

Last week's winners: Monday 8/9/03

Friday 12/9/03

1st David/Tomas 64%
 2nd Gerry/Dave 55%

1st Clive/Terry 67%
 2nd Gunnar/Tomas 61%

A bit chaotic last Monday with three mis-boardings. Anything similar again and we will have to re-introduce the dreaded curtain cards. Twice a board was played to about trick 11 before one player realised that he had 14 cards and another that he had just 12. This really is inexcusable. The laws of bridge (and common sense) are very clear - count your cards before you even look at them. It really is a waste of everybody's time if two players can bid and play a hand with an incorrect number of cards. What is the name of that convention for showing 4433 shape?

Clive has returned from Penang, he was not impressed. Apparently there was a taxi strike and general anti-farang feeling there. Perhaps they thought he was American? Anyway, nice to have him back and we just managed three tables on Friday.

Bidding Quiz

Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A LHO opens 1♦, partner overcalls a weak 2♥ and RHO bids 3♦. You are vulnerable against not and make a sensible pass. LHO bids 3NT round to you. Do you bid?
♠ 94	♠ Q9752	
♥ 10	♥ A10	
♦ 8762	♦ A9	With Hand B you open 1♠ and partner bids 3♠, do you bid 4♠ or pass?
♣ AKQ1062	♣ A654	
Hand C	Hand D	With Hand C what do you open playing a strong NT (15-17)? What would you open playing Acol?
♠ A106	♠ J72	
♥ AQ94	♥ K1082	With Hand D, partner opens a strong NT. Do you bid?
♦ QJ	♦ 876	
♣ AJ102	♣ Q93	With Hand E you open 1♦, LHO doubles and partner bids 1♥. What is your rebid?
Hand E	Hand F	With hand F you choose to open 1♠, what then: -
♠ A76	♠ AK1065	(a) What is your rebid if partner responds 2♦?
♥ 105	♥ K93	(b) What is your rebid if partner responds 2♥?
♦ AKQ1063	♦ -	(c) Is a 3♣ rebid from you weak, invitational or forcing?
♣ Q8	♣ KJ954	(d) What would 2NT over partner's 2♦ show?
		(e) What would 3NT over partner's 2♦ show?

Leading Quiz

Two more problems from Monday 8th

Hand G	Hand H	With Hand G, RHO opens 1♦ and you choose to bid a weak 2♥. LHO bids 3♦, RHO bids 3NT. What do you lead? What do you lead if partner had doubled the final contract?
♠ 6532	♠ Q54	
♥ AQ6543	♥ A87	
♦ -	♦ A72	With Hand H you open 1NT. This is passed round to RHO who bids 2♠. What do you lead?
♣ 987	♣ AJ106	

Stayman with a weak hand?

Board 27 from Monday 8th

North (C)	South (D)	West	North	East	South
♠ A106	♠ J72	-	-	-	pass
♥ AQ94	♥ K1082	pass	1NT (1)	pass	2♣ (2)
♦ QJ	♦ 876	pass	2♥	pass	pass
♣ AJ102	♣ Q93	pass			

An excellent contract, but is it good bidding or just lucky? Let's look: -

At (1) we have opened a strong NT (15-17) with 18 points. With good intermediates some would say it's too strong, but QJ doubleton is a poor holding and I agree with 1NT. Now what about that Stayman 2♣ at (2). It worked out well as partner happened to have 4♥'s.

But what if partner responds 2♦ or 2♠? With just 6 points and no fit you have no recourse, a 2NT bid would be invitational showing 8 points. South should pass 1NT. Only bid Stayman with invitational or better values unless you can cope with any (2♦/♥/♠) response.

Hand J	Hand K	Partner has opened a strong NT opposite both of these hands. Neither has invitational values but you can bid 'garbage' Stayman with both of these hands because you are happy with any response. With Hand J you simply pass any reply. With Hand K you pass a major suit response and convert 2♦ to 2♠. This shows a weak hand with 4♥'s and 5♠'s and partner will pass.
♠ J1064	♠ J10864	
♥ Q942	♥ Q942	
♦ Q8765	♦ Q76	
♣ -	♣ 3	

And just a look at why that North hand (C) is not worth 18 points – if you do not open 1NT and consider it worth 18 points then the bidding will go something like 1♣ - 1♥ - 4♥ - pass (or 1♥ - 2♥ - 4♥ - pass or 1♥ - 2♥ - 3NT - 4♥ - pass if you play 4 card majors). Either way you end up in 4♥; with a combined 24 points and a fit this is sometimes enough, but 4♥ is a poor contract (because the ♦QJ are worthless). A bad hand for the weak NT? No. Playing a weak NT I would also downgrade the Hand, I would bid 1♣ - 1♥ - 3♥ - pass. Playing Acol it goes 1♥ - 2♥ - 2NT - 3♥ - pass.

I cannot see how to sensibly bid this hand to just 2♥ playing any system but 3♥ is a very sensible contract.

An 'Impossible Lead'?

Board 7 from Monday 8th

West (H)	West	North	East	South
♠ Q54	1NT	pass	pass	2♠
♥ A87	pass	pass	pass	
♦ A72				
♣ AJ106				

First of all, the bidding. I did not say if you were playing a weak or strong NT. A totally flat 15 count, so deduct a point. Playing a weak NT I would open 1NT. And playing a strong NT? The good ♣ suit and three aces is some compensation for the flat shape, I would also open 1NT if playing a strong NT but 1♣ is OK. Strive to open 1NT

if your hand is suitable. Hans opened this with a strong NT and Gerry opened a weak NT. I agree with both.

Now then, what do you lead? We all know not to underlead an ace against a suit contract. Also, it is rarely correct to lead an ace when you don't hold the king (it may give declarer a trick if he holds the king and partner the queen). Now a trump from Q54 could very easily give away a trick. So it's unsolvable! Unfortunately the laws state that you have to lead, so which is the least of the evils?

I would reason as follows: - A trump lead really is too dangerous. I will not underlead an ace against a suit contract. So that just leaves the lead of an ace. The problem with leading an ace is that it gives declarer a trick with his king, if your side holds the Q and J then he would not get it otherwise. So in which suit(s) are our side likely to hold the Q and J? ♣'s are most likely as you hold the J. Thus I would lead a red ace. Which one? A bit of a toss up but I would lead ♥A. ♦A is probably just as good. What happened? West led a small ♣, declarer had the ♣K and partner the ♣Q. The contract made on the nail.

The Killing Lead

Board 3 from Monday 8th . E-W vulnerable

West (G)	East (A)	West	North	East	South
♠ 6532	♠ 94	-	-	-	1♦
♥ AQ6543	♥ 10	2♥ (1)	3♦	pass (2)	3NT
♦ -	♦ 8762	pass	pass	dbl (3)	pass
♣ 987	♣ AKQ1062	pass	pass		

First of all, the bidding. 2♥ at (1) is a weak jump overcall. Some players would not make the bid with a 4 card ♠ suit and a void, I have no problem with the bid. I was East and passed at (2); partner has shown a weak hand and bidding 4♣ is too dangerous, especially when vulnerable. Now what is that double at (3)? It is explained below.

So, what should West lead? First consider the situation without the double. Some players would lead ♥5 (4th best) and others would prefer not to lead a ♥ in which case a ♠ (unbid major) is preferable. Either could work out. But what does partner's double mean? A double of a freely bid 3NT says that East expects to defeat the contract because he has a good long suit. West has to lead this suit and so should choose his shortest suit. In this case it is ♣'s. What happened? West obediently led a ♣ and E-W made the first 8 tricks. 3NT was made (+1) at two other tables (undoubled) when a ♥ was led. With a ♠ lead 3NT makes exactly.

Don't get too high (or bid NT) on a mis-fit

Board 21 from Friday 12th

North (F)	South	West	North (me)	East	South (Clive)
♠ AK1065	♠ 73	-	1♠ (1)	pass	2♦ (2)
♥ K93	♥ 842	pass	2♠ (3)	pass	3♣ (4)
♦ -	♦ AKQ952	pass	4♣ (5)	pass	4♠ (6)
♣ KJ954	♣ AQ	pass	pass (7)	pass	

Two really powerful hands – but don't get carried away, it is a mis-fit. The bidding is that at our table and needs some explaining: -

- (1) I prefer to open 1♠ when 5-5 in the black suits. 1♣ is acceptable if that is your partnership style but I know that Clive opens 1♠ on this hand type. I have a good memory as far as people's bidding is concerned and I recall Clive opening 1♠ with a similar hand (news-sheet 36).
- (2) Some people will jump shift to 3♦ here, I prefer 2♦ as it consumes less room.
- (3) So then, what's your rebid? 3♣ would be game forcing and this hand is not good enough. 2NT is silly with a void (and shows a balanced 15-16 points in our system, 12-14 if you play a strong NT). 3NT would show a very strong hand (17+ in our system, 18+ if you play a strong NT). 2♥ would be lying in a major suit, silly. That only leaves 2♠. Rebidding a suit does **not guarantee** six cards. If partner had responded 2♥ at (2) then that would have improved this hand immensely and 3♣ would then be correct, although 4♦ (splinter) or even 5♦ (Exclusion Blackwood) are possible alternatives.
- (4) South has a tricky bid now. 3♦ is not forcing (we do not play 2/1), 3NT is out with no ♥ stop but your bid must be forcing. Clive chose a sensible bid, 3♣. Partner would normally bid 3NT with a ♥ stop and then everything is fine.
- (5) I had a ♥ stop but I will not bid 3NT with a void in partner's suit. I envisaged a ♣ slam and so I bid 4♣ (forcing).
- (6) No choice now but to play in 4♠.
- (7) Even though I assumed a ♣ fit, I did not continue because of my void in partner's suit.

So, the best contract was (easily?) reached. And what happened at the other tables?

A poor 3NT was reached at one and a miserable 6NT (minus 5) at the other. The bottom lines? Do not bid NT with a void in partner's suit nor with a mis-fit. Do not bid too high with mis-fits. If West bids NT in this example, East will think that his ♦ suit will produce 6 tricks – it will not opposite a void.

And how did 4♠ fare? With ♠'s 3-3 it was easy; as it happened a ♠ was led initially by East and West did not know about 3rd hand playing high. Thus no trump loser and 13 tricks were then easy. A gratifying result for being in the correct contract.

♠ 73	Let me just illustrate the importance of a fit. Change the red suits and
♥ AQJ82	make the South hand weaker. Opposite North F this now makes 7♥ easily.
♦ 8452	As I said, the North Hand is enormous if South bids ♥'s, but not if he bids
♣ AQ	♦'s.

Accept the Invitation?

Board 24 from Monday 8th

South (B) You open 1♠ and partner bids 3♠, do you go to game or not? This hand has rather poor trumps, but the good shape and three aces more than compensate. Partner's raise shows about 11 points and this hand is certainly worth 4♠. What happened? This hand passed at one table and 11 tricks were made. 4♠ was bid at the other two tables.

♠ Q9752
♥ A10
♦ A9
♣ A654

A Jump Rebid?

Board 17 from Friday 12th

West (E)	West	North	East	South
♠ A76	-	pass	pass	pass
♥ 105	1♦	dbl	1♥	pass
♦ AKQ1063	?			
♣ Q8				

So, what's your rebid? You are playing a strong NT and so 1NT (12-14) is out. 2NT would show a balanced 18-19. 3NT (showing a very strong hand with a long solid suit) is an overbid – a bit down on high cards and the ♦ suit is not solid. That really just leaves 2♦ or 3♦. I think this hand is good enough for 3♦, partner made a free bid (over the double) so probably does not have a miserable 6 or 7 count. What happened? At our table West bid just 2♦ and played there making +1 when partner produced just two aces. 3NT was reached and made at the other tables.

Bidding Quiz Solutions

- Hand A You should double the 3NT bid if partner understands it. It requests partner to lead his shortest suit (but not their suit, obviously).
- Hand B Happily accept the invitation, bid 4♠.
- Hand C This hand is not worth 18 points (doubleton QJ is a poor holding). Playing a strong NT open 1NT. Playing Acol open 1♥ and jump rebid NT (showing 17-19) over partner's response.
- Hand D You must pass partner's 1NT opening. Bidding Stayman is too dangerous as you are fixed over both a 2♦ or a 2♠ reply.
- Hand E Bid 3♦. Too good for just 2♦.
- Hand F
- After a 2♦ reply from partner this hand is not so good. A void in partner's suit is not usually an asset. Your only sensible bid is 2♠.
 - After a 2♥ reply your hand is enormous. Bid 3♣. A ♥ slam could be there.
 - 3♣ shows a big hand. It is **game** forcing.
 - A 2NT rebid would show a balanced 12-14 (15-16 if you play a weak NT).
 - A jump to 3NT shows a hand too good to open a strong NT. In this case a balanced 18-19 points playing a strong NT, (17-19) if playing a weak NT.