

Last week's winners: Monday 15/6/03

Friday 19/6/03

1<sup>st</sup> Garry/John 62 %  
2<sup>nd</sup> Hans/Clive 57%

1<sup>st</sup> Garry/John 57 VPs  
2<sup>nd</sup> Hans/Jan (Nor) 55 VPs

Well done Garry/John. There has been a little bit of agro recently and I would like to clear up my interpretation of the rules, and what is applicable to our club.

### **Strong or Weak NT?**

ACBL rules are quite clear here – if you do not play 15-17 then partner must announce the range. However, Pattaya is not USA and despite what a certain gentleman may say, ACBL rules will not always apply. In our club about 50% play a strong NT and 50% a weak NT. As far as I am concerned it is up to everybody to establish the NT range of their opponents. If you don't know, then you can always ask during or after the auction. The best solution, of course, is to fill out a convention sheet.

### **Transfers**

I have no idea what the current ruling is. Alert procedures change all the time. I really don't mind if transfers are alerted, announced or if nothing is said. Only a few players at our club do not play transfers and most know who they are. You can always ask if not sure.

### **Questions During the Auction.**

Suppose your partnership has been silent and the opponents are bidding on merrily towards slam. One opponent bids 4NT (Blackwood) and you enquire if they play key card or not. Asker thought they played normal and responder thought RKCB. So responder says that the bid is RKCB. Asker wakes up and realises that there are two aces missing and does not bid the slam that he would have done otherwise. Unethical? Sure. But nobody can prove it.

So what's the solution? Simple. Do not ask questions during the auction unless the answers are going to affect your bid. We have bidding boxes and the bidding sequence is laid out on the table. Ask questions about the bidding after it has finished. If you are on lead then you ask before leading. If your partner is on lead, then request that the lead be made face down (as it always should be) and then ask questions. This latter rule is so that a player's question does not affect his partner's lead.

Incidentally, you should only ask a question during the auction if it is your turn to bid.

### **Using the Bidding Boxes**

Do not wrap up your bidding cards directly after you have made what you think is your last bid. Others get a turn and are entitled to see all of your previous bids. When the bidding is over – after 3 passes, then the bidding cards should actually remain on the table until after the opening lead has been made (face down, of course) and leader's partner has either asked questions or said 'no questions or OK'. Bidding boxes really do make life easier, especially if used correctly.

## Alerts and Explanations

Most players know which bids need alerting. As an example, you play Cappelletti defence to opponents 1NT opener. Partner bids over their 1NT and you alert; but *do not start explaining unless an opponent asks*.

## The Prepared ♣

This is one that really gets Chuck going. It is quite common in Europe that a 4432 hand that cannot open 1NT opens 1♣, although it is a doubleton. In USA you must alert a 1♣ opening that may be less than 3 cards. In England you must alert a 1♣ or 1♦ opening if it may be less than 4 cards. In Europe there is no need to alert anything, 1♣ is frequently short. In Pattaya anything goes as far as I am concerned.

I really don't care what America says and I don't think that Chuck should call people cheats simply because they do not alert bids that the American authorities say should be alerted. For us, it's up to you to ask if your opponent's 1♣ opening may be short.

## 'Conventions' that are not well known

1) Now at least one player (Hans) took exception to my article on 'silly Stayman'.

He said that it was often taught to beginners as they were unable to cope with the concept of a 2♥ bid that may also have 4♠'s. Now I am not a teacher, but if I was teaching maths I would not start by telling students that 1+1=3 and then teach them the correct answer later. Anyway, you can bid whatever you like (within reason) and 'Silly Stayman' is allowed. However, you most definitely need to alert both a 2NT response *and* a 2♥ response. The 2♥ response needs to be alerted as it denies a 4 card ♠ suit which is not standard. Seems a bit silly to me, a player plays 'silly Stayman' because he does not understand the 2♥ response but then he has to alert and explain if asked.

2) If your 2♣ Stayman bid does not guarantee a 4 card major (perhaps because you play 4 way transfers) than I feel that it should be alerted. The rules keep changing here but it makes common sense to me.

3) The 1NT overcall. I really do not like having to repeat myself too many times. As mentioned in news-sheets 4, 18, 21, 27, .... - a 1NT overcall is always 15-18 points in the direct seat. *This applies even if you play a weak opening 1NT*. If you play a 1NT overcall of 12-14 points (as Don/Sid appear to do) then you may, but it *must* be alerted. Probably best to wave a flag saying 'please double me'. 12-14 is most certainly not a recognised range for a 1NT *overcall* in the direct seat. Don got away with this twice last week. It is not allowed (if not alerted). Any future infractions will most definitely receive an adjusted (unfavourable) score.

## Hesitation

Directors are called more for conflicts over hesitation during the bidding than for any other reason. You are, of course, allowed to think. But the fact that you are thinking passes unauthorised information to your partner (that you have something to think about!). Often the implication is that you have some points or are perhaps considering raising partner. If there is a pass after a long pause then the partner of the hesitator should not bid unless he has a clear-cut bid. A few examples: -

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Your RHO opens 1NT. You are playing Cappelletti (or multi Landy) where a 2♥ overcall promises ♥'s and a minor. You elect to overcall 2♥. LHO bids 2♠, passed round to you. What do you do? With hand A you have told your story. Pass is clear. Hand B is not so obvious and many people (including
♠ 63	♠ 7	♠ 7	me) would try 3♦. Hand C is a clearcut 3♥ bid (it should probably not have bid 2♥ first
♥ AQ986	♥ AJ1086	♥ KQJ10876	time, but that is beside the point). So, a clear pass, a questionable bid and an obvious bid.
♦ KJ63	♦ KQJ98	♦ A2	But what if partner had hesitated after the 2♠ bid? Obviously he was thinking about bidding something
♣ J5	♣ 85	♣ J74	and so 3♦ on hand A may well be a good bet. You cannot. Partner's pause must not be considered and

you *must* pass. And hand B? A debatable decision without partner's hesitation. After the hesitation you *cannot* bid on hands like this even though you would have without the hesitation. And Hand C? Partner's hesitation does not affect you here. You certainly will not be encouraged to know if he was thinking of asking for your minor. It's very unlikely that he was going to raise ♥'s. He may even have been thinking about doubling 2♠ (for penalties). A 3♥ bid is quite in order here after hesitation.

Hans, Paul and Chuck cry out in unison: - 'But partner's hesitation has indicated that he has some points!' Yes, but you know that anyway. RHO has 15-17. LHO's bid is weak, probably 3-7. You have 11. On average that leaves 8 points for partner. His hesitation does not affect your knowledge that he has some points. Hans and Chuck argue that this is true, but that many players at the club could not work that out. I like to believe that they can. The bottom line: -

Partner's hesitation does *not* bar you from bidding. But it does bar you from making bids that are not *absolutely* clear-cut.

The best solution? Try not to hesitate and then pass. It saves a lot of problems if you elect to bid after a long pause. Even if it's not a very good bid, it may well be better than the debates ensuing from long pauses followed by a pass. And it's less hassle for the director!

## **Claiming**

Claiming the contract is to be encouraged as it usually saves time. Claims are usually made by declarer, but please face your cards and allow opponents time to examine both your hand and their partner's and the validity of your stated line of play. Simply claiming the remainder, flashing the hand and returning it to the wallet (as I have witnessed recently) is unacceptable.

## **Cue Bidding Opponent's Suit**

Again I have no idea what the current rules are. When one cue bids the opponent's suit it is rarely natural. As far as I am concerned it need not be alerted, it's up to opponents to ask if they wish.

OK, that's it on etiquette and rules for now. Please try to be polite and well-behaved. I have had to eject a few people from the club before and I will do so again if necessary. We all know Hans as an easygoing guy, and if somebody ruffles his feathers then I know that something is very wrong. In the years that I have known him, I have never heard Hans raise his voice (except just this one time recently). I trust Hans explicitly (except in some matters of the bidding! – we seem to have a totally different style). It would be stupid to really upset me at the club (you will get kicked out) and if you manage to upset Hans then I can only assume that your behaviour has been very bad – so be careful. If there is any doubt then I will always take Hans' side. So, unless you know that your behaviour is beyond reproach (so OK for the vast majority of club members), be especially careful at Hans' and my table.

Enough of the rules for now, let's have a few hands: -

## The Jump Shift (Jump Response in English).

You open 1♣ (or 1♦) and partner replies 2♠, what type of hand does partner have?

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Hand D
♠ KQ9842	♠ Q9764	♠ AKQ873	♠ Q98642
♥ 85	♥ KJ8	♥ A8	♥ 85
♦ J5	♦ KQ6	♦ J63	♦ 653
♣ J92	♣ Q5	♣ Q5	♣ 105

Four totally different hand types, so something to discuss with your partner. But you will get a few tips from me: -

Hand A would have opened a weak 2♠, but after partner has opened the bidding there is no need to pre-empt. A 1♠ response is fine on this hand.

Hand B has game forcing values, so jump to 2♠? Why? Your ♠ suit is not so great that you can virtually insist on it being trumps. Since some exploratory work (to find the best strain) is necessary, then reply just 1♠ (but make sure that you find a forcing bid next turn).

Hand C Now this is more like it! In traditional Acol/Standard American, the jump shift shows a game forcing hand and a good suit (strongly suggesting the trump suit with little support from partner – especially if the suit is a major, NT may be preferable with a minor suit). This scheme certainly has its merits and is probably the most popular use of the jump shift.

Hand D A load of garbage with a 6 card major suit. A hand that is too weak to respond 1♠! This is a popular bid nowadays, 2-5 points and a 6 card *major*. Pre-emptive. This is my preferred style, but then I often get dealt garbage hands and get fed up with passing all the time.

So, up to you. Hand type C or D? If you opt for the popular strong Hand C type approach, then the hand should be 14++ points with a *very* good suit. A suit such as KQ975 is not good enough.

## Respond to Partner's opening with 6+ points

Hand E East hand 12 from Friday

♠ Q96 Partner opens 1♥, what is your reply? Too weak for 2♣ and no support for  
♥ A partner, so this hand passed. Wrong. You cannot pass with 7 points. The  
♦ 1083 only sensible bid is 1NT. Not an ideal shape, but often over major suit  
♣ J108753 openings you have no room for a descriptive bid. This is especially true if  
you play a strong NT system where a 2-level bid promises 11+ points  
(playing a weak NT then a change of suit at the two level is just 8+). So playing a weak NT, this hand is  
nearly worth 2♣, whereas it is nowhere near when playing a strong NT. If you had initially passed then you  
bid 2♣ on this hand whatever system you play as the bid is then non-forcing.