



Monday 23/8/2004

Friday 27/8/2004

1st Tonni/Dave 63 %
 2nd Hans/Jean-Marc 56 %

1st Bob/Dave 55%
 2nd Jan/Tonni 54%

This time it's Dave who gets the elusive double, good show; he also did a few weeks back but I failed to mention it in news-sheet 87.

Some people have left the club recently but we also have some new blood. Thus I would like to explain just a couple of obvious 'rules'. This is a friendly club and most people do not take it too seriously. With a lot of beginners/improving players I would appreciate it if there was no psychic bidding. And please do not open 1NT with a singleton.

If you have a hand that you find difficult to bid – just ask me (even during the bidding is OK if I am not playing). Chuck is gone now and nobody else minds me helping out a beginner/improver occasionally at the table. I'm sure that everybody will agree that having a pleasant game in a pleasant atmosphere and improving the standard at the club is more important than who actually wins in a particular week?

Bidding Quiz**Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.**

Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A partner opens 1 ♠ and RHO overcalls 2 ♣. (a) what do you bid? Suppose that you choose 2 ♥ then (b) what do you bid if partner raises to 3 ♥?
♠ A62	♠ 73	
♥ QJ10962	♥ AKQ532	
♦ QJ	♦ K	
♣ Q3	♣ KQ85	With Hand B RHO opens 2NT, what do you bid?
Hand C	Hand D	With Hand C RHO opens 2NT, (a) what do you bid? Suppose that you double, this gets passed round to opener and he bids 3 ♦. (b) What do you do now? (c) What would dbl mean?
♠ AK72	♠ J	
♥ KQ2	♥ K10	
♦ Q4	♦ J1072	Do you open with Hand D, non-vul in 2 nd seat?
♣ KQJ7	♣ QJ9876	
Hand E	Hand F	With Hand E partner opens 2NT, what do you bid? With Hand F you are in 4 th seat. (a) Would you open after 3 passes? (b) What would you bid if partner opened 2 ♠?
♠ 93	♠ AQ	
♥ K832	♥ J1073	
♦ KQ4	♦ Q95	
♣ Q982	♣ K952	
Hand G	Hand H	Do you open with Hand G? With Hand H LHO opens 1 ♥, partner bids 2 ♣, RHO and you both pass. LHO then bids 2 ♥, partner bids 3 ♣ and RHO passes. What do you do?
♠ K65432	♠ Q1097	
♥ K62	♥ K72	
♦ 2	♦ J864	
♣ A73	♣ A9	

Separating fact from fiction

Hasn't it been exciting recently, with Chuck showing his literary prowess with two pages of 'facts or fiction' mumbo-jumbo? I did, however, manage to decipher some of it and here's my response to a number of points.

- 1- As Maria said in the Sound of Music, let's start at the very beginning. Chuck's notes are stated to be comments on news-sheet 97. Now Chuck may possibly be quite intelligent, but isn't it pushing it a bit to comment on something that I have not yet written?
- 2- I said in sheet 93 that the bidding challenges are pretty meaningless. Chuck rather rudely disputed this, so let's see what a real expert says. This time it's Michael Rosenberg from his book *Bridge, Zia and Me*. Rosenberg is No 94 on Chuck's list and so is eligible to give his expert opinion: - *'Bidding contests are not real Bridge, the whole thing is a sham. The contestants are often not monitored and even if they are they are permitted to retract and change bids. The hands are specially selected and should not be bid in the same way as you would in real bridge.'* Rosenberg then gives a list of silly things that you have to do to get a good score. Looks like I've found yet another expert who agrees with me and disagrees with Chuck, eh? 'Not a good shot'.
- 3- Raising a 3♣ pre-empt to 4♣ with a small doubleton ♣ when the opponents bid 3NT is ludicrous. End of conversation. The Jury is out on this one.
- 4- Chuck had ordered a director's guide through the post. The postage was more than the cost of the book. He offered it to me at the bargain price of twice its face value. I already have three director's books and so declined his generous offer.
- 5- My final word on a sequence like 1♠ - 2♣ - 3NT. *Some* experts play that the 3NT bid is the same range as an opening 1NT (so 15-17). I explained the theory of this last week. Chuck has now introduced yet another red herring of 14-17? Get it right.
- 6- Chuck does not like Don's remarks about George W. Bush. I did not tell Chuck to take it outside, it was Chuck who said that he would punch Don on the nose if he continued.
- 7- I banned a Scandinavian for 'slapping cards'? 'Everybody' knows that he was banned immediately when he punched another player in the club. Guess I've got rid of Chuck just in time before he punches Don (or me)?
- 8- Chuck says nobody quit because of him and he wants names. How about Don and Sid?
- 9- And the kangaroo court (or trial of a monkey)? The last time Chuck behaved like an ape I had a pole to see if he should be evicted. Of the sixteen responses 14 said it was totally my decision. I think that that is a mandate to make a decision this time, don't you? Incidentally, the other two suggestions? One was to ban him for life. The only one to remotely defend Chuck was Clive. He said that a warning was not enough and a ban for a short period should get the message across. Obviously it didn't – remind me to have a word with Clive next time I see him. But for Clive, Chuck would have been totally banned.
- 10- Chuck was not banned from a club in the USA? Perhaps – I have no idea. I am simply repeating what Chuck had previously told me. Either he was lying then or he is lying now. Who cares?
- 11- Chuck does not want his name in the news-sheets. I complied for a while, but then I feel that it's off once he starts mentioning me in his sheet...?
- 12- Several people told Chuck that they did not want him barred? That is not consistent with the results from the last pole. Maybe he threatened to punch them? And is there *anyone* out there who thinks that the club would be a better place with long time members like Don and Sid absent and the trouble-making Chuck present?

13- A message from Terry to return? Hans asked me if it was OK if Chuck returned and I said ‘no problem’ as he had served his ban. Doubtless Hans will confirm this?

14- Chuck says that he did not challenge me to write up the 2♦ doubled hand. Oh yes he did.

On 12-1-04 after the Monday session Chuck and Hans were sitting together just outside the coffee shop (where the fish tank now is). They called me over and proceeded to tell me all the things that I was doing wrong in running the club. Chuck criticised the news-sheets and said ‘*why don’t you write up your (Terry’s) bad bids like the pass of 2♦ doubled on Friday*’. I’m sure that Hans remembers having the conversation, he may or may not remember this exact request of Chuck’s. I remember everything very clearly. I guess Chuck is simply going the way of Ronald Raegan, Charlton Heston etc.?

15- ‘For your reading pleasure’ I repeat the contested deal: -

Dealer:	♠ J1062		West	North	East	South
East	♥ AQ9			(me)		(Chuck)
Both vul	♦ 1075					
	♣ K86		-	-	pass	1NT
			pass	2♣	pass	2♦
♠ 85	N	♠ A943	dbl	pass (1)	pass	pass (2)
♥ 10753	W E	♥ 862				
♦ AQ982	S	♦ KJ				
♣ 52		♣ 10973				
	♠ KQ7					
	♥ KJ4					
	♦ 643					
	♣ AQJ4					

The contract went one down, 200 to E-W. 3NT went 2 down at other tables so also 200 to E-W.

I wrote it up and gave a preliminary copy to Chuck the next Friday. I said that my pass of the double at (1) was correct and that Chuck cannot pass at (2), he must bid. Chuck said that I should bid 3NT at (1). He then had another look at the deal and stated that both the hand and bidding was not as he remembered! I ‘jumped up’ to retrieve the board - the boards had not been shuffled yet from the previous week and I needed to get the board before it was. So Chuck then had to admit that the hand was correct. He then tried to say there was no double. A really pathetic ‘shot’. Chuck claims to know all about the rules. His last bid was 2♦, so why did he subsequently place a pass card on the table at (2) if the bidding was finished (if there was no double)? And if no double then why complain about my bid at the end of the hand when -200 was entered on the score-sheet (undoubled, -100 would have given us a top)? Is the man an idiot? – don’t answer that just yet.

Anyway, I subsequently wandered over to our opponents on the deal and they confirmed both the hands and the bidding. If there was no double then there would be no story. And Chuck continued to say that I should have bid 3NT at (1); he may only now accept that I am right after an ex World champion has confirmed it. Chuck’s pathetic lies and excuses on this deal defy logic. And I choose my words carefully, backed up by *evidence* and *witnesses* – there is no way that it is logically possible that Chuck is not lying here. He did not miss the double, the hand was as I stated and he did demand that I write it up. He presumably knew that this scenario would not be in any bidding book (West’s double is silly as he would be on lead against a NT contract) and so I could not prove my case; but I guess that Chuck did not expect me to write off to a real expert to prove him incorrect yet again.

Three indisputable ‘*blatant lies*’ on one deal, not bad even by Chuck’s unenviable standard.

- 16- Chuck says that I did not print a contribution from Ian and that I had said that I would write up people's comments when given to me. Untrue yet again. Let's quote me from news-sheet 10: - *'I will happily print anything sensible from anyone'*. Pretty clear, eh? Unfortunately Ian's input was not sensible. It was simply a page on how Ian enjoys playing with Chuck and what a wonderful person Chuck is. It was utter, complete, nonsense that was apparently written with Chuck looking on! Ego?
- 17- But it did Ian no good. The last time that Chuck partnered Ian was 3rd May. Despite a respectable 2nd place finish Chuck came up to me after the session and said *'never again'*. Stating that he would prefer not to play than partner Ian.
- 18- And that brings me onto the next topic. Chuck thinks that he can waltz into a club and expect the director to find him a compatible partner. That becomes increasingly difficult when Chuck refuses to play with some (Jeff, Ian, Alex, to name but a few). And these three are certainly not beginners. So that just leaves the much more experienced players; unfortunately many of these (Joe, Bob ...) have already told me that they do not wish to partner Chuck either. Sometimes a director's life is difficult.
- 19- Chuck says that I did not write up the fact that he informed me that a jump shift rebid is game forcing in Standard American. Let's quote from news-sheet 30: - *'The jump shift (1♦ - 1♥ - 3♣) is also very strong. As Chuck points out, this is normally played as game forcing these days. In the old days of Acol it was not, but it was very rarely passed below game.'* - looks like I did actually write up what Chuck said I didn't! In England this is commonly played as not strictly game forcing. I believe that Hans also plays it that way? - Quite reasonable if you play strong two's or Benjamin. Incidentally, I was asked if I could repeat the article on Benjamin twos (it appears later) - Ian may not find my news-sheets instructive but others most certainly do. But I suspect that Chuck is also lying here as I noticed that Ian picked up numerous back issues on Monday - excellent, that's why they are there. Anyway, in Standard American the jump shift rebid is game forcing
- 20- Chuck says that I drive people away from the club. On the day of the 'ticking off' he told me that Richard had left because of comments by me. I was a little upset at this information as I always try to give polite constructive comments to people who appreciate them. But maybe there is a God, the very next Friday (20th) Richard appeared and confirmed that he appreciated my help, that he had been absent in America and had never said anything of the kind to Chuck. So is Richard lying or is it Chuck? I have not been able to get in touch with Bill. Bill was at the club on the very first day and never missed a session except for a brief hospital visit. After five years he left the club because, as I understand it, one player was very rude and called him a liar! It most certainly was not me. It is unlikely that Bill left after 5 years because of me, if anybody sees him could they please confirm his reason for leaving (and ask him to return).
- 21- I simply did not understand Chuck's garbage about me changing the scores. I gave Chuck a zero against the Scandinavians on the second board when he psyched again. I will do the same to anybody who psyches on two boards in one session.
- 22- Double standards? I don't think so. Chuck quotes the case of a Jeff psyche. That is, to my knowledge, Jeff's first and only psyche and it may or may not have been deliberate. He has been warned. But he most certainly did not psyche again on the next board! Chuck was penalised for his 2nd psyche.
- 23- I waited 3 weeks to ban him? Chuck provoked Don/Sid on Monday 9th. I 'ticked him off' on Friday 13th. He wrote his silly note about being able to behave any way he wishes on Monday 16th. I did not read it on the Monday or he would have been banned then. I banned him on Friday 20th. I make that 11 days, not 3 weeks. 50% out (that's his success rate on a good day). I guess that Chuck's math skills are fading along with his memory?

- 24- And onto the BIG final points – America. Don, Sid and myself are not anti-American; we are anti-bush. A few years ago everybody would talk about the weather. Now, every time we turn on the TV we get bush, bush, bush... Ten or twenty years ago nobody really cared who the president of the USA was, now it's different. The president of the USA rules the world. He is so powerful that he can ignore the United Nations, the Geneva convention, World Trade Organisation, World opinion, the environment, climate change, greenhouse gas emissions and anybody or anything. He can do whatever he wants regardless of the consequences or what the rest of the World says. I am most certainly not going to say that people cannot discuss the 'ruler' of the World at our bridge club; and if there was anything nice to say about him I'm sure that someone would say it?
And isn't everybody totally disgusted with the American adverts slandering Kerry's war record? One fact is indisputable (well maybe Chuck can dispute it?), Kerry was in Vietnam 'fighting for his country'. Bush was not. And what can we say about Clinton? Clinton (and thus America) was respected the World over, by Arab and Jew alike. America treated him appallingly. Seems it's OK to lie about a war costing billions where hundreds of Americans and others are dying, but to lie about a trivial affair is a no-no.
- 25- Proud to be an American? And so you should be, but unfortunately there is not much to be proud of these days. It will take decades for Kerry (or whoever) to undo the damage that bush has done in 4 short years. Name one country that is now friendly towards the USA! Israel of course and maybe Australia, but that's it. There's Tony and a few others, but they do not have the backing of their people. The Spanish people demonstrated that at the poles. True friendship is not gained by threats nor bought with dollars. Bush has completely squandered the good-will that he received after 911. And I really despise people who repeat the old chestnut about the USA saving the World in WW2. It is the last resort of a pathetic person who cannot argue logically. Hitler was a tyrant and GB went up against him in 1939. It took USA until Japan attacked until they did the right thing. And America did not win the war; Great Britain, the British Empire and all of the free world collectively did. Talk about ego! It is people like you (Chuck) who bring the good name of America down. Your behaviour is an insult and embarrassment to people like Bob, Richard and millions of other Americans.

The above two sections are pretty much what I said when Chuck accused me of going 'bonkers'. Chuck asked Bob to back him up, seems Bob largely agrees with me.

So there you have it. A comprehensive, legible list of facts and figures; and hopefully the final words. There is no logical reply and I would urge any friend of Chuck's to tell him to '*go quietly, very quietly*' with what little dignity he has left. I can run circles around him with simple logic, knowledge and facts; his silly little notes only make him look even more stupid. You are akin to a man in quicksand – the more you squirm, the worse it gets. Give up gracefully. It is no contest, I make it 25-0. Eat your heart out, go eat some 'freedom fries'.

I'm sure that everybody joins me in wishing Chuck all the best and hope that he gets the psychiatric help that he so clearly needs. Perhaps he will be able to fit some sessions in between his elocution, math, history and grammar lessons? I understand that they are developing a drug for the memory loss. And with less bridge and so more free time, how about a visit to the cinema? I can recommend Fahrenheit 911. It may seem a flight of fantasy at times but it is a true documentary directed by a patriotic American. The main star is a comedian. The fact that it won 1st prize at an international festival says volumes about what the rest of the World think about bush; but bush and Chuck do not give a hoot!

I have not been rude to Chuck, nor do I wish to be. But he has somewhat provoked me as well as others and so I say: -

You, sir, are a cad and a bounder. Be gone, I say, be gone.

Benjamin Twos

As requested, the article on Benjamin twos: -

Now I am one of those guys who like to have their cake and eat it (perhaps explains my weight?). I certainly like to be able to open a weak two in the majors, but I also like strong Acol type twos in the majors. Fortunately, this was all solved by Albert Benjamin. Playing Benjamin twos, the traditional 2♣ opening (23+ or a game forcing hand) is replaced by 2♦. This then leaves 2♣ free to show a strong two in either major (partner normally relays with 2♦ and you then bid 2♥/♠). Now there are numerous variants as to exactly what the 2♣ and 2♦ opening bids (and subsequent rebids) mean. I shall simply describe my preferred Benjamin variation etc.

Playing Benjamin twos the opening bids are: -

- 2♣ Strong but not game forcing. Either 8-9 playing tricks in an unspecified suit or a balanced 22-24.
- 2♦ Game forcing. 25+ if balanced
- 2♥/♠ weak, 6 card suit, 6-10.
- 2NT 20-21 balanced.
- 3NT pre-emptive (gambling 3NT). long solid minor, nothing outside.

After a 2♣/♦ opening, I prefer an automatic relay of 2♦/♥. Rebids then mean: -

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♥ | 8 playing tricks in ♥'s – non-forcing (but rarely passed) |
| 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♠ | 8 playing tricks in ♠'s – non-forcing (but rarely passed) |
| 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♥ | 9 playing tricks in ♥'s – non-forcing (but very rarely passed) |
| 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♠ | 9 playing tricks in ♠'s – non-forcing (but very rarely passed) |
| 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♣ | 9 playing tricks in ♣'s – non-forcing (generally an unbalanced hand) |
| 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♦ | 9 playing tricks in ♦'s – non-forcing (generally an unbalanced hand) |
| 2♣ - 2♦ - 2NT | 22-24, balanced |
| 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT | 25+, balanced, game forcing |
| 2♦ - 2♥ - any suit | natural, game forcing |

As I said, there are numerous variants of Benjamin twos, but I prefer this one because you never have to bid 3NT (this leaves partner the option of Stayman and transfers etc. when he is bust and you are 25+ and balanced). There is a rather better/more complex variant based on this scheme which also includes 4441 type hands.

Note that a 2♦ opening is always game forcing.

Note also that an Acol two is normally forcing. Playing this version of Benjamin the sequence 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♥/♠ is not strictly forcing as a stronger opening hand would rebid at the 3 level.

Incidentally, Benjamin twos are normally associated with Acol – but there really is no dependence. You can play any variation of Benjamin twos with Standard American, 2/1 or any natural system.

If the bidding starts 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♥/♠ then this is not strictly forcing, but responder needs very little to make a bid. I covered this in detail in news-sheet 72: - A Benjamin 2♥/♠ after 2♣ is strong and virtually forcing – only pass with a real heap. Responder to a Benjamin (or strong) two should take a very optimistic view of any assets that he has and bid with a reasonable expectation of making a trick.

Maybe Hans is right?

Board 11 from Friday 20th, love all

North (A)	South	West	North	East	South
♠ A62	♠ K7543	-	-	-	1♠
♥ QJ10962	♥ AK4	2♣	2♥ (1)	pass	3♥
♦ QJ	♦ K64	pass	4♥ (2)	all pass	
♣ Q3	♣ 102				

A fairly automatic auction to the best spot, I'm sure you'll agree? But not everybody thinks so. Let's have a look: -

- (1) Now I was North. What did you bid at (1) with Hand A in this week's quiz? You have 3 card support for partner's ♠'s but I believe that 2♥ is better. This is a very robust suit and it may just be that there is a ♠ loser (as in this actual case) if you play in ♠'s.
- (2) But what did you bid at (2) in the quiz? I chose 4♥, did you? You have an enormous double fit and game seems odds-on.

Now you would think that that's that and there is no reason to discuss the hand? Not so when Hans is at the table. Hans was West and maintains that the North hand should pass 3♥. Why would he make such a seemingly unnecessary comment?

♠ KQJ754 Because this was the actual South hand and there are 4 top losers and so
♥ AK4 4♥ went down (as did 4♠/5♠ at other tables).
♦ 64
♣ 102

As always you can construct countless hands where 4♥ makes and you can also construct countless hands where the opponents cash 4 top tricks. It is not possible for North to establish if there are 4 top losers. I will leave it up to you to decide if Hans is right or if, as Chuck often accused me (falsely) of, he is a results merchant.

As I said last week, I am always willing to print any criticism of my bidding "right or wrong". Everybody makes poor bids on occasion; and when I do, I admit to it. This was not one of those occasions in my view. Hans says it was. No problem, bridge would be boring if everybody thought the same.

And what happened? 4♥ went minus one. At the two other tables 4♠ went minus one and 5♠ went minus two. I guess somebody even went looking for slam?

Too good for a pre-empt?

Board 15 from Friday 27th

Dealer: ♠ A43
South ♥ QJ106543
N-S vul ♦ K
♣ Q8

♠ Q1097 N ♠ K2
♥ K72 W E ♥ A98
♦ J864 S ♦ Q5
♣ A9 ♣ KJ6543
♠ J865
♥ -
♦ A109732
♣ 1072

Table A

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	pass (1)
pass	3♥ (2)	pass	pass
pass			

Table B

West (H)	North	East	South
-	-	-	pass
pass	1♥ (2)	2♣	pass
pass	2♥	3♣ (3)	pass
3NT (4)	pass	pass	pass

Very reasonable bidding at both tables, here's my opinions: -

Table A: (1) This hand would be fine for a weak 2♦ opener if it were not for the 4 card ♠ suit. I too would pass.

(2) But what should North open? 1♥ or 3♥? 12 points is normally too much for an opening pre-empt but if partner is a passed hand it's OK as there probably is no game. Also the singleton ♦K may be worthless. I would also open 3♥, remember that a 3 level pre-empt at unfavourable vulnerability must be a decent hand - but I would not be critical of a 1♥ opening.

Table B: (2) This North chose 1♥, fine.

(3) If you repeat an overcall it should be a 6 card suit and a decent hand, this hand just about qualifies.

(4) What did you bid with Hand H in this week's quiz? Partner has shown a good hand with 6 ♣'s, you have a ♥ stop if you are declaring and I think that 3NT is a fine bid.

And what happened? 3NT made comfortably. 3♥ was the contract at the two other tables and went either one or two down.

The bottom lines: -

- Do not open a weak two with an outside 4 card major.
- A 3 level pre-empt at unfavourable vulnerability must be fairly respectable.
- In 3rd seat you can pre-empt with opening values because partner is a passed hand.
- If you overcall and then repeat the suit after partner has passed, it's 6 cards and a decent hand.

p.s. This hand is a very nice example of how the bidding at the club is improving (perhaps with the aid of my news-sheets? Or it could be tuition from Chuck?). I made four 'bottom line' comments here, and all of them were positive! In my opinion there was not a bidding error by anyone at all of the tables. Good show everybody, very gratifying.

See, Chuck. I can take constructive criticism and do not now always concentrate on the negative!

Stayman after 2NT

Board 10 from Friday 27th, both vul

West	East (E)	West	North	East	South
♠ AJ2	♠ 93	-	-	pass	pass
♥ AQ94	♥ K832	2NT (1)	pass	3NT (2)	pass
♦ AJ10	♦ KQ4	pass	pass		
♣ A107	♣ Q982				

This was the bidding at all 3 tables on Friday. Obviously 3NT makes but 4♥ is a far better contract. Let's have a look at the bidding: -

(1) The 2NT opener is 20-21 (or 20-22, depending upon partnership agreement). This West hand has 20 points and is totally flat (so deduct one point). However, 4 aces are a big + and the two 10's and a 9 make it a sound 2NT opener.

(2) But I don't like this. What did you bid with Hand E in this week's quiz? With a 4 card major and a weak doubleton you should bid Stayman. The 4-4 fit will normally produce an extra trick.

♠ AJ102 And what happened? Well actually West had the ♠ 10 instead of the ♦ 10 and
♥ AQ94 so the ♠'s were adequately covered. But that does not detract from the fact
♦ AJ hands of type E should bid Stayman. And if you allow 5 card majors in
♣ A107 your 2NT opener (most pairs do) then you may otherwise miss a 5-4 ♥ fit!

The bottom line. Stayman and transfers still apply after a 2NT opener.

A reverse?

Board 17 from Friday 27th, love all

West	East	West	North	East	South
♠ 7	♠ KQ93	-	pass	pass	pass
♥ AK94	♥ 863	1♦	2♣	2♠ (1)	pass
♦ QJ1094	♦ A865	3♥ (2)	pass	4♦	pass
♣ Q106	♣ 82	pass	pass		

4♦ is not a good contract and should go down. What went wrong?

(1) East has a problem here. With no interference he would have bid 1♠. A negative double is an option but E-W do not play them (why not?). So East does not have a good bid. It's 9 points but the points are in the long suits and Axxx in partner's suit is a big +. I think that 2♠ is better than a feeble 2♦. If you do not play negative doubles then I assume that this only guarantees 4 cards.

(2) So this is the real point of the hand. Partner's 2♠ bid has denied ♥'s. A 3♥ bid here is a reverse and promises a stronger hand. West has two sensible options, 2NT (12-14) or 3♦.

The bottom lines: -

- A reverse shows a big hand (16+).
- If partner has responded at the two level in a new suit then 2NT shows 12-14.
- But if partner has simply raised your suit (say East bid 2♦ at (1)) then 2NT at (2) would show a big hand (18-19 points).
- A negative dbl at (1) only guarantees one 4 card major – this is because it is difficult to bid this type of hand otherwise.

A 3♣ opener?

Board 17 from Monday 23rd, love all

West	East (D)	West	North	East	South
♠ A109763	♠ J	-	pass	3♣	-
♥ J7	♥ K10	5♣ (1)	all pass		
♦ K5	♦ J1072				
♣ AK4	♣ QJ9876				

So did you open 3♣ with Hand D in this week's quiz. It looks like some followed my and Marty Bergen's advice and opened 3♣. They got a good score. West has a difficult decision at (1); 3♠, 4♣ and 5♣ all have their merits. 3NT does not. This West chose 5♣; it went one down for a 2nd top. It was only beaten at one table when the 3♣ pre-empt meant that N-S could not judge the hand and so got too high in 4♥.

The bottom lines. Non-vul, this East hand is a classic 3♣ opener despite what Chuck says. It gets a good board here. It will usually get a good board if you have a sensible partner. It would have got a good board when I bid it with a similar hand a couple of weeks back if Chuck could only keep quiet and let the opponents play in a hopeless 3NT.

A 2♠ opener?

Board 23 from Monday 23rd, both vul

West (G)	East (F)	<u>Table A</u>			
♠ K65432	♠ AQ	West	North	East	South
♥ K62	♥ J1073	-	-	-	pass
♦ 2	♦ Q95	2♠ (1)	pass	pass (2)	pass
♣ A73	♣ K952	<u>Table B</u>			
		West	North	East	South
		-	-	-	pass
		pass (1)	pass	pass (3)	

Table A: (1) What did you open with Hand G in this week's quiz? It looks like a classic (top-of-the-range) weak 2♠ to me.

(2) And what did you do with Hand F after partner opened 2♠? You should pass. 2♠ will be an excellent spot and there certainly is no game.

Table B: (1) This West chose to pass. It is a matter of style, but I play that there is no hand that is too good for a weak 2♠ that cannot open 1♠, i.e. I do not allow a 'gap'. This hand is not good enough for 1♠.

(3) Did you open Hand F in 4th seat in this week's quiz? It just about qualifies as an opener in 1st-3rd seat (rule of 20) but I would not argue with pass, AQ doubleton is very bad. In 4th seat things are different. The ♠ suit is all important and the rule of 16 (suit length + ♠ length) applies. This hand is nowhere near (14) and should certainly pass in 4th seat.

And what happened? 2♠ made +1 for the top score. So opening at (3) may have worked on this occasion, but only because partner has the ♠'s and should have opened.

The bottom lines: My preference is to have no gap between a 1♠ and 2♠ opener. With a 6 card suit, if it's not good enough for 1♠ then open 2♠. The only exception would be if there was an additional 4 card ♥ suit.

Add up the points!

Board 10 from Monday 23rd

Dealer: ♠ 109865
East ♥ 8
both vul ♦ 1083
♣ 6432

Table A

West North East South (B)
- - 2NT (1) 3♥ (2)
pass pass dbl pass
pass pass

♠ J42 N ♠ AKQ
♥ J96 W E ♥ 1074
♦ 97652 S ♦ AQJ4
♣ J9 ♣ A107
♠ 73
♥ AKQ532
♦ K
♣ KQ85

Table B

West North East South (B)
- - 2NT (1) pass (2)
pass pass

Table A: (1) 2NT is 20-22 (or 20-21, depending upon partnership agreement). This hand is 20 but has totally flat shape; but the two 10's are a + factor and so it's just about worth 2NT.
(2) What did you bid with Hand B at (2) in this week's quiz? This is not something that you find in the bidding books – you have to think. RHO has 20-22 points; you have 17 points; LHO and partner have at most 3 between them. If you double then either the opponents will find a (♦) fit or you will end up in a doubled contract. If you bid 3♥ then RHO will obviously double you and you will go down. If you pass then so will LHO and partner – excellent.

Table B: (2) This South had his thinking cap on.

And what happened? Just two South's found the pass at (2). 2NT was down 3 at both tables for 300 to N-S and a joint top. At the other 3 tables the contract was 3♥ by South. That was 100 away and 500 away at the two tables where it was doubled.

The bottom lines: -

- When RHO opens 2NT it is rarely correct to double with a big hand.
- Indeed, some players play that double shows a distributional two-suiter.
- If you think that 2NT is going down, then pass. If you double then 2NT will not be the final contract.

Now this situation - a huge hand when RHO opens 2NT - comes up once in a blue moon. But we had a total blue moon at the club a few years back (News sheet 6). Remember?

West	East	West	North	East (me)	South
♠ AK72	♠ 9864	-	-	-	2NT
♥ KQ2	♥ 98754	dbl (1)	pass	pass	3♦
♦ Q4	♦ 763	dbl (2)	pass	pass (3)	pass
♣ KQJ7	♣ 6				

West chose to double at (1). Showing 20 pts, I'm not arguing although pass may be better. South removed to 3♦, so what do you do at (2)? You must pass. You have told partner about your 20 points and pass now means that you do not have good enough ♦'s for a penalty double. I was East and passed at (3). My partner said that his double was take-out. Wrong.

Bidding Quiz Answers

- Hand A: (a) 2♥. This is forcing and is better than supporting ♠'s (say 3♠ or 4♠) as there may be a ♠ loser in a ♠ contract which is not there in a ♥ contract. The intermediates in this suit make all the difference.
(b) Pass or 4♥? Hans says pass, I say 4♥. Take your pick.
- Hand B: Pass. You expect to defeat 2NT. If you double then somebody will bid. If you bid 3♥ then you will go down, probably doubled.
- Hand C: (a) Pass or double. Double is not too bad this time as if partner bids you hope to have a fit; but I still prefer pass.
(b) But this time you must pass. Your last double told partner that the points are 20-20. If you pass then partner will bid a major with his zero count....
(c) ... but double here is penalties. Showing the same 20 points you showed last time but promising something decent in ♦'s.
- Hand D: 3♣. A 6 card ♣ suit like this is OK non-vul according to Marty Bergen. That's good enough for me.
- Hand E: 3♣, Stayman. With a weak doubleton look for the 4-4 ♥ fit. Swap the ♠9 and ♥K and I would bid 3NT.
- Hand F: (a) Pass. Apply the rule of 16 (long suit + ♠ length) in 4th seat. This does not qualify (it is 14).
(b) Pass. There is no game. You do not want to raise ♠'s with just two trumps (the Law – the total is eight) and you will be happy to defend if the opponents compete to the three level.
- Hand G: 2♠. A top-of-the-range weak two.
- Hand H: 3NT. Partner has shown a good hand with a 6 card ♣ suit. Nine tricks in NT could easily be there. You have a ♥ stop and so it's best if you are declarer.