



## 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.

## Ways to raise majors. The importance of leading towards honours.

#10860 BBO – Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2022

<b>5</b>		♠ A	Dir: N	
		♥ JT6	Vul: N-S	
		♦ 9762		
		♣ Q8763		
♠ 752		♠ JT943		
♥ KQ52		♥ A973		
♦ KJ8		♦ A3		
♣ K54		♣ A9		
7	♠ KQ86	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
12	♥ 84	N - - - -		
13	♦ QT54	S - - - -		
8	♣ JT2	E 1 2 4 3		
		W 1 2 4 3		

A good general principle in bridge is to lead towards honours. Board 5 last week was a slightly unusual example of this principle.

First the bidding, however. East will open 1♠ and West will want to raise in some fashion although it's not at all clear what the best bid is. There are different approaches for raising with these sorts of hands.

When we start bridge we usually all play raises from 1 to 3 as invitational but as we gain more experience we usually switch to playing that as a pre-emptive raise to make life harder for the opponents in finding their own fit. There are numerous other approaches to show invites. It's also useful to play methods that identify how many trumps responder has for their raise. Bergen raises are a common

example of this - see advanced section for more details.

On this hand there are flaws with everything West might do:

- A balanced 12 point hand isn't quite enough to game force given how light players tend to open these days.
- You are therefore also a bit light for 3NT (if played as a 4333 game raise).
- A 2♥ response shows at least 5 hearts.
- An invitational raise of spades to the 3 level is better played as showing 4 card support.
- 3♥ (if played as a 3 card spade raise) takes up a lot of space and doesn't allow partner to judge their hand.
- Inventing a 2♣ response has obvious risks of partner raising!

Most tables chose 3♥ presumably meaning it as a 3 card limit raise of spades. That's certainly reasonable and most Easts then bid 4♠. Again reasonable – although the spades are bad and the hand only has 13 high card points, it does have aces and a side 4 card suit. The trouble, of course, is that West's 3♥ bid leaves no room and East has to basically decide there and then between 3♠ and 4♠. For that reason I think I would actually invent a 2♣ response because, whatever partner does, I can always go back to spades later. While it obviously isn't the hand partner would expect us to hold, 2♣ at least lets me find out much more about partner's hand from his rebid. Then I can perhaps bid 3♠ on the next round to show an invite.

A 3NT response is sometimes played as a 4333 game force (about 13-15 points) which can be useful. It has also become popular amongst top players to use a 2♣ response to 1M as artificial including assorted hand types - one of which is an invitational raise. See advanced section for more discussion on these bids.

Assuming East West end up in 4♠ which almost everyone did, the challenge is to make it! ♣J lead looks normal as South is sitting with trumps and doesn't want to give anything away as he knows the hand isn't going to sit nicely for declarer.

Several declarers won in hand and started spades with the J or 10. Today that was fatal. Now South's KQ8 are worth more 3 tricks. The correct play is to win in dummy and lead a low spade towards the J109xx. Most of the time spades will break 3-2 and it will make no difference but here it's essential. When a top honour pops up singleton with North, declarer can

play the 3 and now the J109 are good enough to force out South's trumps and eventually use the 9 to draw South's 8. The principle of leading towards honours is more commonly seen with holdings like KQxxx where, if the ace is onside, you score at least 2 tricks whereas if you play an honour yourself you will lose an additional trick to the J or 10. But it's equally applicable on hands like this where you don't quite have solid enough trumps to force out all the top ones from the defenders if they break badly.

Another problem some declarers seem to have had on this hand is to give up drawing trumps after seeing the 4-1 split. But that's no good either as it just meant South eventually was able to ruff a heart with the ♠8. Even when your trumps aren't that good you still need to try and draw them to stop the defenders ruffing your other winners. Here the precious ♠9 is just good enough to draw South's final trump and let declarer score 10 tricks via 2 spades, 4 hearts and the AK of both minors.

### *Key points to note*

- There are lots of ways to show invitational raises of majors. The simplest is just a jump raise from 1M to 3M but more experienced players may wish to consider different options.
- Lead towards honours wherever possible. If a singleton honour appears on your left it means you haven't wasted a high card unnecessarily.
- Even when trumps break badly, or you don't have the top ones you should still generally try to draw the opponents' - otherwise they will score ruffs with them.

### *More advanced*

A 3NT response to 1 major is often played as a flat raise to game. Typically a 4333 shape with about 13-15 points. The West hand here isn't quite strong enough in my view but it's close. This bid is very descriptive and allows the other hand to judge to pass 3NT if he is also fairly balanced (i.e. 5332) with stoppers in the other suits. Often it can be easier to make 9 tricks than 10 and playing 3NT can also be better if the 5-3 fit breaks badly.

One common approach with raises is to identify how many trumps the partnership has. This is partly to judge whether to bid game or not (remembering 9 card fits are hugely more powerful than 8 card fits) but also to make life harder for the opponents by quickly getting to the 3 level before they can judge their hands.

Bergen raises (in quite common use) are an example of this. All the following bids show at least 4 card support:

- 2NT is a game forcing raise
- 3♣ and 3♦ typically show weak (6-9) and invitational (10-12) raises of the major
- 3 major is a pre-emptive raise.

This way, the partnership knows they have at least a 9 card fit. Where you only have 3 card support you use other bids:

- A jump in the other major (1♥-2♠ or 1♠-3♥) is often used as an invitational raise but with only 3 card support.
- Game forcing hands with 3 card support typically start with another suit and then jump to 4 major on the next round.

I also mentioned the "3 way" 2♣ response to 1M. It's not something I am that familiar with but usually the options are an invitational raise of the major, a game forcing balanced hand or natural with clubs. Opener's rebids are also artificial. 2♦ says he would accept the raise if that's what responder has, 2M says he would decline the invite (responder with the invite can now pass and the pair is only at the 2 level not the 3 level). Responder can of course bid on to show the game forcing hand types.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

## Sunday Funday on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022



Our first Sunday afternoon game went well with 10.5 tables! We hope you enjoyed the classic cucumber sandwiches, cheese platter and everything makes a Sunday great. As requested by players the club will now run two Sunday Funday's each month, whenever the venue is available. The next few Sunday Funday's will be held on:

- Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022, 1.30pm – 4.30pm
- Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2022, 1.30pm - 4.30pm
- More are being scheduled! Please keep an eye on the SBC website

You don't need a partner. No need to book in, visitors and walk-ins are welcome. \$18 member (\$15 concession member) / \$22 visitor. Refreshment throughout play and join us for a glass at the end of the session.

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

Our Beginners Course started last week. It's not too late to join from lesson 2, just come in half an hour earlier and we will help you catch up. Emma Barnes is one of the best Beginners teachers in the country! She is patient, humorous and makes bridge easy to learn! The current Beginners Courses are held on:

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

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

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

Please find the [details](#) and still [enrol](#) via the Sydney Bridge Centre website, so we can prepare the Learners' Kit for you.

## 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 29<sup>th</sup> 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.