play rather than overcall in a five-card minor (and a lousy one at that).
7 Pass This hand is "12-17" but is ugly with wastage in the opponent's suit. Your holding in the other major is poor and partner will have to show his suit at the two-level.
8 Double Only 11HCP, but perfect shape.

Next month we will explore doubles of openings above 1♠.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Larry Cohen, a World and 26-time National Champion, was one of the world's leading players when he semiretired from tournament play to focus on teaching and writing. Many of his books and CDs have won awards from the ABTA and the IPBA. His best-seller on the LAW of Total tricks was one of the most influential books on competitive bidding theory. For two decades, he has been a monthly columnist in *The Bulletin* as well as many other bridge publications. His bridge seminars, especially bridge cruises, are a global hit – he has established himself as one of the top bridge teachers in the world. His website (www.larryco.com) contains hundreds of free articles with bridge instruction on a vast array of topics.

THE PROBLEMS

[SELECTED BY THE BRIDGERAMA TEAM]

BIDDING

Bidding Basics Doubles

1. ♠ K1098
♥ KJ96
♦ A84
♣ A4

W	N	E	S
			1♦
	?		

A) Dble
B) 1NT
C) 1♥

2. ♠ 1074
♥ AQ6
♦ KQ5
♣ K973

W	N	E	S
			1♠
	?		

A) 1NT
B) Pass
C) Dble

3. ♠ A10
♥ QJ3
♦ Q8763
♣ K109

W	N	E	S
			1♠
	?		

A) 2♦
B) Dble
C) Pass

4. ♠ A7652
♥ K1096
♦ J
♣ K106

W	N	E	S
			1♦
	?		

A) 1♠
B) Pass
C) Dble

5. ♠ AQ93
♥ Q6532
♦ QJ8
♣ 8

W	N	E	S
			1♣
	?		

A) Pass
B) 1♥
C) Dble

6. ♠ A102
♥ K87
♦ K1095
♣ A109

W	N	E	S
			1♠
	?		

A) Dble
B) 1NT
C) Pass

7. ♠ AK98
♥ Q984
♦ AQ10
♣ 85

W	N	E	S
			1♣
	?		

A) 1NT
B) Dble
C) Pass

8. ♠ KJ85
♥ -
♦ 107543
♣ AK96

W	N	E	S
			1♥
	?		

A) Dble
B) Pass
C) 2♦

Bidding is not everything there is in life!

DECLARER PLAY

Problem 1

♠ K74
♥ 72
♦ 974
♣ AK742

Contract: 4 Spades.
Lead: ♥Q.

W	N	E	S

♠ A8653
♥ A64
♦ AJ65
♣ 8

What's your plan?

- Win, cash two Clubs pitching a Heart and play a Diamond.
- Duck, win the next Heart, ruff a Heart, cash two Spades ending in dummy and play a Diamond.
- Duck, win the next Heart, and play three rounds of Clubs.

Problem 2

♠ KQ9
♥ 6
♦ KQJ103
♣ AQ52

Contract: 4 Spades (East opened 1♥).
Lead: West leads the ♥3.

W	N	E	S

♠ AJ108
♥ A82
♦ 752
♣ 863

You:

- Win, ruff a Heart and play trumps.
- Duck, win the probable trump switch, ruff a Heart, draw trumps and play on Diamonds.
- Win, ruff a Heart and then play on Diamonds.

Problem 3

♠ K6
♥ A972
♦ 743
♣ 8743

Contract: 4 Spades.

West, having overcalled 2♠ (promising Hearts and a minor) and subsequently bid 4♣, leads the ♥K.

W	N	E	S

♠ AJ109873
♥ 10
♦ AK8
♣ K6

What is your plan?

- Win in dummy and cash the ♠K.
- Win in dummy and ruff a Heart.
- Win in dummy and play a Club to the King.



THE SOLUTIONS

BRIDGE WITH LARRY COHEN

PRACTICAL EXERCISES

BIDDING

Bidding Basics Doubles

1. Overcalling on a four-card suit is not recommended. You have the strength for 1NT but nothing in the way of playing tricks. Doubling gets both majors into the picture.

Dble =5
1NT =4
1♥ =1

2. You don't have a Spade stopper or the strength for 1NT. Doubling with a balanced hand and without the other major is not recommended. Best is to pass and await developments.

Pass =5
Dble =3
1NT =1

3. Overcalling at the two-level requires a much better suit than this, preferably with six cards. Doubling is marginal without four Hearts. One advantage of passing at this stage is that you do not help the other side to place the whereabouts of missing high cards.

Pass =5
Dble =4
2♦ =1

4. It would be timid to pass. Overcalling risks missing a Heart fit. Your shape fully justifies a Double.

Dble =5
1♠ =4
Pass =1

5. Passing is conservative when you have both majors and good shape. Overcalling on a poor suit does not give such a clear message as a takeout double.

Dble =5
1♥ =3
Pass =2

6. You are not strong enough to overcall 1NT. Doubling with a flat hand, especially lacking four cards in the unbid major, is not risk free. Passing is your best alternative.

Pass =5
Dble =3
1NT =1

7. You can't afford to pass with such a strong hand. 1NT without a Club stopper is dubious, but at least it conveys your high card strength. Double is clearly best when you hold both majors.

Dble =5
1NT =2
Pass =1

8. Passing with such perfect shape is dubious. Overcalling on such a poor suit is a bad idea. This is an ideal distribution for a takeout double.

Dble =5
2♦ =1
Pass =1

DECLARER PLAY

Problem 1

Duck, win the next Heart, and play three rounds of clubs, c).

	♠ K74 ♥ 72 ♦ 974 ♣ AK742	
♠ QJ9 ♥ QJ10 ♦ K1032 ♣ J95	N W E S	♠ 102 ♥ K9853 ♦ Q8 ♣ Q1063
	♠ A8653 ♥ A64 ♦ AJ65 ♣ 8	

The best chance of avoiding four losers is to establish dummy's clubs. Duck, ruff the third Club, cash the top Spades ending in dummy and ruff another Club. Even if this is overruffed, you can enter dummy with a Heart ruff and discard a second losing Diamond on the master Club.

Problem 2

Duck, win the probable trump switch, ruff a Heart, draw trumps and play on Diamonds, b).

	♠ KQ9 ♥ 6 ♦ KQJ103 ♣ AQ52	
♠ 7642 ♥ 10753 ♦ 86 ♣ J104	N W E S	♠ 53 ♥ KQJ94 ♦ A94 ♣ K97
	♠ AJ108 ♥ A82 ♦ 752 ♣ 863	

If trumps are 3-3 everything works, but when they are 4-2 it is essential to follow the recommended line. You must remember to win the trump switch in hand. If West leads the ♥10, ducking fails as a Club switch will be fatal (as would an initial Club lead).

Problem 3

Win in dummy and ruff a Heart, b).

	♠ K6 ♥ A972 ♦ 743 ♣ 8743	
♠ - ♥ KQJ65 ♦ Q5 ♣ AQJ952	N W E S	♠ Q542 ♥ 843 ♦ J10962 ♣ 10
	♠ AJ109873 ♥ 10 ♦ AK8 ♣ K6	

The danger is that Spades will be 4-0. To guard against that, ruff a Heart at trick two (being careful to retain the ♠3!), cross to dummy with the ♠K and continue with the ♠6. When that holds, you ruff a Heart, cash the top Diamonds and then exit with a Club. West can win and cash a Club but you ruff the next trick and exit with a Diamond, taking the last two tricks with your ♠AJ.



POISSON D'AVRIL

The World Bridge Federation Youth site published this story on the 1st of April:

BREAKING: Magnus Carlsen Spotted At Bridge Tournament

Is World Chess #1 Magnus Carlsen trading in his Chess pieces for playing cards?

The world chess champion has reportedly been spotted at an ACBL regional tournament in the United States today.

This alleged sighting may come as less of a shock to Norwegians. Much like chess, Norway has long been a force at the highest levels of bridge, having won the Bermuda Bowl in 2007 and finishing as runners-up in 2023.

Funbridge has reached out to Carlsen's camp and the Chess.com team to confirm the sighting.



IT'S ALL IN THE MIND

The Alzheimer's Center in Warsaw hosted a scientific conference on mental fitness at the beginning of March, addressing the topic of Crossing the bridge over the valley of dementia.

The conference was broadcast in two language versions on the Foundation's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@bridgetothepeople>

Bill Gates sent a message to the participants.

The contributors included Marek Małysa, Prof. Martin Seligman from the University of Pennsylvania, USA, Prof. Beata Przyborowska, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Dr. Tomasz Rutkowski Rikken, Tokyo and Dr Emilia Leszkowicz, University of Gdańsk. Jan Szewczyk made a presentation outlining the method of teaching bridge to patients of the Alzheimer Center.

**FEEL FREE TO COMMENT AT:
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IN THE SPOTLIGHT



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.

REVIEW

"Tired of watching a favourite partner go down in contracts that might have been made? Add this to your Christmas shopping list. Geared for Intermediate players, the text covers a wide range of declarer-play strategies designed to maximize the chances for making contracts. Some may think this cautious approach should be reserved for team or rubber bridge but even the matchpoint duplicate fiends who hunger for overtricks, often at the cost of their contract, would benefit from a study of this book."

—Paul Thurston, National Post.

David Bird (Southampton, UK) is the world's most prolific bridge writer, with more than 150 bridge books to his name. Known for the clarity of his writing and explanations, he has won the American Bridge Teachers' Association Book of the Year Award a record nine times. His celebrated humorous fiction series, featuring the cantankerous Abbot, has run for over 45 years.

Barbara Seagram (Toronto, Canada) ran one of the largest and most successful bridge clubs and bridge schools in N. America. After selling the club in 2007, she now concentrates solely on teaching and organizing her popular bridge cruises. An ABTA Master Teacher, Barbara has been involved in many of MPP's most successful titles, most notably 25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know. With more than 300,000 copies in print in English alone, this book is the bestselling bridge title since Charles Goren was writing in the 1950s.

Find it at <https://ebooksbridge.com/>



FIND THE LEAD



BY GODEFROY DE TESSIÈRES



WHAT DO YOU LEAD AS WEST?

COUNT YOUR POINTS

1.	♠ J1043	W	N	E	S
	♥ Q4	Pass	Pass	1♦	1NT
	♦ 765	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
	♣ A983	Pass	3NT		

♦5: East obviously opened light in third seat, so he must have a solid suit. A Diamond lead is therefore indicated (standard count in partner's suit).

♦5	10
♠3	5
♣3	2

2.	♠ K843	W	N	E	S
	♥ J1092			1♦	1NT
	♦ 2				
	♣ Q642				

♥J: Given the auction and your singleton, a Diamond lead could help declarer establish their longest suit. It is therefore better to lead your most promising suit: Hearts, top of the sequence.

♥J	10
♣2	4
♠3	2

3.	♠ Q109543	W	N	E	S
	♥ 842		1♦	2♣	2NT
	♦ QJ5	Pass	3NT		
	♣ 8				

♠10: Leading a Spade follows a simple and effective plan. You hope to establish your Spades and get back in with a Diamond. The alternative – hoping East holds a Club suit that can be established immediately along with an outside entry – is less likely.

♠10	10
♣8	6

4.	♠ QJ92	W	N	E	S
	♥ 63			1♥	1♠
	♦ 432	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦
	♣ J1032				

♦4: Declarer will certainly want to ruff Spades in dummy to set up the suit. To thwart this plan, you should lead a trump.

♦4	10
♥6	7
♣J	2

5.	♠ 983	W	N	E	S
	♥ A74			1♥	1SA
	♦ J7632	Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
	♣ 52				

♣5: You need to keep your Ace of Hearts to capture an honor from South, who has promised a stopper. The best plan is to lead a Club, which is neutral and offers the possibility of ruffing. Leading a trump or a Diamond carries too much risk of helping declarer capture honors.

♣5	10
♠9	5
♦2	4
♥A	3

6.	♠ 8763	W	N	E	S
	♥ 8		1♦	1♥	2NT
	♦ 10753	Pass	3NT		
	♣ Q973				

♥8: East holds a five-card suit and nearly all the points of your side, so the priority is undoubtedly to try establishing his suit despite your singleton. The alternative of leading a Club is much less likely to succeed.

♥8	10
♣3	4

One hand, seven questions

This month, you'll have a single hand and will have to answer a series of questions on a variety of themes, ending with a dummy play.

You hold as South:

♠ KQ105
♥ AJ2
♦ 8765
♣ AK

1 Your partner opens 1NT, you bid 2♣ and partner responds 2♦, what do you bid?

2 You open 1NT, your partner bids 3♣. What do you bid now?

3 You open 1NT, your partner transfers to Hearts (2♥) and over your 2♥ he jumps to 4♥. What do you bid now?

4 You open 1NT, partner transfers to Clubs (2♣) and over your 3♣ he bids 3♥. What do you bid now?

5

Your right-hand opponent opens 1♣. Over to you!

6

Your left-hand opponent opens 1♠, and two passes follow. How do you protect?

7

You play 3 No-Trump by South after the following auction:

W	N	E	S
1♠	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	Pass	3NT	

	♠ AJ6 ♥ Q762 ♦ QJ109 ♣ 85	
	N	
W		E
	S	
	♠ KQ105 ♥ AJ3 ♦ 8765 ♣ AK	

West leads the Queen of Clubs.
How do you imagine the continuation?

SOFTWARE STEP BY STEP IN ACTION

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THE SOLUTIONS

1 6NT. With this nice 17-HCP hand, facing partner's 1NT opening, it is reasonable to jump to 6NT and hope that our kind partner will make their contract. Some experts have a way to find a Diamond slam in a 4-4 fit (or even a 5-4), either by bidding 5♥ or 5NT.

2 3NT. Usually, facing a Diamond transfer, there is little to think about – we complete the transfer automatically, as the vast majority of players would do. But here, my natural enthusiasm leads me to deviate from the standard. We have a hell of a hand, with a ten-card Diamond fit and only top cards in the side suits: Ace-King, Ace, King. The game can really be making very quickly, even opposite a hand that North would pass opposite 3♦. This 3NT bid also allows to alert partner on the possibility of a slam when he might be satisfied with bidding 3NT himself over another bid. And if he really has a minimum, he can run to 4♦.

3 4NT. The answer is quite simple if you correctly interpreted 4♦ as a Splinter, promising slam interest and six cards in Hearts. I believe our hand is nearly the best possible opposite a Diamond Splinter. No lost points in Diamonds and the certainty of a nine-card fit allow us to ask for keycards.

4 4♥. Our partner transfers to Clubs, then shows Heart shortness with his 3♥ bid. What should we do now? True, with Ace-Jack we stop the Heart suit. Even opposite a singleton, this will often be a double stopper, but it also means not many lost points in a Club contract. To have a hand in the game-range, partner cannot be far from holding the complementary cards: Ace of Spades, the Queen of Clubs and one or two big Diamond honors. We have good prospects for twelve tricks. I therefore recommend not saying 3NT. I suggest a cue-bid of 4♥ to indicate slam interest and show our Heart control.

5 Double. Two options seem possible over this 1♣ opening: 1NT or Double. We have a balanced 17-count with a stopper in the suit of the opening, so the 1NT overcall seems quite reasonable. I am quite sure that some very good players, especially non-French, would overcall 1NT. However, with only two Clubs and 4-3 in the majors, I recommend you double. This call leaves more flexibility and allows avoiding a heavy penalty when partner has a very weak hand, without preventing us from reaching game if he has some points.

6 2NT. What is the difference with the previous question? The opening is 1♠ and not 1♣ and, in addition, in the previous question we were in 2nd position whereas now we are in 4th. Over the 1♠ opening, we tend towards No-Trump. But at what level? 1NT in fourth seat shows a fairly wide range, 10-13HCP. Double followed by a bid in No-Trump shows 14-16HCP, and the direct jump to 2NT shows 17-19HCP, which corresponds well to our hand.

7 You can already count seven top tricks. The bidding, especially West's opening, helps you locate all the missing honors, in particular the King of Hearts. You have two possibilities: setting up the two missing tricks in Diamonds or in Hearts. Knowing that the Heart finesse will fail, should you fall back on the Diamonds? Absolutely not! You are sure that the defense would set up their tricks faster than you could set up yours. After the opening lead, you have only one Club stopper left and you would have to lose the lead twice to establish your Diamonds. You therefore need to exploit the Hearts. However, since the King of Hearts must be in opener's hand, it is useless to try finessing the Jack. Instead, start by cashing the Ace of Hearts, hoping for the King to be singleton. If it does not fall, play a small Heart (not the Jack), to protect your honors if the King is doubleton. If it falls, which is the case here, you have three tricks in the suit. Otherwise, take the Queen and then play another Heart hoping for the suit to break 3-3.

The full deal

	♠ AJ6 ♥ Q762 ♦ QJ109 ♣ 85	
♠ 97432 ♥ K4 ♦ AK ♣ QJ106	N W E S	♠ 8 ♥ 10985 ♦ 432 ♣ 97432
	♠ KQ105 ♥ AJ3 ♦ 8765 ♣ AK	



WHOSE FAULT IS IT?

BY ALAIN LÉVY



North-South have reached a very poor contract. As so often, each of the two players considers that his partner is responsible for the accident. And you, what do you think?

This month we will be looking at: High-level competitive bidding.

→ Easy. ↗ Average. ↑ Difficult.

Problem 1 →

♠ 10	
♥ AQ9874	
♦ K3	
♣ A1075	
N	
W	E
S	
♠ 95	
♥ K652	
♦ QJ842	
♣ 94	

E/W Vul.				
W	N	E	S	
	1♥	1♠	3♥(*)	
4♠				

(*) Mixed raise, 8-10DH and four trumps.

The facts

5 Hearts goes down one, but 4 Spades is laydown. Did one of the players misjudge their hand, or was it simply bad luck?

Arguments

North: "I only have 13HCP, so there's no chance of making a contract at the five-level, and practically three defensive

tricks, which are strong reasons to believe that 4 Spades will go down. I know that my pass is not forcing but it must encourage you to bid on in defense if you have no hope of beating them."

South: "Thank you for this lesson but I don't agree with you at all. With my jump to 3♥, I have said what I had to say and I have no reason, or even the right, to bid again. As Michel has explained to you a hundred times, stop counting your points and learn to evaluate your distribution. This lesson is more useful than yours."

Verdict

These two youngsters are overdoing it a bit and are following a line of thinking that won't help them handle these competitive bidding situations better. North refers to technical bidding – a pass that isn't forcing but is encouraging – whilst South criticizes his partner's poor judgement.

Let's go back to North's technical arguments. He is right when he says his Pass is not forcing. The Pass is only forcing if the pair has shown at least 23HCP. But here the points seem to be evenly distributed. On the other hand, this Pass

is not encouraging; it is simply a 'nothing to report' and, opposite a limit raise, this Pass ends the bidding for his side. Knowing they have ten Hearts between them and following the Law of Total Tricks, North should have bid 5♥.

The bid responsible for the accident

North's Pass over 4♠. North is the only one responsible for this accident.

The correct auction

W	N	E	S
	1♥	1♠	3♥(*)
4♠	5♥	Dble	

(*) Mixed raise, 8-10DH and four trumps.

Problem 2 ↗

♠ 62	
♥ K954	
♦ QJ2	
♣ A1087	
N	
W	E
S	
♠ 9	
♥ AQ2	
♦ AK8753	
♣ K92	

N/S Vul.				
W	N	E	S	
			1♦	
1♠	Dble	4♠	Dble	

The facts

5 Diamonds is laydown, the slam is not a bad gamble and the penalty Double will only give between 100 and 500 depending on the distribution.

Arguments

North: "I fully understood your Double as cooperative, but my balanced distribution prompted me to pass. However, I do not regret my decision. Knowing there must be an eight-card fit in one of the minors is not reason enough to venture to the five-level when I am sure that 4 Spades will go down two or three."

South: "I don't blame you for anything and I even tend to agree with you. Looking at your cards, 4 Spades will go down heavily if I have the most frequent distribution, 1-3-5-4. It is unexpected that I have six Diamonds, but I did not want to bid 5♦ on my own."

Verdict

Unlike the two previous candidates, our two friends calmly discuss this relative accident and find excellent

arguments to justify their decision. South's reasoning is solid. With 16HCP, he must double. This is an informative double indicating that his side has at least 23HCP in total, designating them as the "offensive side", and leaving it to his partner to decide whether to pass or bid on. Bidding 5♦ directly is not an option. This is a competitive bid, which we would make with ♠9 ♥A2 ♦KQJ10873 ♣Q102. The analysis of this Double allows us to introduce this rule:

RULE

If the responder has not shown support or confirmed that their side is on offense on their first bid, opener's Pass over a high-level competitive bid simply conveys "nothing to report". The Double places the side on offense; it is defined as an informative double.

North's Pass with a balanced hand seems natural, but on closer inspection, two factors are missing from his reasoning. His distribution, three Diamonds and four Clubs, suggests a double eight-card fit opposite a 1-3-5-4 hand, a double fit that provides a positive adjustment in assessing the number of tricks likely to be made. North failed to assess the quality, position, and value of his honors, which should ideally supplement those of his partner, who has just shown 15+HCP. Under these conditions, North must not pass but impose a minor-suit game by bidding 4NT, which leaves South the choice between bidding 5 Clubs or 5 Diamonds.

The bid responsible for the accident

North's Pass in the balancing seat. North is solely responsible. But the right decision isn't obvious.

The correct auction

W	N	E	S
			1♦
1♠	Dble	4♠	Dble
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦

Problem 3 ↑

♠ 95	♥ Q10985	♦ AQ3	♣ AQ8
♠ 7	♥ AK76	♦ K10974	♣ K75

N/S Vul.

W	N	E	S
	1♥	2♠	3♠
4♠	Dble		

The facts

In this Teams competition, reserved for advanced players, the North-South pair scored a poor +300 against a very frequent +680. The punishment was even harsher when their valiant opponents bid the small slam for a thundering +1430. They sent me this question to find out who the culprit was. What do you think?

Arguments

North: "I have a balanced hand in the lower range for an opening, I must discourage you from venturing to the five-

level. This is the message that I want to convey with this Double, which is not a penalty Double and leaves you the decision to pass or bid on. For me, you have every reason to bid 5♥."

South: "I have nothing more than what I promised and it would be undisciplined not to respect your suggestion not to bid on. Your Double would be justified with lost points in Spades and in that case 5 Hearts will go down more than half the time and it would be taking an unnecessary risk when the penalty should be around 500."

Verdict

There are no technical errors in the speech of either partner, but there was a real mishap at the finish. Once again, it was a lack of judgement. In essence, North is correct. The Double is discouraging, showing a hand with which you would not want to play at the five-level unless forced to. It is the opposite of the forcing Pass, which encourages partner to overbid at the five-level or even try a slam. All this makes it possible to write this rule:

RULE

When you get to a high-level competitive situation after a forcing raise, a Pass is forcing and a Double is discouraging.

However, the forcing Pass is not an order. If the responder feels he has already done enough, he may Double in response to this Pass. Here, North has no lost points in Spades, suggesting that all his honors are useful. Therefore, he must pass, confident that 5 Hearts will make should South decide to bid on. Opposite this encouraging Pass, South should consider slam. However, South is not entirely blameless. Despite North's Double, undoubtedly motivated by poor trump quality, he must bid 5♥. It is certainly possible to build a North hand with which 5 Hearts goes down, but then it is possible that 4 Spades makes.

The bid responsible for the accident

North's Double. The responsibility is shared 60%-40%. North's Double reduces the chances of reaching game and leaves little prospect of considering a slam. Nevertheless, going down at the five level with South's hand will not happen very often.

The correct auction

W	N	E	S
	1♥	2♠	3♠
4♠	Pass	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♠	Pass	6♥

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→ Solutions

1. 4♥: You have six Hearts and a very good shape; you don't need more to jump to game when partner doubles for take-out.

2. 3♣: With a maximum for your weak-two opening, opposite the artificial and forcing 2NT enquiry, the general principle is to show your outside values, here the King of Clubs.

3. 2♣: You are little too strong to sign off in 2♥ given that it is still possible to make game. You can opt for a checkback and sign off in 2♥ if partner answers 2♦. On the other hand, if East

responds 2♥ or 2♠ (showing three Hearts), you jump to game in the name of the nine-card fit and the King of Clubs.

4. 4♥: You kept quiet about these beautiful Hearts so far, but you can show them now! It is entirely possible that you have a fit in that suit. If East should unfortunately be void in Hearts and hold very nice Spades, he might still insist on repeating his Spades.

5. 3♦: Here we apply the famous Rubensohl! When partner opens or

overcalls 1NT and RHO annoys us at the two-level, we bid our suit by way of a transfer, here 3♦ for Hearts.

6. 6♣: Your partner has taken command, which is his right. After your 5♦ response, showing one keycard, his 5♠ bid is a grand slam try, asking for the Queen of trumps. As you hold the Queen of trumps and a grand slam is still possible (if he has ♠AJ7♥K62♦AJ♣AQJ42, for example), you need to show your King of Clubs by bidding 6♣. If East bids 6♦ or 6♥, you go back to 6♥ or pass, considering that you have done enough.

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BY SALLY BROCK

GOING THROUGH THE CARD



Multiple world champion Sally Brock examines classic problems from match pointed events.

CAUGHT SPEEDING

Sally: Board 5 was not without interest:

N/S Vul. Dealer North

	♠ 52 ♥ Q3 ♦ AJ9864 ♣ Q87	
♠ 83 ♥ J985 ♦ Q1073 ♣ 1032	N W E S	♠ KJ94 ♥ A102 ♦ K5 ♣ J654
	♠ AQ1076 ♥ K764 ♦ 2 ♣ AK9	

West: This wasn't a great board for us. North opened a weak 2 in Diamonds. Partner doubled – I know it was a bit thin, but I don't blame him as we were at favourable vulnerability. South redoubled which was alerted as showing a good two-way hand, i.e. North was allowed to double or bid as he saw fit. I bid 2♥ and this was passed around to South who doubled. We were told that North was allowed to pull this if he did not have a defensive hand, but he was happy enough and passed it out.

Sally: That looks like a good decision for them. What happened?

West: North led a Spade, to the 9 and 10. South then switched to the ♣A. When he got an encouraging signal he continued with the ♣K and another Club. North won and played a second Spade, covered by the Jack and Queen. South now found the excellent play of a low Spade. I pitched a Diamond and North ruffed low. Now the ♦A and another Diamond, ruffed by South, and a fourth Spade, ruffed by North, with the ♥K still to come, meant five down, –1100!

Sally: Oops. Not a good board for you. They did very well, both in the bidding and the defence.

What about you East? It's a good job you were not playing with West, or we would all be on at you for that rather light double.

East: Nothing very exciting. I did not double 2♦ and South jumped to 3NT.

Sally: How did the defence go?

East: Partner led a low Heart to the ♥Q and my Ace. I returned the ♥10, ducked, and continued with a third Heart won by declarer (who pitched a Diamond). Declarer now played a Club to dummy and a Spade to his 10. He then played a Diamond to dummy's Ace and took

another Spade finesse, followed by the ♠A and a fourth Spade. He had nine top tricks now. There didn't seem to be very much we could do. What happened to you?

Sally: Well, it started out with similar bidding to yours, though South just bid 2NT over 2♦, and was only in game because North was maximum – better judgement in my view. The early play went the same way as at your table, but I reasoned that to be playing on Spades, South surely had a singleton Diamond, and I could almost see that he would make nine tricks if I played low on that first Diamond. So, I unblocked the ♦K. That meant that when declarer gave me my Spade trick, I could put partner in with the ♥Q, and he could cash a Heart trick, so declarer lost one Spade, three Hearts and one Diamond.

West: Well defended.

Sally: Declarer could still have succeeded.

West: Really?

Sally: Yes. When Spades turn out to be 4-2, he must change tack (he can see five losers otherwise). He needs to cash his Clubs and exit with a Heart. West wins the Heart and the ♦Q, but has to give dummy the ♦J at trick thirteen.



BY ANDREW ROBSON

MISSING THE BOAT

This deal comes from an all-expert high-stakes rubber. The expert South missed the boat, however.

North-South vulnerable.

	♠ K10965 ♥ A984 ♦ J2 ♣ A3	
♠ J83 ♥ J732 ♦ K75 ♣ 764	N W E S	♠ Q2 ♥ - ♦ AQ109864 ♣ KJ102
	♠ A74 ♥ KQ1065 ♦ 3 ♣ Q985	

W	N	E	S
		1♦	1♥
Pass	4♥	5♦	5♥(*)

(*) Very marginal – bidding five over five is rarely right. Here 5♥ (which North would double) would be two down.

West led a low Diamond, and East won the Ace and returned the Queen, declarer ruffing. At trick three, declarer cashed the King of trumps, and not unsurprisingly given East's bidding, he discarded.

At the table, declarer now played Ace, King and a third Spade, hoping that East would win the third round and be endplayed to lead a minor. No good. West won the Jack of Spades and switched to a Club. Declarer had to play low from dummy, but East could win the King. Down one.

Declarer should have realised that playing for East to have three Spades was doomed to failure – the expert West would ruff the third round (even if East was winning) to switch to a Club through dummy's Ace. Declarer's only chance was

that East held a doubleton Spade honour. The indicated line, after cashing the King of Hearts, is to cash the Ace of Spades then lead to dummy's 10. East wins the Queen but is now endplayed. A Club can be won by declarer's Queen, but a Diamond works no better: declarer ruffs (with the 10), throwing a Club from dummy; he then cashes the Queen of trumps, finesses dummy's 9, cashes the Ace (felling West's Jack) and runs Spades. Eleven tricks and game made. You'll note the King of Diamonds opening lead followed by a Club switch would have left declarer without recourse.

Should East pull?

This deal comes from a late-night high-stake game. Are you a night-owl?

All vulnerable.

	♠ 8742 ♥ 1064 ♦ 632 ♣ QJ3	
♠ Q103 ♥ - ♦ AKJ1098 ♣ K765	N W E S	♠ - ♥ KQJ98753 ♦ Q75 ♣ 42
	♠ AKJ965 ♥ A2 ♦ 4 ♣ A1098	

W	N	E	S
1♦	Pass	4♥	4♠
Dble ⁽¹⁾	Pass	Pass ⁽²⁾	Pass

(1) Can hardly be blamed, holding an extreme misfit, including a defensive trump trick.

(2) Should East remove the double, having already bid his hand? Perhaps, given his Spade void and offensive Queen of partner's Diamonds. Five Hearts would make.

West led the Ace-King of Diamonds. Declarer ruffed and laid down the Ace of Spades, receiving the (expected) bad news as East discarded. At the table, declarer decided to stake all on the Club finesse working (having a seemingly sure loser in Hearts as well as Spades and Diamonds). He led King and 9 of Spades to West, ruffed the Diamond return (high), crossed to the 8 of Spades, then ran the Queen of Clubs. West won the King and, out of Spades in both hands, the roof fell in. Three down.

West is likely to hold the King of Clubs on the auction, but you as declarer can still succeed. After cashing the Ace of Spades and observing East discard, you lead a low Club. Say West wins and leads another Club (as good as anything).

Win in dummy, ruff a third Diamond (eliminating the suit), cash the third and fourth Clubs, then the King of Spades, then the Ace of Hearts (in case West has a singleton – of which he must be stripped), and then (assuming West did not ruff the Ace – no difference) exit with a third Spade.

West wins his Queen of Spades but is endplayed. His forced Diamond return enables declarer to ruff with dummy's last Spade as he gets rid of his Heart loser from hand. Ten tricks and doubled game made.

To watch Andrew's daily instructional videos, including his Strong and Fives channel, go to andrewrobsonbridgecast.com



BIDDING QUIZ

BY GODEFROY DE TESSIÈRES



Godefroy de Tessières invites you to test your bidding skills on nine examples with the same theme. The difficulty increases gradually, but don't assume that level 1 will be easy or that level 3 will be 'inaccessible'! Study each sequence and choose the most accurate bid.

Level 1

1

- ♠ QJ76
- ♥ K72
- ♦ AKQ32
- ♣ 6

W	N	E	S
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

2

- ♠ A73
- ♥ KJ6
- ♦ AKQJ7
- ♣ 63

W	N	E	S
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

3

- ♠ Q102
- ♥ KQJ2
- ♦ KQ5
- ♣ AQ9

W	N	E	S
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
?			

Level 2

4

- ♠ KJ96
- ♥ AQ2
- ♦ AQJ32
- ♣ 2

W	N	E	S
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

5

- ♠ A3
- ♥ AJ76
- ♦ AQJ752
- ♣ 6

W	N	E	S
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

6

- ♠ Q2
- ♥ K872
- ♦ KJ964
- ♣ A9

W	N	E	S
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

7

- ♠ KQ32
- ♥ 72
- ♦ AKQ764
- ♣ 2

W	N	E	S
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

Level 3

8

- ♠ A653
- ♥ 4
- ♦ QJ974
- ♣ KQ5

W	N	E	S
1♦	Pass	1NT	Pass
?			

9

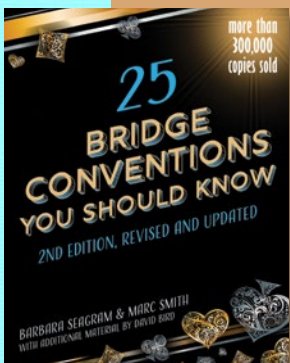
- ♠ 4
- ♥ AK64
- ♦ KQ5
- ♣ AKQ32

W	N	E	S
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
?			

10

- ♠ 4
- ♥ KQ92
- ♦ AQJ64
- ♣ 832

W	N	E	S
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
?			



BARBARA SEAGRAM & MARC SMITH

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→ SOLUTIONS

Level 1

- 1** 3♠ = 10
4♣ = 6
2♠ = 4
A perfect collection for a raise to the three-level, showing a hand of 15–17HCP (thus unbalanced because we did not open 1NT), which corresponds to a strength of 17 to 19HLD. We lack a little strength to force to game with a Splinter of 4♣.
- 2** 2NT = 10
3♦ = 4
Without a fit and with a balanced hand, we of course rebid No-Trump. The jump to 2NT shows 18–19HL but does not promise stoppers in all suits. The jump to 3♦ is reserved for suits with at least six cards.
- 3** 3NT = 10
4♥ = 8
3♥ = 4
This 19-count warrants a game-forcing action. A jump to 4♥ is generally reserved for 5–4–2–2 hands. With balanced hands, it is preferable to bid 3NT conventionally to show support and 18–19HCP in a 4–3–3–3 or 4–4–3–2 shape.

Level 2

- 4** 4♣ = 10
4♠ = 8
3♠ = 4
These 20HLD allow you to confidently consider a game, or even a slam, if partner has the right cards. With this in mind, it is important to precisely describe the fit and Club shortness to partner so that he can assess the quality of his honors.
- 5** 2♥ = 10
3♦ = 4
The jump to 3♦ does indeed promise six cards in a hand of 15–17HCP (17–19HL), but it denies four Hearts. It is essential to describe this two-suiter (strong: 18 HL or more) on the second round of bidding.
- 6** 1NT = 10
2♦ = 6
Hands with a 5–4–2–2 distribution are considered "semi-balanced" and can be treated like balanced hands if no other bid describes them better. The mediocre quality of the Diamond suit and even more so the honors in the doubletons suggest a rebid of 1NT.
- 7** 4♦ = 10
4♣ = 6
3♠ = 4
This hand is strong enough to force a game (the Ace of Spades opposite would be sufficient to make 4 Spades playable) and it is important to give the responder precise information in view of a possible slam. The fundamental information is of course the presence of a source of tricks in Diamonds. There is a clear advantage, therefore, to the 4♦ bid (which shows six Diamonds and four Spades in a game-going hand) over the 4♣ Splinter bid.

Level 3

- 8** 2♣ = 10
2♦ = 6
Pass = 5
The 1NT response indicates a maximum of three Hearts and at least seven cards in the minors, which makes minor-suit contracts much preferable to 1 No-Trump. We are sure of a minor-suit fit but we don't know in which suit: the best bid is a small lie at 2♣, which gives the choice to responder.
- 9** 3♦ = 10
3♠ = 7
4♥ = 4
With this two-suited hand, it is mandatory to open at the one-level despite the 21HCP. At the second round, the hand becomes too strong (24HLD) for a simple Splinter (which is usually in the range of 20–22HLD). The solution is a Superforcing at 3♦, which shows the Heart support, Spade shortness and a hand of at least 23HLD.
- 10** 3♥ = 10
2♥ = 7
A simple raise to 2♥ seems obvious with only 12HCP. And this is, by the way, the bid we would have made without South's intervention. But after an intervention, things are not quite the same anymore. The jump to 3♥ is made with beautiful and unbalanced hands in the range of 12–14HCP to give precise information to partner who will thus be able to make the right decisions in a competitive situation. A jump to 4♥ would show a hand of 15–17 HCP and the cuebid promises support and a hand in the range of 18+.





THE RIGHT PATH

BY JÉRÉMIE TIGNEL



THIS MONTH...

THIS MONTH YOU ARE LUCKY TO HOLD HALF THE POINTS OF THE DECK: MAKE THE MOST OF THEM! HERE IS YOUR HAND AS SOUTH:

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

You open 2NT and your partner bids 3♥.

What is your rebid?

It is now fashionable to play that accepting a major-suit transfer after a 2NT opening shows support: 3♠ (15 points) is therefore correct. Jumping to 4♠ (20 points) however is more descriptive because it shows four trumps and all the controls. Over 4♠, partner asks for keycards. You respond 5♦ and he bids 6♣.

What does the 6♣ bid mean?

This is a grand slam try, whose meaning depends on the way you would respond to 5NT (asking for Kings). If, like the majority of advanced players, you respond by bidding your lowest King, 6♣ is asking for a third-round control in Clubs (Queen or doubleton). Give yourself 20 points if you gave this excellent explanation. Here, you answer negatively and bid 6♠, which is the final contract. This is the full auction:

	W	N	E	S
				2NT
	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♠
	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
	Pass	6♣	Pass	6♠

Test yourself a little before you discover the dummy, assuming that 6♣ was indeed asking for a third-round control in Clubs.

By inference, what do you learn about North's hand?

This grand slam try shows that your side has all the keycards and the Queen of trumps: Without it, North would have either signed off in 6♠ or asked for the Queen (5♥). It follows that your partner has the King and Queen (5 points) of Spades. Well done, however, if you do not completely agree with this conclusion: North can indeed have six Spades to the King (without the Queen) and knowing that your side has ten trumps does not care about the Queen. This insight earns you 10 bonus points. Finally, North also has the King of Clubs since he did not ask you about it, and he must have long Clubs, probably four, since he is looking for the Queen or a doubleton in this suit in your hand (15 points). Let's get back to the play. West leads the Jack of Diamonds and you discover the dummy.

	♠ KQ987 ♥ Q5 ♦ K4 ♣ K764	
	N W E S	
	♠ A J 10 3 ♥ A J 10 ♦ A Q ♣ A 8 5 2	

What simple chance does your contract depend on?

You have one Heart loser and one or two Club losers, depending on how the suit breaks. If the Heart finesse succeeds (20 points), you can easily bring home twelve tricks. You win the Diamond lead with the Queen (East following with the 2) and draw trumps in three rounds (East discards the Heart 2 and the Diamond 3). You are about to cross back to dummy to try the Heart finesse when you suddenly have second thoughts.

Under what circumstances, and how, can you still make your contract if West holds the King of Hearts?

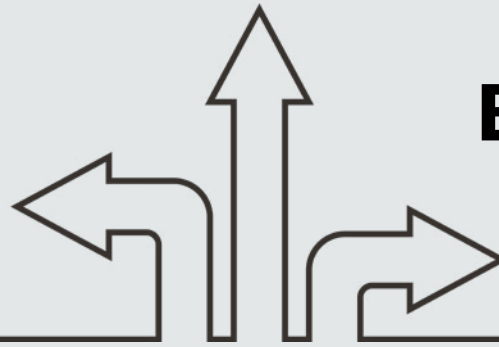
An unsuccessful Heart finesse defeats your contract because you will inevitably lose a Club. You realise that if the King of Hearts is offside, you can only make the contract if West is forced to lead away from his King of Hearts. This can only happen if he wins the third round of Clubs, provided you have eliminated the Diamond suit beforehand. The correct line of play becomes clear. You win the Diamond lead, draw trumps, cash the second Diamond and play two rounds of Clubs. If they split badly (4-1), you simply fall back on the Heart finesse. If they are 3-2, you exit with a Club. Either East wins and exits with a Heart, in which case the fate of your contract again depends on the finesse; or West gets in with the third Club, and your **elimination and endplay** allows you to make your contract regardless of where

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BRIDGE THREE WAYS



BY MARK HORTON



the King of Hearts lies. Award yourself **20** points for this excellent line of play.

	♠ KQ987 ♥ Q5 ♦ K4 ♣ K764	
♠ 652 ♥ K43 ♦ J1095 ♣ QJ3	N W E S	♠ 4 ♥ 98762 ♦ 87632 ♣ 109
	♠ AJ103 ♥ AJ10 ♦ AQ ♣ A852	

To finish, here is a purely theoretical question – a bonus one.

In which case(s) and how can you make your contract when West has three trumps, at least three Hearts to the King but only two Clubs?

If West has the doubleton Queen-Jack of Clubs, you can follow the same line of play, but putting him on lead on the second and not third round of Clubs. Note that West can defeat this manoeuvre when he has the doubleton Queen without the Jack, especially Q10, provided that he has the courage to play the Queen on the first round of Clubs and that East does not forget to insert the Jack on the second. What a defense! Give yourself **10** bonus points if you answered specifically the QJ doubleton but only **5** if you answered the doubleton Queen: bonus points must be earned!

YOUR SCORE

100 points: When are you free to play a tournament with me?

90 points: If your sympathy is like your game level, you must be a courted player.

80 points: Very decent.

70 points: Not so bad.

Less: You will certainly do better next time.

Misdefend this Hand with Me

Based on his best-selling trilogy of books, *Misplay These hands with me*, *Misdefend These Hands with me* and *Misbid These Hands with Me*, Mark Horton shows you how to avoid misplaying, misdefending and misbidding hands.

Deflection

In a knock out match during a major championship, I pick up these cards: Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ K94
♥ 7
♦ 53
♣ KJ85432

When East has nothing to say, I open 3♣. When West overcalls 4♥ and East responds 4♠, promising a Spade control with Heart support, that is enough for West to jump to 6♥, which leaves us with this auction:

W	N	E	S
		Pass	3♣
4♥	Pass	4♠	Pass
6♥			

My partner leads the ♣Q and this is what I can see:

	N W E S	♠ AQ103 ♥ 432 ♦ 1087 ♣ A96
		♠ K94 ♥ 7 ♦ 53 ♣ KJ85432

Declarer wins with dummy's ♣A, cashes the ♥AKQ (partner following with the ♥869) and then plays the ♠8 to dummy's Queen. I win with the ♠K and play the ♣K. Declarer ruffs, takes the ♦A and cashes two more Hearts. On the last of these, my partner, down to ♠J65 ♦Q6 has no answer. When he discards a

Spade, declarer cashes the ♦K and then plays a Spade to the 10 to land his slam.

This was the full deal:

Dealer East. All Vul.

	♠ J652 ♥ 986 ♦ Q642 ♣ Q7	
♠ 87 ♥ AKQJ105 ♦ AKJ9 ♣ 10	N W E S	♠ AQ103 ♥ 432 ♦ 1087 ♣ A96
	♠ K94 ♥ 7 ♦ 53 ♣ KJ85432	

Post Mortem

After winning with the ♠K, to break up the impending squeeze against partner I must return a Spade into the jaws of death!

It's worth noting that without a Club lead declarer can make twelve tricks by playing to squeeze North in Spades and Diamonds, using the ♣A, still there, as the squeezing card.

In the other room, our team stopped in 4 Hearts so we lost 13 IMPs.

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LET'S BID, PARTNER!

BY PETE HOLLANDS

Find East's hands on page 25 and the comments on page 26.

WEST'S HANDS

- ♠ Q76
 - ♥ 1086
 - ♦ Q
 - ♣ AKJ1076

Dealer North. All Vul. North opens 1♠ and South raises to 2♠.

- ♠ 2
 - ♥ A854
 - ♦ KJ98
 - ♣ A952

Dealer East. None Vul. South opens 1♠, North raises to 2♠ and South bids 3♠.

- ♠ AQ76
 - ♥ K
 - ♦ 1072
 - ♣ J7653

Dealer South. None Vul. North opens 1♦ and rebids 2♥.

- ♠ KJ85
 - ♥ -
 - ♦ 107543
 - ♣ AK96

Dealer South. E/W Vul. South opens 1♥ and North raises to 4♥.

- ♠ KJ1074
 - ♥ A10865
 - ♦ J4
 - ♣ 6

Dealer South. None Vul. North opens 1♦ and South raises to 3♦.

- ♠ A973
 - ♥ KJ9
 - ♦ 8
 - ♣ AJ1064

Dealer South. None Vul. South opens 1♦ and North jumps to 3♦.

DEFENCE AGENCY

BY MATTHIAS HUBERSCHWILLER



CLASSIFIED
BRIDGERAMA+ DEPARTMENT

	♠ Q1074 ♥ QJ83 ♦ K10 ♣ AJ8	
	N W E S	♠ 93 ♥ A1064 ♦ 8752 ♣ 1074

	W	N	E	S
				1NT
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
	Pass	4♠		

Lead: ♥9.

How do you see the play developing?

	♠ 94 ♥ J103 ♦ KQJ103 ♣ 862	
	N W E S	♠ J10763 ♥ K64 ♦ A72 ♣ Q7

	W	N	E	S
				1♣
	Pass	1♦	Pass	2NT
	Pass	3NT		

Lead: ♥5, for the Jack from dummy.

What will you do?

	♠ QJ9 ♥ J1093 ♦ K1083 ♣ A4	
♠ 63 ♥ AKQ ♦ QJ54 ♣ QJ62	N W E S	

	W	N	E	S
				1♠
	Dble	2♥(*)	Pass	2♠
	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠

(*) Spade fit, positive.

Lead: ♥A, East follows with the 2.

How do you plan the defense?



LET'S BID, PARTNER!

BY PETE HOLLANDS

Find West's hands page 24
and the comments on page 26.

EAST'S HANDS

1. ♠ J
♥ AKQ7
♦ 9432
♣ Q954
Dealer North. All Vul. North opens 1♠ and South raises to 2♠.

2. ♠ 643
♥ 6
♦ A753
♣ QJ1076
Dealer East. None Vul.
South opens 1♠, North raises to 2♠
and South bids 3♠.

3. ♠ KJ10852
♥ QJ8
♦ -
♣ AKQ9
Dealer South. None Vul. North
opens 1♦ and rebids 2♥.

4. ♠ Q7642
♥ 1098
♦ A6
♣ Q75
Dealer South. E/W Vul. South opens
1♥ and North raises to 4♥.

5. ♠ AQ85
♥ KQJ9
♦ 5
♣ Q752
Dealer South. None Vul. North
opens 1♦ and South raises to 3♦.

6. ♠ QJ852
♥ AQ62
♦ 105
♣ 97
Dealer South. None Vul. South
opens 1♦ and North jumps to 3♦.

DURING YOUR BRIDGE CAREER, YOU SPEND HALF OF YOUR TIME DEFENDING. MAKE USE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PERFECT YOUR SKILLS IN THAT AREA!

You have no other entry outside the Ace of Hearts. If partner's lead is a singleton, you need to win immediately to give him the ruff. But is this possible? No. South answered 2♠ to North's Stayman, so he does not have four Hearts and partner's 9 must be from a doubleton. Play a low Heart, a hold-up play intended to maintain communication. When partner regains the lead with the King of Spades, he will play another Heart, and you will take the Ace and give him a ruff.

	♠ Q1074 ♥ QJ83 ♦ K10 ♣ AJ8	
♠ K52 ♥ 95 ♦ A9643 ♣ 962	N W E S	♠ 93 ♥ A1064 ♦ 8752 ♣ 1074
	♠ AJ86 ♥ K72 ♦ QJ ♣ KQ53	

Holding the third Ace of Diamonds, you know that you can "kill" the dummy by holding up twice if necessary. But if you insert the King of Hearts, you give South the opportunity to enter dummy with the 10 of Hearts. Can your partner hold Ace-Queen of Hearts? No, because in that case South would only have 17HCP. You can therefore safely play a low Heart. When South plays on Diamonds, you will duck twice (when West follows with the 9 and 6). Declarer will try to find his ninth trick in Clubs, to no avail.

	♠ 94 ♥ J103 ♦ KQJ103 ♣ 862	
♠ Q52 ♥ Q985 ♦ 96 ♣ J943	N W E S	♠ J10763 ♥ K64 ♦ A72 ♣ Q7
	♠ AK8 ♥ A72 ♦ 854 ♣ AK105	

You hope that partner's 2 is from three cards, but you are still missing one trick. East cannot have the King of Clubs because that would only leave 11 points for South who would then not have accepted the invitation. If you play passively, South will have enough time to set up dummy's Heart. You therefore need to attack the Diamond suit, even if it does not look very inviting. But be careful. If you play the Queen, South will win in hand and then play a Diamond towards dummy's 10. You need to give him a chance to go wrong by playing a small Diamond. South will call for the 8 from dummy, playing for split honors and the 9 in your hand. You will win the battle of the red suits!

	♠ QJ9 ♥ J1093 ♦ K1083 ♣ A4	
♠ 63 ♥ AKQ ♦ QJ54 ♣ QJ62	N W E S	♠ 874 ♥ 752 ♦ 97 ♣ 109753
	♠ AK1052 ♥ 864 ♦ A62 ♣ K8	



LET'S BID, PARTNER!

BY PETE HOLLANDS



TAKEOUT DOUBLES AT THE ONE-LEVEL

1. WEST EAST
 Dealer North. All Vul.
 North opens 1♠ and South raises to 2♠.

♠ Q76	♠ J
♥ 1086	♥ AKQ7
♦ Q	♦ 9432
♣ AKJ1076	♣ Q954

W	N	E	S
	1♠	Dble	2♠
5♣			

When East doubles, West has enough to jump to game.

2. WEST EAST
 Dealer East. None Vul. South opens 1♠, North raises to 2♠ and South bids 3♠.

♠ 2	♠ 643
♥ A854	♥ 6
♦ KJ98	♦ A753
♣ A952	♣ QJ1076

W	N	E	S
		Pass	1♠
Dble	2♠	3♣	3♠
4♣	Pass	5♣	

When West raises Clubs, East, appreciating that partner is marked with at most a singleton Spade, goes on to game.

3. WEST EAST
 Dealer South. None Vul.
 North opens 1♦ and rebids 2♥.

♠ AQ76	♠ KJ10852
♥ K	♥ QJ8
♦ 1072	♦ -
♣ J7653	♣ AKQ9

W	N	E	S
			Pass
Pass	1♦	Dble	Pass
1♠	2♥	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♠			

East starts with a takeout double, intending to bid Spades on the next round. When West introduces the suit, East makes a void showing jump in Diamonds. When West shows a Heart control, East does the same in Clubs and West jumps to the cold slam.

4. WEST EAST
 Dealer South. E/W Vul.
 South opens 1♥ and North raises to 4♥.

♠ KJ85	♠ Q7642
♥ -	♥ 1098
♦ 107543	♦ A6
♣ AK96	♣ Q75

W	N	E	S
			1♥
Dble	4♥	4♠	

When North jumps to 4♥, East has an easy 4♠ bid.

5. WEST EAST
 Dealer South. None Vul.
 North opens 1♦ and South raises to 3♦.

♠ KJ1074	♠ AQ85
♥ A10865	♥ KQJ9
♦ J4	♦ 5
♣ 6	♣ Q752

W	N	E	S
			Pass
Pass	1♦	Dble	3♦
4♦	Pass	4♥	

When South jumps in support of Diamonds, West bids 4♦ to show both majors.

6. WEST EAST
 Dealer South. None Vul.
 South opens 1♦ and North jumps to 3♦.

♠ A973	♠ QJ852
♥ KJ9	♥ AQ62
♦ 8	♦ 105
♣ AJ1064	♣ 97

W	N	E	S
			1♦
Dble	3♦	3♠	Pass
4♠			

When North jumps to 3♦, East has enough to introduce the Spades and West has an easy raise to game.

Pete Hollands started playing when he was 14 and is now a professional bridge player & teacher (www.bridgevid.com) who has represented the Australian open team. He runs a popular YouTube channel (Pete Hollands Bridge) where you can play tournaments and compare with him. He won two silver medals in the 2013 World Junior Championships.



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BRIDGE
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PROVIDES THE ANSWERS



BY PATTY TUCKER

Two questions from the
English Senior Trials.

The Right Path

Dealer West. E/W Vul. IMPs.

♠ Q762
♥ 62
♦ 963
♣ AKQ10

Open Room

W	N	E	S
	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

What do you consider to be the best way to approach the West hand after partner's opening bid?

I personally would show a 4-card limit raise (my partnership plays Bergen) and accept any game try. I have no way to know if the AKQ of Clubs are valuable.

If partner has shortness in Clubs or 'soft' holdings in Diamonds, we may have three losers immediately. I can think of several hands with solid opening bids that have no chance for game: ♠AJxxx ♥Kx ♦Axx ♣xxx or ♠AKxxx ♥KQx ♦Qxx ♣xx. I have a lot of sympathy for a partner who chose to bid 2♣, but if you opt for

that, you should downplay your hand for the remainder of the auction.

The American Bridge Teachers Association is a networking organization of bridge teachers, authors, and anyone interested in the future of bridge. Its aim is to help those who teach bridge to do it better, more effectively, more knowledgeably and more professionally throughout Canada, the United States and Mexico. Send your bridge related question to markhorton007@hotmail.com – it might appear in this column!

What's it worth

Dealer North. E/W Vul. IMPs.

♠	N	♠
J9		A72
KQJ842	W	♥9765
♦A	E	♦K107
♣KQ92	S	♣A108

After North passes as dealer, would you open as East?

Playing strong NT opening bids, I would pass.

If you Pass and West opens 1♥, how

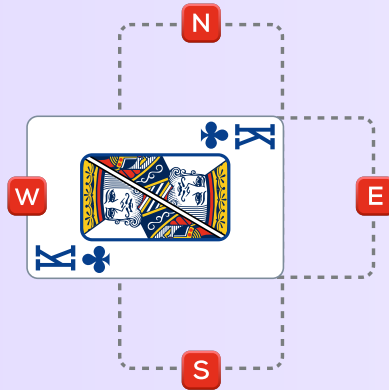
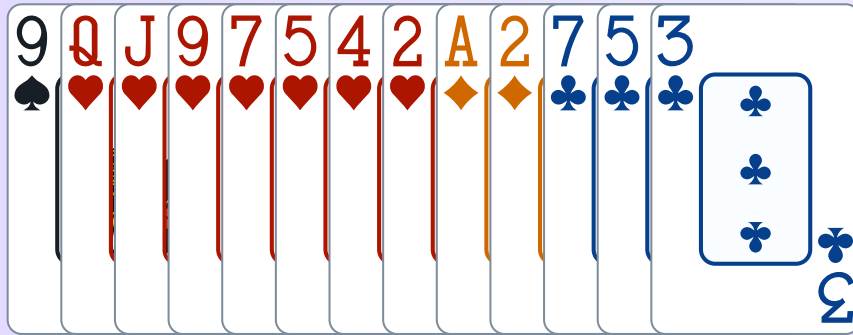
do you think the bidding should go?

My partnership plays two-way reverse Drury so I would bid 2♦, always intending to bid again if partner bids 2♥. With the hand that West holds, I would expect he would bid 3♣ (ostensibly a Help Suit Game Trial), at which point I would bid 3♠, showing help in Clubs and the ♠A. My partnership has very definite descriptions of 'help', so partner will know I either have a singleton Club and four trumps or the ♣A. Based on my 3♠ bid, I think they will conclude ♣A and ♠A and something else (for my 2♦ bid). I think we will reach slam.



SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO:
BRIDGERAMA@LEBRIDGEUR.COM

Sophia Baldysz made **4♥**
on this deal.



Do you think you can do it?

Play the deal

