



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.

#90948 BBO – Saturday ARVO session 2nd October 2021

22	♠ AKJ7	Dir: E																									
	♥ T75	Vul: E-W																									
	♦ KQT72																										
	♣ 8																										
♠ T842																											
♥ K983	♥ AJ4																										
♦ 854	♦ A6																										
♣ KQJT72	♣ A963																										
13	♠ Q9653	<table border="1"> <tr><td>♣</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♠</td><td>NT</td></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>7</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>7</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>-</td></tr> </table>	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	1	S	-	-	-	1	E	7	1	5	-	W	7	1	5	-
♣	♦		♥	♠	NT																						
N	-		-	-	1																						
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	♦ J93																										
5	♣ 54																										

Board 22 last week had quite a variety of contracts with a few pairs scoring game East West.

The normal start to the auction is 1♣ P 1♥. One or two Wests raised clubs immediately but it is better to look for a major suit heart fit first. North then has the first decision. The field was roughly evenly split between double and overcalling 2♦. I would have doubled for a few reasons:

It's showing both the other suits as opposed to only one – so more chance of our side competing.

It gets spades into the auction now at a safer level. Imagine overcalling 2♦ and then hearing 3♥ or something come back to you – you will now feel a bit uncomfortable bidding again but you will also feel you haven't really shown your hand as your spades haven't been mentioned.

At this vulnerability if partner has spades we might have a cheap sacrifice over their 4♥ contract.

After a double from North, East may rebid 1NT or pass (but see advanced section for a way to show 3 hearts). Where East passes South will have to bid 1♠, otherwise South will surely pass. West will now want to show some club support. This can get confusing because it's not always clear whether West has longer hearts or clubs and East might give "preference" back to hearts! See advanced section for some possible methods here. If West bids 2♣ and East goes back to hearts, West should now bid 3♣ to try to get across that they didn't have 5 hearts to start with.

Pairs playing in clubs by East usually made 11 tricks after a diamond lead. The natural line is to draw trumps and try a heart to the J which loses. The defence then cash one more diamond but that's all because West's third diamond is ruffed in East.

On a spade lead, 12 tricks should be made. You can ruff in West, again draw trumps and take a losing heart finesse. But now if the defence switch to diamonds it's too late. Declarer wins the ♦A and tries ♥A and ♥K. When hearts split 3-3, the 13th heart in West is a winner on which the ♦6 can be discarded. Now both West's remaining diamonds can be ruffed in East. 12 tricks is good but Deep Finesse can in fact make all 13 tricks on any lead! See advanced section for how.

Where North overcalled 2♦, some Easts could make a support double (showing 3 card heart support). West retreated to 3♣ but North-South may end up competing further to 3♦. If East find a spade lead this will play horribly as West will ruff and can get East back in in both clubs and hearts more for 2 more spade ruffs. With the ♥K and ♦A still to come! In practice, however, East isn't very likely to lead a spade – a club or partner's heart suit is more normal but there is still time to beat the contract quite easily.

When East West did play in hearts, they had a chance to score 11 tricks for +650 and outscore the +600 that pairs in 5♣ were typically making. After the normal spade lead ruffed, declarer tries a heart to the J (losing to the Q) followed

no doubt by a 2nd spade. This reduces the West hand to just the ♥K. But if declarer puts all his eggs in one basket, he cashes that ♥K, then crosses to a minor suit ace and tries the ♥A. When that draws both remaining trumps, the clubs provide lots more winners. If of course the trumps had not split 3-3, you'd be going a lot off as you would have run out of trumps and the defence can take all their spade tricks! The only pair who tried 4♥ unfortunately didn't try to draw the trumps and ended up going 4 off.

Key points to note

- Prefer to respond 1 major rather than raising a minor initially – you should explore for a major suit fit first.
- When you have a choice of overcalling or doubling after the opponents have bid two suits, doubling is frequently more flexible as it implies both suits which gives your side a better chance of competing in the auction.
- It is possible to play support doubles and support redoubles to show 3 card support for responders' major (but make sure you and your partner have a clear agreement!)
- A "backward" finesse is an unusual way of playing a suit that can sometimes work when you know a regular finesse will be wrong (see advanced section)

More advanced

After the auction 1♣ P 1♥ X some pairs play that a redouble shows 3 card heart support – analogous to a support double. Other pairs keep redouble for its more traditional meaning – "I have a good hand and I think they are in trouble"! This is obviously important to discuss with your partner – redoubles are not an area you want to have a major accident with – they tend to be very expensive!

In an auction like this one where West responds 1 major, it can sometimes be hard to get across to partner that, once you have failed to find a fit in the major, you now actually want to play in the minor. After all, from East's point of view if West responded 1♥ and then bid 2♣ they could easily have 5 hearts and only 4 clubs – East will naturally then want to return to a heart contract.

In a case where East rebids 1NT (as they would do here without any interference from North), some pairs play a method where 2NT is a relay to 3♣. That caters for this sort of hand where you only have 4 of the major and, having discovered partner doesn't have support for it, you now want to return to play in 3♣ (if you want to invite in no-trumps you bid checkback and follow up with 2NT). Others agree 3♣ is weak like this hand and, if you have a good hand with clubs, you need to go via another route (for example play 2 way checkback so you can start an artificial game force and then show clubs).

So how do East West make all 13 tricks in clubs? On this hand it's double dummy but it can be done with what is known as a "backward finesse". Declarer has to start playing the heart suit by running the ♥J from East on the first round! If South covers, declarer wins and now runs the ♥9 from West which finesses North's ♥10. Because the suit is 3-3 that allows the 4th heart to discard the ♦6 from East and later ruff West's other two diamonds! Extremely lucky. On this hand there is no reason to try that though – taking a simple finesse hoping North has the ♥Q is perfectly normal.

Sometimes, however, a backwards finesse can be the only chance. That usually arises in a situation where you virtually know from the auction or the cards played to date that the relevant honour (usually the Q) has to be in one hand and the normal finesse will fail. Note, however, it only works when you have enough intermediate cards as well because you should assume the honour will be covered. Here for example declarer needs both the ♥9 and ♥8 to pick up the whole suit after the ♥J has drawn the Q and K. Without those intermediate cards, the only hope then is to hope the honour falls doubleton offside.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

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The [NSWBA Online Teams of Three](#) will be held on RealBridge, an online bridge program with built-in video support, so your Captain can give you “face-to-face” feedback.

RED masterpoints awarded. \$30 per player to be paid in advance via our online payment portal. We intend to run 3 separate fields for Novice, Restricted and Open players, so we can assign the most appropriate Captain to your categories. Please nominate the field you would like to compete in.

[Enter in advance](#) required on the NSWBA website. There will definitely be 3 separate fields for Novice, Restricted and Open players, so you can compete in your own league. Please nominate the field you would like to compete in.

The Sydney Bridge Centre online sessions on BBO

Our clubroom on Goulburn Street is temporary 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.

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24 boards, BB\$4 per person per game.