



Last week's winners: Monday 8/12/03

Friday 12/12/03

1st Knut/Rolf 62%
 2nd Johannes/Bjarne 61%

1st = Hans/Jan 64%
 1st = Chuck/Terry

Three Scandinavian pairs boosted the Monday numbers up to 7 tables. The 'home team' managed to stop a complete route by the Viking visitors with an excellent 59% by our most consistent pair, Jeff and Philip, in the Bronze medal position. In the past I have always played a Mitchell (N-S stationary) with 7 tables (it is far easier for the director; 4 boards a round and only half the field moving just 6 times). This time I experimented with a 7 table Howell which is fairer (and more sociable) in that all pairs play all other pairs; the drawback is that there is a lot of moving (with just two boards a round).

Which movement do you prefer? Let me know. If there is a sit-out (6 ½ tables) then obviously the Howell is better as one's sit-out is then just two boards, and everybody sits out as opposed to 50%. With 7½ or more table then a Mitchell is mandatory.

Onto current affairs. Three Western tourists kidnapped near the Iran/Pakistan border and a few million \$ asked in ransom. I would be most upset if my government paid a Baht. If people wish to visit these problem areas (Columbia etc) on holiday, it's up to them; I don't see why taxpayers should pay a cent for their stupidity. The same applies to the stupid man who's aeroplane ran out of fuel over the Antarctic.

Bidding Quiz**Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.**

Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A partner opens a strong NT. Suppose that you ask for aces (partner has none), then what final contract would you be aiming for?
♠ QJ	♠ A10965	
♥ AJ	♥ J9	
♦ AQ87653	♦ J753	Both vul. With Hand B RHO passes as do you. LHO bids 1♣, partner bids 1♠ and RHO bids 2♦, what do you do?
♣ A6	♣ Q8	
Hand C	Hand D	With Hand C RHO opens 1♦, what is your bid?
♠ J87	♠ 743	
♥ A532	♥ A93	With Hand D you open 1♣ and partner responds 1♦. Obviously you rebid 1NT. But what if RHO had overcalled 1♠? Same bid regardless?
♦ A94	♦ KQ4	
♣ Q65	♣ A743	
Hand E	Hand F	With Hand E LHO opens 1♠, partner overcalls 1NT (15-18) and RHO bids 2♠. What do you do? And what would 3♣ by you mean. Natural? – (Weak? Forcing?) or Stayman?
♠ 98	♠ AQ1053	
♥ QJ82	♥ A10	
♦ 106	♦ J754	With Hand F you open 1♠ and partner responds 1NT. Do you pass or bid something?
♣ A9832	♣ K10	
Hand G	Hand H	With Hand G partner opens 1♦ and RHO doubles. What do you do?
♠ A1093	♠ KQJ73	
♥ 6	♥ Q1065	With Hand H RHO opens 1♣, what is your bid?
♦ J10853	♦ 86	
♣ K107	♣ K3	

6NT scores more than 6 of a minorBoard 22 from Monday 8th, E-W vul.

North (A)	South	West	North (me)	East	South
♠ QJ	♠ K108	-	-	pass	1NT
♥ AJ	♥ KQ7	pass	4♣ (1)	pass	4♦
♦ AQ87653	♦ K2	pass	6NT	pass	pass
♣ A6	♣ KJ1085	pass			

(1) Gerber

I was North, playing with an unfamiliar partner. Even so, it seemed straightforward to me; ask for aces and bid 6 or 7NT accordingly. I can see no point in ending up in ♦'s in a pairs competition. And what happened? At our table the opponents took their ♠ A at trick one and partner claimed the rest. The board was played 6 other times and just one other pair (Johannes/Bjarne) bid 6NT (+1). When you have a long suit and plenty of stops, 6NT is nearly always better than 6 of a suit as it scores more. 6 of a suit will normally only be better if there is a *fit* and you get an extra trick with a ruff. And what happened? Just two pairs bid 6NT, one bid 6♦ and **four** pairs failed to even bid slam!

A Take-out Double - and then what?Board 23 from Monday 8th

Dealer:	♠ 62	West	North	East (C)	South (G)
South	♥ K1084	-	-	-	pass
Both vul	♦ KQ72	pass	1♦ (1)	dbl (2)	pass (3)
	♣ AJ2	pass (4)	pass		
♠ KQ54	N	♠ J87	A very silly final contract that made +3 (an off-the-scale top for N-S, vulnerable doubled overtricks are 200 a time). So what went wrong with the bidding?		
♥ QJ97	W E	♥ A532			
♦ 6	S	♦ A94			
♣ 9843		♣ Q65			
	♠ A1093				
	♥ 6				
	♦ J10853				
	♣ K107				

- (1) 4+ ♦'s
- (2) A poor double. It is not short in ♦'s and has miserable major suits. I would pass.
- (3) Pass cannot be correct here. I would bid 1♠ (natural, 6-9 points) but a pre-emptive 3♦ is perhaps not totally unreasonable (it is correct without 4♠'s).
- (4) This is terrible. E-W were a first time partnership and presumably West thought that East's bid was penalties?? 1♥ is correct here, but having already passed then 2♦ (or even a splinter of 3♦, agreeing either major in this case) are reasonable. But not, of course, if partner doubles with hands like this East one.

The bottom lines. A take-out double (as I have emphasised on many occasions) is not just any opening hand. Unless it is very strong, it needs to be short in the suit opened. That was not the cause of this disaster however, it is *virtually never* correct to pass a take-out double at the one level. In last week's Hand F, even ♦ QJ108654 (as Hans pointed out) is insufficient to defeat 1♦ doubled with best declarer play.

One does not have to rebid if RHO intervenesBoard 6 from Friday 5th, E-W vul.

West	East (D)	West	North	East	South
♠ 98	♠ 743	-	-	1♣	pass
♥ J4	♥ A93	1♦ (1)	1♠	1NT (2)	2♠
♦ A107	♦ KQ4	3♠ (3)	dbl	pass	pass
♣ KQJ852	♣ A743	4♣ (4)	pass	pass	pass

- (1) West's response to a 1♣ opening is interesting on this deal. The hand is too good for 2♣ and (in my opinion) too good for a non-forcing 3♣ (partner needs very little for 3NT to make). I was West and made the 'waiting' bid of 1♦. If you play 'inverted minors' it's easy (bid 2♣, forcing).
- (2) Obviously the correct rebid with no interference. However, after an overcall East is under no obligation to bid. With this minimal flat hand with no ♠ stop East should pass.
- (3) West still figures to make 3NT if East has a ♠ stop, he probably should have for his 1NT bid at (2), but best to check?
- (4) The correct spot is finally reached.

The bottom line. When you don't have to bid (in this case because RHO has intervened) then only bid if you have something definite to say, pass with a flat minimum; partner has another bid.

Stayman etc when RHO intervenes?Board 5 from Friday 12th, both vul

North (E)	West	North (me)	East	South (Chuck)
♠ 98	-	-	1♠	1NT (1)
♥ QJ82	2♠	3♠ (2)	pass	4♥
♦ 106	pass	pass	pass	
♣ A9832				(1) 15-18

So you hold this North hand and have to bid at (2). First of all, you are already up near the 3 level, and so bids are either weak or forcing to game (no room left for polite invitations). The first decision: - is this hand worth a stab at game or do you sign off (in 3♣)? With two decent suits, I considered it worth a game force.

Now you need a bid to be able to sign off in 3♣ (if you were weak), you also need a bid to show a game forcing hand with ♣'s, and you need to have a Stayman bid (3♦/♥ would be natural, forcing and a 5± card suit). Impossible? No. Enter Lebensohl.

Playing Lebensohl you can do everything: In this situation 3♣ is (5+)♣'s and forcing, 3♥ is (5+)♥'s and forcing, 3♠ is Stayman and 2NT (forcing) is the weak bid to sign off in any suit (partner must bid 3♣). 4♥ was a comfortable contract.

When dummy appeared, East asked what the 3♠ bid was; upon hearing that it was Stayman, he asked if it should have been alerted. When one cue bids the opponent's suit it is rarely natural and often has a defined systematic meaning. As far as I am concerned it need not be alerted, it's up to opponents to ask if they wish.

And as for the question 'what is Stayman after intervention?'. The answer is that it's best to play a bid of their suit as Stayman. I also covered this in news-sheet 23.

Defending against RHO's take-out double

I have covered what constitutes a take-out double (and what partner of the doubler should do) in earlier news-sheets, but one area as yet not fully covered is what the partner of opener should do when RHO doubles. Everything stated here is 'standard practice', any partnership may agree to play something different if they wish – but it is not standard. So, partner opens (let's assume 1♥ in all of the examples) and RHO doubles; let's see what all of the bids should mean: -

1- Pass

Similar to when you would pass with no double. So any hand with less than 6 points will normally pass. With support for partner however, you can shade a 2♥ response.

2- Raising Partner's Suit

When RHO doubles (so generally showing values in the other three suits) you really should go out of your way to support partner when you have support (4 card support, or 3 card support if a major and playing 5 card majors). Basically, you should bid as high as you feel is 'safe'. Jump raises (to the 3 or 4 level) are pre-emptive.

So after 1♥ - double - ?

Hand J	Hand K	Hand L	Hand M	Hand N	Hand P
♠ A5	♠ 75	♠ 5	♠ A5	♠ 5	♠ A5
♥ K98	♥ K98	♥ K983	♥ KJ9	♥ KJ983	♥ KJ98
♦ J763	♦ J763	♦ J763	♦ Q763	♦ A763	♦ A763
♣ 8542	♣ 8542	♣ 8542	♣ 8754	♣ 875	♣ 854

Hand J: Bid 2♥, just as though there had been no interference.

Hand K: Bid 2♥, you would have passed if there was no double, but after RHO has doubled, bid 2♥

Hand L: Bid 3♥, pre-emptive – that's fine according to 'the law'.

Hand M: This is a sound raise to 3♥. We show this my means of a conventional 2NT (a direct 3♥ is pre-emptive). We do not need 2NT as a natural bid showing a balanced 11 points as we would re-double with such a hand.

Hand N: Bid 4♥, pre-emptive.

Hand P: This is a sound raise to 4♥. You cannot bid 2♦ as that is weak bid and 4♥ is also weak. You could re-double (showing 9+ points) and then bid 4♥ later. I'm not so keen on that approach and prefer 2NT followed by 4♥ if partner tries to sign off in 3♥. The best approach, however, is to use the Swiss convention, so that 4♣/♦ show a solid raise to 4♥. I feel it is best to show your support and strength immediately just in case the opponents get into the act with ♠'s. If you prefer to use 4♣/♦ as pre-emptive bids, then it's best to use 3NT as this sound raise to 4♥.

3- Redouble

We no **not** redouble with support for partner. A redouble shows 9+ points (unlimited) and generally no fit for partner. It advertises that your side has the balance of power and, in principle, is often looking to double opponents in their final contract.

4- Bidding NT

In theory 1NT is similar to normal (6-bad 10) but generally denies a fit with opener. However, since RHO's double means that partner gets another shot if you pass, there really is little point in bidding with a poor 6-7 points or unsuitable shape.

2NT, as I mentioned earlier, is conventional.

And 3NT? Certainly not a balanced 13-15 count (you would redouble). If you don't use this as a sound raise to 4♥, then I would play it as a log running (minor) suit, asking partner to pass with a stop in ♠'s and a minor, otherwise to bid 4♣ (pass or correct).

5- A New Suit

Limited to 8 points. A new suit at the one level may be played as forcing or not, as you wish (expert opinion is divided, but forcing is probably best). Up to you. At the one level a suit may be 4 card, at the two level a *decent* 5 carder is required. A new suit at the two level is non-forcing. How you play jump bids in a new suit is up to you, most people these days play everything as pre-emptive.

Hand Q	Hand R	Hand S	Hand T	Hand U	Hand V
♠ QJ7	♠ Q7	♠ QJ76	♠ J8	♠ J8	♠ KJ97
♥ 76	♥ J6	♥ K7	♥ 9	♥ 9	♥ 9
♦ Q1076	♦ Q10762	♦ Q1076	♦ J542	♦ J54	♦ KJ97
♣ K1084	♣ J843	♣ 754	♣ KQJ984	♣ KQJ9876	♣ AJ97

Hand Q: Bid 1NT

Hand R: Pass. You would have made a 'courtesy' bid of 1NT with no interference, but now you can happily pass.

Hand S: Bid 1♠

Hand T: Bid 2♣. Weak, a mis-fit and a decent suit.

Hand U: Bid 3♣. Pre-emptive

Hand V: A typical re-double. 9+ points and no fit for partner. You will subsequently double anything that they bid (for penalties).

So, a brief, non-exhaustive look at what is *generally accepted*. I guess that if you need to know more then you need a book? Feel free to ask me if you have any specific questions.

Opener is 5-4 and partner responds 1NT

Board 11 from Friday 12th, love.

North (F)	South	West	North (me)	East	South
♠ AQ1053	♠ J	-	-	-	pass
♥ A10	♥ Q9632	pass	1♠	pass	1NT
♦ J754	♦ K1062	pass	2♦ (1)	pass	pass
♣ K10	♣ 865	pass			

When you have a 5 card major and another lower ranking 4 card suit, it is usually best to pull partner's 1NT. If you are lucky (as here) you will land in a 4-4 fit; if not, then there is usually a 5-2 major fit which usually plays better than 1NT. The hand was played 3 times on Friday and the 1NT bid at the other two tables went one down (2♦ made exactly).

You don't always have to bid as high as 'The Law' allows.

Board 7 from Monday 8th, both vul.

West (B)	East (H)	West (me)	North	East (Jan)	South
♠ A10965	♠ KQJ73				
♥ J9	♥ Q1065	-	-	-	pass
♦ J753	♦ 86	pass	1♣	1♠ (1)	2♦
♣ Q8	♣ K3	3♠ (2)	pass	pass	pass

- (1) 1♠ is a far better bid than double (what do you do if partner replies 2♣?). So overcall 1♠ and subsequently bid 2♥ if you can.
- (2) This worked out fine.

What happened? 3♠ was one down (-100) for a joint top for E-W. N-S made 10 tricks in ♦'s or ♣'s at the other tables. When it was over, my partner asked me why I had not bid 4♠ (law of total tricks). The reason was that the opponents had not bid ♥'s, they were unlikely to have game, and may not venture to the 4 level over 3♠'s. Also, being vulnerable it is risky to bid at the 4 level if opponents have no game - two down (or one down doubled) vulnerable is -200, so a bottom on a partscore deal at pairs.

Also, of course, you have the edge when your suit is ♠'s. Even if you are prepared to go to the 4 level, you can try 3♠ first (and only later bid 4♠ over a possible 4♥). With this particular West hand I would go on to 4♠ if opponents had bid and agreed ♥'s (obviously East's hand would not have these ♥'s) - two down doubled in 4♠ would be -500, so a good save against their 620. On this deal the opponents have had three bids before (2) and so a 4♠ bid has little pre-emptive effect and is too risky with little to gain.

The bottom line? 'The Law' dictates the 'safe' level, but don't go to the limit if you feel that opponents have no game and you are vulnerable. Avoid -200 at pairs.

Bidding Quiz Answers

- Hand A: 6NT. 6♦ scores less and if 6NT goes down (very unlikely) then so will 6♦. 6 of a suit is usually only superior to 6NT when you have a *fit*.
- Hand B: 3♠. 2♠ is too little and 4♠ is too much vulnerable. If you bid just 2♠ then one opponent may support the other's minor and they will reach 4 of a minor after a subsequent 3♠ by you; 3♠ immediately is just enough to make life difficult for them (my favourite pastime).
- Hand C: Pass. Totally unsuitable for a take-out double.
- Hand D: Pass. This really is a miserable opener and you are now under no obligation to bid. A 1NT rebid should be the upper range (so a good 13 or 14) and most players would like a ♠ stop. 2♦ is possible, but I prefer pass with just 3♦'s.
- Hand E: Bid Stayman. Chuck and I play 3♠ as Stayman here and 3♣ as natural (forcing). Are you sure what 3♣ and 3♠ mean in your partnership?
- Hand F: 2♦. Better than passing. Look for a fit, and even a 5-2 ♠ fit is usually better than 1NT. Also, partner may have a long (♥ or ♣) suit.
- Hand G: 1♠, 6-9 points and 4+ ♠'s. Most partnerships play this as forcing.
- Hand H: I prefer 1♠ to double (what do you do if partner replies 1♦?). So overcall 1♠ and subsequently bid 2♥ if you can. If you double and subsequently pull a 1♦ bid from partner to 1♠, that shows a far stronger hand.