



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.

Bidding (and doubling) over 1NT

#5439 BBO – Saturday 2nd July 2022

16		♠ AQJ85	Dlr: W
		♥ Q3	Vul: E-W
		♦ AKT6	
		♣ 42	
♠ 74	♠ K93		
♥ KJ95	♥ T4		
♦ J32	♦ Q84		
♣ AKQJ	♣ 98753		
16 ♠ T62	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
15 5 ♥ A8762	N - 1 1 2 -		
4 ♦ 975	S - 2 1 2 1		
♣ T6	E 3 - - -		
	W 3 - - -		

On Board 16 last week shows the way auctions can diverge after a single different decision.

Three tables opened 1NT as West which is also what I would have done (even though I don't have stoppers in spades or diamonds it's still the best overall description of my hand). The other two opened 1♣. This is what I'd open if I was playing a weak NT system (intending to rebid 1NT to show 15-17).

North has the next decision. Over 1♣ it's a pretty normal 1♠ overcall. Holding 5 clubs, East might compete to 2♣ and South should definitely compete to 2♠. Over 1NT, it's close. There are three plausible choices:

- Overcall 2♠
- Make a bid to show spades and a minor (if you have an agreement for that)
- Double (penalties)

This will of course depend on what your own bidding agreements are. Not everyone has a bid to show spades and a minor, and not everyone plays double of a strong no-trump as penalties. See advanced section for more details about bidding options here.

Each of these choices has some downsides. 2♠ is only a 5 card suit and you could have a better fit elsewhere. A bid to show spades and a minor gives more information away about your hand but perhaps has the best chance of finding the best place to play. You are quite minimum for double and will be leading round to a strong hand. Against that, you can lead spades and quickly set up 6 tricks for your side (4 spades and 2 diamonds) and that's with partner having nothing. Given the vulnerability I would have tried double – even 1 off is +200 which is going to be a great score at pairs.

One table did double 1NT. After that, East passed and South ran to 2♥. Personally I would have been running as East as well! It's important to have some way of running from 1NT doubled – here East should run to clubs and, as it turns out, this is a much better contract since partner has support. North South can't penalise that so will most likely bid onto 2♠. It's also important to establish what double means if they do run. It's playable as takeout as penalties but not if one partner thinks takeout and the other penalty!

Turning now to the play, 2♠ by North makes 8 fairly easy tricks. You lose 2 clubs, the ♠K, a heart and a diamond. How should you play the diamond suit? It's trivial today because they are 3-3 but see advanced section for more details.

Although no-one played 1NT, it should go off. North leads a spade and, as a minimum, the defence will then score 4 spades, 2 diamonds and a heart. Knocking the ♠K out of dummy also then means the club suit is blocked (although declarer can eventually get back to the 5th club with the ♦Q).

At the table where South played 2♥, declarer went 1 off. Hearts break 4-2 so you lose the ♠K, 2 hearts, a diamond and 2 clubs.

Key points to note

- Doubling a strong NT for penalties is fairly unusual but can still be lucrative.
- When bidding over 1NT it's useful to have a bid to show both majors. But beyond that there are lots of bidding methods to choose from. It's really partnership preference – there is no perfect method.
- Your partnership should agree how you run from 1NT doubled contracts. Both if they double partner's 1NT and if partner doubles theirs.
- It's also important to agree what a subsequent double means e.g. we double their 1NT for penalties, they run to 2♦ (say) and we double. Takeout or penalty are playable but you need to agree which!

More advanced

There are lots of bidding options over 1NT and, as usual, it's much more important to make sure you and your partner are playing the same thing rather than what it actually is! Natural overcalls are actually perfectly fine (I played that way for many years) but it is useful to have a bid to show both majors since that's where you most often want to compete. Therefore one popular method is to play 2♣ as majors (usually at least 54 between the suits) but all other bids as natural. In response to 2♣ partner can bid 2♦ to show no preference between the majors.

There are also many 2 suited methods around. My partner and I play "ASPTRO" where 2♣ shows hearts and another suit, 2♦ shows spades and another suit. 2♥ and 2♠ are natural. There are many variants of this which I am sure can be found on the internet for those interested.

I also mentioned not everyone plays double of a strong NT as penalties. A method in frequent use is DONT ("Disturb opponent's no-trump"). Here double shows a single suiter (partner is required to bid 2♣ and doubler then passes or bids their suit), and other bids show that suit plus a higher suit. The theory is that when one hand has a strong NT, it's rare for there to be another hand strong enough to make a penalty double (this hand is one of those cases where that is in fact the case!) so it's more useful to use double for something else.

It's also important (especially if playing a weak NT) to have a means of running from 1NT when it gets doubled. Once again there are lots of possible methods, the simplest being natural. I like a method where redouble shows a single suiter (and asks partner to bid 2♣) and other bids show that suit and a higher suit. Some prefer to keep redouble for "blood". In my experience, however, you never score badly if you are in 1NTx making and if you redouble for blood the opponents virtually never stay there – so you are then worrying about either penalising them or what else to bid your way.

Likewise if partner does double their 1NT, you may also want to run if you have a very weak hand. You can't play the same way as above of course because you can't redouble partner's double (!) so it's usually simpler to just play natural.

Although academic on this hand, there is a correct way to play the north-south diamond suit for 1 loser. I have seen players try low to the 10 but the correct approach is A, K and another. It doesn't matter when the suit is 3-3 but when it's 4-2 (which it will be more often) this picks up Qx or Jx in either hand. The 9 makes a difference. Once one honour has dropped you will be left with 9 opposite 106 which will be good enough to force out the other honour. If low to the 10 lost to a doubleton honour with East, you'd now lose 2 tricks in the suit.

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.