

Last week's winners: Monday 15/12/03

Friday 19/12/03

1st Hans/Chuck 63%
2nd Mike/Terry 61%

1st Dave/Norman 60%
2nd Mike/Don 53%

It's time for a repeat of what I stated in news-sheet 6. The Pattaya Mail available at the Amari is for Hotel guests (residents) only. You are free to read the papers in the lounge, but please **do not** remove them.

And what's happening in the world? Just for a change I agree with the USA here: -The American taxpayers are funding loads of contracts in Iraq; America says that only allies in the war can compete for contracts. This seems to upset France, Germany, Russia etc. I simply don't understand (maybe somebody can explain it to me?). *America* is paying for this reconstruction, it would seem fair to me if only *American* firms were allowed to tender. They are being generous by letting allies in - am I missing something?

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

Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A partner opens 1♦ and RHO overcalls 1♥, do you take any action?
♠ K10983	♠ K63	
♥ Q4	♥ KQJ6	With Hand B partner opens a strong NT. Do you bid Stayman? Suppose that you do and partner shows 4♥'s, (he also has 3 aces and one king if you ask). What final contract do you bid?
♦ 64	♦ A75	
♣ 9653	♣ KQ9	
Hand C	Hand D	With Hand C you open 1♠ and partner responds 1NT. A nice shapely 17 count, so what now?
♠ AKJ84	♠ K543	
♥ AJ7	♥ 8	With Hand D you open 1♦ and partner responds 1♠. What is your bid?
♦ 9	♦ AKQ43	
♣ A975	♣ KQ6	
Hand E	Hand F	What do you open with Hand E?
♠ A8	♠ 52	
♥ AJ	♥ K98653	With hand F RHO opens 1♦, what is your bid?
♦ AQJ108753	♦ AJ2	
♣ K	♣ K4	
Hand G	Hand H	With Hand G partner opens 1♥, what is your response?
♠ Q63	♠ AQ73	
♥ Q832	♥ AK10753	With Hand H you open 1♥ and partner bids 2♦. What is your rebid?
♦ A102	♦ 8	
♣ Q95	♣ K5	

Is it Strong, Weak, Forcing or whatever?

What type of hand does the last bid in these sequences show? No intervention. Are J & M forcing?

Sequence J: 1♠ - 1NT - 3♣ ?
Sequence K: 1♣ - 1♠ - 4♠ ?
Sequence L: 1♠ - 4♠ ?
Sequence M: 1♥ - 2♦ - 3♥ ?

Checking that Terry's got it right

Occasionally I will place the wrong boards on a table - difficult to believe, I know, but nobody gets it right all the time. However, I know my limitations and so I have gone to the trouble of making up movement cards for every movement that we could possibly have. So, will North (or somebody) please check the pair numbers (with opponents) and that they have the correct boards before the play of each round. Easy really.

That Law Again

Board 1 from Monday 15th

Dealer:	♠ K10983		West (F)	North (A)	East	South
North	♥ Q4					
Love all	♦ 64		-	pass	pass	1♦ (1)
	♣ 9653		1♥ (2)	1♠ (3)	2♥ (4)	2♠ (5)
			3♥ (6)	pass	pass	3♠
♠ 52	N	♠ J4	pass	pass	4♥ (7)	4♠
♥ K98653	W E	♥ J1062	pass	pass	pass	
♦ AJ2	S	♦ Q1085				
♣ K4		♣ A72				
	♠ AQ76					
	♥ A					
	♦ K973					
	♣ QJ108					

A somewhat prolonged auction, but the 'par' contract was eventually reached: -

- (1) I prefer 1♣, but I guess 1♦ is OK playing better minor.
- (2) A sound overcall, this hand is too good for a weak 2♥.
- (3) I would never pass, how else will partner know that you have these fine ♠'s?
- (4) With 4♥'s this hand can go to 3♥, but with values for just 2♥ I think that's fine. You can always go one more later and this initial response has indicated your high card strength.
- (5) This South hand is a good one, and every bid so far has improved it immensely. I would not mess about, but bid 4♠ here. It may not make, but it's where you belong.
- (6) With one more♥ than already shown, this is fine. Bidding 3♥ here has little to do with the high card strength, it shows 6♥'s; 'safe' after partner has supported.
- (7) With one more♥ than already shown, this is also excellent bidding for the same reason – the law. East now knows that E-W have 10♥'s between them.

As I said, this is the 'par' contract, 4♥ would make and 4♠ went minus one. I would have bid 4♠ at (5), but everything else was very sensible. E-W both got it absolutely right.

And how does 'the law' fit in? E-W have 10 'trumps' (♥'s), N-S have 9 'trumps' (♠'s), a total of 19 'trumps' and so 'the law' says that there are 19 tricks available between the two contracts. Spot on, E-W have 10 tricks in♥'s and N-S have 9 in♠'s. This *total* remains the same if you swap cards around; put the ♦K in the North hand and N-S make 4♠ whereas 4♥ would then go one down. Still 19 tricks in total.

The bottom line? In a competitive auction, obey 'the law'. The simple version says that with roughly equal high cards (as here), it is safe to bid to the level of the total number of trumps held by your partnership.

All the Aces and all the Kingsmen (but they couldn't put Humpty together again)

Board 9 from Monday 15th, E-W vul

North	South (B)	
♠ A87	♠ K63	North opens a strong NT, so which contract should South be aiming for? <i>All 7 tables</i> on Monday got this one wrong! First of all, South has to think 'how many combined points?'. The total is 18 + (15-17), so 33-35.
♥ A1072	♥ KQJ6	With a flat hand this is often enough (but only just) for a small slam, quite why <i>five</i> pairs bid a grand baffles me.
♦ KJ10	♦ A75	
♣ A72	♣ KQ9	

And next, something equally important. Should South bid Stayman (looking for a ♥ fit) or should he simply respond 6NT? You know the answer already if you have read previous news sheets – the 4-4 fit will usually provide an extra trick. Three pairs failed to find the ♥ fit and bid 7NT! Two pairs were also too high in 7♥. One pair got to the poor 6NT and one pair stopped in just 4♥. *Nobody* found the correct contract of 6♥!

And how should the bidding go? How about 1NT - 2♣ - 2♥ - 6♥. Simple. South does not have the values for a grand, and even a small slam in NT may be dicey – go for the sanctuary of the 4-4 fit. With insufficient values and shape for a grand, I don't see the point in asking for aces (and kings). Simply bid what you can make.

And why is 6♥ preferable to 6NT? 6NT depends upon finding the ♦Q, so little more than 50%. 6♥, however, is 100% when ♥'s split 3-2. Since both the pairs in 7♥ made just 11 tricks, just for a change, I'll have a diversion into the play of the hand: -

North	South	<u>The Strip...</u>
♠ A87	♠ K63	North wins the opening lead, draws trumps in three rounds and plays 3 rounds of ♣'s, leaving this position.
♥ 10	♥ J	This is called stripping the hand – eliminating suit(s) where the opponents have a safe exit.
♦ KJ10	♦ A75	
♣ -	♣ -	
... <u>and Throw-in</u>		Playing in ♥'s (as opposed to NT) North does not need to guess the position of the ♦Q. He simply now plays ♠A, ♠K and a third round of ♠'s - simultaneously stripping the hand of ♠'s and throwing the opponents in at the correct moment. It is immaterial if East or West wins this third round of ♠'s; he either gives declarer three ♦ tricks by leading a ♦ or he concedes a ruff and discard. Just one declarer found this play on Monday (wasted when in 4♥?).
North	South	
♠ -	♠ -	
♥ 10	♥ J	
♦ KJ10	♦ A75	
♣ -	♣ -	

The bottom line? I've said it time and time again – look for the 4-4 fit. Even when both hands are totally flat (with duplication) then the 4-4 fit is usually superior.

Also, of course, brush up on stripping and throw-ins, and remember that you need about 37 points for a grand slam if you have no long suit to run. And note that all the aces and all the kings is only 8 tricks; in a small slam you need 4 more from somewhere (and a 4-4 fit often helps).

A Comfortable slam missed Board 12 from Monday 15th, N-S vul

6♠ was bid at just one of the seven tables on Monday, this auction was typical: -

North (D)	South	West	North	East	South
♠ K543	♠ AQ1076	pass	1♦	pass	1♠
♥ 8	♥ 52	pass	4♠ (1)	pass	pass (2)
♦ AKQ43	♦ 85	pass			
♣ KQ6	♣ A842				

- (1) This is not a shut-out bid. It shows a strong hand with 4 card support, typically 18-19 points.
- (2) Should South press on to slam? A nice hand; the two aces and a good 5 card trump suit are plusses, however, there could be two ♥ losers. Difficult. Blackwood is normally a poor bid with a weak doubleton. A 5♣ cue bid could work out well (5♣ - 5♦ - 5♠ - 6♠) if North realises that his singleton ♥ is golden. The best solution, however, is for North to tell South that he has a singleton ♥ at (1), how?

The answer is, as always, surprisingly simple. Play splinters (this N-S pair did not). A 3♥ bid at (1) would show this hand exactly, values for a ♠ game (usually 4 card support) with a singleton ♥. South would then have an easy 6♠ bid. If you play 3♥ as natural here (I would not as 2♥ is a reverse, showing a strong hand with ♥'s – so an unnecessary jump is a splinter) then 4♥ would be the splinter. I would play 4♥ here as a splinter with explicitly a void (with 3♥ showing exactly a singleton). Imagine that same North hand with the ♥ 8 replaced by any minor suit card – wouldn't it be nice to bid a cold 7♥ on a combined 27 points! Splinters really do work.

Five of a Minor is rarely the best contract

Board 13 from Friday 19th, both vul.

North (E)	South	West	North	East	South
♠ A8	♠ J642	-	2♣ (1)	pass	2♦ (2)
♥ AJ	♥ 863	pass	3♦ (3)	pass	3NT (4)
♦ AQJ108753	♦ K64	pass	pass (5)	pass	
♣ K	♣ A86				

3NT makes +3. This was an above average score as two pairs played in 5♦, just one pair found a slam (6♦) Let's look at this bidding first: -

- (1) A clear 2♣ opener, far too strong for just 1♦. A 2♣ opener does not guarantee 23+ points if it has playing strength. I would also open this hand with the strongest opening bid if playing strong two's (it's too good for a strong 2♦).
- (2) This pair play 2♦ as a not completely bust hand (at least one king or ace).
- (3) Game forcing.

Now South would also make this same 3NT bid at (4) on a far weaker hand. North felt that South should bid 4♦ at (4) – North has shown a very strong hand. South felt that North should not pass 3NT but make a slam try with a (forcing) 4♦. Who's right? Dunno. Maybe both? Anyway, I would never bid 5♦ with this North hand at pairs. That loses out to anyone in slam but also to anybody playing in NT. If you decide that NT is too risky because of the singleton ♣ then I would bid 6♦.

A Comfortable SlamBoard 8 from Monday 8th, love all.

West	East	West (H)	North	East	South
♠ AQ73	♠ 2	1♥	pass	2♦	pass
♥ AK10753	♥ J94	2♥ (1)	pass	3♥ (2)	pass
♦ 8	♦ AKQ72	4♥	pass	pass	pass
♣ K5	♣ AJ62				

This pair play Acol and it looks like they had difficulty even reaching game.

- (1) Playing Acol (or Standard American) this is weakish. 3♥ or a 2♠ reverse are sensible bids, I prefer 2♠ (forcing) as partner may pass 3♥. 3♥ here is not strictly forcing in Acol (although it's rarely passed in practice).
- (2) This bid is only invitational playing Acol or Standard American.

Anyway, this pair reached just 4♥, as did two other pairs on Monday; 6♥ is easy and 7♥ makes with correct play (eight ever nine never). 7♥ was bid and made once. Now 7♥ is probably pushy, but how do you reach 6♥ playing Acol or Standard American?

West	North	East	South
1♥	pass	2♦	pass
3♥	pass	4NT	pass
5♥	pass	6♥	pass

There really are umpteen different auctions to get there, this is a simple one.

Too High, Even With a FitBoard 15 from Friday 12th, N-S vul

West (C)	East	West	North	East	South
♠ AKJ84	♠ 5	-	pass	pass	pass
♥ AJ7	♥ K654	1♠	pass	1NT	pass
♦ 9	♦ 8763	3♣ (1)	pass	3♥	pass
♣ A975	♣ KJ32	4♥	pass	5♣	all pass

So, a hopeless contract that went two down. 2♥ made +1 at other tables. Anyone to blame? Let's see.

- (1) A strong bid. This is forcing, most play game forcing.

West (Hans) tried to blame East, saying that 3♣ is not forcing and that East should pass because of his singleton ♠. Obviously totally incorrect on three counts. 1st East is not minimum, 2nd he has a ♣ fit, 3rd the 3♣ bid is *forcing*.

No, the fault lies with squarely on West's shoulders. The 3♣ bid at (1) is forcing. Partner's initial 1NT response has denied a ♠ fit, and with a singleton ♦ a NT game looks unlikely. With a rather poor ♣ suit, West should be satisfied with a 2♣ bid - any game looks remote, even opposite a max. To force to game with 3♣ you need a better hand and/or a decent 5 card ♣ suit.

Too High

Board 1 from Friday 19th, love all.

North	South (G)	West	North	East	South
♠ J107	♠ Q63	-	1♥	pass	3♥ (1)
♥ AK1096	♥ Q832	pass	4♥ (2)	pass	pass
♦ QJ75	♦ A102	dbl	pass	pass	pass
♣ 3	♣ Q95				

The contract was one down for a poor score, anybody to blame? Let's see: -
First of all, is this South hand worth a raise to 3♥ at (1)? A 2♥ bid is 6-9, a 3♥ bid is 11-12, with 10 points you have to take the rest of the hand into account. 4 trumps, so a + factor, but the totally flat shape and three queens (bad cards) are – factors. I would bid just 2♥. And North's raise to 4♥ at (2)? Again borderline, but with excellent shape, excellent trumps and good intermediates it's perhaps worth a go.

Bidding Quiz Answers

- Hand A: 1♠. Pass is feeble. This ♠ suit is great (texture!) – bid it.
- Hand B: 6♥. Go for the 4-4 fit. 34+-1 points is usually enough for a small slam when you have a *fit*. Do not bid NT and do not go overboard at the 7 level.
- Hand C: 2♣. This sort of hand is one that, it appears, even the more experienced players get wrong. 3♣ would be (game) forcing; partner has denied ♠ support and so what game do you expect to make? 4♠ on a 5-2 fit when you may continually be forced with ♦ leads? 3NT with a singleton ♦?
5♣ on a combined +- 25 points? And, of course, partner may only have a 6 or 7 count! No, be realistic, settle for a partscore at the two level.
Now I expect that most of you chose 3♣ here? And some (certainly one) may even try to argue that 3♣ is correct (in spite of what I have said)?
If you think that I'm wrong, then check with Chuck (perhaps the most knowledgeable bidder in our club?). I believe that I pissed him off a couple of months back, so he won't side with me unless I am certainly correct!(?)
- Hand D: 3♥, a splinter agreeing ♠'s and showing a singleton ♥. If you do not play splinters then bid 4♠, showing about 18-19 points. 3♠ would not be forcing (it's invitational, about 15-17 points)
- Hand E: 2♣ (or your strongest bid). Too good for 1♦ or a strong 2♦.
- Hand F: 1♥. Too strong for a weak 2♥.
- Hand G: 2♥. Not quite good enough for 3♥.
- Hand H: 2♠ or 3♥, but 3♥ only if you play it as forcing. You have values for game after partner's two level response. 4♥ is too unilateral. This is the sort of hand where I prefer to play 2/1 (a simple 2♥ rebid is forcing as partner's 2♦ is forcing to game playing 2/1).
- Sequence J: Obviously strong, and *forcing*. Most people play *game* forcing.
- Sequence K: Strong. This shows 4 card support and about 18-19 points. If you play splinters then the bid denies a shortage. Partner is welcome to investigate slam.
- Sequence L: Weakish. Generally 5 card support and less than 10 points. Opener should only investigate slam with a *very* strong hand.
- Sequence M: Obviously strong, but not strictly forcing in Acoll (but rarely passed). Playing Standard American the 2♦ response promises 11 points and so 3♥ is best played as (game) forcing.