

Last week's winners: Monday 22/9/03

Friday 26/9/03

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-----|-----------------|-------------|-----|
| 1 st | Clive/Ken | 61% | 1 st | Clive/Jim | 68% |
| 2 nd | Kevin/Noreen | 52% | 2 nd | Tomas/Terry | 55% |

Up until now, most of the contents of the news-sheets have been about the bidding. There are various reasons - talking about the play is more complex and takes up more space, also my play is nowhere as good as my bidding. I have, however, covered most topics in the bidding and so it's time to branch out. There are a couple of play hands in this edition.

Bidding Quiz

Hand A Hand B With Hand A everybody is vulnerable and you dealt.
Do you open? And if so, with what?

| | |
|------------|-----------|
| ♠ KQ95 | ♠ K108732 |
| ♥ 85 | ♥ 10 |
| ♦ - | ♦ KJ |
| ♣ Q1097632 | ♣ A54 |

With Hand B everybody is vulnerable and you dealt.
What do you open?

Hand C Hand D With hand C partner opens a strong NT, you bid 2♣
and get a 2♦ reply. Now what? Do you go slamming?

| | |
|--------|---------|
| ♠ K976 | ♠ K9 |
| ♥ KQ43 | ♥ J |
| ♦ AK | ♦ KJ982 |
| ♣ J94 | ♣ AQJ96 |

With hand D partner opens 1♣, RHO overcalls 1♠ and you bid 2♦. Partner replies 2♥, do you go slamming?

Hand E Hand F You open Hand E with 1♦ and partner replies 1♥. What
is your rebid?

| | |
|---------|--------|
| ♠ AJ8 | ♠ J10 |
| ♥ A | ♥ Q72 |
| ♦ 98532 | ♦ A532 |
| ♣ AK52 | ♣ AKQ6 |

With Hand F RHO opens a strong NT and you double.
LHO passes and your partner bids 2♣. This is passed round
to LHO who bids 2NT, passed to you. What do you do?

At King Arthur's Court

Sir Lancelot was staying in a hamlet 100 miles distant from Camelot. He was due back today and King Arthur decided to meet with him on the way. They both left at the same time; the king and his court travelled at 20 mph whilst Sir Lancelot and his steed travelled at 30 mph. King Arthur sent his hunting hawk, Whirlwind, ahead and the hawk flew to Lancelot and back to the king repeatedly until the two friends met. Whirlwind flew at 40 mph and when Arthur and Lancelot met the king noted that the hawk looked rather tired, how many miles had Whirlwind flown?

A Couple of Slams

A slam was bid and made successfully on just two occasions on Monday. As it happens, both times by me – not bad as I only played 18 of the 27 boards. Credit has to go to my bidding partners, however. So let's have a look: -

A Minor Suit Fit?

Board 10 from Monday 22nd

| North (D) | South (A) | West | North | East | South |
|-----------|-----------|------|---------|------|-------------|
| ♠ K9 | ♠ Q1064 | - | - | pass | 1♣ (1) |
| ♥ J | ♥ A1086 | 1♠ | 2♦ (2) | pass | 2♥ (3) |
| ♦ KJ982 | ♦ A104 | pass | 4NT (4) | pass | 5♥ (2 aces) |
| ♣ AQJ96 | ♣ K7 | pass | 6♣ | pass | pass |

- (1) I bid this one with Rosemary, let's have a look at the bidding. Playing a strong NT and 5 card majors you have to open this hand with one of a minor. Playing better minor you open 1♦, but I like the 1♦ opening to guarantee 4 cards and prefer 1♣ with this particular 4432 hand. So does Rosemary.
- (2) Obviously I was interested in slam and had to find a forcing bid. 2♣ and 3♣ are not forcing; you could leap straight into Blackwood but I prefer 2♦ and wait for partner's rebid.
- (3) This is normally a reverse, showing 16+ points with 5♣'s and 4♥'s. Some people (Chuck with me) do not play this as showing extra values after a two level response but that is not standard. If you play negative doubles then the correct bid with this hand is 2NT, showing a balanced 12-14. This is not denying a ♥ suit as partner has denied ♥'s by not bidding a negative double. If you do not play negative doubles then 2♥ is OK I guess.
- (4) I was not certain if Rosemary was showing extra values or not (are you sure with your partner?); I assumed a ♣ fit and launched into slam mode. 4NT was normal Blackwood.

Whatever the bidding is, I will always be looking for slam with that excellent North hand opposite a 1♣ or 1♦ opener. Playing better minor you get a 1♦ opening and I will bid to 6♦. Opposite a 1♥ or a weak 1NT opening it's not so clear. Anyway a slam is an OK prospect and I don't see how to avoid it after a 1♣ or 1♦ opening. 3NT (3 times) and 4NT were bid at the other tables. Note that a suit (♣ or ♦) slam is OK but 6NT is a poor contract on a ♥ lead.

I was playing this hand against Hans and Kenneth and half way through the hand I commented that I don't often find myself in 5-2 fits at the 6 level. Hans said that it served me right as I deserved to be passed out in 2♦. I subsequently made the contract, but what did Hans mean? Hans maintains that 2♦ is not forcing in this auction. Now there is a variation of negative doubles (negative free bids) where this sequence is not forcing, however it is my no means standard (and needs to be alerted). 2♦ is forcing. Hans disagrees. What's new? I said that everybody in the club (except Hans) would play 2♦ as forcing. Hans said not so. I knew it was unnecessary, but I checked with 3 of our leading players; Clive, Ken and Jim all said that 2♦ was unlimited and 100% forcing. I happen to know that both Chuck and Austin despise negative free bids and play this as forcing. Hans' comment seems strange to me as he says that the news sheet is sometimes rather complicated and I should strive to keep it simple. Agreed, and I am most certainly not going to recommend negative free bids. A new suit by responder is forcing. Simple.

A Good Slam Missed by Nearly Everybody

Board 4 from Monday 22nd

| West (B) | East | West(me) | North | East | South |
|-----------|--------|----------|-------|--------|-------|
| ♠ K108732 | ♠ A96 | 1♠ (1) | pass | 2♦ (2) | pass |
| ♥ 103 | ♥ A942 | 2♠ (3) | pass | 6♠ (4) | pass |
| ♦ KJ | ♦ A987 | pass | pass | | |
| ♣ A54 | ♣ KQ | | | | |

- (1) I bid this one with Jan, let's have a look at the bidding. The opening bid is perhaps a toss-up between 1♠ and a weak 2♠. With decent intermediates in the ♠ suit and honours outside trumps I think that 1♠ is best. The hand complies with the rule of 20 (11 pts plus 9 cards in two suits) and is too good for a weak 2♠ opener.
- (2) When you pick up a hand like this and my partner opens then think of slam. As with the previous hand, you have to find a forcing bid. You cannot bid 2♥ (you need 5♥'s for the bid) and any ♠ bid is non-forcing, a 'waiting' 2♦ is best.
- (3) Obvious. Showing a minimal hand and usually 6♠'s.
- (4) With a hand bristling with controls I am going to slam. There is no point in asking for aces as the ♣A is probably irrelevant. Keep it simple. 6♠.

Partner is minimum, but is it a good slam? Yes, I calculate it at about 70%. And the play after the ♥K lead? Easy if the trumps split; I drew two rounds but they were 3-1 so I had a loser there. But still 50%; finesse the ♦J immediately. If this loses you are down; but it won so ♦K, then off to dummy with a ♣ and pitch the losing ♥ on the ♦A. The board was played 5 times and the other 4 times it was in 4♠, not even an attempt at slam. Why? Maybe West opened a heavyweight 2♠? On the odd occasions that I am dealt a good hand like this East one I will always bid slam opposite a normal opener. The bottom line? Aces are good cards.

When Do You Pre-empt?

| Hand G | Hand H | Hand J | South 7 (A) |
|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| ♠ 5 | ♠ KQ95 | ♠ K95 | ♠ KQ95 |
| ♥ K5 | ♥ 8 | ♥ Q53 | ♥ 85 |
| ♦ 965 | ♦ 5 | ♦ - | ♦ - |
| ♣ QJ107632 | ♣ Q1097632 | ♣ Q1097632 | ♣ Q1097632 |

When you have a weak hand and a 7 card suit it is often a good idea to pre-empt. Hand G is a classic pre-empt and should open 3♣. There are, however, a number of hand types where pre-empting is unadvisable. Hand H should not open 3♣ because it contains a decent 4 card major; partner may have ♠'s in which case a ♠ game may be on your way. Hand J should not pre-empt because of the 3 card major(s) combined with the void. If partner has a major suit then a major suit game may be missed. Hand A should most definitely not pre-empt; with a void **and** a 4 card major you could easily miss game. What happened on Monday? One player opened this hand with 3♣ and a lay-down 4♠ was missed. Do not pre-empt when you have potential playing strength in another (major) suit.

Two(!) Chinese Finesses

Board 12 from Friday 26th

| West (E) | East (C) | West | North | East | South |
|----------|----------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| ♠ AJ8 | ♠ K976 | 1NT (1) | pass | 2♣ (2) | pass |
| ♥ A | ♥ KQ43 | 2♦ (3) | pass | 3NT (4) | pass |
| ♦ 98532 | ♦ AK | pass | pass | | |
| ♣ AK52 | ♣ J94 | | | | |

First of all, the bidding playing a strong NT: -

- (1) Strong, 15-17. What can I say? I would have thought that anybody who has read a few of the news-sheets or is past page 6 of a beginner's book knows not to open 1NT with a singleton. Apparently not. With this hand open 1♦; if partner bids 1♠ then raise to 2♠. If partner bids 1♥ or 1NT then 2♣ is the rebid. Playing a weak NT then you can rebid 1NT rather than 2♣ over a 1♥ response. A 1NT response shows 15-16 points, it is not usually a good idea with a singleton but with a singleton ace in partner's suit and both unbid suits well covered it is acceptable. A 1NT rebid playing a strong NT is 12-14 points and is obviously absurd with 16 points.
- (2) With one or two 4 card majors, bid Stayman.
- (3) No 4 card major, it is a coincidence that this hand has 5♦'s.
- (4) If opener had responded with a 4 card major then slam was worth a try. With no fit a slam is remote. 4NT (quantitative) is a possibility but even opposite a max, 6NT is not a good bet with no long suit or fit. 3NT is best.

And now the play, the contract is cold but at pairs overtricks are important. Declarer won the ♥ lead and decided to tackle ♠'s next, how would you play this suit? This declarer played the ♠J towards the dummy (East). North covered with the ♠Q and East won with the ♠K. The ♠9 back picked up the ♠10 in the South hand; the suit split 3-3 and so produced 4 tricks. Good play or just lucky?

Lucky. The correct play is to cash ♠K and finesse the ♠J. A 50% chance of trapping the ♠Q. The 'Chinese' finesse requires both ♠Q and ♠10 in the correct hands and is 25%. Needless to say, North had ♠Qxx and South ♠10xx and so this inferior play succeeded.

Flushed with success, the declarer then led ♣J. This play is even worse and has no real chance of success. The best chance of three tricks from the ♣ suit is to cash the ♣A and then lead towards ♣Jx, this succeeds whenever North has ♣Q or when ♣'s are 3-3.

The bottom line? A Chinese finesse is very occasionally the correct line, but not very often. It is usually best to have the 10 (in hand or dummy) if you lead the J.

Worth a Vulnerable Pre-empt?

Board 7 from Friday 26th

| | |
|------------|--|
| North | Both vulnerable, do you pre-empt? Just 5 points, is it good enough for a vulnerable 3♠ or is 2♠ more prudent? Perhaps pass? I held this hand |
| ♠ AJ109763 | on Friday and had no problem with bidding 3♠. The ♠ suit is excellent |
| ♥ 1085 | and the garbage outside makes it an excellent pre-empt. What happened? |
| ♦ 7 | Opponents have 12 tricks in ♦'s but the pre-empt meant that just 5♦ |
| ♣ 76 | was reached. I would open 3♠ in 1 st , 2 nd or 3 rd seat, any vulnerability. |

Is It Forcing? – Reverses, Jump responses and rebids etc

I have been asked to clarify this area, which you need to be clear about with your partner. Lets have a look at some common sequences, there is no intervention: -

Opener bids a new suit: -

Non-jump bids are non forcing
 Jump bids are forcing
 A reverse is strong, some (most) say forcing
 A reverse after a 2 level response is game forcing
 A new suit at the three level is game forcing

Examples: -

1♣ - 1♥ - 1♠ or 1♥ - 1♠ - 2♣
 1♣ - 1♥ - 2♠ or 1♥ - 1♠ - 3♣
 1♣ - 1♥ - 2♦
 1♥ - 2♦ - 2♠
 1♥ - 2♦ - 3♣

Opener repeats his suit: -

Non-jump rebids are weakish
 Jump rebids are stronger but non forcing

1♦ - 1♠ - 2♦
 1♦ - 1♠ - 3♦

Opener supports partner: -

Non-jump support is weakish (about 12-14)
 Jump support is invitational (about 15-17)
 Jumping to 4♥/♠ shows 4 card support & 18-19 pts

1♣ - 1♠ - 2♠
 1♣ - 1♠ - 3♠
 1♦ - 1♠ - 4♠ or 1♦ - 1♥ - 4♥

Responder's Bids: -

A jump shift shows a good suit and is game forcing
 A repeated suit is weakish ...
 ... but after opener repeats it is mildly encouraging
 ... and after a jump by opener it's forcing
 A repeated suit jump is forcing
 A reverse by responder is forcing
 Any new suit is not strictly forcing (it's rarely passed)..
 ... but a jump is forcing
 ... and a new suit at the 3 level is forcing
 Minimal support for opener is weak (6-9)
 Jump support is invitational (+- 11)
 Jump to game on the 2nd round is strong...
 ... immediate jumps to game are weaker

1♦ - 2♥
 1♦ - 1♥ - 2♣ - 2♥
 1♦ - 1♥ - 2♦ - 2♥
 1♦ - 1♥ - 3♦ - 3♥
 1♦ - 1♥ - 2♣ - 3♥
 1♦ - 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♠
 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♦ - 2♥
 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♦ - 3♥
 1♥ - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♣
 1♥ - 1♠ - 2♦ - 2♥ or 1♥ - 2♥
 1♥ - 1♠ - 2♦ - 3♥ or 1♥ - 3♥
 1♥ - 1♠ - 2♦ - 4♥
 1♥ - 4♥

Bid Your Hand Just Once

| South (F) | West | North | East | South |
|-----------|------|-------|------|-------|
| ♠ J10 | - | pass | 1NT | dbl |
| ♥ Q72 | pass | 2♣ | pass | pass |
| ♦ A532 | 2NT | pass | pass | ? (1) |
| ♣ AKQ6 | | | | |

Board 17 from Friday 26th

What should South bid at (1)?

He should pass. Partner has shown a weak hand and West has promised invitational values.

An Endplay

Board 8 from Friday 26th

| | | | | | |
|---------|----------|------|----------|---------|--------|
| North | South | West | North | East | South |
| ♠ AK107 | ♠ QJ5432 | - | 1NT (1) | dbl (2) | 2♥ (3) |
| ♥ J7 | ♥ KQ10 | pass | 2♠ (4) | pass | 3♠ (5) |
| ♦ J63 | ♦ 10 | pass | pass (6) | pass | |
| ♣ AQ83 | ♣ 1052 | | | | |

First of all, the bidding, playing a strong NT: -

- (1) Strong, 15-17.
- (2) 15+ points
- (3) You have to decide with your partner whether transfers are still on after a double. Playing natural or transfers still on are both acceptable methods.
- (4) North was not sure, so bid 2♠.
- (5) invitational with 6 ♠'s.
- (6) With 4 good trumps, North should possibly bid game. However, he knows that there are 15 points sitting over him and he was not quite sure about the transfer!

Now onto the play. It is pairs and picking up an overtrick is important. East cashed the ♦A and the ♥A and continued with a ♥. You have lost two tricks, how do you avoid losing two ♣'s? The ♣ finesse is bound to fail and you lack the ♣9 for a finesse of the ♣J even if you thought that that was a good play. The answer is to delay playing ♣'s. Draw trumps (they split 2-1), ruff two ♦'s in dummy and throw a losing ♣ on a ♥. That leaves this position, with the lead in dummy (South): -

| | | |
|-------|--------|---|
| North | South | This is called stripping the hand. You have eliminated the red suits and now is the time to tackle ♣'s. Lead the ♣10 from dummy and run it round to East. East can win with his ♣J but he has to concede the last 4 tricks to you. He either leads into your ♣AQ or concedes a ruff and discard. If West had the ♣J and covered the ♣10 then you play ♣Q and East wins his ♣K. He then has similar losing options and will not make his ♣9. |
| ♠ 107 | ♠ QJ | |
| ♥ - | ♥ - | |
| ♦ - | ♦ - | |
| ♣ AQ8 | ♣ 1052 | |

At King Arthur's Court – Solutions

Whirlwind flew 80 miles. The King and Lancelot have a combined speed of 50 mph and so they met after two hours. Whirlwind flew at 40 mph and so covered a distance of 80 miles in the two hours.

Last week's solution: Remember the three coins (one with two heads, one with two tails and one normal). Hogwarts was correct. If one is placed randomly on a table then the odds are 2 in 3 that the reverse is the same as the side showing.

Bidding Quiz Solutions

- Hand A: pass
Hand B: 1♠
Hand C: No. Bid 3NT.
Hand D: Yes. Ask for aces.
Hand E: Rebid 2♣ over 1♥. A 1NT rebid is acceptable if you play a weak NT.
Hand F: Pass. Partner is bust.