

		<u>Winner</u>		<u>Runner-up</u>	
Mon 6 th	N-S	1 st Dave/Eddie	59%	2 nd Dinnie/Jacques	57%
	E-W	1 st Barbara & Ben Estes	55%	2 nd John/Kenneth	53%
Wed 8 th	N-S	1 st Alan/Chris	63%	2 nd Bill/Mike(Can)	58%
	E-W	1 st Jim(Can)/Tom	60%	2 nd Bob/Eddie	59%
Fri 10 th	N-S	1 st Ian/Jean-Charles	60%	2 nd Dave/Ruth	56%
	E-W	1 st Bob/Eddie	68%	2 nd Jim(Can)/Tom	56%

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 do?
♠ J	♠ KQ765	
♥ AQJ83	♥ 764	With Hand B you open 1♠ and partner bids 2♦, what do you bid now?
♦ 843	♦ A	
♣ 10854	♣ K752	
Hand C	Hand D	What do you open with Hand C?
♠ AQ10965	♠ Q109853	
♥ -	♥ 42	With Hand D you open 1♠ and LHO overcalls 2♥. This is passed round to you, what do you bid?
♦ -	♦ J10	
♣ KQ109873	♣ AKQ	
Hand E	Hand F	What do you open with Hand E?
♠ AK954	♠ 983	
♥ K43	♥ J1075	With Hand F partner opens 2NT (20-21), what do you do?
♦ AQ6	♦ Q9874	
♣ J3	♣ 5	
Hand G	Hand H	What do you open with Hand G?
♠ QJ	♠ J8	(a) What do you open with Hand H?
♥ AK64	♥ AQJ53	(b) Suppose you choose 1♥ and partner responds 1♠, then what do you bid?
♦ AKJ	♦ QJ4	
♣ Q1097	♣ A83	
Hand J	Hand K	With Hand J you open 1♥ (because you do not play Benji) and partner responds 1♠, what do you bid now?
♠ 543	♠ Q1098	
♥ KQJ10874	♥ 87	With Hand K partner opens 1♥ and you respond 1♠. Partner the bids 2♣, what do you bid?
♦ AQ5	♦ A1098	
♣ -	♣ K92	

Bidding Sequences Quiz

All of the following occurred this/last week

- L 1NT - 2NT - 3♠ No opposition bidding. What is 3♠? Is it forcing?
- M 1♠ 2♥(overcall) pass pass 2♠ Normally I would expect opener to re-open with a double, so what is this 2♠ bid?
- N 1♥ - 1♠ - 3♥ No opposition bidding. Is 3♥ invitational or forcing?
- P 1♥ - 1♠ - 4♥ No opposition bidding. Is 4♥ strong or shut-out (fast arrival)?

Open 1NT with a 5-card major? – part 1

Board 3 from Monday 6th Feb.

Dealer: ♠ AK954

South ♥ K43

E-W vul ♦ AQ6

♣ J3

♠ J1072

N

♠ 63

♥ QJ96

W E

♥ A52

♦ 109

S

♦ K8543

♣ 952

♣ K107

♠ Q8

♥ 1087

♦ J72

♣ AQ864

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

- (1) What did you open with this North hand E in this week's quiz? Some people like to allow a 5-card major in their 1NT opening and I certainly do not disagree. But I would open 1♠, not because it's a good ♠ suit, but because the hand is too good for 1NT in my opinion. A 5 card suit headed by the AK is a big plus and so I would open 1♠ with a jump rebid in NT in mind as a response. However, there's not much in it and 1NT would be my 2nd choice as opener
- (2) 2NT is fine here, but with a good 5 card suit and excellent intermediates I would bid 3NT.
- (3) If I had decided to open 1NT then I too would bid 3♠ here – it accepts the game invitation and shows a 5 card ♠ suit.
- (4) Clearly South did not understand what was going on.

And what happened? 3NT or 4♠ make, six pairs bid game but three somehow went down.

The bottom lines: -

- Upgrade a hand with a good 5 card suit.
- Opening 1NT with a 5 card major is up to partnership understanding. Most experts do these days.

Which slam? – part 1

Board 12 from Wednesday 1st Feb.

Dealer: ♠ 10642
West ♥ A753
N-S vul ♦ 75
♣ Q76

♠ -	N	♠ AQJ8
♥ J106	W E	♥ KQ2
♦ A10632	S	♦ KQJ4
♣ AK542		♣ 103
	♠ K9753	
	♥ 984	
	♦ 98	
	♣ J98	

Table A

West	North	East	South
1♦	pass	1♠	pass
2♣	pass	2♥ (1)	pass
2NT (2)	pass	4NT (3)	pass
5♣ (4)	pass	6NT (5)	all pass

Table B

West	North	East	South
1♦	pass	1♠	pass
2♣	pass	2♥ (1)	pass
3♣ (2)	pass	3♦ (6)	pass
4♣ (7)	pass	4NT (8)	pass
5♥ (9)	pass	6♦ (10)	all pass

- Table A: (1) 4th suit forcing. My preferred treatment is that the 4th suit is game forcing – it really makes life easy.
- (2) The first priority when responding to partner's 4th suit bid is to show a stop for NT. Now this is not a real stop, but it nearly is (any honour, even singleton, in partner's hand guarantees a stop). Anyway, it's not really important for this auction and the alternative of 3♣ would presumably have led to the same final contract.
- (3) I much prefer the bid at Table B. This was presumably RKCB with ♣'s as the trump suit??
- (4) This E-W pair play 1430. Now there are mechanisms to show a useful void in response to Blackwood, but E-W had not agreed this and a void in partner's suit is not usually useful. So West simply responded 5♣ (3 key cards playing 1430).
- (5) West has shown no more than a minimal opener with 5 ♦'s. So East can only count on something like 30-32 combined points – not usually enough for 6NT. But it should be enough for slam with a known 5-4 fit and I think that East should bid 6♦ here.

- Table B: (2) This West chose 3♣, fine.
- (6) The 4th suit at (1) set up a game force, so this sets trumps. Excellent bidding.
- (7) A cue bid. I think this is better than cue bidding the void in partner's suit.
- (8) RKCB for ♦'s.
- (9) 2 key cards without the ♦Q.
- (10) A very sensible and logical bid. Good bidding throughout. Well done guys.

And what happened? Three pairs reached 6NT and all went the obvious -1. Four pairs stopped in 3NT. Just the one pair bid the excellent ♦ slam.

The bottom lines: -

- 30 to 32 combined points is not usually enough for 6NT, but usually is enough for a suit slam with a 5-4 fit.
- Every pair play 4th suit forcing differently, but I definitely think it's best to play it as forcing to game, especially for non established partnerships. It really make bidding easier.

Which slam? – part 2

Board 15 from Wednesday 1st Feb.

Dealer: ♠ Q6
South ♥ 965
N-S vul ♦ 10943
♣ 8642

♠ 543	N	♠ AK1092
♥ KQJ10874	W E	♥ A2
♦ AQ5	S	♦ KJ7
♣ -		♣ AJ10
	♠ J87	
	♥ 3	
	♦ 862	
	♣ KQ9753	

Table A

West(J)	North	East	South
1♥	pass	1♠	pass
4♥ (1)	pass	4NT (2)	pass
5♠ (3)	pass	6♥ (4)	all pass

Benji Table

West	North	East	South
2♣ (1)	pass	2♦ (5)	pass
2♥ (6)	pass	4NT (7)	pass
5♠ (8)	pass	7NT (9)	al pass

- Table A: (1) What was your answer to sequences N and P in this weeks bidding sequences? I go into it below. What did you bid with this West hand J in this week's quiz? I think that either 3♥ or 4♥ are reasonable, this West considered the hand worth 4♥ after partner had responded in ♠'s, fine.
- (2) RKCB
- (3) Two key-cards and the ♥Q. Now there are methods to show a useful void in response to Blackwood, But E-W had no agreed this and West did not know if the void was useful and East would not know which suit it was anyway. Apart from that, I think the 5♠ response is clearly best as it shows the trump queen.
- (4) Quite why East stopped in the small slam knowing that partner had a big hand with the ♦A and ♥KQ is a bit baffling – more of this later. I would either enquire about kings, 5NT (thus promising all key cards present – in which case West would have simply bid 7♥ because he had a void) or else simply bid 7♥ or preferably 7NT.
- Table B: (1) Benji – 8 playing tricks in this instance. Actually this hand is only 7 1/2 but I think it's worth a strong two.
- (5) Automatic relay.
- (6) 8 playing tricks in ♥'s.
- (7) RKCB
- (8) Two key cards and ♥Q
- (9) 8 tricks opposite at least 5 = 13 so 7NT. Easy, eh?

And what happened? Just one pair bid the grand (the same pair who bid the good 6♦ on the previous page, good show chaps), most stopped in 6♥.

The bottom lines: -

- Let's discuss sequences N (1♥ - 1♠ - 3♥) & P (1♥ - 1♠ - 4♥).

3♥ is invitational with a good ♥ suit. Around 16-18 points including distribution.

4♥ is a stronger hand that expects to make 4♥ opposite most 1♠ responding hands even with a ♥ void. It is not a weak shut out bid (as two experienced players at the table thought). It is not fast arrival (fast arrival is generally only applicable in game forcing situations). West's 4♥ bid showed a *very* strong hand, just short of a 2♣ opener, it should be the equivalent of about 19 points in playing strength and by inference has some ♠'s as partner's 1♠ bid presumably improved the hand as it did not open 2♣.

If 3NT is a sensible option – then bid it?Board 21 from Wednesday 1st Feb.

An all-too familiar title in the news sheets which apparently is not heeded enough. Not a single pair from 9 tables found 3NT on this board: -

Dealer: ♠ K532
 North ♥ QJ95
 E-W vul ♦ K542
 ♣ 2

♠ J764	N	♠ 108
♥ 86432	W E	♥ A7
♦ AJ10	S	♦ 6
♣ K		♣ AQJ109763
	♠ AQ9	
	♥ K10	
	♦ Q9873	
	♣ 854	

Table A

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

Table B

West	North	East	South
-	pass	2♣ (5)	dbl (6)
2♦ (7)	pass	3♣ (8)	pass
3♥ (9)	pass	4♣ (10)	pass
5♣ (11)	all pass		

- Table A: (1) Showing a good hand and good ♣ suit
 (2) With just 5 ♦'s I would pass.
 (3) Meant as penalties. I guess that it may be tempting at this vulnerability but I cannot see that a penalty double is a good idea at the 3 level when opponents have agreed the suit. To start with, this West hand probably has at most 2 defensive tricks and 3♦ may well make (looks like it easily does to me) and partner is obviously short in ♦'s and may well (wisely!) pull the double. I would simply bid 3NT.
 (4) Clearly East cannot stand to defend 3♦ doubled and sensibly pulled it. Retrospectively (or maybe it's just that I've seen all 4 hands?) I suppose that East (me) could have punted 3NT.
- Table B: (5) This pair play Benjamin twos.
 (6) I have no idea what this double is
 (7) I don't know E-W's agreements here, I would pass.
 (8) Showing (a good 8+) playing tricks in ♣'s.
 (9) With the important ♣K and something else in every suit I would bid 3NT. Partner has shown long ♣'s and it's unlikely that ♥'s is the best strain.
 (10) East is now in much the same spot as his counterpart at Table A at (4). He could punt 3NT but chose 4♣ (as I did at Table A).

And what happened? 5♣ was bid 5 out of 9 times and went down. There were other spurious results but nobody found the totally solid 3NT.

The bottom lines: -

- 3NT is usually better than 5♣/♦ with a good long minor suit.
- With a double stop in the opponent's suit (♦'s at Table A) bid NT.

One, two, that'll do? - Understanding negative doubles Board 30 from Monday 6th Feb.

One, two, that'll do? Often good advice, but absolutely not in this situation. I have tried, on numerous occasions (even very emphatically in just last week's news-sheet) to demonstrate the need for the 'automatic' re-opening double when playing negative doubles. Yet I witnessed **at least** two very experienced players messing this one up.

Dealer:	♠ J		West	North(A)	East	South(D)
East	♥ AQJ83		-	-	pass	1♠
Love all	♦ 843		2♥	pass (1)	pass	2♠ (2)
	♣ 10854		pass	2NT	pass	3♠
			pass	3NT	all pass	
♠ AK4	N	♠ 762				
♥ K10975	W E	♥ 6				
♦ Q2	S	♦ AK9765				
♣ 976		♣ J32				
	♠ Q109853					
	♥ 42					
	♦ J10					
	♣ AKQ					

- (1) What did you bid with this North hand A in this week's quiz? 50 years ago you would make a penalty double, but things have moved on since then and virtually everybody plays negative doubles – quite right too. So what do you do when you hold a penalty double hand as you cannot now double for penalties? Why, you simply pass of course, and await opener's 'automatic' re-opening double and then pass that for penalties.
- (2) But it seems that my years of preaching about negative doubles have been falling on a number of deaf ears. What did you bid with this South hand D in this week's quiz? Double is 'automatic' here. This is a sound opener and should most certainly re-open with the 'automatic' double. Note that if partner does not have the penalty pass hand nothing is lost as he usually simply bids your suit (so 2♠ here) if he has a weak hand.

And what happened? Looks like every West got let off the hook as nobody defended 2♥ doubled. Mind you, the computer says that 2♥ makes – but that is by N-S! It's a shame that people do not know how to get their big penalties!

The bottom lines: -

- When you play negative doubles you have to understand that opener should **virtually always** re-open with a double when LHO overcalls and it gets passed back to you. There are **very few** exceptions to this 'automatic' double.
- Note that double at (2) is not a negative double or a take our double, is simply an 'automatic' double to state that you actually had 13 cards when you decided to open the hand.
- I made the same point very emphatically just last week, but it seems that a **number** of experienced players got it wrong and bid 2♠ here. And I repeat – **they got it wrong** – this is not 'a view' or 'one, two that'll do'. If you do not realise or accept that you have to double at (2) then I suggest that you give up playing negative doubles.
- The 'automatic' re-opening double is only applicable when LHO overcalls and partner and RHO pass. If LHO and partner pass and RHO bids then you need a good hand to double.
- And if LHO overcalls, partner passes and RHO bids then opener is no longer under any obligation to bid.

How many points for a 2♣ opener?

Board 6 from Wednesday 8th Feb.

I've been all over this before (news-sheet 152, 156). In old – fashioned Standard American a 2♣ opening was 23+ points. Most people these days play 22+ for a balanced hand, but that's a minor change. The thing that's 'new' these days is that it is recommended to open 2♣ on any hand that has game (or virtually game – say one trick short) in it's own hand. Hand A from news-sheet 156 was very strong in playing strength but had only 13 points. I stated then to my partner that I require some sort of minimal point count for a 2♣ opener (otherwise responder does not really know what's going on). There was a similar problem hand in news-sheet 152. And we again had a similar sort of situation on Wednesday: -

Dealer:	♠ -				
East	♥ J763	West	North	East(C)	South
E-W vul	♦ A9865432	-	-	2♣ (1)	pass
	♣ 5	2♥	5♦ (2)	5♠ (3)	pass
		6♠ (4)	pass	pass	dbl
		all pass			
♠ 83	N	♠ AQ10965			
♥ AKQ95	W E	♥ -			
♦ K107	S	♦ -			
♣ AJ2		♣ KQ109873			
	♠ KJ742				
	♥ 10842				
	♦ QJ				
	♣ 64				

- (1) What did you open with this East hand C in this week's quiz? It is a very powerful hand and, as I said above, the modern style in Standard American is to open 2♣. I didn't like it back in news-sheets 152 and 156 and I don't like it now. With strong two-suiters I believe that it is unwise to open 2♣ - simply bid it naturally. I would open 1♣ and then make forcing ♠ bids (or else open 1♠ and then jump in ♣'s). Bear in mind that there is zero chance of being passed out in 1♣ when you have two voids! And the bidding is very likely to get very high very quickly – an excellent reason for bidding your suits naturally with a two-suiter.
- (2) North enquired if the 2♣ opening was this 'new style' (strong but maybe not loads of points). Upon being informed by West that that was indeed the case he threw his spanner in the works as high as he thought was sensible.
- (3) And here we see just another one of the problems with this 'new style 2♣ opening'. East has no room to show both suits and knew nothing much about partner's hand. So there's really little option but to bid 5♠.
- (4) And West clearly has enough to bid slam. Indeed, I would be thinking of a grand slam opposite a 'proper' 2♣ opener.

And what happened? Other results were all over the place. I don't know the bidding at other tables but I do know that one East opened a multi 2♦ (orthodoxy weak I believe) and another opened 1♣. The bottom lines: -

- It's up to you how you play your 2♣ opener. My personal views are :-
- Don't open 2♣ with strong two-suiters.
- Have some sort of sensible minimum point count for 2♣ (I suggested 18 in news-sheet 156).
- Play Benjamin twos (but I would still open 1♣ (or 1♠) with a two-suiter like this even if playing Benjamin.

'Bristling with Intermediates'

Board 12 from Monday 6th Feb.

I was asked two questions about this deal. South's opening and North's response if South opens 2NT.

Dealer:	♠ 983				
West	♥ J1075	West	North(F)	East	South(G)
N-S vul	♦ Q9874	pass	pass	pass	2NT (1)
	♣ 5	pass	pass (2)	pass	

♠ 10752	N	♠ AK64
♥ 93	W E	♥ Q82
♦ 653	S	♦ 102
♣ AK83		♣ J642
	♠ QJ	
	♥ AK64	
	♦ AKJ	
	♣ Q1097	

- (1) What did you open with this South hand G in this week's quiz? To me it's very clear, 2NT, 20-21 balanced. Note that a 2NT opening (just like a 1NT opening) does not promise a stop in every suit. It simply shows a balanced hand within your specified point range. If you open anything but 2NT you will have a rebid problem.
- (2) Now we come to the real point (the previous question was trivial). What did you do with this North hand F in this week's quiz? When I was asked, I said that I would not pass. This North hand is not 3 points – it has good shape and great intermediates, it's really worth about 5 points, even more if a ♥ fit comes to light. I said that I would bid 3♣ (Stayman) and raise 3♥ to 4♥ and bid 3NT over a 3♦/♠ response. Those were my words of wisdom, but a few disagreed, saying that the hand is not good enough. OK. For the feint hearted I'll accept that Dave's proposal of bidding 3♣ and then passing any response (so Garbage Stayman at the 3 level) is perhaps an equally good idea. Either way, I most certainly would not pass 2NT.

And what happened? Two pairs bid game, six pairs did not. 4♥ (or 3♥) is a good contract, 2NT is not.

The Bottom lines: -

- When evaluating hands, take shape into account.
- When evaluating hands, take tens and intermediates into account.
- 3451 is a very good shape (unless you know that partner has ♣'s).
- You can still play Garbage Stayman over a 2NT opener.
- A 2NT opening does not guarantee a stop in every suit.

Open 1NT with a 5-card major? – part 2

Board 20 from Friday 10th Feb.

Dealer: ♠ Q1098
West ♥ 87
E-W vul ♦ A1098
♣ K92

West	North(K)	East	South(H)
pass	pass	pass	1♥ (1)
pass	1♠	pass	1NT (2)
pass	pass (3)	pass	

♠ 7532	N	♠ AK6
♥ K	W E	♥ 109642
♦ K53	S	♦ 762
♣ QJ654		♣ 107
	♠ J8	
	♥ AQJ53	
	♦ QJ4	
	♣ A83	

- (1) What did you open with this South hand H(a) in this week's quiz? It's the same old question with the same old answer – open 1NT and you never have a rebid problem.
- (2) And here we see the obvious problem. What did you bid with this South hand H(b) in this week's quiz (assuming that you open 1♥). There are a couple of reasonable alternatives; 2♣ or 2♥. 1NT is **not** a reasonable alternative – with this good 5 card suit this hand is an excellent 15++ points and far too good for a 12-14 rebid.
- (3) This North hand would have gone to game opposite a 1NT opener but this North decided it was not worth an effort opposite 12-14. However, if South had bid 2♣ at (2) then I would try 2NT with this hand, did you with hand K in this week's quiz?

And What happened? 1NT (+1 or +2) was a popular spot, and since it was by South on 4 occasions I can only assume that 4 players found this same poor 1NT rebid by South? The bottom lines: -

- The usual about allowing 5-card majors in your 1NT opening.
- Do not lie with your NT rebids. A 1NT rebid is 12-14, if you rebid 1NT with a good 15 you will miss games.

Bidding Sequence Answers

L 1NT - 2NT - 3♠

3♠ accepts the game invitation and shows 5 ♠'s, offering 4♠ as an alternative contract if responder has 3 ♠'s.

M 1♠ 2♥(overcall) pass pass 2♠

2♠ shows a hand that was a miserable opener and has no defensive tricks against a possible 2♥ doubled contract. A very rare hand indeed as double is 'automatic' here.

N 1♥ - 1♠ - 3♥

3♥ is invitational. Typically around 17 points.

P 1♥ - 1♠ - 4♥

4♥ is very strong. It's the equivalent of about 19 points counting distribution with a self-sufficient ♥ suit. It most certainly is not fast arrival.

Bidding Quiz Answers

- Hand A: Pass. You would obviously like to double for penalties but you cannot as you play negative doubles. So you pass and await partner's 'automatic' re-opening double which you then happily pass and collect the big penalty on offer.
- Hand B: 2♠ or 2NT. I am perfectly happy with either. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays I will bid 2NT. On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays I'll bid 2♠. It does not really matter, but if you play a 4-card major system then it's obviously 2♠. But the important thing is that you cannot bid 3♣ as that shows a big hand. You can only bid 3♣ here if you have agreed that it does not show extra values - most 2/1 players have this agreement as there is no need bid 3♣ with a big hand as the 2♦ response is game forcing when playing 2/1.
- Hand C: 1♣ (or perhaps 1♠ if you really prefer that). Now the modern style in Standard American is to open 2♣ when you have game (or nearly game) in your own hand – I don't like it. Call me old fashioned if you wish, but I still like to have a reasonable point count (say 18+) for a 2♣ (or Benji 2♦) opener. Note that there is no chance that your 1♣ opening will get passed out (as you have two voids, somebody will bid) and you can then make forcing noises in ♠'s.
- Hand D: Double. You do not even have to look at your cards again. Double here is automatic when you play negative doubles. If you think that 2♠ is correct then I respectfully suggest that you are playing single-handed bridge (ignoring partner). You most certainly have to double with this hand – and if partner does not have the hoped for ♥ stack he will doubtless bid 2♠ anyway. Double loses nothing, 2♠ loses 500.
- Hand E: 1♠. I would not open 1NT because I think the hand is too strong!. So I would treat it as 18 points, open 1♠ and jump in NT next go.
- Hand F: 3♣, Stayman. I would never pass this hand as I think it's worth a shot at game (the shape and intermediates make it much more than 3 points). However, I would not argue if you took the more conservative approach (bid 3♣ Garbage Stayman and pass any response). Either way, I would not pass. If you play Puppet Stayman over 2NT then you are committed to game and I have no problem with that.
- Hand G: 2NT. A balanced 20-21. A 2NT opener (like a 1NT opener) does not guarantee a stop in every suit.
- Hand H: (a) 1NT. A good balanced 15 count. If you do not open 1NT with these hand types you will have a rebid problem.
(b) 2♥ or 2♣. These are the only real two poor choices from a poor selection. 1NT (12-14) is a very poor bid as this is a very good 15 points, so either rebid the ♥'s or invent a ♣ suit rather than lie about your points.
- Hand J: 4♥. Partner's 1♠ bid has improved this hand and I think it's now worth game. I guess an invitational 3♥ is OK but a bit timid for me. 4♥ here shows a very big hand and partner is invited to bid on, it is most definitely not fast arrival or shut-out.
- Hand K: 2NT. This hand is worth a game invitation when partner may have up to 15 or so points and the expected ♦ lead will certainly not hurt in NT.

Bidding Sequence Answers are on the previous page.