

Last week's winners: Monday 4/11/03

Friday 8/11/03

1 <sup>st</sup>	Alex/Jeff	71%	1 <sup>st</sup>	Dave/John	59%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Bob/Hans	62%	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Bob/Allan	58%

**Bidding Quiz**

Hand A      Hand B      You are playing Standard American with Hand A. Partner opens 1♠, what do you reply?

♠ K93	♠ 952
♥ Q765	♥ AK76
♦ AJ8	♦ 1098653
♣ 872	♣ -

Standard American again with Hand B. Partner again opens 1♠, what do you reply?

Hand C      Hand D      You are playing Standard American, what do you open with Hand C? Suppose that you choose 1♠, what would you do if partner replied (a) 2♠ or (b) 1NT?

♠ AJ1042	♠ J2
♥ K2	♥ AQ
♦ 765	♦ A975
♣ AKJ	♣ KQ642

With Hand D partner opens a weak 2♥, what do you bid?

Hand E      Hand F      With Hand E partner opens 1♥, what is your bid?

♠ AK9	♠ Q976543
♥ Q1093	♥ 6
♦ Q97	♦ QJ8
♣ A83	♣ J9

With Hand F RHO opens a weak 2♥, what is your bid?

Hand G      Hand H      What do you open with Hand G, non-vul against vul?

♠ K	♠ A108
♥ KJ9854	♥ 10732
♦ 10	♦ K6432
♣ 108753	♣ A

With Hand H LHO opens 2♥ (weak) which RHO raises to 4♥, what do you do?

**At King Arthur's Court**

King Arthur had just one convicted criminal for execution this week. As was his custom, he gave the criminal a chance of freedom. He was placed in a room with two doors, each guarded by a knight. One door led to freedom and the other to the gallows. The criminal was told that one knight always told the truth and that the other always lied, and that he could ask just one question to one knight before he had to choose which door to walk through. What question did he ask to ensure his freedom?

## Raising Partner's Pre-empt

Board 16 from Friday 8<sup>th</sup>

Dealer:	♠ J2	West (F)	North (D)	East (H)	South (G)
South	♥ AQ				
E-W vul	♦ A975	-	-	-	2♥ (1)
	♣ KQ642	pass (2)	4♥ (3)	dbl (4)	pass
		pass (5)	pass	pass	
♠ Q976543	N	♠ A108			
♥ 6	W E	♥ 10732			
♦ QJ8	S	♦ K6432			
♣ J9		♣ A			
	♠ K				
	♥ KJ9854				
	♦ 10				
	♣ 108753				

- (1) Well then, should you open a weak two when you also have a 5 card minor? Many would say no. I have no problem with it, and it certainly worked here.
- (2) As I said last week, you cannot pre-empt over a pre-empt. Over a 1 level opening a 3♠ bid would show this type of hand (although most would prefer a better hand when vulnerable). A weak jump to 2♠ is also a possibility. However, over a weak 2♥ opening any ♠ bid here would show a much stronger hand.
- (3) So what would you have bid with this hand? Opposite a 6 card ♥ suit, 4♥ seems obvious to me but nobody else reached this contract. 4♥ here is a double-edged bid; it can be a good hand (with a view to making, as here) or it can simply be raising the pre-empt. This ambiguity really makes it difficult for the opponents – it does not matter that partner is also in the dark, you are the captain and partner (having said his hand) should not bid again.
- (4) East meant this as penalties. In fact he was so proud of the bid that he showed his hand to dummy and partner (!) before play had commenced! So is it penalties? I think it is best played as values (penalty orientated with something in ♠'s). I do not feel, however, that this hand is good enough, I would pass.
- (5) Now West was very unhappy. Apparently his partner had made it very clear on previous occasions that he should not remove his 'penalty doubles', so he passed. Penalty double or not, I would bid 4♠ even if my partner was bigger than me.

So what happened? Obviously 4♥ is cold and in fact E-W mis-defended and it made 12 tricks for 100% of the matchpoints. Contracts at other tables were 5♣, 3♣ and 3♠ (by E-W). Did nobody else open a weak 2♥?

As you can see, E-W can make 4♠, maybe 5♠. But how can they bid it if, as I said, the East hand is not good enough for a double? It's not easy (that's why pre-empts were invented), but if I was West I would bid 4♠ at the 2<sup>nd</sup> turn even if partner had not doubled. Having failed to even overcall on the previous round a 4♠ bid now must show this sort of hand. It could cost a bundle, but then nothing is certain in this world except death, taxes and bush waging war (thus expediting the first two).

## Good 7 card suits

Board 2 from Friday 8<sup>th</sup>

Dealer:	♠ -	West	North	East	South
East	♥ K8752				
E-W vul	♦ KJ64	-	-	1♦	pass
	♣ KJ98	1♠	dbl (1)	pass	1NT (2)
		2♠	pass	3♠	pass
♠ AQ76432	N	pass (3)	pass		
♥ Q43	W E				
♦ Q	S				
♣ 52					
	♠ J1095				
	♥ J9				
	♦ A108				
	♣ 10743				

- (1) It is usually best to overcall with a 5 card major rather than double, but here it would be at the two level and the suit is not very robust. A double (thus also showing ♣'s) is best.

- (2) West (Hans) was not impressed with this bid, but with a stopper in both of the opponent's suits and good intermediates I think it's fine. 2♣ is a reasonable alternative.
- (3) Now this pass beats me. West presumably placed South with the ♠K for his NT bid (?), it looks as if all the cards lie well. West has 10 points, partner has opened and made an encouraging free bid (3♠). I admit that a singleton in partner's suit is not great, but after partner has (belatedly) supported ♠'s nothing on earth would stop me bidding 4♠. The 3♠ bid simply has to be Kx or xxx, doesn't it?

And what happened? 3♠ made +2 but got a poor score as 4♠ was bid and made at other tables. The bottom line? Good 7 card suits play well when partner has supported.

### A Solid Raise of Partner's Major

Board 1 from Friday 6<sup>th</sup>

North	South	West	North	East	South (E)
♠ QJ62	♠ AK9	-	1♥	pass	2♣ (1)
♥ AJ754	♥ Q1093	pass	3♣ (2)	pass	3♥ (3)
♦ K	♦ Q97	pass	4♥ (4)	pass	4NT
♣ Q54	♣ A83	pass	5♦	pass	5♥

- (1) It seems a bit strange, but unless you have a means of showing a good raise to game (Jacoby 2NT, Swiss or something) then you have to bid a minor at the two level. 2♥ and 3♥ would be non-forcing and 4♥ would show a weaker hand with (usually) 5 trumps.
- (2) North does not really have any other bid. 2♠ would be a reverse and rebidding this motley ♥ suit is to be avoided if possible. 2NT is out with a singleton ♦.
- (3) South presumably intended this as forcing. If you play the 2/1 system then it is (an example of the benefits of 2/1); playing standard methods it is invitational – showing 3 card support. So what are the alternatives here? 4♥ would be a delayed game raise, showing a sound raise to 4♥ and is probably best as this hand is flat and partner has shown nothing more than a minimum opener. You could try 4NT if you feel optimistic.
- (4) North really had no good reason not to pass 3♥, just a gut feeling?

5♥ made, so all's well that ends well? The bottom line - It's worth checking up on which sequences are forcing. Preference back to partner's suit is not unless you play 2/1.

## A Minor Suit Game/Slam Missed

Board 3 from Friday 8<sup>th</sup>

Now I frequently say not to look for minor suit games when 3NT is a viable option, but when opponents can run 5 tricks off the top against NT: -

West	East	West	North	East	South
♠ K6	♠ A54	pass (1)	pass	1NT (2)	2♥ (3)
♥ 976	♥ 3	3♥ (4)	dbl (5)	3NT (6)	pass
♦ AJ8643	♦ KQ95	pass	pass	pass	
♣ 96	♣ AK752				

- (1) I believe that E-W were playing Benjamin two's, and so a weak 2♦ opening was not an option for West.
- (2) An extremely poor bid – you cannot open 1NT with a singleton. This hand should open 1♣ with a view to reversing into 2♦ next go.
- (3) Natural
- (4) This is *not* natural. In fact it denies ♥'s; with reasonable ♥ stop(s) West would bid 3NT, with good ♥'s West would double for penalties. The 3♥ bid here was asking partner to bid 3NT with a ♥ stop, otherwise bid something else. Some people play 3♥ here as Stayman but you would have to agree that. Either way, it does *not* show ♥'s.
- (5) North had good ♥'s and wanted a ♥ lead
- (6) You cannot bid NT here with no ♥ stop. Anyway, after the double East is off the hook and can pass if in doubt as to what's going on (his partner gets another bid).

N-S took the first 5 ♥ tricks. But how should the hand be bid to reach 6♦, bearing in mind that a weak 2♦ opening was unavailable and that there will be ♥ interference? How about: -

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	1♣ (1)	1♥
2♦ (2)	2♥	4♥ (3)	pass
4NT? (4)			

- (1) The correct opening. If there is no intervention then rebid 2♦ (a reverse) over partner's 1♥/♠/NT. If partner bids 1♦ (as he would in this case if he were allowed) then bid 3♥, a splinter agreeing ♦'s. A splinter is always one above the forcing natural bid. After 1♣ - 1♦ then 1♥ would be natural but not forcing, 2♥ would be natural (usually a NT stopper) and forcing and so 3♥ is the splinter.
- (2) A bit pushy, but it is a reasonable 6 card suit and it is a passed hand (thus not forcing). As it happens, I believe that this pair play negative free bids (?) and so 2♦ shows this type of hand I think (I don't play them so I'm not too sure).
- (3) East obviously has values for 5♦ or better. 4♥ here is a splinter showing a singleton (possibly void) ♥.
- (4) West just loves ♥ shortage opposite as he has no wasted values. He can either try Blackwood or settle for 5♦ if in a pessimistic mood (I guess that he has already pushed a bit).

Nobody actually bid 6♦, but two pairs reached the fine 5♦ contract (well done Alex/Jeff & Ian/Mike).

**Inviting to Game** I was asked about inviting when in competitive situations on Friday.

Consider the sequence (with no opposition bidding), 1♥ - 2♥ - 3♥. The 3♥ bid here is normally played as invitational, asking partner to bid 4♥ with a maximal hand. When there is interference, however, things are different as you need to be just competitive with weaker hands as well as being able to invite game with stronger hands. For example: -

West	West	North	East	South
♠ J2	1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
♥ KQ9752	3♥ (1)	.....		
♦ AJ7				
♣ 84				

(1) This hand does not have game invitational values. With no opposing bidding it would have passed a 2♥ response. However, selling out to 2♠ is feeble when you have a 6 card suit and so a competitive 3♥ is correct. How does East know that you are not looking for game? - Any bid other than 3♥ would be a game try.

**When a 5-3 fit is better than 4-4** Board 16 from Monday 4<sup>th</sup>

I am continually stating that you have to look for the 4-4 major suit fit, it is generally better than a 5-3 fit. The 5-3 fit is often better playing in NT unless you can get a ruff in the hand with 3 trumps. A classic example occurred on Monday: -

West	East (B)	West	North	East	South
♠ AQ1074	♠ 952	1♠	pass	2♥ (1)	pass
♥ Q985	♥ AK76	3♥	pass	3♠	pass
♦ A	♦ 1098753	4♥	pass	pass	pass
♣ 654	♣ -				

(1) This 2♥ bid is wrong; when partner opens 1♠ then a 2♥ bid always promises a 5 card suit. With just 4♥'s and a good hand, reply in your best minor, if opener has 4♥'s he will then bid them and so a♥ fit is not lost.

4♥ failed but 2♠ made +1 or +2 at other tables. Now this particular East hand is very interesting. You know that there is a 5-3♠ fit, and with the♣ void then a♠ contract will almost certainly play better than a possible 4-4♥ fit as you can ruff in the short hand. This East hand should not bother with the♥'s but look for the best♠ contract. An initial 2♠ is perhaps a bit feeble and 3♠ would suggest 4♠'s, I would respond 2♦. The hand does not have the values for a 2 level response, but with the great shape for a♠ contract (prepared to go to 3♠) then it's OK. After a 2♥ rebid from opener I would then bid 3♠. This sequence (1♠ - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♠ shows values for 3♠ but just three trumps). West would probably pass 3♠, a very decent spot. I don't think that the East hand is strong enough for an initial splinter.

**At King Arthur's Court - Solution**

The criminal asked one knight 'which door would the other knight tell me was safe if I asked him?'. The criminal then walked through the other door.

**When NT is better than a 5-3 Fit**Board 1 from Monday 4<sup>th</sup>

As I said just now, the 5-3 fit is sometimes better playing in NT: -

North (A)	South (C)	West	North	East	South
♠ K93	♠ AJ1042		pass	pass	1♠ (1)
♥ Q765	♥ K2	pass	2NT (2)	pass	3NT
♦ AJ8	♦ 765	pass	pass	pass	
♣ 872	♣ AKJ				

- (1) When dummy came down, North said that South should have opened a strong NT – that really simplifies things as you have no rebid problem. I (sort of) agree with North here, although it is my no means generally accepted to open 1NT with this type of hand.
- (2) What is generally accepted, however, is that a 2NT response to partner's opening 1♠ should show a decent 11-12 count and no primary fit (Kxx or similar) for partner if playing 5 card majors: - So, what is the correct response with this North hand? A totally flat 10 count, the hand is nowhere near worth a new suit at the two level, and 2NT is doubly bad as a possible ♥ fit may be lost. The hand is not worth a jump to 3♠ either (and this should show 4 trumps). So 1NT? This hand is very similar to Hand A from news sheet 50 – the same player (Hans) chose to bid 1NT then when he had Qxx in partner's major. It was wrong then and it's still wrong now. If you bid 1NT then South should pass – this South hand is not worth a try for game with no ♠ support opposite. The correct bid with the North hand is 2♠, simple. Support with support. South would then invite (3♦ or 3♠ or 2NT or whatever you play as a game try here) and North should then bid the good 3NT game. South, of course, had points to spare and so North got away with his overbid. But how would it have turned out if South had an eleven point (or less) 3<sup>rd</sup> seat opener?

The bottom line. When you are 4333 type shape with three to an honour in partner's major - support him. Do *not* bid NT. The 1NT response is often a courtesy bid – avoid it with support. 2NT shows 11 to 12 points and a doubleton (or *weak* triplet) in partner's 5 card major.

## **Bidding Quiz Solutions**

Hand A: 2♠. Support partner and it's not good enough for a new suit or NT at the two level.

Hand B: I prefer 2♦, but 2♠ is fine. You cannot bid 2♥ with just 4♥'s.

Hand C: I would open 1NT, but there are many who would prefer 1♠.

(a) if partner replies 2♠, then try for game.

(b) if partner replies 1NT, then pass. It's not good enough for 2NT (17-18 pts).

Hand D: 4♥. AQ is adequate support opposite a 6 card suit.

Hand E: 2♣. Your hand is easily good enough for 4♥, but a direct 4♥ shows a weaker hand with 5 trumps. If you do not play any conventional raises (Jacoby 2NT, Swiss or anything) then simply 'dig up' a minor suit for now. So bid 2♣ now and then bid 4♥ if partner makes a simple non-strong rebid.

Hand F: Pass. Any bid now would show a much stronger hand – there is no such thing as a pre-empt in this position. You should pass for now and bid ♠'s next go if it looks like a good idea.

Hand G: Seven points and a decent 6 card ♥ suit, looks like a fine weak 2♥ opening to me. The 5 card ♣ suit simply gives it a bit more playing strength and would certainly not affect my decision to open with a weak two.

Hand H: Pass. This Hand is not good enough for a double, no matter if you play it as values, penalties or take-out.