

LE BRIDGEUR PRESENTS

BRIDGE RAMA+

THE MAGAZINE THAT IMPROVES YOUR GAME!

ISSUE 69

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PAGE 18

GOING THROUGH
THE CARD
FREAKISH
FUN

PAGE 19

THE ROBSON TOUCH
DOUBLE
ENDPLAY

2026

SAFE HARBOR

STEP BY STEP DECLARER PLAY

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EDITORIAL

BY MARK HORTON

THIS MONTH
N°694 BRIDGE WITH
LARRY COHEN

NEWS 8

IN THE
SPOTLIGHT P.10STEP BY STEP
DECLARER PLAY P.11PLAY WITH JÉRÔME
& LÉO ROMBAUT P.1214 WHOSE
FAULT IS IT?THE EXAMPLE
OF THE CHAMPIONS P.16GOING
THROUGH
THE CARD P.18THE ROBSON
TOUCH P.19THE SUNDAY
NIGHT
QUESTION P.20

MATCHPOINT PAIRS P.21

SECRETS OF
DECLARER PLAY P.22STRICTLY
CONFIDENTIAL P.2324 DEFENCE
AGENCYLET'S BID,
PARTNER! P.2627 ABTA PROVIDES
THE ANSWERSA VU OF
THE BRIDGE

FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER MAJOR BRIDGE EVENTS HAVE OPERATED WITH WHAT HAS BECOME KNOWN AS A VUGRAPH THEATRE,

a place where spectators can follow the play described by a panel of experts. The best commentators combine analytical skill with a sense of humour, which is essential during the quieter moments. At the famous Sunday Times Pairs in London when Omar Sharif produced a brilliancy Boris Schapiro asked his co-commentator Terence Reese what he thought about it. "It's the best thing he's done since Dr. Zhivago" was his acerbic reply.

In 1997 I was commentating at the World Team Championships in Hammamet, Tunisia, with Billy Eisenberg and Eric Kokish. At one point during the round robin phase the scores of the top eight teams were displayed and Australia was in second place. When Eric asked if anyone knew why they were doing so well, I suggested to the audience that "perhaps its because they are the only team not coached by Eric Kokish."

In Montreal in 2002 Barry Rigal was commentating with Eric. At one point he informed the audience, "With that result Italy's lead goes up to 69, and that's a very good position to be in."

At Maastricht in 2000 the demand for VuGraph was so great that the Dutch organisers operated two huge theatres that were filled to capacity. However, there has been a gradual decline in the number of spectators, and at the recent World Team Championships in Herning, the WBF decided to dispense with a theatre style presentation, although when Denmark reached the final of the Bermuda Bowl an ad hoc theatre with coverage on BBO and commentary by David Burn was provided.

At the Fall Nationals in San Francisco, the ACBL covered the Reisinger with its Bridgecast Live – a rotating cast of experts analyzing the deals as play was transmitted on the YouTube Bridgecast livestream show.

Could this type of presentation become the norm in the future?

LEARN!

TWO-OVER-ONE GF

[PART 9: AFTER A TWO-LEVEL RESPONSE]

Larry Cohen continues his series about the most popular bidding system, this month examining opener's rebid after the response of 2♦ or 2♥.

In recent months we've been discussing the 2♣ response to 1-of-a-major. What if the response is 2♦ or 2♥? Not too much changes. The auctions we will be examining this month are:

W	E	W	E	W	E
1♠	2♦	1♥	2♦	1♠	2♥
?		?		?	

All three responses are still "natural," but while the 2♦ response might be only a 4-card suit, the 2♥ response guarantees at least five Hearts. Of course, the only 2/1 auction with a 2♥ response is: 1♠-2♥. Why does it guarantee five? We don't fool around with the majors (the same way we don't open a 4-card major). Without five Hearts, we manufacture a 2/1 response in one of the minors (usually a 2♣ response). When we are making a 2/1 response, and don't have any five-card suits to respond in, the suit we lie about is a minor. We will always have at least a 4-card suit to respond with (because if our only 4-card suit was support for partner, we would begin with a Jacoby 2NT response).

What if partner opens 1♠ and we have something like: ♠Qxx ♥AJxx ♦Axx ♣Kxx? Assume there is no systemic response available that shows a balanced 13+ (some use 3NT for this). Assume 1NT is not completely forcing. Then what? Don't "lie" with the 4-card Heart suit. Instead, lie in a minor, preferably by responding 2♣. Partner won't play you for a 3-card suit, but he will be in no hurry to drag you into 5♣ without exploring for other contracts. You will surely be correcting back to Spades.

SUMMARY

The 2/1 response is almost always 4+ cards (natural) in a minor, but very rarely 3 cards if stuck. The 2♥ response (which comes only after a 1♠ opening) guarantees 5+ Hearts.

After the 2♦ response

The auction has started either 1♠-2♦ or 1♥-2♦. Opener bids naturally/normally as in previous instalments of this series. Jumps are specialized (see last month's article).

Opener shows his shape. There isn't as much space after a 2♦ response, particularly after 1♥-2♦. If opener doesn't have a 6-card Heart suit to rebid, he could be stuck. For example: ♠654 ♥AJ765 ♦A2 ♣A42, here is no perfect rebid after 1♥-2♦. 2♥ would show six cards. 2NT, while right on strength/shape, feels funny with no Spade stopper. Bidding Spades or Clubs with three or raising Diamonds with two doesn't make sense. So, it is a question of "which lie" to tell. Some pairs lie by repeating the 5-card Heart suit. I'd prefer to lie with 2NT. If partner raises to 3NT and they run five Spade tricks, life will go on. However, this isn't likely to happen. When partner bids 3NT, he surely won't have a singleton Spade (if he did, he would have had some other more descriptive bid available at his second turn to bid out his shape). I'd rather keep the 2♥ rebid as guaranteeing six cards. I draw the line at rebidding 2NT with a small doubleton. The alternative in that case would be to raise partner's minor on three cards. Remember that both players will head towards five of the minor only as a last resort (preferring to explore for 3NT or four of the major).

After the 2♥ Response

Nothing special. The only 2/1 auction with a 2♥ response is: 1♠-2♥. Rebidding 2♠ "promises" six or more. Rebidding 2NT would tend to be exactly 5=2=3=3 shape. Bidding a minor shows 4+ cards there and does not promise extras.

QUIZ

What would you rebid as opener after:

W	N	E	S
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
?			

1	2	3	4
♠ KJ872	♠ AKQ652	♠ AKQJ742	♠ AQJ53
♥ 63	♥ 3	♥ K6	♥ K854
♦ 5	♦ KQ2	♦ 98	♦ AKQ
♣ AQJ62	♣ A72	♣ 52	♣ 4



BRIDGE WITH LARRY COHEN

www.larryco.com



5	6	7	8
♠ J7654	♠ AK652	♠ KQ987	♠ AKQ98
♥ KQJ	♥ A2	♥ K862	♥ 7
♦ 6	♦ AQ92	♦ A982	♦ J987
♣ AQ65	♣ 76	♣ -	♣ K62

9

♠ A9875
♥ 52
♦ KQ3
♣ A32

Answers

- 1** 3♣ I don't recommend, as some do, that this shows extra values. Already in a GF, just bid out shape.
- 2** 2♠ Repeat the 6-card suit and don't jump when it isn't solid. You can raise Diamonds later if need be.
- 3** 3♠ As per last month's article
- 4** 2♥ Bid out your shape, don't jump. No rush to raise Diamonds.
- 5** 3♣ Don't distort by rebidding notrump with a singleton.
- 6** 3♦ Support with four.
- 7** 2♥ Majors first – you might have a 4-4 Heart fit.
- 8** 3♥ Splinter raise.
- 9** 3♦ The least of evils. Avoid a 2NT rebid with a small side doubleton

QUIZ

What would you rebid as opener after:

W	N	E	S
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

1	2	3
♠ KJ872	♠ AKJ65	♠ A8742
♥ 63	♥ 32	♥ KQ6
♦ 5	♦ KQ2	♦ 98
♣ AQJ62	♣ 872	♣ K52

Answers

- 1** 3♣ Bid out your shape.
- 2** 2NT To show a 5-3-3-2 hand.
- 3** 3♥ Since 2♥ guarantees five, you can raise with this kind of hand.

Almost all pairs who use 2/1 GF include 1♦-2♣. As usual in this series, we treat it as 100% GF. The 2♣ response is "natural," but as we've seen in previous months, it could easily be only a 4-card suit. For example, partner opens 1♦ and you hold: ♠A32 ♥642 ♦A42 ♣AQJ3. I would proudly respond 2♣. What if responder has a 4-card major and Clubs? With GF strength, and five Clubs and a 4-card major, I definitely

recommend starting with 2♣. So, with either of these hands:

♠ A654	♠ 8
♥ 65	♥ AJ76
♦ A2	♦ AQ2
♣ AK764	♣ KQ1087

or

I recommend a 2♣ response to 1♦. There will be plenty of time to find a 4-4 major fit if one exists. I even like to respond 2♣ with 4-4 in the major and Clubs. This goes against mainstream thinking, but I find the 2/1 auction is much better than starting with 1-of-a-major and having to later go through fourth-suit forcing. So, I would respond 2♣ to 1♦ with: ♠K876 ♥A2 ♦A76 ♣AQJ9. However, with a good 4-card major and so-so Clubs, I would respond in the major.

More on this topic next month.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Larry Cohen, a 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

Two-Over-One GF

1.

<p>♠ AK9863 ♥ 5 ♦ A982 ♣ 42</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>?</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass	?				<p>A) 3♦ B) 2♣ C) 3♠</p>
W	N	E	S											
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass											
?														

2.

<p>♠ 9 ♥ 86 ♦ AQ1076 ♣ AJ1072</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>?</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			1♥	Pass	?				<p>A) 2♣ B) 2♦ C) 1NT</p>
W	N	E	S											
		1♥	Pass											
?														

3.

<p>♠ A7432 ♥ 54 ♦ KQ7 ♣ A109</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>?</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass	?				<p>A) 2NT B) 2♣ C) 3NT</p>
W	N	E	S											
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass											
?														

4.

<p>♠ K93 ♥ AKQ5 ♦ Q103 ♣ J108</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>?</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			1♠	Pass	?				<p>A) 2♣ B) 4♣ C) 3NT</p>
W	N	E	S											
		1♠	Pass											
?														

5.

<p>♠ AQ7 ♥ AQ92 ♦ KJ103 ♣ 72</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>?</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass	?				<p>A) 4NT B) 4♣ C) 3♠</p>
W	N	E	S															
		1♠	Pass															
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass															
?																		

6.

<p>♠ AK86543 ♥ K106 ♦ - ♣ 1092</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>2♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>?</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♣	Pass	3♣	Pass	?				<p>A) 3NT B) 3♠ C) 4♣</p>
W	N	E	S															
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass															
2♣	Pass	3♣	Pass															
?																		

7.

<p>♠ 85 ♥ 7 ♦ AJ ♣ AKQJ10864</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>2♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>?</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass	?				<p>A) 5♣ B) 3♣ C) 4♣</p>
W	N	E	S															
		1♥	Pass															
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass															
?																		

8.

<p>♠ A5 ♥ A5 ♦ QJ65 ♣ K6532</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>2♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>?</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass	?				<p>A) 3♣ B) 3♦ C) 3NT</p>
W	N	E	S															
		1♠	Pass															
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass															
?																		

**Bidding is not everything
there is in life!**

DECLARER PLAY

Problem 1

♠ K10543
♥ AQ6
♦ 42
♣ A87

Contract: 3 No-Trump.
Lead: West leads the ♥J.

N
W
S

What's your plan?

- a) Win and play three rounds of Spades.
- b) Win in hand and run the ♠9.
- c) Win in dummy and play a Spade to the 9.

♠ A9
♥ K54
♦ K1053
♣ K653

Problem 2

♠ KJ10
♥ J63
♦ KJ
♣ 98762

Contract: 4 Spades.

Lead: West leads the ♥A and continues with the ♥K.

N
W
S

Do you:

- a) Discard a Club?
- b) Ruff and play two rounds of Diamonds?
- c) Ruff and play trumps?

♠ AQ93
♥ 5
♦ AQ852
♣ A43

Problem 3

♠ A
♥ A109
♦ AQ108762
♣ K9

Contract: 6 Hearts (East overcalled 1♠).
West leads the ♠3.

N
W
S

What is your plan?

- a) Draw two rounds of trumps and play a Diamond to the Queen.
- b) Cash the ♥A, play a Club to the Ace and a Diamond to the Queen.
- c) Cash the ♥A and then play two rounds of Diamonds.

♠ 8742
♥ KQJ52
♦ 95
♣ A6



BRIDGE WITH LARRY COHEN

PRACTICAL EXERCISES

THE SOLUTIONS

BIDDING

Two-Over-One GF

- Remember that jumping to 3♠ would promise a solid suit. There is no need to introduce the Diamond suit, the priority being to suggest you have a six-card spade suit.
 - 2♠ =5
 - 3♦ =2
 - 3♠ =1
- Although you have only 11 points the distribution and quality of your suits justify an upgrade. There is no reason to introduce Clubs before Diamonds.
 - 2♦ =5
 - 2♣ =3
 - 1NT =2
- Rebidding Spades would suggest a six-card suit. There is no need to take up bidding space by jumping to 3NT (you could agree that it promised 18-19 balanced).
 - 2NT =5
 - 3NT =2
 - 2♠ =1
- Jumping to 4♠ would suggest a much weaker and more distributional hand. If you play that 3NT promises any 3-3-3-4 with 13-15 this is the near perfect hand for it, although it takes up bidding space. A temporizing 2♣ is the classic solution.
 - 2♣ =5
 - 3NT =4
 - 4♠ =1
- It is generally a bad idea to use Blackwood holding a small doubleton. It would be premature to jump to game. By setting Spades as trumps you allow partner to decide how best to proceed. If the next bid is 4♦ you can sign off in game, knowing a Club control is missing.
 - 3♠ =5
 - 4♠ =3
 - 4NT =2
- Although you have a Heart stopper, 3NT is not a good way to describe your hand. With controls in three suits, you don't need to take up bidding space by jumping to game.
 - 3♠ =5
 - 4♠ =4
 - 3NT =1
- With nine tricks in your hand including a solid suit, a jump to game would be premature. Rebidding 3♣ keeps the ball in play, but jumping to 4♣ to indicate a self-supporting suit is the strongest option.
 - 4♣ =5
 - 3♣ =3
 - 5♣ =1
- You have the stoppers for 3NT, but if game is the limit of your ambition, then it may be safer to play in Spades. You could support Spades, but introducing the Diamonds keeps all avenues open.
 - 3♦ =5
 - 3♠ =3
 - 3NT =2

DECLARER PLAY

Problem 1

Win in dummy and play a Spade to the 9, c).

	♠ K10543 ♥ AQ6 ♦ 42 ♣ A87	
♠ 87 ♥ J1097 ♦ AJ7 ♣ Q1042	N W E S	♠ QJ62 ♥ 832 ♦ Q986 ♣ J9
	♠ A9 ♥ K54 ♦ K1053 ♣ K653	

Playing a Spade to the 9 works when the suit breaks 3-3, when West has the doubleton ♠QJ, and when East has ♠QJxx or a doubleton honor.

Problem 2

Ruff and play two rounds of Diamonds, b).

	♠ KJ10 ♥ J63 ♦ KJ ♣ 98762	
♠ - ♥ AKQ842 ♦ 9643 ♣ KJ5	N W E S	♠ 876542 ♥ 1097 ♦ 107 ♣ Q10
	♠ AQ93 ♥ 5 ♦ AQ852 ♣ A43	

Your best chance is to play for a crossruff. You ruff a third Diamond, return to hand with the ♣A, ruff a Diamond, ruff a Heart, ruff a Diamond taking you up to eight tricks. The ♠AQ will deliver the two more you require.

Problem 3

Cash the ♥A and then play two rounds of Diamonds, c).

	♠ A ♥ A109 ♦ AQ108762 ♣ K9	
♠ 1063 ♥ 8743 ♦ 3 ♣ J8752	N W E S	♠ KQJ95 ♥ 6 ♦ KJ4 ♣ Q1043
	♠ 8742 ♥ KQJ52 ♦ 95 ♣ A6	

As long as trumps are not 5-0, your best chance is to establish the Diamonds. You can ruff a Spade return in dummy, cash the ♥10, ruff a Diamond and draw trumps.

AGENDA

Mixed USBC.

Schaumburg, Illinois.
USA, usb.org
April 22→30.

22

APRIL

12th German Bridge Trophy.

Hannover–Langenhagen.
www.bridge-verband.de
May 22→25.

22

MAY



Canadian Bridge Championship.

Penticton, BC, Canada.
cbf.ca
June 15→21.

15

JUNE

EBL National Team Championships.

Riga, Latvia.
www.eurobridge.org
June 26→July 5.

26

JUNE



Danish Bridge Festival.

Svendborg, Denmark.
www.bridgefestival.dk
July 4→12.

4

JULY

Cards on the Table

Charlecote Park, a grand 16th-century country house on the banks of the River Avon close Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick in England, was owned by the Lucy family from 1247 until it was taken over by the National Trust in 1946. In the holiday season the house takes on a festive atmosphere which was captured by the Editor during a recent visit.



© D.R.

DESTINATION POLAND

The World Bridge Series 2026 will take place in Katowice, Poland, from 20 August to 3 September 2026.

The event will be hosted at the spectacular MCK – International Congress Centre, one of the most important venues for major events in Poland. Designed by JEMS Architekci, the Congress Centre offers vast, flexible spaces and a striking atmosphere that feels both futuristic and industrial, an ideal setting for a world-class international championship.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

The World Bridge Federation and the European Bridge League have announced the appointment of Marc van Beijsterveldt as Online Championships Manager.

Marc will be responsible for the operational management of all future WBF/EBL online events. He will act as the primary point of contact for platform providers, as well as for the relevant WBF committees and staff involved in online events.

For matters related to online championships, he can be contacted at: wbf.online@eurobridge.org

WHATSAPP DOC?

The World Bridge Federation has a redesigned website and has announced the launch of its official WhatsApp Channel.

This will allow everyone to receive verified updates directly from the WBF, including news, information about upcoming events, results and official announcements. Making WBF communications more immediate and accessible ensures that that all members of the bridge community can stay informed quickly wherever they are. You can join the Channel at: <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VbBba627tkjAl4MD4Jlg>



FALSE ALARM

The Editor received an email with this message:
**Easy Live Auction
Merry Bidding!
Celebrate the Season
with Auctions to enjoy**
Alas, it referred to a series of non bridge-related auctions!



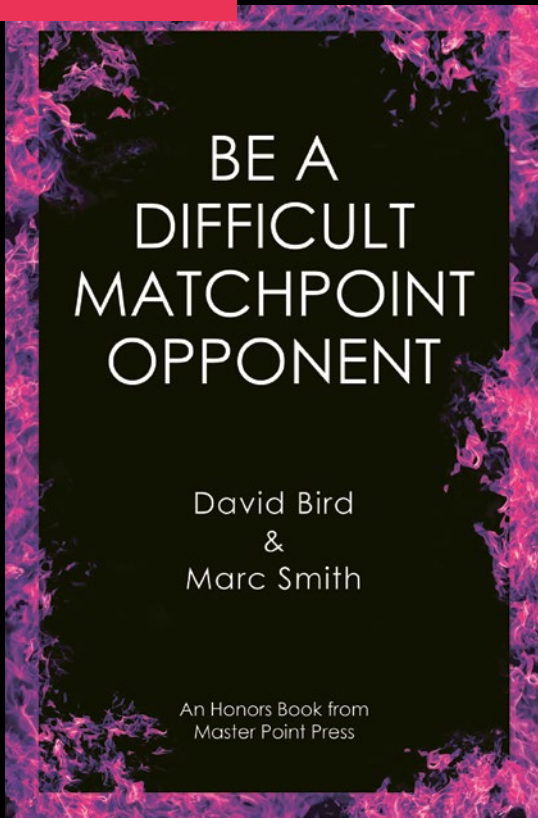
NEWS FLASH

The owner of the Honors Bridge Club in New York, Jeff Bayone, has revealed that CBS News recently paid a visit to the club. The film crew recorded for several hours and the final product (which has been picked up by more than 150 of their affiliates) is likely to be viewed by more than 1,000,000 people. You can watch it at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nYXOE_0trfqHLVYzTlll4A7rgl_be4Yn/view?usp=sharing

**FEEL FREE TO COMMENT AT:
BRIDGERAMA@LEBRIDGEUR.COM**



IN THE SPOTLIGHT



BE A DIFFICULT MATCHPOINT OPPONENT

Marc Smith and David Bird

Whether you play at a club or primarily online, most of your bridge will be at matchpoints. Those who do not vary their strategy to this form of scoring may do well enough, but they will never excel. This book contains over 200 deals, mostly from world championship matchpoint play. You will learn from giants of the game how to finish at the top of the field. The deals are brought to life with some 80 photographs of the world-class players in action. Adopting the tactics and mindset outlined in this book will not only help you win consistently, it will also make the game a lot more fun!

Marc Smith (Southampton, UK) is the author, with Barbara Seagram, of the world's best-selling bridge book in the past sixty years, 25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know. He has written many other bridge books and played successfully in several international championships. He is a popular online bridge teacher, conducting many classes at all levels of play.

David Bird (Southampton, UK) is the world's most prolific bridge writer, with 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.

ABOUT MASTER POINT PRESS



Master Point Press is the world's leading publisher of books on bridge. Master Point Press grew out of Canadian Master Point magazine (1992–1997), founded in Toronto, Canada by Ray and Linda Lee, who began publishing books in 1994. Master Point Press is a part of the 52 Entertainment Group, a mind games specialist.

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



STEP BY STEP DECLARER PLAY

BY NORBERT LÉBELY



REACHING YOUR DESTINATION

TEAMS.

DEALER SOUTH, ALL VUL.

Being the dealer as South, you pick up this two-suited 18-count:

♠ AQ1098
♥ AK65
♦ A7
♣ J10

You open a natural 1♠, and the bidding continues:

W	N	E	S
			1♠
1NT	3♠(*)	Pass	?

(*) Pre-emptive.

What do you do?

Careful not to miss a vulnerable game when playing teams, you add the fourth Spade in the name of your 5-4, the nine-card fit and your four "top cards" (two Aces and Ace-King). West leads the King of Diamonds, and you will soon find out where you stand...

	♠ 7654 ♥ 42 ♦ 65432 ♣ A9	
	N	
	W	E
	S	
	♠ AQ1098 ♥ AK65 ♦ A7 ♣ J10	

Contract: 4 Spades.

Lead: ♦K.

What is your first task?

Given the precise nature of West's 1NT overcall, you should be able to picture his hand easily. Regarding his strength, you can see 18 (you) + 4 (dummy) = 22HCP, so you deduce that he holds almost all the missing honors, including King-Jack of Spades, certainly third.

How many losers do you count in your hand?

Six, with (probably) two in Spades, two in Hearts, one in Diamonds (made immediately after the Diamond lead) and one in Clubs (protected by the Ace).

How do you eliminate three of them?

You can ruff two Hearts and set up a Diamond trick by ruffing (in the most probable case of a 4-2 split), allowing you to discard the Club loser and win ten tricks with three Spades, Ace-King of Hearts, the Ace of Diamonds, the Ace of Clubs, two ruffs in the short hand and one length trick in Diamonds.

What will you need to pay attention to?

To judiciously coordinate all the actions that you need to take in terms of communications and timing. Assuming Diamonds break 4-2, how many times do you need to play the suit? One more than the longest opponent's holding, that is **five times, by immediately attacking the suit and cashing the Ace of trumps in the meantime.**

Let's count together

Ace of Diamonds and a Diamond: **two**. West gets in with the 10 and switches to the King of Clubs, which you win with the Ace. You play another Diamond (**three**) and ruff in hand while East discards a Club. You continue with Ace of Spades, Ace-King of Hearts and a Heart ruff (West shows out on the third round) and ruff another Diamond (**four**). Four cards from the end, the lead in your hand, you have reached:

	♠ 76 ♦ 6 ♣ 9	
♠ KJ ♥ - ♣ Q3	N	♠ - ♥ J ♣ 876
	S	
	♠ Q10 ♥ 6 ♣ J	

You play the 6 of Hearts and:

- If West discards a Club, you ruff and discard the Jack of Clubs on the established 6 of Diamonds (five).
- If West prefers to ruff with the Jack of Spades, discard dummy's 9 of Clubs. In either case, you will concede only one Diamond and two trumps.

	♠ 7654 ♥ 42 ♦ 65432 ♣ A9	
♠ KJ3 ♥ Q10 ♦ KQJ10 ♣ KQ32	N	♠ 2 ♥ J9873 ♦ 98 ♣ 87654
	S	
	♠ AQ1098 ♥ AK65 ♦ A7 ♣ J10	

THE PRINCIPLE

From declarer's point of view, the card play can make you think of a journey, a route to take to get from one point to another. Right from the opening lead, you need to know how many winners you have and find out how to establish the ones that are missing. Once you've set off in the right direction, you need to stay on course, not deviating from your original game plan – all while avoiding any potential pitfalls – and that's how you'll give yourself the best chance of reaching safe harbor.

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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:

♠ A
♥ 65
♦ K643
♣ AK9873

- 1 How do you open that hand?
- 2 Your right-hand opponent opens 1♠. Over to you!
- 3 Your partner opens 1NT, you transfer to Clubs with 2♠, North responds 3♣. What do you bid now?
- 4 They open 3♠ before you. What is your reaction?
- 5 You open 1♣ and your partner responds 1NT. What is your rebid?

6

They open 1♠ to your right, you bid 2♣ and the responder raises to 2♠. After two "Pass", you are in the balancing seat. Will you take any action?

7

You play 3 Clubs by South after the following sequence:

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

West leads the Queen of Spades. How do you see the continuation?

	♠ 9874 ♥ 9842 ♦ AJ2 ♣ J10	
	N	
W	E	
	S	
	♠ A ♥ 65 ♦ K643 ♣ AK9873	

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THE SOLUTIONS

- 1 This first question is quite simple. We have opening strength and an unbalanced hand with a six-card Club suit, so we must normally open 1♣.
- 2 Once again, this question is quite simple. We fill all the criteria for a 2♣ overcall: six Clubs, more than enough points for an overcall, an unbalanced hand and a nice suit. There is no trap; you must bid 2♣.
- 3 Over partner's 1NT opening, we can clearly see a slam, but how should we proceed? Starting with a transfer to Clubs is normal. We then have two options: show Spade shortness by bidding 3♠ or naturally bid 3♦ to show ten cards between the two minors, *a priori* 5-5. Here, bidding 3♦ with a 6-4 seems clever with a view to a slam, to find a fit in Diamonds if partner has two Clubs and four or five Diamonds. What is more, still with slam in mind, showing that you are short in Spades is not necessarily the best thing to do here with the stiff Ace. Partner would devalue the King of Spades or King-Queen of Spades, whereas these cards could be useful for discarding a Heart or two Diamonds. Let's therefore choose to bid 3♦ after the transfer.
- 4 Passing is not an option. However, this pre-empt is problematic because it forces us to bid at a high level. We have two options: bid Clubs at the four-level and go over 3NT despite our Spade stop or bid 3NT. 3NT could be a good bet but with an unbalanced hand, 4♣ seems more reasonable.
- 5 After partner's 1NT response to our 1♣ opening, we are too weak to show our second suit because 2♦ would be a reverse bid and 14 points is too light for that. We could think of jumping to 3♣; we are not far off, and I did consider it but dad would have been right to grumble because there is something missing, like the Jack of Clubs. It is, however, clear that with this unbalanced hand and a six-card suit, we will not pass 1NT. Let's opt for the wise bid of 2♣. If partner has a maximum, nothing prevents him from talking again to find a game contract.
- 6 We can think of passing initially with only six Clubs, two Hearts and 14 points. Showing Diamonds at the

three-level is dangerous. If we don't find a fit, we need to play Clubs at the four-level, which would not be great when partner didn't raise us the first time. But letting the opponents play 2 Spades with a fit when I hold a singleton is against my nature. The technical bid that can be suggested here is 2NT. It is not natural but shows six cards in Clubs and four Diamonds, which allows partner to go back to Clubs at the three-level if he does not like Diamonds. The correct bid is therefore 2NT. Pass is understandable but a bit pessimistic. It is important to fight for the part-score!

- 7 For once, you are playing a simple part-score, but don't let your guard down. True, on days when everything goes well, you could make game in Clubs but here your objective must be to take your nine tricks, without thinking of more. The Spade lead is rather favorable. A trump lead, or even worse, a Heart followed by a trump switch, could have put you in great difficulty. Take advantage of this lead to play the Diamonds safely, in other words, cash the two top honors rather than try any finesse of the Queen. Then simply play a third round of Diamonds. In with the Diamond Queen, the defense will certainly try to play back a trump to prevent you from taking your ruff in the short hand, but this will be too late. You can win the Ace and ruff your last Diamond in dummy, that way ensuring you nine tricks: a Spade, two Diamonds, five trumps from your hand (if the Queen does not fall) and a ruff in dummy. Well done if you weren't too greedy!

The full deal

	♠ 9874 ♥ 9842 ♦ AJ2 ♣ J10	
♠ QJ10 ♥ QJ1073 ♦ 98 ♣ Q65	N W E S	♠ K6532 ♥ AK ♦ Q1075 ♣ 42
	♠ A ♥ 65 ♦ K643 ♣ AK9873	



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:
Who should take the captaincy?

→ **Easy.** ↗ **Average.** ↗ **Difficult.**

Problem 1 →

♠ A9654			
♥ A1082			
♦ 8			
♣ A74			
	N		
	W		E
		S	
♠ KQ82			
♥ K3			
♦ KQ542			
♣ K5			

N/S Vul.

	W	N	E	S
		1♠	Pass	2♦
	Pass	2♥	Pass	3♠
	Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
	Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠

The facts
This is a common type of sequence: both players show their controls, but neither of them sees any good reason to take the captaincy and ask for keycards. Our two young friends explain their points of view.

Arguments

North: "I feel I already made a good effort when I accepted your slam proposal and showed my Club control with only a 12-count, a singleton in your suit and mediocre trump quality. Looking at your hand, how can I have anything else but three Aces?"

South: "You see your three Aces, not me. I cannot ask for keycards with a hand without Aces and no idea of your distribution apart from your two-suiter in the majors. If you respond that you have two keycards, we can easily be in danger at the five-level."

Verdict

South's arguments are indefensible. His hand is close to the pedagogical example of a hand for RKCB. If his

partner responds that he has two Aces (even though that is impossible), he stops in 5♠. Opposite three Aces, he says 6♠ and facing four Aces he bids 7♠ (that too is impossible). Let's now take a closer look at the bids chosen by North, a gifted 16-year-old who fears nothing and no one. The 3♠ bid is a forcing raise in Spades and thus shows slam ambitions. However, opener must not automatically start showing his controls. He can have a large point range for his two-suiter, 11-20HCP. He has several options. Put the foot on the brakes by saying 4♠. Temporize by saying 3NT, a bid that is defined as "Yes but". This shows reservations but agrees to explore further if wanted. Start showing controls with real slam interest. The path chosen by North is certainly optimistic but not devoid of the right judgment. His argumentation proves that he knows it, but looking at three Aces gives him wings. Let's say that the truth is between the two, between 3NT and 4♣. The only disadvantage of his hand is the trump quality, which can lead to reaching a bad slam opposite Queen-third. This disadvantage is suggested by North's 4♥ bid over 4♦. Bidding the last control shows that the hand is not suitable for asking for keycards because of some problem.

The bid responsible for the accident

4♠ over 4♥. South is 100%, responsible. North has done the best he could with his cards to reach the slam.

The correct auction:

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

Problem 2 ↗

♠ KJ108	
♥ A1032	
♦ KQ9	
♣ 74	
N	
W	E
S	
♠ Q6	
♥ KQ984	
♦ A5	
♣ AQ83	

N/S Vul.

	O	N	E	S
				1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	Pass	4♥

The facts

This time, it is the apparent absence of a control that is responsible for the accident. However, the error seems to be due to a technical failure rather than poor judgment at the critical moment.

Arguments

North: "I didn't have the courage to bid on over 4♥, despite my control in Spades. You bid the same way without the Queen of Spades and then the slam becomes very bad."

South: "I don't think you have the right to pass with a Spade control. I understand that you don't ask for keycards yourself but you must continue the bidding by saying 4♣ over 4♥. I did see that I had more points than I told you so far and you surely have a control in Spades but I can't bring myself to ask for keycards without controls in all the suits."

Verdict

This is a trickier problem and it can only be solved with a more extensive arsenal of slam bids than our pair disposes of. All was said in the arguments of these two players.

North saw that he had a Spade control and he may have bid on over 4♥ with the Ace of Spades, but he did not dare with the King. South, on the other hand, says that North has nothing to think about, he has the obligation to bid on as soon as he has a Spade control. And that is the whole question. The 4♥ is responsible for the accident. It shows the lack of a Spade control, but it does not oblige partner to bid on if he has it. It is a transfer of captaincy.

But here, South must instead take the captaincy of the bidding by using the technical bid of 5♥ over 4♦, explicitly asking partner about a Spade control. North then has three options: Pass without a control, 6♥ with second round control and 5♠ with first round control (in that case, he can also bid a side-suit Ace).

The bid responsible for the accident

4♥ by South. South is 100% responsible.

The correct auction:

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

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Problem 3 ↑

♠ 2	
♥ AQ864	
♦ A54	
♣ Q873	
N	
W	E
S	
♠ K4	
♥ 2	
♦ KQ63	
♣ KJ9542	

N/S Vul.

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

The facts

Clubs is often a tricky trump suit when it comes to going from the five-level to the six-level. Some believe that the RKCB response system is to blame. What about it? Could either player have avoided propelling

his side to a slam when they were missing two Aces?

Arguments

North: "I suspected that you would be disappointed with my hand, but I did not imagine that we could miss two Aces. I do have a minimum, but I take responsibility for every one of my bids, even if you obviously don't agree at all."

South: "Don't you feel that you have shown a hand in the 14-16 range after first showing a forcing raise, then going over 3NT and finally bidding a Spade control that was already implied by your previous bids? The only problem I have left is the number of keycards, and the only way to find out is to bid RKCB. It really is time to switch to responding 14-30!"

Verdict

North defends his bids while South accuses him on three points. And it is perhaps this misunderstanding that is at the root of the final accident. The 3♣ bid is indeed game forcing but limited in the range of 11+ -16 HCP and is therefore automatic. The 3♦ bid is no less obvious. It is primarily used to seek a Spade stopper to play 3 No-Trumps, but it can also be an early control bid. South has no intention of playing 3 No-Trumps with his cards. What do you think of the 4♦ bid? It is perfect. It describes North's distribution exactly and shows the Ace of Diamonds (exceptionally the King) and a singleton in Spades. So, yes, there's still some doubt about the force and yes, North sounds more like a hand with 14-16HCP than 11-13. South finally reproaches the 4♠ bid, which repeats what has already been said, a singleton in Spades. Curiously, this is the key bid of the sequence, the one that shows the limits of North's hand **because he did not ask for keycards**. This is once again the fourth suit, which shows a refusal to take the captaincy. Here, it is for lack of material, but it could also be to show a void (but this would soon be known). And, in the end, the only mistake of the sequence is this forbidden keycard blackwood with Clubs as trumps and only one keycard, unless partner is known to have a very strong hand.

The bid responsible for the accident

4NT by South. South is 100% responsible.

The correct auction:

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



THE EXAMPLE OF THE CHAMPIONS

BY NICOLAS LHUISSIER



Report

E-Open of the French bridge federation, pairs.

You find yourself in the shoes of international director Aurélien Lecoq. Notwithstanding your prestigious rank, today you're not directing the tournament, but playing opposite Manuel Prunier (another renowned director) in an online pairs competition. You need to bring home as many tricks as possible in this 4 Hearts contract.

W	N	E	S
	PRUNIER		LECOQ
			2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥		

	♠ AJ4 ♥ J10732 ♦ J65 ♣ 106	
	N W E S	
	♠ KQ52 ♥ KQ5 ♦ A108 ♣ AQ7	

Contract: 4 Hearts by South.
West leads the 3 of Spades.

How many tricks do you expect to win?

You will undoubtedly make four tricks in Spades, four in Hearts and the two Aces in the minors. Except for a big distributional accident, you will therefore easily make this game contract.

But does this mean that you should rest on your laurels?

Of course not! In pairs tournaments, the aim is to take as many tricks as possible.

What's the first thing you do?

To prevent the risk of a ruff, play a trump. West wins your King with the Ace and plays back a trump. You play a third round to draw the last trump.

What are your prospects now to find an additional trick?

You catch the glimpse of a first option: try the finesse against the King of Clubs. The other suit to exploit is obviously Diamonds because you have intermediate cards.

What would be the best way to generate a second Diamond trick?

Your best chance consists in playing a small Diamond from dummy towards your 8. If East holds the 9, West will be forced to play his King or Queen on your 8. You can then play North's second small Diamond towards the 10, hoping that East holds the second missing honor.

After three rounds of Spades ending in

dummy (everyone following suit), you play...?

Diamond. And here is why. If the finesse against the Diamond 9 fails, this is to say if West wins your 8 with the 9 and plays back a Diamond, you win the Queen or King with the Ace. You then discard a Diamond from dummy on your fourth Spade and ruff a Diamond to get back to dummy. Then you can still try the Club finesse for the overtrick. Your chances of taking eleven tricks go up to 75% with no risk of going down!

Any final comments?

Note in passing that if the Diamond finesse succeeds and West wins your 8 of Diamonds with the Queen or King of Diamonds, he finds himself endplayed! He has no Spade left at this point and needs to either lead into your tenace in Clubs or return a Diamond to allow you to score two tricks in the suit (in that latter case, you will discard one of dummy's Clubs on the fourth Spade).

	♠ AJ4 ♥ J10732 ♦ J65 ♣ 106	
♠ 873 ♥ A6 ♦ Q732 ♣ K542	N W E S	♠ 1096 ♥ 984 ♦ K94 ♣ J983
	♠ KQ52 ♥ KQ5 ♦ A108 ♣ AQ7	

Post-mortem

Aurelien brought home eleven tricks and finished with 61% in this pairs tournament, partially thanks to this deal which he negotiated ideally.

Variations on a hand

What is your bid as West?

♠ KQ97
♥ J542
♦ 6
♣ AK73

- | W | N | E | S |
|----|------|----|------|
| 1♣ | Pass | 1♦ | Pass |
| 1♥ | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| ? | | | |
- | W | N | E | S |
|----|------|----|------|
| | | 1♣ | Pass |
| 1♥ | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| ? | | | |
- | W | N | E | S |
|------|------|----|------|
| | | | 1♦ |
| Dble | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| ? | | | |

- | W | N | E | S |
|----|------|-----|------|
| | | 1NT | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| ? | | | |
- | W | N | E | S |
|----|----|------|------|
| | | 1♦ | 1♥ |
| 1♠ | 3♥ | Dble | Pass |
| ? | | | |
- | W | N | E | S |
|----|------|-----|------|
| | | 1♣ | Pass |
| 1♥ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| 4♣ | Pass | 4NT | Pass |
| 5♥ | Pass | 5NT | Pass |
| ? | | | |



→ Solutions

1. 2♠: Your partner's 1♠ bid is special. It's either fourth suit forcing or a natural Spade bid, possibly weak. You must react as if East was showing four Spades and show your support by a raise to the two-level. If it was fourth suit forcing without Spades, East will inform you.

2. 4♦: There's nothing better than a Splinter to best describe your hand with 15HLD points. With this information, partner will be able to evaluate his hand perfectly.

3. 2♥: Don't panic, East's cue-bid is auto-forcing here, he won't leave you

hanging! Bid your four-card major. And with two four-card majors, as here, bid at the lowest possible level to save space.

4. 3♣: In theory, this natural bid shows five Clubs. But with a small singleton in Diamonds, it is legitimate to worry about a stopper in that suit. After all, you would make slam in Clubs while you go down in 3 No-Trumps with a hand like ♠A5 ♥AK9 ♦J87 ♣QJ652 opposite!

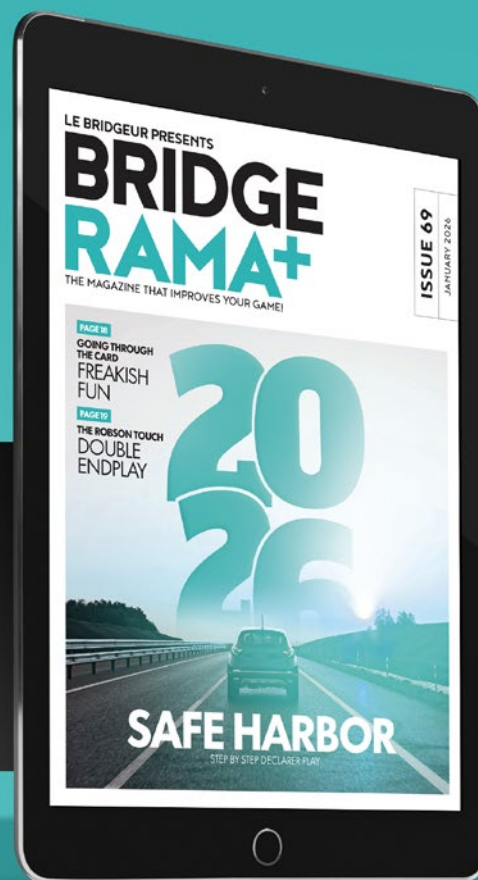
5. 4♥: East's Double shows good opening values and three Spades. You very probably have a Club fit because, given your opponents' bidding, East is likely to be void in Hearts. It is quite

possible that you have twelve tricks in a Club slam! You could bid 4♣, but you can legitimately be afraid that East may pass. Opt for a cue-bid. I admit that it is a bit nebulous, but it clearly expresses slam ambitions and you can bid Clubs at your next turn.

6. 7♣: Even if partner does not have the King of Hearts, the grand slam in Clubs is an excellent bet! East, who has shown a two-suiter in the minors, does not have more than four cards in the majors. Any possible Heart losers will therefore be discarded on your Spades! As for his small Diamonds, most of the time you can ruff them without much trouble.

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BY SALLY BROCK

GOING THROUGH THE CARD



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

FREAKISH FUN

Sally: Well, it's pretty obvious which deal we're going to talk about first. What an amazing board that freak was! You go first, East.

Both Vul. Dealer North.

	♠ AKQJ108543 ♥ 2 ♦ 4 ♣ J7	
♠ 92 ♥ 10 ♦ AQ1076 ♣ 65432	N W E S	♠ 76 ♥ 63 ♦ K985 ♣ AKQ108
	♠ - ♥ AKQJ98754 ♦ J32 ♣ 9	

East: It wasn't particularly interesting at my table. North opened a rather heavy 4♠, which ended the auction. I led the ♣K, asking for count, and partner played the ♣2. I continued with the ♣Q (I hope suggesting something in Diamonds) and partner played the ♣3. So, I switched to a Diamond and she won her Ace. It didn't really matter what we did now – declarer had ten tricks.

Sally: Yes, it is a good idea to have the agreement that if you lead an Ace (or Queen) partner tells you whether or not they like the suit, but if you lead the King it asks them to tell you how many they have. Here that is what you need to know.

What did you do, West?

West: It was really funny at our table, I thought. North opened 2♣ and South bid 4NT asking for Aces. North-South had the agreement that if no suit was agreed, it was assumed that the last bid suit was trumps. So, North bid 5♣, showing one or four key cards (the four Aces and the ♣K). It was inconceivable to South that North had only one, so he assumed it was four and bid 7NT. I had been sleeping, rather bored with the auction, but I suddenly woke up and realised that I was on lead against 7NT and had an Ace, so I doubled. This was the whole auction:

W	N	E	S
	2♣	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Pass	7NT
Dble			

I led the ♦A and partner encouraged, so I continued the suit. I didn't expect partner to have five solid Club tricks

as well. We took the first ten tricks and collected a 2600 penalty!

Sally: Wow! What fun! I don't think much of their bidding! South should surely have bid 7♥ rather than 7NT, though, as North might have had a void Heart!

West: What happened to you?

Sally: Nothing as exciting as that. My partner opened 4♦ showing a very strong 4♠ opener. If I had bid 4♥ that would have been a slam try in Spades, so I bid a simple 4♠.

North: And presumably you lost the obvious three losers?

Sally: Well, what would you lead from that West hand? He chose the ♥10 and East, playing standard count signals, played the ♥6. Having won, I now played the ♥4, on which West discarded, and East had to follow with the ♥3! So I made an overtrick.

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BY ANDREW ROBSON

DOUBLE ENDPLAY

On this deal from a social game of Rubber Bridge, West found himself endplayed not once but twice, first in trumps.

None vulnerable.

	♠ A86 ♥ 1043 ♦ 86432 ♣ AK	
♠ 2 ♥ KJ986 ♦ KQ ♣ QJ1098	N W E S	♠ KQJ10973 ♥ 72 ♦ - ♣ 7432
	♠ 54 ♥ AQ5 ♦ AJ10975 ♣ 65	

W	N	E	S
1♥	Pass	1♠ ⁽¹⁾	2♦
3♣	5♦ ⁽²⁾		

(1) Strong case for 4♣, which on this occasion would steal the pot (only one down).

(2) Five-card support and three quick tricks look good. The barren 5332 shape is an (albeit significant) negative.

Declarer won West's 2 of Spades lead with the Ace. It looked like a singleton (West would lead top from two). Declarer crossed to the Ace of trumps and was disappointed to observe East discard. Cashing the Ace-King of Clubs to eliminate West's safe exit in that suit, declarer exited with a second trump. West was endplayed for the first time. Say he exits with a Club. Declarer ruffs in dummy, throwing the Spade loser from hand, then runs the 10 of Hearts. West wins the Jack but must give another ruff-and-discard or lead around to the Ace-Queen of Hearts. At the table, West chose to switch to a

Heart (perhaps his partner would be good enough to hold the Ace or Queen). No good either. Declarer won dummy's 10, crossed to his Ace, then exited with the Queen (the second endplay). West won the King, but what next? Either a Club or a Heart now enabled declarer to ruff in dummy and shed his losing Spade from hand. Eleven tricks and game made. Yes, 3 No-Trump would have been easier. But then there'd have been no story (and East would probably have bid 4♣).

Removing West's Club

Endplaying one opponent is satisfying enough; endplaying both on the same deal is something really special.

None vulnerable.

	♠ 7654 ♥ J63 ♦ Q82 ♣ AK4	
♠ KQ9832 ♥ 107 ♦ J1053 ♣ 3	N W E S	♠ - ♥ KQ985 ♦ K6 ♣ Q109765
	♠ AJ10 ♥ A42 ♦ A974 ♣ J82	

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

(1) Weak, 5-10 points and good six-card suit.

(2) About 14-18 points.

3 No-Trump really was a dreadful contract – the barren 4-3-3-3 shapes and lack of intermediates or sequences accounted for this. Mercifully, declarer

was blessed with a helpful Diamond lead (any other lead gives him no legitimate chance).

Declarer played low from dummy, beating East's King with the Ace, and immediately returning a second Diamond to West's 10 and dummy's Queen. He drove out West's Jack by leading back a third round (East discarding a Club), and West found the best switch to the 10 of Hearts.

Declarer ducked and won West's Heart continuation. He cashed the fourth Diamond and reflected on West's shape. His 2♠ opener advertised six cards in that suit, and he had shown up with four Diamonds and two Hearts. There was only room for one Club. Leading a Club to dummy's Ace, removing West's singleton Club, declarer then led a Spade to his 10.

West won the Queen but, with only Spades in his hand, was endplayed. His forced Spade return ran to declarer's Jack, and the Ace was cashed.

In the meantime, East had to reduce to three cards. There was no winning option for him, but he chose to come down to the master Heart and Queen-10 of Clubs. No good: declarer exited with a Heart and waited for East to lead away from his Queen of Clubs. Declarer rose with his Jack and scored the last trick with dummy's King. Nine tricks and game made.

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



THE SUNDAY NIGHT QUESTION

BY WILFRIED LIBBRECHT



This Sunday, Santa Corsica, a new player in the group *Girls*, tells me about one of the Biarritz Open deals as we are driving home with her dad, an excellent bridge player.

She amuses me because when she tells me about her deals, she always dons a smile, no matter if the outcome was good or bad. This is not because she is not concerned with the quality of what she does, but rather because it's her personality. She tells me that on this deal (all vulnerable), she doubled 4 Hearts for ten tricks.

Heart. This would not have been enough to speak over 3♥ but she would have bid 4♠ over the Double and you would have made the contract."

She: "Yes, but Leila passed, and it was just making. Besides, was it normal to pass with her hand? She had ♠105 ♥76 ♦842 ♣J96432."

Me: "She had a difficult decision to make. With a six-card suit, one can always consider bidding on. But here I think I would have passed like her. Both because I'm 6-3-2-2 and because we are playing pairs. I think I'm more likely to see the opponents go down in 4 Hearts than to make 5 Clubs or 5 Diamonds."

She: "O.K., but she led the 2 of Diamonds and I won with the Jack. I thought I was only going to make two Diamonds and a Heart and that I needed to establish a Club, so I played the King of Clubs."

Me: "There was no point in switching to a Club. After the lead of the 2 of Diamonds, you know that declarer holds three Diamonds. He therefore has only three cards in the two black suits. Even if declarer has two Clubs, he will discard his second Club on the King of Spades."

Santa: "Ah yes! Besides, if South has a singleton Spade, we can't beat the contract. In that case, he would cash Ace-King-Queen of Spades without getting ruffed."

Me: "Voilà! It follows that Leila must have two Spades. And you need to find a

solution to prevent him from discarding his Diamond or ruffing it."

She: "I thought about playing the Ace of Hearts and a Heart to draw dummy's trumps. But declarer would then have no more problems with the trump suit and would have made the rest of the tricks!"

Me: "Yes... So? You still don't see it?"

Santa: "Oh, yes, now I do! I should have played a small Heart from under the Ace. There was nothing declarer could have done. If he continues with another trump, I win with the Ace and cash two more Diamonds because there is no trump left in dummy. If he plays on Spades, Leila ruffs. After all, I know that she has two trumps."

Me: "Well, there you go, if you make the effort! Keeping your Ace allows you to control the situation."

	♠ AKQJ8 ♥ J3 ♦ 73 ♣ A1087	
	N	♠ 9742
W	E	♥ A4
	S	♦ AKQJ9
		♣ KQ

W	N	E	S
		1♦	3♥
Pass	4♥	Dble	

Santa: "Was it stupid to double 4♥?"

Me: "No, this is very good bridge. Even though they're vulnerable, they can bid 4♥ pre-emptively since you're vulnerable too. 4 Spades could be making with your hand. For example, Leila could have had five Spades to the Ace and a singleton

	♠ AKQJ8 ♥ J3 ♦ 73 ♣ A1087	
♠ 105 ♥ 76 ♦ 842 ♣ J96432	N	♠ 9742
	W	♥ A4
	S	♦ AKQJ9
		♣ KQ
	♠ 63 ♥ KQ109852 ♦ 1065 ♣ 5	



MATCH POINT PAIRS



BY ROBERT ESKINAZI

LACK OF INSPIRATION...

	♠ K4 ♥ Q1075 ♦ AQJ75 ♣ 63	
	N	♠ AQ73
W	E	♥ 84
	S	♦ 542
		♣ AK104

Dealer East, All Vul.

W	N	E	S
		1♣	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	3♥ ^(*)
Pass	4♥		

(*) Shows a solid six-card suit and a good opening hand.

The start of the play

West leads the 2 of Clubs for your King and South's 9. You grumble silently and your thoughts are rather negative. The mere sight of dummy suggests that a Spade lead would have allowed you to cash the first four tricks. It may still be possible to make up for lost time: the cards played at trick one surely reveals that declarer started with Q-9 or J-9 doubleton. If your partner has the Queen, you could put him back on lead so that he can play through a Spade.

Having caught a glimpse of a possibility to beat this, you could **bravely return a small Club under your Ace**. If that is the option you choose, here is what will happen if it is not your lucky day.

The full deal:

	♠ K4 ♥ Q1075 ♦ AQJ75 ♣ 63	
♠ 8652	N	♠ AQ73
♥ 6	W	♥ 84
♦ 983	E	♦ 542
♣ J8752	S	♣ AK104
		♠ J109
		♥ AKJ932
		♦ K10
		♣ Q9

South, astonished to win the trick with the Queen, will not take long to claim the rest. After drawing trumps, he can discard all three Spades from his hand on dummy's Diamonds. The result will be 4 Hearts plus two! What do you think?

Have you made a mistake?

You did not realize the **enormous risk** you were taking by trying to beat the contract at all costs. When playing teams, the risk is worth taking because losing 1 or 2 IMPs is nothing compared to the 12 IMPs you might win, but not at pairs where the risk is about scoring a top or a zero.

What you should have done

Rather than speculate on the presence of the Queen of Clubs in your partner's hand (who cannot hold no more than 1 or 2HCP), you must **give up on the**

idea of beating this. The opponents play a normal contract and the lead of a Club, your opening suit, is also normal and will be the same at most tables. In hand with the King of Clubs, you must quickly cash the Ace of Clubs and the Ace of Spades. And that should already earn you an above-average score, since you have clearly seen the danger coming from dummy's Diamond suit.

Result

In this tournament, all the North-South pairs played in 4 Hearts, and it only went down at one table. What were the scores obtained by East-West?

- The full top went to the clairvoyant, who chose to lead a Spade and beat the contract.
- Holding declarer to 4 Hearts just made resulted as expected in an above average score.
- Not cashing all three tricks for the defense let declarer make plus one and was a mediocre score.
- The one player who, hoping to beat the contract, also conceded the Queen of Clubs for a total of twelve tricks, recorded a complete zero!

In conclusion

Your partner did not find the lethal opening lead of a Spade? We cannot blame him for this lack of inspiration, as his choice was entirely logical. The return of a small Club, on the other hand, would be an unreasonable gamble... and even less inspired.



SECRETS OF DECLARER PLAY

BY JULIEN BERNARD



COMBINING YOUR CHANCES [PART 4]

The very essence of combining chances lies in the ability to miss no opportunity and avoid having to make a premature decision. In addition to the general mechanisms discussed previously, a declarer must remain vigilant for any loss of an additional chance.

	♠ QJ ♥ 10972 ♦ A532 ♣ J62	
	N	
W		E
	S	
	♠ A2 ♥ AKQ83 ♦ K764 ♣ Q7	

W	N	E	S
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥

Lead: ♣A.

West continues with the King of Clubs and plays a third round of the suit. East follows three times.

A declarer who is in a hurry would discard the Spade loser from his hand and put all his hopes on the Diamonds breaking favorably. The choice between a finesse at 50% and a 3-2 break at 68% seems obvious. But is declarer really forced to give up on such a fantastic opportunity so quickly? Absolutely not! The right play is to discard a Diamond on the Jack of Clubs. After drawing trumps, declarer then cashes the King and Ace of Diamonds. If the suit breaks 3-2, he plays another Diamond to set up his tenth trick. If the suit is 4-1, he still has the intact chance of the finesse against the King of Spades.

PRACTICE WITH THE NEXT TWO EXAMPLES.

♠ A1085 ♥ AKJ ♦ AQ ♣ A753
N
W
E
S
♠ KQJ962 ♥ 53 ♦ 64 ♣ K62

W	N	E	S
			2♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	6♠		

Lead: ♠7.
East discards a Heart on the second round of Spades.

Start with the Heart finesse because it is "free". No matter if it succeeds or not, it frees up the opportunity to discard a Club from your hand to then try to set up the suit by ruffing in case of a 3-3 break. If neither of these two techniques provides you with the twelfth trick, you can still fall back on the Diamond finesse. Note that the Heart finesse is well-directed, in other words its eventual failure gives the lead to the harmless opponent, here East, who cannot force you to decide whether to finesse in Diamonds before you can test the Clubs.

♠ 74 ♥ 976 ♦ J9873 ♣ Q109	N	♠ 3 ♥ Q10842 ♦ K1052 ♣ J84
W		E
	S	

♠ A652 ♥ AJ3 ♦ 86 ♣ 9763
N
W
E
S
♠ KQJ10987 ♥ Q642 ♦ AQ ♣ -

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

Lead: ♣K.
You ruff and the King of Spades is enough to draw trumps.

Setting up a third Heart trick would save you from the peril of a Diamond finesse. This time, the dangerous opponent is East. To catch him off-guard, go for the indirect finesse in Hearts and play a Heart to the Ace and then the Heart 3. If East jumps up with the King, you have your twelve tricks (you discard a Diamond on the Queen of Hearts and then ruff the Diamond Queen in dummy). If East plays low, play the Queen. Either it wins the trick and you play another Heart to test the suit before East can play back a Diamond, or West wins the Queen with the King and again you have sufficient time to play a third round of Hearts before possibly resorting to the Diamond finesse as your last chance.

♠ 4 ♥ 975 ♦ KJ942 ♣ KQ105	N	♠ 3 ♥ K108 ♦ 10753 ♣ AJ842
W		E
	S	

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BY GUY LASSERRE & NORBERT LÉBELY



JUMP TO 5 OF A MAJOR

This month, you're sitting West and are invited to think about three bidding problems:

All Vul.

DEAL 1	W	N	E	S
♠ A74	1♦	3♥	4♠	Pass
♥ 652	?			
♦ AKQJ5				
♣ A8				

All Vul.

DEAL 2	W	N	E	S
♠ AK10962	1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
♥ 87	2♠	Pass	3♠ ⁽¹⁾	Pass
♦ K83	4♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4♦ ⁽²⁾	Pass
♣ A5	?			

(1) Slam proposal.
(2) Control.

All Vul.

DEAL 3	W	N	E	S
♠ AKJ1075			2NT	Pass
♥ 87	3♥	Pass	3♠ ^(*)	Pass
♦ 1086	?			
♣ QJ				

(*) Execution of the transfer promises support.

The three sequences clearly have nothing in common. However, the correct bid is always the same, 5♠, a bid which, before the introduction of Keycard Blackwood, referred to the quality of the trump suit and is no longer relevant today. But how do you find your way around the different situations? The key is to identify the specific context in which you find yourself.

DEAL 1

	♠ 3 ♥ KQJ9873 ♦ 93 ♣ 754	
♠ A74 ♥ 652 ♦ AKQJ5 ♣ A8	W	N E S ♠ KQJ10852 ♥ - ♦ 84 ♣ K962
	♠ 96 ♥ A104 ♦ 10762 ♣ QJ103	

After 3♥, East's jump to 4♠ leans on a very solid suit of at least seven cards (and certainly some extras). You now have a veritable "atomic bomb". A slam is in sight. But what about the Hearts? Well, after an overcall, 5 in our major (5♠) asks partner what he has in the opponent's suit:

- Without a control, he passes.
- With a second round control, he bids the small slam (6♠).
- And with first-round control (void or Ace), he cue-bids.

In the present case, East responds 6♥ and from there, with thirteen tricks visible, bidding the grand slam is obvious:

W	N	E	S
1♦	3♥	4♠	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♥	Pass
7♠			

DEAL 2

	♠ 8 ♥ AQ6523 ♦ 762 ♣ 8732	
♠ AK10962 ♥ 87 ♦ K83 ♣ A5	W	N E S ♠ Q53 ♥ 104 ♦ AQ5 ♣ KQJ64
	♠ J74 ♥ KJ93 ♦ J1094 ♣ 109	

Here there was no intervention and 3♠ promises at least three-card support with a top honor (or four cards) and shows hope for a slam. Two suits (one of which will provide discards) are controlled, so the problem lies in the last suit. Under these conditions, 5♠ asks West about his holding in this last suit: he will pass without control (as in the present deal), bid the small slam (in No-Trump with the King) and cue-bid with a first-round control.

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

Comment

With a weaker hand (♠AK1096 ♥874 ♦K83 ♣A5), West will be satisfied to bid 4♠ over 4♦, which will not prevent East from speaking again if he finds the necessary material in his hand.

DEAL 3

	♠ 94 ♥ J42 ♦ Q432 ♣ 10832	
♠ AKJ1075 ♥ 87 ♦ 1086 ♣ QJ	W	N E S ♠ Q86 ♥ AK105 ♦ AK5 ♣ A64
	♠ 32 ♥ Q963 ♦ J97 ♣ K975	

In this third and final case, the jump to 5 in the major (5♠ in this case) describes a beautiful long suit without any control in the other suits. It's up to partner, who holds a very strong and balanced hand, to pass or bid a slam, depending on his top cards...

The bidding:

W	N	E	S
		2NT	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠ ^(*)	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♠	

(*) Execution of the transfer promises support.

By definition, the convention of 5 in a major is incompatible with asking for Aces and therefore requires the possession of high-potential hands. In return, it is essential since it enables us to solve problems that would otherwise be insoluble.

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In certain specific situations, there is no way out without the convention of jumping to 5 in a major.



LET'S BID, PARTNER!

BY PETE HOLLANDS

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

WEST'S HANDS

1. ♠ 9
♥ 86
♦ AQ1076
♣ AJ1072
Dealer North. All Vul.

2. ♠ AJ8
♥ AK9854
♦ -
♣ J852
Dealer West. N/S Vul.

3. ♠ K93
♥ AKQ5
♦ Q103
♣ J108
Dealer East. E/W Vul.

4. ♠ KJ9632
♥ 10
♦ A7
♣ Q1096
Dealer West. All Vul.

5. ♠ J9
♥ -
♦ AKQ832
♣ AJ753
Dealer East. E/W Vul.

6. ♠ AQJ
♥ AK862
♦ K1086
♣ 3
Dealer West. N/S Vul.

DEFENCE AGENCY

BY MATTHIAS HUBERSCHWILLER



CLASSIFIED
BRIDGERAMA+ DEPARTMENT

	♠ K108 ♥ J532 ♦ 653 ♣ K104	
	N	♠ J9632 ♥ 974 ♦ A942 ♣ A
W	S	E

W	N	E	S
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥

Lead: ♦K.

What is your plan for the continuation?

	♠ Q75 ♥ 10975 ♦ AK ♣ AKQJ	
♠ KJ92 ♥ K3 ♦ QJ1062 ♣ 93	N	
W	S	E

W	N	E	S
	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	3NT ^(*)	Pass	4♥

(*) Four Hearts, balanced hand, 18-19HCP.

Lead: ♦Q. Declarer wins with the Ace and lets the 10 of Hearts run.

What is your reaction?

	♠ 1052 ♥ A65 ♦ 53 ♣ 108752	
♠ K87 ♥ J10984 ♦ J ♣ AQ96	N	
W	S	E

W	N	E	S
		Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT		

Lead: ♥J. Declarer wins with the Queen and plays the King of Clubs.

What is your plan for 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. ♠ A42
♥ AKJ953
♦ -
♣ Q643
Dealer North. All Vul.

2. ♠ K52
♥ -
♦ AK983
♣ AQ976
Dealer West. N/S Vul.

3. ♠ AJ108754
♥ 97
♦ K
♣ A74
Dealer East. E/W Vul.

4. ♠ AQ7
♥ AQ92
♦ KJ103
♣ 72
Dealer West. All Vul.

5. ♠ AK86543
♥ K106
♦ -
♣ 1092
Dealer East. E/W Vul.

6. ♠ 85
♥ 7
♦ AJ
♣ AKQJ10864
Dealer West. N/S Vul.

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

Even if you discourage Diamonds with the 2, how can you let your partner understand that you absolutely want him to play a Club?

Rather than hope, take matters into your own hands! Overtake with the Ace of Diamonds, cash the Ace of Clubs and play back the 2 of Diamonds. Your partner will win with the Diamond Jack and understand from your play that you had the stiff Ace of Clubs. He can then play back a Club to give you the ruff.

	♠ K108 ♥ J532 ♦ 653 ♣ K104	
♠ Q754 ♥ 6 ♦ KQJ8 ♣ 8632	N W E S	♠ J9632 ♥ 974 ♦ A942 ♣ A
	♠ A ♥ AKQ108 ♦ 107 ♣ QJ975	

You take the King of Hearts (what else?) and see that your only hope for tricks is in Spades. You must hope that your partner has the Ace and that South has at least three. However, don't lazily play the 2, choose the Jack, which is the right card. East wins dummy's Queen with the Ace and plays back another Spade, thus finessing declarer's 10. Bingo!

	♠ Q75 ♥ 10975 ♦ AK ♣ AKQJ	
♠ KJ92 ♥ K3 ♦ QJ1062 ♣ 93	N W E S	♠ A63 ♥ 42 ♦ 9753 ♣ 10874
	♠ 1084 ♥ AQJ86 ♦ 84 ♣ 652	

South tries to set up his Clubs. If you win the King with the Ace, he wins your return in hand and insists with the Jack of Clubs. No matter if you win this or not, declarer can successfully finesse against your 9, thus getting three Club tricks thanks to the Ace of Hearts providing an entry to dummy. You must therefore duck the King. South continues with the Jack and it is the same battle; you again need to duck. South indeed gets two Club tricks but he does not have enough entries to establish a third. He will fall back on the Diamonds, which unfortunately for him break 5-1, and will go down.

	♠ 1052 ♥ A65 ♦ 53 ♣ 108752	
♠ K87 ♥ J10984 ♦ J ♣ AQ96	N W E S	♠ Q9643 ♥ 72 ♦ Q10986 ♣ 3
	♠ AJ ♥ KQ3 ♦ AK742 ♣ KJ4	



LET'S BID, PARTNER!

BY PETE HOLLANDS



2/1 – RESPONDING 2♦ OR 2♥ TO 1♥/♠

1. WEST EAST
Dealer North. All Vul.
♠ 9 ♠ A42
♥ 86 ♥ AKJ953
♦ AQ1076 ♦ –
♣ AJ1072 ♣ Q643

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

When West introduces Clubs, East is happy to raise, and after an exchange of control showing bids asks for keycards, settling for 6♣ when one is missing. It's a difficult deal unless the partnership has a way of asking specifically about the ♠KQ.

2. WEST EAST
Dealer West. N/S Vul.
♠ AJ8 ♠ K52
♥ AK9854 ♥ –
♦ – ♦ AK983
♣ J852 ♣ AQ976

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

Once West raises Clubs, East jumps to 5♥ asking for keycards excluding the Heart suit. When West admits to only one, East signs off.

3. WEST EAST
Dealer East. E/W Vul.
♠ K93 ♠ AJ108754
♥ AKQ5 ♥ 97
♦ Q103 ♦ K
♣ J108 ♣ A74

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

When East bids Spades for a third time, West shows a control in Hearts, agreeing the suit, and at the same time denying a control in a minor. That is enough for East to jump to slam.

4. WEST EAST
Dealer West. All Vul.
♠ KJ9632 ♠ AQ7
♥ 10 ♥ AQ92
♦ A7 ♦ KJ103
♣ Q1096 ♣ 72

W	N	E	S
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠	

After setting Spades as trumps, East immediately discovers that West does not have a Club control and settles for game.

5. WEST EAST
Dealer East. E/W Vul.
♠ J9 ♠ AK86543
♥ – ♥ K106
♦ AKQ832 ♦ –
♣ AJ753 ♣ 1092

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

When East rebids Spades for a third time, West jumps to 5♥ asking for keycards excluding the Heart suit. When East shows two keycards without the ♠Q, West settles for the small slam.

6. WEST EAST
Dealer West. N/S Vul.
♠ AQJ ♠ 85
♥ AK862 ♥ 7
♦ K1086 ♦ AJ
♣ 3 ♣ AKQJ10864

W	N	E	S
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Pass	5NT	Pass
7♣			

East jumps to 4♣ to show a self-supporting suit and then asks for keycards. 5NT confirms that all the keycards are present and that is enough for West to bid the laydown grand slam.

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.

PROVIDES THE ANSWERS



BY PATTY TUCKER

Two questions from the Champions Cup in Jurmala, Latvia.

A Winning Combination

Dealer North. None Vul. IMPs.

♠ AQJ4	N	♠ -
♥ K83	W	♥ J10764
♦ 32	E	♦ AQJ1084
♣ KQ103	S	♣ A8

After North opens 1♠ your partner decides to jump to 4♦, promising the red suits, and you bid 6♥. North leads the ♣5 (low from a doubleton). Assuming the ♦K is onside, it comes down to how you tackle the trump suit.

In theory, the best way to handle the suit is to lead the ♥J. If they cover, I cover and hope that North wins the ♥A, after which I finesse the nine.

In practice, suppose I win the lead with the Ace and play the ♥J: Queen, King, Ace. North continues Clubs. Now, I'm going down if North is 6-3-2-2 (with A9x in Hearts) because I can't finesse both the ♥9

and the ♦K. Maybe a better idea is to take the lead in hand and immediately finesse the ♦K, before playing the ♥J... which holds the trick! Now, I can't play another round of trump because North will kill me with a third round of trumps. So I play the ♦A, and when the King doesn't fall, I ruff a Diamond with the 8 and play the ♥K.

Note: If I play North with ♥A9 (half as likely

as A9x), I win the lead with the Ace, play the ♥J for the Ace, take the Club return cheaply, finesse the ♦K, then play the ♥10, the ♥K and two Clubs. On the last Club, North, with a 5-2-4-2 shape, is squeezed in Spades and Diamonds.

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!

Lady Luck

Dealer East. None Vul. IMPs

	♠ A865	
	♥ KQ96	
	♦ QJ7	
	♣ 95	
	N	
	W	E
	S	
	♠ Q72	
	♥ -	
	♦ A3	
	♣ AKQ86432	

Against silent opponents, you reach a somewhat dubious 6 Clubs.

West leads the ♣7. Do you see any way to arrive at twelve tricks?

Pretty straight-forward, I think! I need a miracle. At trick one, I'll play the ♣9 (just in case). If that wins, I believe my best line is to play for 3-3 Spades with the ♠K in East. Assuming the ♣9 does not hold the trick, I draw trumps and play the ♦A followed by a Diamond to the ♦Q, hoping that the person who holds the ♦K also holds the ♠K.

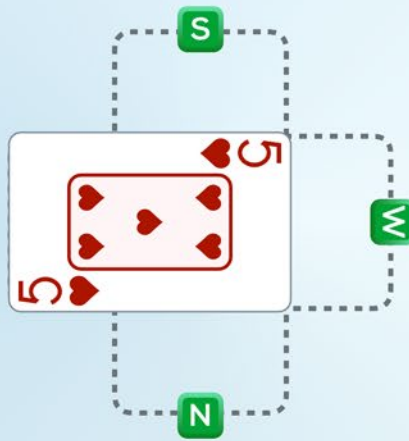
- If West wins, I have a bonus. Were he to start with a doubleton ♦K, there should be no defense. If he plays a third round of Diamonds, I'll now play for either a Heart-Spade squeeze or to ruff out the ♥A in East.

- If East wins and returns a low Heart, I can't squeeze West because I haven't cashed the ♦J, so I play low. Such nerve!



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