

Monday 4/10/2004

Friday 8/10/2004

1<sup>st</sup> Tonni/Bob 64%  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Alex/Jeff 62%

1<sup>st</sup> Alex/Jeff 55.5%  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Sheila/Gerry 55.4%

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

Hand A      Hand B  
 ♠ AK943    ♠ AQ1092  
 ♥ K102     ♥ 98  
 ♦ KQ5      ♦ J9  
 ♣ 54        ♣ KJ65

(a) What do you open with Hand A.  
 (b) Suppose you choose 1♠, then what do you do after partner responds 1NT? This (b) answer is the same playing Standard American or Acol (weak NT).

With Hand B you open 1♠ and partner responds 1NT. What do you do now?

Hand C      Hand D  
 ♠ AJ53      ♠ 75  
 ♥ A765      ♥ J653  
 ♦ AQ7        ♦ J732  
 ♣ 96         ♣ AK3

With Hand C RHO opens 1NT, what do you do?

With Hand D partner opens 1NT so you bid 2♣. Partner replies 2♠, so what do you do?

Hand E      Hand F  
 ♠ 43         ♠ KJ84  
 ♥ KQ6       ♥ A10975  
 ♦ 108743    ♦ A962  
 ♣ A73        ♣ -

With Hand E partner opens 1♠ and so you respond 1NT. Partner then bids 2♣, what do you do?

With Hand F you open 1♥. LHO bids 1♠, partner passes and RHO bid 2NT. What do you do?

Hand G      Hand H  
 ♠ AKQ9      ♠ J10862  
 ♥ A85        ♥ 102  
 ♦ 2            ♦ AK6  
 ♣ 108762    ♣ AKQ

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

What do you open with Hand H?

A number of people at the club seem to be confused about opener's 2NT rebid. I'll explain it with the quiz answers: -

How many points does the 2NT bid in these sequences show?

Sequence J      1♥ - 2♣ - 2NT ?  
 Sequence K      1♥ - 1♠ - 2NT ?  
 Sequence L      1♥ - 1NT - 2NT ?  
 Sequence M      1♥ - 2♥ - 2NT ?

## Way too high? – part 1

Board 26 from Monday 4<sup>th</sup>, both vul.

North (D)	South (A)
♠ 75	♠ AK943
♥ J653	♥ K102
♦ J732	♦ KQ5
♣ AK3	♣ 54

### Table A

West	North	East	South
-	-	pass	1NT (1)
pass	2♣	pass	2♠
pass	3NT (2)	pass	pass
pass			

### Table B

West	North	East	South
-	-	pass	1♠ (1)
pass	1NT	pass	2NT (3)
pass	3NT	pass	pass
pass			

3NT was too high on this deal, lets have a look: -

Table A: So what did you open with Hand A in this week's quiz. A semi-balanced 15 count, so 1NT is certainly acceptable and would be the choice of many. However, my preference would be for 1♠ as the ♠ suit is excellent and the ♣'s are not.

Anyway, this South chose a perfectly respectable 1NT and North then obviously tries Stayman, but what did you bid with Hand D at (2) in this week's quiz?

A 9 count, so obviously 3NT? Maybe, but this is a very poor 9 count – no intermediates, a mis-fit for partner's major, both 4 card suits headed by a miserable jack and all the points in just a 3 card suit. I would not argue with a slightly pessimistic 2NT.

Table B: This South chose 1♠, fine. But what did you rebid at (3) with Hand A in this week's quiz? You should pass. This hand is nowhere near the 17-18 points required for 2NT (whatever system you play). 2♠ is a reasonable alternative but would normally be a 6 card suit.

And what happened? 3 pairs over-bid to 3NT (with one actually making). 2NT was two down at another table and just one pair stopped in the best contract of 1NT making +1.

The bottom lines: -

- The sequence 1x – 1NT – 2NT shows 17-18 points whether you play a strong or weak NT.
- An ill-fitting 24 points will not usually make 3NT. On this deal the tricks made were: 6, 7, 8 (twice) and 9 just once. A 20% success rate if you're in 3NT.

## Way too high – part 2

Board 16(8) from Friday 8<sup>th</sup>

Dealer: ♠ AQ10765  
West ♥ KJ6  
Love all ♦ Q108  
♣ 4

West (F)	North	East	South
1♥	1♠	pass (1)	2NT (2)
3♦ (3)	dbl	3♥	pass
pass	dbl	all pass	

♠ KJ84	N	♠ 9
♥ A10875	W E	♥ 32
♦ A962	S	♦ J4
♣ -		♣ Q10987632
	♠ 32	
	♥ Q94	
	♦ K753	
	♣ AKJ5	

Two West's went overboard on this deal: -

The best bid for East at (1) is a weak 3♣ jump shift – but it is only weak if that is what you have agreed! Since 2♣ is forcing it makes sense to me. Anyway, this pair had not agreed it and so East had to pass, not normally a problem. South's 2NT bid at (2) was natural showing a hand just like he had. Now then, what did you bid at (3) with Hand F in this week's quiz? It's a nice hand but West knows that East has nothing – North has overcalled and South has shown around 12-13 points. All the warning signs are there - West knows that the ♠'s are sitting over him and to venture into the 3 level with just 5-4 shape is asking for trouble. West should pass at (3).

And what happened? West got -800 points worth of trouble. It was similar at another table but declarer managed to scramble 6 tricks and so only went for 500. The other three table played in sensible ♠ part-scores by N-S.

The bottom lines: -

- When your partner has shown nothing and the opponents clearly have the vast majority of the points, you need a *shapely* hand to venture forth at the 3 level.
- A 2NT response to an opening bid is 11-12 pts. But in response to a 1 level overcall you need more, say +- 13, as overcaller does not promise opening values.

### Third Hand plays High

And just a word about the play. In the above deal North obviously led his singleton ♣. West won and led a ♠ which North won with the ♠10. North then needed to lead a ♥ to minimise ♠ ruffs on table. So he led the ♥6, which ♥ should South play?

With no high card in dummy it is automatic – 3<sup>rd</sup> player plays high. There is absolutely no way that playing the ♥9 can gain and it lost a trick for the defence.

The bottom line: -

- 3<sup>rd</sup> hand plays high unless there is a finessable honour in dummy on his right.

## Who should bid?

Board 5 from Monday 4<sup>th</sup>

Dealer:       ♠ K4  
North         ♥ KQ3  
N-S vul       ♦ 10865  
               ♣ AKJ7

West	North	East (C)	South
-	1NT	pass (1)	2♠ (2)
pass	3♣	pass (3)	pass
pass (4)			

♠ 872	N	♠ AJ53
♥ J982	W E	♥ A765
♦ KJ432	S	♦ AQ7
♣ Q		♣ 96
	♠ Q1096	
	♥ 104	
	♦ 9	
	♣ 1086432	

I was asked to comment on this bidding, so here goes: -

(1) First of all, what should East do at (1)? What did you bid with Hand C in this week's quiz? The norm for doubling a 1NT opening is 15+ points but this hand is very marginal. It is nearly flat, has no intermediates and, very important, no good lead if you end up defending 1NT doubled. I prefer pass to double.

(2) A transfer to ♣'s. This pair play 4-way transfers and so this bid is not necessarily weak. It could easily be very strong and it is unlimited.

(3) Having already passed should you say something this go? It is again debatable. This time double would be for take-out and is very reasonable. Pass is perhaps a bit cautious but South is unlimited and you could go for a number if you bid.

(4) But here it's different. West now knows what is going on. South has now shown a weak hand with a long ♣ suit and a take-out double or a 3♦ bid are certainly sensible options. Now you may ask, why should the hand with 7 points bid when the hand with 15 did not?

The answer is that it's all about position at the table. West is in the pass-out (or balancing) seat. Because N-S have subsided in a part-score he knows that partner must have values.

And what happened? 3♣ made +1 for a clear top to N-S. The other results were all over the place but the best E-W score was 3♥ making; nice one David/Kenneth – how did you bid it?

And what would I have done? I think that all of the decisions at (1), (2) and (3) are very borderline and certainly would not argue if you disagree. But I would pass at (1). At this vulnerability I would double at (2). And the vulnerability would again encourage me to bid at (3) and I would double as partner is unlikely to bid ♠'s (with his known values he would have bid already with a 5 card ♠ suit), but 3♦ is equally good at (3).

The bottom lines: -

- You need a decent 15+ points to double a 1NT opening. A good suit to lead (preferably a 5 card suit) is useful. If you don't have a good lead then don't double with a borderline hand.
- Be aware of the vulnerability. Bidding at (2) or (3) above is much safer when non-vul.
- Know about balancing. You generally only need about 6-7 points to bid in the pass-out seat if you know that partner has values. Partner, of course, must realise that you are bidding his points and should not raise (so East would pass a 3♦ bid here).

**28 points enough for slam?**

Board 21 from Monday 4<sup>th</sup>, N-S vul.

West (G)	East (H)
♠ AKQ9	♠ J10862
♥ A85	♥ 102
♦ 2	♦ AK6
♣ 108762	♣ AKQ

Table A

West	North	East	South
-	pass	1NT (1)	pass
2♣	pass	2♠	pass
4♠ (2)	pass	pass	pass

Table B

West	North	East	South
-	pass	1♠ (1)	pass
2♣ (3)	pass	3♠ (4)	pass
4♠	pass	pass	pass

An easy slam missed, who's fault?

Table A: What did you open with Hand H in this week's quiz? 1NT is not ideal but I like it for the reasons that I state week after week – no decent rebid if you open 1♠. Now what should West do at (2)? 13 points opposite partner's 15-17 is not enough for 6NT – but it is probably enough for 6♠ with the known fit. That singleton ♦ may be great, but opposite say ♦KQx it is not. So what is the best way for West to establish if slam is a possibility and inform partner about his singleton ♦? There's only one way – splinter! There are options for splinters after Stayman and it's all in the book that I talked about last week. Anyway, a splinter here and 6♠ is easily found. If you do not play splinters after Stayman (it is not standard) then I would ask for aces at (2) – it's too good to sign off in 4♠.

Table B: This East chose to open 1♠, OK. What did you bid with Hand G at (3) in this week's quiz? West's 2♣ is correct if you don't play splinters. Now East has the rebid problem that I mentioned above. 2♠ is a bit feeble, 3♠ overstates both the length and strength of the ♠ suit, 2NT is 12-14, 3NT is 18-19. There is no good bid (that's why I opened 1NT). Anyway, I guess that 3♠ is as good (or bad) a choice as any. West should of course look for slam.

And what happened? The board was played in 4♠ 6 times and 13 tricks were easy. Only one pair bid 6♠ (good show Alex Jeff) – but then there is no way that Jeff would not bid slam whichever seat he was sitting in!

And how should the hand be bid to 6♠? Assuming you open 1♠ then it could go: -

West	East	There are obviously numerous other routes. I would splinter with 4♦ at (a) but then East has a slight problem as he is interested in 6♠ but does not want to bid Blackwood at (b) because of possibly two ♥ losers off the top (remember that hand last week with ♥AK losers off the top?). So East's best bid at (b) is a 5♣ cue bid, showing the ♣A and slam interest. 5♥ at (c) shows the ♥A and East can bid the slam. However, it costs nothing to cue bid the ♦A at (d) in case West is interested in the grand.
-	1♠	
4♦ (a)	5♣ (b)	
5♥ (c)	6♦ (d)	
6♠	pass	

The bottom lines: - Splinters really work. Splinters after Stayman has found a fit are rather more complicated so it's best to read the chapter in the book I recommended last week.

**If partner doesn't like 1NT, he won't like 2NT** Board 6(14) from Friday 8<sup>th</sup>, love all.

North (B)      South (E)

♠ AQ1092      ♠ 43  
 ♥ 98          ♥ KQ6  
 ♦ J9          ♦ 108743  
 ♣ KJ65        ♣ A73

Table A

West	North	East	South
-	-	pass	pass
pass	1♠	pass	1NT
pass	pass (1)	pass	

Table C

West	North	East	South
-	-	pass	pass
pass	1♠	pass	1NT
pass	2♣ (1)	pass	2♠ (2)
all pass			

Table B

West	North	East	South
-	-	pass	pass
pass	1♠	pass	1NT
pass	2♣ (1)	pass	2NT (2)
all pass			

3 different results here and only one is right, let's have a look: -

Table A: So what did you bid at (1) with Hand B in this week's quiz? I don't like this pass of 1NT...

Table B: After partner's 1NT response you know that it's partscore deal, with these two poor doubletons it must surely be best to play in either 2♠ or 2♣. So you bid 2♣ at (1) which partner will usually either pass or correct to 2♣.

And what did you bid with Hand E at (2) in this week's quiz? Partner's 2♣ bid states that he does not like 1NT and requests that you give preference by either passing 2♣ or bidding 2♠. A 2♠ bid here promises no more than a small doubleton ♠. Even a 5-2 ♠ fit should play better than 1NT. Unfortunately this South chose to ignore North's message that 1NT would not play well and bid 2NT at (2).

Table C: This table got it 100% right. North should bid 2♣ at (1) and South should give preference to the known 5-2 ♠ fit by bidding 2♠ at (2).

And what happened? The good Table C sequence was bid at two tables and they both made 2♠ to share the top score. The poor Table A sequence was bid at two tables and they both went minus one to share a poor score. The silly 2NT contract at Table B went two down and got it's deserved cold zero.

The bottom lines: -

- With a 5 card suit and a lower ranking 4 card suit, it's usually best to remove partner's 1NT response to two of your 4 card suit.
- If partner doesn't like 1NT, then don't bid 2NT!
- In a sequence like 1♠ - 1NT - 2♣ you should pass with 4 card ♣ support or else give preference to 2♠ with a doubleton ♠. The only other option is that you can bid a reasonable 6 suit of your own, you *never* bid 2NT.

## **Bidding Quiz Answers**

- Hand A: (a) Either 1♠ or 1NT are acceptable. I prefer 1♠ because of the good ♠'s and poor ♣'s and the fact that you have no serious rebid problem - after a 2 level response you force to game and after 1NT you .....
- (b) ... pass. You need 17-18 points to invite with 2NT here. Remember, partner may have a little as 6 points. 2♠ is a reasonable alternative.
- Hand B: 2♣. This is a weak bid showing 5 ♠'s and 4 or 5 ♣'s. It tells partner that you do not like NT and he should normally pass or bid 2♠.
- Hand C: Pass. This is a close decision between pass and double (for penalties, 15+ pts). With this flattish hand with no intermediates and no good lead I would pass.
- Hand D: 2NT or 3NT. It's borderline, 9 points should normally go but this is a miserable mis-fitting 9 points and a cautious 2NT would have worked better on the day.
- Hand E: 2♠. Partner has said that he has the black suits and that he does not like 1NT. So heed what he says and let him play in the 5-2 ♠ fit.
- Hand F: Pass. Partner is bust and if you bid you will be doubled and concede a huge penalty.
- Hand G: 4♦. A splinter agreeing ♠'s, showing ♦ shortage and looking for slam. Perfect. If you do not play splinters (why not?) then the hand is too strong for a direct 4♠ and so 2♣ is best. You should not bid a Jacoby 2NT with this type of hand but prefer to splinter (Jacoby is more balanced and asks partner for shortage).
- Hand H: 1NT or 1♠? Either is acceptable but I prefer 1NT for the usual reason – if you open 1♠ the you have no good rebid. Suppose you open 1♠ and partner bids 2♣, what do you do? 2NT is 12-14, 3NT is 18-19, 2♠ shows a weakish hand with 6 ♠'s and 3♠ shows this sort of strength but with much better/longer ♠'s.

## **Opener's 2NT rebid**

Playing Standard American an opening 1NT is 15-17, so a NT rebid is always a different range.

Sequence J: Here 2NT is the cheapest possible rebid in NT, so it's 12-14.

Sequence K: Here 2NT is a jump. 1NT would have been 12-14 so 2NT is 18-19.

Playing Acol (weak NT) it's different. Sequence J is then 15-16 and Sequence K is 17-19.

Sequences L and M are totally different as responder has a weak hand of about 6-9 points and opener does not have to bid (he can pass). Thus the 2NT here is an invitational bid and should be about 17-18 points. This is true if you play Standard American or Acol as it is independent of your opening 1NT range.