



Last week's winners: Monday 17/3/03

Friday 21/3/03

winners	John/Jim	60%	winners	Ian/Peter-M	63%
2 nd	Hans/Bill	59%	2 nd	Chuck/Terry	59%

No Partner?

Now I generally try to ensure that everybody gets a game, with me sitting out if necessary. However, that is not always possible. A couple of members have been particularly rude to me recently and I have no desire to ever play with either of them again. Also, Chuck has returned and you may realise that it is not always easy to get a suitable partner for him (would you believe that more than one member has said that they will not play with him?). Anyway, I quite enjoy playing with Chuck (I can take it) and unless I see another suitable candidate, I will partner him. This may just mean that somebody does not get a game. My advice is to get to the club early if you have no partner.

What Does Partner Need?

Plan the play with this East hand.

♠ J52	Dealer:	West	North	East	South
♥ AK8	South	-	-	-	2♥
♦ AQJ3	E-W vul	pass	4♥	all pass	
♣ KQ9					

N	♠ K	West leads the ♣7 and Dummy's ♣Q is played. You take the ♣A but how do you then continue? Specifically, what card do you lead at trick 2? Answer overleaf.
W E	♥ 97	
S	♦ 764	
	♣ AJ108532	

Hand Evaluation

I have had a few requests, so I have produced a few sheets on this subject (*Appendix B*). How about this as a starter?

Hand A Hans and myself often have completely opposite bidding opinions. Consider this hand, one of us believes this to be a *very* good 23+ points and would open 2♣ followed by 2NT (showing 23-24 pts or 22-24 pts, however you play it). The other would downgrade the hand because of the relatively poor majors and bad ♠J and would open 2NT (showing 20-22 pts). A huge difference of opinion. What would you open? Who do you think would downgrade and who thinks 2♣ is fine? How well do you know me? I'll tell you who's who later.

♠ AJ
♥ A86
♦ AK94
♣ AK83

What Does Partner Need? - Solution

The opening lead could be a singleton or a doubleton, but even if it is a singleton and you give partner a ruff, the contract is not yet down.

Dealer: ♠ J52
South ♥ AK8
E-W vul ♦ AQJ3
♣ KQ9

If declarer has the ♠ A then he makes his contract (6 trumps, 2 ♦'s, ♣K and ♠ A). Thus West has to have the ♠ A to defeat the contract. East should play the ♠ K at trick 2.

♠ AQ10963	N	♠ K
♥ 43	W E	♥ 97
♦ 1082	S	♦ 764
♣ 76		♣ AJ108532
	♠ 874	
	♥ QJ10652	
	♦ K95	
	♣ 4	

If West did have a singleton ♣ then he would let the ♠ K hold the trick, ruff a ♣ and cash the ♠ A. If West does not have a singleton ♣ (as in this lay-out) then he overtakes the ♠ K, cashes the ♠ Q and gives East a ruff.

The 1NT overcall

♠ KQ102 Occasionally a few of us (Hans, Paul, myself) get together to discuss
♥ AJ8 hands etc. We were talking about an overcall of 1NT (15-18) and Hans
♦ K6 expressed the opinion that it should contain two 'stops' in the opener's suit.
♣ KJ54 I disagreed, and quoted this hand. What do you do when RHO opens 1♥.
 Hans said, well... OK, 1NT. Much to my surprise, Paul disagreed (it is
 usually Hans and myself in disagreement, with Paul adjudicating). Paul said that he would double (showing
4 ♠'s). I consider this to be a reasonable double but I prefer 1NT as I have too much in the opponent's
suit – a double should be playable in the other three suits and implies shortage in opener's. Consider an
analogous situation – you play 'Dutch/Australian Acol' – 4 card majors and a strong NT (a terrible
system). Would you open 1♠ or 1NT? - 1NT obviously (I hope). If you can show your hand in one go –
do so. A 1NT overcall does *not* deny a 4 card major and Stayman and transfers still apply. As with an
opening 1NT, you will only miss your 4-4 major suit fit if partner is too weak to bid. Hans pointed out that
you have problems if you double and partner bids 2♦ (you cannot now bid 2NT as that shows 19-20+
pts). Either bid could work out best on its day, but I prefer 1NT to double. If Hans and I actually agree on
a bid, you can be sure that it has some merit.

To sum up. A 1NT overcall is 15-18 points and promises *a* stop in the enemy suit.

Hand Evaluation – The Answer

First of all, there are two common schemes for defining big balanced hands: -

School A 2NT = 20-22, 2♣ followed by 2NT = 23-24

School B 2NT = 20-21, 2♣ followed by 2NT = 22-24

Let's assume the slightly old fashioned school A.

♠ AJ So, back to hand A from the previous page. Is this worth a 2♣ (23+)
♥ A86 opener? There is absolutely no doubt in my mind, but let's look at a few
♦ AK94 possible hands for partner: -
♣ AK83

♠ 9742 You pick up this miserable collection. Partner's 2NT opening means that
♥ J2 you may get a + score (of course you pass). 2NT will make on a good day.
♦ 87 But what if partner opened 2♣ followed by 2NT(23-24) after your 2♦
♣ Q9542 response. Now you have good game prospects and should probably try Stayman and then
settle for 3NT with no fit. Fine with hand A.

♠ K74 And how about this hand? 9 points. Opposite a 2NT opener you should
♥ J74 simply raise to 3NT. If partner opens 2♣ and rebids 2NT, then you should
♦ QJ7 be looking for slam. 6♣ is an excellent contract opposite hand A.
♣ QJ54

♠ 9742 Let's be fair – the other side of the argument. This hand would pass a 2NT
♥ J2 opener but could reach a poor 3NT opposite a 2♣ opening. So in this case,
♦ Q752 a pessimistic view of hand A probably works.
♣ 542

The real question is, are you going to miss more games/slams by downgrading hand A as opposed to the occasions when you get too high with a 2♣ opener?

So, who's got it right? Am I the pessimist or the realist? Hand A is (in my opinion) a *very* sound 2♣ opener. Shame on you if you thought that it was I who would undervalue this hand! You add on a big plus for all four aces. You add on a big plus for a near quackless hand. You add on a big, big plus for *two* 4 card suits headed by the AK. Sure, a 5 card suit would be nice, but you cannot have *everything*! I can see no reason whatsoever to de-value this hand. If you do not open 2♣, you will miss games/slams. True, you may *occasionally* reach an unmakeable 3NT or 4♥, but are we men or mice? The ♠J is not a great card, but I would upgrade this hand to a 2♣ opener if it was replaced by a small x. If you are an eternal pessimist and agree with Hans (open 2NT) and do not accept my case, then you certainly need to read my booklet (*Appendix B*) on hand evaluation. Paul and Chuck totally agree with me.