

Monday 20/9/2004

Friday 24/9/2004

1st David/Kenneth 59%
 2nd = Tomas/Ian 55%
 2nd = Phil/Dave 55%

1st Eddie/Jan 64%
 2nd Alex/Jeff 60%

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

Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A partner opens 1♣, what do you respond?
♠ 543	♠ Q73	
♥ AJ	♥ 976	With Hand B partner opens 1♥, what do you respond?
♦ J84	♦ K3	
♣ KQ972	♣ AJ975	
Hand C	Hand D	With Hand C partner opens 1NT, what do you respond?
♠ K9842	♠ K954	With Hand D you open 1♣, partner bids 1♠ and RHO bids 2♦.
♥ Q974	♥ Q3	What do you bid?
♦ 93	♦ A	
♣ 63	♣ KQ10432	
Hand E	Hand F	What do you open with Hand E?
♠ AK4	♠ A2	
♥ J108	♥ KQ653	With Hand F you open 1♥ and partner responds 1♠. You bid
♦ K7	♦ 1085	1NT and partner bids 2♠. What now?
♣ AQJ73	♣ KQ2	

A QuickieBoard 4 from Friday 24th, both vul

West (E)	West	East
♠ AK4	1NT	3NT
♥ J108	pass	
♦ K7		
♣ AQJ73		

This was the auction at one table on Friday. I've been through this dozens of times but people still keep on doing it! I hope that you did not open 1NT with Hand E in this week's quiz? It's *much* too strong. 18 HCP's but that great 5 carder, the top cards and the working 10 make it worth much more. Correct is to open 1♣ and then jump to 2NT to show 18-19 pts.

What happened? The final contract was 3NT at every table and 13 tricks were easy.

The bottom line (I hope for the last time): -

- Do not open 1NT with a decent 18 points, you will miss slams.

Stayman or transfer with weak 5-4's?Board 7 from Monday 20th, both vul

Dealer: ♠ 76
 South ♥ 65
 Both vul ♦ AJ87
 ♣ AJ1072

Table A

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

♠ K9842 N ♠ A10
 ♥ Q974 W E ♥ AK108
 ♦ 93 S ♦ 652
 ♣ 63 ♣ KQ94
 ♠ QJ53
 ♥ J32
 ♦ KQ104
 ♣ 85

Table B

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

Obviously 2♥ is a better contract for E-W than 2♠, so what went wrong at Table A?

What did you bid at (1) with Hand C in this week's quiz? I've been all through this before, but this is a quite graphic example and so maybe people will remember now? The answer is that with a weak hand and 5-4 or 4-5 in the majors you should not transfer, but bid Stayman. If partner bids 2♥ or 2♠ that's fine and you pass. If partner bids 2♦ then you bid two of your 5-carder, this is a weak bid.

Thus 1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♥ and 1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♠ are weak bids and opener must pass.

Another Weak SequenceBoard 15 from Monday 20th, N-S vul

North South (F)
 ♠ KQ10984 ♠ A2
 ♥ 42 ♥ KQ653
 ♦ 72 ♦ 1085
 ♣ 1084 ♣ KQ2

Table A

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

Table B

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

Two fairly typical sequences from Monday: -

Table A: (1) A 1♥ opening was the choice of everybody on Monday; this is an excellent 14 count and I would not argue with a strong 1NT opening. 2♥ at (2) is fine if you play 4 card majors, I would rebid 1NT (if I had not opened 1NT). 2♠ at (3) here is a weakish (vaguely constructive) bid and so South should pass at (4).

Table B: Much the same here, except that South chose the 1NT rebid. 2♠ here is definitely weak and so pass at (4) is correct.

And what happened? Three tables managed to stop in 2♠ but two got too high (3♠ and 3NT). The bottom line: - These sequences (especially Table B) are weak.

Discards and Signals etc in Defence

I Have been asked to cover this again. The problem is that there are always a number of casual partnerships and I was asked if I could make a few notes on a decent defensive system that a casual partnership (or a more permanent one) could adopt. This is what I played with Chuck and if it's good enough for Chuck..... It may not be the best but is quite adequate and, most important, it is what the majority of reasonable players play.

Leading

Top from all honour sequences. So A from AK, K from KQ etc.

Low card promises an honour. So 3 from Q73 etc.

Do not underlead an ace in a suit contract.

The lead of an ace generally promises the king.

Suppose that you hold QJ10 in a suit. If you wish to lead this suit, then it's the Q. If somebody else leads the suit then play the 10. So top of a sequence when leading but bottom when following suit.

Encouraging (or discouraging) partner.

HELD

Let's start with the attitude signal. When partner leads a suit it is often beneficial to let him know if you like the suit (and want him to continue) or if you don't like it. The most common approach is to play a **H**ighish card to **E**ncourage and a **L**ow card to **D**iscourage, so HELD. For example, if you hold Q92 in a suit and partner leads the ace then play the 9 as you want him to continue. If you hold J92 then play the 2 to discourage.

Discarding – Suit preference.

Lavinthal (aka McKenney)

When you are defending and cannot follow suit, then you have to discard something. It is often best to convey some sort of information to your partner with this discard and there are various schemes. One of the best and most commonly used is Lavinthal, also known as McKenney. The most important point is that you **DO NOT** discard in a suit that you like, but discard from one of the other suits. There are two remaining suits and the size of your discard indicates which of these remaining two suits you like, a high/middle card indicates the higher ranking and a low card the lower ranking.

For example, you are discarding on ♥'s and would like partner to lead a ♦. Discard either a low club (so asks for the lowest ranking of ♠'s and ♦'s) or discard a high ♠ (so asks for the highest ranking of ♣'s and ♦'s). Note that you always have a choice of two suits to discard from and can usually make the signal clear. When you are defending it is important to take special note of partner's *first* discard – that will tell you which suit he likes.

I have witnessed countless occurrences of people throwing away a trick in defence (especially in NT contracts) by discarding in a suit to indicate that they like that suit – that system really sucks. Don't discard from a suit you like, play McKenney.

- | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ♠ A1063 | Lavinthal Suit preference is also used in other situations. Suppose that you |
| ♥ 74 | are on lead defending a ♥ contract. You lead the ♦A and get an encouraging |
| ♦ AK83 | ♦9 from partner. So you continue with the ♦K and he plays the ♦2. So he |
| ♣ 873 | encouraged. Suppose that you know from the bidding that partner is probably |
| | ruffing the next ♦; which ♦ do you lead? The answer is the ♦8. This is Lavinthal and |
| | asks partner to lead back a ♠ (the ♦3 would ask for a ♣).. |

Good enough for an invitation?

Board 17 from Monday 20th, love all

West	East	West	North	East	South
♠ A1063	♠ 82	-	pass	pass	pass
♥ AK74	♥ Q1052	1NT	pass	2♣ (1)	pass
♦ K3	♦ Q8654	2♥	pass	3♥	pass
♣ K73	♣ A9	4♥	all pass		

So has East got enough for Stayman at (1) and the subsequent 3♥ invitation? Just 8 points with two unsupported queens. But actually this is a respectable hand, the shape is great and it's well worth an invitation. This good bidding was replicated at 3 other tables. Just how the other table ended up in a miserable 3NT is a mystery, has Stayman not reached Belgium yet?

Nobody in slam

Board 25 from Monday 20th, E-W vul

North (D) South

♠ K954	♠ AQ632
♥ Q3	♥ K9
♦ A	♦ Q63
♣ KQ10432	♣ A97

Table A

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

Table B

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

Table C

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

An easy slam missed at every table on Monday, what went wrong?

Table A: The North hand is a very nice 14 points and 1♣ is the obvious opener. But what did you rebid at (2) with Hand D in this week's quiz? If South had responded 1♦ or 1♥ then this North hand is still respectable and so should bid 1♠. But when South bids 1♠ then this North hand is no longer a respectable 14 count – it's a monster. 2♠ at (2) is feeble. 4♠ at (3) is fine and North should obviously make a move at (4) having failed to do so previously.

Table B: This North realised that he hand a good hand and so bid 3♠ at (2). This is better but this time it was South who failed to bid up. North's pass at (4) is correct – he's made his move.

Table C: Now this is more like it! 4♦ at (2) is a cue bid agreeing ♦'s and looking for slam. With excellent cards and the all-important ♣A it should have been easy for South to bid on to the slam.

And what happened? Everybody was in 4♠ and everybody made 13 tricks. Easy for me to score. And what should the bidding be? North needs to make a noise and it's between an invitational 3♠ and a game forcing bid. I like North's effort at Table C.

Pairs Tactics?Board 12 from Friday 24th

Dealer: ♠ AKJ8
 West ♥ KJ
 N-S vul ♦ 10654
 ♣ 1086

♠ 64 N
 ♥ AQ532 W E
 ♦ AQJ87 S
 ♣ 3
 ♠ 10952
 ♥ 1084
 ♦ 92
 ♣ KQ42

Table A

West	North	East (B)	South
1♥	pass	2♣ (1)	pass
2♦	pass	3♥ (2)	pass
4♥			all pass

Table B

West	North	East	South
1♥	pass	2♥ (1)	pass
pass	2♠ (3)	dbl (4)	pass

Table A: Quite sensible bidding? What did you bid with Hand B at (1) in this week's quiz? 10 points and 3 card support for partner, so 3♥? Possibly, but the best way to show 3 card support and invitational values is to bid a minor first, as here. 3♥ at (2) is thus invitational with exactly 3♥'s. Fine?

Table B: I'm not so sure! I was East at Table B and bid just 2♥ at (1). This really is a miserable hand in support of♥'s (all the points outside♥'s). With a doubleton, supporting♥'s is better than 1NT or 2NT and I think that 2♥ is quite sufficient, one should not stretch for very thin games at pairs scoring. And now it's North in the spotlight. Do you let the opponents play quietly in 2♥ or do you make a noise? With 4 points in♥'s it may be prudent to keep quiet. Anyway, North decided upon a not too unreasonable 2♠. But the vulnerability was wrong and East made a typical pairs double – looking for the 'magic 200'.

And what happened? North luckily found South with 4 card support but 2♠ was still one down and East got his magic 200 for the E-W top. 4♥ went one down. Just one pair managed to stop in 3♥. Another E-W somehow managed to overbid to 5♥ and went down - how can you bid like that and still come 2nd, Alex/Jeff?

The bottom lines: -

- With 10 points it's marginal if you should raise partner's major to 2 or 3. Look at the whole hand; 3 card support with no honour is bad – downgrade.
- Be wary of competing with a flat hand when vulnerable, just one down is -200 and scores a bottom on a partscore deal.

And a few words on the difference between pairs and teams (or rubber bridge) scoring: -

- Be aware of the vulnerability. At pairs scoring (but not at teams) it is often a good bet to double opponents when they are vulnerable even though you only expect a one trick set.
- This is one of the big differences between pairs and teams scoring. At teams it is unwise to double for a one trick set – the small gain (200 as opposed to 100) is not worth the huge score (-690 as opposed to -110) lost if they make it. At pairs it's not so important – you get a number of tops (+200) for the occasional bottom (-690).
- At pairs winning is all important, the margin of victory is irrelevant.
- At teams size matters.

4th suit forcing?

Board 14 from Friday 24th, love all

West	East (A)	West	North	East	South
♠ AK2	♠ 543	-	-	pass	pass
♥ 9742	♥ AJ	1♣	pass	1♦ (1)	pass
♦ Q105	♦ J84	1♥ (2)	pass	1♠ (3)	pass
♣ A105	♣ KQ972	pass (4)	pass		

A silly contract, let's have a look: -

East has a tricky response here. Did you respond 1NT or 2NT (or 2♣ or 3♣) with Hand A at (1) in this week's quiz? This pair play a short ♣ but I don't really like either 2♣ or 3♣ anyway. It's a bit good for 1NT and so that leaves 2NT. But there is another option, I like the 'wait and see' bid of 1♦. At (2) 1♥ is correct – never deny a 4 card major, even if it is 9 high. And now East is back with the same problem at (3) that he started with. Partner may still have just 2 ♣'s (if 4432 shape) and this East hand is worth an effort. But now East has another option – 4th suit forcing! I believe that a 4th suit bid of 1♠ is fine here. It's the 4th suit and I like to play that it may or may not be natural at the one level (but it's still forcing). Whether East thought that it was natural or not does not really matter on this deal – 1NT is the obvious bid.

And what happened. 1♠ luckily made, but it was still a frigid bottom with 2NT and 3♣ making at other tables. 1NT or 2NT making 8 or 9 tricks would have scored well.

The bottom lines: -

- 4th suit forcing is forcing, whether by a passed hand or not.
- 1♠ in the auction 1♣ - 1♦ - 1♥ - 1♠ is best played as maybe natural maybe not, but definitely forcing. With a weak hand and a 4 card ♠ suit responder could bid 1♠ directly instead of introducing the ♦ suit, especially if a passed hand.
- Do not play in a Moysian fit unless you have a weak doubleton/singleton/whatever.
- Do not be in a rush to support partner's minor suit opening – NT scores more and it may be a 3 card suit.
- Keep it simple (so 2NT here) with an unfamiliar partner?

Bidding Quiz Answers

- Hand A: 2NT. Let's look at the 'obvious' alternatives:- 2♣ - it's too strong. 3♣ - reasonable, but partner may not have ♣'s. 1NT – a bit feeble with a (possible) fit. There is one sensible alternative, I bid 1♦ - partner's rebid should make your next bid easier.
- Hand B: 2♥. Another perhaps tricky one. This hand is not worth 3♥ (either directly or via 2♣) in my opinion.
- Hand C: 2♣. Bid Stayman rather than transferring when 5-4 or 4-5 in the majors.
- Hand D: 3♠. The bidding has improved this hand immensely. 2♠ is feeble. A 4♦ splinter is quite reasonable but it's not usually good to splinter with a singleton ace. 3♦ is also possible but I think it's best to show your support. I would not argue with 4♠.
- Hand E: 1♣ (and rebid 2NT). This hand is *much* too good for a 1NT opener.
- Hand F: Pass. Partner's bid is weak, usually a 6 card suit.