



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.

Variations of stayman over 1NT (Simple v Extended, 4 card v 5 card major asks).

#13333 BBO – Saturday 30th July 2022

24	♠ KQJ	<i>Dir: W</i> <i>Vul: None</i>																														
	♥ 654																															
	♦ 852																															
	♣ A752																															
♠ A9	♠ T8642																															
♥ QJ9	♥ K732																															
♦ AQJ6	♦ T743																															
♣ K984	♣																															
10	♠ 753	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>♣</td> <td>♦</td> <td>♥</td> <td>♠</td> <td>NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	1	-	-	-	-	S	1	-	-	-	1	E	-	4	3	3	-	W	-	5	3	3	-
	♣		♦	♥	♠	NT																										
N	1		-	-	-	-																										
S	1		-	-	-	1																										
E	-	4	3	3	-																											
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17	♥ AT8																															
3	♦ K9																															
10	♣ QJT63																															

Last week board 24 raised some points about responding to 1NT. West has a normal strong NT opening which North will pass. The question is what East should do? Most Easts bid 2♥ (transfer to spades) and all but one of those tables ended up in 2♠ played by West. At the other table South came back in with 3♣ and North later competed to 4♣ after East bid 3♥. West unsurprisingly doubled 4♣ but, instead of collecting the available +500 and a top, they unfortunately only took it 1 off for +100 which gave North – South an undeserved top (because other East Wests were scoring +140 or more). We’ll come back to the defence later.

On the face of it 2♠ only has 2 trump losers and the ♥A (there are no diamond losers once a finesse is taken against South’s ♦K) so you might think it would score 10 tricks. However, the Deep Finesse analysis shows it can be held to 9 tricks.

Some tables did make 10 tricks when North led a diamond. A club lead (yes, either the Ace or a low one if North is on lead!) is actually what holds it to 9 tricks – see advanced section for the play.

Today East West playing in 2♠ was fine but what if West had 2 spades and 4 (or even 5) hearts? Now the pair want to find their heart contract. Provided you are playing simple stayman, a much better bid for East to make is 2♣. If West shows either major, you are quite happy and pass. If West bids 2♦ to deny a major you now bid 2♠ and are no worse off than if you had transferred to start with. Only one table started this way but unfortunately West then bid 2NT over 2♠ which became the final contract and went 2 off. A bidding sequence 1NT–2♣–2♦–2M should be weak to play usually with 5 of the major you bid and 4 of the other. Starting with 2♣ allows you to find a fit in either major. It’s sometimes referred to as “garbage stayman” – meaning that a stayman bid can be made on garbage if it’s just looking to get out of 1NT and play in 2M.

Of course this only works if you play simple stayman where partner’s only responses are 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠. But many pairs don’t do that - I see people playing things like “Extended stayman” or “Lavings” etc. Using those conventions it’s possible for the 1NT bidder to respond with bids of 2NT or higher. That makes it unsafe to bid 2♣ as East with such a weak hand so your only realistic option is to transfer to spades and hope for the best. Effectively you then need at least an invitational hand to be able to bid stayman.

This is one of the reasons why I personally hate extended stayman. The name “extended” implies it’s an improvement on “simple” stayman but I don’t think it is! I just don’t see the need for it. Some of its responses tell you whether partner is minimum or maximum. Fine – but you can find that out with simple stayman too. All you have to do is invite after the stayman response! I think it’s far more valuable to be able to bid stayman on hands like East’s here, knowing partner will never bid above 2♠, so you can find either major.

If your 1NT opening can include a 5 card major there is a case to be playing a method that can find that out. Playing 5 card stayman or Lavings or similar conventions can do that – but it’s still possible to do it after starting with simple stayman as well. See advanced section for more on this.

Just to finish with the defence to a club contract by South. At the table the defence started with ♠A and continued with ♦A which was not a success. I would lead the ♥Q as West – even if partner had only transferred to spades. It's a case of process of elimination (often the case for opening leads!) I don't like a spade lead. Just because partner transferred doesn't mean he has to have a spade honour – I could easily be giving declarer's ♠K a trick it shouldn't make. Also I am holding 4 trumps so I don't really want a spade ruff – I want to use those trumps to be a nuisance to declarer! I wouldn't dream of leading away from that diamond or club holding so that really only leaves hearts. It would have worked very well here. Not only will it set up 2 heart tricks, it will let East get in with ♥K to put a diamond through. By going passive and not cashing aces, the defence should end up scoring 1 spade, 2 hearts, 2 diamonds and a trump – 6 tricks or +500 in 4♣x! Even +300 would have been a top this time.

Key points to note

- Simple stayman over 1NT is (in my opinion) much better than “extended stayman” – it allows you to bid it on very weak hands with both majors and find a fit in either at the 2 level (or even to pass a 2♦ response).
- There are assorted methods to find out about 5 card majors within 1NT.
- Forcing declarer to trump can be effective defence – he may no longer be able to draw the defender's trumps safely as he'll run out himself.
- Don't generally cash aces into thin air when defending – save them to beat Kings and Queens with!

More advanced

There are assorted bidding methods that allow you to find out about 5 card majors within the 1NT opening. Here are three I am aware of (I play (c) with my most regular partner):

- Play 2♣ as a 5 card major suit ask. Over a 2♦ response (which now denies a 5 card major but could still have a 4 card major) you can play 3♦ as simple stayman to still look for a 4-4 fit.
- Keep 2♣ as simple stayman but also play a 3♣ response to 1NT as 5 card stayman perhaps in the same way it often is over an opening 2NT.
- After a 2M response to simple stayman play a 3♣ bid as a further enquiry and the 1NT bidder describes his hand further (obviously repeating the major shows you now have 5).

Just to clarify weak and invitational sequences after simple stayman:

1NT-2♣-2♦-Pass = to play (you might do this with a 4450 or 4360 shape hand).

1NT-2♣-2♦-2M = weak, to play (usually 5M, 4 of the other major)

1NT-2♣-2♦-2NT = invitational

1NT-2♣-2♥-2♠ = invitational with 4 spades (remember opener can have both majors when they respond 2♥ so a spade fit is still possible)

1NT-2♣-2♥-2NT = invitational (without spades)

1NT-2♣-2♥-3♥ = invitational with 6+ hearts

1NT-2♣-2♠-2NT = invitational

1NT-2♣-2♠-3♠ = invitational with 6+ spades

Sequences like 1NT-2♣-2M-3♦ also warrant discussion for more advanced partnerships. One option is to play them as forcing. Another is to play them as weak. In both cases usually 4 of the other major and 5+ diamonds. Which you do then influences what you play a transfer to a minor followed by 3M as – e.g. 1NT-2NT-3♦-3♠. If the 1st sequence is weak then this one needs to be natural and strong as it's then the only way of showing a good hand with 5+ diamonds and 4 spades. But if the 1st sequence is strong then this one isn't needed for that as well – so it is most commonly played as shortage in the major you bid. As usual there are arguments both ways.

Returning to the play in 2♠ to finish with – how does it get held to 9 tricks? The answer is by leading clubs. Even if the defence give the ♣K in West a trick it doesn't help declarer (there is nothing useful that can be discarded on it).

North gets in with the 2nd round of trumps (declarer will have to play ♠A and another to have any chance) and plays another club which declarer will have to ruff. Now declarer has a choice of poisons:

- a) He can play a trump to remove all the defence's trumps but that leaves him with only one himself which the defence force out with yet another club before their ♥A is knocked out – hence they can now cash club winners; or
- b) He can knock out the ♥A but now the defence play another club which forces declarer down to one trump and he can't now afford to play it to draw the last trumps (or the defence can cash more clubs) so he will have to give up on trumps and just allow South to score his remaining small trump at some point.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

Australia Wide Open Pairs on Monday 29th August 2022



Our players really enjoyed the Australia Wide Novice Pairs held earlier this year. Here comes the Open Pairs version! The **SBC Australia Wide Open Pairs** will be held on **Monday 29th August** at **both City and Canada Bay**. Double masterpoints – **GREEN** for sessional results and **RED** for the nation-wide ranking.

\$18 for members (\$15 for concession members) / \$22 for visitors. A souvenir booklet of hand commentaries included.

No need to book in. Walk-ins and visitors are welcome. If you are looking for a partner, please contact office for match making.

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 workshop will be held in the City on:

- **Friday 9th September:** No-Trumps Systems and Bidding
- **More are being scheduled:** 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.

Sunday Funday on 14th August 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 Fundays each month, whenever the venue on Goulburn Street is available. The next few Sunday Fundays will be held on:

- Sunday 14th 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.

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.