

Mon 12 th	1 st N-S	Gene & Jean-Charles	59%	2 nd	Hugh & Sally	58%
	1 st E-W	Paul Sav.. & Ursula	62%	2 nd	Tomas & Tony	58%
Wed 14 th	1 st N-S	Mike & Jean-Charles	56%	2 nd	Bengt M.. and Gastone	54%
	1 st E-W	Clive & Gerry	61%	2 nd	Jan v Koss & Royd	59%
Fri 16 th	1 st N-S	Hugh & Sally	61%	2 nd	Ivy & Phil	57%
	1 st E-W	Clive & Gerry	65%	2 nd	Dave & Terry	62%

Bidding Quiz

Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.

Hand A

Hand B

With Hand A partner opens 1♣ and RHO overcalls a weak 2♠.
What do you do?

♠ 54

♠ J6

♥ KJ1093

♥ J87

♦ 85

♦ AJ74

♣ A984

♣ A874

With Hand B RHO opens 1♣ and this is passed round to partner who doubles. What do you bid?

Bidding Sequences Quiz

Loads of sequences, and they all occurred this week

- C** 1NT dbl What is dbl? How many points? Does it make any difference if the 1NT opening was weak (12-14)?
- D** 1NT dbl pass 2♠ What is 2♠?
- E** 1NT dbl pass 2♠ What is the 2NT bid?
pass 2NT
- F** 2♥ 2♠ dbl 2♥ is weak. What is the dbl – take-out, penalties or ‘optional’?
- G** 1♥ 2NT 3♥ dbl 2NT is the UNT (both minors and usually weak).
What is the double – take-out, penalties or ‘optional’?
- H** 1♣ 2♣ If the 1♣ may be short (two cards) is 2♣ natural or Michaels?
- J** 1♣ 2♣ 2♦ 2♥ 2♣ is Michaels and 2♦ is natural and forcing.
2♠ Does the 2♠ reverse show extra values?
- K** 1♣ 2♣ 2♦ 2♥ 2♣ is Michaels and 2♦ is natural and forcing.
dbl What is dbl – is it ‘negative’ or showing ♥’s?
- L** 1NT 2♣ pass 2♦ 2♣ was Cappelletti (long suit somewhere) and 2♦ was a relay.
dbl What is the dbl?
- M** pass pass 1♦ pass What is 1NT, is it natural (denying 4 ♠’s) or conventional?
1♥ pass pass 1NT
- N** 1NT pass 2♣ pass What is the 3♦? how many ♦’s? how many ♥’s?
2♠ pass 3♦
- P** 1♣ dbl pass 2NT How many points is 2NT?
- Q** 1♣ pass pass dbl How many points is 2NT?
pass 2NT

That interesting hand from last week

Board 13 from Friday 9th

I got some feedback from my article on this deal from last week. It appears that a number of people thought that South should pull the double with 4♣ at (4). I disagree.

Suppose West had the same hand and North held something like ♠A82 ♥A2 ♦K532 ♣9852. Then North knows that 3NT is making, but if he makes a fatuous redouble then E-W will run to 4♥ which will make! No, the answer is as I stated last week, South has described his hand perfectly and it is up to North (Hand F in last week's quiz) to run to 4♣ if he does not have the necessary stoppers. South should most certainly not run.

Anyway, I heard of another interesting auction, given below as Table C.

Dealer:	♠ 42	<u>Table A</u>			
North	♥ Q732	West	North	East	South
both vul	♦ J732	-	pass	pass (1)	3NT (2)
	♣ 985	dbl	pass (3)	pass	pass (4)

♠ K1093	N	♠ AJ8	<u>Table C</u>			
♥ KJ8	W E	♥ A954	West	North	East	South
♦ AQ10986	S	♦ K54	-	pass	1♣ (1)	2♣ (5)
♣ -		♣ 732	2♦	2♥ (6)	3♦ (7)	pass
	♠ Q765		3♠ (8)	pass	4♠ (9)	all pass
	♥ 106					
	♦ -					
	♣ AKQJ1064					

- Table A:
- (1) As I said last week, I would not open this hand (rule of 20)
 - (2) A Gambling 3NT describes this hand perfectly.
 - (3) North should bid 4♣ - pass or correct.
 - (4) And South correctly passed in my opinion.

- Table C:
- (1) This East chose to open with a (could be short) 1♣. This was not alerted.
 - (5) South here thought that 2♣ was natural over a short ♣. North thought that it was Michaels (showing both majors) but did not alert.
 - (6) North was responding to 'Michaels'. But as there was an intervening bid there is no need to bid and I would do so only with a 4-card major.
 - (7) Double (showing ♥'s) is probably best, but showing the ♦ support should have enabled the partnership to reach slam. Pass is a reasonable option.
 - (8) West decided to show his ♠ suit. His reasoning was that partner may have 4 ♠'s. That depends upon your agreement as to whether a reverse after a two level response shows extras (sequence J). This pair have both played 2/1 and most 2/1 players play that it does not (as I state on my 2/1 leaflet), so I would cue bid 4♣ on the way to a ♦ slam. Another argument for not bidding the ♠'s is that South has promised at least 4 cards in the ♠ suit (if you take his bid as Michaels).
 - (9) East assumed that West either had 5 ♠'s or had a ♣ control and was happy to play in a Moysian fit. I agree with this 4♠ assuming that the 3♦ bid denied 4 ♠'s.

And what happened? 4♠ is makeable according to Deep Finesse (i.e. double dummy) but in practice it went two down for a poor score.

The bottom lines:

- You have to decide whether 2♣ is natural over a short ♣. I play it as a Michaels cue bid promising the majors regardless.
- A possible short ♣ opening and Michaels cue bids both need alerting.
- I believe that there were a few words at the table and some unnecessary argo due to the **two** failures to alert (one from each side). Please re-read the above line.
- If partner bids Michaels and the next player bids, then a free bid of one of partner's suits should promise 4+ cards if partner has only promised a 4 card suit.
- Partnerships have to agree if a reverse after a two level response promises extra values or not. I like to play that it does not – then East would bid 2♠ at (7) if he had 4 ♠'s.
- Moysian fits do not play well if you have to take ruffs in the 4-trump hand.
- Had West cue bid 4♣ at (8) the he would have got a 4♥ cue bid in reply (♥A) and the 6♦ slam would have been easy to bid.

A nice unblock

Board 1 from Wednesday 14th

3NT by North is cold on any lead – can you see how?

Dealer:	♠ AKQ				
North	♥ K6	West	North	East	South
Love all	♦ QJ10984	-	1♦	1♠	dbl (1)
	♣ K5	3♣ (2)	3NT (3)	all pass	

♠ 6542	N	♠ J10987
♥ Q105	W E	♥ A87
♦ 76	S	♦ 532
♣ Q1098		♣ A2
	♠ 3	
	♥ J9432	
	♦ AK	
	♣ J7643	

- (1) This is the best bid. It's not really strong enough for a forcing 2♥ and I prefer the negative double. Pass will only cause problems when partner re-opens with double as 2♥ then shows a poor hand. This is similar to Hand A.
- (2) Good bid – obeying the Law.
- (3) The ♠'s are stopped.

And what happened? 4 out of 8 pairs were in the good 3NT (we had the usual three or so going down in 5 of a minor). But the interesting point of this hand is not the bidding but the play. Everybody in 3NT made it, but I don't know how many found the 100% line – win the ♠ lead, cash the other two top ♠'s (discarding the ♦AK) and then cash the six ♦ tricks. An initial ♦ lead means the unblock is unnecessary and a ♥ or ♣ lead leads to ten tricks with the same unblock play.

The bottom lines:

- Unblocks come in all shapes and sizes.

Those Negative waves

Board 13 from Wednesday 14th

Remember ‘Oddball’ saying “Don’t hit me with those negative waves so early in the morning” in the movie “Kelly’s Heroes”? – Donald Sutherland, Telly Savalas, Clint Eastwood. Great movie.

Anyway, I have occasionally (frequently even by Chuck) been accused of only writing negative comments in the news-sheets, so here is a hand that was well bid by Jan/Royd: -

Dealer:	♠ A9875				
South	♥ 10	West	North	East	South
Love all	♦ 10652	-	-	-	1♠ (1)
	♣ 1093	pass	3♠ (2)	dbl	pass
		3♥ (3)	pass	4♥	all pass
♠ 42	N	♠ 63			
♥ 8543	W E	♥ AKQ9			
♦ KQJ97	S	♦ A43			
♣ 87		♣ AK64			
	♠ KQJ10				
	♥ J762				
	♦ 8				
	♣ QJ52				

- (1) A somewhat light opening, and if playing 4 card majors I would open 1♥ if I decided to open. Anyway, it worked as N-S found their fit immediately.
- (2) ‘The Law’ says to raise to 4♠, and that’s what I would do – but I suppose it’s not so easy if you play 4 card majors?
- (3) Should you bid the good 5 card ♦ suit or the 4 card major to the eight? When partner doubles ♠’s he usually has ♥’s and I like this bid chosen by Royd. If partner does not like ♥’s then he must have a very big hand and you can show the ♦’s next go.

And what happened? Four pairs out of eight reached the good 4♥ contract (presumably most were given a free run – 2NT - 3♣ - 3♥ - 4♥). Just one pair played in the inferior 3NT and scored below average for missing the 4-4 fit – serves them right. Two pairs missed game and one E-W pair decided to defend 3♠ doubled by North which made exactly. Looks like 4♠ is a very sound sacrifice.

The bottom lines:

- If partner opens 2NT and you have a 4 card major (and a few points) then bid 3♣ Stayman.
- If partner doubles ♠’s then he usually has ♥’s, so bid a 4 card ♥ suit in preference to a longer/stronger minor.

A Lead Problem

♠ 952	West	North	East	South
♥ 6	-	-	pass	1NT (1) Showing a long suit somewhere
♦ 86542	2♣ (1)	pass	2♦ (2)	dbl (2) Relay
♣ AJ52	2♥	3♦	3♥	all pass

You are North, on lead after partner has opened 1NT and doubled the 2♦ relay bid.

- (a) What do you lead. (b) What is the worst possible lead that you can imagine?
- Answers next page.

The worst lead I've ever seen?

Board 22 from Wednesday 14th

OK. Enough of the nice stuff and back to normal. Let's get onto the most diabolical lead that I have ever seen from a relatively experienced player. What was your answer to the leading question on the previous page?

I cannot think of a worst lead than a low ♣ away from the ♣AJxx; especially when partner has explicitly asked for a ♦ lead, can you? Yet one regular player did find this lead!! It cost a trick of course.

Dealer: ♠ 952

East ♥ 6

E-W vul ♦ 86542

♣ AJ52

West	North	East	South
-	-	pass	1NT
2♣ (1)	pass	2♦ (2)	dbl (3)
2♥	3♦	3♥	all pass

♠ K108 N

♠ A76

♥ AJ9854 W E

♥ Q32

♦ Q10 S

♦ 973

♣ K8

♣ 10963

♠ QJ43

♥ K107

♦ AKJ

♣ Q74

- (1) Cappelletti, showing a single suited hand.
- (2) Relay
- (3) Showing decent ♦'s and asking for a ♦ lead.

And what happened? North did actually find the ♣2 lead! And he's not a beginner – amazing! 3♥ went just one down for somewhere around average. Three E-W pairs were in 2♥ going one down – the silly lead cost a trick and a ♦ lead would have scored a clear top for 3♥ going two down.

The bottom lines:

- Do not lead away from an ace against a suit contract.
- If partner has made a lead directing double – then lead that suit!
- The combination of ignoring the above two guidelines in one lead is mind-boggling.

Bidding out your shape

Board 5 from Wednesday 14th

What was your answer to sequence N (1NT - 2♣ - 2♠ - 3♦) in this week's quiz? It's not the best treatment, but most play it as showing a long ♦ suit with 4 ♥'s and forcing.

Dealer: ♠ J8543
North ♥ Q42
N-S vul ♦ 976
♣ 87

Table A

West	North	East	South
-	pass	1NT	pass
2♣ (1)	pass	2♠	pass
3♦ (2)	pass	4♠ (3)	all pass

♠ 9	N	♠ AKQ2
♥ 10987	W E	♥ AJ6
♦ QJ1054	S	♦ K2
♣ AQ10		♣ 6543
	♠ 1076	
	♥ K53	
	♦ A83	
	♣ KJ92	

'Expert' Table

West	North	East	South
-	pass	1NT	pass
2NT (1)	pass	3♦ (4)	pass
3♥ (5)	pass	3NT	all pass

- Table A: (1) Unless you play 4-way transfers this is the normal bid.
(2) Having bid Stayman, this sequence is generally used to show 4 cards in the other major and a longer minor. It's not really satisfactory and our experts bid it better.
(3) East did not understand the bid.
- 'Expert' Table (1) Our experts play 4-way transfers and that's the best way to show this hand type.
2NT is a transfer explicitly to ♦'s. An alternative is an 'ambiguous splinter' but I would prefer a stronger hand and better ♥'s for that bid.
(4) East would need another ♦ to super-accept.
(5) And now West shows his shape, 5+ ♦'s, 4 ♥'s and game forcing.

And what happened? 4♠ was not a success. Most pairs reached 3NT making anything from 9 to 12 tricks.

The bottom lines:

- Experience partnerships should play 4-way transfers.
- Then with a 5+ card minor and a 4 card major you transfer into the minor and then bid the major.
- This treatment has a number of advantages as detailed in the No Trump bidding book.
- Just one of the problems with the 'orthodox' method of Stayman followed by the minor is that if opener responds 2♦ and responder bids his minor then opener does not know which major it is.
- Ambiguous splinters after 1NT are fully described in the No Trump bidding book.
- The best meaning for sequence N: 1NT - 2♣ - 2♠ - 3♦, is ASID (Advanced Stayman in Doubt). It confirms a 4-4 ♠ fit and asks opener to describe his hand further. It is fully defined in the No trump bidding book.

It's nothing complicated – part 1

Board 2 from Wednesday 14th

What was your answer to sequence M in this week's quiz? 1NT is simply a natural balancing bid.

Dealer:	♠ KJ4					
East	♥ Q76		West	North	East	South
N-S vul	♦ K76		-	-	pass	pass
	♣ KJ63		1♦ (1)	pass (2)	1♥	pass
			pass	1NT (3)	pass	2♠ (4)
			all pass			
♠ AQ7	N	♠ 986				
♥ 1053	W E	♥ K984				
♦ AJ103	S	♦ 52				
♣ 874		♣ A1092				
	♠ 10532					
	♥ AKJ					
	♦ Q984					
	♣ Q5					

- (1) A 3rd seat disruptive opener – good bid as it turned out.
- (2) North has nothing to say at the moment.
- (3) And now it's safe to come in with a natural 1NT in the pass-out seat.
- (4) But unfortunately South read something sinister into the bid – muttering things about sandwich seats and Snapdragons.

And what happened? 2♠ was not a success, with 1NT playing very nicely by North at most tables.

The bottom lines:

- The sandwich seat is no longer the sandwich seat if both opponents have limited their hands.
- A balancing 1NT over a red suit generally denies four ♠'s.

It's nothing complicated – part 2

Board 5 from Monday 12th

What was your answer to sequence Q in this week's quiz? 2NT is simply a natural bid.

Dealer: ♠ Q832

North ♥ AQ2

N-S vul ♦ 862

♣ KQ5

♠ A1054

N

♠ J6

♥ K93

W E

♥ J87

♦ KQ9

S

♦ AJ74

♣ 963

♣ A874

♠ K97

♥ 10654

♦ 1053

♣ J102

	West	North	East(B)	South
	-	1♣	pass	pass
dbl	(1)	pass	2NT (2)	pass
3♥	(3)	pass	3♠ (4)	all pass

- (1) I would bid 1NT – I play that as around 10-13 in the balancing seat.
- (2) What did you bid with this East hand B in this week's quiz? Partner's double is in the balancing seat and the 'borrow a king' philosophy applies. So deduct three points from this hand and you come up with the correct answer of 1NT.
- (3) This shows a very strong ♥ hand, too good to simply overcall 1♥. I believe that West got confused.
- (4) I believe that East thought that West was confused.

And what happened? 3♠ was not a success, it was the only negative score for E-W.

The bottom lines: -

- When partner doubles then 2NT is natural and about 11-12 points and denying an unbid 4 card major.
- But when partner's double is in the balancing seat then you need three more points, so bid 1NT with 11-12 and 2NT with 13-14.
- Be aware of balancing and the 'borrow a king' theory.
- I gave a scheme for bidding 1NT in the balancing seat in news-sheet 213 and it's up on the web in the general bridge topics section.

Don't double with flat hands

Board 26 from Wednesday 14th

I believe that this South is a member of the 'double to show an opening hand regardless' brigade. Unfortunately we have a number of them in the club – it seems that my continual writings are to no avail. It cost 500 on a partscore deal this time: -

Dealer:	♠ 109843				
East	♥ 86	West	North	East	South
Both vul	♦ K86	-	-	1NT(1)	dbl (2)
	♣ 1052	pass (3)	2♠ (4)	pass	2NT (5)
		dbl (6)	all pass		
♠ AK76	N	♠ Q52			
♥ K109	W E	♥ AJ742			
♦ 73	S	♦ A109			
♣ 9874		♣ QJ			
	♠ J				
	♥ Q53				
	♦ QJ542				
	♣ AK63				

- (1) Weak, 12-14
- (2) What would you bid with this South hand? A double of 1NT is penalties and should be 15-18, no more, no less. This is true whether the 1NT opening is weak or strong. This hand is a clear pass.
- (3) This hand is good enough for redouble but I believe that this pair play that opener will always redouble – a good convention.
- (4) North does not want to play against No Trumps. This is a weak bid.
- (5) Well, we have at least 13 combined points and a total mis-fit, so why not try 2NT?
- (6) I'll tell you why.

And what happened? 2NT doubled went for 500 and a virtual bottom.

The bottom lines:

- Don't double with flat hands.
- Don't double 'to show an opening hand'.
- A double of 1NT should be 15-18 points. The strength of the opening 1NT is irrelevant.
- If partner doesn't want to defend 1NT then he sure as hell does not want to be playing in 2NT (doubled).
- If you double 1NT showing 15-18 and partner bids, then he is very weak and does not want to defend 1NT doubled.

The automatic re-opening double

Board 26 from Monday 12th

If you play negative doubles then you really have to understand the 'automatic' re-opening double: -

Dealer:	♠ J3				
East	♥ 8	West(A)	North	East	South
both vul	♦ AKQJ74	-	-	1♣	2♠ (1)
	♣ J1075	pass (2)	pass	dbl	(3) pass
		pass (4)	pass		
♠ 54	N	♠ A106			
♥ KJ1093	W E	♥ A762			
♦ 85	S	♦ 932			
♣ A984		♣ KQ2			
	♠ KQ9872				
	♥ Q54				
	♦ 106				
	♣ 63				

- (1) Weak
- (2) What did you bid with this West hand A in this week's quiz? The hand is not good enough for a game forcing 3♥ but a negative double is perfect. If you pass then your partner will automatically re-open with a double and a 3♥ bid then shows a much weaker hand.
- (3) The expected automatic re-opening double.
- (4) West apparently got confused here and the ♥ contract was missed.

And what happened? 2♠ doubled made +2 for a top to N-S. There were the usual spurious results but 3♥ making exactly is the 'optimum'.

The bottom lines:

- If you play negative doubles then you have to understand the automatic re-opening double. It's all up on the web and in the conventions folder – take a copy and digest it.

Weak 2♦ or a Multi? ...

Board 18 from Friday 16th

... and I'm not referring to an opening bid!

I had to give an average score at Table A when South overcalled 2♦ 'Multi' and North said that it was weak (i.e. ♦'s) when asked.

Dealer: ♠ A642
East ♥ K
N-S vul ♦ J1064
 ♣ 8764

Table A

West	North	East	South
-	-	1♣	2♦ (1)
...?			

♠ J3	N	♠ K975
♥ A85	W E	♥ Q104
♦ Q9752	S	♦ K3
♣ K93		♣ AQ102
	♠ Q108	
	♥ J97632	
	♦ A8	
	♣ J5	

Table B

West	North	East	South
-	-	1♣	pass (1)
1♦	pass	1NT	2♥ (2)
dbl (3)	all pass		

Table A: (1) South meant this as some sort of Multi 2♦ bid (weak ♥ suit). Now I suppose that you can agree to play the Multi 2♦ over a 1♣ opening but that is by no means a recognized treatment. North was asked what the bid meant and he said 'weak' (i.e. a weak ♦ hand). This is the normal meaning of the bid. Once play had started and it became apparent that South did not have ♦'s the director was called. It was agreed to scrap the board and give an average all round.

Table B: (1) This South decided not to show his miserable ♥'s, and at this vulnerability I would not bid a weak 2♥ (or Multi!!!) either.
(2) But South could not resist the temptation a 2nd time. This really is much worse than an initial weak 2♥ overcall as the opponents have exchanged information and you are much more likely to get doubled for penalties when RHO has bid No Trumps.
(3) West decided to go for the 'magic 200 at pairs' score.

And what happened? West at Table B actually got a magic 800 for a clear top.

The bottom lines:

- A Multi 2♦ over a 1♣ opening is quite playable I suppose, but it is not standard and most certainly would have to be agreed.
- If you decide not to make a weak jump overcall, don't change your mind later and come in after the opponents have exchanged information.
- J97632 is not a good enough suit to make a weak noise, especially at unfavourable vulnerability.

Bidding Quiz Answers

- Hand A:** Dbl, negative. Showing 4+ ♥'s and values to compete. A forcing 3♥ is an overbid and pass and then 3♥ over partner's automatic re-opening double shows a weaker hand.
- Hand B:** 1NT. Partner's double is in the balancing seat and could be as few as 8-9 points. He has 'borrowed a king' from your hand and you should deduct three points from your normal bid if it was a direct seat double.

Bidding Sequences Quiz Answers

- C** 1NT dbl
The double is penalties, 15-18. It is the same over a strong or weak 1NT. If you start doubling weak No Trumps with 13 or so points you will hear a redouble all too often.
- D** 1NT dbl pass 2♠
2♠ is a weak hand (less than 6 points) with long ♠'s.
- E** 1NT dbl pass 2♠
pass 2NT
The 2NT is nonsensical. That word probably does not exist but then neither does the bid. 2♠ means that he does not like No Trumps.
- F** 2♥ 2♠ dbl
Double is 100% penalties when partner has pre-empted.
- G** 1♥ 2NT 3♥ dbl
Double is 100% penalties when partner has pre-empted.
- H** 1♣ 2♣
It's up to partnership agreement. I like to play that it's Michaels and assume that the 1♣ opening is natural. With decent ♣'s I pass and may bid them next round.
- J** 1♣ 2♣ 2♦ 2♥
2♠
I like to play that a reverse does not show extra values after a two level response. That agreement is particularly important here as partner has not denied ♠'s.
- K** 1♣ 2♣ 2♦ 2♥
dbl
I think that double here should show ♥'s.
- L** 1NT 2♣ pass 2♦
dbl
The double of 2♦ is lead directing with good honours in ♦'s.
- M** pass pass 1♦ pass
1♥ pass pass 1NT
Nothing complicated, 1NT is simply natural in the balancing seat and in this scenario it probably denies a 4 card ♠ suit.
- N** 1NT pass 2♣ pass
2♠ pass 3♦
This is most commonly played as 4 ♥'s, 5+ ♦'s and forcing. But the best treatment is Advanced Stayman In Doubt (ASID), indicating a 4-4 ♠ fit and asking partner to clarify his hand.
- P** 1♣ dbl pass 2NT
2NT is about 11-12
- Q** 1♣ pass pass dbl
pass 2NT
2NT here is 3 points more, so about 13-14 (you would have overcalled 1NT with a decent 15).