

Monday 7/6/04

Friday 11/6/04

1st Terry/Mike(Can) 55%
 2nd Richard/Richard 53%

1st Kenneth/John 69%
 2nd Richard(UK)/Dave 60%

The John who won on Friday is not the John who walked out because of the other John, nor the other John who subsequently also walked out because I said he was wrong to be rude to the 1st John, but another British John who travels by motorbike.

Numbers are coming down now, but 3 full tables on Friday is good for this time of year. Incidentally, 69% and 60% are really excellent scores for just 3 tables and 20 boards, the norm for a win with just 3 tables is around 55%.

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

Hand A Hand B With Hand A partner opens 1♥ and RHO overcalls 1♠, what is your bid?

♠ AK842 ♠ KQ
 ♥ J62 ♥ A9
 ♦ 95 ♦ J1098
 ♣ J42 ♣ QJ983

(a) Do you open with hand B?
 (b) Suppose that you open 1♣, what do you rebid over partner's 1♦?

Hand C Hand D With hand C partner opens 1♣ and RHO overcalls 1NT (15-18), what do you do?

♠ AJ9 ♠ J10975
 ♥ J5 ♥ K8
 ♦ 109642 ♦ AQ74
 ♣ A87 ♣ K5

With Hand D RHO opens 1♥ and you overcall 1♠. LHO bids 1NT and partner bids 2♠. RHO bids 3♦, what do you bid?
 So: 1♥ 1♠ 1NT 2♠
 3♦ ?

Hand E Hand F What do you open with Hand E?

♠ KJ87 ♠ 1073
 ♥ AQJ10 ♥ KQ5
 ♦ A97 ♦ AK54
 ♣ AK ♣ Q54

With Hand F partner opens 1♥, what do you bid?

Hand G Hand H With Hand G partner opens 2NT, do you bid?

♠ Q102 ♠ A43
 ♥ 54 ♥ 10653
 ♦ Q1053 ♦ -
 ♣ 10983 ♣ J98765

With Hand H partner opens 1NT and RHO overcalls 2♠. What do you do?

Hand J Hand K What do you open with Hand J?

♠ J8 ♠ 65
 ♥ A92 ♥ AKJ8
 ♦ AKJ ♦ A985
 ♣ A7432 ♣ A74

What do you open with Hand K?

Obey the Law part 1

Board 18 from Monday 7th

Dealer:	♠ Q63				
East	♥ Q53	West (A)	North	East	South (D)
N-S vul	♦ J10	-	-	1♥	1♠ (1)
	♣ Q10983	1NT (2)	2♠ (3)	3♦ (4)	3♠ (5)
		dbl	all pass		
♠ AK842	N	♠ -			
♥ J62	W E	♥ A10974			
♦ 95	S	♦ K8632			
♣ J42		♣ A76			
	♠ J10975				
	♥ K8				
	♦ AQ74				
	♣ K5				

This went for 500 on a partscore deal, what went wrong?

As is often the case in these competitive situations, one only needs a basic knowledge of The Law. South's overcall at (1) is acceptable, although some may prefer a better suit. And West's bid at (2)? Some may prefer a penalty pass (playing negative doubles) but with three cards in partner's suit most would choose to bid. I would prefer 2♥ but I guess 1NT would be the choice of a few. North has 3 card support and 2♠ at (3) is obviously fine. This puts East in a spot; does 3♦ at (4) show a good hand and is it forcing?

I asked West after the game was over, and he confirmed that he thought that 3♦ was forcing. Anyway, what about South's 3♠ bid at (5)? This hand has enough points, but that is **totally** irrelevant. The only thing that matters in these evenly matched competitive situations is the total number of trumps. South can only be sure of 8 trumps and so he **must** pass. There are also a couple of other compelling reasons why South should pass. E-W are up at the three level thanks to partner's bid; it may well be too high (it was) but what's more East's bid was forcing! Who knows how high E-W would have got? And this South hand is a superb hand for defence.

And what happened? N-S (or rather South) got his deserved total bottom instead of an outright top. At other tables E-W were in *two level* partscores, all going down.

The bottom lines.

- 1- Obey the Law. In this particular case when you have overcalled with a 5 card suit, do **not bid again** if partner simply raises. Unless you have enough points to try for game, your point count is immaterial. The over-riding factor is the number of trumps. If you do happen to have a 9 card fit, it is partner who knows this and he will bid to the three level.
- 2- When you have high honours in your suit(s), think offence; when you have high honours in the opponent's suit(s), think defence.
- 3- If you do not obey The Law and blindly bid on without trump length you will find that partners will not trust you. North's 2♠ bid here should have earned N-S an easy top – North would not support if he knew that partner would up the anti again with only 5 trumps, and it's no longer a partnership game. Some players (not me of course?) get upset when partners convert tops into bottoms with no sound reason.
- 4- Think! If it looks like opponents are in a tangle, don't let them off the hook. There's no need to 'push them up' if the last bid was forcing!

Obey the Law part 2

Board 17 from Friday 11th

Dealer: ♠ KQ63
 North ♥ K103
 Love all ♦ 2
 ♣ AQ986

♠ J10875 N ♠ A2
 ♥ A2 W E ♥ 965
 ♦ J943 S ♦ AK1075
 ♣ J2 ♣ 1054
 ♠ 94
 ♥ QJ874
 ♦ Q86
 ♣ K73

Table A:

West	North	East	South
-	1♣	1♦	1♥
2♦ (1)	2♥ (2)	3♦ (3)	pass (4)
pass (5)	pass		

Table B:

West	North	East	South
-	1♣	1♦	1♥
1♠	2♥ (6)	pass	pass
pass (7)			

Table C:

West	North	East	South
-	1♣	1♦	1♥
1♠	2♣ (8)	pass	pass
pass (9)			

Table A: Apparently West had not sorted his cards and did not realise that he had a ♠ suit, hence the 2♦ bid at (1). 2♥ at (2) is correct unless you play support doubles (I explain this below). And 3♦ at (3)? This is incorrect; West has only promised 3♦'s for his support, This East hand is nothing special and it's points are working equally well in defence. With only 5♦'s East should pass at (3) and then West would bid 3♦ at (5) as he has extra **length**. And South's pass at (4)? He has 5 trumps and should bid 3♥ if there is a combined 9 card ♥ fit – but is there? He does not know, the solution is to play Support Doubles but they are perhaps somewhat advanced. Let's get the basics right first, eh?

Table B: The first 4 bids are obvious, as is 2♥ at (6) if you do not play Support Doubles. All is then well up to (7); West has 4 card support for partner's 5 card ♦ suit and should bid 3♦ (9 combined trumps).

Table C: I guess it's not atrocious, but I don't like 2♣ at (8). When you have 3 card support and a singleton, even a Moysian fit will play very well and I would support ♥'s. West should, of course, bid 2♦ at (9) (and be prepared to go to 3♦ later).

Support Doubles. Perhaps a little complex, but if you are a great believer in The Law (as I am) then they tell you how many combined trumps your side has.

West	North	East	South
-	1♣	1♦	1♥
1♠/2♦	dbl (1)	pass	2♥
3♦ (2)	pass	pass	pass (3)

In this example North has two options at (1). A 2♥ bid promises 4♥'s and a double is a Support Double, promising exactly 3 card support. West should bid 3♦ at (2) (he knows about their combined 9♦'s). South now knows what to do at (3), if North had bid 2♥ at (1) then he can venture to the 3 level. But as he knows that North has just 3 card support then a pass at (3) is best. With a good defensive hand there is no need to go above the level of The Law.

And what happened? 3♦ went just one down for a top to E-W at Table A. 2♣ and 2♥ both made. The bottom lines? Obey the law: -

- I keep on saying it, in these competitive situations points are of secondary importance to the combined number of trumps (so East should not bid 3♦ but West should!).

Pass Out?Board 18 from Friday 11th, love all.

West East (B)

♠ A93	♠ KQ
♥ K83	♥ A9
♦ K764	♦ J1098
♣ 652	♣ QJ983

Table A:

West	North	East	South
-	-	pass	pass
pass	pass		

Table B:

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

Table C:

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

Table A: So did you open with Hand B in this week's quiz? I hope so, apply the rule of 20 and it passes (excuse the pun – you know what I mean) with flying colours (13 pts + 9 for the two longest suits = 22). You can deduct a bit for KQ doubleton but there is adequate compensation with the excellent intermediates. J1098 is more than 1 point. A very clear opener.

Table B: So we decide to open 1♣ and partner bids 1♦, what did you rebid at (1) with Hand B in this week's quiz? A semi-balanced 13 count so 1NT? Reasonable, but I prefer East's choice at Table C.

Table C: This East chose a 2♦ rebid at (1), I agree. It's a known 4-4 (or better) fit and with two doubletons it must be best?

And what happened? 1NT made exactly and 2♦ made +1 for the top score. East's pass at Table A scored them a zero.

The bottom lines?

- If you are in doubt about opening in 1st, 2nd or 3rd seat then apply the rule of 20 (points + length of two longest suits).
- Support with support.

Raise a 2NT opener?Board 2 from Friday 11th, N-S vul, dealer East.

North (G)

South (E)

♠ Q102	♠ KJ87
♥ 54	♥ AQJ10
♦ Q1053	♦ A97
♣ 10983	♣ AK

Table A

North	South
-	2NT (1)
pass	

Table B

North	South
-	2NT (1)
3NT	pass

What did you open with Hand E in this week's quiz? It's worth 2♣ (followed by 2NT) even if you play a 2NT opening as 20-22. And what did you respond with Hand G? 3NT I hope. With three 10's and excellent intermediates this hand is worth far more than 4 points.

And what happened? Two tables bid 3NT. The NT contracts made 9,10 or 11 tricks.

The bottom lines. Add on for intermediates. A 10 is usually worth ½ a point. 1098x is worth more than ½ a point. The modern trend is to play a 2NT opener as 20-21 and 2♣ followed by 2NT as 22-24 (the 20-21 range is more frequent and so should be more precise).

Double and bid again shows a big hand

Board 1 from Friday 11th

Dealer: ♠ J8
North ♥ A92
Love all ♦ AKJ
♣ A7432

♠ 643 N ♠ AK102
♥ KQ63 W E ♥ J754
♦ Q3 S ♦ 10875
♣ Q985 ♣ J
♠ Q975
♥ 108
♦ 9642
♣ K106

Table A

West	North (J)	East	South
-	1♣ (1)	dbl	pass
1♥ (2)	pass	2♥ (3)	pass
3♥ (4)	all pass		

Table B

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

Table A: Some strange stuff here. N-S play a strong NT and quite why North did not open one I don't know. Anyway, this let in East cheaply (nobody in their right mind would overcall a strong 1NT opener with this hand). West has an obvious 1♥ bid at (2) but exactly what East was doing at (3) I don't know. West's 1♥ bid is 0-9 points and an invitational 2♥ at (3) should be about 15-17 points; even with classic shape, 9 points really is silly. Luckily West bid only 3♥ at (4), with this maximum many would bid game – perhaps West knew his partner's eccentricities?

Table B: This North got it right, apart from everything else, a 1NT opener shuts out the opposition. A good board for the strong NT – provided you remember to open one!

And what happened? 3♥ was one down but got a good score as it was non-vul and N-S made 1NT at the other tables. No justice, eh?

The bottom lines.

- If you have a balanced hand within your NT range, open 1NT.
- Partner promises zero points (0-9) with a non-jump response to a take-out double.
- You need a good hand (15-17) to make an invitational raise of partner's minimum response to your take-out double.

2NT is too high

Board 14 from Friday 11th, love all.

North South (K)

♠ QJ742	♠ 65
♥ 4	♥ AKJ8
♦ J643	♦ A985
♣ Q102	♣ A74

Table A:

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

Table B:

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

Table C:

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

Table A: 2NT went minus two, anything wrong with the bidding?

Yes. If you play a strong NT then you have to open this South hand with 1NT at (1). If you do not you will run into difficulties later! At (2) South has no sensible rebid. The hand barely warrants a reverse, but it is the wrong shape. A reverse guarantees at least 5 cards in the first bid suit. And South is again in a pickle at (4), pass would be prudent. Mind you, since South's reverse promises 5+ ♦'s, I would have bid 3♦ at (3) and blundered into a good spot.

Table B: Very sensible.

Table C: Reasonably sensible, I would transfer as Table B.

What happened? 2NT went minus two for a clear bottom.

The bottom lines.

- If you have a balanced hand within your NT range, open 1NT.
- A reverse promises greater length in the 1st bid suit.
- There is a well known saying, you need strength for a reverse but do not reverse to show strength.

I note that this deal would be a very good one for the weak NT (and 5 card majors). The bidding would go 1♦ - 1♠ - 1NT - 2♦ - pass, the very best spot but difficult to reach with most systems.

The play's the thing - 1

North	South
♠ Q62	♠ AK3
♥ QJ10653	♥ K97
♦ K62	♦ 1095
♣ 5	♣ KQ42

With no opposition bidding you end up in 4♥. It does not matter which hand is declarer. You get a ♠ opening lead, where do you win and what do you lead next?

Answer on the next page.

The play's the thing 1 - Answer

Board 7 from Friday 11th

I have had a few comments suggesting that I do a little more about the play in the news-sheets. Unlike my bidding, which is pretty good, I do not pretend to be an expert declarer or defender. But I'll do my best - I'm sure that Hans or Chuck will correct me if I slip up, and I'm quite likely to when it comes to the play. Anyway, this hand came up on Friday and the declarer who went down asked how the others made it (one with an overtrick!). I have changed the board slightly to make it more straightforward as with the original board the contract had no chance against decent defence.

Dealer:	♠ Q62		<u>Table A</u>			
South	♥ QJ10653		West	North	East	South
Both vul	♦ K62		-	-	-	1NT (1)
	♣ 5		pass	2♦	pass	2♥
			pass	4♥	all pass	
♠ J105	N	♠ 9874				
♥ A8	W E	♥ 42	<u>Table B</u>			
♦ AJ74	S	♦ Q83	West	North	East	South
♣ J983		♣ A1076	-	-	-	1♣
	♠ AK3		pass	2♥ (2)	pass	2♠ (3)
	♥ K97		pass	3♥	pass	4♥
	♦ 1095		pass			
	♣ KQ42					

All 3 tables got to 4♥ on Friday. The 1NT opening at (1) is borderline with the 4333 type shape, but the ♦ 109x is worth a bit and so it's not too bad. At Table 2 North's 2♥ bid at (2) is game forcing and should show a much stronger hand. Anyway, let's look at the play: -

Suppose that you are declaring the hand from North or South and get a ♠ lead. Where should you win and what should you do next?

You were fortunate not to get a ♦ lead, you have 3 sure losers (the 3 aces) and one or maybe two more ♦ losers, you have to attempt to get rid of ♦'s ASAP. Win in the North hand and lead the ♣5 towards the South hand. If East ducks then you have not lost a ♣ trick and the ♦A onside ensures success. If East goes up with the ♣A then you can subsequently discard one or two ♦'s on the ♣KQ.

The bottom line. It's usually best to draw trumps, but if it is imperative that you get losers away as quickly as possible then you may have to postpone this. In this case it's imperative to set up a ♣ winner early. If you lead a trump then a ♦ switch will kill you as the defence will subsequently win the ♣A and cash the setting ♦.

<u>The play's the thing - 2</u>		West	North	East	South
North	South	-	-	pass	1♠
		1NT (1)	2♠	pass	4♠
♠ A876	♠ J10932	pass	pass	pass	
♥ A10876	♥ -				
♦ 103	♦ QJ9	(1) 15-18			
♣ 76	♣ AKQJ3				

West leads the ♦A and then switches to the ♥K. Plan the play. Answer on the next page.

After the Monday game there are usually a few players who stay behind for a while to chat about some of the hands. I don't usually join in – when you have two people who both think that they are usually right but totally disagree about absolutely everything it tends to spoil the atmosphere. Anyway, I had to wait for the wife and so I had some time to pass....

Board 22 was mentioned. I said that I found it amazing that 3 of the 4 declarers went down in a totally solid contract. My adversary knew the board, he said that after the natural ♦A lead, a ♥K switch makes life difficult for declarer and the contract goes down. The only difficulty for declarer as far as I can see when West does not cash the ♦K at trick two is ensuring the overtrick! Let's have a look, this was the bidding at my table: -

Dealer:	♠ A876				
East	♥ A10876	West	North	East	South
E-W vul	♦ 103	-	-	pass	1 ♠
	♣ 76	1NT	2 ♠	pass	4 ♠
		pass (1)	pass	pass	
♠ KQ54	N	♠ -			
♥ KQ3	W E	♥ J9542			
♦ AK75	S	♦ 8642			
♣ 94		♣ 10852			
	♠ J10932				
	♥ -				
	♦ QJ9				
	♣ AKQJ3				

I don't know the bidding at the other three tables, I guess that it was the same except that every other West doubled the final contract.

Well then. At my table West led the ♦A and continued with the ♦K. The ♥K came next; declarer won in dummy and led the ♠A from dummy – down one.

In the discussion mentioned above my adversary stated that the contract is down if West switches to the ♥K at trick two. I **totally** disagree. Dummy wins and South discards ... it does not really matter, but a ♦ is probably best as this leads to a comfortable overtrick. Declarer then leads a ♣ to get to hand and leads the ♠9. There are now various permutations depending upon whether West covers or not. Let's say that he ducks the ♠9 but puts up the ♠Q on the next ♠. Dummy wins with the ♠A and the ♣7 is led back to hand.

	♠ 87				
	♥ 10876				
	♦ 10				
	♣ -				
♠ K5	N	♠			
♥ Q3	W E	♥ immaterial			
♦ K75	S	♦			
♣ -		♣			
	♠ J103				
	♥ -				
	♦ Q				
	♣ QJ3				

That leaves this position. South now leads the ♣Q and West is helpless. If he ruffs low then dummy over-ruffs, back to hand with a ♥ ruff and lead another ♣ on which the ♦10 is discarded – 11 tricks.

If West ruffs instead with the ♠K then the ♦10 is discarded and it's still 11 tricks.

If West does not ruff then South simply continues with ♣'s. It's always 11 tricks.

The bottom line. My analysis may or may not be perfect – I do not claim to be an expert declarer. But I most certainly would not have gone down!

All NT responses to partner's opening are Limit bids

A few people seem to have got this wrong in recent weeks: -

Suppose partner opens 1♣ or 1♦ or 1♥, then:

1NT by you shows 6-9 points, denies a 4 card major and is not forcing

2NT by you shows 11-12 points, denies a 4 card major and is **not** forcing

3NT by you shows 13-15 points, denies a 4 card major and is not forcing.

It's the same if partner opens 1♠ except that you may have a ♥ suit with a 1NT response.

4th suit forcing?

Board 21 from Friday 11th, N-S vul.

North South (F)

♠ AJ965 ♠ 1073
♥ A10873 ♥ KQ5
♦ J7 ♦ AK54
♣ J ♣ Q54

Table A:

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

Table B:

West	North	East	South
-	1♠	pass	2NT (1)
pass	3♥	pass	3♠ (4)
pass	4♠	all pass	

Table C:

West	North	East	South
-	1♠	pass	2♦
pass	2♥	pass	4♠ (5)
all pass			

Table A: 3NT was not pretty, what went wrong? The first 3 bids are obvious, but what should South bid at (1)? You have points for game but ♣Qxx is not good enough in the 4th suit to bid NT (you know that the opponents are going to lead this suit). If you want to probe 3NT then bid 3♣, 4th suit forcing, and partner will bid 3NT with a ♣ stop. However, partner's bidding has shown 5 ♠'s and 4+ ♥'s and I would simply bid 4♠ at (2) to play in the known 5-3 fit. Mind you, if I was North I would pull 3NT to 4♥ at (3) (showing 5 ♥'s) because the previous bidding only promised 4 ♥'s and this hand really is unsuitable for NT.

Table B: This South did not realise what I stated above about 2NT here being non-forcing, a forcing 2♦ is correct at (1) but the pair somehow landed on their feet.

Table C: This pair bid it correctly. One player did ask me how the slightly better 4♥ contract can be reached. It's not really that easy, North's 2♥ rebid only promises 4 ♥'s. Even if you try 4th suit forcing at (5) a 3♥ response would not guarantee a 5th ♥. You know that there is a 5-3 (maybe 6-3) ♠ fit so it's simplest to bid 4♠.

And what happened? 3NT was -3, 4♠ was +1.

The bottom lines?

- 5-3 major suit fits are usually better than NT if one player has a shapely hand.
- Remember 4th suit forcing if you are doubtful about a stop for NT.

When you have the balance of points and they bid NT, Double!

Board 15 from Monday 7th

Dealer:	♠ Q83	<u>Table A</u>				
South	♥ Q942	West	North	East	South (C)	
N-S vul	♦ A3	-	-	-	pass	
	♣ KJ102	pass	1♣	1NT (1)	2♦ (2)	
		pass	pass	pass		
♠ 7654	N	♠ K102				
♥ 10873	W E	♥ AK6	<u>Table B</u>			
♦ K5	S	♦ QJ87	West	North	East	South
♣ 653		♣ Q94	pass	1♣	1NT (1)	dbl (2)
	♠ AJ9		2♣ (3)	dbl	pass	pass
	♥ J5		2♦	pass	pass	dbl
	♦ 109642		redblall	pass		
	♣ A87					

One or more players at both tables got this wrong: -

Table A: 1NT at (1) is 15-18 points whatever system you play. But is it correct here? I guess that most players would like to bid but the 4333 type shape dictates caution. Pass is probably more prudent but I guess that 1NT is acceptable. But what about South's 2♦ bid? This is not (acceptable). What did you do with Hand C in this week's quiz? You really just have to think here at (2); partner has opened the bidding (usually around 13+ points), you have 10 points (and some decent intermediates). The opponents are not going to make 1NT – so double! After such a penalty double you're out for blood and any subsequent doubles by you or partner are also for penalties. E-W have nowhere to go.

Table B: This South got it right. I'm not sure exactly what went on after this, I believe that the 2♣ and 2♦ bids were trying to wriggle out into the best major but East did not see it that way. All bids after a double are best played as natural unless you specifically agree otherwise, but since ♣'s here is opener's suit then 2♣ at (3) must be Stayman. Anyway, I assume that West thought that he was asking for majors, his partner did not; West's redouble demanded that East bid a major, his partner did not.

What happened? 2♦ by South just made for the N-S bottom. 2♦ redoubled by West went for 2200 and was obviously a clear bottom for E-W.

The bottom lines.

- 1- Agree with partner what you do when your NT is interfered with.
- 2- A 1NT overcall is 15-18. Expect problems if you overcall 1NT with a *totally* flat 15.
- 3- If partner has opened and you have a reasonably balanced 9+ points, then double an intervening 1NT overcall (for penalties). Any non-jump suit bid is weak (9-)

Weak or Forcing?

Board 19 from Friday 11th, E-W vul.

West	East
♠ K7	♠ A43
♥ AQ2	♥ 10653
♦ Q873	♦ -
♣ AQ43	♣ J98765

Table A:

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

Table B:

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

Table C:

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

Obviously the best contract for E-W is a ♣ part-score, preferably 3♣. But how do you get there? I was kibitzing at Table C and at the end I said that E-W had done well as luckily West had excellent ♣'s and nobody else found a ♣ partscore contract. I said that the only real solution is to play Lebensohl. North then had his tuppence (or 20 bht, 20 guilders, whatever) worth and said it was unnecessary and that I was complicating matters, just bid naturally. North said that East should bid 3♣, non-forcing. Fine, but what does East bid with a similar hand with, say, another ace? 3♣ forcing I suppose?

This is a problem and that's why two pairs 'got it wrong'. Obviously all three pairs considered that 3♣ was forcing. So is a new suit by responder here forcing or not? It's up to you, but you can't have it both ways. You can't have one bid to show a weak hand with a ♣ (or any other) suit as well as a strong hand with a ♣ (or any other) suit - it's even more important if your suit is a major. The answer is, of course, that you have to play Lebensohl. 2NT by East at (1) demands that West bid 3♣, which East either passes or corrects to his long suit. Thus any 3 level bid directly (so 3♣ here) is strong and forcing.

What happened? 4♣ made +1 (well played John), 3NT was -2 and 2♠ made +1.

The bottom line. Sometimes you cannot bid everything naturally (this is an excellent example). 3♣ cannot be both weak and strong. For situations like this it is necessary for more advanced players to have a few conventions in their arsenal.

Lebensohl is defined in the 2003 Yearbook.

Bidding Quiz Answers

- Hand A: 2♥. A penalty pass (or penalty double if you do not play negative doubles) is a possibility; but I would prefer a slightly stronger hand at the one level and three cards in partner's suit is not good for defending (shortage is best). At the table, this player chose 1NT which I suppose is reasonable, but with a weak doubleton (and you know that the ♠ suit will not set up in NT) I prefer 2♥.
- Hand B: (a) A clear opener. Open 1♣ (or a weak 1NT).
(b) 2♦. Support with support, this is better than 1NT. If partner has a decent hand such that 3NT makes then he will bid again. If it's a partscore hand then it's best to play in the known fit.
- Hand C: Double. Penalties.
- Hand D: Pass. The Law, and this is a nice defensive hand. You need another ♠ to bid, your point count is irrelevant.
- Hand E: 2♣. If your 2NT opening range is 20-21 (and 2♣ followed 2NT is 22-24) then it's easy. If your 2NT opening range is 20-22 (and 2♣ followed 2NT is 23-24) then I would still open 2♣. Why? 4432 is reasonable shape, it is good when both the 4 cards are majors, but the main reason why it's worth more is the intermediates. Add on a big + for a hand with nothing less than a 7!
- Hand F: 2♦. You have game forcing values and must find a forcing bid. 2♥ is weak, 3♥ is only invitational and promises 4♥'s anyway. 4♥ is too unilateral and shows a weaker hand with (usually) 5 trumps. 2NT is 11-12 and non-forcing. 3NT is possible, it is 13-15, but with good 3 card ♥ support I prefer to bid 2♦ and see what happens; a subsequent 4♥ bid would then show game values and 3♥'s.
- Hand G: 3NT. Even if partner's 2NT range is 20-21 it's still worth a go. A combined 24 points is not usually enough for 3NT (especially if they are divided 20-4) but this hand is not 4 points. Add on a point for two 10's (♠ and ♦) – especially as they are in combinations with a higher honour (the Q's here), that's what Marty Bergen says – see news sheet 77. And add on another point for the ♣1098 combination.
- Hand H: This one depends upon your partnership agreement. Is a new suit at the 3 level here forcing in your system? If it is, then you cannot bid 3♣. If 3♣ shows a weak hand then it's fine. Which system is best? With Chuck I play a new suit here as forcing, but then we play Lebensohl – it's the only solution to the dilemma.
- Hand J: 1NT. A balanced hand in the 15-17 range.
- Hand K: 1NT. A balanced hand in the 15-17 range.