

Monday 22/11/2004

Friday 26/11/2004

1st Tomas/Jim 61 %
 2nd Alex/Jeff 61 %

1st Alex/Jeff 58 %
 2nd Bob/Dave 55 %

Don't Forget

Next Monday we move to the Diana Inn, so we will be playing at the Diana Inn on both Mondays and Fridays from 2.00 from now on.

There is also a group of players who meet at 2.00 on Wednesday (again now at the Diana Inn). This format is slightly different as I like to get a game myself, but I understand that there will always be somebody prepared to not play if there is an odd number of players. So come along.

We had our first session at the Diana Inn on Friday and although slightly cramped it was otherwise excellent and there will be no problem when we get more tables – we can expand into the adjacent area and handle about 40 tables!

Richard and I tried the buffet dinner (160 bht) after the session and we can thoroughly recommend it – excellent.

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

Hand A Hand B With Hand A RHO opens 2♥ (weak), what do you do?

♠ J8 ♠ J65
 ♥ AJ7 ♥ 1086
 ♦ AQ976 ♦ KQ105
 ♣ AK5 ♣ KQ5

With Hand B partner opens 1♠, what do you bid?

Hand C Hand D With Hand C partner opens 1NT. You transfer and partner bids 2♠, what do you do now?

♠ AJ1083 ♠ K875
 ♥ A96 ♥ J4
 ♦ A10 ♦ A98
 ♣ Q98 ♣ Q752

With Hand D partner opens 2NT. So you bid 3♣ Stayman: -
 (a) what do you bid if he responds 3♦ ?
 (b) what do you bid if he responds 3♠ ?
 (c) what do you bid if he responds 3♥ ?

Understanding Blackwood and Gerber - 1

Board 7 from Wednesday 24th

Dealer: ♠ AJ1083
South ♥ A96
both vul ♦ A10
 ♣ Q98

♠ Q5 N ♠ 97
♥ 1074 W E ♥ QJ3
♦ QJ862 S ♦ 754
♣ J76 ♣ 105432

♠ K642
♥ K852
♦ K93
♣ AK

Table A:

West	North(C)	East	South
-	-	-	1NT
pass	2♥	pass	2♠ (1)
pass	4NT (2)	pass	5♥ (3)
pass	6♥ (4)	pass	6NT (5)
all pass			

Table B:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1NT
2♦ (6)	3NT (7)	all pass	

A bit of a mix-up here at Table A and ludicrous bidding at Table B, let's have a look: -

- Table A: (1) This South simply accepted the transfer, with 4 ♠'s and excellent top cards I would super-accept with 3♠.
- (2) This is quantitative. Partner may pass or bid 5♠ to play. 6NT and 6♠ are obviously simply to play and South may introduce a 5 card suit if he wishes in order to suggest slam in that suit.
- (3) South, however, took 4NT as Roman Key Card Blackwood and so gave the 2 key card response.
- (4) North assumed that South had a maximum with 5 good ♥'s and was suggesting a ♥ slam.
- (5) South knows of the 5-4 ♠ fit but with every suit covered and no obvious weakness he chose 6NT because it was pairs scoring.
- Table B: (6) Even at favourable vulnerability this overcall of a strong NT is absurd.
- (7) But North no longer has a transfer available. 2♠ here would be weak (to play) but 3♠ (forcing) is available. Double (penalties) is also a very sound option.

And what happened? 12 tricks are obviously easy. The third table also bid to 6NT.

The bottom lines: -

- When partner opens 1NT then you need about a good 16-17 points to *invite* slam. With more you can check on aces/key cards and bid slam.
- Note that this North hand is not just 15 points – it's worth much more. Three aces, a good 5 card suit, two tens and ample intermediates make the hand worth about 17 points.
- 4♣ is the ace ask after partner's last bid was NT.
- 4♣ is also the ace (or key-card) ask after a transfer is simply accepted.
- 4NT is quantitative in both of the above cases.
- Aces and kings are good cards, quacks are not.

Just to clarify what's what after a transfer, here's an extract from news-sheet 63: -

- 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4♣ asks for aces (RKCB)
- 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4NT is quantitative
- 1NT - 2♦ - 3♥ - 4♣ is a cue bid - the same for any super-accept (or a 2nd suit according to partnership agreement).
- 1NT - 2♦ - 3♥ - 4NT asks for aces (RKCB)

Understanding Blackwood and Gerber - 2

Board 21 from Wednesday 24th

Dealer: ♠ 10942

North ♥ K985

N-S vul ♦ J64

♣ 106

♠ AQJ63

N

♠ K875

♥ Q73

W E

♥ J4

♦ KQ

S

♦ A98

♣ AK4

♣ Q752

♠ -

♥ A1062

♦ 107532

♣ J983

West	North	East (D)	South
-	pass	pass	pass
2NT	pass	4♣ (1)	pass
4♠ (2)	pass	4NT (3)	pass
5♥ (4)	pass	6NT (5)	all pass

Now this East was North at the previous deal. Then he had '15' points and missed slam opposite partner's 1NT opening. So this time, with 10 points opposite a 2NT opening he drove to slam. Sensible? Let's have a look.

- (1) 4♣ here is Gerber. This hand should, of course, bid 3♣ Stayman and then 4♠ if a fit is located or else 3NT. There is a mechanism (Puppet Stayman) for locating both 4 card and 5 card majors after partner has opened 2NT but it's best left to more experienced players.
- (2) Two aces.
- (3) Apparently this pair had agreed that this asked for kings. I asked how they signed off in 4NT and they said that they did not – presumably the ace and king asks are to help the opposition as slam is always going to be bid anyway?
- (4) Two kings.
- (5) Now I believe that East could have signed off in 5NT here in their system (?). There is an ace and a king missing but that really is not important – this is a flattish East hand with no known fit and two unsupported quacks and should not even be inviting slam, yet alone jumping right in.

And what happened? 6NT went minus two. 4♠ was +1 and 6♠ -1 at other tables.

The bottom lines.

- When you have used 4♣ as the ace ask, then 5♣ asks for kings and 4NT is to play.
- If partner opens 2NT (or 1NT) and you have a 4 card major, then bid Stayman to look for a fit. You can then subsequently ask about aces/key cards.
- If partner opens 2NT (20-22) then without a fit or a long suit you need a good 11-12 points to *invite* slam. This East hand is not even worth an invite. Note that even with this super maximum and super-fitting West hand, slam fails.
- Remember, with no fit or long suit then you need a total of 34 pts for 6NT.
- This East hand is an average 10 count, no more, and is nowhere near good enough to even think about slam.

Notice the difference between this deal and the previous one; both have a combined 31 points and both have a 5-4 ♠ fit. Slam fails on the second because of quacks instead of top cards.

Partscore or slam?

Board 16 from Friday 26th

Dealer: ♠ J65
West ♥ 1086
E-W vul ♦ KQ105
♣ KQ5

♠ Q94 N ♠ 82
♥ Q975 W E ♥ K3
♦ 986 S ♦ J43
♣ J102 ♣ A98763

♠ AK1073
♥ AJ42
♦ A72
♣ 4

Table A

West	North(B)	East	South
-	-	pass	1♠
pass	3♠ (1)	pass	4NT (2)
pass	5♣	pass	5♠
all pass			

5♠ is too high here, so what went wrong?

- (1) So what did you bid at (1) in this week's quiz? It's 11 points and a 3♠ bid here would be 11-12, but is this North hand worth 3♠? It is dubious – it is aceless and totally flat (no ruffing value) and the ♠ suit is just 3 card and is rather weak, I would settle for 2♠. But one important point – a direct bid of 3♠ here should promise 4 ♠'s; with a hand that is worth a raise to 3♠ but with only 3 card trump support then bid 2 of a minor first (so 2♦ here) and then bid 3♠ - this differentiates between 3 and 4 card support.
- (2) And should South go looking for slam here? It's fairly close, give partner something like ♠Q965 ♥K9 ♦KQ105 ♣653 and slam is better than 50%. However, this example hand is 'ideal' in that there are no wasted ♣ honours; on average slam will not be there and South should simply settle for 4♠.

And what happened? 5♠ was minus two; one pair bid 6♠ (minus three) and a third pair played in 2♠ making +2. Only Linda/Kaj got it right (4♠ making exactly).

The bottom lines: -

- Know how to differentiate between 3 and 4 card support with a limit raise (to 3) for partner's major - with 4 card support bid 3 of the major directly, with 3 card support bid a minor first. If you play 2/1 then the 3 card raise is shown via a forcing NT.
- Deduct a point for a totally flat hand.
- Downgrade a hand with just 3 card trump support, especially if you have weak trumps and no ruffing potential.

If 3NT is a sensible option – then bid it.

Board 3 from Monday 22nd

Dealer: ♠ J8
South ♥ AJ7
E-W vul ♦ AQ976
♣ AK5

Table A
West North(A) East South
- - - pass
2♥ 3♦ (1) all pass

♠ A107 N ♠ K6542
♥ KQ9865 W E ♥ 32
♦ J S ♦ 84
♣ 643 ♣ Q972
♠ Q93
♥ 104
♦ K10532
♣ J108

Table B
West North(A) East South
- - - pass
2♥ dbl (1) pass 3♦
pass 5♦ all pass

Table C
West North(A) East South
- - - pass
2♥ 3NT(1) all pass

Table A: (1) So what did you bid with this North Hand A at (1) in this week's quiz? 3♦ is a poor bid – you don't want to play in ♦'s (at any level) with these ♥ stops.

Table B: (1) And double is equally bad – what do you do over 2♠/3♣/3♦? A double of a 2♥ bid guarantees ♠'s unless it's very strong and you bid again. Double followed by 3NT would show an enormous hand (about 22+).

Table C: (1) This 3NT was bid at 4 tables – spot on.

And what happened? 3NT was bid at 4 tables and made exactly. 3♦ was bid at two tables and made exactly for a poor score. 5♦ was down two for the undisputed bottom.

Bidding Quiz Answers

Hand A: 3NT. With a double ♥ stop 3NT is clearly best. 2NT would show a slightly weaker hand (about 15-18) and 3♦ is a very poor bid – because 3NT is likely to be the best contract and partner cannot possibly have a ♥ stop. Double is pointless.

Hand B: 2♠. The hand is not worth a raise to 3♠ (via 2♦ to show just 3 card support) because of the flat shape, no ruffing values and just 3 weak trumps. 1NT is a reasonable alternative – it's not worth 2NT for the same reasons.

Hand C: 4NT – quantitative. You need a good 16-17 points to invite slam opposite a strong NT, and this hand is worth it. It's not good enough to insist upon slam (4♣ would ask for aces/key cards) and 3NT is a bit feeble.

Hand D: (a) 3NT, it's nowhere good enough to even think about slam.
(b) 4♠, this time there's a fit but it's not quite good enough to investigate slam.
(c) 3NT, and pass if partner converts to 4♠.