

Last week's winners: Monday 10/3/03 Friday 14/3/03

Winners	Hans/Bob	66%	winners	Paul/Terry	61%
2 nd	Joe/Jeff	65%	2 nd	Hans/Bob	60%

Raising Partner's 1NT response.

♠ K7432 This is North hand 14 from Monday. What do you open? If you play a
 ♥ 87 strong NT this is certainly a hand where you should consider opening 1NT,
 ♦ AKQ it shows the strength and balance of the hand all in one go. I also prefer
 ♣ KJ8 1NT because you have tenaces in two suits that need protecting. If you
 open 1♠ you will have a rebid problem over 2♣/♦/♥ (the ♠ suit is too ropey to rebid
 and 2NT shows 12-14 points). If you play a weak NT there

is no problem, open 1♠ and rebid 2NT (15-16) over partner's 2♣/♦/♥. But what if partner responds 1NT (6-9) to your opening of 1♠? Regardless of if you play a strong or weak NT, you cannot now bid 2NT as you need a good 17-18 points for this bid (partner may have only 6 points). This hand is a very poor 16 points (with a bad 5 card suit and 13 points concentrated in two 3 card suits). My preference would be to pass, Hans expressed some sympathy with a 2♦ rebid (I don't like this). What actually happened? The hand rebid 2NT. This is an overbid and is likely played by the wrong hand (note what I said about tenaces). And then? 2NT was raised to 3NT (South had a decent 8 points) and this drifted two off (this happened at two tables). If North had opened 1NT then South would have raised to 2NT and this North hand should then pass (a poor 16). The moral? :-

- 1) Don't worry about weak doubletons. If 1NT describes your hand – open 1NT.
- 2) Don't worry about bad 5 card major suits. If 1NT describes your hand – open 1NT.
- 3) The sequence 1any – 1NT – 2NT promises a good 17-18 points playing a strong NT. It would be a hand that was too strong for a strong 1NT opening.
- 4) If you play a weak NT and have 15 – bad 16 points (a NT rebid) and partner replies 1NT to your opening suit bid, then pass. Bid 2NT with 16-17, 3NT with 18+.
- 5) Read up on hand evaluation. This hand is not worth 16 points unless partner supports ♠'s. It is certainly not worth 16 points in a NT contract. I have a few pages on hand evaluation, ask me if you would like a copy.

The 1NT Response

In news-sheet 18 I stated that a rebid of 1NT with a singleton in partner's suit should be avoided – and *never* with a void. A response of 1NT to partner's opening is different: - Ideally, a 1NT response is 6-9 points and denies a 4 card major that is by-passed. It would be nice to also be balanced but is not always possible and the higher the opening bid, the less balanced a 1NT reply may be. Over partner's 1♣ opening everything is easy (it is in fact possible to split the point range by utilising both 1♦ and 1NT to mean the same thing but different points). The higher the opening bid the more difficult it becomes for responder if he has insufficient values to bid at the two level (one reason why I prefer 5 card majors and a prepared 1♣ – keep the opening bid low). Just look at these two hands, partner has opened 1♠.

Hand A	Hand B	It may seem like a bit of a distortion, but there is really no alternative but to respond 1NT to partner's 1♠ opening. Not very nice, but both hands are too weak to respond at the two level (especially if you play a strong NT). Hands like this are one reason why I prefer to play 5 card majors (partner is less likely to open 1♠!). If playing a strong NT I prefer to
♠ -	♠ -	
♥ QJ107	♥ QJ10985	
♦ K10974	♦ QJ4	Incidentally, if you play 2/1 and a forcing NT play 2/1 (as I
♣ J962	♣ J932	do with Chuck) then these Hands are easy. Playing a forcing NT, the 1NT response to a major suit opening is 6-12 points, forcing, and <i>any</i> shape; two level suit responses are game forcing.

Dealer:	♠ Q984	West	North	East	South
East	♥ QJ107				
Both vul	♦ 95	-	-	2♥	2♠
	♣ AQ8	pass	3NT	pass	4♠
		pass	pass	pass	
♠ 10	N				
♥ 42	W E				
♦ AK765	S				
♣ KJ953					

You are West and lead the ♦A, partner follows with the ♦Q. What next?

Dummy is somewhat depressing, the ♣AQ sit well for declarer and he has found good 4 card trump support opposite. It looks like just three tricks (two ♦'s and hopefully the ♥A from partner (declarer can have just one ♥). Is there a chance of a 4th trick? Partner's ♦Q can be a singleton or from ♦QJ, but does continuing ♦'s do any good?

Answer overleaf.

Go For the Only Chance - Solution

Dealer:	♠ Q984	West	North	East	South
East	♥ QJ107				
Both vul	♦ 95	-	-	2♥	2♠
	♣ AQ8	pass	3NT	pass	4♠
		pass	pass	pass	

♠ 10	N	♠ K5	
♥ 42	W E	♥ A98653	
♦ AK765	S	♦ Q	West has to continue ♦'s. The only hope
♣ KJ953		♣ 10642	of setting the contract is if East can over-
	♠ AJ7632		ruff dummy in the 3 rd round of ♦'s.
	♥ K		
	♦ J10832		If East plays a small ♦ at trick two or
	♣ 7		switches then the contract makes.

Bridge Magazines

Every now and again members give me a Bridge magazine from their home country (much appreciated Joe, John, Chuck). I mentioned to Joe a few months back that I thought the Dutch magazine to be superior to the British (he just said 'of course'). Anyway, last week John gave me the xmas 2002 copy of 'Bridge'. It contained various articles of varying quality, but the one that struck me was by Anthony Cusk about his 'Holt Weekends', in which he gives lectures.

Dealer:	♠ J10984	Table A:			
West	♥ 962				
E-W vul	♦ J	West	North	East	South
	♣ 10632	1NT (1)	pass	3NT (2)	all pass

♠ Q3	N	♠ AK2	Table B:			
♥ AK84	W E	♥ QJ73				
♦ Q643	S	♦ A8	West	North	East	South
♣ K84		♣ AJ95	1NT (1)	pass	4NT (3)	pass
	♠ 765		6NT	all pass		
	♥ 105					
	♦ K109752					
	♣ Q7					

- (1) 12-14
- (2) pathetic
- (3) Quantitative

The article goes on to say that it was a pair of old ladies who stopped in 3NT at table A but got a good score because the rest of the field got to 6NT (by bidding as table B) which 'unluckily?!' stands little chance. So who was correct? My only question is if the Bridge scene in UK is now run by beginners? When I lived in UK (20 years ago) most players had heard of Stayman. I would certainly fancy my chances in 6♥ on this hand. This is simply another example of the good 4-4 fit yielding an extra trick. There are a few reasonable lines of play; all succeed as you get an extra trick with a ♦ ruff.

So, a pretty silly article by somebody who wants you to spend £169 ++ for a weekend of his lectures. But it does not stop there, the very next hand: -

Contract:	♠ A763		
4♠ by S	♥ 6		
Lead: ♦K	♦ A432		
	♣ AK87		
♠ K10	N	♠ QJ5	
♥ KQ853	W E	♥ J109	
♦ KQJ10	S	♦ 9865	
♣ Q5		♣ J106	
	♠ 9842		
	♥ A742		
	♦ 7		
	♣ 9432		

The bidding was not given, how do you make the contract? Apparently if you book yourself into a Holt weekend then you will be told. This is a cross-ruff hand. Typical technique is to cash ♣AK, the two red aces, two ruffs in each red suit and hope that the final ruff holds up. If you have a clue from the bidding, then you can arrange to take the final ruff in the suit that is more likely to split 4-4. With no clue, I believe that the best line is to arrange to be in hand at trick 9 (cross to the ♥A before you ruff anything) and to try to ruff a 3rd ♥ at trick 9 (this is best as you can over-ruff West with the ♠A if he has 3 ♥'s). This line works if ♥'s are 4-4 or if West has 3 ♥'s and ♦'s are 4-4. It fails on the actual lay-out where the inferior

line of being in dummy and ruffing a 3rd ♦ works. I can only assume that west bid ♥'s at some juncture. It is silly to set problems that depend upon bidding that is not given! Incidentally, on this particular deal it is better not to cash the ♣AK at the start as you then have a back-up entry to North if the ♥'s misbehave – you may still be able to ruff a 3rd ♦ even if a ♥ is over-ruffed. I would be fascinated to see Mr. Cusk's analysis (please save the next issue John), but I would certainly not pay £169 for it. Perhaps I should look for a job as Editor of a UK magazine?