



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.

A 1NT response to an opening bid, and subsequent bidding.

#1914 BBO – Saturday 21st May 2022

5		♠ K7653	Dir: N
		♥ A732	Vul: N-S
		♦ AK2	
		♣ 5	
♠ AQT984	♠ J2		
♥ K4	♥ QJT5		
♦ QJ7	♦ T853		
♣ 86	♣ K74		
14 ♠	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
12 7 ♥ 986	N 3 1 2 - -		
7 ♦ 964	S 3 1 2 - -		
♣ AQJT932	E - - - 1		
	W - - - 1		

Board 5 last week required some discipline in the bidding to gain a good score.

North starts with 1♠ (no doubt causing West to quietly reassess his hand!). At several tables South responded 2♣. This is wrong - you are not strong enough. A 2 level response should show at least 10 points. The correct response is 1NT.

We usually start our bridge careers being taught that no-trump bids show balanced hands and, indeed, most of the time that's true. But there is an exception which is the 1NT response to an opening bid. If you don't have support for partner, don't have another suit you can bid at the 1 level, and don't have enough values to bid at the 2 level the only thing you are left with is 1NT. This hand is a good example of that.

After 2♣ the auctions usually continued 2♥ 3♣ 3NT. Which went anywhere between 1 and 4 off! That's the problem with 2♣. From North's perspective the hands pretty much have game values once he hears a 2 level response so he can't really pass South's 3♣ bid.

After 1NT North again rebids 2♥. A couple of Souths passed that (holding obvious preference for hearts over spades) but a much better bid is 3♣. Having already limited your hand with 1NT, 3♣ now describes your hand perfectly - no fit for partner, weak with lots of clubs (at least 6, often 7) and only interested in playing there. North should then trust his partner and pass 3♣. One table had this auction and, deservedly, scored a virtual top for +110 when 3♣ made. The hand is known to be a misfit once south repeats clubs which is another reason for North to pass. See advanced section for more.

Even though West has quite a nice hand at first glance, he doesn't really have a bid at any stage. When the opponents start bidding your long suits, it's generally time to shut up and let them get into a mess!

The play in 3♣ is fairly easy. Declarer will normally score 6 trumps and 3 top tricks in the red suits. Unless of course West starts with ♠A or something (which would set the ♠K up for a discard of a red suit loser). But his normal lead would be the ♦Q.

When North was left in 2♥, one table made 8 tricks and one made 10. On a diamond lead, declarer can scramble quite a few tricks by ruffing. It's harder on a heart lead though and, on the auction where South passes 2♥, that is what East should be leading. See advanced section for why, and how the play might go.

The play in 3NT is utterly revolting once the ♣K does not drop. Declarer will probably score 2 clubs, 2 diamonds, 1 heart and 1 spade but it's hard to see too many more. There is just no source of tricks or, more accurately, there's a great source of tricks in the club suit but no entry to get to them!

Key points to note

- A 1NT response to a 1 level opening bid does not promise a balanced hand. It's just a "catch all" for hands that don't have another bid available.
- Bidding a suit later after responding 1NT shows length in that suit but a weak hand (stronger hands would have responded at the 2 level to start with).
- With a misfit, get out of the auction. Continuing to bid usually only makes things worse.
- When dummy has given a clear preference to a 2nd suit, and the defence are known to hold length in declarer's 1st suit a trump is often a good lead to cut down ruffs in dummy.

More advanced

You might consider the South hand should be upgraded in value because of the long suit. Yes but extra points for length generally only become valuable once a fit has been found. The hand on its own will not play well in anything except clubs. By showing more strength than you have, partner will continue bidding when you don't want him to!

Yes it's true 1NT doesn't feel like it's describing your hand but you hope to get the chance to complete a much better description on the next round of the auction. While it's possible 1NT could be passed out, it's not very common. Indeed, that's another reason why North should strive to bid a 2nd suit if he has one after a 1NT response. Not only might there be a good fit in that 2nd suit which would otherwise be missed, it also gives the chance for partner to show a hand like the South one here.

I mentioned that 3♣ was a much better bid than passing 2♥. Why? The main reason is to simply look at what the hand might be worth in the respective contracts. In 3♣ the hand has an absolute guarantee of 6 trump tricks. In hearts it may have 1 or 2 ruffs and the ♣A. 3 tricks at best. But it might be worth nothing at all. Give North AKxxx QJxxx Axx -. If the defence lead three rounds of trumps declarer will be stuck in his own hand and might never score a single trick from your hand!

What's more, in an auction like 1♠ P 1NT P 2♥ all pass a trump lead is highly appealing. Given the preference to hearts, dummy is clearly short in spades. When East has a decent spade suit himself, it's pretty clear that leading trumps will help reduce spade ruffs in dummy and potentially allow him to make some spade tricks later. It's not so obvious on this hand but, holding only two spades, East can work out West must have some length in the suit so the same logic should point to a trump lead – this time to try and protect partner's spade tricks.

Therefore against 2♥ I would lead the ♥Q. Declarer's best effort is probably to win, ruff a spade, cross to a diamond, ruff a 2nd spade, cross to a diamond, take the club finesse, cash the ♣A (discarding his diamond loser) and ruff a diamond back to hand. That's 8 tricks. But of course that is quite risky because if the club finesse lost declarer may never score the ♣A. What's more if declarer loses that finesse early on, the defence could play more trumps and prevent spade ruffs. Another line might be to win ♥A, ruff a spade, ♣A, ruff a club, ♦AK, ruff a spade and lead another club from dummy. Assuming West retained his ♥K at trick one, he has to ruff with it now (otherwise declarer will score a small ruff in his hand as his 8th trick). Declarer can discard his diamond loser now and, as the cards lie, will always score another ruff in hand.

After South does respond 1NT and then bid 3♣ North has a clear pass. Partner is showing about 5-9 points and at least 6, quite possibly 7, clubs with no fit for either spades or hearts. So this is screaming "misfit". It is also a classic case of a hand playing better in the weak hand's long suit. North's 3 top red cards will still score tricks in a club contract. South's clubs may not score tricks in any contract played by North. If North had the ♣K it is more appealing to try 3NT because there is a much greater chance of the suit running. With a small singleton you need partner's clubs to be at least AKQxxx to even have a chance of running the suit – and that hand might well have responded 2♣ rather than 1NT anyway.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

A fun way to learn from the experts – F2F NSWBA Teams of Three



The Teams of Three is one of the most popular events organised by NSWBA! You form a team of 3 players and we invite advanced players to be your Captain. Your Captain will play 2 matches with each player. It's a fun way to learn about team matches in bridge, it's also a great opportunity to learn from your Captain partner.

This one-day congress will be held on **Sunday 5th June 2022** at the NSWBA clubrooms on Level 1, 162 Goulburn Street, Sydney, 10am start (please arrive at 9.40am to draw team captains).

Attractive prizes. \$50 per player (lunch included). **RED** masterpoints.

Please find the [details](#) and enter via MyABF.

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 3rd June:** Reverses and Jumps
- **Friday 1st July:** The 2NT Jacoby Raise

\$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 -

We have been running Monday and Thursday Morning sessions in Canada Bay Club, 10.00am for 10.15am start. Starting from 1st June, there will be **NEW session on Wednesday afternoon for Supervised players**. Details will be announced soon! Please keep an eye on our website.

Member's rate for both Sydney Bridge Centre and Strathfield Bridge Club players in any session and events run by either club in either venue.

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.