

25/3/2005

## Club News Sheet – No. 125

Mon 21/3/05	1 <sup>st</sup> Bob/Dave	57%	2 <sup>nd</sup> Chuck/Jean Charles	57%
Wed 23/3/05	1 <sup>st</sup> Phil/Mike(Can)	57%	2 <sup>nd</sup> Michael(Ger)/Jeff	56%
Fri 25/3/05	1 <sup>st</sup> Dinie/Sheila	65%	2 <sup>nd</sup> Bob/Dave	53%

### Bidding Quiz

Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.

Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A partner opens 1♥ and RHO overcalls 2♣, what do you bid?
♠ KQ75	♠ K874	
♥ A6	♥ Q10	With Hand B partner opens 1♥ and you bid 1♠. Partner then jumps to 3♥, what do you do?
♦ J542	♦ K432	(a) What do you open with Hand C?
♣ 754	♣ 1095	(b) Suppose that you open 1♣ and this is passed round to RHO who doubles, what would you bid?
Hand C	Hand D	With Hand D partner deals and passes. RHO and you both pass and LHO opens 1♠. Partner overcalls 2♥ and RHO bids 2♠, what do you do?
♠ AJ32	♠ 86	
♥ Q83	♥ 9632	
♦ AQ6	♦ AQ63	
♣ AQ7	♣ A94	
Hand E	Hand F	With Hand E partner opens 1NT and you transfer with 2♦.
♠ K6	♠ K6	(a) What do you do when partner obediently bids 2♥?
♥ KJ543	♥ KJ1093	(b) How many points is Hand E worth?
♦ 43	♦ 107	With Hand F partner opens 1NT and you transfer with 2♦.
♣ 5432	♣ 10872	(a) What do you do when partner obediently bids 2♥?
		(b) How many points is Hand F worth?

### Editorial

Jan is helping me out at the moment by setting up a web site for the club. Now my computer knowledge is pretty minimal but Jan is arranging things so that even I will hopefully be able to put the news-sheet on the web soon. It's [www.pattayabridge.com](http://www.pattayabridge.com).

And on a similar topic, I would like to thank Jim (Canada) who managed to install a bridge scoring program on my computer. I've had a 'play' with it, but it only works with a Mitchell (7+ tables) so it will get going next high season (when I really need it). It takes me about 1 hour to score a 6 table (Howell) movement by hand, but the 13 or 14 table movements we had in Jan/Feb took me 3-4 hours. With this program it should be just about 1 hour or so to just enter the pairs and results and then press 'go'. And, incidentally, this scoring program is designed to work with a web site, so I should be able to put the complete results on the web when everything gets going.

### Bridge Lessons

I've had a number of people interested and I now run a beginner's class every Wednesday and Friday. We start at 10.30 and finish at 12.00, at the Diana Inn. And if the numbers are OK (i.e. 4 or more) then the students can play alongside us from 1.00 to 4.45 ish, hopefully with some supervision if the numbers dictate.

## It's different in Pattaya

Board 11 from Monday 21<sup>st</sup>

Dealer:	♠ A54	West	North	East	South
South	♥ KJ7	-	-	-	1♣
Love all	♦ A876	pass	1♦	pass	1NT
	♣ J54	pass	3NT	all pass	

♠ K9732	N	♠ J8
♥ 963	W E	♥ 8542
♦ 105	S	♦ QJ43
♣ K87		♣ A62
	♠ Q106	
	♥ AQ10	
	♦ K92	
	♣ Q1093	

Bjorn gave me this deal from a Swedish news-paper and I included it in Monday's hands. The bidding is uninteresting and it's all about the play. West should lead a low ♠ and South plays a low ♠ from dummy, East playing the ♠J.

Now, of course, South must count his tricks. The lead has given him 2 ♠ tricks and with 3 ♥'s and 2 ♦'s that's a total of just 7. Now he can develop two more tricks in ♣'s but if he wins the first trick in hand and leads a ♣ then West will play low, East win and return a ♠. That establishes West's ♠ suit and when West subsequently gets in with the ♣K then he cashes 3 ♠ tricks for one down.

Can you see how South can ensure the contract?

He should duck East's ♠J at trick one!

It does not matter what E-W then do. East will probably return a ♠ but declarer has two stops. He wins this trick and attacks ♣'s and when East gets in with his ♣A he has no ♠ left to lead.

And what happened in Pattaya? Of course everything is completely different here. I somehow doubt that anybody found the play of ducking the opening ♠ lead but 3 tables made 3NT exactly and two tables even made +1. At my table South won the opening lead with the ♠Q and then led a ♣. West correctly ducked this and East won with the ♣A. He then went into a 'think' and produced the ♣2, donating the contract to South. I can only assume that the play was somewhat similar at all of the other tables? Or maybe West rose prematurely with ♣K (he must preserve his entry so that he has it when the ♠'s are set up). Also, of course, it's no good for West to win the first ♣ trick as a ♠ from him gives declarer another ♠ trick (he knows that declarer has the ♠10) – the ♠ lead must come from East. This would probably explain the two 3NT+1 results.

The bottom lines: -

- I guess that I have to give more attention to the play of the hand in the news sheets?
- Unless you have a good reason to do otherwise, return partner's suit.
- It is often a good idea to duck in order to sever the opponent's communications.
- Many contracts are won or lost at trick one!

## Good technique

Board 3 from Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup>

OK, so I'll start this week with a bit more about the play of the hand. With this deal everybody was again in 3NT, but the results ranged from minus one to plus two; let's investigate: -

Dealer:	♠ J852				
West	♥ QJ952	West	North	East	South
N-S vul	♦ QJ5	pass	pass	1♣	pass
	♣ J	1♦	pass	2♥	(1) pass
		3NT	all pass		
♠ KQ6	N	♠ 1094			
♥ 86	W E	♥ AK104			
♦ K8762	S	♦ A4			
♣ Q76		♣ AK95			
	♠ A73				
	♥ 73	↑			
	♦ 1093	DUMMY			
	♣ 108432				

(1) East can rebid either 2♥ or 2NT here, depending upon your partnership and ability to find a possible 4-4 major suit fit if you bid 2NT. Anyway, this time it's all about the play.

All six tables were in 3NT by E-W. This particular West (me) got the ♠2 lead, ♠9, ♠A and ♠6. West won the ♠ return perforce, but what should West do now?

Count the winners first, of course. 2 ♠'s, 2 ♥'s, 2 ♦'s and 3 ♣'s; so the contract is secure and so it's all about overtricks. If the ♣'s split there's one there, but there is no need to do anything with ♣'s yet. Another chance for overtrick(s) is the ♦ suit. If they split 3-3 then you give up just one ♦ trick and gain two; if it's a 4-2 split then you lose 2 ♦'s but still make the contract (+1); if ♦'s are 5-1 then you still make the contract exactly.

But actually you can combine your chances (♦'s splitting or ♣'s splitting). This declarer led the ♦A from dummy and then the ♦4 but ducked (not playing the ♦K), allowing North to win the trick. Now West is in control; whatever North leads West simply cashes his winners and when the ♦'s split he made 11 tricks without the ♣'s splitting: he made 2 ♠'s, 2 ♥'s, 4 ♦'s and 3 ♣'s, so +2.

And what happened with the rest of the field? 8 tricks, 9 tricks, 10 tricks (twice) and just one other distinguished declarer matched this play with 11 tricks.

Now when 3NT went minus 1 it was declared by East, but declarer should put up the ♠Q on the ♠3 lead and subsequently attack ♦'s as above and he certainly makes at least +1.

The bottom lines.

- We saw in the last deal that it is sometimes beneficial to duck a round of a suit in order to sever the opponent's communications. This time it's different, we ducked a round of ♦'s in order to keep control of all our options.
- If you know that you must lose at least one trick in a suit (♦'s here) then think about ducking a round.

## The negative double

Board 24 from Monday 21<sup>st</sup>, love all

I was asked to comment on this bidding from Monday - well actually I made up this bidding, I was asked to comment on the 2♦ bid that one East chose at (1): -

West	East (A)	West	North	East	South
♠ A643	♠ KQ75	1♥	2♣	dbl (1)	pass
♥ KQ985	♥ A6	2♠ (2)	pass	3♦ (3)	pass
♦ 6	♦ J542	4♠ (4)	all pass		
♣ K93	♣ 754				

- (1) So what did you bid with this East hand A in this week's quiz? At one table East bid 2♠ - that's not a good bid as it promises 5 ♠'s. At another table East bid 2♦ and the ♠ fit was lost (West cannot bid 2♠ over 2♦ as that would be a reverse – showing a much stronger hand). Actually, the hand (and a multiple of other ones) is impossible to bid unless you play negative (sometimes called Sputnik in the UK) doubles. East's best (only sensible) bid at (1) is a negative double. This simply promises 4 ♠'s and values to compete to 2♠.
- (2) This 2♠ bid is not now a reverse, it is simply supporting partner at the lowest level.
- (3) ♠'s are agreed and this is a help-suit game try.
- (4) And despite his minimum point count West should accept because of his singleton ♦ and the great ♥'s.

And what happened? 4♠ by West should be a good contract on these cards but only 3 out of the 6 tables even found the 4-4 ♠ fit and nobody was in game.

The bottom lines: -

- Play negative doubles.
- There are a multitude of different variations of the use of negative doubles but for me there is only one sensible method:
  - 1- If one major has been bid (by either partner or the overcaller) then a negative double promises the 4+ cards in the unbid major and values to compete to the cheapest call in that suit.
  - 2- If no major has been bid (say 1♦ - 2♣(overcall) – dbl) then only one 4 card major is promised.
  - 3- If both majors have been bid (say 1♥ - 1♠(overcall) – dbl) then that promises 4+ cards in both minors and generally denies 3 card support for partner.

Incidentally, when you play negative doubles then you can obviously not double directly for penalties. That is no problem: if you open and LHO overcalls and partner passes then you (opener) should bend over backwards to double in this situation just in case partner has a stack in the LHO's suit and so could not bid (because a double would be negative). Partner will, of course, pass if he had a penalty hand and any other bid by him is weak (not enough values to make a forcing bid directly over the overcall).

## Beware of mis-fits – part 1

Board 18 from Friday 25<sup>th</sup>

Dealer:	♠ 1073				
East	♥ 108	West	North	East	South
N-S vul	♦ 8643	-	-	1♠ (1)	pass
	♣ J543	2♥	pass	3♣ (2)	pass
		3♥ (3)	pass	3♠ (4)	pass
♠ -	N	♠ KQ98542	4♥ (5)	pass	pass (6)
♥ AQ9743	W E	♥ K			
♦ AKJ97	S	♦ -			
♣ K9		♣ AQ107			
	♠ AJ6				
	♥ J652				
	♦ Q1052				
	♣ 82				

- (1) A powerful hand, but a 1♠ opening is quite sufficient.
- (2) This is game forcing.
- (3) Now West could introduce his ♦ suit, but that would be the 4<sup>th</sup> suit and may confuse the issue, I think that 3♥ is fine (remember, the auction is already game forcing).
- (4) Bidding out the shape.
- (5) Now West was dealt a great hand, but it has got worse with every bid that his partner has made! In my opinion West should give up on even thinking about slam (it's a total mis-fit) but with oodles of points to spare and the 4<sup>th</sup> suit well stopped, I would bid 3NT here.
- (6) And East's hand has also obviously got worse as time went by. Pass is certainly best here.

And what happened? Nobody managed to put on the brakes in time to stop in 3NT, but 4♥ is an equally good (perhaps better) contract. The hand was played six times and four times it was in slam. The two 6NT contracts both went justifiably down, as did 6♠. Jeff was in 6♥ of course, and for Jeff there is no such thing as a hand getting worse when partner bids suits that you don't have; the only thing that surprises me about Jeff's bidding 6♥ is that, with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> round controls in every suit, he did not bid 7♥! Anyway, the defence somehow allowed the hopeless slam to make.

The bottom lines: -

- Downgrade your hand if partner bids suits that you are short in.
- Bail out ASAP with mis-fits.
- 31 points may be enough for slam if you have a long self-sufficient suit or if you have a fit; it's nowhere near on a total mis-fit.
- Play mis-fits in a suit, not NT, unless you have oodles of points to spare. So with this particular deal 3NT (or 4♥ or 4♠) would be OK, but not any sort of slam.

## Beware of mis-fits – part 2

Board 14 from Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Dealer: ♠ 10964  
East ♥ AJ64  
Love all ♦ 865  
♣ K6

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

♠ KQJ753	N	♠ A
♥ Q97	W E	♥ 1053
♦ Q	S	♦ A943
♣ J82		♣ A10753
	♠ 82	
	♥ K82	
	♦ KJ1072	
	♣ Q94	

- (1) Now with this particular minor suit distribution *some* experts do say to open 1♦ as you then have an ‘easy’ 2♣ rebid. What I think about that philosophy is probably unprintable and 1♣ is the obvious opening to me.
- (2) And here we see the ‘problem’ – no good rebid (2♦ would be a reverse showing a good hand). But actually there are two quite reasonable options - 2♣ or 1NT. Now a 2♣ rebid generally shows a 6 card suit but I prefer that to rebidding 1NT with a singleton. Anyway, either option is far better than opening 1♦ and rebidding 2♣ as that lies about the length of two suits!
- (3) Highly invitational but not forcing.
- (4) Anyway, East got over the first two hurdles fine, but now went astray. Partner has invited you but this is a completely minimal opening and with a singleton in partner’s suit I would pass. 3NT is a very poor bid with this minimal misfit – there will be communication difficulties.

And what happened? Two out of the 5 E-W pairs bid the terrible 3NT, I’m glad to see that at least one of them got exactly what they deserved – minus five and 250 away for the undisputed bottom. Other results were mixed but a ♠ partscore is the best contract, 3♠ being fairly comfortable.

The bottom lines: -

- Bail out ASAP with mis-fits.
- Play mis-fits in a suit, **not NT**, unless you have oodles of points to spare.

## Highly Invitational

Board 5 from Friday 25<sup>th</sup>

I was asked about the bidding at Table A where an easy 4♥ was missed. West said that his 3♥ bid at (3) was forcing and East said that it was only invitational. Who's right?

Dealer: ♠ 1052  
North ♥ 75  
N-S vul ♦ 96  
♣ AK8732

♠ AJ6                    N                    ♠ K874  
♥ KJ9842                W E                ♥ Q10  
♦ AQ                        S                        ♦ K432  
♣ Q4                        ♣ 1095  
  
♠ Q93  
♥ A63  
♦ J10875  
♣ J6

### Table A

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

### Table B

West	North	East	South
-	pass	pass	pass
1♥	2♣ (1)	dbl (5)	pass
3♥ (6)	pass	4♥ (7)	all pass

To answer the question, East was right (the 3♥ bid is invitational) but East's hand is certainly good enough to go on to 4♥.

Table A: (1) Especially at this vulnerability, one probably needs a little more for a 2 level overcall, but many would bid 2♣ these days and I won't argue. But a weak jump overcall (3♣) would obviously be asking for trouble.  
(2) An easy bid.  
(3) (Highly) invitational.  
(4) So what did you bid with this East hand B in this week's quiz? West has promised 6♥'s and has invited a♥ game knowing that East probably has at most two♥'s. East is way above minimum and with these two very good♥'s a 4♥ bid is in order.

Table B: (1) This North chose to overcall, a bit light but acceptable for some.  
(2) Now with traditional methods East would be stuck here, he does not have the values for a two level response. It is precisely because of these sort of unbiddable hands that negative doubles were invented. You would have responded 1♠ if there was no overcall and a double of 2♣ here means just that – that you would have bid 1♠ if allowed to. Note that you do not need any more than 6 points for a negative double in this situation (but exactly the same requirements as a 1♠ bid) because partner can sign off at the two level.  
(6) West is now in exactly the same position as at (3) at Table A and again bid the invitational 3♥.  
(7) But this East correctly bid game.

The bottom lines: -

- Negative doubles solve many 'impossible' bidding problems.
- A bid of 3 of a major having bid the suit earlier is invitational in most auctions.

**(a) Bid(e) by the Law**

Board 6 from Friday 25<sup>th</sup>

In a competitive auction with the points evenly matched, how high should you go?

Dealer:	♠ KQJ54				
East	♥ KJ	West(D)	North	East	South
E-W vul	♦ 10987	-	-	pass (1)	pass
	♣ 82	pass	1♠ (2)	2♥ (3)	2♠ (4)
		3♥ (5)	pass	pass	3♠ (6)
		all pass			
♠ 86	N	♠ 73			
♥ 9632	W E	♥ A10754			
♦ AQ63	S	♦ K42			
♣ A94		♣ KJ5			
	♠ A1092				
	♥ Q8				
	♦ J5				
	♣ Q10763				

Answer: As high as the Law says.

Now none of these hands are really worth an opening bid, but it was not passed out at a single table on Friday (people did not battle through the rain to pass hands out), so let's have a look: -

- (1) This East hand looks like the closest to an opener to me. It's only 19 (for the rule of 20) but with a useful 10 and all the points in the longer suits a 1♥ opening is acceptable.
- (2) With a marginal opener in the pass-out seat, look at the ♠ suit (rule of 15), this hand just about qualifies (I suppose).
- (3) I would much prefer to have opened than to overcall here at the 2 level.
- (4) 6-9, so 2♠ is fine here.
- (5) Now West does not have the values (I mean high cards) to go to the 3 level opposite a passed partner, but that is not the issue in this situation. West knows that the points are divided about 20-20 and this is a classic situation for applying 'the Law' – bid to the level of the total number of trumps. East has promised 5♥'s and West, with a total of 9 trumps, should raise to the three level pretty much regardless of his point count. This does not invite partner to bid game (with a game invitational hand West would bid anything but 3♥).
- (6) And it's exactly the same here. South knows that N-S have 9♠'s between them and so should compete to 3♠. It may go down, but in that case 3♥ will be making.

And what happened? 3♠ went one down so 50 to E-W. But this is the 'par' result because E-W can make 3♥. And at other tables? I'm ashamed to say that two E-W pairs obviously do not understand the Law and let N-S play in a comfortable 2♠.

Incidentally, it's much the same if East decided to open 1♥. West would raise to 2♥ (to show his values) but should then compete to 3♥ if necessary because of the known 9 card fit.

The bottom lines: -

- The law of Total Tricks (in a very simplified form) states that in a competitive auction where the points are roughly even that you should compete to the level of the total number of trumps held by your side.
- 'I fought the Law,... and the Law won'

## Open 1♣?

Board 1 from Friday 25<sup>th</sup>

One of my students told me that at the ladies club in Bangkok they play that a 1♣ opening is forcing – it may be natural or a big hand or the equivalent of a weak 1NT (12-14). Now I have actually played this system (a rubber bridge session with three Scandinavians). It is very playable but it is not standard. Playing Standard you probably know by views, don't pass partner's 1♣ opening if you are short in ♣'s and can scrape up a bid, but pass with a miserable hand containing ♣'s. All sorts of horrible things happened on this deal from Friday:

Dealer:	♠ AJ32		<u>Table A</u>			
North	♥ Q83		West	North(C)	East	South
Love all	♦ AQ6		-	1NT (1)	pass	pass
	♣ AQ7		pass			
♠ K86	N	♠ 10974	<u>Table B</u>			
♥ AK54	W E	♥ 1097	West	North	East	South
♦ J1083	S	♦ K94	-	1♣ (1)	pass	pass (2)
♣ 62		♣ K53	pass (3)			
	♠ Q5		<u>Table C</u>			
	♥ J62		???? to 3NT by North			
	♦ 752					
	♣ J10984					

Table A: (1) So what did you open with this North hand C(a) in this week's quiz? Now this was the student's table and North asked me if a 1NT opening was acceptable. Now sometimes you can upgrade a hand (see next deal for a 7 count that's worth 8 or 9) but this is the total opposite. To start with it's totally flat (4333) so knock off a point. Then it has no intermediates and no touching honours (it's totally full of holes). I said that normally 19 'points' is too much for a 1NT opener but this hand really was an exception. 1NT is just about acceptable in my opinion.

Table B: (1) Now everybody else presumably thought that this was a great hand and they all opened 1♣, presumably with the intention of leaping about next go.  
(2) But luckily at this table South knew how to stop partner from leaping about.  
(3) With no ♣ length I would not pass here, but double.

Table C: I don't know the bidding, but at two tables North reached an impossible 3NT. If West doubled at (3) then North should bid 1NT – what did you bid with this North hand C(b) in this week's quiz? 1NT shows about 18-19 points and this deal shows exactly why North should not bid any more opposite a passed partner. South could (should) convert to 2♣ (provided partner realises that there's a pass card in the box). I simply do not understand how North can bid anything more than 1NT, let alone 3NT, can somebody enlighten me? Now upon checking the pair numbers I realised that one North was Jeff, so that explains one table (Jeff only takes account of the 13 cards staring him in the face and partner's inability to bid is totally irrelevant) but that does not explain the other table.

And what happened? 1♣ was the final contract twice and made +1. 1NT made exactly and so also scored +90. The silly 3NT contracts went 2 or 3 down.

The bottom line.

- Bridge is a partnership game, a flat 19 opposite zero does not make a game.

## Coffee Housing?

Board 20 from Friday 25<sup>th</sup>, love all

One very experienced pair complained to me about what they considered to be an unjustified long pause on this deal, they may well not agree with my conclusion: -

West	East (F)	West	North	East(F)	South
♠ Q103	♠ K6	1NT	pass	2♦	pass
♥ Q8	♥ KJ1093	2♥	pass	pass (1)	pass
♦ AQJ	♦ 107				
♣ KQ653	♣ 10872				

(1) East eventually passed after a long pause. What did you bid with this East hand F in this week's quiz? Now to invite (with 2NT of course) you need about 8-9 points and N-S complained to me that East, with 'only 7 points', has nothing to think about and that his pause was unethical and against the rules.

I totally disagree.

Now most of you know my preachings; points in long suits are good, tens are worth more than zero points (and 3 tens are certainly worth a point or more opposite a NT opener), a J109 combination in a 5 card suit with another honour is most certainly excellent. And combined with the other good intermediates I believe that this East hand is a perfectly acceptable 2NT bid and would make game opposite most non minimal 1NT openers.

Even opposite this average 1NT opener game is a reasonable prospect, and actually game was bid at *every* table except this one. Indeed, one of our top pairs bid and made 4♥ with these E-W cards. So it looks like Bob/Dave (and the rest of the club) agree with me (or were they all also coffee housing – anonymous (guess who!) complainer comment please?). I guess I'll have to lend the 'experienced' complainers a book on hand evaluation?

N-S think that I should reprimand East for pausing and then passing, when they believe that pass is automatic. The only thing I have to say to East is 'having thought about it, why did you not bid on?'

And don't ask me what 'coffee housing' is, I suppose it's some sort of uncomplimentary American term?

The bottom lines: -

- Anybody who looks at this East hand F and tries to tell me that it is 'only 7 points' really needs to take some lessons or read a decent modern book. I give free lessons every Wednesday and Friday and always bring along books/magazines to the club for people to borrow. I have also written a decent modern book!

Hand E But if East had this hand E then I agree that he should transfer and then pass without thinking; this hand really is 'only 7 points'.

♠ K6  
♥ KJ543  
♦ 43  
♣ 5432

## **Bidding Quiz Answers**

- Hand A: Double. A negative double promising 4 ♠'s. If you play negative doubles then a 2♦ bid here would deny 4 ♠'s.  
If you do not play negative doubles (why not?) then you would have to bid 2♦ as a 2♠ bid promises a 5 card suit. But this really is not very satisfactory as partner cannot bid ♠'s with a minimal hand (because it's a reverse) and the ♠ fit may get lost.
- Hand B: 4♥. You are not minimum and have two great ♥'s for partner.
- Hand C: (a) 1NT or 1♣. Borderline. Yes, you are not seeing things, 1NT is acceptable in my opinion. This is a really miserable 19 count. With it's totally flat shape, no intermediates and no touching honours to downgrade to 1NT is certainly reasonable. Of course I expect that most of you opened 1♣ with the intention of rebidding 2NT (18-19). Fine.  
(b) 1NT. 18-19, anything more is way overboard. When partner has passed your opening bid then you need a good hand to bid 1NT.
- Hand D: 3♥. The points are obviously fairly evenly matched and you have 9 ♥'s between you and partner; the Law says to compete to 3♥.
- Hand E: (a) Pass, in tempo. Hand E is a poor 7 count and there is no need to think. Indeed, one distinguished member says that it against the rules for an experienced player, and as he has probably called the director more times than I have had hot meals then he is probably right.  
(b) 7.
- Hand F: (a) 2NT. An invitational 2NT should be around 8-9 points but this hand has a good 5 card suit, three 10's and bundles of intermediates and I think that an invitational 2NT is fine. 2NT is preferred as 3♥ should show 6 ♥'s and an invitational hand. Anybody who thinks that pass is 'automatic' here really needs to have a word with me and I'll put them straight.  
(b) 8 or 9. If you think that hands E and F are worth the same then you really need to read up on hand evaluation.