



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 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.

#9972 BBO – Wednesday morning session

1		♠ 73 ♥ K965 ♦ T53 ♣ 9542	Dir: N Vul: None																									
♠ A4 ♥ AQJ842 ♦ A9762 ♣		♠ QT9652 ♥ 7 ♦ KJ84 ♣ A3																										
3 15 10 12	♠ KJ8 ♥ T3 ♦ Q ♣ KQJT876	<table><tr><td></td><td>♣</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr></table>			♣	♦	♥	NT	N	2	-	-	-	S	2	-	-	-	E	-	7	5	6	W	-	7	5	6
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Board 1 last week had a potential grand slam in diamonds which is pretty hard to bid (in fact no pair managed to play in diamonds at all!) But it also contains some interesting general bidding points.

After North passes, what should East open?

Some Easts opened 2♠ (either as a weak two or as a multi with spades and a minor) and some passed. I would have done neither of those things:

A weak two is basically a pre-empt suggesting to partner that this suit is all your hand is playable in. But that's not the case here – you have a perfectly

playable 2nd suit. And I think the hand is too strong for a weak two which is usually about 6-9 points. This has 10 points and good shape.

A bid showing a weak hand with spades and a minor also isn't ideal because it typically shows only 5 spades. Partner holding 2 will assume you do not have a spade fit when in fact you do.

Even though you only have 10 points, I think this hand is a clear 1♠ opening bid. If you count losers you have 2♠, 1♥, 2♦ and 1♣. A 6 loser hand is well worth opening (7 losers is often an average opening bid). The more you play bridge the more you learn that distribution is actually far more important than high card points. Aces and Kings in a suit may not be worth any points if your opponent is void and can trump them!

If East does open 1♠ then what should South do? To me the answer depends on what has already happened. Here my partner has already passed. That makes it very unlikely we have anything on our way and I just want to make life difficult for my opponents. So I would bid 3♣ to get in the way. Most people play that as a weak jump overcall (like a pre-empt) but, even though I have 12 points, I know partner has at most 10 so we are not going anywhere. But if East had been dealer and opened 1♠, now I would overcall 2♣ (showing a decent hand). That's because this time my partner could still have a good hand as well so we might easily make a game our way – therefore I want to leave room to explore it.

West has a hugely powerful hand with only 4 losers and once partner opens 1♠ they should be thinking that slam is certainly possible if a fit is found. After 1♠ 3♣ West has a fairly easy 3♥ bid and now the spotlight falls back on East. Although you do have a Club stopper, Ax is not ideal to bid 3NT because you cannot hold the A up very long. I would prefer to just bid 3♠ – to show I have an extra one (I prefer 3♠ to 4♦ because it still leaves room for partner to bid 3NT if they want to). West will now either raise to 4♠ (which is a bit conservative and East will pass) or will bid 4♦ (over which East probably now raises to 5♦ and West should then bid 6♦ given their extra shape and controls).

Key points to note

- Shape beats points every time. A 10 count with a 64 shape is worth a 1 level opening bid.
- There isn't always a single "right" bid on every hand – it can vary depending on what has already happened in the auction.

More advanced points

Notice the difference if south only overcalls 2♣. Now there is more room. A possible auction might go 1♠ (2♣) 2♥ 2♠ 3♦ 3NT 4♦ 5♣ 6♦. West's 4♦ bid is key here. It shows a hand interested in slam because it has moved again over 3NT. It is also repeating the suit they bid second so it shows at least 5 diamonds – but they started by bidding hearts so they also have at least 5 hearts. That shows at least 10 of their 13 cards so is very descriptive. But they only have room to do that because they could start with 2♥. When they had to start with 3♥ there wasn't enough bidding space left to bid ♥ and then ♦ twice.

East's 5♣ bid is a cue bid – showing a good hand for the last bid suit (diamonds) and control in clubs. Note that they should do this even though they only have 10 points. Their hand has become very powerful now they know there are 5 diamonds opposite. When West hears 5♣ that should be enough to bid slam – they can now picture the ♣A providing a discard for their losing ♠4 (and that's only needed if partner doesn't have the ♠K). So they just need to avoid losing 2 tricks in ♥ and ♦ to make slam – very possible. In fact I would probably be more worried about making 13 tricks!

Note that neither partner bid blackwood at any point. West's hand is not suitable for blackwood because it has a void. If partner shows 1 key card in diamonds, how do you know if it's the ♦K (critical) or the ♣A (which might be useless)? East's hand could bid blackwood but isn't strong enough to move towards slam on its own – West has the really powerful hand here and they are the one who should take control.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

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The SBC online session timetable

We have daily session from Monday to Friday. Please find our [session timetable](#) on our website.

To book an Introduction to BBO session

Join our [BBO Training session on Zoom](#), we will be able to show you how a tournament table looks like on BBO, how to make alerts, how to find out the meaning of opponent's bids, etc. It's a live session running on Zoom teleconference application, completely free of charge. You can book a session with us by picking a time suitable for you via this [booking form](#).