

IRISH BRIDGE Journal

Spring 2024

Welcome

Welcome all to the Spring 2024 Journal. In addition to our usual features, there are a few non-recurring items of interest this time around.



Enda Murphy, Editor

I'm delighted that our seasoned international, Ranald Milne, has sent me his article on Muppet Stayman. It's a genuine improvement on Puppet Stayman, and anyone playing Puppet stands to benefit. As a matter of fact, one or two of my contacts in international Bridge journalism have expressed interest in reproducing the article - well done Ranald, great to have Ireland to the fore! Ranald is already finalising a follow-up treatment of slam bidding using Muppet, which will hopefully appear next issue.

Michael Mullen, President of Dargle Bridge Club, got in touch in relation to a new initiative of theirs, details of which appear in this issue. Their aim is to smooth the transition of recent new learners over to regular Novice competition. I must say their thinking is really progressive, and I've no doubt that other clubs will be quick to adopt these ideas. As I've said before, I'm always happy to feature noteworthy initiatives/milestones at Club level - the bread and butter of our game. So please have a think about replicating the Dargle initiative, and let me know of anything noteworthy relating to your own Club.

Rory Timlin concludes his excellent series on Squeezes in this issue. He'll then move on to cover Master Defence. Rory's technical analyses are always very instructive. And it's great to be able to report that Rory's health is now very much on the mend.

On the international front, Ireland fell away in the Camrose, but subsequently recorded a notable victory in the prestigious Lederer

What's Inside

Guess the Contract	2
CBAI President's Merit Award 2024	3
Play Quiz 6 <i>Tomás Roche</i>	4
Play Quiz 6 - Results	5
Results and Fixtures	7
CBAI News	8
Bric-A-Brock <i>Sally Brock</i>	9
Novice To Intermediate <i>Melissa Brady</i>	10
Burke Trophy <i>BJ O'Brien</i>	12
When I was a Boye! <i>Boye Brogeland</i>	13
Davidson Cup <i>John Noonan</i>	14
Holmes Wilson <i>Michael McAuliffe</i>	15
Bridge in the Twilight Zone <i>Editor</i>	17
Lederer Trophy <i>John Carroll</i>	18
Teltscher Trials - <i>Editor</i>	20
Junior bridge <i>Luca Crone</i>	21
Intermediate Update <i>Nicola O'Dowd</i>	23
Assign the Blame <i>Editor</i>	26
Magic Squeezes <i>Rory Timlin</i>	27
Muppet Stayman <i>Ranald Milne</i>	30
Opening Leads against Suit Contracts <i>Peter Pigot</i>	32
Bidding Quiz 6 <i>Bob Pattinson</i>	34
Bidding Quiz 5 - Results <i>Bob Pattinson</i>	36



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Trophy. We had another solid second placing in the Lady Milne; 3rd going into the last round, a big win over Scotland took us into 2nd. That's a pair of seconds of late, so hopefully it will be 3rd time lucky next year, perhaps with Rebecca O'Keeffe available again. Pride of place goes to the Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer squads, both of whom finished second [to England]. There's a report on those events in this issue - "lively" might be a good word to describe the bidding! I think I was a Junior once.

As I write, the Regent Leagues 23/24 are concluding. These are without doubt the Gold Standard of Teams competition, and they are open to non-members.

So whatever your grade, I'd strongly encourage you to get involved if you can. Yours truly is part of the Paul Porteous squad in the Premier League. We narrowly missed the semis, but we did record a boastworthy win over the Mark Moran outfit [Tom Hanlon, John Carroll, Terry Walsh]. Kudos to James Heneghan for carrying me to this and other league wins.

I'm pleased to announce another very high profile addition to Bob Pattinson's Bidding Panel - Denmark's Christina Lund Madsen. Christina has a recent World Mixed Teams win to her name among other notable victories on the international stage.

It would be remiss of me to fail to note the increasingly regular successes of our resident columnists Nicola O'Dowd, Melissa Brady and Luca Crone. Can I pick 'em or what?

In conclusion, I must note a significant milestone. My bridge partner of 46 years and counting, BJ O'Brien, has just turned 70. He's a national treasure and an inspiring exemplar for kidney transplant recipients. We've had many wins and never a cross word. I like to think I've helped him on his way, even if he doesn't.

Enda Murphy
editor@cbaí.ie

Guess the Contract

Editor

Elsewhere in this issue, you can read of the terrifically exciting climax to a Round of 16 match in the 2022 Vanderbilt [US Teams Championship]. Earlier in the same match, this was the layout:

Dealer East. Vul All.

		♠ -	
		♥ K10962	
		♦ QJ752	
		♣ Q87	
♠ 852	N	♠ KQ10643	
♥ AQ8743	W	♥ J5	
♦ A10	E	♦ K983	
♣ J9	S	♣ 3	
		♠ AJ97	
		♥ -	
		♦ 64	
		♣ AK106542	

Guess the contract!! Answer on p22

CBAI President's Merit Award 2024

The CBAI each season canvasses for nominations for the President's Merit Award, with the President selecting the winner. This award is designed to recognise the unsung heroes and heroines of Irish bridge – the people who do all the hard work behind the scenes without which bridge clubs and competitions could not function, but without ever seeking official status or other recognition for themselves.

We are delighted to announce that Martin Keane, from Templeogue, Dublin (but originally, and proudly, from County Clare!) has been selected as this year's winner of the President's Merit Award. Martin was nominated by the five clubs that form the Templeogue Bridge Centre, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Martin has been a Trustee of the Centre since its inception. But that has been the least significant of his many contributions to the Dublin South bridge community. For several years from the start of the Centre, for example, Martin was the official TD for the major competitions in all five clubs operating within it.

For the entire 25 year period right up to today, Martin has acted, on a purely voluntary basis, as the unofficial caretaker, superintendent, and groundskeeper for the Centre – cutting the grass, trimming hedges, checking the drains and the electrics, opening up and closing up for visitors, filling potholes, and generally making sure that everything is shipshape and in top condition. One anecdote sums up perfectly Martin's dedication to the cause. A friend of his arrived for morning bridge one day to find a man halfway down a manhole. She recognised him and said "Hi Martin, I thought you were in Australia". Martin replied



Martin Keane and his family at the presentation to Martin of the President's Merit Award 2023 by Gordon Lessells, President, CBAI.

"I got home this morning at six. I was worried the bad weather might have caused the drains to block so I came up to check everything was okay".

His attention to detail is also legendary. If you have played in the Templeogue Centre, you may have wondered what purpose the yellow dots on the floor serve. Martin painted those to establish a definitive position for each of the fifty-plus tables in the room (each individually numbered, of course), and personally ensures after each event that every table is back in its correct position. He deals with everything quietly and efficiently, and always has time for a friendly chat or even the occasional cup of tea.

Martin is an unsung (and unpaid) hero of the bridge centre, and his contribution is warmly recognised by all the clubs and players within it, and by the CBAI, which as members will know, shares a premises in Templeogue and uses the bridge centre for several major events each season. CBAI CEO Dermot O'Brien echoed all the comments on Martin's helpfulness and dedication, and his availability 24/7 at a moment's notice.

CBAI President Gordon Lessells visited Knocklyon Bridge Club recently to make the surprise presentation of his award to Martin, with many of his family, including his wife Joan, adding to the element of surprise by their attendance. Our thanks to Knocklyon President Jennifer Cullen and Martin's Monday night partner Willie Kearney for setting everything up and keeping Martin in the dark about his well-deserved award.

There were, as ever, several deserving candidates nominated for the Award this year, but there can only be one winner. Many people at the presentation commented that Martin's was exactly the kind of contribution that this award was designed to recognise. Many clubs across the country will have similar individuals working within them. If there is someone you would like to nominate for next season's award keep an eye on our website in November or December, when the 2025 award will be publicised.



Play Quiz 6

Tomás Roche



You are West as declarer, playing teams. What is your play strategy on each board?

Board 1 Dealer North. Vul All.

♠ A93	N	♠ KQ5
♥ 74	W	♥ AKJ83
♦ J964	E	♦ K10
♣ A1072	S	♣ K53

W	N	E	S
	P	1♥	P
1NT	P	3NT	All Pass

The Play

North leads the ♠J of spades against 3NT. How do you plan the play?

Board 3 Dealer West. Vul E/W.

♠ AK8653	N	♠ J74
♥ A763	W	♥ Q8
♦ K4	E	♦ AQ1062
♣ A	S	♣ J63

W	N	E	S
1♠	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	2♠	P
4♣*	P	4♦*	P
4♥*	P	4♠	P
5♦*	P	6♠	All Pass

* 4♣, 4♦, 4♥ and 5♦ = control bids.

The Play

A heart lead from North against 6♠ was covered by the queen, king and ace. Two top trumps left North still in possession of the queen. How do you plan the play?

Board 2 Dealer East. Vul N/S.

♠ J	N	♠ A85
♥ A74	W	♥ KJ62
♦ KQ763	E	♦ A8
♣ AK92	S	♣ J1073

W	N	E	S
		1NT	P
3♠ ¹	P	4♣ ²	P
4♦ ³	P	4NT ⁴	P
6♣	All Pass		

¹ 3♠ = splinter, 5+/4+ in both minors;
² 4♣ = Four or more card suit;
³ 4♦ = Redwood;
⁴ 4NT = two key cards, denies queen of clubs.

The Play

North leads a spade taken by the ace. How do you plan the play?

Board 4 Dealer West. Vul All.

♠ AKQ10874	N	♠ 965
♥ AKQ9	W	♥ 1053
♦ -	E	♦ Q87642
♣ Q5	S	♣ 8

W	N	E	S
2♣	P	2♦	X
3♠ ¹	P	3NT ²	P
4♣ ³	P	5♣ ³	P
6♠	All Pass		

¹ 3♠ = sets trump suit;
² 3NT = denies any 1st round control;
³ 4♣ = asking for kings;
⁴ 5♣ = 2nd round club control.

The Play

North leads the ♦A against 6♠. How do you plan the play?



Play Quiz 6 - Solutions and Results

You are West as declarer, playing teams. What is your play strategy on each board?

Board 1 Dealer North. Vul None.

				♠ J1086				
				♥ 52				
				♦ 873				
				♣ Q984				
♠ A93		N		♠ KQ5				
♥ 74		W	E	♥ AKJ83				
♦ J964				♦ K10				
♣ A1072		S		♣ K53				
				♠ 742				
				♥ Q1096				
				♦ AQ52				
				♣ J 5				

W	N	E	S
	P	1♥	P
1NT	P	3NT	All Pass

Lead:

North leads the ♠J of spades against 3NT. How do you plan the play?

The Play

To make sure of the contract West should win with the king and lead the ♦K from the table. This way declarer can be sure of two diamond tricks with seven top winners in the other suits.

Board 2 Dealer East. Vul N/S.

				♠ 109742				
				♥ 86				
				♦ 1074				
				♣ Q65				
♠ J		N		♠ A85				
♥ A74		W	E	♥ KJ62				
♦ KQ763				♦ A8				
♣ AK92		S		♣ J1073				
				♠ KQ63				
				♥ Q1094				
				♦ J83				
				♣ 82				

W	N	E	S
		1NT	P
3♠ ¹	P	4♣ ²	P
4♦ ³	P	4NT ⁴	P
6♣	All Pass		

¹ 3♠ = splinter, 5+/4+ in both minors;
² 4♣ = Four or more card suit;
³ 4♦ = Redwood;
⁴ 4NT = two key cards, denies queen of clubs.

Lead:

North leads a spade taken by the ace. How do you plan the play?

The Play

It is not so easy to decide on the best plan for 6♣ after a spade lead. To play off ♣A and ♣K, followed by the top diamonds will doubtless be good enough if trumps are 3-2, but a 4-1 break will be awkward. The best line may be to lead a low club to the nine at trick two. If this loses to the queen and a trump is returned, win with the ten, ruff a spade, cross to the king of hearts, ruff a spade, cross to ace of diamonds and draw the last trump. West still has the ♥A and ♦KQxx, and there is a trump on the table for a diamond ruff if the suit does not break.



Board 3 Dealer South. Vul E/W.

	♠ Q92		
	♥ 1093		
	♦ J873		
	♣ K84		
♠ AK8653	N		♠ J74
♥ A763	W	E	♥ Q8
♦ K4			♦ AQ1062
♣ A	S		♣ J63
	♠ 10		
	♥ KJ54		
	♦ 95		
	♣ Q109752		

W	N	E	S
1♠	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	2♠	P
4♣*	P	4♦*	P
4♥*	P	4♠	P
5♦*	P	6♠	All Pass

* 4♣, 4♦, 4♥ and 5♦ = control bids.

Lead

A heart lead from North against 6♠ was covered by the queen, king and ace. Two top trumps left North still in possession of the queen. How do you plan the play?

The Play

After these unfavourable developments, West has to play for a long shot. He cashes the ♦K and then finesses the ten on the second round. Declarer is able to dispose of all his heart losers in time, as North holds ♦Jxxx in addition to Qxx of trumps.

Board 4 Dealer West. Vul All.

	♠ J 3		
	♥ J 8 6 2		
	♦ A 5		
	♣ K10964		
♠ AKQ10874	N		♠ 965
♥ AKQ9	W	E	♥ 1053
♦ -			♦ Q87642
♣ Q5	S		♣ 8
	♠ 2		
	♥ 74		
	♦ KJ1083		
	♣ AJ732		

W	N	E	S
2♣	P	2♦	X
3♠ ¹	P	3NT ²	P
4♣ ³	P	5♣ ³	P
6♠	All Pass		

¹ 3♠ = sets trump suit;
² 3NT = denies any 1st round control;
³ 4♣ = asking for kings;
⁴ 5♣ = 2nd round club control.

Lead

North leads the ace of diamonds against 6♠. How do you plan the play?

The Play

West may need to ruff twice in dummy, so leads the ♣Q at trick two. The defenders win and play a trump, to which all follow. After ruffing the club West should not draw the outstanding trump but should play off two top hearts and, if the jack does not fall, a third heart. This gains when the same defender holds ♥Jxxx and two trumps, as declarer will be able to ruff the fourth round of hearts with impunity. West must be careful to ruff the third diamond with a top trump.

Results and Upcoming Fixtures

National Results

Mixed Trials (Templeogue, 8-10 March)

1st Karel De Raeymaeker, Anna Onishuk; Claudiu Dima, Sandra Newell; Marcin Rudzinski, Michelle Moloney

IBU Senior Trials (12-14 March)

1st Ian Hamilton & Ian Lindsay
Sam Hall & Hastings Campbell

IBU Inter-County Teams Championships (Cavan, 9-10 March)

Burke Trophy (Open) Dublin South

Paul Delaney & Tomas Roche
Martin Brady & David Dunne

O'Connor Trophy (Intermediate) Meath

Dara Voyles & Nicola O'Dowd; Sandra Peden & Linda Walsh

CBAI National Team Championships (Loughrea, 23-24 March)

Kelburne Cup Master

South Munster
Derek O'Gorman, Ciaran Coyne; Cian Holland, Tom McCarthy, John Russell

Tierney Trophy Intermediate B

North Midland
Tom Roche & Joan Peppard; John Higgins & Dillon Murtagh

Bankers Intermediate A

Mid Leinster
Dara Voyles & Paul Dunne
Nicola O'Dowd & Maria Rusu

Moylan Cup (Malahide, 13-14 April)

1st Thomas McCormack & Jade Barrett
2nd Tom Hanlon & John Carroll
3rd Anna Onishuk & Karel De Raeymaeker

IBU Seniors Congress (Cavan, 16-18 April)

Gala Pairs Winners

Philomena Geoghegan, James Newman

Congress Pairs Winners

Liam Maher, Kevin O'Dea

Congress Teams Winners

Peter Stewart & Dolores Gilliland,
Liam Maher & Kevin O'Dea

Confined Novice, Intermediate and Area Masters Pairs and Teams (Templeogue, 27-28 April)

Lambert Cup Pairs Winners

Pam Harrington & Eamonn Martin Jnr

Cooper Cup Teams Winners

Alan Auchincloss & Eugene Gath;
Konstantin Rabkin & Andrew Cole

JJ Murphy Novice Pairs Winners

Eve Connell & Klara Flanagan

IBU Club Pairs (Templeogue, 11 May)

Master

Deirdre Tuckey & Seamus Costello

Intermediate

Emer O'Flaherty & Russell Down

CBAI 4Fun Teams National Final (Westmanstown, 25 May)

1st **Wexford**
Trevor Murphy & Michael Lennon; Marguerite Sweetman & Eric Pinaqui
2nd **Offaly**
Frank Kelly & Declan Downey; Heather Ridgeway & Anne Crombie
3rd **Laois**
Damien Nee & Mary Tierney; Peter Conroy & Dilly Webster



IBU Inter-County Intermediate Teams Championships - Winner Dara Voyles, Nicola O'Dowd, Peter O'Meara - IBU President, Linda Walsh, Sandra Peden

Upcoming Fixtures

Date	Event	Notes	Venue
2024			
June 24 - July 04	European Championships		Herning, Denmark
Aug 10-11	Pre-Qualifier Trials	Closing date for entry 12 July	Templeogue Bridge Centre
Sept 6-8	Camrose Trials	Closing date for entry 9 August	Templeogue Bridge Centre
Sept 21-22	Duais an Uachtarain	Three sessions	Portmarnock Links Hotel
Sept 27-29	Lady Milne Trials	Closing date for entry 30 August	Galway Bridge Centre



CBAI News

Dermot O'Brien



As we come to the close of another season, I think we can be reasonably satisfied with the continuing rebuilding of bridge in Ireland.

- ▶ Our membership numbers are up by 7.5%, which is a bit more than we would have anticipated at the start of the season;
- ▶ Many of the dormant clubs have come back and have reaffiliated, and a few more have indicated that they intend to rejoin in September;
- ▶ Our national competitions have all been well supported – in particular we were very pleased with 109 teams for the Holmes Wilson, 107 pairs for the Master Pairs, a full house for the Confined Weekend, 33 pairs for the JJ Murphy novice championship - the biggest turnout in quite a few years - and 38 4Fun Teams, up 30% on the previous year;
- ▶ We will generate a decent surplus for the year, and the Association's reserves are such now that we are beginning to look at how they might usefully be spent – the Finance Committee is recommending expenditures that represent an investment in the future of bridge. We will present some more detail on that at the upcoming AGM.

There are also a couple of potentially exciting developments that I would like to bring to your attention. Firstly, from within the European Bridge League (EBL), two of the largest European nations, France and the Netherlands, have been working together on a number of projects, and at a recent EBL meeting, extended an invitation to other countries to join them, which we very happily accepted. The first brainstorming session will be at the European Championships in Denmark in June. If we can piggyback onto the ideas and resources of larger federations in terms of ideas around promoting bridge, recruiting younger players, developing teachers and TDs, accessing schools, etc, it can only be good for bridge in Ireland.

Secondly, within Ireland, the CBAI and our equivalent body in Northern Ireland, the NIBU, have each received approval from their governing bodies to examine the conditions under which the two bodies might amalgamate. Thus far, no insurmountable obstacles have been identified, and the nominees of both bodies are of the opinion that an amalgamation would be in the best interests of both, and of bridge in Ireland. (The two already operate as a confederation via the Irish Bridge Union, for international purposes.) The final decision, of course, will rest with the membership, so any proposal on amalgamation would have to be approved at AGMs of both bodies. Assuming the ongoing discussions proceed as planned, members can probably expect a formal proposal on amalgamation at the 2025 AGM.

I'd like to thank all the club and regional committees for all their hard work during the season. If there is anything more we can do to help you, or to make our processes work more smoothly for you, I'd welcome your suggestions. Thanks also to the members of the various CBAI committees and governance bodies. As ever, some were busier than others during the year, but all volunteers are always ready with their time and advice when the need arises. The same is true of our Tournament Director cohort, without whose hard work and expertise our events would not be anything like as successful as they are, so my thanks to all our TDs too.

Wearing my Irish Bridge Union hat, I'd like to wish the four Irish teams (Open, Women, Mixed, and Senior) competing in the upcoming European Championships in Herning, Denmark, the best of luck. The championship runs from 27 June to 4 July, and I'm sure it will be possible to watch our teams online at various times.

And finally, I am delighted to invite you to the CBAI AGM on Saturday July 6 in the Hilton Hotel, Malahide (Northern Cross), at 2 p.m., at which we will inaugurate Catherine Byrne, from the Dublin North Region, as our CBAI National President for 2024/25. All CBAI members are welcome to attend, and the AGM will be followed by a game of bridge for anyone wishing to play.



Bric-A-Brock

Sally Brock



Bridge can be very serendipitous. By that I mean that some innocuous decision made early in hand can have completely unexpected repercussions that could not have been predicted.

Let me give you a lead problem. You are West and hold:

♠ 10982
♥ 6543
♦ 762
♣ 86

I am going to give you several different bidding sequences and see what you would lead:

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	1♥	P
2NT	P	6NT	All Pass

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	1♥	P
2NT	P	6NT	X
All Pass			

I would lead the ♠10 on the first and a heart on the second (for me, an out of the blue double always asks for dummy's first bid suit).

Let's try a different match:

W	N	E	S
2NT	P	3♣	P
3♣	P	6NT	All Pass

W	N	E	S
2♣	P	2♠	P
2NT	P	3♣	P
3♣	P	6NT	All Pass

I might lead a diamond on the first as dummy has hearts, declarer has spade and partner has not doubled three clubs for a club lead. I'm not quite sure what all the bidding means on the second sequence, but I guess East's two spades showed a particular strength of hand or number of controls so it is essentially the same as the first. So again, a diamond is possible.

You see the difference in the defensive thinking that one diamond opening has made. This was the full deal:

♠ A76					
♥ KJ107					
♦ Q5					
♣ KJ72					
♠ 10982		N		♠ 53	
♥ 6543				♥ 98	
♦ 762	W		E	♦ AK108	
♣ 86				♣ 109543	
		S			
				♠ KQJ4	
				♥ AQ2	
				♦ J943	
				♣ AQ	

Across all events the deal was bid to 6NT (occasionally 6♥) by South 71 times, sometimes doubled. And in all, West led a diamond only six times. Thank goodness for my partner, Fiona Brown!



Novice To Intermediate – My Journey Continues

Melissa Brady



For some people, their happy place is in the garden tending to their flowers, while for others, it involves swinging clubs and hitting balls on the golf course. However, for me, happiness is found at the bridge table.

Since the last article, I've participated in numerous tournaments, many of which marked my first time to play in those competitions, while some may have potentially been my final chance to play in them. I'll explain further on.

First up was the Novice and Intermediate Congress in February. Seventeen and a half tables made up the A competition which was held in The Great National Hotel, Ballykisteen, Co Tipperary. Anna and I hadn't initially included this tournament on "The List" for the year, but we made a last-minute decision to attend. Our spur-of-the-moment decision led to us winning the New Ireland Trophy for the Inter As. In the first session we excelled and secured the top position but we were only average in the second session. We couldn't believe our ears when CBAI President Gordon Lessells read out the results saying "They held on for the win." Sometimes it's those unexpected twists and turns that make the victory even sweeter as it was genuinely surprising to us both. This win was a momentous occasion for us. While examining the trophy, I saw names like Gordon himself, former CEO Paul Porteous and international player Anna Carr. It's evident that we are in distinguished company. My favourite board from the tournament was Board 9.

Board 9. Dealer North. Vul E/W.

		♠5		
		♥87653		
		♦1063		
		♣KQJ5		
♠K1082	N		♠AJ9743	
♥J10	W	E	♥K4	
♦KJ42			♦Q9	
♣1092	S		♣A64	
		♠Q6		
		♥AQ92		
		♦A875		
		♣873		

The bidding went 1♠-2♠-4♠. Anna makes the lead of the ♣7 (MUD), and I put in the Jack, East wins with the Ace so now my partner knows I have clubs. Two rounds of trumps are taken out and I discard a high heart (revolving) to let my partner know that I really want a club back. A low diamond is played to the Queen, Anna takes her Ace and returns the ♣8. My King and Queen come good and I switch to a heart, enabling Anna to get her AQ, putting the contract down 2. Despite several players making 4♠ on that board, we managed to keep our opponents to eight tricks, precisely what the grid indicates should happen if defended properly. I'm always delighted when we earn top scores for defense because it's my favorite aspect of playing bridge. Considering that most nights, you only get to play the boards around 25% of the time, you end up defending at least 50% of the night. Strong defense is crucial for a successful bridge session.

Participating in the National Women's Pairs [Jackson] in Clane was another first-time experience for me. The standout board from that tournament was Board 18.

Board 18. Dealer East. Vul N/S.

		♠K653		
		♥963		
		♦J98		
		♣Q103		
♠AQ1072	N		♠J	
♥AQJ8	W	E	♥754	
♦4			♦Q765	
♣J54	S		♣AK862	
		♠984		
		♥K102		
		♦AK1032		
		♣97		

I'm West and our opposition are Mary Kelly-Rogers and Anne Fitzpatrick, the eventual winners. This was my first time to play against them. My partner opened 1♣ natural [as you would! Ed.] It went 1♣-1♠-2♣-3♥-4♥. I get the lead of the ♦8 and I find myself with a 4-3 fit and just two guaranteed tricks from dummy. I play low and Anne wins with her ♦K and returns a trump I play the Queen and it holds. I play the ♣J which is covered and taken with the King. I now run the ♠J to Mary's ♠K and a club return is won by ♣A. A trump to the Jack wins and fingers crossed, I cash ♥A. Happily they were 3-3! So I scored four trumps, four spades and two clubs - 4♥ made for a shared top. The grid says you're supposed to make 5♥ hearts. I'm not sure what I did wrong in only getting 10 tricks but I was thrilled to make my contract against the eventual winners of the tournament getting 93% for my troubles. [♠A then ♠Q ruffing out ♠K - only works because South has 984. Ed.] Ironically, our best round coincided with being their worst! When I went to congratulate them at the end of the session, Mary joked that we almost cost them the victory, and



Anne continued the banter the next morning at breakfast. Throughout the day, we played against many pairs, but we couldn't have met two nicer ladies, both at and away from the table.

Laird Cup – National Inter A Pairs Board 2. Second Session

Dealer East. Vul N/S.

		♠ Q87	
		♥ KJ3	
		♦ Q742	
		♣ 1087	
♠ AJ432	N	♠ K	
♥ A109	W	♥ Q86542	
♦ 3	E	♦ A6	
♣ AK43	S	♣ QJ92	
		♠ 10965	
		♥ 7	
		♦ KJ10985	
		♣ 65	

Having won our regional qualifiers, Anna and I headed to Ennistymon to compete in the Laird Cup. I made a mess of this particular hand! I opened 1♥ as East and it went 1♥-1♠-2♥-4♣-4♥-6♥. I won the club lead in dummy, came to my ♠K and inexplicably and unforgivably played the ♥Q, despite not having the Jack. It was a costly mistake, as North now scored two trump tricks to put me down. Trump splitting two, two could have saved me, but unfortunately not this time. A valuable lesson learned, albeit at a high price. "You can't undo a bad move but you can learn from it" that's what I keep telling myself. [Yes, the right play is low to H9. Ed]

Anna and I ended up 6th which was more than I expected given it is my first year playing at this level. As I mentioned earlier, this could potentially be my first and last year participating in Intermediate A competitions although I hope it's not. This season, I attended numerous team competitions and accumulated many points, which may accelerate my progression from an A2 to an Area Master within a single year. I feel that there's a substantial difference between an Area Master with 10 national points and one with 40. Considering how rapidly one can accumulate points, perhaps setting the threshold at 10 NPs is too low. Should my membership card be purple in September, I am committed to improving my game and try to prove myself worthy of it, as I believe I am not yet at that standard.

While I'm discussing teams, I'd like to offer my sincere congratulations to my good friend and fellow journal contributor, Nicola O'Dowd, as well as her teammates, for their remarkable achievements in securing victories in both the O'Connor and Bankers Trophies. Their exceptional performances mark them as ones to keep an eye on in the years ahead. [As are you, Melissa. Ed.]

Unlike the Covid-affected years, this year has been packed with congresses and a variety of competitions to attend and as we near the end of the season, I want to express my gratitude to both my partners and teammates for making

this year truly fantastic. Thank you for embracing my numerous wild ideas with enthusiasm! Together, we've enjoyed countless memorable experiences, shared plenty of laughter, and built a treasure trove of memories through our bridge adventures. I'd also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Fearghal, Mairead, Huey, Diarmuid, our regional director Peter, and all the other dedicated tournament directors who have provided exceptional support throughout the year. Their invaluable contributions make them indispensable to us and the CBAI. I offer my sincere admiration to each of them.

Finally, I need to mention the email I got from Zia Mahmood that Enda referred to in the last issue. When it arrived, I suspected it was a scam and thought nothing of it!! As I was heading into Bridge one Friday night, I received an email from Enda mentioning that he had heard I had received an email from the great man. You can imagine the panic I felt upon reading that!! Enda assured me that Zia would find that priceless and I'm glad that was the case. I was puzzled about how I received the email in the first place, all the while panicking that I had ignored the GOAT!! Enda revealed that he had arranged for Zia to contact me. I greatly appreciate that. I've now completed the book and highly recommend it. [Zia is pure class. "Bridge – A Love Story" is available online in the CBAI shop, and is a wonderful read. Ed.]



Burke Trophy

BJ O'Brien



As is now the norm, The Burke trophy was held in the Cavan Crystal Hotel over the weekend of 9th/10th March. Twenty teams competed, nine of which were representing Dublin in one form or another.

Congratulations to the winning team of Paul Delaney, Tomás Roche, Martin Brady and David Dunne who were always there or thereabouts. The runners up were Luca Crone and Matthew O'Farrell, playing with Teresa Rigney and B.J.O'Brien who in contrast to the winners were 20th after round 3 and never nearer than their final placing. For Luca and Matthew as Juniors, this was their fourth recent visit to the National podium - having finished 3rd in the Holmes Wilson, 2nd in the Junior Camrose and 2nd in the Davidson. It will not be long before they take the top prize at national events. 3rd prize went to the Donegal team of Sandra and John McGinley, Denis Ellis and Connell McLoone. Attendance at some major National events is becoming a concern due to reduced hotel capacity post Covid, as well as escalating costs of a weekend away. One night's B&B in the hotel for one adult cost €234, which on top of a €50 entry fee and food and drink is not inconsequential.

Board 17 from Session 1 saw Luca and Matthew show why they are a force to be reckoned with.

Luca	Matthew
♠ KQ4	♠ A873
♥ Q8732	♥ AKJ9
♦ AJ104	♦ 8
♣ A	♣ 9643

1♥	2NT	(2NT = Heart support, asking)
3♥	3♠	(3♥ = singleton Club, non-min. 3♠ = cue)
4♣	4NT	(4♣ = cue, 4NT RKCB)
5♠	5NT	(5♠ = 2 plus ♠Q, 5NT = king ask/grand slam try)
7♥		

The very last board propelled us to 2nd spot, without much science I have to add!

Teresa	BJ
♠ AKJ863	♠ Q94
♥ AK74	♥ -
♦ 2	♦ AQ107
♣ K7	♣ AQ6542

1♠	2♣	(2♣ = Nat GF)
2♥	2♠	(2♠ = 3-card support)
4NT	5♠	(5♠ = 2 Aces plus ♠Q)
7♠		

This earned us 11 IMPs when 6♠ was the contract at the other table.

When I was a Boye!

column from the 2007 Bermuda Bowl winner

Boye's bridge

Playing with the wind at your back

By **BOYE BROGELAND**, FLEKKEFJORD NORWAY

WHEN THE CARDS are falling your way, bridge is a simple game. The finesses are working, the throw-ins deliver, and you squeeze the opponents to smithereens. Every shot is "in off the post," as they say in soccer. The 29th of January, 2007, was that kind of day for me when I visited Canberra for the Summer Festival.

For the second year in a row Team Brogeland (some sponsors are kind enough to name the team after one of the players) had reached the final of the National Open Teams. Last year we (Linda Stern, David Stern, Robert Grynberg, Pablo Lombardi, Espen Erichsen and I) lost to a good Polish team led by Pepsi (Jacek Pszczola). This year's event was not at a convenient time for the Argentinian Lombardi, so Peter Gill stepped in as a partner for Mrs Stern. (*This event would be Linda's final NOT, before her unexpected death later that year. – Ed*)

At the end of the qualifying stage, where over 200 teams lined up for the start, we were in second place behind OzOne (the Australian national team). In the knockout stage we lost our first match, beaten once again by our nemesis Pepsi. However, the double elimination format (also used in the Spring Foursomes in England) gave us a second chance. Having taken some time out for drinks with Michael Courtney and Stephen Burgess, it was time to roll up our sleeves for a 2nd shot at OzOne.

The Australian national team played well below their par and after 32 boards we had a strong win. Actually, it was perfect timing to meet the favourites in the quarter finals, since we would have had to play 64 boards if we had met in the semi finals or finals.



The victory tasted especially good for David and Linda, who had an unfriendly business rivalry with one of the OzOne players.

In the semi final we beat a wild bunch (most Australian players like to bid, but the number of preempts employed by this team was hard to believe). We won by 50 imps, and it was time for the final against the Noble team.

We get off to a flying start and are leading by 73-26 after 16 boards. Just before half time I pick up these cards:

♠ A9863 ♥ 5 ♦ 97 ♣ AQ874

Looks like an opening hand to me, but partner, Espen Erichsen has already started proceedings with 1♥ when it is my turn to bid. I bid 1♠ and I'm not surprised to hear 2♦ from partner. What now?

I cannot stomach false preference with only one heart, and with 10 HCP pass is out of the question (slam in spades could still be on). With a 3-5-4-1 shape partner would have a good hand as he did not support spades directly. 2♠ is possible but I settle for a more normal 2NT.

Partner raises quickly to 3NT (when a good player does this, it is often a sign that he doesn't have much to spare). Paul Marston leads the ♣2 and dummy is not a pretty sight:

♠ Q ♥ AK874 ♦ A864 ♣ 953

Do you think 2NT is forcing, partner? Is it that singleton ♠Q, giving you enough points to open, you are so proud of? Couldn't you have allowed me to play a normal 2NT that at least can be made with a favourable club layout? The taunts keep bubbling up inside me but in these situations it is worth keeping your cool. "Thank you",

I say without a hint of sarcasm; and I start planning the play.

The best chance is that Marston has led from a three card suit and I can make four club tricks, and then hope for a miracle in the end game. I win East's ♣J with the queen and play a small club to keep communications as fluid as possible. Marston wins with the ♣10 and his partner, Michael Prescott, discards a small heart. Now it's just a question of undertricks.

West switches to the ♠2, king from East. I duck, and then play the eight on the next spade from East. West, on lead again with the ♠10, switches to a small diamond to East's queen and a spade comes back. Have you lost focus, or are your eyes still on the ball?

Michael Prescott is a good player and he is unlikely to have given me a free spade finesse (he knows that I have A9 as partner won the last spade with the ten). For the ace to gain, Marston must have switched to a spade from ♠JT2. I am allowed to hope – and I play the ace which conveniently fetches the jack!

How many tricks have I lost? Four. How many can I count on? Three spades, two hearts, one diamond and two clubs – eight altogether. There are no finessing positions, no extra trick available in any suit but could there be any chance of a squeeze?

I try to visualise how the cards could, and must, be distributed for a squeeze to work. East likely started with at least five hearts since he had no problem letting one go on the second round of clubs. Perhaps a double squeeze, with East controlling hearts and West clubs so that neither defender can keep diamonds? No, that won't work in practice as I'll have to discard a key card from dummy before East. Can you see another way?

With West being 3-1-5-4 and East 4-6-2-1, which is not unlikely considering the play so far, a club diamond squeeze on West would work. You cash the spades throwing hearts, followed by the ♥AK. In the three-card ending West cannot keep both two clubs and two diamonds and miraculously you have the rest of the tricks and your contract. The full deal:



♠ Q
 ♥ AK874
 ♦ A864
 ♣ 953
 ♠ J102
 ♥ 3
 ♦ J10532
 ♣ K1062
 ♠ K754
 ♥ QJ10962
 ♦ KQ
 ♣ J
 ♠ A9863
 ♥ 5
 ♦ 97
 ♣ AQ874

In the third and fourth session, the nature of the battle changes. Now suddenly the ball starts to fall well for our opponents and our shots go out off the post (staying with the soccer analogy). We lose the second half 91-45 but still win the battle by a comfortable 28imps. Soon after, we get to raise aloft the large silver cup proving we are champions of Australia. At last David Stern gets to see his name engraved alongside previous winners after having played in this event for nearly a lifetime.

My advice: Stay focused, even when things look hopeless. Look for possibilities and play for the only chance if you can see it. On a good day it doesn't matter if your name is Eric Jannersten or Jan Eriksen. ♦♦

AUSTRALIAN BRIDGE, June 2014

Davidson Cup

John Noonan



The National Pairs Final (Davidson Cup), with qualification from the Regions, was held in the Falls Hotel Ennistymon, Co.Clare in late February - a little earlier than usual.

The Falls Hotel is a splendid venue, with a lot of the East Coast Players heading down on Friday to enjoy the warm West Clare hospitality.

Here is an interesting hand from Session 3.

Board 24 (rotated for convenience)

		♠K9654		
		♥A5		
		♦J		
		♣QJ875		
♠QJ10	N		♠7	
♥J1097	W	E	♥Q863	
♦98542			♦Q763	
♣3	S		♣K1096	
		♠A832		
		♥K42		
		♦AK10		
		♣A42		

W	N	E	S
			1NT
P	2♥	P	2NT
P	3NT	P	4♣
P	4NT	P	5♦
P	6♠	All Pass	

South opens 1NT 15-17 [devaluing the hand due to the flat shape and lack of intermediate cards]. But when North transfers to Spades, the South hand has grown up considerably. 2NT [a transfer break] shows a max with four Spades and good controls. 3NT then asks for South to cue bid and after 4NT Keycard, 6♠ is reached.

West leads the ♦8, which looks helpful, and South is ready to claim if trumps break 2-2. But when West turns out to have a trump trick, there seems to be a club loser too, even if the finesse works on the first round.

Never give up! South cashes the Red suit winners and ruffs a Heart ending in Dummy, thereby eliminating the red suits. Next comes ♣Q running it when East does not cover [it makes no difference if he does]. The contract is now certain to make. A second club is played to the Ace. If West ruffs this with his master trump, he's endplayed - he must lead a red suit, allowing a ruff in dummy and a discard of the third club from Declarer's hand. Now a club ruff in the South hand is the 12th trick. So West refuses to ruff, but he's merely postponing the inevitable.

After winning the second club with ♣A, Declarer exits on a trump and West is endplayed as before.

On a non-Diamond lead it looks like Declarer will have to take the diamond finesse, risking two off in order to succeed, as there will not be enough Trumps in dummy to ruff a Diamond and Heart and also get the ruff and discard.

My partner [Carol-Ann Cummins] and I made the 6♠ for a 95% score, but it wasn't enough to get us higher than 10th place in the field of 40 pairs. The hand was played 20 times - 6♠ was made three times and went down six times.

The lead changed hands during the last few rounds with Enda Glynn and Joan Kenny [59.7%] winning from up-and-comers Luca Crone and Matthew Farrell [59.1%], with Martin Brady and Paul Delaney [57.5%] in 3rd. TD Huey Daly was in charge and ensured a smoothly run Competition.



Holmes Wilson 2024

Michael McAuliffe



The excellent setting of the Mount Wolseley Hotel in Tullow, Co. Carlow was once again the venue for this year's Holmes Wilson competition (or, to be pedantic and give it its full title: the National Open Teams Championship for the Holmes Wilson Trophy).

This event has been one of the highlights of the calendar for many years, attracting virtually all of the country's top players and some overseas visitors too, and has bounced back marvelously after the Covid interruption. Attendance regularly exceeds 100 teams, and this year was no exception, with 109 taking part. The mammoth organisational task of running a Swiss Teams format of this size – involving, among other things, collecting and replacing close to 40 sets of six boards across the whole room between each round – was, as ever, flawlessly handled by the TD team of Fearghal O'Boyle, Máiréad Basquille, Huey Daly, John Crimmins, Bernard Higgins, Diarmuid Reddan and John Phelan.

The competition was won by our international team stalwarts, Tom Hanlon, Mark Moran, Adam Mesbur and Nick Fitzgibbon, who held off a strong challenge from the holders (Karel de Raeymaker, Anna Onishuk, Conor Boland and Kelan O'Connor) who were bidding to make it three wins in a row. There were great showings as well from some of our up-and-coming juniors – Luca Crone and Matthew O'Farrell were on the 3rd-placed team, and Isabel Burke finished 4th. (Yours truly was delighted to sneak into the prizes too, even if it was for the 'Zimmer frame' prize aka Best Seniors.....).

A funny thing happened on the way to the slam...

This hand came up in the 3rd session:

Dealer North. Vul All.

		♠A9		
		♥AJ6		
		♦KQ72		
		♣Q952		
♠J1086	N		♠K754	
♥32	W	E	♥1054	
♦95			♦A643	
♣J10843	S		♣76	
		♠Q32		
		♥KQ987		
		♦J108		
		♣AK		

As you can see, 6♥ played by North is a good contract. Barring any freakishly bad breaks, it's only defeated if the ♠K is with West AND East finds an opening spade lead. At our table, after an opening 1NT (15-17), a 2♦ transfer response, later an exchange of cue-bids and a key-card Blackwood enquiry, we duly bid and made 6♥ for a routine-seeming +980, as did many other tables.

At the other table, things were proceeding along the same lines, until our teammates got frisky and decided to take the opportunity to double North's 4♦ cue-bid...and their opponents, at this stage not being sure slam was on, were alert enough to realise they had enough goodies to pass out 4♦x and play there, and thus get a definite, possibly very juicy, plus score and maybe land a psychologically damaging blow also. So that's what happened, they played in 4♦x, making an overtrick in fact and clocking up the fairly unusual score of +610 – only to find, sadly for them, that the slam was indeed on and that they had lost nine IMPs.

(Their disappointment paled into complete insignificance, of course, compared to our teammates' relief – all I can say is, thank God a redouble wasn't found!).

Q: 'What do you call an eight-card suit?'

A: TRUMPS!!!!'

So the old joke goes – and a very useful rule of thumb it is too. So when you pick up the following hand as South [Vul against not], and East on your right passes as dealer, your thoughts might well revolve just around how high you're going to go in your attempt to play in a heart contract, and how quickly you're going to try and get there.

♠ AK85
♥ KQ1097643
♦ 4
♣ -

My partner decided to take it slowly, and just opened 1♥. This makes it easier to find out where the rest of the points are around the table and thus potentially helps to judge what to do later in the auction. But it also runs the risk of letting the opponents get into the action more easily if they have a big fit of their own, which is quite likely with this sort of distribution. And inevitably, that's what happened.



Here's the whole deal:

Dealer East. Vul N/S.

♠ J7642			
♥ -			
♦ KQ10732			
♣ 9 2			
♠ 103	N	♠ Q9	
♥ A5	W	♥ J82	
♦ A965	E	♦ J8	
♣ AKJ53	S	♣ Q108764	
♠ AK85			
♥ KQ1097643			
♦ 4			
♣ -			

W	N	E	S
		P	1♥
2♣	P	3♣	4♥
P	P	5♣	P
P	X	All Pass	

They found their 11-card club fit, and although we were able to double them in 5♣ they got away for down two and -300. (Down three is possible if North leads a spade initially and South switches a top heart, as West's ♥A is then ruffed - but I led the normal-seeming ♦K. Should I have led a small diamond or spade, seeking an Ace with partner, and surely suggesting my heart void?)

The -300 seemed like the par on the hand, though, since 5♥ goes down one unless the defence slip up. (Sadly, the heart game made at the other table so we lost eight IMPs). But of course, the big takeaway from the hand is that this is one of those very rare exceptions to that rule of thumb - 5♥ with

its eight-card trump suit goes down, but 5♠ makes, in fact potentially with an overtrick!!

And 16 tables managed to find the spade fit and play there, well done to them. (Maybe we could have too, if I make a takeout double of the 2♣ overcall, following that other well-known rule of thumb, '6-5, come alive'? But having heard just a 1-level opening, and having only 6pts and a void in partner's suit, I was afraid the hand could be a huge misfit, so decided to keep quiet for the time being, in the hopes maybe of coming in again later - only it turned out there was no 'later'!).

I guess I should have gone with that third rule of thumb - it's a bidder's game!!



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Bridge in the Twilight Zone

Editor



A really good Youtube channel, well worth subscribing to [free] is ACBL NABC. You can view the key matches in the US National Championships.

In the 2022 Vanderbilt round of 16, Goodman played Rosenthal. The last set of 15 boards saw Goodman in front by 114-78, a useful lead, though not insurmountable. Boye Brogeland [our columnist] and Christian Bakke for Rosenthal faced Chris Compton and Mike Passell. As board 28 [of 30] hit the table, the lead was down to 114-99.

Try these hands on for size:

Board 28. Vul N/S.

W LHO	N Partner	E RHO	S You
	1NT	X	2♥
X	P	P	?

1NT is 15-17. RHO's double shows the majors. 2♥ is a transfer and LHO's double shows values.

- ♠QJ1084
- ♥AJ972
- ♦AK3
- ♣-

Your bid?

Board 30. Vul All.

W LHO	N Partner	E RHO	S You
		1♥	X
XX	2♦	P	P
2♥	3♦	4♥	All Pass

You lead ♦A and this is the lie of the land:

	♠974		
	♥J108		
	♦Q5		
	♣AQJ42		
♠K86		N	
♥KQ9			
♦AJ86	W	E	
♣973		S	

All follow and you continue diamonds, partner's King being ruffed. Declarer leads a low heart and you win ♥Q. Continue.

OK let's look at Board 28. Here was the full deal:

Dealer North. Vul E/W.

		♠32		
		♥104		
		♦Q98762		
		♣873		
♠A		N		♠K9765
♥K8				♥Q653
♦J1054	W	E		♦-
♣AQ10965		S		♣KJ63
		♠QJ1084		
		♥AJ972		
		♦AK3		
		♣-		

W	N	E	S
	1NT	X	2♥
X	P	P	?

Nobody would envy Christian Bakke's situation. 15 HCPs in your hand and everyone bidding strongly!! Who not to trust?? He agonised before passing.

West [Compton] led ♥K!! Bakke won and played a heart to the ten, losing to the Queen. He ruffed the club continuation and drew trumps. At that point he was harbouring thoughts of scoring four hearts and six diamonds for plus two, but when East was void in diamonds he had only seven tricks. Minus 100. Boye Brogeland, by the way, tabled his dummy like a choirboy!!

At the other table, E/W made 5♣X for 750, so Rosenthal gained 12 IMPs to reduce the deficit to 114-111 with two boards remaining.

Board 29 was a push and this was the final board:

		♠974		
		♥J108		
		♦Q5		
		♣AQJ42		
♠K86		N		♠1052
♥KQ9				♥43
♦AJ86	W	E		♦K107432
♣973		S		♣85
		♠AQJ3		
		♥A7652		
		♦9		
		♣K106		

Board 30. Dealer South. Vul All. [hands rotated]

W	N	E	S
			1♥
X	XX	2♦	P
P	2♥	3♦	4♥
All Pass			

Compton led ♦A and continued a diamond. Bakke ruffed and led a low heart to ♥Q. South has opened the bidding and on hearing that North had about ten points and three hearts, jumped to 4♥. Yes, Partner has bid diamonds twice but he's got six to the King and is entitled to compete after your takeout double [a bit off-centre, by the way]. Compton returned a spade - 4♥ made. At the other table 4♥ went down one, and that completed a spectacular comeback by Rosenthal, who went on to win the competition.

South must surely hold ♣K. For a spade return to be right, South needs to be 3-6-1-3 or 4-6-1-2, and partner needs to hold ♠Q. Would South really jump to 4♥ on a 12-count? If South is 3-5-1-4, 4♥ is down anyway. He can hardly be 2-6-1-4 or 2-5-1-5 because then partner would have five spades and he would have bid them. That leaves 4-5-1-3. If the spades include ♠Q [as here], a spade return is fatal, whereas any other return will defeat 4♥ regardless of South's spade holding. Bakke did well to start with a low heart, not disclosing whether he held five or six.

A great tussle!

Lederer Trophy

Ireland lands a fourth win RAC Club, London. February 2024

John Carroll



The Lederer Memorial Trophy is a prestigious invitation event. It was first played in 1945 as a tribute to Richard Lederer.

It was originally an inter-county competition, but soon became a challenge event between London's Bridge Clubs. Richard Lederer was a leading international player who ran his own club and he contributed greatly to the development of English bridge in its formative years. He won the Gold Cup three times in the 1930s

The name of his son, Tony, was added to the trophy in 1977 by his widow, Rhoda Barrow Lederer, one of the leading bridge teachers of the time.

During the 1970s, teams from outside the capital were often invited to play, and in 1977 a Glasgow quartet (including Victor Silverstone and Willie Coyle) won the competition. Over the following years an international flavour was introduced and overseas teams have included Australia, Canada, France, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, North America, Norway, Poland and Sweden. A VuGraph room was introduced in 1990 and the event has been shown live on the Internet for over ten years via Bridge Base Online.

The Lederer Memorial Trophy is one of the strongest tournaments held in England. In 2013, the event expanded to accommodate ten teams rather than the usual eight.

Irish teams had previously won in 2004, 2005 and 2009. This was the fourth victory [see picture] and John Carroll had the distinction of playing each time.

Once again there was strong British and International representation – names such as Zia Mahmood, Christian Bakke and our own columnist Sally Brock. Ireland fielded Nick Fitzgibbon/Adam Mesbur, Mark Moran/John Carroll and Tom Hanlon/Frederic Volcker. Freddie is French, and plays with Tom in the French Premier League. I'm told he sported green socks!

Scoring was a hybrid of IMPs and Point-a-Board, with a maximum of 50 Victory Points available for each of the nine 10-board matches.

30 VPs were available for the IMP score, and there were two VPs per board for the winners of each board, or one each for a tied board.

Ireland took an early lead and built it consistently, winning seven of their first eight matches. In the final round they faced DeBotton, whom they led 271-232. It looked all over bar the shouting, but DeBotton [Bakke, Hoftaniska, Charlesen, Malinowski, Heiberg-Evenstad] mounted a stirring comeback. They won the match 44-6, only to fall just one VP short as Ireland clung on to win 277-276. Nicolai Heiberg-Evenstad, the youngest player in the tournament, is surely a name for the future.



Winning Team L-R; Frederic Volcker, Adam Mesbur, John Carroll, Gráinne Barton [NPC], Tom Hanlon, Mark Moran, Nick Fitzgibbon.



The night before the Lederer, Team Ireland played a Crockford's match [another prestigious teams competition in Britain]. John Carroll reports this deal, which featured expert defence by Mark Moran:

Dealer South. Vul E/W

		♠KQJ2		
		♥K65		
		♦J65		
		♣1062		
♠10743	N		♠A95	
♥9	W	E	♥QJ4	
♦K974			♦AQ1082	
♣QJ85	S		♣93	
		♠86		
		♥A108732		
		♦3		
		♣AK74		

W <i>John</i>	N	E <i>Mark</i>	S
			1♥
P	1♠	P	2♣
P	3♥	P	4♥
All Pass			

Opening lead - ♠7

Mark won ♠A and switched ♦A and another when he saw my encouraging ♦4. Declarer ruffed and played three rounds of hearts leaving Mark looking at:

		♠KQ2		
		♥		
		♦J		
		♣1062		
♠1043	N		♠95	
♥	W	E	♥	
♦9			♦Q108	
♣QJ8	S		♣93	
		♠8		
		♥108		
		♦		
		♣AK74		

If Mark returns a club or diamond, declarer wins and now his last trump squeezes me in the black suits. Mark saw this and played back a spade, breaking up the squeeze by cutting communication to dummy. That's really good defence - lots of people would miss it at the table.



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Teltscher Trials 2024

Editor



Trials for the Teltscher Trophy [Senior Camrose] were held at HQ on February 6th and 7th.

Just four teams entered, and the format was a single round-robin of 32-board matches. The event was played in a commendably positive spirit under the able direction of Brian Lawlor.

Going into the final match, three teams still held winning chances. In that last round, leaders Goodman [Peter Goodman, Terry Walsh, Pat Barry, David Terry] lost 9-11 and nearest pursuers Keaveney [Gay Keaveney, Enda Glynn, Donal Garvey, Pat Quinn] lost 6-14, so Goodman ran out winners. If Keaveney had won 14-6 instead of losing by the same score, they would have been the victors. But by the same token, had the O'Brien team [BJ O'Brien, Randal Milne, Micheál and Pádraig O'Briain] scored 15 rather than 11 against Goodman in that final match, they would have come out on top.

There were a few close decisions – see how you'd have fared.

Hand 1. Dealer North. Vul E/W.

North opens 3♥ and you hold

- ♠ K2
- ♥ K53
- ♦ Q942
- ♣ AK75

Your bid?

Hand 2. Dealer South. Vul All.

South passes and Partner opens 1♥. North overcalls 2♦. You hold

- ♠ KQ843
- ♥ 762
- ♦ 87
- ♣ K32

What do you bid?

Hand 3

- ♠ AJ9
- ♥ J7
- ♦ Q62
- ♣ AJ1095
- ♠ 765
- ♥ AK9632
- ♦ 8
- ♣ KQ6

You play 4♥ from the hand on the left. The lead is the ♣4. You win ♣K and cash ♥A, seeing ♥10 from LHO. How do you continue?

Here was the full layout on Hand 1

Dealer North. Vul E/W.

♠ 9					
♥ QJ98642					
♦ J					
♣ 8632					
♠ Q8764	N		E	♠ K2	
♥ 107	W		E	♥ K53	
♦ 10853				♦ Q942	
♣ 104		S		♣ AK75	
				♠ AJ1053	
				♥ A	
				♦ AK76	
				♣ QJ9	

If you ventured 3NT over North's 3♥ opening, you'd be picking the pieces up off the floor. Pat Barry showed the benefit of experience by passing. 3♥ cannot be beaten.

Hand 2 looked like this:

				♠ J102	
				♥ 8	
				♦ AKJ43	
				♣ A1074	
♠ A765	N		E	♠ KQ843	
♥ AQ1043	W		E	♥ 762	
♦ 2				♦ 87	
♣ QJ5		S		♣ K32	
				♠ 9	
				♥ KJ95	
				♦ Q10965	
				♣ 986	

West opens 1♥ at Nil All and North overcalls 2♦. David Terry was able to make a non-forcing 2♣ bid. That allowed Pat Barry an easy 4♠ over South's 4♦. There were 11 easy tricks. If you bid 2♥ as East, spades

are out of the game and 4♦-1 or 4♥-1 is your probable result. [N/S have a profitable 5♦ sacrifice over 4♠].

Hand 3 was tricky to play.-

				♠ AJ9	
				♥ J7	
				♦ Q62	
				♣ AJ1095	
♠ K10432	N		E	♠ Q8	
♥ 854	W		E	♥ Q10	
♦ A9				♦ KJ107543	
♣ 872		S		♣ 43	
				♠ 765	
				♥ AK9632	
				♦ 8	
				♣ KQ6	

After a transfer sequence, North declares 4♥ on the lead of the ♣4. ♣K wins and ♥A fetches ♥10.

If ♥10 is a singleton, a small heart towards ♥J will limit West to one trump winner. But if West wins ♥Q and plays a spade, declarer must win and re-enter dummy with ♣Q in order to draw trumps. That could be ruffed by West and now you'd lose two spades, ♥Q, a diamond and two club ruffs!

Randal Milne reasoned that if East had started with singleton ♥10, the club lead was more likely from a four-card suit than three or two. He cashed ♥K – 12 tricks.

Note that if West had held Q854 trumps, then declarer needs him to have three clubs in order to make 4♥ after cashing ♥AK. A spade is pitched on the fourth club. West ruffs and plays a spade, but declarer wins ♠A and the fifth club parks the last spade loser.

Well done to the winners, and congrats to David Terry on gaining a first cap. Gay Keaveney and Enda Glynn were added as the third pair.



Junior Bridge Update

Luca Crone [majorly assisted by Isabel Burke]



Junior Camrose & Peggy Bayer

From the 16th to the 18th of February 2024, the Irish Junior Bridge squad were competing in the La Mon Hotel, Belfast to try and make history with the first ever Irish Junior Camrose win and our second Peggy Bayer win. That being said, it would be very difficult to secure victory over the prestigious English teams.

Our Junior Camrose (U26) team was represented by:

Luca Crone, Matthew O'Farrell, Denise Walsh, Leah Finnegan and Sheila Walsh with John Phelan as NPC.

The Peggy Bayer (U21) team was: Klara Flanagan, Eve Connell, Isabel Burke, Tom Gorey, David Hoyne, Ben Orosz with Margaret Murphy as NPC.

Sheila said "I didn't play many hands, but when I did, it was just slapping down slams!" This may be true, but more often than not they made. She subbed in and out of the U26 team, while Luca and Matthew played all of the matches – 160 boards! Isabel played all the matches on the U21 team, most with Tom and two at the end with David. Both teams finished 2nd behind England which was a good showing. Thanks to our NPCs and coaches – hopefully next year in Wales one of our teams can out-do England.

Now, onto the bridge.

The Peggy Bayer team started off with a winning streak of three 20-nils which put us in the lead with England only 1.34 VPs behind. A win of 14.8 VPs to 5.2 against Scotland was not enough to maintain our lead, so we dropped to second and stayed there for the remainder of the competition. The Junior Camrose team started

off with two solid wins against Northern Ireland and SBU and beat England but couldn't pick up quite enough steam in the other matches to put it up to England.

Dealer East. Vul E/W.

		♠ J864			
		♥ 864			
		♦ 10753			
		♣ 109			
♠ 92	N		E	♠ AQ75	
♥ 53				♥ KJ7	
♦ AKQJ	W		S	♦ 982	
♣ AQ862				♣ K43	
		♠ K103			
		♥ AQ1092			
		♦ 64			
		♣ J75			

Let me set the scene for you. Ireland versus Northern Ireland Peggy Bayer. Last match of the day. Everyone is exhausted and ravenous.

With all other tables being in a standard 3NT on this board, neither the Irish nor NI got there! At my [Isobel's] table our opponents played in 2♣ – the bidding began with a four card 1♠ opening followed by 2♣ which was passed out. Thinking -110 would be a great score, my mood was dampened slightly to see -1000 at the other table! East had opened a club, South overcalled 2♥ and West forced with 3♦. All good so far. A raise to 5♦ got doubled and David plucked up the courage to redouble! This went down two. Oh well, these things happen. -15 IMPs was the only negative score we had that round.

Dealer East. Vul None.

		♠ A109			
		♥ J10876			
		♦ 53			
		♣ 963			
♠ 7	N		E	♠ KQJ43	
♥ A54				♥ K	
♦ AJ962	W		S	♦ KQ874	
♣ AQJ10				♣ 75	
		♠ 8652			
		♥ Q932			
		♦ 10			
		♣ K842			

This board contributed to our win against Wales. Well done to David and Ben who were the only pair to bid 6NT on this board. +990 VS -460 at our table was a nice victory against Wales and even better at match points beating those in 6♦!

Dealer North. Vul All.

		♠ -			
		♥ 843			
		♦ J9753			
		♣ J10852			
♠ KJ1052	N		E	♠ A98764	
♥ 96				♥ AKQ107	
♦ Q1062	W		S	♦ -	
♣ 92				♣ 64	
		♠ Q3			
		♥ J52			
		♦ AK84			
		♣ AKQ7			

This board came near the end of the last match of Peggy Bayer – against England to top things off. Even if we got a 20-nil we couldn't have beaten them and Scotland in 3rd place couldn't have caught us. That gave David and Isabel free rein to go wild (we didn't consider the implications for the Butler scores). I will bring you through the bidding and see what you would have done. East opened 1♠, next came a double from partner, 2NT (alerted as a good four+ card raise) by the west hand. East now bid 3♦, Double again from partner and a



quick 4♠ from west. Phew we didn't have to bid. East now after much deliberation passed. Now as South, what do you do?

Why not continue to do as you have the whole auction and X? Not successful here. I as North now bid 4NT, intending it as pick a minor, get me out of here partner they are making 4♠. There was some miscommunication as this was passed to west who saved me with 5♠. Thank god, out of the deep end, I just prayed partner could resist the urge to continue these doubles. Unfortunately, he had what he thought were a few tricks in defence and doubled but reality was a lot harsher when East now came alive to XX. I didn't find the club lead to hold it to making. Needless to say we were not overjoyed with -2000 but once again, these things happen. Our teammates were in a reasonable 4♠+1 not expecting to lose 17 IMPs on the board.



Junior Camrose:
John, Matthew,
Leah, Denise, Luca

We all had the opportunity to play speedball on the Saturday night – some mixing up partnerships. Tom and I opted for a new system where anything we bid means the suit 2 above – 1♣ opening means 1♥ and so on. Needless to say, this ended disastrously after a trip to the bar! Luca playing with Imogen, an English player were just pipped on the last board to finish 2nd. Summing up our less than successful night, according to Tom an alert is an opening bid, who knew. *[My head is spinning after reading this piece. I really need to get out more. Ed.]*

The Junior Camrose team won seven out of their ten matches while Peggy Bayer won eight out of 10. Well done to Luca and Matthew for finishing second on the Butler as a pair and to Ben for being top of the Peggy Bayer team in 5th place. Overall, it was a great weekend and hopefully at least one of our teams next year can beat England in Wales.

Guess the Contract - Solution

Editor

Dealer East. Vul All.

♠ -			
♥ K10962			
♦ QJ752			
♣ Q87			
♠ 852	N		♠ KQ10643
♥ AQ8743	W	E	♥ J5
♦ A10			♦ K983
♣ J9		S	♣ 3
			♠ AJ97
			♥ -
			♦ 64
			♣ AK106542

OK – prepare to suspend disbelief! N/S were the Italian pairing of Donati and Percario. Here was the bidding:

W	N	E	S
	Donati		Percario
		2♠	3♣
3♠	X	P	4♠
P	4NT	P	5♥
All Pass			

One is not clairvoyant. Was South responding to RKCB for clubs? South's 4♠ surely ought to warn North – ♠A is not worth much. Was 4NT meant as "two places to play" – but what was wrong with Clubs? 5♥ was down 5. There's hope for us all!

Intermediate Update

Nicola O'Dowd



I read somewhere "Some days I have a crush on the game of bridge and other days I feel crushed by the game of bridge" I am sure we all feel bridge is like this now and again.

In 2024, the first Congress of the year was in Waterford. My mum and I went. By then, President Gordon Lessells had gotten used to seeing me at all the congresses, (I think I have only missed one) so we had this little running joke where he'd say, "Oh, fancy meeting you here" and act surprised.

However, since he became president, and I moved up to A1, I haven't been lucky enough to be on the podium with Gordon. It becomes harder to win when you move up the grades which I guess is the whole point of a grading system. While I had won a few congresses and competitions as a B player, from September 2023 to January 2024, I hadn't secured any prizes as an Intermediate A player.

My luck changed when I played in the CBAI Women's Teams event in Clane on the 13th of January. 49 teams took part and it was a mixture As and Masters. Congratulations to Joan Kenny, Jeanie Fitzgerald, Teresa Rigney and Siobhan Part coming first.

I put together an Intermediate A Team with my partner Maria Rusu from Trim Bridge Club and Niamh Feeney her partner Joanne Macken from Navan Bridge Club. Winning five of the eight matches, and coming overall 22nd, we won best Intermediates and we were all thrilled.

Maria and I also played in the Women's pairs and had a great first session finishing 21st out of 76 Pairs. However, things didn't go as well in the second session, and we ended up finishing 52nd overall. The Intermediate A prize went to Grainne Courtney and Linda Gallagher. Congratulations to both of them, as well as to all the players who competed.

Next on my radar was the Holmes Wilson Trophy, National Open Teams Championship. It was held in Mount Wolsley Hotel in Tullow on the 10th and 11th of February 2024. It proved to be an unforgettable experience.

A staggering 109 teams participated in the event. I played with my teacher Declan Byrne and our teammates were Dara Voyles another student of Declan's and his brother in law, Paul Dunne.

Our first session exceeded all expectations.

Winning four out of our five matches was super and just left us buzzing. Despite losing the first match to Mairead Haugh, Justin Corfield, Roisin De Jong, and Jeroen Lodewijks, we bounced back strongly, securing a 20-0 victory in the next match. The third match was a close call, with a narrow 10.99 win in our favour. Match 4 saw us performing well, clinching a 13.15 victory, followed by a great 19.78 win in the last match of the session.

At the end of the first session, to our astonishment, we ranked 11th out of 109 teams, it left me utterly amazed. The competition was open to players of all levels from intermediates to masters, grandmasters, and international players. It was a truly humbling and gratifying experience to achieve such a ranking among such talent and experience... but it didn't last long. We soon went into free fall and our parachute refused to open.

My friend and bridge player Niamh Feeney often says, "Nothing grounds you like a game of bridge," and I couldn't agree more.

Our initial match of the second session was against Martin Brady, David Dunne, Paul Delaney, and Tomas Roche, and unfortunately, we suffered a defeat with a score of 16.11 - 3.89. This trend persisted as we lost the following two matches as well.

However, the lively atmosphere of the room and the camaraderie at each table helped uplift our spirits. Despite the losses, we managed to secure victories in our fourth and fifth matches. Although the second session didn't unfold as we had hoped, we were able to finish with smiles on our faces, appreciating the enjoyable moments shared amidst the competition.



Women's Teams - Clane - Best Intermediate Prize: Nicola O'Dowd, Maria Rusu, Niamh Feeney, Joanne Macken, Gordon Lessells.



One of my favourites parts of bridge is the “post mortem” of the boards and contracts. I find this so helpful, sometimes fun but always beneficial. My favourite board during the post mortem was definitely board 25 in the 1st session. Declan opened 1NT (12-14), I bid 4♣ (Gerber over NT) when I received my answer of 4♠ (two Aces) I went on with 5♣ Asking for kings, Declan answered 5♥ showing one king. I knew it was the K♥ and should have bid 7NT but I bid 7♦.

Of the 109 teams only 18 teams were in 7NT, and nine teams including us were in 7♦, I was kicking myself after that I did not bid the 7NT however was very pleased that I was one of the 27 teams that bid a grand slam.

Board 25. Dealer North. Vul E/W.

		♠ 72	
		♥ J743	
		♦ 3	
		♣ QJ9532	
♠ KJ	N	♠ A965	
♥ A		♥ K108	
♦ KQ87542	W	♦ AJ9	E
♣ AK8		♣ 1076	
		♠ Q10843	
		♥ Q9652	
		♦ 106	
		♣ 4	

W	N	E	S
	P	1NT	P
4♣	P	1♠	P
5♣	P	5♥	P
7♦	All Pass		

The final session proved to be our toughest, with only one match won. However, during this challenging session, there was a special moment of fun and laughs. This occurred during a match against a team that was well known to Declan and I. With both teams having a competitive spirit and a desire to beat our friends, the atmosphere was filled with excitement from the moment we sat down.

Our opponents, John Coulter and Paul Clinch, engaged in playful banter with us right from the start. The friendly rivalry added

an extra dimension to the game, making it not only a test of skill but also a memorable and enjoyable experience.

Our teammates played against Austin Leahy and Mark Ryan and this contributed to the spirited atmosphere, ensuring that every moment of the match was filled with energy and enthusiasm. Despite the overall outcome of the session, this particular match stood out as a testament to the fun and sociability that bridge can have among players.

Right from the start of my beginner lessons with Declan, he often said “bridge is a game we play for enjoyment and never forget that”. This match was the last match of the three sessions but by far the most enjoyable. It was a great way to end our first Holmes Wilson.

The IBU Inter-County Intermediate Teams Championships took place in the Cavan Crystal Hotel Over the weekend of 9/10th March.

Ten Teams competed in the O’Connor Trophy for the Intermediate As. Two Meath, two Donegal, three Cavan and three Dublin teams.

Our team consisted of myself, Dara Voyles, Sandra Peden and Linda Walsh from Navan.

After session 1, we were in third place with 135.4 VPs, trailing behind Cavan with 146.2 and Dublin 1 with 146.8. First Place was within reach for all of us.

The banter and friendly competition among us was just great fun and there was a lovely atmosphere with all players. Winning our first three matches and losing only the fourth in put us slightly ahead going in to the last two matches. What I really love about the team events is the element of surprise, that you just don’t know how you stand until your teammates return to your table to compare what happened at theirs. It can really surprise you when you are sure you lost.

Board 17 starting of the second last round was my favourite board of the whole tournament.

Dara opened 1♦ East passed and I was sitting there with 17 points and a 4441 hand. I responded 1♠. Then west came in with 2♥ and Dara and East passed. What was I going to do now. I figured my choices were Double making Dara bid again so I could find more about his hand or bid 4NT so he would know how strong I was looking for key cards in Diamonds. But did I do either of them? No!

I decided with my singleton heart and five and half loser hand that I would Jump straight to 6♦ hope that Dara had the ♦AK and close my eyes. ♥A lead and then East switched to a club. Dara went up the ♣A and then could discard his losing clubs on the spades. Right or wrong it was the only 6♦ bid in our section and as it worked out it happened to win that match for us.

Board 17. Dealer North. Vul None.

		♠ Q	
		♥ Q92	
		♦ AK975	
		♣ 7542	
♠ 953	N	♠ 107642	
♥ KJ8765		♥ A43	
♦ J8	W	♦ 64	E
♣ K3		♣ 1098	
		♠ AKJ8	
		♥ 10	
		♦ Q1032	
		♣ AQJ6	

W	N	E	S
	1♦	P	1♠
2♥	P	P	6♦
All Pass			

Dublin 1 and Cavan 3 also won those matches leaving them 205.7/205.2 respectively, and us on 210.4. The outcome of the final match would determine the championship. We were delighted to win the match by 15 VPs.

It was a super game and Paul Clinch, Vicky Pigot, Jeremy James and Mia Delaney coming 2nd place certainly gave us a run for our money. It was a tight competition with us and Dublin 1 team exchanging the lead regularly.



The Regional Teams Qualifier 2024 took part in various clubs around the country on the last weekend in January 2024. This time our team was Dara Voyles, Paul Dunne Maria Rusu and Myself. We entered Mid Leinster Region as we are all members of Declan Byrne Bridge Online.

Dara and Paul are also members of Roselawn bridge club which is Mid Leinster region too. The entries were small but we qualified and were looking forward to the National Teams competition.

The National Teams Championships were held in Loughrea Hotel & Spa on the 23rd and 24th of March.

The Bankers Trophy (Intermediate A Championship) had 19 teams.

Session 1 we won four of our six matches leaving us in third place with South Munster 1 in first and Dublin South 1 in second place.

We had a good second session winning six of our seven matches and leaving us in second place to South Munster 1.

I really messed up the first board in the last session. Playing in 1NT I pulled out the ♣9 instead of the Queen and was down one. Costing us to lose that match 6.72-13.28

We won the next two matches but then I messed up again!

Session 3

Board 17. Dealer West. Vul E/W.

	♠ J107543		
	♥ 85		
	♦ 63		
	♣ 1062		
♠ AK2	N	♠ 98	
♥ 7		♥ A93	
♦ KJ10	W E	♦ Q9742	
♣ J98743		♣ AK5	
	S		
	♠ Q6		
	♥ KQJ10642		
	♦ A85		
	♣ Q		

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	1♦	1♥
2♣	P	3NT	All Pass

Getting the ♥K lead I could count nine tricks on top if the ♣Q fell. Eight Ever Nine Never. Sorted. So I ducked the ♥K and then ducked the ♥Q discarding the ♠2. ♥J played next and I stupidly discarded the ♣3 instead of the ♦10. Down 1. I was raging with myself. Lucky enough the boys found and made 4♥ on board 15 leaving my error cancelled out and we walked away with a draw 10:10.

These errors serve as valuable learning experiences, reminding me to stay focused and composed under pressure.

As I said before I personally feel you cannot punish yourself for letting your team down. In bridge, mistakes are inevitable and are certainly not made intentionally. They are simply part of the exciting journey that is the game of bridge. Luckily for me my partner and team mates all felt the same and never once did any of them criticise or blame me for either mistakes on these boards, they simply said "Hard Luck" and offered support and encouragement going in to the next round. Now, they may have been thinking it (!) but I felt absolutely no pressure from them, only the annoyance I caused myself.

In the end, it's the comradeship and mutual respect among teammates that truly enhance the enjoyment of bridge, despite the occasional missteps along the way.

Going in to the last match we were 6.73 VPs behind South Munster 1 team, who held first position over the 68 boards played so far, they never dropped.

Then at board 22. I opened 1♠ Maria bid 3♠. North passed and all I could think was "Will I play it safe in 4♠ or go investigate slam? We were vulnerable and I had to hope that the opposition would stay in 4. So I took a chance and bid 4NT.

Maria answered RKCB 5♣ showing one Ace. I bid 6♠.

♣A led and then they switched to a diamond, North went up the ♦K which meant I did not have to finesse. I had the rest of the tricks and knew I was going to make 6♠.

Session 3

Board 22. Dealer East. Vul E/W.

	♠ 8		
	♥ 74		
	♦ K8763		
	♣ QJ762		
♠ A765	N	♠ KQ942	
♥ K982		♥ AQ65	
♦ J10	W E	♦ AQ9	
♣ K83		♣ 9	
	S		
	♠ J103		
	♥ J103		
	♦ 542		
	♣ A1054		

W	N	E	S
		1♠	P
3♠	P	4NT	P
5♣	P	6♠	

Obviously because it was teams we did not know what happened at the other tables. I just could not believe it when Dara and Paul standing in front of the Screen watching the final results turned around to us, as we were still putting cards back in the boards, telling us that we jumped up to first place.

The four of us were thrilled.

But I have to say we really felt for the South Munster 1 Team Pat Twomey, David Sheehan, Alf Davis, Martin Delaney, they had a fantastic game and had been holding on to first place through all the sessions, right till the last. A super team.

The theme of President Gordon Lessells' presidential year, "Please cherish and nurture your club's beginners and novices – they are the future of our game," resonates deeply with me. Just three years ago, I was a novice myself, and through hard work, dedication, support, encouragement and the guidance of a wonderful teacher and partners, I have progressed to achieve the points to become Area Master.

When I first started learning bridge we were told that bridge is the best card game in the world and a game for life. Our teacher emphasised that bridge is not only a game but also a social experience enriched by the people and characters we encounter. I wholeheartedly agree with this statement.

Throughout my journey in bridge, I have had the opportunity to travel across Ireland, mostly accompanied by my mother, which is a fantastic opportunity in itself to have.

I have met countless individuals who share a passion for the game.

President Lessells' message reinforces the importance of fostering a welcoming and supportive environment in our local clubs, where beginners and novices can thrive and contribute to the future of bridge.



Bankers Trophy - Intermediate A Championship President Gordon Lessells, Paul Dunne, Dara Voyles, Nicola O' Dowd, Maria Rusu

Assign the Blame!!

Editor

I think we can agree that when even the very best experts have bad boards, there's hope for us all. I saw this hand from the 2016 Spingold [US Teams Championship] online recently.

It's Nil All, RHO passes and you hold

♠ Q
♥ AK94
♦ AK10
♣ AQ842

What do you open?

You can put me down for 2NT, thanks very much. The least bad option as I'd see it. Bobby Levin, from the all-conquering Nickell team, opened 1♣, promising at least three clubs, no upper points limit. LHO passed and Steve Weinstein held:

♠ 10875
♥ 753
♦ Q42
♣ K53

He passed. 1♣ became the final contract, making +3. There are 10 cold tricks in 3NT. 5♣ also makes. At the other table the contract was 1♣+4!!

27 combined points and 1♣ is the contract in both rooms. Wowser. Assign the blame!!



Magic Squeezes - Defence to Squeezes

Rory Timlin



This is the final of a series of articles on Squeeze Play.

This time we look at ways to Defend against Squeezes, such as:

- (a) Upsetting the Timing of the Play,
- b) Killing Menace Cards, and
- (c) Attacking Entries.

For a change, we will look at full hands rather than presenting play/defence problems. Feel free to cover up declarer's hand and your partner's hand while planning the defence. In all cases, assume IMPs scoring.

(a) Upsetting the Timing:

(1)		
♠ KQ94 ♥ K86 ♦ A6 ♣ A752		
♠ 53 ♥ QJ1095 ♦ 72 ♣ J983	N W S	♠ AJ1062 ♥ 32 ♦ 9854 ♣ 104
♠ 87 ♥ A74 ♦ KQJ103 ♣ KQ6		

South deals and opens 1♦. N/S bid 1♦-1♠-1NT(15/16)-4NT-6NT. Opening lead ♥Q. South wins in hand and trick 2 goes ♠8, ♠5, ♠Q. Plan the defence.

Partner is marked with ♥QJ and hopefully a minor suit knave. If we win the first spade, we are rectifying the count for declarer and may be walking partner into a Simple Squeeze in hearts and clubs. So best defence is to duck at trick 2. Now there is no play for the contract. Note that, as the cards lie, winning the first spade is fatal (and exiting in any suit, let's say a heart, it doesn't matter), as declarer will be in a position to cash winners leading to this ending

♠ - ♥ 8 ♦ - ♣ A75		
♠ - ♥ J ♦ - ♣ J98	N W S	♠ J106 ♥ - ♦ - ♣ 10
♠ - ♥ 7 ♦ 10 ♣ Q6		

Now the last diamond squeezes West and 6NT makes. Note that a smooth duck of the first spade may lead to three down if declarer plays a second spade towards the king.

(2)		
♠ 7532 ♥ A102 ♦ 863 ♣ AQ4		
♠ QJ108 ♥ 64 ♦ KJ952 ♣ 86	N W S	♠ 96 ♥ QJ973 ♦ Q10 ♣ J1053
♠ AK4 ♥ K85 ♦ A74 ♣ K972		

South opens 1NT (15-17) and North raises to 3NT. You lead ♦5, 3, Q, 4. Partner returns ♦10, declarer wins ♦A and exits on ♦7, partner discarding ♥3. Take it from here.

It looks like declarer wants us to cash our diamond winners. If we cash them, East can discard two hearts and a spade, but then he is squeezed in hearts and clubs when declarer cashes two top spades, and the contract makes. The winning defence is to cash the fourth diamond (optional), but not the fifth. Exiting in any other suit at trick 4 or 5 breaks up the squeeze and beats 3NT.

In hands (1) and (2), rectifying the count hands the contract to declarer. In particular, on hand (2), we should be warned when declarer exits in diamonds. In these examples, rectifying the count leads to a Suicide Squeeze (self-inflicted).

(b) Killing Menace Cards:

(3)		
♠ J643 ♥ J98 ♦ 92 ♣ A932		
♠ AKQ108 ♥ K65 ♦ 1083 ♣ K4	N W S	♠ 95 ♥ 2 ♦ QJ754 ♣ J10875
♠ 72 ♥ AQ10743 ♦ AK6 ♣ Q6		

South deals and it goes 1♥-[1♠]-2♥-[P]-4♥. You cash two top spades, all following. What next?

If you don't kill the spade menace, then declarer will play three rounds of diamonds, ruffing the third one, finesse trumps, losing a trick to ♥K and then running trumps. In the three card ending, the last trump will squeeze West in the black suits.

The winning defence is to play a low spade at trick three, say ♠10. East will ruff and South will overruff. When West wins ♥K, he plays a top spade to kill the spade menace and now the defence will win a club in the endgame to beat the contract.

(4)		
♠ 10762 ♥ A943 ♦ 84 ♣ A85		
♠ AKQ94 ♥ KJ5 ♦ 109 ♣ 732	N W S	♠ J83 ♥ 10872 ♦ 63 ♣ J964
♠ 5 ♥ Q6 ♦ AKQJ752 ♣ KQ10		



South deals and the bidding starts 1♦-1♠-X. Then South bids very strongly, including a spade cuebid (1st or 2nd round control) and lands in 6♦. You lead a top spade which catches ♠2, ♠3, ♠5. What next?

The auction and the partner's card at trick one confirm that declarer has a singleton spade. A spade continuation will allow declarer to draw trumps, enter dummy in clubs and ruff a spade to isolate the spade menace. Now the run of the clubs and trumps leads to this ending as declarer leads the last minor winner:

♠ Q		♠ 10		
♥ KJ		♥ A9		
♦ -		♦ -		
♣ -		♣ -		
	N		E	
♠ -		♥ 1087		♠ -
	W	♦ -		♥ -
	S	♣ -		♦ -
				♣ -
		♠ -		
		♥ Q6		
		♦ 2		
		♣ -		

West is squeezed in the Majors at trick 11 and the slam makes.

West can avert all of this by switching to a minor at trick two, say to a trump. Now declarer doesn't have enough entries to dummy to isolate the spade menace and in the endgame, East retains ♠J and West retains ♥KJ to beat the slam.

(c) Attacking Entries:

(5)		♠ 10863		
		♥ AK5		
		♦ J		
		♣ QJ962		
♠ KQJ7				♠ 52
♥ 107				♥ 98643
♦ Q10743				♦ 865
♣ 105				♣ 874
	N		E	
	W		S	
		♠ A94		
		♥ QJ2		
		♦ AK92		
		♣ AK3		

East deals and N/S bid 2NT-3♣-3♦-3♠-3NT-4NT-6NT. 2NT was 20-22 and 3♣ asked for suits upwards. You lead ♠K, 3, 2, 4. What do you do at trick 2?

On the bidding, you know East has 0 or 1 HCP (♥J). So declarer has five tricks in clubs, three in hearts, two in diamonds and one in spades, 11 on top. And if you continue a high spade, declarer will need just ♦9 or any five card diamond suit to squeeze you in spades and diamonds. Declarer will simply cash three hearts and all the clubs ending in dummy. On the lead of the last club, this is the position:

		♠ 108		
		♥ -		
		♦ J		
		♣ 9		
♠ J				♠ -
♥ -				♥ 9
♦ Q107				♦ 865
♣ -				♣ -
	N		E	
	W		S	
		♠ 9		
		♥ -		
		♦ AK9		
		♣ -		

Declarer throws a spade on the last club and West is squeezed. West can foresee all of this and should switch at trick two to ♦Q. This breaks up the entries and beats the contract.

Note that 6♣ cannot be stopped. Test it out and see that it makes on a ruffing squeeze, as West cannot cope in spades and diamonds.

(6)		♠ Q85		
		♥ Q62		
		♦ AQ104		
		♣ A93		
♠ KJ74				♠ 1092
♥ J107				♥ 9843
♦ KJ972				♦ 863
♣ 7				♣ K54
	N		E	
	W		S	
		♠ A63		
		♥ AK5		
		♦ 5		
		♣ QJ10862		

South deals and it goes 1♣-(1♦)-3NT-no-4♣-no-4♦-no-6♣. West leads ♥J, 2, 4, A. Trick two goes ♣Q, 7, 3, 4. A second trump goes to the ace, West discarding ♦2, and a third trump is played,

West throwing ♠7. In with ♣K, what does East return?

On the evidence so far, we know that declarer started with six clubs, one diamond and six Major suit cards. Best hope for the defence is that West has ♠K (or ♠A). So a spade looks like a good switch. But not good enough. Declarer will go ♠A and run off heart and trump winners. In this four card ending, West is squeezed in spades and diamonds. So 6♣ rolls home with the aid of a finesse of ♦Q:

		♠ Q		
		♥ -		
		♦ AQ10		
		♣ -		
♠ K				♠ -
♥ -				♥ -
♦ KJ9				♦ immaterial
♣ -				♣ -
	N		E	
	W		S	
		♠ 63		
		♥ -		
		♦ 5		
		♣ 6		

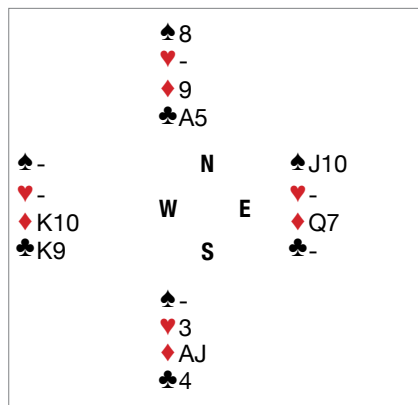
Could the defence do better? Yes. A diamond exit by East at trick five attacks the entries and breaks up the squeeze. Sometimes a lead of a suit where declarer is known to have a singleton can kill a squeeze. Note that it doesn't matter if East wins the 1st, 2nd or 3rd trump. In each case the winning defence is a diamond switch.

(7)		♠ A852		
		♥ AQ8		
		♦ 94		
		♣ A1053		
♠ 73				♠ KQJ1094
♥ 72				♥ 5
♦ K10862				♦ Q753
♣ KJ98				♣ 76
	N		E	
	W		S	
		♠ 6		
		♥ KJ109643		
		♦ AJ		
		♣ Q42		

At Game All, North opens 1♣, East overcalls 2♠ (weak) and South ends up in 6♥, having shown a first round control in diamonds along the way. You lead ♠7, A, K, 6. Declarer cashes ♥AQ, East following once and then discarding ♠Q. Trick four goes ♣3, 7, Q, K. Back on lead, what now?



Based on the play so far, declarer is likely to be 1-7-2-3 with $\heartsuit A$, so we can count declarer for 11 tricks with $\clubsuit 10$ finesse. If you exit in clubs or spades, declarer will finesse clubs, ruff a spade and run trumps to get to this four card ending ending:



On the lead of the last trump, West must keep the clubs and play a diamond, a club goes from dummy and East plays a spade. Now a club to dummy squeezes East in spades and diamonds. A nice Double Squeeze to make the slam.

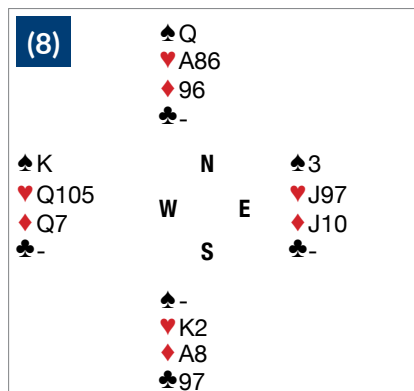
Can the defence do better? The way to break up the double squeeze is to exit in diamonds after winning $\clubsuit K$. On a low diamond exit, East goes $\diamondsuit Q$ and South wins $\diamondsuit A$. But now South will rattle off the trumps and catch West in a Simple Squeeze in the minors.

So, is there no defence to beat the contract? Yes, the winning defence is for West to exit with $\diamondsuit K$ at trick five. This breaks up all squeezes. Difficult defence? Yes, but not impossible to find if you make the effort to work out declarer's hand.

Note that an initial diamond lead beats the contract, but then there would be no story.

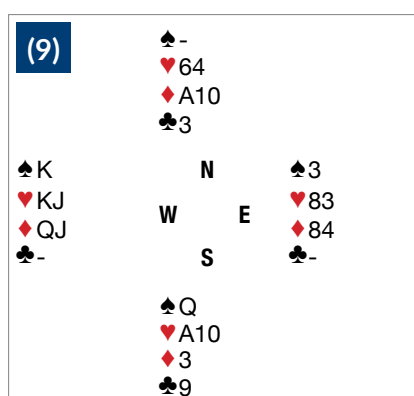
Which Suit to Discard:

In the following examples with South (declarer) on lead at Notrump, assume that you are West and that both defenders know the layout of the cards:



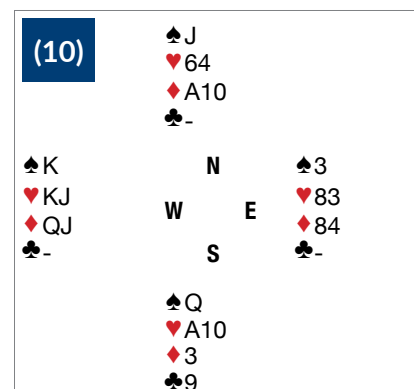
In the six card ending, declarer has five top tricks. On the lead of a club, a spade discard is fatal. So which red suit do you discard? The best discard is a heart. North sheds a diamond and East a spade. If the last club is then led, you must let go another heart. Now the squeeze fails.

However, if your first discard was a diamond, then dummy plays a diamond and East a spade. Now South cashes $\diamondsuit A$ and the last club then brings off a Double Squeeze. In a case like this, it is often best to unguard the suit in which the menace lies on your left.



This is a typical Triple Squeeze. Declarer has three top tricks in the five card ending (two losers). A Triple Squeeze usually yields one extra trick, sometimes two. In this case, South leads the last club and West has to yield one trick, but has to be careful not to yield two. So what do you play? A diamond discard gives you one trick, but any

other discard allows you to be squeezed again to concede all the tricks. As above, the rule of thumb is to release the suit which is held on your left.



This is a slight variation of hand (9), with North holding $\spadesuit J$ instead of a small club. Again South has just three of the last five tricks on top. But this time the spade menace sitting over West is more potent and West is powerless to stop South making all five tricks. A Progressive Triple Squeeze.

Final Thoughts on Squeezes

The easier and most frequent forms of Squeeze Play are the Simple Squeeze and the Strip Squeeze. Other forms, such as the Double Squeeze, Trump Squeeze, Guard Squeeze and Triple Squeeze, along with Defence to Squeezes, are trickier to master and you really need to read up about them and this can be very rewarding, both in terms of personal satisfaction and of results at the table.

So I recommend you go back and reread all 11 articles in this series. The first seven articles are in the earlier hardcopy format IBJ dating from May 2021 to July 2022 and the final four articles are in the more recent electronic issues of the magazine.

Also there are many great books on Squeeze Play. My favourite author on this topic is Hugh Kelsey. He, along with Terence Reese, writes brilliantly and lucidly on the subject. So, bon voyage.

And finally, a special word of thanks to my friend Paul Scannell for his very valuable advice in developing these articles.



Muppet Stayman

Ranald Milne



In 2012 Bill Jacobs attempted to uncover the bidding system that enabled Fulvio Fanoni and Claudio Nunes to be the world number-ones that they were.

His book, which he called “Fantunes Revealed”, remains a remarkable achievement, undiminished by the accusations later that their bidding success wasn’t entirely as a result of their system! *[Not their system of bidding, but their furniture arrangement and card positioning systems were wonders to behold! Ed]*

Not long after publication (but before the accusations), James Heneghan and I tried to adopt the system, with varying degrees of success but one aspect that Jacobs included in an appendix fascinated me and that was their treatment over 2NT openings. Jacobs referred to it as Muppet Stayman and although he had a good crack at an outline, there were some of gaps and so I’ve had a go at finishing the job.

The convention itself isn’t for the faint-hearted and, I suspect, will need a lot to practice and repetition before one becomes confident and proficient. It does however enable your partnership, when holding game values, to find all 8+ card major suit fits¹ allowing them to be played by opener (the strong hand), plus allowing for minor suit games and slam investigations. It also allows opener, holding 4-4 in the majors, to select their preferred contract when partner shows 5-4 in the majors - particularly useful in marginal slams, as the 4-4 fit is likely to provide an extra trick.

Take a look at this problem:

Hand 1

North

♠ Axx
♥ AKxx
♦ Axx
♣ KQx

South

♠ QJxxx
♥ xxx
♦ x
♣ Axxx

Hand 2

North

♠ Ax
♥ AKxxx
♦ Axx
♣ KQx

South

♠ QJxxx
♥ xxx
♦ x
♣ Axxx

South’s cards are the same for both hands, so what should they respond to partner’s 2NT opening (or strong 2♣ or 2♦ opening followed by a 2NT rebid)?

If they’re playing Puppet Stayman they may elect to bid 3♣ and will hit pay-dirt on Hand 2 when North bids 3♥ to show a five-card heart suit but will be stymied if opener rebids 3NT (denying a major) or, as in Hand 1, bids 3♦ to show at least one.

The more likely response from all players is to transfer to spades and then bid 3NT. That works fine on Hand 1 but isn’t so good for Hand 2.

If you’re using this version of Muppet Stayman then the problem disappears (as do others).

If that’s got your interest then read more on the table on the following page!

Responding with weak hands deserves some consideration. With no five-card or longer major, such hands must pass 2NT. With such a major one can transfer and then pass but what action should one take holding 5-4 in the majors? Standard Stayman users have no problem: they respond 3♣ and either pass opener’s major suit bid (or raise it if their hand improves enough) or bid their five-card major over a negative response but Puppet Stayman risks getting too high if opener bids 3NT to deny a major. Their only option is to transfer and pass. With Muppet Stayman, however, there is an option when holding four spades and five hearts and a hand that would become strong enough for game if a fit were found. Respond 3♣ and, if opener bids 3♦ to show a major, bid 4♣ to show both majors. If, however, opener responds 3♥ denying a major then responder passes. Unfortunately, this option is not available when holding five spades and four hearts.

Otherwise, the **only** times responder doesn’t respond 3♣ are:

- ▶ When holding five spades and fewer than three hearts (transfer)
- ▶ When holding five hearts and fewer than four spades (transfer)
- ▶ When holding five hearts and four spades (bid 3NT)
- ▶ When holding six+ cards in a major (transfer)
- ▶ When they have slam interest in a minor or minors (3♠, 4m or 4M)

¹ Except when opener has 5-4 in the majors. If over 3♣ they show their five-card suit then the other major gets lost (unless partner is slam-going) and if they show both majors then the 5-3 fit is lost (unless partner is slam-going).



I have kept away from discussing slam exploration bidding for fear of making this introductory piece too complex.

Finally, here is how Muppet Stayman users would cope with Hands 1 and 2.

Firstly, South bids 3♣, asking for majors

- ▶ If opener bids 3♦ (showing one or more four-card major) South bids 3♥ (showing four+ spades) and then raises North's 3♣ response (showing three spades) to 4♠ (Hand 1)
- ▶ If opener bids 3NT (showing five hearts) South raises to game (Hand 2)

Of course, if opener happens to bid 3♥ (denying a major) then South bids 3NT to show five spades.

Muppet Stayman

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣ = Major suit ask	3♦ = One or more 4-card major	3♥ = 4+spades	3♣ = 3 spades 3NT = 2 spades 4 any = 4 spades 3NT = to play	
			3♠ = 4 Hearts		
			3NT = no major		
			4♣ = 4-4 in the majors		
			4♦ = 5 spades + 4 Hearts		
		3♥ = No major	3♣ = puppet to 3NT	3NT - oblige	Pass
			3NT = 5♠, 3♥		4♣ = 5/5 in the majors (slam try)
			4♣/♦ = natural 5 card, slam try		4♦ = 5/5 in the majors
		3♠ = 5 spades	3NT = to play		
			4♠ = to play		
		3NT = 5 hearts	Pass = denies 3♥		
			4♦ = puppet to play in hearts		
		3♦ = Transfer	3♥ - obliged	Pass = to play	
				3♠ = denies 3 spades	
				3NT = 5♥ and 3♣	
3♥ = Transfer	3♠ - obliged	Pass = to play			
		3NT = 5♠ (denies 3 hearts)			
3♣ = At least 5-4 in minors, slam try	3NT = no 4-card minor	4♣/4♦ = 5-card minor			
	4♣/4♦ = 4-card minor				
3NT = 5♥ and 4♠					
4♣/4♦ = Natural - mild slam try					
4♥/4♠ = Strong slam try in ranking minor					



Opening Leads against Suit Contracts

Peter Pigot



When asked what is the most difficult aspect of the game of bridge, nearly all experts would nominate the opening lead. No surprise that in the 2015 cheating exposé at the highest expert level, a number of the pairs that were 'outed' were found to be "helping" each other in this department... (little did they realise this specific would make it easier for the analyst sleuths to discover their impropriety).

When leading to NT contracts we generally try and find OUR longest suit, knock out declarer's stoppers and get back in to cash our winners in that suit. This approach is not foolproof - sometimes '4th highest from our longest and strongest' finds partner with NO help in our suit, and we therefore gift declarer tricks he/she doesn't deserve. In the days of yore this was generally ok, but these days people are far more prudent and careful when leading AWAY from honours.

Anyway it's suit contracts we are dealing with today and here comes a big message! Leading our long suits is only best about 20% of the time!! When leading against a SUIT contract it is very important to consider your cards in the light of the bidding. You then form a plan - should your defence be offensive or defensive? How is declarer likely to play the hand - and how can / should you counter this?

There are many potential considerations when framing your defensive strategy against a suit contract. Here are a few!

1. Cashing your winners
2. Getting a ruff
3. Forcing defence
4. Cutting down declarer's ruffs
5. Breaking declarer's communications
6. Passive defence
7. Building a slow trick
8. Killing dummy's long Suit
9. Leading through dummy's suit
10. Attacking in your 3rd suit (5-4-3-1, i.e. the THREE card suit)
11. Leading against doubled contracts - leading trumps, other approaches.

Let's explore some of these principles in practice.

Hand 1. Dealer South. Vul N/S .

	♠9 ♥K97 ♦K7653 ♣Q753		
♠54 ♥654 ♦QJ1082 ♣J109	N W E S	♠KQ1076 ♥32 ♦A94 ♣K86	
		♠AJ832 ♥AQJ108 ♦- ♣A42	

W	N	E	S
P	1NT	P	2♣ ¹
P	2♦ ²	P	3♥ ³
P	4♥	All Pass	

¹ Gazzilli = 16+ distributional; ² = 8-11; ³ = 5-5+

The best lead against NT is top of a sequence from length, so West would bang down ♦Q without much thought. However this is a suit contract. Declarer is 5-5 in Spades and Hearts, North has chosen Hearts [i.e. has more Hearts than Spades] and you hold only TWO spades. Where are the rest of the spades? In partner's hand!! How do we apply this information? We need to prevent declarer ruffing spades in dummy, so that partner's spades will take their natural tricks. How to do that? Lead a trump!!

On this hand, after a trump lead, declarer has only nine tricks and when the ♣K is sitting over the Q, declarer is doomed.

Hand 2. Dealer South. Vul AI .

	N	E	
♠A876 ♥K762 ♦1092 ♣94	W	S	♠2 ♥AJ104 ♦K743 ♣8752
			♠KQJ109 ♥8 ♦QJ ♣AKJ103

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	2♠	P	4♠
		All Pass	

West is on lead and thinks... "With trump control maybe I should lead a short suit and hope to get a ruff?" Yes, with control in trumps you can protect the small trumps from being drawn BUT to get a ruff you will need partner to know



it's a doubleton lead rather than a singleton – and that's IF he holds the ♣A. [A well-known English bridge Journalist says he hasn't led a doubleton since 1986 as his partners always think they are singletons!]

So - back to the West hand. West has a BIG surprise for declarer with FOUR trumps and a control card to boot. Therefore the BEST defence is a forcing defence, trying to force declarer in trumps and stop him being able to draw yours. 'When long in trumps, lead your long suit'.

West leads the ♥2 and East inserts the 10 which holds. A very thoughtful East can see his singleton spade so knows the

defence West is planning. East returns a LOW Heart retaining the Ace. Declarer ruffs this and tables the ♠Q on which you rise with the Ace and play another Heart to again force declarer down to LESS trumps than you. Declarer cashes a winning trump and sees East discard (boo hoo). Clubs are next played and you ruff the Second round to play the last Heart. Declarer can ruff and play another clubs but you ruff and lead a Diamond. When East turns up with the ♦K the defence have their man! They take a heart, a diamond, the Ace of trumps PLUS West's fourth trump, which grew up due to the forcing defence. One down.



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Bidding Quiz 6

By Bob Pattinson



All eight hands are from live pairs events. Entries to biddingquiz@cbaire.com by 7th July 2024.

Good luck!

Question 1

Dealer West. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ QJ32
- ♥ A65
- ♦ AKQ85
- ♣ 7

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	2♦ ¹	2♥
3♣	P	?	

¹ 2♦ = Inverted

Question 2

Dealer East. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ AK105
- ♥ A4
- ♦ 1082
- ♣ A1096

W	N	E	S
		P	1♦ ¹
P	1♠	P	1NT ²
P	?		

¹ 1♦ = 4+; ² 1NT = 12-14

Question 3

Dealer North. Vul All. Pairs.

- ♠ KQ105
- ♥ AK86
- ♦ Q2
- ♣ A92

W	N	E	S
	3♣	X	P
4♦ ¹	P	?	

¹ 4♦ = GF: 6+ suit

Question 4

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ Q852
- ♥ A7
- ♦ AQ762
- ♣ AJ

W	N	E	S
	1♦	P	3♦ ¹
X	?		

¹ 3♦ = 4+:6-8

Question 5

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ Q
- ♥ AQ109
- ♦ K432
- ♣ QJ75

W	N	E	S
	1♦	1♥	1♠
P	2♣	P	4♣
P	?		

Question 6

Dealer South. Vul E/W. Teams

- ♠ 2
- ♥ 10874
- ♦ -
- ♣ KQ986432

W	N	E	S
			2NT ¹
P	?		

¹ 2NT = 20-22

Question 7

Dealer North. Vul /W. Pairs.

- ♠ Q
- ♥ AK104
- ♦ AK107
- ♣ A1097

W	N	E	S
	3♣	P	4NT
P	5♣ ¹	P	?

¹ 5♣ = one key card

Question 8

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams

- ♠ 53
- ♥ A63
- ♦ AK654
- ♣ J43

W	N	E	S
	1♦	1♠	2♣ ¹
4♣	?		

¹ 2♣ = 5+ F!

Entries to:
biddingquiz@cbaire.com
by 7th July 2024

In every issue a €50 CBAI gift voucher will be awarded to the leading contestant in each of the following categories:

- **Novice/Intermediate**
- **Master (below Life Master)**

Please remember to state your grade in your entry



Bidding Quiz System

General Approach:

Five card majors, three+ minors, 2/1 GF,
1NT = 15-17,
2♣ = art GF with 2♦ waiting response

Balanced Hands

4333, 4432, 5332
(with five minor)

12-14 and 18-19 open 1♣/♦

20-22 : 2NT (may include five card major hence play puppet Stayman)

Major Suit Responses

1NT = 5-10 F1:
2♣/♦/♥ = 2/1 GF

3♣/♦/♥ over 1♠ opening and 2♠/3♣/♦ over 1♥ opening = four card+ trump support: 8-11 : first or second round control in bid suit.

3M = 4-7 and 4+ trumps

2NT = Jacoby 16+:
4+ trumps:

Opener bids a singleton at the three-level, a second five card suit at the four-level, rebids 3M with 17-19, 4M with 12-14, and 3NT with 15-16.

Responses to the forcing 1NT:

example for 1♥: 1NT: 2♣ = Gazzilli : either 11-16 with 5M and 4+ clubs or any 17+ hand

2♦ = 11-16 : 3+ diamonds

2♥ = 11-16 : 6+ hearts

2♠ = 14-16: 6 hearts and 5 spades

2NT = 14-16 : 6 hearts and a 4 card minor : now 3♣ pass/ correct; 3♦ = GF asks for minor; 3♥ - to play

3♣/♦ = 14-16: 5-5

3♥ = 14-16 : 6+ hearts and strong suit

Example of Gazzilli after 1♥:1NT:2♣

2♦ = any 8+ suit

2♥ = 5-7 : 5+ hearts

2♠ = 5-7 : 6+ spades

2NT = 5=7: 3 suiter with short hearts

3♣/♦ = 5-7 : 6+ minor

After responder bids 2♦ opener rebids 2M with 11-16 and 5M and 4+ clubs
2NT = 17-19 balanced : other bids game forcing

Responses to 1nt Opening (15-17)

2♣ = non-promissory Stayman

2♦/♥/♠/NT = transfers

3♣/♦/♥/♠ = long suits with slam interest

Two-Level Suit Opening Bids

Bid	Meaning	Responses
2♣	23 + or equivalent unbalanced	2♦ = waiting bid
2♦/♥/♠	6-10 : six card suit, using rule of two, three or four depending upon different vulnerability of the two sides	2NT = enquiry: opener signs off with three-level rebid of own suit with minimum and bids a new suit to show a feature or 3NT with a feature in the opening suit

Three/Four-Level Opening Bids

Bid	Meaning	Responses
3♣/♦/♥/♠	6-10 : six or seven card suit	New suit forcing
3NT	Eight card broken minor suit	4♣ = pass / convert 4♦ = interested in club slam but only part score in diamonds 5♣ = willing to play in game in either minor 4M = asking bid; interest in game in either major: seeks control in bid major 4NT = name suit and quality: 5♣/♦ = confirms suit but denies Ace or King : 5♥/♠ = respective suit and holds Ace or King in that minor
4♣/♦	Namyats: eight card solid major in ♥/♠ : three key cards	Bid of intermediate suits 4♦/♥ asks for shortage and 4M denies any shortage
4♥/♠	Eight card broken suit: less than three key cards	4NT = Roman key card Blackwood : 1430
3NT	Ace asking	5♣ = no ace; 5♦/♥/♠/6C = ace in bid suit; 5NT = two aces

Opening Side Action over Interference

Bid	Meaning
Negative double	Shows values in the remaining two suits
Support Double	Opener confirms three card trump support, so a raise of the suit shows four card support
4th suit	Forcing: asking for more information
Cue bid	Unassuming and forcing: asks for more information
Jump cue	Has a long running suit: seeks NT stop
2NT	Relay to 3♣: this may then be passed or converted to a new long weak suit; thus a direct new suit at the 3-level is GF
Transfers after own 1NT is overcalled	Double /new suit/2NT are all transfers to the next suit (2NT over 2♠); follow up in second suit is game forcing; transfer to intervening suit asks for NT stop, and now accepting the transfer denies a stop and 3NT confirms one

Intervening Bidding

Bid	Meaning
1NT overcall	16-18
Weak jump overcalls	6-10
Two suited overcalls	Direct cue = two highest suits 2NT = two lowest suits; 3♣ = two remaining suits
5-5 : either 6-10 or 15+	
Defence to 1NT	Double = minor two suiter or major two suiter: advancer assumes minors first 2♣ = three suiter with clubs; 2♦ = three suiter with diamonds 2♥/♠ = either six card suit or the bid suit plus a minor side suit: 2NT asks for the minor

Slam Bidding

Roman key card Blackwood (1430) and Kickback in the minors (1430)

Non serious 3NT: when a trump fit is found 3NT is artificial confirming a minimum hand still prepared to show controls if partner fails to sign off. By passing 3NT shows a strong hand, bidding 1st or 2nd controls up the line.



Bidding Quiz 5 - Results - Bob Pattinson

All hands from live pairs events.

Question 1

Dealer South. Vul 1 E/W. Pairs.

- ♠ AQ52
- ♥ AKJ83
- ♦ Q1042
- ♣ -

W	N	E	S
			1♥
P	2♣ ¹	P	2♠
P	3♥	P	?
¹ 2♣ = Game forcing			

Votes: 3♠=8; 4♥=3; 3NT=2; 5♣=2; 4♣=2

Decent controls and shape, but the void in partner's suit looks a drawback and the diamonds are not strong. Still, partner has shown a three card fit for hearts and there is some potential for slam. A majority of the panel start enquiries in varying ways.

Irene 3♠: Lack of a diamond control removes the 5♣ exclusion bid, so a 3♠ cue bid leaves space for 3NT from partner. Over that I can cue 4♣ and hear about a control in diamonds. If partner rebids 4♣ over 3♠ I continue with 5♣ showing interest in a slam without a diamond control.

Ciaran 3♠: Control and slam interest. While 4♦ completing shape is appealing, it's not clear that it would actually show this shape, as I might have rebid 2♦ with this shape.

Luca 3♠: Cue, waiting for partner to clarify hand with non-serious 3NT.

Joe 3♠: Start of a cue bidding auction. I would never bypass a suit to cue bid.

Adrian 3NT: A non-serious slam try, so doesn't show any extras to what I have already shown (void club may not be an asset opposite partner's club values)

Christina 4♣: A serious cue bid and I need a diamond cue from partner, and don't fancy being passed out in 5♣ meant as void wood. With only a 5-3 fit slam might not be great.

Peter G 4♣: Need to get a diamond cue out of North, next bid then 4♠, and my lack of Blackwood may suggest the void.

Sabine 5♣: Shows a club void which describes my hand perfectly.

Roy 5♣: Exclusion key card showing a club void and heart support. It is possible we are without a diamond control and that's not perfect, but it might be difficult to get to the right level via another sequence.

Sally 4H: For me 2♠ would not show extra but some play that it does. Either way, though, I don't really like my hand.

George 4♥: While I have a tad extra, my void could be opposite AQJ10xx. I don't really have a good source of tricks. For now let's go low.

Micheál 4♥: A minimum reverse without showing any fit for clubs or a diamond control.

Dealer South. Vul 1 E/W. Pairs.

			♠ J
			♥ Q75
			♦ K5
			♣ AK108652
♠ 1087643	N	♠ K9	
♥ 10964	W	♥ 2	
♦ J	E	♦ A98753	
♣ QJ	S	♣ 9743	
		♠ AQ52	
		♥ AKJ83	
		♦ Q1042	
		♣ -	

W	N	E	S
			1♥
P	2♣ ¹	P	2♠
P	3♥	P	?
¹ 2♣ = Game forcing			

Summary

There was some uneasiness amongst the panel about the prospects of a slam on this hand due to the club void opposite partner's long suit and the quality of the diamond suit. The majority took a more cautious exploration route - a 3♣ cue or a non-serious 3NT - leaving space to find out the diamond position at a low level.

The fact that 6NT makes on a squeeze due to the very favourable lie of the minor suits doesn't detract from the correctness of the more cautious approach.

Marks: 3♠=10; 3NT=10; 4♣=9; 5♣=9; 4♥=8

Bidding Tip:

1. Be prepared to downgrade your hand with a void in partner's long suit.
2. Remember the useful distinction when cue bidding:
 - ▶ Non-serious 3NT: weaker hands
 - ▶ Serious direct suit cue: stronger hands

Question 2

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams.

- ♠ A10952
- ♥ 6
- ♦ Q76
- ♣ Q652

W	N	E	S
		1♦	P
1♠	2♥	X ¹	4♥
?			
¹ X = support double showing 3 spades			

Votes: 4♠=11; Pass=6

This is a common competitive bidding situation where the non vulnerable side puts pressure on their vulnerable opponents. We must also weigh up defensive versus offensive values, length of trump fit, shortage in the opposition's suit.



The panel divides into two groups, most bidding 4♠ and a minority leaving it round to partner by passing.

Joe Pass: I have the ♠A and only an eight card fit. So I have a defensive trick, and not enough offense to bid 4♠ myself.

Karel Pass: Tempting to bid 4♠ but partner will rightly expect more. If partner has a 16+ count they can double.

Christina Pass: It is tempting to bid 4♠, yet with a similar argument as in the problem above, that a 5-3 fit isn't optional, I don't think my hand is good enough to take action since my partner could have a balanced 12 count in this auction.

Roy Pass: I don't think I have enough to bid 4♠. With my singleton heart along with an ace and two queens, my defensive prospects are decent, but not amazing. If partner doubles I'll go for the 620 in 4♠.

Anna Pass: I don't want to be doubled and go for a telephone number. There is no guarantee that my partner has anything but a bare 12 points. 4♥ may or may not make but my partner is still there and can act accordingly.

Peter G Pass: I like my ♦Q and fifth spade but unless 1♦ shows a shapely hand 4♠ is too much.

Adrian 4♠: I am expecting my partner to have at minimum a 3253 shape hand so we have a double fit, a sixth diamond will be a bonus, and the shape may even be 3361 though opponents sound like a 10 card fit. They may or may not make 4♥, same for us in 4♠, but then only one off.

Peter P 4♠: If partner has shape I should be in with a decent chance of making 4♠. Also the more shape partner has the more likely 4♥ is a make. Assuming the opponents have a 10 card heart fit I'm going to bid, however somewhat speculative.

Sabine 4♠: I dislike a style where a support double is mandatory.

So to me double should indicate some interest in competing in spades. 4♠ may be the wrong bid in theory, but often works in practice because the opponents bid 5♥.

Sally 4♠: Not happy about this, but I do hope the double was not mandatory with three spades, i.e partner wouldn't do it with a minimum and a lot of hearts.

Ciaran 4♠: Who knows what is right, but with short hearts and a double fit, I'll bid. Passing requires partner to find another action with many minimum hands that have play for 4♠.

George 4S: This time we will be a little aggressive. Probably nothing wasted in hearts, a fit for diamonds, and surely partner will produce something useful in clubs. The key is that only you know you have five spades.

Micheál 4♠: Close decision between pass and 4♠. My fifth spade and diamond fit tip the balance.

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams.

				♠8763				
				♥AKJ104				
				♦3				
				♣A87				
♠A10953		N		♠KJ4				
♥6				♥Q3				
♦Q75	W	E		♦AKJ92				
♣Q652		S		♣1093				
				♠Q				
				♥98752				
				♦10854				
				♣KJ4				

W	N	E	S
		1♦	P
1♠	2♥	X ¹	4♥
?			

¹ X = support double showing 3 spades

Summary

A number of themes emerge from the comments of the panel:

- ▶ Is East's double made at the two level still mandatory when bidding reaches the 4-level? Surely not.
- ▶ If West passes East won't know about the 5-3 spade fit and may pass if minimum when 4♠ is either making or a good save against 4♥ making
- ▶ Is it the best policy to bid 4♠ as this may make or force opponents to bid on to a non-making 5♥ when 4♠ fails? (5♥ makes by running the ♣J through West, and squeezing East in diamonds and clubs)

On balance the double fit, decent spades, short heart and two queens suggest 4♠ covers most variations. Would East bid again if you pass? No, say the passers because East is minimum.

Marks: 4♠=10; Pass=9

Bidding Tip:

1. Clarify in your partnership how far the support double operates in competitive auctions
2. If the 5-level is for opponents should you then compete at the 4-level?

Question 3

Dealer North. Vul All. Pairs.

♠ 986
♥ A7
♦ KQ754
♣ J62

W	N	E	S
	1♥	1♠	P
?			

Votes: 2♥=15; 2♠=1; 3D=1

The majority see 2♥ as a routine cue bid confirming an invitational raise to 2♠, stronger than a direct raise to 2♠.



George 2♥: This could be near unanimous. I have exactly my bid, a good limit raise in spades.

Luca 2♥: Three card invitational raise in spades. Get my hand off my chest early especially if North continues to bid. I won't complicate things by bidding 2♦ then trying to raise spades.

Adrian 2♥: This seems like a standard unassuming cue bid, A good three card raise to 2♠, and although a 3♦ jump fit may work better it might get us too high if partner has a poor overcall.

Anna 2♥: Anything better than 2♠ from partner, I would invite.

Roy 2♥: It's an underbid, but since they did not raise hearts, my partner is more likely to have some heart length and need to ruff once or twice, which might expose my poor trump cards, and also may devalue my decent looking diamond suit.

Christina 2♥: I don't really like my hand, yet that is the textbook bid and I do have a doubleton heart, so 2♠ is an underbid. If South had doubled I play transfers and could have transferred to diamonds followed by 2♠ as a lead director.

Ciaran 2♥: Good spade raise. Not 3♦ with spades this weak.

Peter P 2♥: With a balanced collection I'm just showing support and some interest. Being pairs I'm conservative.

Karel 2♥: Unassuming cue bid. 2♦ here should be natural and forcing.

Peter G 2♥: Not enough spades for 3♦ which would be a fit hand.

Rory 2♦: I play this as forcing, if it is not then 2♥.

Irene 2♠: In pairs I don't care if I miss game, and I don't want to give North the possibility to double my 2♥ cue bid to show a decent hand.

Sabine 3♦: Fit showing, and if not then 2♦ and support spades later.

Dealer North. Vul All. Pairs.

		♠K42		
		♥K109864		
		♦AJ3		
		♣5		
♠986	N		E	♠AQJ73
♥A7	W			♥53
♦KQ754				♦102
♣J62		S		♣AKQ3
		♠105		
		♥QJ2		
		♦986		
		♣109874		

W	N	E	S
	1♥	1♠	P
?			

Summary

A 10 point hand with eight losers, three card trump support, a first round control in their suit, and a decent diamond suit. Looks invitational. The unassuming cue bid allows us to stop at the two level if overcaller is minimum.

Marks: 2♥=10; 2♦=8; 3♦=8; 2♠=7

Bidding Tip:

The unassuming cue bid is helpful in distinguishing between an invitational raise and a direct raise, and keeps the bidding low when the overcall is minimum.

Question 4

Dealer East. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ A
- ♥ J8764
- ♦ Q52
- ♣ Q853

W	N	E	S
		1♠	P
1NT ¹	P	3♦ ²	P
?			

¹ 1NT = F1: 6-11: < 3 spades;
² 3♦ = 16+ : 5-5

Votes: 4♦=8; 3NT=4; 4♣=3; 5♦=2

With poor hearts and clubs, and Queen to three in opener's second suit, the chances of 3NT look to be low. Diamonds look the place to play.

Anna 4♦: There are still hands when we would not make 5♦, but my hand is pretty good. 3NT is out of the question.

Peter P 4♦: I'm going to play in diamonds, and hopefully after 4♥ from partner I'll bid 4♠ and leave it up to partner. If partner holds KJxxxx x AKJxx a slam is a good prospect.

Rory 4♦: Non forcing I assume.

Irene 4♦: I want to give partner a choice of game in case five or six good spades are held.

Adrian 4♦: In teams it must be right to nudge partner to 5♦ and play him for a useful card in clubs or else KQxxx in spades and AKxxx in diamonds. He may even be as good as this and have controls in hearts and clubs, so 4♦ gives us space to find this out.

Christina 4♦: It makes sense to combine Gazzilli with transfers to show these unbalanced hands. Since 3♦ is not forcing then 4♦ covers my hand, and with an extra diamond bid 5♦.

Karel 4D: 3♥ as a "fudge" would be nice but here it must be a natural 6+ heart suit to play. 3NT was my first thought but this looks like it will be a struggle, communications are poor, so 4♦ is the bid.

Joe 3NT: Close call. I hope partner is 6-5 and bids again.

Sally 3NT: Anything could be right, but Hamman's rule (if 3NT is a possibility, bid it) seems to apply.

Luca 3NT: I believe it was Bob Hamman who said if one of your options is 3NT then you know what to do.

Micheál 3NT: My soft values in hearts and clubs persuade me to play in no trump.

Sabine 4♣: A game try. If partner can't bid more than 4♦ I'll pass.

Irene 4♣: I want to give partner a choice of game in case there is a good five spades or a 6-5 shape.

Roy 4♣: I can't bid 3NT with such poor round suits, so I prefer to try for game in clubs or spades.



George 5♦: since partner is short in some suit, I would hate to see the opponents run 5-6 tricks in no trump when game is cold in diamonds. I can't make any move towards slam.

Peter G 5♦: Lots of poor cards and 3NT probably has five losers.

Dealer East. Vul All. Teams.

♠ 763			
♥ Q953			
♦ 964			
♣ 1063			
♠ A	N	♠ J10852	
♥ J8764	W	♥ 10	
♦ Q52	E	♦ AKJ103	
♣ Q852	S	♣ AK	
♠ KQ94			
♥ AK2			
♦ 87			
♣ J976			

W	N	E	S
		1♠	P
1NT ¹	P	3♦ ²	P
?			

¹ 1NT = F1: 6-11: < 3 spades;
² 3♦ = 16+ : 5-5

Summary

As the cards lie 3NT makes, but 5♦ looks to be safer. Little enthusiasm is expressed for a slam, but the 4♣ and 4♦ options leave this open, whereas 3NT closes the door.

Marks: 4♦=10; 5♦=10; 4♣=10; 3NT=8

Bidding Tip

When partner shows 5-5 or better shape ensure you have stops in the other suits in order to bid 3NT.

Question 5

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

♠ A6
♥ K4
♦ QJ10965
♣ Q64

W	N	E	S
	1♦	P	2♣ ¹
P	2♦	P	2♠
P	?		

¹ 2♣ = Game forcing

Votes: 3♣=13; 2NT=4

Responder has shown at least 5-4 in clubs and spades. Two choices - 2NT to protect the ♥K or 3♣ to show three card support for responder's first suit. Whilst both of these bids allow for a rebid of 3NT later, 3♣ has the advantage of also showing the club support.

Ciaran 3♣: Show my club fit. I can bid 3NT next time if that's a destination of interest.

Anna 3♣: My partner shows uneven distribution and if any luck all of my points are good for even a slam, I can always bid 3NT en route.

Adrian 3♣: Can't see anything better, as this lets me see what partner tries next.

Joe 3♣: Partner can always bid 3♥ to check if I can bid 3NT.

Sally 3♣: seems right for now. Can always bid 3NT next.

Karel 3♣: I play 2♥ here as the artificial Bourke relay enquiring further about opener's shape and strength, and 2♠ is normally 6-4 or very strong. 3♣ shows three card support as I would have raised on the previous round holding four clubs.

Micheál 3♣: Show the club fit first and then 3NT to confirm the heart stop.

Irene 3♣: Give partner support before bidding 3NT.

Roy 3♣: I would like to make sure if 3NT is the final contract that I am declarer, but with such weak diamonds I don't want to bid 2NT and exclude alternative contracts.

George 3♣: If partner wants me to bid 3NT then 3♥ asks for a heart stopper, and my bare ace will do.

Luca 2NT: Let's right side NT if we end up playing there. If partner bids 3♣ I will encourage in this suit.

Peter G 2NT: Want to leave room for other options.

Christina 2NT: Sometimes this is the only chance to right side the contract. Partner has plenty of room to bid again.

Peter P 2NT: Show my heart control and minimum. Give partner a chance to bid out their shape if they have 4216 or 4315 shapes. With 4315 I expect they will raise to 3NT/4NT or higher.

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

♠ A6			
♥ K4			
♦ QJ10965			
♣ Q64			
♠ Q987	N	♠ 1053	
♥ A95	W	♥ Q10732	
♦ 832	E	♦ K74	
♣ K72	S	♣ 103	
♠ KJ42			
♥ J86			
♦ A			
♣ AJ985			

W	N	E	S
	1♦	P	2♣ ¹
P	2♦	P	2♠
P	?		

¹ 2♣ = Game forcing

Summary

3♣ offers another option for the final contract, allowing either hand to declare 3NT. South's holdings in the red suits makes 5♣ look the better option.

Marks: 3♣=10; 2NT=8

Bidding Tip

Faced with two options in the bidding choose the one which provides the most helpful information to partner.

Question 6

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Pairs

♠ KJ4
♥ AQJ52
♦ A8
♣ A62

W	N	E	S
		3♦	4♠
?			

Votes: X=5; 4NT=5; 6♦=3; 5♦=3; 5NT=11

At last you pick up good hand, but are now faced with two problems: partner's vulnerable pre-empt and now a non-



vulnerable leap to 4♠. You need to defeat 4♠ by four tricks to outscore a vulnerable game for your side, and your spade holding is tempting in that regard. We are always told the 5-level is for the opposition. But if partner has his vulnerable pre-empt, 5♦ could make. The panel came up with five different bids.

Ciaran X: Take the money. Not clear we can make anything.

Adrian X: I would just take money and double 4♠ as on a club lead 5♦ might not be guaranteed.

Micheál X: Take the money. We are likely to get at least 500 for doubling 4♠, while we are not guaranteed to make 5♦.

Luca X: This is going for a number and I don't think it is likely we are making much. OK partner could hold seven diamonds including the KQ and ♥K, but my partner is never that good to me.

George 4NT: Our vulnerable game is more than the 300 or 500 we will collect from doubling 4♠. Partner rates to not have a single point outside of diamonds so they should be good. Partner may be void in a major and RHO could easily be void in diamonds.

Anna 4NT: We can always stop in 5 if needed.

Sally 4NT: Can't see us getting fat enough out of 4♠. For me, 4NT is a slam try in diamonds. Partner can bid 5♣ to show some interest, in which case I'll bid a slam. At worst that will probably be on the heart finesse.

Karel 4NT: How many packs are we playing with? 4♠ should be a good hand as you don't pre-empt over a pre-empt. On the likely ♣K lead how do we do? All depends on how good partner's diamonds are. If they have KJ10 to 7 and right hand opponent doesn't have a void there could be a slam on (assuming the heart finesse works). I bid 4NT and over a key card response I have a decision. Not doubling is far too big a chance. Right hand opponent has a black two suiter and a diamond void.

Sabine 5D: I am very afraid of a club lead against 6NT. If I need a top I would bid 6NT.

Peter G 5♦: Only because it is pairs and 800 not guaranteed here.

Rory 5♦: Bidding 6♦ is just too pushy. The vulnerability is wrong for double.

Christina 5NT: Pick a slam. I can count 10 tricks with partner having only KQxxxx of diamonds, and hearts and spades will provide the 11th, and I think the 12th will not be far away. If partner has a spade void, 6♦ can be right with the ♥K onside.

Roy 6♦: Tough hand. My experience tells me that if I bid 6NT left hand opponent will be less likely to lead a spade. I am hoping the right hand opponent might try the ♠A, Then switch too late to beat the contact. Of course if they play ace and a ruff I'll feel foolish.

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Pairs

			♠Q52
			♥93
			♦K1098
			♣9753
♠KJ4	N	♠-	
♥AQJ53		♥K76	
♦A8	W	E	♦QJ76432
♣A62		S	♣K84
			♠A1098765
			♥1086
			♦-
			♣QJ10

W	N	E	S
		3♦	4♠
?			

Summary

Those taking the money are less confident of making a slam, whereas others wish to keep options open. 5♦ is seen as a safe destination, with ten tricks in NT more difficult. A close decision but the vulnerability swings it towards bidding on. Even if opener holds seven solid diamonds and ♣K it is unlikely South holds ♥K.

Marks: 4NT=10; 5♦=10; X=9; 5NT=7; 6♦=7

Bidding Tip

Consider the vulnerability when deciding whether to double or bid the vulnerable game.

Question 7

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ J1076
- ♥ 10942
- ♦ AK
- ♣ 984

W	N	E	S
	1♠	2NT ¹	?
¹ 2NT = Minors 5-5: 7-11 points			

Votes: 3♠=9; 3♦=6; 3♣=2

With four useful trumps but nine losers is this hand worthy of more than a courtesy raise to 3♣? Just over half the panel are content with the simple raise.

George 3♠: I think any more than this is convention abuse, such as bidding 3♦ to show a limit raise in spades.

Anna 3♠: I am not overly impressed with my ♦AK and nothing in hearts or clubs, to bid either 3♣ to show a limit or better raise, or to jump to 4♠.

Luca 3♠: I want to compete.

Peter G 3♠: ♦AK is not a great holding, but pass is feeble and a game try is too much.

Micheál 3♠: Showing this type of strength.

Ciaran 3♠: This shows the value of the hand. With more strength I can cue in one of the minors.

Karel 3♠: Fairly routine. The ♦AK are massive [Anna and Peter disagree!] but the rest of the hand requires partner to cover, and if so will raise to 4♠.

Roy 3♠: It might go all pass and I miss a game, but I have no top honours in hearts or spades, so it might require a lot of points to make game.

Rory 3♦: Unusual v unusual, showing a good raise to 3♠ or better. I will pass 3♠ if partner bids it.



Sally 3♦: A limit raise in spades.

Sabine 3♦: limit raise in spades.

Adrian 3♦: I play the higher of the opponent's two known suits as a good raise to 3♠, and I think I am just about worth this.

Irene 3♣: Shows a limit raise.

Peter P. 3♣: I bid the lower of their two suits as a constructive raise in ours. I have defence and trump support. Partner will look for my opinion without very good distribution, and my opinion would be double of course.

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

			♠AKQ54				
			♥KQ				
			♦72				
			♣K1032				
♠92		N		E		♠83	
♥A87652	W					♥J	
♦J653						♦Q10984	
♣6		S				♣AQJ75	
			♠J1076				
			♥10942				
			♦AK				
			♣984				

W	N	E	S
	1♠	2NT ¹	?
¹ 2NT = Minors 5-5: 7-11 points			

Summary

2NT warns of potential bad breaks, and they strike with a vengeance here, where the only makeable game is 3NT. Anything else is punished by the bad breaks. Certainly the gloomier view expressed by the 3♠ camp is justified on this hand.

Marks: 3♠=10; 3♣=8; 3♦=8

Bidding Tip

When opponents show shapely hands bad breaks are most likely to occur.

Question 8

Dealer West. Vul E/W. Pairs

- ♠ 98642
- ♥ AK
- ♦ Q
- ♣ K6543

W	N	E	S
1♦	?		

Votes: 1♠=12; Pass=3; 2♦=1; 3♣=1

Surprising that the majority of the panel overcalled vulnerable with such a poor suit, even though with great reluctance. A minority used Ghestem to show the black two suiter. The danger here is two hands have yet to bid. There could be few points or trump support in partner's hand. And he may lead from a high honour doubleton, giving a vital trick away in pairs.

George 1♠: Yes, they are wretched, but a fit will bring them to life. I have enough strength to overcall, so let's get to it.

Christina 1♠: I know the auction never ends here and if partner has a four card fit we are on the right path.

Anna 1S: I know the suit is terrible, but we are playing pairs, the vulnerability is good. If I could have shown a two suiter, I would rather do this, but it doesn't look as if I can (see intervening section in the bidding system).

Roy 1♠: I really hate overcalling in a suit like this playing pairs, but I think I have no choice.

Sally 1♠: I just have to bid. I know the suit is filthy, but it is very likely that we should be bidding, so one of us needs to bid the suit.

Peter G 1♠: Not ideal suit quality but Ghestem is even worse, and we all like to take out their 1♥ bid.

Sabine 1♠: Obviously not for the lead.

Irene 1♠: I want to win the contract.

Peter P 1♠: With so many high cards in "their" suits I make a simple overcall and express my 5-5 hand. You will hear more from me later I suspect.

Adrian 1♠: The system includes a 3♣ overcall to show a black two suiter, but with only 7 points this seems a bit heavy, so I prefer a more cautious 1♠ despite the poor quality.

Karel Pass: Shocking suits, with worthless singleton ♦Q. See how the bidding goes, we may be able to come back in later.

Micheál Pass: Neither double with only two hearts or 1♠ at this time accurately describes this hand. I can bid spades in the auction later.

Rory Pass: Not ideal for the system bid of 3♣ to show a black two suiter. Gets us too high when most of the points are in a short suit.

Luca 3♣: This is the system bid for a black two suiter. I want to get them in the picture even if they are not great.

Ciaran 3♣: Black 2 suiter.

Dealer West. Vul E/W. Pairs

			♠98642				
			♥AK				
			♦Q				
			♣K6543				
♠Q53		N		E		♠AJ10	
♥Q87	W					♥J65	
♦AKJ109						♦82	
♣Q9		S				♣AJ1087	
			♠K7				
			♥109432				
			♦76543				
			♣2				

W	N	E	S
1♦	?		

Summary

Over the 1♠ overcall East will bid 1NT and raise West's 2NT to game. If South leads ♠K, that is a gift overtrick for declarer. The argument in favour of passing 1♦ is that partner will take action holding values, and there will still be space to compete.

Marks: Pass=10; 1♠=9; 2♦=7; 3♣=7

Bidding Tip

To maintain partnership trust, when overcalling ensure sufficient suit quality that you can withstand the lead from king small from partner.



Summary of the Expert Panel Results

Karel just pips Anna on the set – showing why they're one of our top pairs.

We had a reader, Konstantin Rabkin, score an excellent 78.

Well done - €50 voucher on its way!

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Auken Sabine	9	10	8	10	10	7	8	9	71
Baroni Irene	10	10	7	10	10	10	8	9	74
Brock Sally	8	10	10	8	10	10	8	9	73
Coyne Ciaran	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	7	76
Crone Luca	10	10	10	8	8	9	10	7	72
De Raeymaecker Karel	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	79
Moss Brad	10	10	10	10	10	7	8	9	74
Goodman Peter	9	9	10	10	10	10	10	9	77
Grue Joe	10	9	10	8	10	9	10	9	75
Jacobs George	8	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	77
Lund Madsen Christina	9	9	10	10	8	7	10	9	72
Pigot Peter	10	10	10	10	8	10	8	9	75
O'Briain Micheál	8	10	10	8	10	9	10	10	75
Onishuk Anna	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	9	78
Thomas Adrian	10	10	10	10	10	9	8	9	76
Timlin Rory	10	10	8	10	10	10	8	10	76
Welland Roy	9	9	10	10	10	7	10	9	74



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