

Mon	12 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	Bill/Dave	56%	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Mike/Tomas	54%
Wed	14 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	Kenneth/David	60%	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Dave/Ian & Tom/Tomas	55%
Fri	16 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	Philip/Tomas	53%	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Clive/Dave	51%

**Bidding Quiz**

**Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated**

Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A RHO opens 1♥, what do you do?
♠ AKQ8652	♠ J95	(a) What do you open with hand B?
♥ K4	♥ K5	(b) Suppose you open 1♣ and partner responds 1♥, what do you rebid?
♦ Q106	♦ A2	
♣ Q	♣ AKQ876	
Hand C	Hand D	With Hand C partner opens 1NT, what do you do?
♠ KJ1092	♠ A653	With Hand D partner opens 1♥ and you bid 1♠. Partner then rebids 2♦, what do you do? _
♥ J10	♥ K5	
♦ 1092	♦ 987	
♣ J65	♣ K642	

**What does the last bid in these sequences show? :-**

Sequence W	West	North	East	South
	1♣	pass	1♥	pass
	2♥	2♠	3♦?	
Sequence X	West	North	East	South
	1♦	1♥	pass	2♥
	pass	pass	dbl?	
Sequence Y	West	North	East	South
	1NT	pass	2♣	pass
	2♠	pass	3♣?	

**Take-out or penalty double?** Board 27 from Monday 12<sup>th</sup>

I say the same things week after week, but who listens? .....

Of course we all know that we pre-empt to the limit and bid only once. And we also know, I hope, that if you wish to raise partner's pre-empt, you do so immediately and not wait until the opponents have gauged each other's strength: -

Dealer:	♠ AJ1087642		West	North	East	South
South	♥ K43		-	-	-	pass
Love all	♦ 8		pass	4♠ (1)	dbl (2)	pass (3)
	♣ 5		5♣ (4)	pass	pass	5♠ (5)
♠ Q	N	♠ K9	pass	pass	dbl	all pass
♥ 109	W E	♥ AQJ65				
♦ 9763	S	♦ K104				
♣ AK8642		♣ J109				
	♠ 52					
	♥ 872					
	♦ AQJ52					
	♣ Q73					

- (1) An 8 card major suit, so open 4♠.
- (2) This was meant as penalties.
- (3) Obvious
- (4) West decided to bid his ♣ suit.
- (5) And with a good defensive hand and absolutely no reason to bid ♠'s, South decided to turn a top into a bottom.

And what happened? 5♠ doubled went 3 down for a complete bottom to N-S. 5♣ would have gone two down for a good N-S score

The bottom lines: -

- Obey The Law; (N-S have 10 combined trumps and should not go beyond 4♠).
- If you wish to raise partner's pre-empt, do so **immediately**.
- It is unwise to raise partner's pre-empt with no honours in his suit and just two small.
- Pre-empts are all about creating uncertainty. After you/your partner pre-empt then do not assume that the opponents have arrived in a good spot.
- Decide to what level a double of a pre-empt is for take-out. Chuck says 4♥, I prefer 3♠ (with a double of a higher pre-empt showing values). Up to you/your partner.

**There's no need to jump in a game-forcing sequence** Board 15 from Monday 12<sup>th</sup>

Dealer: ♠ 982  
 South ♥ 972  
 N-S vul ♦ J1092  
 ♣ KJ2

♠ AKQ73	N	♠ 5
♥ 865	W E	♥ AKQJ10
♦ 83	S	♦ AKQ65
♣ 1083		♣ A6
	♠ J1064	
	♥ 43	
	♦ 74	
	♣ Q9754	

<u>Table A</u>			
West	North	East	South
-	-	-	pass
pass	pass	2♣	pass
2♠ (1)	pass	3NT (2)	all pass

<u>Table B</u>			
West	North	East	South
-	-	-	pass
pass	pass	2♣	pass
2♠ (1)	pass	3♥ (2)	pass
4♥	pass	4NT (3)	pass
5♦	pass	5NT (3)	pass
6♦	pass	7♥	al pass

- Table A (1) A positive response. Different partnerships have different opinions about what constitutes a +ve response but this certainly qualifies for all but those who demand an automatic 2♦ relay.
- (2) 3NT was bid here at two tables. Apparently both East's later said that they were afraid that partner would pass 3♥ - perhaps they should partner each other?  
 See Table B for how it should go.
- Table B (2) 3♥ is game forcing and obvious.
- (3) Blackwood gives partner one ace and one king and so 7♥ is odds-on. Easy.

And what happened? 3NT was bid as at two tables and made 12 or 13 tricks for poor scores. One table bid 6♥+1 and two bid 7♥ making. There are 12 top tricks; 7♥ is not a great contract and the best line is to draw just two rounds of trumps, then the ♦AK and ruff the 3<sup>rd</sup> ♦ with the ♥8. This succeeds when ♦'s are 3-3 or when ♦'s are 4-2 with the doubleton ♦ hand not starting with ♥8xx or when the ♥9 falls in two rounds. That's probably around 80%, so certainly good enough at pairs scoring.

The bottom lines: -

- The sequence 2♣ - 2♦ - 2NT shows 22-24 balanced and is non-forcing. This is the **only** sequence that starts with 2♣ that is not game forcing.
- **Any** other sequence that starts with a 2♣ opener is **game** forcing.
- If responder gives an initial +ve response (i.e. not 2♦) then slam is probably there.
- In a game forcing situation, a jump to game is fast arrival, showing a minimum and a wish to play in that contract.

**Open 1NT and you've said it all!**

Board 4 from Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>

Dealer: ♠ J95  
 West ♥ K5  
 Both vul ♦ A2  
 ♣ AKQ876

♠ K73	N	♠ A84
♥ 6	W E	♥ QJ1093
♦ J10765	S	♦ Q94
♣ J1094		♣ 52
	♠ Q1062	
	♥ A8742	
	♦ K83	
	♣ 3	

'Expert' Table (\*see note)

West	North(Z)	East	South
pass	1NT (1)	pass	2♣ (3)
pass	2♦	pass	3♦ (4)
pass	3NT (5)	pass	pass (6)
pass			

Table A

West	North(B)	East	South
pass	1♣ (1)	1♥	pass (2)
pass	3♣ (3)	pass	3NT
all pass			

Table B

West	North(B)	East	South
pass	1♣ (1)	1♥	1NT (2)
pass	3NT	all pass	

Table C

West	North(B)	East	South
pass	1NT (1)	pass	2♣ (4)
pass	2♦	pass	3♠ (5)
pass	4NT (6)	pass	pass
pass			

- Table A (1) What did you open with this North hand B(a) in this week's quiz? It's **far** too good for 1NT and 1♣ is correct (with a view to rebidding 3NT).  
 (2) With ♥'s sitting over the overcaller, South passed awaiting North's 'automatic' re-opening double.  
 (3) But North was hoping to make a vulnerable game and so bid 3♣. With this particular hand when vulnerable it is reasonable not to re-open with a double but I would prefer 1NT (partner may be very weak). 1NT here would show a very strong hand with a ♥ stop and ensures that 3NT is played from the correct hand if that turns out to be the final contract.
- Table B (2) This South chose 1NT instead of the 'penalty' pass and 3NT was again easily reached.
- Table C (1) This North chose a 1NT opening. Way off-beat and **far** too strong of course.  
 (4) When 5-4 or 4-5 in the majors it's best to go via Stayman (and leave transfer sequences to 5-5 major suit hands).  
 (5) This N-S pair play Smolen. It is a rather out-dated/inefficient convention (see expert table) but the 3♠ bid here promised game values with 4 ♠'s and 5 ♥'s.  
 (6) This bid is not catered for when playing Smolen. Opener is expected to bid 3NT or 4 of responder's 5 card suit. I believe that opener was trying to compensate for his appalling underbid with his opening bid and that 4NT was quantitative.

And what happened? North at table C got what he deserved, 4NT went one down – the ♣'s did not run (not totally surprising in view of South's bidding).

All of the other tables bid the easy 3NT one way or another and shared the top.

Hand Z            Now this brings me on to an interesting point – bidding 5-4 (or 4-5) major suit hands when partner opens 1NT. Let's change this North hand slightly so that it actually is a sensible (but absolutely maximum) 1NT opener.

♠ J95            So you open 1NT and partner bids 2♣. You respond 2♦ and partner jumps to

♥ K5            3♥ (or 3♠ playing Smolen). How can you indicate to partner that you are

♦ A82            maximum? The answer is that you cannot playing traditional or Smolen.

♣ AKQ76

'Expert'        So for this example North holds this Hand Z (\* note, so a reasonable 1NT opener)  
Table            and South holds the actual South hand. Our experts play all of the latest gadgets of course: -

- (1) Hand Z is a (very maximum) 1NT opener.
- (3) And responder always bids Stayman with all 5-4 (or 4-5) hands.
- (4) Now South has a game forcing hand and the traditional method is to jump in the 5-carder (so 3♥) or jump to 3♠ playing Smolen. But there is a better method that not only ensures that opener is always declarer but also allows opener to show a maximum without going past game (this is very important if responder has only invitational values – impossible to bid playing traditional methods) and is also important if responder has slam ambitions if opener is maximum. So responder now bids 3♦ - a Quest transfer – promising 5♥'s, 4♠'s and invitational or game forcing (or better) values.
- (5) North now shows his maximum (and no fit for partner).
- (6) And South has no further ambitions even knowing that partner is maximum. Easy, eh?

The bottom lines: -

- A 1NT opening is 15-17 points. Anybody who considers ♣ AKQ876 to be just 9 points needs to attend my bidding lessons?
- If you underbid then it is very dangerous to overbid later in order to compensate, especially if you go past game.
- And note that this actual North's hand A most definitely has not improved with South showing both of his short suits!
- When you open 1NT you have said it all. Partner is the captain and you cannot subsequently take control unless partner invites.
- The only exception to the above is when partner transfers into a major and you have a maximum and 4 cards in the major – then you can super-accept.
- If you play Quest transfers (1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♦/♥ to transfer to ♥/♠ resp) then these are invitational or better and opener should not simply accept with a maximum.
- And, perhaps most important of all, there is no room playing standard (or Smolen) methods for responder to show an invitational hand when 5-4 (or 4-5) in the majors. The only way is to play Quest transfers and they are fully described in the NT book on our web site. If you want details and have no computer access then I can print the pages for you.

## A help-suit game try

Board 24 from Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>

What was your answer to the 3♦ bid in Sequence W (the sequence below) in this week's quiz? I asked two of our top players after the Wednesday session; one said 'a trial bid' and the other said 'a help suit game try'. Actually they are both correct (two names for the same thing). When you have agreed a major suit at the two level then a bid of another suit below 3 of the major is a help-suit game try and asks partner to bid game (or bid something other than 3 of the major) if he has help in the suit bid.

Dealer: ♠ A109  
West ♥ A873  
Love all ♦ 105  
♣ AJ106

♠ J2	N	♠ KQ654
♥ 6542	W E	♥ -
♦ AJ964	S	♦ K832
♣ 43		♣ K952

♠ 873  
♥ KQJ109  
♦ Q7  
♣ Q87

West	North	East	South
pass	1♣	pass (1)	1♥
pass	2♥	2♠	3♦ (2)
pass	3♠ (3)	pass	4♥
all pass			

- (1) I would overcall 1♠. I do not see the point in passing and then bidding ♠'s at a higher level next go.
- (2) South certainly has values to push on, and 3♥ would be simply competitive. But this South hand is just about worth a shot at game provided that there are not two quick ♦ losers. So South bid 3♦. This is a help-suit game try and asks partner to bid game with ♦ help.
- (3) I believe that North believes that two small is good enough to accept a help-suit game try? and so cue bid his ♠A. I do not (singleton or top honour is needed), and with two small ♦'s I would simply bid 3♥. North maintains that dbl at (2) is better than a ♦ help-suit try. I disagree, a ♠K or Q in North's hand would be useless whereas a ♦ honour is what South needs.

And what happened. 4♥ went one down. 3♥ was bid and made at just one table and scored a top. The bottom line: -

- Help-suit game tries apply when a major suit has been agreed at the two level and apply whoever opens the bidding.
- A small doubleton is not a good enough holding to accept a help-suit game try. You need an honour (A,K or Q) or a singleton/void.
- If you wish to accept the game try then you can cue bid if partner is unlimited (i.e. could be looking for slam).

## The power of aces

Board 22 from Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>

I have frequently said the aces are undervalued (at 4 points) compared with quacks that are overvalued. The following deal from Wednesday illustrates that fact perfectly: -

Dealer:	♠ J73				
East	♥ 2	West	North	East	South(A)
E-W vul	♦ K4	-	-	1♥	dbl (1)
	♣ KJ86543	pass (2)	2♣ (3)	2♦	2♠ (3)
		pass (4)	3♥ (5)	pass	3NT (6)
		all pass			
♠ 104	N	♠ 9			
♥ 108753	W E	♥ AQJ96			
♦ J72	S	♦ A9853			
♣ A109		♣ 72			
	♠ AKQ8652				
	♥ K4				
	♦ Q106				
	♣ Q				

- (1) What did you bid with this South hand A in this week's quiz? This South hand really is too strong for a simple 1♠ overcall, and if you play weak jump overcalls you cannot jump to 2♠. So South correctly doubled with the intention of bidding ♠'s next go to show this very strong hand.
- (2) I would bid 3♥ (even 4♥ at a different vulnerability) here.
- (3) This North hand is close to a +ve 3♣ response and I would not argue with that bid.
- (4) West again failed to support partner (who has now shown a decent red two-suited hand).
- (5) But West's failure to act gave North enough rope to hang himself. South has shown a ♠ hand that was too strong to simply overcall 1♠ and North knows that he easily has values for game now. And with a 7 card ♣ suit and something in ♦'s he got 'greedy' – opting for 3NT if South had a ♥ stop. 3♥ asked partner to bid 3NT with a ♥ stop.
- (6) And so South obediently did what he was asked.

And what happened? A ♥ was led and since N-S had 3 aces missing the best that South could do was cash his 8 tricks. Note that the North hand is totally useless; with the ♣A it may possibly have been a different story. So 3NT was one down and every other N-S pair were in the 'obvious' 4♠, making exactly.

The bottom lines: -

- Aces are good cards. Give South the ♣A and North's gamble may have paid off – with South making 11 tricks in either 3NT or 4♠ if both the ♣'s and the ♠'s were solid. I won't bother to go into the mathematics of that possibility, but it is surely way less than 50%? Unfortunately the deal went with the percentages when South did not have the ♣A!
- With no ace and a singleton in the opponent's suit you probably need more than one stop from partner for 3NT to be successful.
- A double followed by a bid of a new suit shows a hand that was too strong to simply overcall.

## False Preference

Board 26 from Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

One pair got to a poor 3NT contract on this deal and I was asked about the bidding: -

Dealer:	♠ Q10984	<u>Table A</u>			
West	♥ J	West(D)	North	East	South
Both vul	♦ Q52	-	-	1♥ (1)	pass
	♣ A753	1♠	pass	2♦ (2)	pass
		2NT (3)	pass	3NT (4)	all pass

♠ A653	N	♠ -	<u>Table B</u>			
♥ K5	W E	♥ Q10864	West(D)	North	East	South
♦ 987	S	♦ AK10643	-	-	1♥ (1)	pass
♣ K642		♣ Q8	1♠	pass	2♦ (2)	pass
	♠ KJ72		2NT (3)	pass	3♦ (4)	all pass

♥ A9732			<u>'Expert' Table</u>			
♦ J			West(D)	North	East	South
♣ J109			-	-	1♥ (1)	pass
			1♠	pass	2♦ (2)	pass
			2♥ (3)	pass	3♦ (4)	all pass

With E-W bidding N-S's majors in front of them it was difficult for N-S to find their ♠ fit!

- Table A
- (1) It's usually best to open your longest suit, but with a weakish hand with a 5 card major and a 6 card minor then opening the major usually works out best.
  - (2) A simple 2♦ rebid is quite sufficient here, especially as partner bidding your void does not improve the hand.
  - (3) What did you bid with this West hand D in this week's quiz? This is where it all went wrong. 2NT by responder is virtually always 11-12 points; this is a poor 10 (mis-fit with partner and poor intermediates in the 'long' suits). See 'Expert' table for the correct bid.
  - (4) At the end of the deal West blamed East for the poor result (3NT went way off), West thought that East should have bid 3♦. Now I have a lot of sympathy with East here, if West had had his bid then 3NT may well have been the top spot.
- Table B
- (4) This East did indeed decide upon 3♦ and that worked out best.
- 'Expert' Table
- (3) Our experts know that 2NT is an overbid here. Now West could pass but East may have up to around 16 points and the thing to do with a reasonable hand in this situation is to give 'false preference'. So putting partner back into his first bid suit to give partner another shot if he has a good hand.
  - (4) But East does not have a good hand, and so can either pass 2♥ (a sound possibility at pairs scoring) or else simply bid 3♦.

And what happened? 3NT went 3 down. 3♦ made 10 tricks.

The bottom lines: -

- 2NT by responder is 11-12 points in most auctions.
- If unsure what to do, giving false preference is sometimes the solution. Note that giving false preference to a major suit usually only shows two card support.



There were a couple of deals on Friday where my partner had a ♠ void. He handled them differently – but we landed on out feet both times: -

**A ♠ void – part 1**

Board 1 from Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

Dealer:	♠ -	West	North	East	South(me)
North	♥ K975	-	1♦	pass	2NT (1)
Love all	♦ KQ10532	pass	3NT (2)	all pass	
	♣ AK2				

♠ Q107543	N	♠ A982
♥ 4	W E	♥ AJ1062
♦ J6	S	♦ 9
♣ J765		♣ 943
	♠ KJ6	
	♥ Q83	
	♦ A874	
	♣ Q108	

- (1) 11-12 points with no 4 card major.
- (2) North's knows all about South's 'thing' about not being in 5 of a minor if 3NT is an option. 3♦ would be weak (to play) and so North really has to decide now between 5♦ and 3NT and with this partner decided to bid 3NT.

And what happened? 3NT got the expected ♠ lead but still made a comfortable +1. At all of the other tables 5♦ was bid, making 11 or 12 tricks and so 3NT scored the top.

The bottom lines: -

- 3NT+1 scores more than 5♦ making or +1.

Just two boards later the same N-S pair has another ♠ void (but N-S had changed places): -

**A ♠ void – part 2**

Board 3 from Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

Dealer:	♠ KQ84				
South	♥ 8742		West	North(me)	East
E-W vul	♦ AKQ		-	-	-
	♣ K6		pass	1♥ (2)	pass
			pass	2♠ (3)	pass
♠ A752	N	♠ J10963	pass	3NT (4)	pass
♥ J63	W E	♥ KQ9	pass	6♦	all pass
♦ 987	S	♦ 103			
♣ QJ4		♣ 1087			
	♠ -				
	♥ A105				
	♦ J6542				
	♣ A9532				

- (1) A marginal opener, but acceptable in my view.
- (2) Always bid 4 card majors up the line, even if one is this ropery!
- (3) 4<sup>th</sup> suit forcing. North could simply bid 3NT here, but he went via the 4<sup>th</sup> suit with the intention of showing a better hand.
- (4) So showing a very good hand (since he went via the 4<sup>th</sup> suit) with a ♠ stop(s).
- (5) But this time South (North from the last hand) did not feel like chancing his luck again with a void in the unbid suit. Now he would not remove to a minor (certainly not with this North) but 4♥ does look like a very sensible bid. Moysian fits should play well when you can ruff with the short trumps.
- (5) But North knows that 4♥ will play terribly with his pathetic ♥ suit; he also thought that 5♦ would score badly (3NT is probably better) so he bid 6♦!

And what happened? 6♦ got the expected ♠ lead and so made when North pitched dummy's two losing ♥'s on the ♠ K&Q (he lost just the first ♠ trick). All the other tables were in 3NT making +1 or +2 and so 4♥ or 5♦ would indeed have scored a bottom.

The bottom lines: -

- 3NT+1 scores more than 5♦ making or +1; but not as much as 6♦!

**Play Quiz**

Assuming ample entries everywhere and no bidding from the opponents, how would you play this ♦ suit?

Dummy	Declarer
♦ AJ97	♦ K1085

Answer overleaf

## A ♠ void – part 3

Board 11 from Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

A different partner this time, but yet another ♠ void: -

Dealer:	♠ 10763				
South	♥ 942	West	North	East	South(me)
Love all	♦ AJ97	-	-	-	1♥
	♣ J5	1♠	2♥	2♠ (1)	3♠ (2)
		4♠	pass	pass	5♣ (3)
♠ KJ952	N	pass	5♥ (4)	all pass	
♥ 83	W E				
♦ 432	S				
♣ Q43					
	♠ -				
	♥ AKJ76				
	♦ K1085				
	♣ AK76				

- (1) I would bid more.
- (2) This is a cue bid, and since N-S have bid ♠'s it's probably a void.
- (3) This is another cue bid – South is looking for slam!
- (4) North should bid 5♦ here, but he either did not recognise partner's bids as cue bids looking for slam or considered his hand too weak.

And what happened? South made 12 tricks. But he need not have worried about missing slam as all of the other South's played in just 3♥!

The bottom lines: -

- Holding a hand like this South one, the hand improves every time that the opponents bid ♠'s.
- This South hand is surely worth game after the merest squeak from partner?
- Don't 'automatically' cover an honour with an honour. You should only do so if you can promote a card in your hand or in partner's. East should not cover the ♦J lead here.

### Play Quiz Answer.

Obviously it's a 50% guess which way to finesse. So how did I play it?

I led the ♦J from dummy with the intention of overtaking with the ♦K and playing a (losing as it happens) finesse against West. But the reason for playing the ♦J rather than a small one is that East may slip up and cover – he did! Note that playing the ♦10 from hand is not the same thing as 'nobody' would cover the ♦10 seeing the ♦AJ9x on table.

## The Roman 2♦

I personally think that a weak 2♦ opening is rather a waste of a useful bid. Other possible uses, such as Flannery, are also a bit of a waste (most Flannery type hands can be bid naturally). One quite popular treatment for an opening 2♦ is to show a 3-suited hand.

Any 4441 type or 0445 type with the 5-carder a minor are permissible.

And the point range? You can play what you like and I discuss the best range for your system later. Playing Mini Roman it is about 12-14.

There are various schemes for the responses to 2♦. One typical scheme is: -

- 2♥ = Pass (or correct to 2♠).
- 2♠ = Pass (or correct to 3♣).
- 2NT = Shortage ask. Opener then bids the suit below the shortage (3♠ with ♣ shortage). Responder can then sign off in any of opener's suits or bid on. With a strong hand responder now bids the shortage suit and things take off.
- 3♦ = An invitational (limit) raise for either major. Opener should respond 3♥/♠ with a minimum or 4♥/♠ with a maximum.
- 3♥ = Natural (6 card suit). Obviously opener raises to game if this is one of his suits.
- 3♠ = Natural (6 card suit). Obviously opener raises to game if this is one of his suits.
- 3NT = To play
- 4♣ = Ace asking
- 4♦ = To play in 4♥ or 4♠.

## Which Range?

Hand 1	Hand 2	So what point range is best for your Roman 2♦ system? Consider these two hands. Suppose that you play a strong NT system, then you open Hand 1 with 1♣ (or 1♦ or even 1♥ if you are that way inclined) and partner responds 1♠, what is your rebid? Whatever you opened, the only realistic rebid is 1NT, fine. But Hand 2 is a problem; you cannot rebid 1NT as that would show 12-14 points.
♠ 4	♠ 4	
♥ KQ87	♥ AK87	
♦ AJ54	♦ AJ54	
♣ K743	♣ KJ43	

But if you play a weak NT then you have the same problem but the other way round. You open whatever your system dictates and with Hand 2 you rebid 1NT (15-16) over a 1♠ response. But here it's hand 1 that is the problem.

Basically, these 4441 type hands (especially with short ♠'s) are difficult to bid if you open one of a suit and partner responds in your singleton if you cannot rebid 1NT.

## **So it's best to have your Roman 2♦ bid to be the same range as your opening 1NT.**

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But, of course, you can play whatever range you like; and many prefer to play Mini Roman as 12-14 comes up more often than 15-17.

And I am not saying that Roman 2♦ is necessarily the best use of the 2♦ opening; my personal preference is to play Benjamin twos.

## Always Transfer

Board 13 from Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

Unlike Stayman, there is no points requirement for a Jacoby transfer. There are no guarantees, but it generally works out best to transfer to a major however many points you have. Here is an example where one player did not realise that.: -

Dealer:	♠ 843		<u>Table A</u>			
North	♥ A5432		West(C)	North	East	South
Both vul	♦ A		-	pass	1NT	pass
	♣ 10732		pass (1)	pass		
♠ KJ1092	N	♠ A75	<u>Table B</u>			
♥ J10	W E	♥ Q97	West(C)	North	East	South
♦ 1092	S	♦ KQ84	-	pass	1NT	pass
♣ J65		♣ KQ4	2♥ (1)	pass	2♠	all pass
	♠ Q6					
	♥ K86					
	♦ J7653					
	♣ A98					

Table A (1) What did you bid with this West hand C in this week's quiz?

Table B (1) This West got it right – it virtually always works out better to transfer when holding a 5 card major – and it is even more important to do so with a weak hand.

And what happened? South led a ♦ but North's ♥ switch ensured that the contract made just 8 tricks. So 1NT made +1, but the 2♠ bid at other tables easily makes 9 tricks.

The bottom lines: -

- You should always transfer with a 5 card major, regardless of strength.
- The only exception is when also holding 4 cards in the other major (so 5-4 or 4-5 in the majors) when it's best to use Stayman with all strength hands.

## Balanced hand Bidding

On the next page I state that I will get tougher on people who open 1NT with hands of 20 or 21 points. Just in case you don't know how to bid big balanced hands here is a chart (for playing a strong NT) that has appeared in numerous previous news-sheets: -

12-14 points	open 1 of a suit and rebid NT at the lowest level.
15-17 points	open 1NT
18-19 points	open 1 of a suit and jump rebid in NT.
20-21 points	open 2NT
22-24 points	open 2♣ and rebid 2NT
23+	this one you have to decide with your partner. Standard is to open 3NT or else to open 2♣ and then jump to 3NT. The 'best' solution is to play Benjamin twos.

## Bidding Quiz Answers

Hand A: Dbl. With the intention of bidding ♠'s next go. If you play weak jump overcalls then this is the way to show a hand that is too strong for a simple overcall.

Hand B: (a) 1♣. It's far too good for 1NT.

(b) 3NT. This is the rebid with a good hand with a good long minor like this.

Hand C: 2♥. Always transfer, regardless of strength. And this is even more important with weak hands; a transfer does not promise any points.

Hand D: 2♥. Pass is possible but partner's simple rebid is not forcing and you have a decent hand and may make game opposite a 15 or 16 count, so you should give him another chance. 2NT by you would be an overbid as it (as usual by responder) shows 11-12 points. That just leaves giving 'false' preference back to the first bid suit.

Sequence W: It's a help-suit game try, asking partner to bid game if he can help in the ♦ suit.

Sequence X: Penalties. East did not double the 1♥ bid as that would have been a negative double. He was prepared to defend 1♥ doubled and must now be extremely happy with the turn of events. Note that this double cannot be asking opener to bid something – if responder had values elsewhere then he could have found a bid over 1♥.

Sequence Y: This one is up to partnership agreement. Traditionally it is forcing, showing 4♥'s and 5+♣'s. However, if you play 4-way transfers it is better to transfer to the minor and then bid 3♥ with that type of hand. So if you play 4-way transfers the sequence is free and it's best used as a form of Minor Suit Stayman – known as SARS (Shape Asking Relays after Stayman). It's full described in the NT bidding book on our web site.

## Editorial

**Count your cards** (face down). There was *yet another* case on Wednesday when a hand was played out with one player holding 14 cards and another just 12. This really is getting beyond a joke and is wasting everybody's time. I have now updated the club rules – the offending partie(s) will automatically receive a zero for the board. If there is a non-offending party then they will receive their average +. I will give them more than their average for the day as they would presumably have got a good score against opponents who cannot even count their cards? If, say, North and East have 12/14 resp. and play starts then *everybody* will receive zero. Perhaps after a few zeros people will learn to count their cards?

**Don't open 1NT way out of range.** Most players play the strong 1NT opening, so 15-17 points. Now I try to 'protect' 'beginners' from Chuck, but I can only do so much and I finally had to side with Chuck on this one. If anyone opens 1NT with 20+ points then I will caution them. And if they do it again I'll warn them. If they *keep on* doing it then they will simply be awarded a zero score every time and risk a suspension from the club. People come to the club to play bridge and repeated blatant disregard of the rules is not playing bridge.

Making a bid which is 4 points outside the stated range is a psyche and is not allowed in this club. And if a player in a regular partnership does it repeatedly it is defined as 'cheating'. Chuck got a warning/suspension a couple of years back for psyching twice, he has never done so since. It's only fair that I treat others in the same way. Agreed?