



## Wednesday Wisdom

### The Sydney Bridge Centre mini lesson

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative) will be analysing an interesting hand from each Wednesday morning session. This hand commentary will be sent to participants before the next Wednesday BBO session.

You are also welcome to [send questions](#) about hands that you have played. We will collate them and let our panellists (Julian Foster, Marcia Scudder and Paul Roach) answer them.

## #40093 BBO – Wednesday morning session 30<sup>th</sup> December 2020

16	♠ 973	Dir: W
	♥ A986	Vul: E-W
	♦ 92	
	♣ AT95	
♠ AQ84	♠ KJ6	
♥ KQJT7	♥ 43	
♦ T5	♦ AKQJ3	
♣ 64	♣ 832	
	♠ T52	
8	♥ 52	
12 14	♦ 8764	
6	♣ KQJ7	

I was asked for some advice on bidding board 16 so, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in a row we'll feature that board.

The auction is highly likely to be uncontested East West. It's not a nice hand for natural methods though. The normal start is 1♥2♦.

Looking at the BBO records last week most Wests then bid 2♠. Even though you have spades this is not what I would bid. 2♠ is a "reverse." By that I mean a **rebid that forces your partner to give preference to your first suit at the 3 level**. After a 1 level response (where partner might only have 5 or 6 points) this needs to be a good 16 points. If you do it on a minimum opening bid you could end up at the 3 level with 11/12 points opposite 5/6. Way too high.

Here partner made a 2 level response which normally shows 10+ points (see advanced section for an alternative). But even here rebidding 2♠ means partner might have to go back to 3♥ on a minimum 10 point hand and we'll land up in 3♥ on a combined 22 points. 2♠ should show a hand better than a minimum opening and, opposite the 2 level response, it is game forcing (better than min is 14/15+ which is worth game opposite 10+).

So what should West bid? 2♥. Yes I know they've already shown 5♥ when opening but they aren't strong enough to bid higher. It would be the same if their shape was 2524 also with 12 points. They cannot afford to bid 3♣ over 2♦ with that either - they need to bid 2♥. If partner is strong enough they will bid again.

Here of course East has game values but which game? Some Easts bid 3NT at this point. That's certainly an option but I don't like it. Suppose partner had this hand: AQxx AKxxx xxx x. They would bid exactly the same way but now 6♦ is cold for us and 3NT is ridiculous! Also partner might easily have 6 hearts and 4♥ is our best contract. 3NT is a premature gamble.

I would bid 2♠. Yes I only have 3 spades so it's not ideal but it shows where my values are. Normally after opener rebids their suit, a 3rd suit is "naturalish". By that I mean it's usually natural but sometimes it might be just showing a stopper hoping partner can bid NT. Here East just wants to find out more to see if the hand should be played in ♦, ♥ or NT.

Here West obviously raises spades in case 2♠ is natural but, to allow for East having a hand like this, West should bid 3♠ not 4♠. Hearing a spade raise is not what East wants to hear on this occasion(!) because now they don't know if partner has a C stop or not. But it's still a wild gamble to bid 3NT so I'd bid 4♥ now (partner might be 46xx anyway).

So my auction would be 1♥-2♦-2♥-2♠-3♠-4♥.

Deep finesse says 4♠ is the only making game. I can't contrive a normal auction to reach that.

At the table 3NT was reached several times and, despite the ♣K being led each time, not one NS pair took their 5 tricks! See advanced section for how to get it right.

4♥ also made after 3 rounds of clubs, declarer ruffing, and the ♥K forced out the ♥A. Declarer just lost ♥A and 2 clubs. 4♥ should go off though. See advanced section for how.

### Key points to note

- Rebids that force your partner to go back to your first suit at the 3 level are “reverse” bids. They need to be better than minimum (14+ opposite a 2 level response, 16+ opposite a 1 level response).
- A 3<sup>rd</sup> suit introduced to the auction is usually still natural but sometimes the best bid is just where your values are to show a stopper for no-trumps.
- There is no need to gamble 3NT when there are still other good options to explore.
- If you know how to defend a hand and your partner might not, do not be afraid to take control (see advanced section).
- Ducking from Axxx trumps is often good defence for lots of reasons (see advanced section).

### More advanced

I said a 2 level response normally shows 10+ points. Some pairs play a different method - “2 over 1”. They agree that a 2 level response is game forcing. 2 over 1 has advantages in that a game force is quickly established and the pair may then be able bid game and slam hands more accurately. But like any system it comes at a cost. The main one is that you now have to respond 1NT on a much wider range of hands (anything not worth a game force – i.e. 5-11 points). This makes partscore hands harder to handle. Personally I am not a fan of 2 over 1 as I think it puts too much pressure on the 1NT response. But plenty of much better players than me would disagree!

Another very important thing when playing 2 over 1 is to agree what bids show extra values and what bids do not (e.g. West’s 2♠ potential rebid here). I have seen pairs playing 2 over 1 establish a game force, start making lots of cue bids and land up way too high because they still only had 13 points each and neither partner ever actually limited their hand. There are lots of books on 2 over 1 for those interested.

Returning to this hand, what about the defence? Firstly to 3NT. Declarer has 9 tricks immediately available in spades and diamonds so the defence have to take their 5 tricks immediately. South obviously leads ♣K which North will encourage. At several tables South continued ♣Q which also held. At this point on seeing partner’s 9 they switched, no doubt thinking declarer (East) was holding up the ♣A. One way of avoiding this is for South to continue with the ♣J (partner already knows you have the Q when you lead the K). Now North knows declarer has gambled 3NT without a stopper and, holding ♣A109, should take control to stop partner potentially going wrong. North can do this by overtaking the ♣J with the ♣A to let partner know what is going on. Even then they must be careful. If they continue with ♣10 and 9, partner will be back on lead with the ♣Q. How do they know to play a heart next? North should cash the ♥A themselves to avoid any accidents before returning clubs. Never assume it’s “obvious” for partner – so often the position looks totally different from their perspective!

There is still one holding where this defence would go horribly wrong, however. What if south started with exactly ♣KQJ and declarer had gambled 3NT with 8732? North has now blocked the clubs! South should probably continue with the ♣Q with that holding to try and stop this happening.

What about the defence to 4♥? This time North is on lead. On any lead except a club it’s easy – declarer wins, forces out the ♥A and when they get back in they draw the remaining trumps and cash diamond and spade tricks. However on the auction I recommended, it’s very likely EW do not have a club stop so trying the ♣A is a reasonable shot (even though normally leading an unsupported ace is a very bad idea). South of course encourages and the defence play 3 rounds of clubs. Declarer ruffs and plays the ♥K. North is now in the spotlight. If they take the ♥A

what are they going to do next? A further club can be ruffed in dummy, other suits allow declarer to draw trumps and cash winners.

North needs to duck ♥K! Now declarer has two unpalatable options. First they can carry on with trumps. North wins the 2<sup>nd</sup> round and, because dummy now has no more trumps, can safely continue the 4<sup>th</sup> round of clubs which forces declarer off. After they ruff North now has more trumps than West and must score a 2<sup>nd</sup> trump trick. Declarer's other unpalatable option is to give up on trumps and try to cash side suit winners. But that's no good either. 3 spades and 2 diamonds cash to go with 4 trumps – but that's only 9 tricks. North will eventually score one of their small trumps as a ruff. The key to the right defence is to exhaust dummy's trumps so the force can work. Which option should declarer try? The first definitely. This still has a chance of making 4♥ if hearts had been 3-3.

Finally a general note when defending with Axxx. It's a very powerful holding and the A gives a lot of control. When declarer has 5 trumps we've seen here it can be right to force declarer's trumps, perhaps after ducking. When defending against a 4-4 fit, it is often right to duck as well. Only this time it often pays to duck twice! Now if declarer plays a 3<sup>rd</sup> round we can play a 4<sup>th</sup> and remove all the trumps which might allow us to cash a side suit if we get in. Or if declarer switches we may now get a ruff with our other small trump.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

## The Sydney Bridge Centre is now running F2F club sessions AND online sessions on BBO

Yes, we have reopened on Goulburn Street only. Rozelle and Henley remain closed for the time being. We are now running F2F sessions in the City AND also online sessions on BBO. Please find our full session timetable on our website:

<https://www.sydneybridgecentre.com/sbc-sessions/>

### For Face-to-Face sessions:

Our first F2F session in the new year will start next Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021, 10am start.

All are welcome but due to Covid restrictions the numbers are limited. It is essential that you pre-book for these sessions via this [F2F Session Booking Form](#). Walk-ins are welcome for sessions which are not fully booked.

Normal table money fee.

### For BBO sessions:

All are welcome. No need to book. Please find us on BBO / Featured Areas / Virtual Clubs / ABF-Australia. Tournament title "Sydney Bridge Centre & Friends". Tournament will open only 2 hours before the game starts.

BB\$3 per person per game.