



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.

No trump leads. Is the 10 an honour? Should you lead a suit they've bid?

#10832 BBO – Saturday 25th June 2022

2		♠ KT3	Dir: E	
		♥ T9643	Vul: N-S	
		♦ Q63		
		♣ J8		
♠ A94		♠ J762		
♥ QJ52		♥		
♦ KT95		♦ AJ74		
♣ A5		♣ KQ932		
6	♠ Q85	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
14	♥ AK87	N - - - -		
11	♦ 82	S - - - -		
9	♣ T764	E 4 5 1 4 3		
		W 4 5 1 3 3		

On board 2 last week the majority of East West pairs ended in 3NT. How many tricks this makes can vary quite a lot based on the defence and also the bidding.

All but one East opened 1♣ (the other East passed). I definitely would open with 11 points and shape, not to mention a reasonable suit I'd be happy for partner to lead. All but one West responded 1♥. East then has an easy 1♠ continuation.

Personally I would have responded 1♦ with West. You are strong enough to force to game so you can afford to bid your suits up the line. If partner has hearts he will bid them next or we can explore a major fit via checkback later (see advanced section). If partner happens to have a strong hand with diamonds a 1♦ response might enable you to reach 6♦, something that will be much harder after a 1♥

response. The time to respond 1♥ is when you are weak and you might not be able to make another bid.

After 1♣ - 1♥ - 1♠, however, West could just bid 3NT directly although he could perhaps go through fourth suit forcing (2♦) just in case East has some very shapely hand (e.g. 5026 when you might want to play in 4♠).

If West did respond 1♦ East has a choice whether to raise or whether to rebid 1♠. I would choose 1♠ to check first whether we have a fit there (just because West responded 1♦ doesn't mean he can't also have 4 spades). Now once again West will probably just bid 3NT.

3 different leads were tried against 3NT – the ♦3, the ♠3 and the ♥4. None of them fared well!

The diamond lead finds the ♦Q for declarer. He should then play 4 rounds of clubs to set the 5th club up and end up making at least 4 clubs, 4 diamonds and the ♠A.

The spade lead isn't much better because South will have to play the ♠Q at trick 1. Declarer should win the ace and again set up his 5th club. Whatever the defence do, the ♠J in dummy will score a trick now and declarer can then then guess the ♦Q to make 10 tricks (2 spades, 4 diamonds and 4 clubs).

The ♥4 lead ended up even worse because it caused South to cash ♥K, ♥A, and play another. That gave declarer 2 heart tricks. He then guessed diamonds correctly and when South mistakenly discarded a club, declarer ended up with 11 tricks! But even if South hadn't mis-discarded, declarer was still going to make 10 tricks after the start. If you were leading a heart would you lead the ♥4 or ♥10 from North? That is worth discussing (see advanced section).

Obviously the auction here will influence the lead. Where West responded 1♥ that put North off leading hearts so he tried something else. Where West responded 1♦ a heart was the natural lead. It is worth remembering this – see advanced section for more.

In fact 3NT can always be made no matter what is lead – the only issue is overtricks. Once the defence lead spades they should score 4 tricks (1 spade, 2 hearts and a club). Two declarers made more – the 11 tricks mentioned above and someone made 10 when South switched to a low heart after winning the ♣10.

One table reached 5♦. The contract went 1 off but it is possible (albeit very difficult) to make it – see advanced section.

Key points to note

- If you are strong enough as responder, over 1♣ you don't need to prioritise bidding a major over diamonds – you can bid 1♦ up the line and still find major fits. If your hand is weak, then responding in the major is better as it may be your only chance to bid.
- Therefore after 1♣ P 1♦ even with diamond support it is usually right to bid a major if you have one – partner can still have that major too.
- If playing 4th/2nd as a lead method against no-trumps, establish whether you treat the 10 as an honour or not. It can make quite a difference to the defence later.
- If you think you are likely to end up playing 3NT, it can be good tactics to bid a weak suit instead of a strong suit to try and stop the opponents leading it.

More advanced

A popular leading method against no-trumps is “4th and 2nd” But let's consider what that actually means. Usually it says the partnership have agreed to lead 4th highest from suits with an honour. But they lead 2nd highest from suits without an honour. Assuming partner can read the card led, that helps partner to judge whether it is safe to continue or return the suit.

But do you treat the 10 as an honour against no-trumps or not? That is something you should agree with your partner. Opinions vary. On this hand, if you do treat the 10 as an honour you lead the ♥4. If you don't then you lead the ♥10 (led in this case because you also have the ♥9 but from a holding like 108642 you would lead the 2nd highest 8).

This hand is a good example of why I don't think you should treat the 10 as an honour. Look at things from South's perspective. When partner leads the ♥4 that looks like a low one and the void in dummy makes it very attractive to play 3 rounds of the suit – maybe even hoping to beat the contract straight away if partner has led from ♥Q10xxx and declarer has ♥Jxxx. Even if partner has ♥Jxxxx it will set up his heart suit. But on this layout it's disastrous.

If, however, North leads the ♥10, the one card he doesn't have is the ♥J (assuming standard honour leads are being used). Yes he might still have ♥Q109xx but he is more likely to have his actual holding and South is now going to be more wary about playing the suit and giving declarer 2 tricks.

Another thing South could try is to deceptively win the ♥A at trick 1 (the ♥K would be the normal card) and return a low one. Declarer might now place North to have led from something like ♥K109xx and perhaps mis-guess if he has just the ♥Q. Of course the longer South thinks before doing that the more suspicious declarer is likely to be though!

What about the play in 5♦? On the face of it you might think you can make it by ruffing a club in the West hand and just losing 2 spades (thus setting up the 13th spade in East). But that probably only works after a spade lead. You either have to draw all the trumps before taking your club ruff (otherwise North can overruff) or you have to ruff with the ♦K and then finesse against North's ♦Q. Even that isn't enough as you still need to do something in spades. Unless spades had been led at trick 1, as soon as the defence play a heart to force East to ruff with his last trump, that's the entry to the 13th spade gone. It's actually quite a complex series of plays to make 5♦ that involve South being squeezed or endplayed. Interested readers are advised to check Deep Finesse!

To finish on a more practical note, it is worth observing that when West bid one suit in the auction, North usually led a different suit. Devious players can use this tendency to their advantage! With a balanced hand where you think you are likely to end up playing 3NT (like the West hand here) you might deliberately choose to open or respond in a very bad suit and conceal a better one – the aim being to deter the defence from leading your weak suit. Here of course it doesn't apply – West has decent holdings in diamonds and hearts so is happy for either to be lead. But had he held 4 small in one of the suits it might be attractive to respond there in the hope of avoiding it being lead later. The converse to that of course as a defender is not to be intimidated out of your natural lead just because it's been bid by the opponents once in the auction!

Note that West responding 1♦ shouldn't preclude finding a heart fit – East will rebid hearts if he has them with an unbalanced hand. If he has a balanced hand he will rebid NT and West can now use some form of checkback to investigate about majors.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

Sunday Funday – FREE game for everyone on 17th July 2022



Our organiser was under the weather, with regrets we have to cancel the long-awaited Christmas in July Congress on 16th – 17th July 2022.

No need to get disappointed, as we're bring back the once-a-month Sunday Afternoon game on the 17th July, 1.30pm – 4.30pm. An early Christmas – **FREE** first session (\$20 worth) for EVERYONE! If you have joined our Sunday Afternoon session before, you would recall the snacks and munchies through the session, and the post-mortem over a glass afterwards. If you have never played on Sunday, time to give it a go!

You don't need a partner, visitors and walk-ins are welcome.

Share your love of the game with a friend – Beginners and Improvers Courses

Emma Barnes is one of the best Beginners teachers in the country! She is patient, humorous and makes bridge easy to learn! Our next Beginners Courses will be held on:

- **6 Wednesday mornings** from 20th July – 24th August at City, 10.00am – 12.15pm
- **6 Wednesday evenings** from 20th July – 24th August at City, 6.30pm – 9.30pm

If you are beyond Beginners level, consider the Improvers Course:

- **6 Thursday mornings** from 21st July – 25th August at Canada Bay, 10.00am – 12.15pm

Please find the [details](#) and [enrol](#) via the Sydney Bridge Centre website.

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 29th July:** Defence
- **More under schedule:** please keep an eye on the Sydney Bridge Centre website.

\$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 -

- Monday morning 10.00am – 1.15pm, Open Inclusive
- Tuesday morning 10.00am – 1.15pm, Two Tiers Open Inclusive
- Tuesday night 7.15pm – 10.00am, Open Inclusive (booking in advance required, please contact office)
- Wednesday morning, 2 separate sessions – Intermediate/Open (9.45am – 1.15pm with a 15mins pre-game talk) and Beginners Supervised (10.00am – 12.30pm)
- Wednesday night 6.30pm – 9.30pm, Beginners Supervised
- Thursday morning 10.00am – 1.15pm, Open Inclusive

- F2F @ CANADA BAY -

- Monday morning 10.00am for 10.15am start – 1.30pm, Open Inclusive
- Wednesday afternoon 1.30pm – 4.30pm, Intermediate Supervised (1-hour lesson plus 2-hours game)
- Thursday morning 10.00am for 10.15am start – 1.30pm, Open Inclusive

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 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.