

Monday 19/7/04

Friday 23/7/2004

1st Chuck/Terry 60%
 2nd Kevin/Noreen 59%

1st Dave 44 IMPs
 2nd Sheila 37 IMPs

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

Hand A Hand B

♠ KQ32 ♠ K107
 ♥ K98432 ♥ 9863
 ♦ 10 ♦ QJ54
 ♣ 54 ♣ 107

With Hand A partner opens 3♣, non vul, and RHO bids 3NT.
 What do you do?

With Hand B partner opens 1NT, what do you do?

Hand C Hand D

♠ 97 ♠ AJ85
 ♥ J ♥ K1075
 ♦ K962 ♦ A2
 ♣ QJ10987 ♣ A53

At love all, what do you open with Hand C as dealer?

With Hand D RHO opens 1♣, what do you bid?

Bid Stayman?Board 19 from Friday 23rd, E-W vul

North	South (B)	West	North	East	South .
♠ AJ85	♠ K107	-	-	-	pass
♥ K1075	♥ 9863	1♣	1NT	pass	2♣ (1)
♦ A2	♦ QJ54	pass	2♥	pass	2♠ (2)
♣ A53	♣ 107	all pass			

So do you bid Stayman at (1)? Pass is probably best because if partner bids 1♠ you will be in a 4-3 fit; but as LHO bid ♣'s that may work out OK and so Stayman is not too bad. As it happened, South lucked out when partner replied 2♥. Exactly why South then bid 2♠ at (2) will remain one of those mysteries that will never be solved by mankind.

And what happened? 2♠ went two down for minus 200. 1NT was made at the other table.

The bottom line. Do not bid Stayman unless you can cope with any (2♦/♥/♠) response.

Incidentally, what does the sequence 1NT - 2♣ - 2♥ - 2♠ mean? ...

... it is up to partnership understanding. Playing 4-way transfers it shows an invitational hand with 4♠'s. Others play it as a hand with 5♠'s but not quite good enough to transfer and then invite. I like to play 4-way transfers and so for me it's the former.

A sound pre-empt?

Board 24 from Monday 19th.

Dealer:	♠ AJ6	West (A)	North	East	South
West	♥ AQ65	(me)			
Love all	♦ QJ54				
	♣ AK	3♣ (1)	3NT (2)	4♣	pass
		pass	dbl	all pass	
♠ 97	N	♠ KQ32			
♥ J	W E	♥ K98432			
♦ K962	S	♦ 10			
♣ QJ10987		♣ 54			
	♠ 10865				
	♥ 107				
	♦ A873				
	♣ 632				

An interesting auction, let's analyse it: -

- (1) So do you open with this hand? If this ♣ suit were any other suit then many would open a weak two and some experienced players (see comments by Marty Bergen below) would open with a weak 3 bid. Since you cannot open a weak 2♣ I think that 3♣ is obvious.
- (2) North is a bit fixed now. Normally he would open 2NT to show a balanced 20-21 points and Stayman/transfers should find the correct contract. After the pre-empt he has to guess and 3NT is best, tough if you miss a ♥ 4-4 fit. That's what pre-empting is all about.
- (3) West's pre-empt has deprived N-S of bidding space and they may or may not be in the right contract. East has a reasonable defensive hand and, thanks to partner's bid, an easy lead. This 4♣ bid is ludicrous, it is most certainly a candidate for the worst bid of the year.

And what happened. 4♣ doubled was -3 for a bottom. And at other tables 3NT was bid twice and made exactly. At a fourth table North played in 1NT (+1), I've no idea how.

Anyway, let's get back to our table. At the end of play East criticised my opening. I believe that it is a perfect pre-empt (see below). I did not bother to comment upon East's ludicrous 4♣ bid. As I said above, a pre-empt makes life difficult for the opponents, but there is also another advantage. Lead indication - if East simply passes and leads a ♣ then North's contract is hopeless. North smugly said that he was happy with +500. I'm sure he was, but I see little point in making the remark unless he was implying that it was my fault for opening such a pre-empt? Now I am used to Hans continually trying (and failing) to find fault with my bidding. He read a Marty Bergen book a few months back and claimed that he bids just like Marty Bergen. Really? Lets have a Marty Bergen hand:

♠ 76	This comes from 'Marty Sez ... vol 2, page 88. What sez Marty?
♥ 4	<i>As dealer with neither side vulnerable open 3♦. No majors, no defence</i>
♦ QJ10982	<i>and 'solid' trumps. Opening 2♦ is better than nothing but is being too</i>
♣ Q953	<i>nice to the enemy. As for pass, for once, I'm speechless.</i>

So there you have it. Even if there was such a thing as a weak 2♣ opening, this Hand A should open 3♣ (for the reasons Marty sez). The bottom lines: -

- If you have made a foolish bid and it results in a bad score, don't try to blame partner.
- And if you do wish to criticise my bidding at the table then you really should know what you are talking about. Expect me to write it up.

That unusual Unusual NT again

Board 27 from Monday 19th.

Dealer:	♠ Q10875	West	North	East	South
South	♥ J105				
N-S vul	♦ J10	-	-	-	1♥
	♣ J109	2NT (1)	pass (2)	3NT (3)	pass
		5♣ (4)	pass	pass (5)	pass
♠ K4	N	♠ A9632			
♥ -	W E	♥ K832			
♦ AKQ64	S	♦ 972			
♣ KQ8652		♣ 7			
	♠ J				
	♥ AQ9764				
	♦ 853				
	♣ A43				

Problems, yet again, when the UNT convention is abused: -

- (1) In traditional methods a jump overall of 2NT is 19-20 points, i.e. a hand that is relatively balanced and too good for a 1NT overcall. A more recent meaning for the bid is weak with at least 5-5 in the minors. This 3rd meaning (5-5 but weak or possibly very strong) is a variation that I have only seen in this club.
- (2) The same North who asked last week. This North hand is too weak to make a bid at the 3 level and I cannot see the point in asking the meaning of the bid during the auction. If you have no intention of bidding whatever the answer is, it's best to leave your question until the end of the auction. Anyway, North unwisely asked and East said that it was 19-20 points.
- (3) Opposite 19-20 points East wants to be in game and so bid 3NT (surely a 3♥ transfer is best?).
- (4) And now we come to the real problem. West plays the UNT and his 2NT bid only promised about 6-10 points and 5-5 in the minors. Partner then bid a natural 3NT, so clearly he has a good hand, about 15 points minimum. West should obviously be looking for slam with a combined 32+ points and a void in the opponent's suit. Why didn't he? Because he heard his partner's explanation?
- (5) East should convert to 5♦ of course, but he did not know that his partner's bid had shown both minors.

What happened? 5♣ made but scored a bottom as others were in 5♦+1 or 3NT+2.

The bottom lines: -

- If your partner gives an explanation of your bid during the auction, you are not allowed to 'hear' what he says. You cannot let what he says affect your bid, it is unauthorised information. West is obliged to look for slam in this scenario.
- Don't ask questions during the auction unless the answer is going to affect your bid – it only causes problems, as in this case. Leave your question until the auction is finished.
- Don't abuse the UNT and Michaels conventions.

And just one final point. As it happened, the result was bad for E-W. If it had turned out well for them then this North would have undoubtedly have called the director. I would have let the result stand as the whole problem was caused by North asking a needless question. Also, of course, it does not add up: 17 + 15 + opening bid = too many points in the pack.

A two-suited hand?

Board 4 from Friday 23rd

Dealer:	♠ K103		West	North	East	South
West	♥ A86					
both vul	♦ 432		pass	(1) 1♣	pass	1♥
	♣ AQ107		dbl	(2) 2♥ (3)	pass	4♥
			4♠	(4) dbl	pass	pass
♠ Q8742	N	♠ J96	5♦	pass	pass	dbl
♥ K94	W E	♥ Q103	pass	pass	5♠	dbl
♦ Q10876	S	♦ J9	pass	pass	pass	
♣ -		♣ K6542				
	♠ A5					
	♥ J752					
	♦ AK5					
	♣ J983					

(1) There is a convention, common in Holland, where you can open 2♠ when weak with 5 ♠'s and a 4 card minor. But even if you do play that I would pass as with a void and a good 3 card ♥ suit you may miss a ♥ contract. So pass and hope to show your two suits later.

- (2) Hasn't it worked out well! A take-out double enables West to show his two suits and he does not need to worry about missing a ♥ contract as South has bid the suit. Perfect.
- (3) This is a poor bid. Sometimes it is correct to support with 3 cards, but not with a totally flat hand. Without West's double North should bid 1NT. After the double he could still do that, but I prefer pass to show a minimum hand. A redouble would be a Support Redouble (showing 3 ♥'s) but I believe that only Chuck (with me) plays that.
- (4) Now this really is a poor bid. The previous double showed the two suits and this hand has good defence against ♥'s. Pass is clear, and it would work out well as the opponents are in an impossible 4-3 fit game.

And what happened? Down 4, so 1100 away. And at the other table N-S were in 3NT going two off. The bottom lines: -

- If you open, partner responds and RHO bids (or doubles), then pass with a minimum hand.
- Only raise partner's possible 4 card major with 3 card support if you have shape.
- - 1100 really is too much when the opponents cannot even make game.
- If you have shown your hand already (the double with this West hand), then don't bid again - especially at the 4 level when vulnerable!

Bidding Quiz Answers

- Hand A: Pass and lead a ♣, thankful that partner's bid has solved your otherwise difficult lead problem. And why is this trivial hand in the quiz? One very experienced player actually found a 4♣ bid! What can I say? What would Marty Bergen say??
- Hand B: Pass. If you bid Stayman then a 2♠ response fixes you.
- Hand C: 3♣. Two of the club's 'leading' players may disagree with this. Fine, they are wrong. See Marty Bergen's comments earlier for what he thinks of pass. The modern trend for opening pre-empts is that they are lighter than they used to be. If you passed with this hand then you are living in the Stone Age and need to read a modern book, right Fred?
- Hand D: 1NT(15-18), some may prefer to double. Reasonable, and this will work out OK if partner bids a major, but not if he bids 1♦.