



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.

Defending against a sacrifice to get the maximum number of tricks.

#9364 BBO – Saturday 20th August 2022

22		♠ K5	Dir: E
		♥ Q963	Vul: E-W
		♦ AQ9752	
		♣ 9	
♠ 863	♠ AQ9742		
♥ AJ87	♥ 52		
♦ KJT6	♦ 43		
♣ J5	♣ AK2		
11 ♠ JT	♣ ♠ ♥ ♦ NT		
10 13 ♥ KT4	N 1 - - -		
6 ♦ 8	S 1 - - -		
♣ QT87643	E - 1 1 4 3		
	W - 1 1 4 4		

Last week board 22 was one I would have expected to be flat in 4♠. But not so. Two North South pairs played in 5♣ x and scored a top or a bottom depending on how many tricks they made.

Starting as usual with the bidding, East has a normal 1♠ opening. Some Souths passed and others made a 3♣ weak jump overcall. Given the vulnerability I think 3♣ is perfectly reasonable – it could make things harder for East West and it could pave the way for a profitable 5♣ sacrifice later.

West could perhaps double 3♣ (takeout) just in case partner has hearts but the better bid is to raise to 3♠ immediately. This is because if North does raise clubs it puts your partner in a much better position if he knows you have a fit. With no club fit, North should pass and, even though his hand isn't great, East will surely

raise to 4♠ based on the fact he has 6 of them (see advanced section for more on this). That ended matters at most tables. Of the two tables that reached 5♣, one South just bid it himself over 4♠. I don't like this – very unilateral and could easily be going for a penalty much larger than -620. At the other table North raised 3♣ to 4♣ which caused their partner to, perfectly reasonably, then bid on to 5♣. I don't like the 4♣ bid either – it's strange with only a singleton, especially as the hand also has some defence to the likely 4♠ contract.

Let's look at the play in 4♠ first. It's normal for South to start with his singleton ♦8 which North will win with the ♦Q. North cannot then tell which of South or East has the singleton diamond (see advanced section for why). It's more likely to be South given he made the pre-emptive weak jump overcall but ♦A could be disastrous if declarer ruffs it as it will set up the ♦KJ in dummy. So North might well return a club hoping that his partner has the ♣A and can give him a ruff. That doesn't work here because declarer will win the ♣A. But he then has to cross to dummy either by playing another diamond or a heart to the ace in order to take the spade finesse and draw trumps. The defence will still then come to their other diamond and a heart and declarer will score +620 for 10 tricks. At one table North did try the ♦A and then played a 3rd round when it held. This enabled South to score a ruff (declarer discarded his heart loser) but that was still only 3 tricks. Declarer could have ruffed with the ♠Q and won the trick but now the defence have a trump trick instead. All routes effectively lead to 10 tricks for declarer and East West +620.

Therefore, when South did play in 5♣x the number of tricks made was hugely important. One pair made 8 tricks and scored -500 for a complete top, the other pair made 7 tricks for -800 and a complete bottom! This is not uncommon and it's important for the defence to be able to take the maximum number of tricks when the opponents do sacrifice. Any score above the value of game will be huge, any score below the value of game will be bad (if game is making and the field is bidding it). Here West will normally start with a spade to the ♠Q and ♠A followed by ♥5 switch. After winning the ♥A, West might try a 2nd heart (although there's a reason not to – see advanced section). That should allow declarer to escape for 3 down because he can win the heart in dummy and lead a club. If East wins the ♣A or ♣K he cannot get West in to give him a heart ruff. If he ducks, declarer can win the ♣Q and play another to limit his trump losers to 2. Of course declarer has to guess the club layout to do that but there are reasons to get it right.

There is, however, a way to take the contract 4 off. West actually needs to play a 3rd round of spades after the ♥A! Yes, even though that's a ruff and discard. See advanced section for why this works.

Key points to note

- Weak jump overcalls at favourable vulnerability are usually good bids which take up space and pave the way for a possible sacrifice later
- Known 9 card or longer fits are much more powerful than 8 card fits and should be bidding game even with fewer than the normal points.
- When declaring, consider if you can afford to let one hand in. If you can't, your only chance may be to play the other hand for the top honours.
- When defending try and imagine what partner might have done with certain holdings. The fact he hasn't done it probably means he doesn't have that holding!
- When defending think about the possible holdings partner can have in a suit and what that would give declarer. Then check to see if the card declarer played is consistent with that.
- Be alert to the possibility of scoring extra trump tricks via trump promotions (see advanced section).

More advanced

If West just raises to 3♠ over 3♣ should East definitely bid onto 4♠? Even though he only has 13 points and 2 low cards in both red suits the answer is yes for several reasons:

- He has 6 spades so he knows there is at least a 9 card fit, possibly 10. Such a fit is hugely more powerful than an 8 card fit (you can draw trumps much more quickly and have more trumps left over to ruff your losers or help set up your own long suits).
- He is quite likely to be receiving a club lead so he may not have to make a guess in a red suit at trick 1.
- His club length means he will probably be able to ruff a club in dummy later. That means, if partner has just the ♠K and nothing else, he can already count 9 tricks (6 spades, 2 clubs and a ruff). But partner will obviously have more than 3 points for a raise to 3♠!

Against 4♠, observe it's because South's singleton diamond is the 8 that makes it unclear to North who has the singleton (South could have ♦84 or ♦83 and a club holding headed by the ♣A or ♣AQ that he didn't want to lead from). Had South's singleton been the 3, it would be clear and declarer couldn't prevent North from knowing that. Had it been the 4, however, declarer could create some doubt by playing his 8 on the first round (from 83) leaving North unsure who held the 3.

Defending 5♣ after two rounds of spades and ♥5 to the ace, the spotlight is on West. A 2nd heart hoping for East to ruff is not very likely because if East had a singleton, that would give South 4. Pre-empting with a side 4 card major is less likely because it's more dangerous and could miss a major suit contract for their side. The only other layout where it is right for West to return a heart is if East holds ♥K105. This is definitely possible (imagine the South hand with the ♣K instead of the ♥K). But that would give South ♥42 and, while he might smoothly play the ♥4 and not the ♥2, many players would not!

Another thing for West to consider is declarer's shape. South almost certainly has 2 spades. If he did only have 2 hearts, he'd most likely be 2227 shape. But that would give East a singleton diamond. Is that likely? Not really. Why not? Because wouldn't East switch to that himself at trick 3 with the aim of winning his ♣A, and THEN crossing to West's ♥A to get his diamond ruff? The fact he hasn't done that should suggest to West the diamonds are as they are.

All in all, the most likely layout is the one that exists here. Which means West's best hope for another trick is his ♣J. This should be a clue to the best defence – a 3rd round of spades. Declarer has no side suit losers left so the ruff and

discard isn't useful to him. Besides, if he did ruff with the ♣9 in dummy, he would then have to lead away from his own trumps. Therefore, declarer will trump in hand, cross to dummy in diamonds and lead the ♣9. Now East can hop up with the ♣K and play a 4th round of spades. This enables West to score the ♣J via a trump promotion. Even if South ruffs high with the ♣Q, the ♣J and ♣A will now score separately. 3 trumps together with 2 spades and a heart holds declarer to 7 tricks and +800 for East West.

Finally, if West does go wrong and play a 2nd heart declarer wins in dummy and leads the ♣9. If East plays low smoothly what should declarer do? The ♣Q is right for 3 reasons:

- East has doubled and is more likely to have the outstanding values.
- Even if he runs the ♣9 and it loses to (say) the ♣K with West, that doesn't actually help. The ♣AJ are still outstanding and will score.
- If West can get in, declarer knows a heart ruff is coming anyway. Hence he needs East to have both ♣AK

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.

Stroke Awareness Day on Wednesday 7th September 2022



An annual SBC fund-raising session for the Stroke Recovery Association. The Stroke Recovery Association is founded by one of our bridge players and provides a range of support and information services for people affected by Stroke and their families / carers. This year, we will run this fun event on Wednesday 7th September 2022, 10am – 1.15pm.

Snack and refreshment throughout the session, great raffle prizes and lots of spot prizes for everyone. **RED** masterpoints.

You don't need a partner. No need to book in, visitors and walk-ins are welcome. \$18 member (\$15 concession member) / \$22 visitor. Come join us for a game of meaning!

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 4th September 2022



Sleep in on a Sunday and enjoy a relaxed game in the afternoon! 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 one, and hopefully two Sunday Funday each month, whenever the venue on Goulburn Street is available. The next few Sunday Funday will be held on:

- Sunday 4th September 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.