

Mon 26 th	26 th	Clive & Dennis	66%	2 nd	Bob Short & Gerry	60%
Wed 28 th	28 th	Clive & Terry	74%	2 nd	Bob P & Ivy	58%
Fri 30 th	30 th	Jan & Phil	63%	2 nd	Hugh & Sally	61%

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?
♠ AJ53	♠ 9752	
♥ 32	♥ J654	With Hand B RHO opens 1♦, LHO bids 2♦ and this is passed round to you. What do you do?
♦ 108	♦ 9	
♣ Q10963	♣ A864	With Hand C it's favourable vulnerability. Partner opens 1♣ and RHO overcalls 1♦, what do you bid?
Hand C	Hand D	
♠ J83	♠ K4	With Hand D LHO opens 1♦ and RHO bids 2♦.
♥ AKJ3	♥ AQ103	(a) What do you do?
♦ A10973	♦ J1086	(b) Suppose you pass and this goes round to partner who doubles (take-out), what do you bid now?
♣ 9	♣ KQ9	
Hand E	Hand F	With Hand E partner opens 1♠ and you bid 2♦. Partner then bids 2♥, what do you bid?
♠ A53	♠ 4	
♥ A6	♥ AJ1085	With Hand F it's unfavourable vulnerability. RHO opens a weak NT and you choose to overcall a natural 2♥. LHO doubles (penalty) and partner bids 2♠. What do you do?
♦ KJ1043	♦ K10632	
♣ KJ6	♣ K10	

Bidding Sequences Quiz

G	1NT	pass	pass	2♠	
	dbl				what is the double by opener; penalties or take-out?
H	1♣	1♥	1♠		after the overcall, how many ♠'s does 1♠ show, and how many points?
J	1♣	1♥	dbl		after the overcall, how many ♠'s does dbl show, and how many points?

There is no interference in the following sequences: -

K	1♣ - 1♠ - 2♦	what is 2♦?
L	1♣ - 1♠ - 3♦	what is 3♦?
M	1♠ - 2♥ - 3♦	what is 3♦?
N	1♠ - 2♥ - 4♦	what is 4♦?

Take-out double with 5 points?

Board 9 from Wednesday 28th

A take-out double at the 1-level should be close to opening strength; but things are different in the balancing seat: -

Dealer: ♠ A1063
North ♥ 72
E-W vul ♦ AK42
♣ J107

Table A

West(D)	North	East(B)	South
-	1♦	pass	2♦ (1)
pass (2)	pass	pass (3)	

♠ K4	N	♠ 9752
♥ AQ103	W E	♥ J654
♦ J1086	S	♦ 9
♣ KQ9		♣ A864
	♠ QJ8	
	♥ K98	
	♦ Q753	
	♣ 532	

Table B

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

- Table A: (1) 1NT is a sound alternative. If playing better minor I would bid 1NT but playing a short ♣ (so partner has 4+ ♦'s) then 2♦ is probably best.
- (2) What did you bid with this West hand D(a) in this week's quiz? I totally agree with this pass. To bid would be sticking your neck out as you are vulnerable opposite a silent partner and LHO is unlimited. And you have no sensible bid anyway; 2NT is too high and if you double partner will probably bid 2♠.
- (3) But it's different in this seat. What did you bid with this East hand B in this week's quiz? I bet most people passed?

- Table B: (3) But I am not 'most people'. I was East and made a balancing double. It's strange for the less experienced to understand, but a double here with this weak hand is a much sounder bid than any noise from West at (2). That is because this is the 'balancing' seat – the auction had died and so you know that partner has values. Some may say that 5 points is a bit light – but it has great shape! The main point is that partner is very likely to have 15+ points but no bid over 2♦ in the sandwich seat.
- (4) What did you bid with this West hand D(b) in this week's quiz? This West also knew all about balancing. But East could have had as much as a 10 count and 3♥ is the value bid. To bid 4♥ is a good way to lose partners – it is called hanging partner – and he will never balance again.

And what happened? 3♥ made exactly for a clear top. At every other table N-S were left to play peacefully in ♦'s and made 7,8 or 9 tricks.

The bottom lines: -

- Understand balancing.
- And if your partner understands balancing there is no need to come in with a flat 15 count in the 'sandwich' seat (i.e. at (2)).
- And when partner does balance, don't go bonkers. An excellent guide is to assume that you hold a king less than you really do. 3♥ by West at (4) was spot on.

Negative double to show the other major

Board 5 from Wednesday 28th

Playing negative doubles one should double to show the other major. A failure to do so may fix you when partner re-opens with a double as expected: -

Dealer: ♠ 642

North ♥ 85

N-S vul ♦ 73

♣ AJ8542

♠ AJ53

N

♠ KQ108

♥ 32

W E

♥ AQJ74

♦ 108

S

♦ J65

♣ Q10963

♣ K

♠ 97

♥ K1096

♦ AKQ942

♣ 7

Table A

West(A)	North	East	South
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-	pass	1♥	2♦
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pass (1)	pass	dbl (2)	pass
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2♥ (3)	all pass		
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'Expert Table'

West(A)	North	East	South
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-	pass	1♥	2♦
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dbl (1)	pass	2♠ (4)	all pass
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Table A: (1) What did you bid with this West hand A in this week's quiz? If RHO had passed you would clearly bid 1♠, and I play negative doubles to mean exactly that – that you would have bid the unbid major. Some people demand more points at the two level but I think that 7 is fine if you have tolerance for partner's suit (♥32 is just about tolerance). Another way to look at it is that if you do not make a negative double then you will be fixed after partner's 'automatic' re-opening double.

(2) An automatic double when playing negative doubles.

(3) And West is fixed as he cannot now show the ♠ suit at a safe level.

'Expert' (1) Our experts knows when to negative double.

Table: (4) East has a very nice hand in support of ♠'s, but I don't think it's quite good enough for 3♠ (the ♣K singleton is poor and so is ♦Jxx).

And what happened? 2♥ did not play nicely at table A and went one down. Everybody else found the ♠ fit but got too high (3♠ and 4♠) going one or two down.

The bottom lines: -

- In my style, a negative double promises 4 in the unbid major and values to compete to two of that major or of partner's suit (so 6 points are enough).
- So double at (1) is exactly the same as bidding 1♠ if South had passed.

A 5-3 fit is not always better than NT

Board 5 from Friday 30th

We all know that a 4-4 fit is usually better than NoTrump. With a 5-3 fit it's usually safer to play in the fit rather than NT. But the exception (when NT is better than either 4-4 or 5-3) is when you have bundles of points and expect to make 11 or 12 tricks in any contract: -

Dealer: ♠ KQ1076
 West ♥ QJ83
 Love all ♦ AQ2
 ♣ 9

Table A

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

♠ J9	N	♠ 842
♥ K975	W E	♥ 1042
♦ 9765	S	♦ 8
♣ 1052		♣ AQ8743
	♠ A53	
	♥ A6	
	♦ KJ1043	
	♣ KJ6	

Table B

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

'Expert Table'

West	North	East	South(E)
pass	1♠	pass	2♦
pass	2♥	pass	2♠ (1)
pass	3♦ (2)	pass	3♥ (3)
pass	4♣ (4)	pass	4NT (5)
pass	5♠ (6)	pass	6♠ or 6NT (7)

Table A: (1) What did you bid with this East hand E in this week's quiz? 16 points opposite a minimum opener will not usually make slam and I don't know how to sensibly investigate slam in basic Standard American. 4♠ was the overwhelming choice at the table. Probably the best bid is 3♣ (4th suit) and after partner's 3♦ response you can bid 3♠, forcing, and maybe get to slam but you still don't know if partner has a suitable hand.

Table B: (1) But this South (me) likes to be different! I knew that we probably had a combined 28-30 points and no sensible way of investigating slam. I also thought that a 5-3 fit is not going to produce an extra trick (as opposed to No Trump) and so my answer to question E was 3NT. I felt that the ♣KJx may need protecting from the opening lead and that 3NT by South would probably make the same number of tricks as 4♠ by North.

'Expert' Table: (1) But for our experts, who play 2/1 of course, slam hands like this are routine!
 This 2♠ bid is game forcing and shows slam interest when playing 2/1. Just look how much room our experts now have to exchange information: -

- (2) A cue bid, showing the ♦A and denying the ♣A.
- (3) A cue bid, ♥A.
- (4) A cue bid, 2nd round ♣ control.
- (5) RKC Blackwood
- (6) 2 key cards and the ♠Q
- (7) South knows that North has a ♣ singleton and therefore something decent in the red suits. 6NT is probably the best bid now (for the reasons I outlined above about protecting the ♣ KJx).

And what happened? I was right (my thoughts at table B); the computer says that South makes 12 tricks in No Trump, North makes 12 tricks in ♠'s but North will only make 11 tricks in NoTrump. One pair did bid 6♠ but I don't know the bidding. 3NT made the obvious 12 tricks and scored next to top. Everybody else seemed to give no thought to NoTrump and bid as Table A, sharing the bottom. Everybody made 12 tricks in any contract of course.

The bottom lines: -

- 2/1 makes slam bidding a walk in the park.
- I don't know how to sensibly bid slam if not playing 2/1. South leaping off into Blackwood at (1) is a wild gamble in my opinion. And 3♣ (4th suit) does not really help.
- With loads of points (say 28-30) and good cover in all suits, think about 3NT rather than a 4-4 or 5-3 major suit contract.
- And think about No Trumps if it protects a tenace (the ♣KJx in this case).

Don't pull partner's run-out

Board 12 from Wed 28th

When the opponents are in doubling mode and they have you by the short and curlies, do not pull partner's rescue at the two level into a mediocre suit of your own at the three level – it will cost: -

Dealer:	♠ 4				
West	♥ AJ1085	West	North(F)	East	South
N-S vul	♦ K10632	1NT (1)	2♥ (2)	dbl (3)	2♠
	♣ K10	pass	3♦ (4)	dbl (3)	3♥
		pass	pass	dbl (3)	all pass
♠ A75	N	♠ K10			
♥ 92	W E	♥ Q764	(1) Playing a weak NT, so 12-14.		
♦ AQ4	S	♦ J75	(2) Natural		
♣ Q9842		♣ AJ76	(3) Penalties		
	♠ QJ98632		(4) A poor decision. And note that there is no		
	♥ K3		need to rush into 3♦ as 2♠ may not get		
	♦ 98		doubled, but even if it is North should pass.		
	♣ 53				

And what happened? 3♥ doubled went minus three for 800. At other tables South was making 8 tricks in ♠'s. Whether East would have doubled 2♠ had North passed it we will never know for sure, but I suspect he would have and N-S would then get a top.

The bottom lines: -

- Normally when you are 5-5 you should bid the higher ranking suit and later bid the other one. But when the opponent's clearly have you out-gunned and have already doubled you, it is suicide to pull partner's bid to a new suit at the 3-level.
- If you play Multi Landy (or Cappelletti) where 2♥ shows ♥'s and a minor then the same reason exists for not pulling the 2♠ bid. In fact it is explicitly written up in my sheet on Multi Landy that a new suit is natural, long and to play.

You don't miss the penalty when playing negative doubles

Board 25 from Wed 28th

It is a myth that you miss out on penalty doubles when you play negative doubles. In fact, you often get them one level higher: -

Dealer: ♠ Q742
North ♥ Q942
E-W vul ♦ 5
♣ AK63

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

♠ 10965	N	♠ AK
♥ 875	W E	♥ 106
♦ 42	S	♦ KQJ86
♣ QJ74		♣ 10852
	♠ J83	
	♥ AKJ3	
	♦ A10973	
	♣ 9	

- (1) What did you bid with this South hand C in this week's quiz? N-S probably have game but that's not certain. What is certain is that it is favourable vulnerability and East will not make 1♦. So pass, and pass partner's automatic re-opening double, to collect the vulnerable penalty.
- (2) I have no idea why West bid here. I believe that he did not understand negative doubles and assumed that South had nothing for his pass?
- (3) And with AK in partner's suit I would pass.
- (4) Finally showing his hand. And note that it's one level higher than a penalty double at (1) would have been.

And what happened? 2♦ doubled went minus two for 500, beating the two N-S pairs in 4♥. At the end of the deal E-W asked how South can pass with such a good hand. I explained that he was hoping to defend 1♦ doubled, as would have been the case had West passed.

The bottom lines: -

- Be wary of responder passing after his partner's opening is overcalled – if playing negative doubles he may well have a very big hand.
- Do not remove partner's overcall with a flat 3 count.
- Playing negative doubles often 'traps' the opponents one level higher – this is most certainly not the first time I've seen it happen.

Bidding Quiz Answers

- Hand A: Dbl. Negative showing 4 ♠'s and values to compete to 2♠ or 2♥ (so 7 points is enough). Pass is a poor bid because partner will re-open with a double and you are then fixed and cannot show ♠'s safely.
- Hand B: Dbl. The auction has died and partner has values. This is called balancing – some may say it's a bit light but I think that the ideal shape is enough compensation.
- Hand C: Pass, and pass partner partner's automatic double. You will probably make game if partner has 4 ♥'s but there is no reason to assume that. So I prefer to take the vulnerable money rather than make a negative double (showing 4 ♥'s) in search of a non-vul game.
- Hand D: (a) Pass. This is the 'sandwich' seat and any bid with a flat hand is very dangerous as partner has said nothing and LHO is unlimited. There is no need to 'show your strength' if you/partner understand balancing; and if you got the answer to B above right then you certainly do. Note that double is a poor bid as partner will doubtless bid 2♠ and where do you go from there?
(b) 3♥. You have enough to make an effort. But remember that partner's double is a balancing double and could be as few as 6 points. If you chose 4♥ here that is called 'hanging partner' and is a good way to convert a top into a bottom.
- Hand E: 3NT. There is a known 5-3 ♠ fit, but with loads (28-30) of points and the outside suits well covered I prefer to protect the ♣K and go for the No trump game. 4NT (Blackwood) is an optimistic gamble in my opinion. A bid that is probably better than 3NT is 3♣ (4th suit) but I still cannot see how to safely negotiate slam. But easily the best bid is: - 2♠. Provided you play 2/1. In 2/1 this is game forcing and slam invitational and everything is then very easy (cue bids etc. to slam if there is one).
- Hand F: Pass. Partner has a long ♠ suit and bidding at the 3 level with 3♦ is suicidal as you know you will get doubled.

Bidding Sequences Answers

- G 1NT pass pass 2♠ the double by the 1NT opener is penalties. He has a good 1NT opening with excellent ♠'s (very good 4 card or 5 card).
dbl
- H 1♣ 1♥ 1♠ playing negative doubles; 1♠ shows 5+ ♠'s and 6+ points.
- J 1♣ 1♥ dbl playing negative doubles; dbl shows 4 ♠'s and 6+ points.

There is no interference in the following sequences: -

- K 1♣ - 1♠ - 2♦ 2♦ is a natural forcing reverse.
- L 1♣ - 1♠ - 3♦ 3♦ is one above the forcing natural bid and so is a splinter.
- M 1♠ - 2♥ - 3♦ 3♦ is natural and game forcing. Sometimes called a high reverse.
- N 1♠ - 2♥ - 4♦ 4♦ is one above the forcing natural bid and so is a splinter.