



## 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. His column is updated weekly and published on the Sydney Bridge Centre website, under “Learn Bridge”.

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.

## Shape showing rebids and managing no-trump play

#71407 BBO – Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022

<b>1</b>	♠ A92	Dir: N
	♥ 8752	Vul: None
	♦ J5	
	♣ J942	
♠ QT4	♠ K873	
♥ AJ96	♥ 3	
♦ 932	♦ KQ6	
♣ K73	♣ AQT86	
	♠ J65	
6	♥ KQT4	♣♦♥♠NT
10 14	♦ AT874	N - - - -
10	♣ 5	S - - - -
		E 4 1 - 3 3
		W 4 1 - 3 3

Board 1 last week usually saw East West making a partscore contract although game was available.

The normal start to the auction is pass from North and 1♣ from East. Quite a few Souths then passed but some bid 1♦. I definitely think it's right to overcall. You have 10 points, it's just at the 1 level and the vulnerability is love-all (this is the vulnerability where it is most attractive to bid – see previous columns for some discussions on this). It's normal to overcall 1♦ but, playing pairs, it's also quite tempting to risk a 1♥ overcall with the 4 card suit – this pinpoints a good lead from partner if we end up defending and could lead to a higher scoring major suit contract our way. A takeout double of 1♣ is another option again although you are very light for this and bidding your 5 card suit frequently works out better.

Whatever South does though, West will continue with 1♥ and East 1♠. At this point in uncontested auctions several Wests bid 1NT. I don't like that for three reasons:

- You have no diamond stopper
- You are too good
- You have club support (although see advanced section for discussion on partner's shape)

West has values in both partner's suits which is normally a good sign. Even though the hand only has 10 points I would show it as invitational and jump to 3♣. East then has an easy 3NT bid with his 14 points and diamond values.

The declarer play in 3NT is interesting too. South will most likely lead a diamond to North's J and East's Q or K. At this point declarer only has 7 tricks (1 heart, 1 diamond and 5 clubs). He therefore needs to play on spades to make extras. But on this hand North gets in with the ♠A and fires another diamond through which dooms 3NT. See advanced section for how it can actually be made.

Note that I said declarer had 5 club tricks. This isn't guaranteed either and a couple of tables didn't score that many. It's worth looking at how the club suit should be played. When clubs are 3-2 it doesn't matter so you need to consider the 4-1 splits. Imagine South holding J9xx – in that case you can't actually do anything (South will cover your 10 with the J and his 9 will eventually be a trick). So there's no point worrying about that. But what about North holding J9xx? This time we can pick that up with a finesse – provided of course that we know North holds 4 clubs! So, although the natural instinct might be to lead a low club to the King initially, the correct line is to cash the Ace first and THEN cross to the K. If both defenders follow that's fine but if, as here, South shows out we now know that North does have 4 clubs and we are in the right hand to finesse against him. Had we played ♣K, ♣A we still find that information out but we are now in the wrong hand and we will need to cross back to West to finesse on the next round. We can't afford to cross in hearts as that will use our only heart stopper so it has to be in spades. But it's preferable to be able to run all of the club suit first because that will force the defenders to make some discards.

One or two pairs played in club partscores. In that case it's even more important to play the suit correctly as you might risk an opposing ruff if you have to leave trumps out while getting back to the other hand.

### *Key points to note*

- 1 level overcalls these days don't show that much but often pave the way for your side to compete
- After 1 of a suit and a 1 level response playing suit rebids as shape showing has a lot of benefits (see advanced section)
- Honours in partner's suit(s) increase the value of your hand – tend to upgrade these hands if you have a marginal bidding decision
- Watch your entries when playing suits – playing your high cards in the wrong order can leave you in the wrong hand to take a finesse which may mean you have to waste an entry or risk an opposing ruff.
- When playing no-trumps it can be just as effective to duck from a holding of KQx as Axx to exhaust one defender of the suit and prevent the defence establishing their winners (see advanced section)

### *More advanced*

In the auction the advantage of playing a suit rebid as shape showing is seen here. In other words when East opens 1♣ and rebids 1♠ he shows at least 5 clubs and 4 spades (or 4441). Importantly, he denies a balanced hand (which would rebid 1NT even if it held 4 spades). This way West knows East actually has some clubs and can better evaluate his hand. It also helps the pair diagnose a club fit which may be the best contract if they don't have a diamond stopper for no-trumps. If East could still be 4333 when he rebids 1♠ that makes West's 2nd bid very hard on this hand.

The play to make 3NT is hard. The first decision is at trick 1. I said earlier that declarer wins the ♦J with the Q or K but that's not necessarily the best thing to do. This is not something that comes naturally to many players but you don't have to win trick 1, you can duck the ♦J. You know South has the ♦A once North doesn't play it at trick 1. You therefore have exactly one diamond stop but you have some control over when you use it. If you duck the defence may well play ♦A and another to set their diamonds up or they might duck trick 2 (not much point here but when their diamonds are 4-3 this might be necessary to preserve their own communications). Having ducked trick 1, notice the key difference when you play spades. When North wins the ♠A he no longer has any diamonds so South's long diamonds cannot get set up.

These sorts of positions often boil down to a guess about who has the ♠A. If North has it you want to duck at trick 1 to try and exhaust him of diamonds. If South has it you want to win trick 1 to preserve a tenace position so that when he wins the ♠A he can't play diamonds without giving you another trick. There is often very little for declarer to go on so early in the hand. Here if South has overcalled, he's actually more likely to have the ♠A so you might be more tempted to win trick 1 which is wrong on this particular layout.

Even after getting trick 1 right and ducking, once your diamond stop is knocked out you still have to play clubs correctly and then generate 2 extra tricks in spades without South getting in to cash his diamond winners. That basically means you have to assume North has the ♠A (South will dive in with it as soon as possible to cash diamond winners). But the only way to get 2 extra spade tricks is to assume South has the ♠J and play low to the ♠10. On this hand that works well.

Anyone who bids and makes 3NT on the hand has done very well.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

## F2F Easter Monday Matchpointed Pairs Congress



Let's have some real cards in hand and play in a F2F congress with real people!

The Sydney Bridge Centre is running a F2F Matchpointed Swiss Pairs Congress on Easter Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April at Level 1, 162 Goulburn Street, Sydney. It is a one-day congress with 24 boards in the morning, lunch break, then another 24 boards in the afternoon. A delicious light lunch is included.

An invaluable and meaningful prize for Overall Novice & Restricted winners and the Best Novice (or Restricted) Pairs will receive a meaningful prize – Over the Shoulder Mentoring by an advanced player in one complimentary SBC session (either online on BBO or F2F in club). To support our fellow clubs, the Open Winners will receive a Complimentary Entry to any one-day local congress in New South Wales in 2022.

**RED masterpoints awarded.** \$50 per person (a delicious lunch and snacks included)

[Enter in advance](#) required on the NSWBA website. We intend to run separate fields for Open and Restricted & Novice players, if number allows. Please nominate the field you would like to compete in.

## F2F Friday Workshop is back!

We are as pleased as you are that Will is running his Workshops again. The Friday Workshops are filling up! Please book in early to avoid disappointment. The next two workshops will be held in the City on:

- **Friday 8th April:** Play and Defend
- **More are under schedule**

\$50 for member (both Sydney Bridge Centre and Strathfield Bridge Club members can enjoy the special rate) / \$55 for visitors. Please find the [details](#) on our website. [Booking](#) essential for catering purpose.

## Regular F2F and Online sessions at 3 venues

### - F2F @ CITY -

There will be sessions every day from Monday to Thursday at City, with a separated field for Supervised players on Wednesday morning. All morning sessions start at 10.00am. We have two evening sessions – the Tuesday night is for Open (7.15pm start), please contact office for pre-arrangement if you are not a regular of this session. The Wednesday night is a study group for Supervised players, 6.30pm start and aim to finish at 9.00pm.

### - F2F @ CANADA BAY -

To start with, we will have two morning sessions in Canada Bay Club. We co-host the Monday morning session with Strathfield Bridge Club and add an extra Thursday morning session to the week. Both club members will enjoy member's rate for the table money fee. Cash only for the moment, we intend to extend the usage of PP over there.

Please find the details of [the session timetables](#) and find out [more about our venues](#) on our website.

### - ONLINE @ BBO -

If you prefer to play online, there are regular club sessions on Monday morning (10.15am), Thursday afternoon (1.45pm) and Saturday afternoon (1.45pm) on BBO. To join our online game, please follow this [step by step guidelines](#). BB\$4 for 24 boards.