



## 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.

### Singleton leads and suit preference signals in defence. False cards by declarer.

#80586 BBO – Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2022

<b>4</b>		♠ T87	<i>Dlr: W</i>	
		♥ Q8753	<i>Vul: Both</i>	
		♦ 5		
		♣ K764		
♠ KJ532		♠ Q96		
♥ A2		♥ KT		
♦ AQ864		♦ KJT		
♣ 9		♣ QJT52		
		♠ A4		
5		♥ J964		
14	12	♦ 9732		
9		♣ A83		
			♣♦♥♠NT	
			N	- - 2 - -
			S	- - 2 - -
			E	1 4 - 3 4
			W	1 4 - 3 4

Last week board 4 saw most people making 4♠ although it could have been defeated. What should the defence have done?

Before we get to that, let's consider the bidding as usual. Although 3NT happens to work better on this particular hand it's pretty normal to get to 4♠. West will open 1♠. Like the hands I have featured the last two weeks, the East hand has several options it could consider. It's very close to a game force because it holds a nice 5 card side suit and spade support. One table bid 3♠ presumably meaning that as invitational. As mentioned before that's OK but is more usually played these days as guaranteeing 4 card support. Two tables bid 3♥ meaning that as a limit raise in spades with 3 card support. On this hand West should definitely be accepting any sort of invite – he has a nice 55 shape with good controls.

The rest of the Easts responded 2♣ and I think this is best because it allows partner to make a rebid which can help you judge your hand better next time. Your intention might initially be to then jump to 3♠ to show an invite (quite descriptive as you've shown your side suit on the way which will help West judge his own hand when deciding whether to accept or decline the invite). However, after 1♠ - 2♣ - 2♦ things change a bit. The diamond cards in the East hand now become very useful. They make it look like the hands will fit well and East should upgrade and bid 4♠ - this is what all but one of the 2♣ bidders did.

Having arrived in 4♠ what should North lead? The field was roughly split between the ♦5 and the ♥5. After the ♥5 there is no defence. Declarer wins and knocks out the ♠A. After drawing the remaining trumps he will lose the ♣A but should make 11 tricks. After the ♦5 lead, however, the contract can (and should) be beaten. How? South needs to jump straight in with ♠A and give partner a diamond ruff. He then gets back in with ♣A and gives partner a 2nd diamond ruff. Only one table found this defence so they earned a complete top – well done.

How can the defence get this right? By being sharp and using good signals. A lead of a suit declarer has bid is highly suspicious so both South and West should suspect the ♦5 is a singleton (although declarer can muddy the waters – see advanced section). Declarer should win in dummy and lead a trump towards his hand – this makes it slightly harder for South who might fall for “2nd hand plays low” by instinct. Indeed, a couple of tables did play low which was fatal this time because North can now only get one ruff. If South does take the ♠A straight away he should then return his lowest diamond for North to ruff. This is one of the most useful signals in bridge - a suit preference signal. Whatever diamond South leads is going to be ruff so he can use the one he plays as a signal. A low card asks partner to return the lowest of the other two side suits (i.e. clubs), a high card would ask for the higher suit (i.e. hearts). With no preference South leads a middle card. Here North duly trusts his partner and returns a club. South then delivers the 2nd ruff.

Obviously the ♦5 lead works better today but is it reasonable? I think so – especially if East had bid 2♣ on the way to 4♠ because North might now think his ♣K is likely to be finessed while declarer sets up his clubs in dummy. What's more,

North's hand is weak which also makes a singleton lead attractive. See advanced section for some more discussion on when singleton leads are most effective.

### *Key points to note*

- Don't be afraid to re-evaluate your hand if partner's rebid is in a suit you have good cards in.
- Singleton leads can be very effective but only if partner can get in to give you ruff(s).
- Suit preference signals are essential when giving a ruff to indicate your entry if partner wants to receive a 2nd ruff.
- Declarer can often muddy the defence's signals by subtle concealment of small pips (see advanced section). Usually this costs nothing to declarer but it can give a defender a losing option that might not otherwise exist.

### *More advanced*

Here leading a singleton in declarer's suit should work out well. But is it usually a good strategy? There are certainly times where it can backfire because it may help declarer set his main side suit up and that can often mean he will be able to discard losers on it later after trumps have been drawn. So you may need to secure 2 ruffs quickly to make it worthwhile. This gives some pointers as to when a singleton lead can be a good idea:

- a) When you have trump control (so you know you can get in and then attempt to get partner in to receive your ruff).
- b) When you have a weak hand (because this makes it more likely partner has the entries you will need him to have to be able to give you your ruffs – there's little point leading a singleton if you have almost all the defence's values as you won't be able to get partner in before declarer can draw trumps).
- c) When you have at least 3 trumps (so there's a chance for more than one ruff)
- d) When it doesn't look like anything else is going to work (e.g. if you have a KQJ holding in an unbid suit that's likely to be a better bet).

North's hand here doesn't meet (a) but it does meet the others. So he has to hope partner provides the trump control and, on this hand, his wish is granted!

After the ♦5 lead, can South be sure it's a singleton? It depends what declarer plays! Suppose trick one goes ♦5, 10, 2, 4. What can North have? He shouldn't ever underlead the ace and surely it would be insane to lead away from the ♦Q around to declarer's 2nd suit? The ♦5 is also his lowest (South can see all the lower ones) so it's not top of a doubleton. It therefore has to be a singleton.

But now suppose trick one goes ♦5, 10, 2, 6. If declarer makes the subtle play of the ♦6 not the ♦4 then from South's perspective, North COULD still have ♦54 doubleton. Of course that's still pretty unlikely (why would you choose to lead that holding round to declarer's known 2nd suit?) but it's at least a possibility and it might muddy the waters in South's mind sufficiently that he doesn't try for a diamond ruff. It's not that likely to work here but simple little false cards like this from declarer to conceal small pips can often have a surprisingly big impact on how the defenders can read the cards played, and on their signals!

There's one more signal South should be giving and that's at trick 1. When the ♦10 wins in dummy, he should play the ♦2. There's no real need for this to be count and it clearly isn't attitude – so it should again be suit preference indicating that he has a club card. This might be essential knowledge if North were the one holding the ♠A and he needed to know how to get South in for his ruff.

Finally, could it ever be wrong for South to dive straight in with the ♠A? Not really. He only has 2 so there's almost no risk of crashing an honour in partner's hand. Even if there were 3 small spades in dummy (so declarer could have had a KJ guess) it's still right to take the A because South knows he can get in quickly again in clubs to play another

diamond. Of course had ruffs not been a consideration, then South probably should play low to follow the general principle of not wasting his Ace into thin air but waiting to beat the Q or K with it. Here, however, the need for quick ruffs overrides that.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

## Australia Wide Open Pairs on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 Funday's each month, whenever the venue on Goulburn Street is available. The next few Sunday Funday's 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.