



## Tuesday Night Tips

### The Sydney Bridge Centre mini lesson

The Tuesday night BBO has discontinued from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021. Please join Martin Clear on Tuesday night for a Face-to-face game at Sydney Bridge Centre, 7.15pm start.

Martin Clear continues to host and lead the group for bridge discussion after the session. He will also pick an interesting hand from the face-to-face session for the Tuesday Tips column.

### Managing Risk in Pairs Play

F2F at City – Tuesday Night 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022

<b>4</b>		♠ Q863	Dir: W
		♥ 943	Vul: All
		♦ 32	
		♣ AKJ8	
♠ AJT975	♠ 42	10	
♥ J7	♥ QT62	7	4
♦ J87	♦ QT6	19	
♣ 94	♣ 7532		
		♠ K	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT
		♥ AK85	N 5 5 4 2 5
		♦ AK954	S 5 5 4 2 5
		♣ QT6	E - - - -
			W - - - -

You bid these hands up to 5NT ... well, no, you don't. But unfortunately that's the way you sometimes have to think when you are playing Pairs. If 3NT is easy, you have to try to make a tenth trick, or even an eleventh. In Teams play, you would not want to risk failing to make the contract in order to score an overtrick or two, but if the overtricks are more likely than not, you need to take that risk in Pairs because other declarer's will outscore you if you don't.

A simple (and classic) example: you are in 3N, you have four winners in your own hand (fortunately including Ace-King of the suit the opponents lead), you have a dummy consisting of AKQxxx in clubs and no other possible

entry, and you hold two small clubs yourself. In this case, bridge books - which are almost invariably based on Teams or rubber bridge assumptions - would earnestly tell you to duck one round of the suit, then when you regain the lead, cash the suit out. This makes 5 tricks whenever the five opposition-held clubs break 3-2 or 4-2, giving a healthy 96% chance of 9 tricks for your 3N contract.

However if you take this play in Pairs, you will score up your game, but against declarers who simply cashed the suit out from the top, you will score 400, and they will score 430 if the clubs break 3-2, and a minus score if the clubs break 4-1. Your 400 looks good, but since Pairs only looks at who got the higher score, not by how much, you will gain a matchpoint against Pairs who did not duck a round only on the 28% of the time the suit broke 4-1, but lose a matchpoint against Pairs who did not duck a round on the 68% of the time the suit broke 3-2. The fact that you make the contract more often is barely relevant. In Pairs, it is losing bridge to insure the contract when the cost of the insurance loses you the comparison of the scores.

However, there are often ways to attempt to make overtricks that don't cost anything to try. If you have 9 winners in a 3N contract, why cash them out when it does not appear as though the opponents can cash more than 4 tricks anyway? Is there a safe way to develop a 10th trick without dropping the contract. To play Pairs successfully, you must look.

There was an interesting example of this on Board 4 at the Tuesday night face-to-face game at the Sydney Bridge Centre. West opened a fairly standard Weak Two by bidding 2♠, but then most tables ended up in 3N by North. The opening lead was 4♠, and the singleton K♠ in dummy is swallowed by the A♠, and the JS follows.

There is every reason to believe the opponents' bidding here. 2♠ was opened, showing six cards in the suit, and the bid was not raised by East, suggesting 2 or less spades. Accordingly, you should win the second spade with the Queen, as the opponents are already out of communication with each in the spade suit.

How many winners do you have? 4 clubs, 2 diamonds, 2 hearts, and the Q♠, making 9. Congratulations, you have your contract. What can you do to safely gain another trick? The opponents have the next four winners in spades, and you already have all the clubs, so it can only be in a red suit. There isn't any kind of safe duck you can make by leading toward your own hand in a red suit, because ALL your red honours are in the dummy. So some declarers shrugged shoulders and cashed 9 tricks, beating only those who failed to bid 3N.

There is another way to safely drop a trick only to the hand who doesn't have spades, however. It is called an Avoidance Play. At trick 3, lead a diamond toward dummy, playing an honour if the ♦Q does not come from East. Then play ♣Q, and then a club to ♣A, and lead another diamond, again playing an honour if the ♦Q does not come from East. If the ♦Q is played by East in either of these leads, you can duck safely as the play of the highest diamond held by the defenders means the trick cannot be won by the holder of the spades. On any lead by East you can win and cash 11 whenever the diamonds break 3-3, and 10 tricks whenever East has 4 diamonds.

What if East plays low both times? You can give up and cash 9 tricks, but you can also take a risk and lead another diamond. This works whenever East has the ♦Q. This is slightly better than 50-50 as East is likely to have more diamonds, given the spades were 6-2 the other way. One factor that may influence you is that there is another possible contract: ♥4. This contract is likely to make 10 tricks when the hearts break 3-3 or 4-2, scoring better than 9 tricks in 3N. To beat these declarers, you need to take 10 tricks, which means chancing the third round of diamonds.

It is these sorts of value decisions that make Pairs play such an interesting challenge.

Martin Clear (SBC Tuesday Night host)

## F2F Night Game in the City

Yes most of our regular sessions are run during the day, however, the night game culture is not lost! The SBC evening games are run by our volunteers who contribute their time for the love of the game.

The **Tuesday Night** has created its own special vibe which attracts a steady growth in table number. The session starts at 7.15pm, 24 boards will be played. Martin Clear will be your host of the session and the après in which drinks & snacks will be served. We are trying to avoid sit-out for a proper competitive night, so please [contact office](#) if you would like to join the group on the first time. Promotional table money fee at \$6 per person! Limited time only.

For players who have just started their bridge journey and are looking for a more social game night, please join our **Wednesday night Supervised session** instead. The session starts at 6.30pm, with a 20 – 30 minutes pre-game talk by Jake Andrew (on the current Supervised Play) and Wing Roberts (on the upcoming Beginners Supervised Play). The session is run on duplicate movement, so players can get to meet other people. We aim to finish at around 9pm, so only 12-16 boards will be played. Table money fee \$12 for member and \$15 for visitors. No need to book, walk-ins are welcome.

There are more sessions during the day, both F2F and online, please refer to our [session timetable](#) on our website.