



Weekly Wisdom

The Sydney Bridge Centre mini lesson

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative) will be analysing an interesting hand from each Saturday ARVO BBO session. To subscribe, please email your name and email address to office@sydneybridgecentre.com.

You are also welcome to [send questions](#) about hands that you have played. Please use "Weekly Wisdom" as email subject. We will collate them and let our panellists leading by Julian Foster to answer them.

#66662 BBO – Saturday ARVO session 10th July 2021

2	♠ 9	<i>Dir: E</i>																										
	♥ A84	<i>Vul: N-S</i>																										
	♦ J9432																											
	♣ J975																											
♠ QJ74	♠ AT3																											
♥ Q7	♥ JT9632																											
♦ AQ	♦ K86																											
♣ KQT62	♣ 3																											
6	♠ K8652	<table border="1" style="font-size: 0.8em;"> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>			♣	♦	♥	NT	N	-	1	-	-	S	-	1	-	-	E	1	-	2	3	W	1	-	2	1
	♣			♦	♥	NT																						
N	-			1	-	-																						
S	-			1	-	-																						
E	1	-	2	3																								
W	1	-	2	1																								
16	♥ K5																											
8	♦ T75																											
10	♣ A84																											

Board 2 last week saw every East West playing in some number of hearts or no-trumps but with the usual wide variety of scores and tricks taken. How might things have gone?

East has first go and many players opened a weak 2♥ which seems perfectly reasonable to me. A multi 2♦ opening if you are playing that is also fine. However several players chose to pass.

Where East passed, most Wests opened a strong NT and found themselves in 4♥ via a transfer sequence.

Over 2♥ should South consider overcalling 2♠? Absolutely NOT! There are lots of reasons why:

- You only have 5 spades and their quality is terrible
- Your hand is balanced
- The vulnerability is dangerous – getting doubled can quickly get very expensive
- After an opponent has pre-empted their partner has the best idea of whose hand it is – so they will be able to double you (and here West most definitely should!)

What about West in response to a weak two? Players tended to bid 3NT or 4♥. At teams that is reasonable but at matchpoints I'm not so sure. It is worth being more conservative and perhaps just enquiring about East's hand (see advanced section for some possible bidding methods here). If West learns that East has shortage in clubs that might tip them off that the hands are not fitting that well and stop in 3♥.

A very important factor is actually knowing what your partner's style of weak two is. Many pairs these days play extremely aggressive pre-emptive opening bids, even more so when the vulnerability is in their favour as it is here. It is also quite common for a weak two to only be a 5 card suit when not vulnerable. Just to show the variation that style creates - with my most regular partner I would be at least enquiring with West because we play fairly traditional weak two bids that are always a 6 card suit or more. But with another regular partner I would actually pass with West as they could easily have almost nothing! See advanced section for more.

What about the play firstly in hearts? Played by West, North will lead their singleton spade and this puts the contract in all sorts of trouble. South will get in with ♥K and can give North a spade ruff. So the defence will score ♠K, a spade ruff, ♥AK and ♣A holding declarer to 8 tricks. Played by East it's not so bad as South will probably lead a spade. North will still get a spade ruff but the defence no longer scores the ♠K so declarer will probably make 9. Deep Finesse shows that the contract can still be held to 8 though – see advanced section for how.

Finally let's consider the play in no trumps – played almost certainly by West. NT was played 9 times and ranged from 7 to 10 tricks. North has a natural diamond lead. Declarer should start playing on hearts and if they can get them going will probably score 1♠, 4♥, 3♦ and at least 1♣ to make the contract. However it's not that simple to reach the long hearts (see advanced section for more).

Key points to note

- Weak two bids are an effective pre-empt but can vary a lot in strength and style these days – it is worth discussing that with your partner.
- Do NOT overcall pre-empts with bad suits or with weak balanced hands at unfavourable vulnerability – it is asking to be doubled and concede a very large penalty!
- There are assorted responses available to weak twos – usually involving 2NT being an enquiry with game interest. Responses to that vary a lot too! (See advanced section)
- Be more conservative in the bidding playing matchpoint pairs – you don't need to push for game as every board is worth the same so the game bonus isn't as valuable.
- Just like it is often right for declarer to duck the 1st round of a suit in no-trumps with a double stopper it can also be right for the defence to do the same to make sure the long suit cannot be established (see advanced section).

More advanced

What responses are played to weak twos? A huge variety. Direct raises to the 3 level are usually pre-emptive in nature. Hands that are interested in game usually start with a 2NT enquiry. Responses to that also vary by partnership agreement. A traditional method was OGUST where responses focused on both the strength of the hand and the quality of the suit. Typically:

- 3♣ = poor suit, weak hand
- 3♦ = good suit, weak hand
- 3♥ = poor suit, good hand
- 3♠ = good suit, good hand.

These days more common methods are either "Feature asks" or "Shortage asks". A "feature" is typically an honour in a suit – something like Kxx. A shortage is obviously a singleton or a void. Both these methods help responder identify if the hands fit well together.

My partner and I play shortage asks but we also have the agreement that we only show a shortage if we are non-minimum. Any minimum hand (even with a shortage) just rebids the weak two suit.

The style question is absolutely critical because it can also have knock on effects to your 1 level opening bids. For example if you open very aggressive weak twos at favourable vulnerability then you don't want the range of them to be so wide that it's impossible for partner to know what to do. Therefore you tend to drop the strength of your 1 level openings as well so you might open 10 or even 9 point hands at the 1 level as they are "too good" for a weak two.

Some pairs try to accommodate this by playing two strengths of weak 2. Usually 2♦ is opened with a "bad" weak two (typically weaker or only a 5 card suit). 2♥ or 2♠ show a stronger weak two (sometimes even up to 11 points).

A further question is what new suits mean. E.g. 2♥ P 2♠. Forcing or non-forcing? Playable either way but you need to agree. It makes more sense to play them as forcing over decent weak twos because you are unlikely to need to pull to your own suit as you know partner will have at least 6. Playing bad 5 card weak twos there is more of a case to play these bids as non-forcing because you may well want to correct the partscore (strong hands then all have to start with 2NT).

Looking at the play and defence now, 2♥ played by East can still be held to 8 tricks but the defence is basically double dummy. South has to lead a low heart from their Kx! North wins the A and switches to their spade. Now South gets in with ♥K to play ♠K and North still has a low trump for their spade ruff. If that defence takes place in the real world, something extremely fishy is going on!

The no-trump play is the most interesting. Suppose after a diamond lead, declarer wins and plays ♥Q. If South wins and plays another diamond, declarer can win and get the hearts going by forcing out North's ace. That should lead to making as North has no more entries so declarer will have time to set up 3 spades to go with 4 hearts and 3 diamonds. To make sure the hearts can't be set up, North South need to DUCK the ♥Q! Now when South wins the

♥K and plays a 2nd diamond, declarer has no more hearts himself and needs an extra entry to dummy to set them up. He will probably try the spade finesse but when that fails, South can play a 3rd diamond. Now whatever declarer does is no good – North has a heart entry and if declarer plays on clubs instead, the defence will score two tricks there including the ♣J as an entry to North’s diamond winners. Of course after the ♥Q is ducked, declarer should realise the hearts are now useless and switch to spades themselves.

Deep Finesse holds the contract to 8 tricks by leading the singleton spade and then playing clubs themselves whenever the defence get in. Eventually they score 1♠, 2♥ and 2♣. By attacking clubs before both their heart cards are knocked out, they win the race.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

The SBC Online Charity Pairs on BBO – Saturday 17th July, 10am start



We won’t be able to run a F2F Christmas in July Congress as originally scheduled on 17th-18th July, but we can still get into the spirit of the season – let’s give hope to those in need. For each entry, Sydney Bridge Centre will donate AUD 4.00 to the Salvation Army’s Red Shield Appeal, half of which comes from BBO generously reducing its fees. All are welcome to join us for this **charity game on Saturday 17th July on BBO**, including interstate players – you play, we donate. BB\$12 per player.

RED masterpoints awarded. Please find the [program brochure](#) and [enter online](#) on the NSWBA website.

The Sydney Bridge Centre online sessions on BBO during temporary lockdown

Our clubroom on Goulburn Street is temporarily closed under the current restriction. We are running regular club session online on BBO for the moment and will resume our F2F sessions once we can. Please keep an eye on our [website](#) for the latest announcement.

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.

For Face-to-Face sessions:

All are welcome, you don’t need to be a member to join us for a game in SBC. We have sessions for different level of players. If you need a partner, please come in 15-20 minutes before the game start, our directors will try to find you a partner.

Normal table money fee.