

Last week's winners: Monday N-S 1st Dave/Norman 66% E-W 1st Hans/Chuck 60%
 Friday 1st Chuck/Terry 72% 2nd Tomas/Per 63%

It's peak season again, 9 tables on Monday and 7½ on Friday. I had the undoubted pleasure of partnering Chuck on Friday, so some interesting bidding material this week.

Before we start on the Bridge, some current affairs. All of the 'do-gooders' in the world seem to be upset about the plight of the poor terrorists held captive in Cuba. If they are unhappy with American justice then it's simple – ship them back to Afghanistan for a quick trial and sentence there. And I don't see that the fact that a few are British, US or Australian nationals or whatever is at all relevant. Their crimes were committed in Afghanistan – let them face justice there from the people they suppressed and terrorised.

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

Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A partner opens 1 ♠, do you respond?
♠ 983	♠ AJ10983	
♥ K32	♥ AK52	With Hand B RHO opens 1 ♦. Do you double or bid
♦ Q1092	♦ 73	1 ♠? Suppose you choose to double, LHO bids 2 ♣,
♣ 654	♣ 8	partner bids 2 ♥ and RHO bids 3 ♣. What now?
Hand C	Hand D	
♠ KQ76	♠ A53	What do you open with Hand C?
♥ A87	♥ A962	
♦ A73	♦ AKQ	What do you open with Hand D?
♣ Q76	♣ J73	
Hand E	Hand F	With Hand E you open 1 ♣, LHO overcalls 2 ♠ and
♠ A2	♠ K5	this is passed round to you. You play Negative doubles,
♥ AK72	♥ 10954	RHO was unsure if the bid was intermediate or weak.
♦ Q86	♦ 96	What do you do?
♣ 10875	♣ Q7543	With Hand F partner opens 1 ♦, do you respond?
Hand G	Hand H	What do you open with Hand G? Suppose that you open 1 ♦ and
♠ A92	♠ KJ92	partner bids 1 ♠, what is your bid now?
♥ KJ9	♥ K2	With Hand H partner opens 1 ♥ and you bid 1 ♠.
♦ AQ1073	♦ K98	(a) partner rebids 2 ♦, what would you bid?
♣ A8	♣ K1082	(b) partner rebids 2 ♠, what would you bid?
Hand J	Hand K	With Hand J RHO opens 1NT (15-17). What's your bid?
♠ AQ94	♠ A1043	With Hand K partner opens 1 ♥ and you bid 1 ♠.
♥ K543	♥ A6	(a) partner rebids 2 ♦, what would you bid?
♦ AQ	♦ 6542	(b) partner rebids 3 ♦, what would you bid?
♣ 972	♣ 653	

Is it Strong, Weak, Forcing or whatever?

What type of hand does the last bid in these sequences show? No intervention.

- Sequence L: 1♦ - 1♠ - 2NT - 3♦?
- Sequence M: 1♦ - 1♠ - 2NT - 3♦ - 3♠? and how many ♠'s?
- Sequence N: 1♦ - 1♠ - 2NT - 3♠? and how many ♠'s?
- Sequence P: 1♦ - 1♠ - 3♦? and how many ♦'s?
- Sequence Q: 1♦ - 1♠ - 3♠? and how many ♠'s?

It looks like a lot of players need to brush up/agree what's what after a 2NT or jump rebid. *Five* pairs missed an *easy* game with 26 points and *two* fits! (see next page).

Double 1NT?

Board 1 from Monday 5th, love all

The board was played 9 times but this auction occurred only twice. I checked, and eight of the nine N-S pairs played a strong NT, so why were more auctions not the same? North had a solid balanced 16 count, an obvious 1NT opener.

West	East (J)	West	North	East	South
♠ 1083	♠ AQ94	-	1NT	dbl	pass
♥ Q872	♥ K543	pass	pass		
♦ 653	♦ AQ				
♣ KQ6	♣ 972				

I would double 1NT with the East hand, I guess that 6 players did not? And if partner does double 1NT

then West should certainly pass – it is not for take-out unless you play DONT. And one interesting point that I noticed – Jeff and Alex are the only players that I know who play DONT and yet they were one of the two pairs who defended 1NT doubled! Did somebody forget the system? Or have they realized the wisdom of what I said about DONT and changed to Multi Landy? They scored a top on the board (1NT dbl -2). I suppose that if you play Landy or some defence that has a bid to shows both majors then that's what some would choose (but I prefer 9 cards in the majors); I would not make such a bid with 15+ points. Double!

A Solid Overcall!

Board 5 from Friday 19th Dec, N-S vul

East	West	North	East	South
♠ AKQJ6				
♥ AKQ53	-	-	-	pass
♦ KQ	pass	1♦	1♠ (1)	pass
♣ 3	pass	pass		

Two (!) pairs overcalled just 1♠ with this East hand on Friday 19th and played there. So what is the correct bid? If you do not play Michaels Cue Bids then 2♦ is the bid at (1). This is traditionally a very strong bid (too strong for a double). If you play Michaels, then you have to double (unless you play that Michaels may be weak or strong); I have frequently said that a double should be playable in the other three suits – but that is not necessary if the hand is strong enough to bid again after partner's response. And what should you do after you double(or bid 2♦) and partner bids his inevitable ♣ suit? Bid ♦'s, partner will hopefully get the message and bid his best major. You then raise him to game. What happened? 1♠ made the obvious +4. 4♥ was bid and made (+1) twice.

What's Your rebid?

Board 20 from Monday 5th, E-W vul.

West	East (G)	West	East
♠ K8754	♠ A92	pass	1♦
♥ Q64	♥ KJ9	1♠	? (1)
♦ K952	♦ AQ1073		
♣ 5	♣ A8		

The East hand is far too strong for a 1NT opener and so 1♦ is correct, but what do you rebid at (1)? After partner responds you want to go to game. Neither 3♦ nor 3♠ are forcing (anyway, 3♠ promises 4 card ♠ support and 3♦ promises 6 ♦'s – the hand is far too good for either in any case). A semi-balanced 18 count, so 2NT? Quite acceptable, but is there a forcing bid? (it's a nice 18 count with good ♠'s for partner and I don't want to play in 2NT). An equally good alternative (that I prefer) is 2♥ provided that you play this reverse as forcing. Normally I hate to 'lie' in a major, but it's OK here. If partner supports ♥'s then he must have 5 ♠'s! 4♠ is then easily reached. Also, the 2♥ bid guarantees 5 ♦'s (a ♦ slam may be on).

And what happened? 3NT was reached (and went down) twice, deservedly so. If East bids 2NT then it's best to play any bid by West as forcing except a return to his suit (3♠). West's best bid is 3♦, then East should bid 3♠ (forcing, showing 3 ♠'s) and West bids 4♠. 3♦ was reached twice, 3♠ once and 5♦ (making) once. And the top score was 4♠ (+1) which was bid three times. This best contract was bid by two visiting pairs and Alex/Jeff. One distinguished home pair languished in 3♦. It does not matter how well you play the cards, making 12 tricks in 3♦ does not score well. Maybe they need to brush up on what's forcing? One could do worse than referring to news-sheet 56. Always willing to help, my suggested bidding sequence(s) are: -

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

A Strong 2♥ opener? - 1

Board 23 from Monday 5th, both vul

Dealer:	♠ KJ863		
South	♥ 7542		
both vul	♦ -		
	♣ 10942		
♠ A954	N	♠ Q107	
♥ Q3	W E	♥ 8	
♦ 10985	S	♦ J7642	
♣ AQJ		♣ K865	
	♠ 2		
	♥ AKJ1096		
	♦ AKQ3		
	♣ 73		

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♥
dbl	3♥	pass	4♥
pass	pass	pass	

This was the auction I witnessed at one table, quite reasonable. This N-S pair, however, play Benjamin twos and I would certainly open the south hand with 2♣. Anyway 4♥ was easily reached at 8 tables. But why have I included the E-W hands? I have no idea what

happened, but one distinguished home team pair bid 4♠ at the 9th table on the E-W cards – vulnerable! Minus 1100 scored zero matchpoints. Did East bid too high (3♠) after North's 3♥? Check on the Law (of Total Tricks) and tell me about it sometime, guys.

A Strong 2♥ opener? - 2Board 12 from Monday 5th, N-S vul.

North	South	North	South
♠ K93	♠ A	pass	1♥ (1)
♥ 5	♥ AKQ7432	2♦	3♥ (2)
♦ A109743	♦ 62	pass (3)	
♣ J92	♣ A76		

This was the bidding at one table on Monday, one other pair even managed to stop in 2♥! 4♥ was bid at the other 7 tables, making +1 or +2. So how should the bidding go? The South hand has 9 playing tricks; some people believe that when one trick short of game in your own hand, open your strongest bid (2♣, or 2♦ playing Benjamin). I don't like that, I prefer more high card strength for 2♣/♦ (partner may go slamming). The hand is also too strong for a 4♥ opening. Playing Benjamin I would open 2♣ and playing strong twos then 2♥. Playing Standard American I prefer 1♥ to 2♣. But then what do you rebid at (2)? After partner has responded you have game values, you must bid game or make a forcing bid. I would bid 4♥, the ♥ suit is self-sufficient. Actually, after a 2-level response, 3♥ is forcing; but do you trust your partner?

A Strong 2♥ opener? - 3Board 17 from Monday 5th, love all.

North (K)	South	North	South
♠ A1043	♠ -	pass	1♥ (1)
♥ A6	♥ KQ9852	1♠	3♦ (2)
♦ 6542	♦ AQ987	pass	
♣ 653	♣ A8		

This was the bidding at more than one table on Monday. In fact the hand was played in a partscore 8 times! unbelievable? With the ♦K inside doubleton and ♥'s 3-2, 13 tricks were there for the taking. So how should the bidding go to reach just 4♥? Again, the opening bid? Way short of a strong 2♣/♦, and I would not even open a strong 2♥. It's not good enough and two-suiters are usually best bidden slowly, 1♥ is fine. With a ♠ void, this will never be passed out. And at (2)? 3♦ is OK, but this bid is *game* forcing – North cannot pass! Even if South had made a more conservative 2♦ rebid at (2) this North hand should give false preference to 2♥ which South would raise to 4♥. 8 tables out of 9 missing game must be some sort of record when a grand slam is cold?

No other sensible auction?Board 3 from Monday 5th, E-W vul.

West	East (H)	West	East
♠ 1087	♠ KJ92	1♥	1♠
♥ AQJ73	♥ K2	2♦ (1)	3NT
♦ AQ74	♦ K98	pass	
♣ 4	♣ K1082		

This was the bidding at 5 tables on Monday. I can see no other sensible auction, whatever system you play? Three pairs (including our distinguished home pair) managed to play in silly ♠ contracts, tell me about it sometime. Maybe West chose 2♠ at (1)?

It would not be my choice but I guess that it's reasonable? East, however, should then bid 3NT anyway because West may have just 3 ♠'s. 4♠ got what it deserved – minus 200.

Game with 20 points?Board 1 from Friday 9th, love all.

West	East (B) (Chuck)	West	North (me)	East	South
♠ K54	♠ AJ10983				
♥ Q763	♥ AK52	-	1♦	dbl (1)	2♣
♦ K108	♦ 73	2♥ (2)	3♣	4♥ (3)	pass
♣ 964	♣ 8	pass	pass		

What shall we say about the bidding? First of all, should East double or overcall 1♠ at (1)? This is probably a matter of partnership style. But if you are partnering Chuck it's best to let him have his fair share of being declarer (I had already been declarer in two slams when this hand came up), so I chose double. Normally a double should promise all three unbid suits, but I have discussed this with Chuck before when I did not double with a similar hand and he said that it's fine on hands like this with two good majors, one of which is very good. I always go along with my partner's style, even if I don't totally agree.

I think that 4♥ at (3) is fine. You have shortage in both of the opponent's suits, the ♠ suit is excellent (texture) and partner's free bid at (2) promises values (unlike if South had not bid when a 2♥ bid could be zero points). In this particular case, the opposition bidding made it easy to reach the excellent game on minimal values.

And what happened? ♦A was offside but ♠Q was singleton and so 4♥ (or 4♠) rolled home. Game (4♠) was reached at two other tables and the contract was 2♠ (+2) at three tables. It did not matter on this particular deal, but imagine the same West hand with ♦A instead of the ♦K. Then 4♥ would make +2 but 4♠ would make just +1. Always look for good 4-4 fits. Even though you have more ♠'s the 4-4 fit is often best as you get discard(s) on the long ♠ suit.

A Strong 1NT opener?Hand East 12 from Friday 9th

Hand C A balanced 15 points so a 1NT opener?

♠ KQ76	You know me by now. This hand is totally flat with no intermediates.
♥ A87	Treat it like a 14 count and open 1♣ (or a weak NT if that's what you
♦ A73	play). What you do not want is to open a strong NT and hear partner
♣ Q76	raise to 2NT – you may well go down.

Pass partner's opening 1♦?Board 2 from Monday 5th, E-W vul.

West (F)	East	West	East
♠ K5	♠ Q93	-	1♦ (1)
♥ 10954	♥ A876	pass	
♦ 96	♦ AQ52		
♣ Q7543	♣ K2		

This result caught my eye as 1♦ is a silly contract. The pair were playing a strong NT so quite why East opened 1♦ I don't know. Anyway, I would never pass 1♦ with the West hand (although some would). I've been all through that before. 1♦ was minus 1 and 1NT or 2♥ made.

What is that 4♣ bid?

Board 5 from Friday 9th, N-S vul.

West	East	West (Chuck)	East (me)
♠ 94	♠ A	-	1♥
♥ A763	♥ KJ9852	2♦ (1)	3♦ (2)
♦ AK97	♦ J10643	3♥ (3)	4♣ (4)
♣ QJ9	♣ A	4♦ (4)	4♠ (4)
		6♥	pass

I play 2/1 with Chuck and this sequence shows why it is a fine system, especially when slam is in the air – you establish a game force early (at a low level) and can cue bid away or whatever to your heart's content. 2♦ at (1) is game forcing. Jacoby 2NT is another option but I quite like this sequence. 3♦ at (2) agreed ♦'s, but 3♥ at (3) set ♥'s as trumps. Playing Standard American you would have to agree if it's forcing or not – just another reason why I like 2/1, forcing sequences really are clear. 4♣ at (4) was a cue bid (showing 1st round control) as were the 4♦ and 4♠ bids. 6♥ was easily reached.

And what happened? ♦'s behaved so it made +1. Just one other pair reached 6♥ and one reached a decent 6♦. Two played in 4/5♥ but the one pair who reached 5♦ obviously have not read my news-sheets about 5 of a minor not usually scoring much at pairs (it scored a zero here).

What is that 4♣ bid again?

Board 10 from Friday 9th, both vul.

West	East (D)	West (Chuck)	East (me)
♠ Q	♠ A53	-	1NT (1)
♥ KQJ1085	♥ A962	2♦ (2)	3♥ (3)
♦ J9875	♦ AKQ	4♣ (4)	4♦ (5)
♣ K	♣ J73	6♥ (6)	pass

Not such plain sailing this time, but we got there: -

- (1) We play a 15-17 NT but all of you who know me know that I deduct a point for a totally flat hand. Also, the ♦AKQ is not worth 9 points (♦AKQx would be). So 1NT.
- (2) transfer
- (3) A super accept. We play this as 4 trumps and a maximum, the super-accept to 3 of the trump suit denies a weak doubleton in our style.
- (4) oops! Chuck meant this as Gerber (ace ask), I took it as a cue bid.
- (5) Cue bid.
- (6) I guess the aces are irrelevant, so bid the slam anyway? Actually, 4NT here would be the ace ask.

After the hand Chuck agreed to swing along with Frank Sinatra and do it my way: -

- 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4♣ asks for aces (RKCB)
- 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4NT is quantitative
- 1NT - 2♦ - 3♥ - 4♣ is a cue bid (the same for any super-accept)
- 1NT - 2♦ - 3♥ - 4NT asks for aces (RKCB)

Basically, if NT is a possible resting place then 4♣ is the ace ask (RKCB with us). When the suit is agreed then 4NT is RKCB.

Trust Partner?Board 11 from Friday 9th, love all.

West	East (A)	West	North	East (me)	South
♠ 10	♠ Q954	-	-	-	pass
♥ Q93	♥ AK72	pass (1)	1♦	dbl	pass
♦ K1074	♦ -	2NT (2)	pass	3NT (3)	pass
♣ AQ1073	♣ KJ852	pass	pass		

Many people would open the West hand. It conforms to the rule of 20 and has the points in the long suits. Chuck, however, is a very solid opener and with a singleton ♠ you 'know' that the hand will not be passed out so you get another chance later. If you open, you may have a rebid problem. It was all quite straightforward after the initial pass (I prefer Chuck's 2NT to 3♣ at (2) – it's pairs). But what should East bid at (3)? West has denied a major suit and so probably has ♣'s. But he did not bid them! He promised a ♦ stop(s) and knows that you are short in the suit, so put him to the test?!

And what happened? 3NT made +1 for a virtual top. Two pairs were in a reasonable 5♣ and two others in a not so reasonable 4♥ (-1). I won't mention the N-S pair who sacrificed in 5♦ doubled (-1100). Obey the law, 9 combined trumps is not enough to compete at the 5 level when you have less than the balance of the points. Now this 4♥ contract is quite interesting; often a 4-3 fit is quite playable, but not when you have to ruff in the hand with long trumps – you lose control. And the hand is best played by West, not just because Chuck is a good declarer, but the ♦K needs protecting from the opening lead.

Raise Partner's Major?

Board 17 from Friday 9th, love all.

West (A)	East	West (Chuck)	North	East (me)	South
♠ 983	♠ AK764				
♥ K32	♥ AJ9	-	pass	1♠	pass
♦ Q1092	♦ J	1NT (1)	pass	3♣ (2)	pass
♣ 654	♣ KQJ9	4♠ (3)	pass	pass	pass

(1) 5-12 points, any shape, forcing (for one bid).

(2) game forcing

(3) vroom.., fast arrival.

So, would you raise partner's 1♠ opening to 2♠ with that West hand? For most people, certainly not! A 2♠ bid at (1) is normally 6-9(10) points with either 3 or 4 card support. This is quite a large range and you should not confuse the issue by raising on rubbish like this! However, things are different when you play 2/1. There are two different ways to raise partner's major to the two level – either directly (a decent raise) or via the forcing NT (a not-so-decent raise); this hand just about(?) qualifies for the latter.

3♣ at (2) is obviously forcing (we play game forcing) and so 4♠ at (3) shows a weak raise (fast arrival). 3♠ at (3) would be forcing and show a better hand with slam interest.

And what happened? 4♠ made exactly. 1♠ was passed out 3 times and 3NT (making) was reached just once.

Bidding Quiz Answers

Hand A: pass. Unless you play 2/1 when you can bid a pushy forcing 1NT.

Hand B: 1♠ is probably technically correct, but I prefer double. If you double and partner makes a free bid of 2♥, then raise to 4♥.

Hand C: 1♣ (or a weak NT), that's all it's worth. What's more, Chuck agrees.

Hand D: 1NT (15-17), that's all it's worth.

Hand E: Double. If you play negative doubles then it is usually correct to re-open with a double in case partner has a penalty pass.

Hand F: 1♥. If you pass, 1♦ will probably be a miserable contract.

Hand G: Open 1♦. A 2NT rebid is fine, but I slightly prefer 2♥ if you play that as forcing. 3♠ and 3♦ are both incorrect (promising 4♠'s and 6♦'s resp). They are also underbids and are non-forcing.

Hand H: (a) 3NT

(b) 3NT (pard may have just 3♠'s). Partner will correct to 4♠ if he has 4♠'s.

Hand J: Double (penalties).

Hand K: (a) 2♥. Give (false) preference unless you have a real heap and a definite preference for ♦'s when you can pass. This hand is far too good to pass; 3♦ is a reasonable bid but I prefer 2♥, especially at pairs scoring.

(b) 3♥. Partner's 3♦ is *forcing*. I prefer 3♥ to 4♦.

Sequence L: 3♦ is (game) forcing.

Sequence M: So 3♠ is still game forcing, promising 5♠'s.

Sequence N: 3♠ is the only weak bid (except pass) over 2NT here. It promises 5♠'s.

Sequence P: 3♦ is strong, but only invitational. It promises 6♦'s.

Sequence Q: 3♠ is strong, but only invitational. It promises 4♠'s.