

WESTERN CAPE BRIDGE UNION NEWSLETTER



Edition 9
June 2020

Editor: Shirley Kaminer
newsletter@wcbridge.co.za

Message from the Editor

Dear Bridge Players

How the world has changed since the last newsletter – a mere three months’ ago! We even have a new lexicon of words and phrases that are now in daily usage and which we are bombarded with in almost everything we read and hear that is news related – lockdown, social distancing, flattening the curve, self-isolation, PPE (personal protective equipment), herd immunity, the new normal – just to name a few. And, of course, Zoom – how on earth would we manage without it?

As bridge players, we are particularly fortunate that we are able to continue playing the game we love so much and still retain social distancing. Please read the next article with Tim Cope’s message on how this quickly came about for Western Cape bridge. He has mentioned a number of people who were involved with setting up online bridge tournaments for all of us, but omitted to mention his name in helping to establish it. So, a very special “thank you” to you, too, Tim!

The situation that the global world is currently in can be described as a *Black Swan* event. The term was popularised by Nassim Nicholas Taleb, a finance professor, writer, and former Wall Street trader. In 2007, prior to the 2008 financial crisis, Taleb stated that because black swan events are impossible to predict due to their extreme rarity yet have catastrophic consequences, it is important for people to always assume a black swan event is a possibility, whatever it may be, and to plan accordingly.



Taleb describes a black swan as an event that 1) is beyond normal expectations that is so rare that even the possibility that it might occur is unknown; 2) has a catastrophic impact when it does occur; and 3) is explained in hindsight as if it were actually predictable.

I would like to take the liberty of transferring this analogy to the bridge world. It is mainly world-class bridge experts who are able to “foresee” such an event at the bridge table. Let’s take an example from declarer play . . . A particular deal may be beyond normal expectations in the lie of the cards as to be extremely rare; the impact would be that a contract cannot be made despite the positive prognosis for its success; and it can be viewed in retrospect as if it was predictable. And it is the world-class expert bridge player who will take into account that a black swan event in a particular deal is a possibility and who will plan accordingly – and those are the bridge players who will succeed in making the contract against all odds.

We are very fortunate indeed to have such experts who contribute to this newsletter on a regular basis and who take the time to give us deeper insights into this fascinating, but not always predictable, game of bridge. Tim Cope gives us precise information on how to manage an auction in defence of the Multi-Two; Diniar Minwalla gives us some examples of deception in defence and declarer play; while Kathryn Herz and Eckhard Böhlke continue their series, focusing in this edition on defensive bidding. We continue to be most grateful to all of them, as well as to Warwick Wealth for their support.

Finally, after Tim read the above, he suggested that perhaps another bird might provide some hope for the future in the form of the Phoenix which, in ancient Greek mythology, is a bird that regenerates or is born again. Often depicted in art with a halo, because of its association with the sun, a phoenix obtains new life by arising from the ashes of its predecessor.



We therefore look forward to a post-pandemic future when we will hopefully be able to adjust to a new normal and - perhaps - be part of an even better world.

Take care and happy reading!

Shirley Kaminer



President's Message

Dear Fellow Bridge Players

A lot has happened since the last newsletter. We have completed a spectacular National Congress in Cape Town – I shall discuss this later in a separate article. That was the good news – then came the necessary lockdown which has been bad news for all of us.

But perhaps these are times to look at the positives rather than the negatives. As opposed to many, who may well have found themselves short of ideas other than binge watching or the like, we have had our favourite pastime to stimulate our brains and maintain our bridge friendships.

We should, therefore, consider ourselves fortunate that we learned to play such a fascinating game that stretches our minds and occasionally inflames our emotions. In order to do this, we yet again have had to rely on our dedicated Band of Brothers – those volunteers who have spent countless hours making sure that it is possible for us to pursue our addiction. We are especially fortunate that this is a game that, because of Bridge Base Online (BBO), we can play and meet with our friends, and battle our wits in an online arena. So, many thanks BBO for being in existence and also being free to all to play bridge at any time of the day – whether it be for the odd half hour or, for some, it seems nearly the whole day.

I must single out certain individuals who have helped keep the Western Cape Bridge Union on the map. Thanks to Malcolm Siegel for having secured his Director privileges on BBO before the spread of the pandemic. This meant that we have been able to provide a master-pointed Pairs event every day of the week at a very small cost. Malcolm and Andrew Cruise have, therefore, been able to set up this daily event. These events are then ably directed by Steve Bunker and Andre Truter. With the help of “magic” software developed by Steve, the results of these sessions are transported into our WCBU website, where Ann Sturrock has built a portion of the site to capture these results so that you can look up your scores at any time. Then we have Phil King who processes all the data so that we can look at our overall performance. Last, but certainly not least, is the work of Cary Roberts, who (again with the help of the magic software from Steve), captures all the names of the people who have played, or who are new to BBO, and therefore ensures that your credits and debits are kept up to date. I would advise you all to stay in her good books, or she might be chasing you for money. We have seen a lot of new faces on BBO from people who have never played online before – and, for those who have not yet tried it, all the details of how to download, how to play and how to enter our events can be found on Ann's WCBU website <http://www.wcbridge.co.za/>.

I think I mentioned the word magic twice already – trust me it is not. I am part of the BBO WCBU whatsapp admin group. My guess is that there is an average of 20 messages a day, where the team is trying to improve something or sort something out – which could be the process of adding new players to our community or trying to sort out an indecipherable deposit reference. Well done team!!

Even though we are the WCBU, we have opened our doors to anyone within the South African bridge community – affiliated or not, we want you to play. Other volunteers around the Cape and the country have also made this happen. So, hats off to the Hermanus Bridge Club (not affiliated but we are working on them 😊) who, through the efforts of Ian Holdsworth and Chris Quirke, produced stunning manuals and have encouraged their players to participate. And well done to John Gibson in Plettenburg Bay who, I believe, has 48 players online many afternoons where he has spoon-fed his troops into the joys of BBO. Needless to say, Heidi Atkinson is also promoting the game in Knysna and George (I know the last two are in the Southern Cape according to the SABF, but the last time I looked at an official map, they formed part of the Western Cape). Finally, a big thank you to Rob Stephens – yes, I know he is from Gauteng, but they are not all bad. When we started this venture (and we were the first Province in SA to get things underway), he was always available and ready to help with any assistance he could provide and I think with a smile on his face whilst he did so. Most of you will now know him as drowzee, the oke who runs the Johannesburg events, but note him down as one of the good guys.

So, without the volunteers we would be nowhere and we owe them a lot. But we also hope that this new normal does not last forever. Yes, we play the game for its cranial challenges, but we also miss the social interaction that is an integral part of the game. So, I look forward to shutting down our events on BBO and getting you all back to the bridge clubs so that we can see each other face to face (or maybe mask to mask). I fear that this will unfortunately be no time soon – our bridge community is not the youngest of age groups, and our sport is more tactile than even rugby.

Financially, without the clubs operating, we will take a big knock this year. But we have the reserves to afford to do this and, basically, we are spending your money since that is where we accumulated our surplus from. I hope you agree that we are spending the money wisely and ensuring that the game is kept alive. There is also much we are missing out on – for instance, we cannot get into the schools at this stage to help promote the future of the game. Whilst I thank all of you who have participated in our online venture, I hope that many of you are using the time to teach your children and grandchildren this beautiful game. Unfortunately for them, you have them under lock and key, so this is your chance (and they cannot get away)!

As always, my thanks to another of the Band of Brothers, Shirley Kaminer (aka Western Cape Sports Journalist of the Year), for all her efforts in putting together this bulletin – she probably spends more time correcting my typing errors and grammatical obscenities than I do trying to write it.

Wishing you and your families health and safety.

Yours in bridge

Tim Cope

Deception in defence and declarer play

by Diniar Minwalla

As a competitive bridge player, one has to try and make things as difficult as possible for the opponents in every area of the game, be it bidding, defence or declarer play.

Pre-empts in bidding and false carding during play are widely used as destructive tools to lead the opponents astray.

Sometimes you will have the opportunity to make a deceptive opening lead. The objective of such an action is to paint a false picture of your hand, which may sometimes lead to very productive results.

Consider the following hand which was played at the Cape Festival in December 2018. As South you pick up the following hand:

KJT842
K8642
Void
K5

Both sides vulnerable, and your partner (North) is the dealer. The bidding proceeds as follows:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
Pass	Pass	1S	DBL
Pass	3D	3H	3S
Pass	3NT	Pass	4D
Pass	5D	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West made a takeout double of your opening bid and East jumped in Diamonds showing 10-11 points with diamonds. 3H from you was natural and 3S from opener showed a good hand, primarily looking for a spade stopper from partner for 3NT. East showed a spade stopper with 3NT, and West now bid 4D, showing some diamond support and slam interest. East signed off in 5D which became the final contract.

Over to you: What is your opening lead?

Your thoughts should proceed as follows:

1. I have shown a distributional 2 suiter in hearts and spades
2. Being void in diamonds, partner may well have a trick or two in the suit.
3. Is there an opportunity to deceive declarer with my opening lead?

Indeed, there is a great way to deceive declarer with the opening lead. Try the effect of leading . . . the 5 of clubs! The objective of the lead is to try and convince declarer that you hold a singleton club and are pursuing a club ruff (even though you are void in trumps).

This was the full hand:

	653	
	95	
	K8732	
	862	
9		AQ7
AQT		J73
AT6		QJ954
AQJT94		73
	KJT842	
	K8642	
	Void	
	K5	

Observe the effect that this lead has on declarer's thoughts . . .

You have already set the scene by showing your distributional 2 suited hand. Convinced that the lead is a singleton, declarer can hardly be blamed for refusing the club finesse, after which the contract can no longer be made. Winning the lead with the ace of clubs, declarer would have crossed to hand with the ace of spades and advanced the queen of diamonds. When south shows out with an encouraging spade, declarer loses this trick to North's king. North continues spades and declarer eventually drifts 2 down.

The final result after comparing scores with your team-mates is 11 imps to the defending side.

A little imagination can go a long way!

Lockdown Bridge

I would like to wish all our readers the very best of health in these trying times. The Western Cape Bridge Union has organised online tournaments to keep us entertained during this difficult period. It is a great opportunity to play some competitive bridge and at the same time to say hello online to our friends whom we haven't seen for some time.

Here's a hand from one of the lockdown tournaments which presented an opportunity for a little bit of deception, this time as declarer. The hand can be presented as a double dummy problem:

(This is a pairs tournament, so overtricks are valuable)

	AQ87	
	K87	
	K875	
	Q9	
52		J943
943		652
Q964		T2
A875		K642
	KT6	
	AQJT	
	AJ3	
	JT3	

The bidding does not present much interest. East was the dealer and passed, and all South players who play a 15-17 NT would have opened 1NT. After a Stayman enquiry, the normal contract of 3NT is reached. The opening lead is the 4 of diamonds. (A small comment on the lead: it is usually not a good idea to lead 4th best from a suit headed by the Queen into a strong NT opening – it usually costs a trick as it did on this occasion.)

As declarer, you play the 5 from dummy and East contributes the ten which you win with the Jack. After this start, you can guarantee 11 tricks by simply establishing a club trick to go with 3 spades, 4 hearts and 3 diamonds. So, you play a club to dummy's queen and East wins the King. East returns a diamond. Do you have any thoughts of producing a 12th trick which would give you a complete top?

If you can sneak a club trick and West has the Ace, you will be in a good position to put pressure on him as he will be in sole control of clubs and diamonds. Consequently, you

win the diamond return with the Ace (essential to preserve the diamond entry in dummy in order to exercise the necessary pressure on West).

You now play the ten of clubs and if West ducks this, you have managed to steal your club trick. You now play your major suits starting with spades. If the spades are 3-3 or the Jack comes down in 2 rounds, you will have your 12 tricks. This does not happen as, when you play 3 rounds of spades, East advertises that he started with 4 spades headed by the Jack. No matter! You now play 3 rounds of hearts ending in hand to produce the following ending:

S: 7
H: Void
D: K8
C: Void

S: Void
H: Void
D: Q9
C: A

Immaterial

S: Void
H: A
D: 3
C: J

You lead the Ace of hearts now, and West is caught in a simple squeeze. If he throws a club, it will make your Jack of clubs into a winner, and if he throws the 9 of diamonds, your 2 diamonds in dummy are winners.

Look out for these extra chances which can earn you a bushel of points!



*Diniar is available for lessons in the Southern Suburbs for groups of four
– intermediate and advanced.*

He can be contacted on 072 709 5180 or 021 782 0167

NATIONAL CONGRESS 2020

by Tim Cope

To misquote T.S. Eliot, “This is the way Congress ends, not with a bang but a whimper”. On the penultimate day of Congress, the government banned assemblies of over 50 people. Effectively, it was the start of the lockdown. So, on the last day only the top section in the pairs was able to complete their final session, and the subsequent victory banquet was somewhat muted. Since that day, no bridge club has been open and we wait to see when we will actually meet again.



But enough of this gloomy stuff – let us turn back the clocks to the start of Congress. That was not when the first card was played but months earlier when the organising committee took on the mammoth role of trying to put on the biggest and best Congress we have had in Cape Town. If you were to read the SABF report on Congress, there are a couple of lines thanking the organising committee. Not exactly heartfelt, and no names were mentioned of the two people who headed that committee. Similarly, Mr Grant, the SABF President, did not mention the names of the organisers at the victory lunch – maybe the SABF thought that they had done all the work themselves? We shall try to redress the balance here and give thanks to the co-chairpersons, Kitty Cruise and Andre Truter, who put in countless unpaid and unappreciated hours (or should I say months?) of work so that we, the bridge players, could enjoy ourselves. A standing ovation for Kitty and Andre!

In fact, the event should have been called the Western Cape National Congress rather than the SABF. Added to the aforementioned names on the organising committee were the usual suspects – Malcolm Siegel, who innovated congress with his BBO set up. Even though I could not understand what he had done, I saw the end results which were amazing. Steve Bunker then implemented it and we became the first Province to have 4 tables of BBO online for a National Congress – a great advert for South Africa, the Cape and bridge. Ann Sturrock who prepared all the booklets and ran the website; and Hilary Nick who looked after the finances and many other organisational tasks. The list could go on. And I apologise if I have left anyone out, but “thank you” to you all.

When we turn to Congress itself, we were grateful to have Waleed Al-Ahmedy on board – as the chief TD of the African Bridge Union, he added a wisdom and serenity to the proceedings. But, other than him, the onsite team were all from the Western Cape. So, again thanks to our TDs Heidi Atkinson, Neil Hayward and Jan van Dijken, to our scorer

Andre Truter, to our techno-buff Steve Bunker, and to Richard Atkinson for the dealing. A special thank you to Neil Hayward who produced an excellent daily bulletin. And a final thanks to our loyal bridge centre staff - Thabo, Bridget and Lindiwe - who acted most efficiently as caddies.

We can eulogise about Congress for a long time, but I suppose the results are also important. As this is a Western Cape newsletter, we shall highlight the performances of our local players. Yes, we thank the visiting internationals for coming and winning some of our events, but let us rather look at some local performances.

The National Teams is the main event, and whilst Norway played Sweden in the final, we had quite a few players who made it to the top eight after qualifying. Pride of place must go to Jill Rabie, a player with a bright future, who qualified for the teams final eight along with team-mates Imtiaz Kaprey and Maureen Narunsky and her partner Carol Stanton. Her team finished 6th overall – a great performance. Other local teams making it to the top eight were CRUISE (Andrew Cruise, Tim Cope, Malcom Siegel, Rob Sulcas, Glen Holman and Brian Pincus) who finished 4th; and MINWALLA (Diniar and Nancy Minwalla, Julian Gruft and Paul Mestern).

In the other sections, we were winners of the 2nd Section – The Congress Teams – won by the ASHBERG team (Jocelyn Ashberg, Shirley Kaminer, Michele Alexander and Rob Stephens).

In the Pairs, the WC had representation in 9 of the finalists - the highest of any province. Individual honours here go to Chris Convery (a blast from the past!) who finished 7th and Michael Alexander (9th), but the top pair who were both Capetonians were Nancy and Diniar Minwalla (10th). Special mention must be made of Duncan Keet who, playing with Anton Der Kinderen, at his first pairs final (at his first Congress, I think). Otherwise the usual suspects made it to the final but not enough to shine - Cruise/Cope (11th), Kaprey/Grunder (12th), Sulcas/Siegel (13th) and Holman/Pincus (14th). Andre van Niekerk playing in a hybrid partnership also made the final (19th).

In the other sections for those who did not qualify for the Championship, we also showed success – unfortunately the final session was never played, but officially the result stands. So, well done to Sid Ismail and Bashir Mukuddem who pipped Sue Botha and Lynn Cunningham to win the second section. Well done to John Bryant and Mark Kenyon who won the 3rd section, and Audrey Shearer and Toni Hendler who were runners up in the 4th section. Another Western Cape innovation was to have 21 pairs playing the same boards as the main field in a “no fear” tournament. For these players, it was dipping their toes into the Congress atmosphere for the first time. Well done to Marilyn Markus and Bernice Kaye who can now say that have won their first Congress event.

So that’s a wrap from the Cape as far as our Congress was concerned. I think we did rather well.

Defence to the Multi 2♦ opening

by Tim Cope

Many people these days are playing a Multi 2♦ opening – usually a weak 2, but often including other stronger options. These stronger options basically turn up once in a blue moon, so the majority of the time you are defending against a weak 2 bid – the only trouble is that you do not know the suit they have got - either ♥ or ♠.

The advantages of playing a Multi is twofold. First, it frees up the opening of 2♥ or 2♠ to have other meanings. The second and perhaps more distressing fact is that players, as soon as their opposition open a Multi, go into panic mode, and because they do not have a comprehensive defence, they will often gift the opposition a great board more through uncertainty than bad bridge. So, with more and more players incorporating a Multi into their system, it is one of those areas where you need to have a good partnership understanding of how to defend against it.

And here is the big kicker and the truth – a Multi – if you know your defence – is much easier to defend against than a weak 2 opening bid and gives you many more options to describe your hand type and have a constructive auction if the hand belongs to you. So, it is worth taking the time and effort to learn a good defence. Then when the opposition do open a Multi, you will no longer be afraid, but can rejoice in the fact that you know what you are doing, and you have many more strings to your bow. And you can actually almost feel delighted when your opponents open a Multi! So, maybe a little bit of work, honing and learning your methods, but well worth it after you have put in the hard yards. Below is my system – there may be others who also have good defensive methods – but this one works for me.

Quizzes

I would suggest you perhaps try to answer the quizzes first without reading the article, then read the suggested defence and decide if you have changed your mind before reading the answers at the end of the article.

1. Your opposition open a multi 2♦ and you hold ♠ x ♥ Kx ♦ AKQ10xxx ♣ Axx – what is your plan?
2. Your opposition open 2♦ multi, your partner passes and the next hand bids 2♥ - what is your plan with the following hand: ♠ 763 ♥ AQ76 ♦ 5 ♣ AKJ87 ?
3. The opposition open 2♦ multi, your partner doubles and the next hand bids 2♥ - what is your plan with ♠ 76 ♥ AQ87 ♦ AK63 ♣ J42 ?
4. The opposition open a Multi and you hold ♠ 65 ♥ J4 ♦ AQ87 ♣ AKJ76 – what is your plan?

2nd seat actions after a Multi 2♦ opening

So, your opponents have opened a Multi and you are next to speak. There are a lot of different hand types you might like to bid, but one of the key foundations of the defence is that on many good hands you will actually PASS. Remember 2♦, even though it is weak, is effectively forcing. So, on many hands, we wait for them to turn it into a weak 2 and then

make our bid next time around. What we do then, is to use our defence to Weak Two's (you may have to go back and revisit the previous newsletter which dealt in more detail with defence to weak twos), but consider the following hands after your RHO has opened a multi 2♦ just as a reminder . . .

a) ♠ 8 ♥ KJ43 ♦ AQJ87 ♣ K54

Now if the opening bid had been a weak 2♠ opening, we would automatically make a take-out double of 2♠, but when they open 2♦, for the time being we just PASS. We expect the auction to go (2♦) P (2♥) P / (2♠) and now we make our take-out double and the weak two defence (including Lebensohl etc) applies.

b) ♠ AKJ87 ♥ 5 ♦ AKQ65 ♣ J4

Again, they open 2♦. Now if they were not playing a Multi, there is a very high probability that the opening hand has a weak 2 in ♥. Had they been playing weak 2's, according to our agreed defence from the last issue, we play the convention called Leaping Michaels. So, over a 2♥ opening we would bid 4♦ to show 5/5 in the suit we bid and the other major and a very strong hand. But over a 2♦ opening we have to PASS. We expect the auction to go (2♦) P (2♥) P / (P) and now we bid 4♦ as effectively we are back in the mode of defending against weak 2's.

c) ♠ 4 ♥ K5 ♦ AKQ10876 ♣ A75

So, yet again they open 2♦. And yet again we PASS. This time it is probably less clear as to whether the 2♦ opener is weak with ♥ or ♠ - but we will know next time the auction gets back to us provided we have passed. So, if the auction goes (2♦) P (2♥) P / (P) we would probably take a shot at bidding 3NT as we have a heart stopper ourselves – this would show a solid minor and a heart stopper. But if the auction goes (2♦) P (2♥) P / (2♠), now we would bid 3♠ to show a solid minor without a ♠ stopper.

So, as we can see, we initially mainly use the weak 2 defence against the Multi. So, what are these advantages I was talking about earlier? Let me ask it this way – suppose you held the following 2 hands:

a) ♠ 65 ♥ AJ1094 ♦ K85 ♣ A32

b) ♠ 543 ♥ AQ7 ♦ KJ54 ♣ A105

Let us suppose you were playing against a pair who played weak 2's and your RHO opened 2♠ - what would you bid on both of these hands? The answer is pass – on the first one we would like to be able to bid our ♥ suit, but we only just have an opening hand and being forced to bid at the 3 level when we are balanced and only have a 5 card suit with an unknown strength hand sitting behind us it is too dangerous. Against a Multi 2♦ opening we can comfortably bid 2♥.

On the second hand again, we would pass. We cannot make a take-out x as we are not shape suitable and cannot bid NT as we have neither a ♠ stopper, nor enough points. This may mean we get locked out of the auction and our side may never get to bid when partner has a moderate 12pt hand. Against a Multi 2♦ opening we can use the bid of double – this in principle shows a balanced hand of 13-16pts and we are in the auction. There are some

fairly specialised responses to this double (more of that later), but just remember that they are not going to play in 2♦ so it is a cheap and efficient way of getting into the auction.

Summary of bids we can make in 2nd position after a Multi 2♦ opening

1. Pass – this might be weak or any hand where we intend to pass and then use our weak 2 defence
2. Suit bids are natural – a decent 5 card suit if a major, and probably a 6-card suit if a minor
3. Double = any balanced or semi-balanced hand of 13-16pts or (very rare) a hand of 20+pts
4. 2NT – 17-19 with a stopper in both majors – remember if we respond to this bid of 2NT, we play the same system as if partner has opened 2NT
5. Jumps in a major are strong – we do not pre-empt against a pre-empt - and will be a 6+ card suit

So, now we need to put in some work when dealing with the response to the double of a 2♦ opening. Usually the auction will start (2♦) Dbl (pass or 2♥) and we have to decide what to bid.

Clearly, we do not have to bid at all – it is not the same as a take-out double where we will always have to bid, and they are not going to play in 2♦ doubled.

So, our rules are:

- Pass on weak hands
- A non-jump bid in a suit is natural and just competitive – certainly not forcing. So, after the usual start of (2♦) Dbl (2♥) we might bid 3♦ on ♠ 63 ♥ Q54 ♦ KJ1075 ♣ Q43. It might not be perfect, but do we want to let them play in 2 of a major and partner will have some diamonds as they have a balanced hand type.
- A double of 2♥ (or 2♠ if they bid that) shows a competitive hand and shows that suit. So again, after (2♦) Dbl (2♥) we would double on ♠ 83 ♥ KJ76 ♦ K843 ♣ J54. For the double we are only promising 4 cards – on a good day we may have 6
- A bid of 3♥ or 3♠ is a 5+ card suit and is forcing
- A bid of 2NT is what we would usually bid on a hand without a long major and is a quasi-game force (a quasi-game force is a bid that is forcing to 4 of a minor) – so we should have 11+pts to make this bid. It is the most important part of the defence in this area and needs partnership discussion. It is basically a Staymanic stopper ask. So after (2♦) Dbl (2♥) 2NT the original doubler bids:
 1. 3♣ = either a 4-card heart suit or a heart stopper but nothing in spades
 2. 3♦ = either a 4-card spade suit or a spade stopper with nothing in hearts
 3. 3♥ = a 4-card heart suit with a spade stopper
 4. 3♠ = a 4-card spade suit with a heart stopper
 5. 3N = both majors stopped but not four cards in either

Now if partner has responded 3♥ or 3♠ we will know what to do – if we have four card support for their major, we can bid 4 of that major and, if we do not, we can bid 3NT secure in the knowledge that partner has a stopper in the other major if we do not. The problem

sometimes comes when partner bids 3♣ (or 3♦) - now we know partner has something in ♥ but no spade stopper – so if we have 4♥ ourselves we can bid 3♥. If we do not have 4♥ but we have the spade stopper, we can bid 3NT. If we do not have a spade stopper, we will have to bid our cheapest minor suit. The purpose of this whole system is to find a 4/4 major suit fit if we have one and also to avoid a silly 3NT when we do not have a stopper in their long major. This can best be exemplified by a hand –

♠ 764	♠ J4
♥ KQ7	♥ J874
♦ AJ4	♦ KQ7
♣ A876	♣ KQJ5

So, after (2♦) Dbl (2♥) 2NT which - as we have said - is the asking bid, the auction would proceed:

3♣ (a)	3♥ (b)
3NT (c)	4♣ (d)
Pass (e)	

- I have something in ♥ - either a stopper or a 4-card suit
- I have 4♥ - do you?
- No, sorry partner – I would raise you to 4♥ if I did, so I will bid 3NT and hope you have a spade stopper – you know I do not have a spade stopper as I bid 3♣ so please do not leave this in unless you can stop the suit
- I cannot stop spades, so we cannot play 3NT – that would be silly, so I will bid my lowest minor
- I know you have 11+pts, but 4♣ is non-forcing and it is time to pass

It is not always true that the opposition may bid 2♥ after a double – sometimes they will be more pre-emptive. We will come back to that later. For now, we will move on to the 4th seat where partner has taken no action in 2nd seat.

4th seat actions after a Multi 2♦ opening

We will assume initially that the auction has started: (2♦) P (2♥) ?. Then:

- Dbl is for take-out = a typical hand might be ♠ KJ87 ♥ 7 ♦ AQJ96 ♣ K84. Remember that when partner responds to this take-out double, they may use Lebensohl if appropriate.
- 2NT is natural 16-18 with stoppers in both majors
- 3♥ shows a solid minor and asks for a major suit stopper. We cannot afford to pass these hands as that might be the end of the auction. So, if our hand is ♠ K4 ♥ x ♦ AKQ8765 ♣ K54, we bid 3♥ to show a solid minor. Partner now can bid 3♠ to show a spade stopper, 3NT to show a ♥ stopper or 4♣ (pass or correct) to deny either suit stopped. If partner shows the stopper we want, then we can play 3NT. If we do not have a stopper in a particular major, then we revert to 4 of our solid minor. Remember, partner over our 3♥ bid may also bid 4♦ as a slam try asking for cue-bids up the line.

- d) 3♠ is a strong jump overcall in ♠
- e) Pass is either weak or waiting for the 2♥ bid to be transferred to 2♠ - so, if our hand was ♠ 8 ♥ K1087 ♦ K98 ♣ AQJ87 we would pass 2♥ expecting it to be transferred to 2♠ and then we would double for take-out. If the person who opened a multi actually had a heart suit, we should be happy that we are defending 2♥.

Remember, we do not have to get involved on, for example, a balanced hand of 12/13 pts – if partner possibly also has a balanced 13pt hand they could have doubled in 2nd seat. So, stay quiet and hope to pick up a small penalty.

6th seat actions after a Multi 2♦ opening

So, first we assume that neither of us have bid on the first round of the auction. The auction will have started (2♦) P (2♥/2♠) / P ?

Most of this has already been discussed when we looked at 2nd seat actions – we said that we would pass first time round on certain strong hand types, but let us quickly recap:

- a) Double would now be for take-out – remember this is not a protective double as we had to pass first time around - and Lebensohl applies
- b) 3 of the major bid by them shows a running minor and asks for a stopper
- c) 4NT shows a running minor and a stopper
- d) 4 of a minor is leaping Michaels

But they have also given us some extra strings to our bow.

2NT shows a minor suit take-out at least 9 cards in the minors and values of an opening hand – we would bid 2NT now on ♠ 32 ♥ J5 ♦ AQJ87 ♣ AQ32

Before we go on to the second string, let me ask a question of you.

Suppose you pick up ♠ 76 ♥ KQ104 ♦ 65 ♣ AKJ87. The hand in front of you opens a Multi 2♦. You suspect that the player who opened 2♦ probably, but not definitely has a weak 2 in spades. Would you take any action in 2nd seat?

What are our options in 2nd seat?

- a) We could bid 3♣ - the drawback here is that we have 4♥ and may never get to show them and we only have a 5-card club suit. So, 3♣ is flawed.
- b) We could double to show a balanced or semi-balanced hand 13-16pts – we have the right point count but with a 4/5 shape we are not really balanced.

So, we decide to wait until the auction gets back to us. Let us say it is (2♦) P (2♥) P / P ? So now it is not a weak 2 in spades, but hearts and we should be happy to defend as partner took no action in 4th seat. But what if it goes (2♦) P (2♥) P / (2♠) - that is what we were expecting to happen, and it did! So now what do we do – make a take-out x – it looks possible, but we would not be happy if partner takes us to 3♦ say via Lebensohl on a hand like ♠ J65 ♥ 765 ♦ Q832 ♣ Q63. As we can see from this hand opposite ours, true we do not make anything, but 3♣ down one looks a much better contract than 3♦ down 4 (and they are making at least 2♠). So, the take-out double is flawed. I hope the flawed actions will lead you to the right conclusion in 6th seat.

The rule is:

- a) If the opposition stop in 2♠ as our example auction above, then a bid of 3 of a minor shows a real hand (this is not a protective bid) with 5 of that minor and 4 of the unbid major. If we had a natural bid only in a minor suit, we would have bid it directly over the 2♦ opening.
- b) If the opposition stop in 2♥, then a bid of 2♠ in 6th seat shows only a 4-card suit and 5 of an undisclosed minor. The same principle applies – if we had a natural 2♠ bid, we would have bid it directly over 2♦. So, if our hand is ♠ KQ106 ♥ 87 ♦ AKJ98 ♣ 76 we pass in second seat and if the opposition stop in 2♥, we now bid 2♠ to show this hand type. If partner does not like spades (knowing that we only have 4), they can bid 2NT to ask for our minor. If they bid 3♣ or 3♦, they do not care about our minor but want to play in the bid they have made. So, if partner had ♠ 53 ♥ K53 ♦ Q52 ♣ Q9853 after (2♦) P (2♥) P / (P) 2♠ (P), they would now bid 2NT asking for our 5-card minor and we would rest in 3♦. But if they had ♠ 53 ♥ K53 ♦ 64 ♣ KJ10987, they would bid 3♣ to play.

So, you can see that with a proper defence to the Multi, we can show far more hand types than we would have been able to do against a weak 2. Ask yourself the question, what would you have done if the opposition had opened a weak 2♠ in front of you and you had held the example hand of ♠ 87 ♥ KQ102 ♦ 76 ♣ AKJ87 – we can deal with this hand when the opposition open a Multi by the methods above, but which flawed action would you choose if you had only one bite of the cherry - because if they play a weak 2♠ opener, it means this may be your last chance to take action. Which flawed action (Pass, 3♣ or x) are you going to choose? I hope you choose right and to me it is a guess – in the words of Clint Eastwood as Dirty Harry “Do you feel lucky, punk?”

8th seat actions after a Multi 2♦ opening

Again, we might need to review why we might have passed in 4th seat with a decent hand. In general, the reason is that we were waiting for the opponents to transfer to a weak 2 where we could take appropriate action. So, if we had:

After (2♦) P (2♥) we would have passed on:

- a) ♠ 8 ♥ AQ54 ♦ KJ876 ♣ A64 in 4th seat as we are expecting 2♥ to be taken back to 2♠ by the opener. So, when it comes back to us in 8th seat we can make a take-out double.
- b) ♠ 9 ♥ AKJ98 ♦ AKJ98 ♣ Q4 we would have passed 2♥ waiting for the conversion to 2♠ and then bid 4♦ as leaping Michaels to show 5/5.

To this one can add an extra string to our bow, as in 6th seat.

- c) A bid of 2NT would be a real hand, minor suit take-out with at least 9 cards in the minors.

If you have gotten this far in the article – well done, we are nearly there 😊

There is one more area that we have to discuss – what to do when the opposition pre-empt the pre-empt. Very often you may be waiting your turn in the queue to bid in 4th seat or 6th seat when you hear the auction go:

(2♦) P (3♥) ?

With a ♥ suit we can pass – waiting for the correction to 3♠

Otherwise our normal general principles kick in:

- a) Doubles are for take-out
- b) 3NT is natural with a running minor and a stopper or a very strong (19+) balanced hand with a stopper in both majors
- c) 4 in a minor is leaping Michaels (even though we have not leapt) showing 5 of that minor and 5 cards in spades and a strong hand

If we are carrying hearts with a spade shortage, we expect the auction to proceed:

(2♦) P (3♥) (P) / (3♠) P ? P and now we can apply the same principles as above. Where . . .

- a) Doubles are for take-out
- b) 4 in a minor is leaping Michaels (even though we have not leapt) showing 5 of that minor and 5 cards in hearts and a strong hand.

There are some hands after the pre-empt that become unbidable or guesswork, but they are usually equally unbidable if they had opened a weak 2 (natural) and the auction had gone (2♠) P (3♠) – we do have slightly more information, however, when they pre-empt the pre-empt as (2♦) P (3♥) would show length in both majors (pass or correct) so we need sometimes to be a little more cautious before getting involved.

There is one auction when they pre-empt the pre-empt that we do have to discuss which is:

(2♦) Dbl (3♥) – clearly bids opposite this double are natural but what does the responsive x mean?

What we play here is what I think used to be referred to as a Kaplan double, named after the late, great Edgar Kaplan. It is an *either/or double* – *either* showing the suit *or* for take-out and partner should be able to work out which.

If the auction goes (2♦) Dbl (3♥) Dbl, then if the person who opened the Multi passes, they have long hearts, their partner has at least 3 hearts and the doubler has a balanced hand. Therefore our partner can work out that we are short in ♥ and so it is a take-out double. If, however, the person who opened the Multi backtracks to 3♠ then the double shows hearts (4+cards) and values to compete and hopefully partner can take an educated decision.

One final point, we said that the immediate double of 2♦ showed 13-16 balanced or semi-balanced, but with a further option of being a hand that was 20+pts. This last hand type is rare, but if we double in 2nd seat and partner passes the 2♥ response and it comes back to us, a further double would show 20+pts (Leb still applies) and a suit bid would be natural and also 20+pts with a 5+ card suit.

So, now you have it all. There may be different methods around the world, but I believe this is fairly comprehensive and helps turn that scary 2♦ opener from a nightmare to a pleasure to defend against. The fact that it is possible to show so many different hand types against a Multi, which in effect make your bidding easier, does not mean that playing the Multi is a bad thing. It will still strike fear into those who have not read this article, and more importantly frees up the 2♥ and 2♠ bid to show different hand types. So now that you have mastered all the concepts herein, it is time for the Return of the Jedi to show them who is their new master.

Quizzes (repeated)

1. Your opposition open a multi 2♦ and you hold ♠ x ♥ Kx ♦ AKQ10xxx ♣ Axx – what is your plan?
2. Your opposition open 2♦ multi, your partner passes and the next hand bids 2♥ - what is your plan with the following hand: ♠ 763 ♥ AQ76 ♦ 5 ♣ AKJ87 ?
3. The opposition open 2♦ multi, your partner doubles and the next hand bids 2♥ - what is your plan with ♠ 76 ♥ AQ87 ♦ AK63 ♣ J42 ?
4. The opposition open a Multi and you hold ♠ 65 ♥ J4 ♦ AQ87 ♣ AKJ76 – what is your plan?

Answers:

1. You must pass for the first round. When the opposition reveal which major suit they have, if it is ♥ you bid 3NT to show a running minor with a heart stopper. If opener shows a spade suit, you bid 3♠ to ask for a stopper. Partner will bid 3NT if they have the spade stopper, else bid 4♣ which is pass or correct.
2. You pass for now – you expect them to end up in 2♠ - if they stop in 2♥ you are happy to defend. If they do end up in 2♠, you now bid 3♣ to show 5♣ and 4 of the other major with a hand that was not shape suitable to make a take-out double.
3. Bid 2NT – this a quasi GF relay and asks partner about major suit length and stoppers. You would not want to end in 3NT opposite a hand such as ♠ 42 ♥ K87 ♦ QJ109 ♣ AKQ6 where a 5♦ contract is secure, and a 4♥ contract would be a great pairs score.
4. Pass again first time round, then whichever major they end up in say (2♦) P (2♥) P / (2♠) we now bid 2NT to show a real hand that is minor suit oriented (9+ cards) and allow partner to determine strain and level.



During the closure of bridge clubs, Tim is available to play or teach online (BBO).

He can be contacted on 084-4474944 or email timc@vdslaw.co.za

Online Bridge



Do me a favor. Take a few minutes off from playing online bridge. Your eyes will appreciate it.

Tim, in his President's message, gave the background to how the Western Cape Bridge Union very quickly set up online tournaments for bridge players, whether affiliated members or unaffiliated members. I am sure that you will agree that it's been an absolute boon for all of us to be able to continue with bridge on this platform and to meet each other virtually across the virtual baize!

Andrew Cruise sent out a letter to bridge players a few weeks' ago with some pointers for BBO and I want to reiterate some of these, including the links on how to play on BBO:

General overview of BBO: 11 minutes - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MldFbBdea90>

UNDO and ALERT: 2 minutes - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fd9KLhFWIGU>

Please remember to allow **UNDOS** for mis-clicks - but don't ask for an UNDO for an obvious change of mind as it should not be accepted. On the other hand, valid UNDOS **must** be accepted – you may not benefit from someone else's mis-click.

The **ALERT** button should be used for artificial bids. **Please note that you have to self-alert** – your partner does not alert for you. The explanation field next to the ALERT button should be used to announce bids and can be used on its own (if the bid is natural) or in conjunction with the ALERT button (if artificial).

Other aspects that may be unfamiliar to those not yet accustomed to playing on BBO:

- When moving to the next table, it is courteous to **greet** your new opponents and, if possible, to state what you are playing – Standard American or 2/1 or precision.
- And - please - if you can put your **real name** under your profile, it would also make it more friendly.
- If there is a query that needs to be resolved, you can call a TD by clicking the **DIRECTOR!** button on your screen.
- If it is obvious how many of the rest of the tricks belong to you, as declarer, it's not necessary to continue to play out the cards – you can click the **CLAIM** button on the screen. If the opposition agree with the declarer, then both opps need to click the **ACCEPT** button before one can move onto the next deal.
- Similarly, as defender, you can **CLAIM** some, all, or none of the remaining tricks. Valid **CLAIMS must** be accepted for the smooth flowing of the movement.
- You are now able to look on the WCBU website – www.wcbridge.co.za – to check your **credits online**. Please top up when you see that your credits are low. In any event, it is advisable to keep an eye on our website for up to date information.

I echo Tim's gratitude to those who are intimately involved with the BBO technology and who keep it running for all of us – thank you!

Strategy at Matchpointed Pairs Tournaments

Part 5: Defensive Bidding

By Kathryn Herz & Eckhard Böhlke

The objective of the defenders is to make life as difficult as possible for their opponents who had the advantage of the first opening bid (c. 12+ HCP) and probably hold at least a small majority of the total HCP (12 plus on average one third of the remaining 28 HCP). For the defenders it is important to get into the auction, even though the high-card points may not be on their side. Their aim is to occupy bidding space, impeding the exchange of information and often raising the auction by at least one level. Let us look at two topics where defensive bidding strategies at Matchpoints vary from Teams: balancing and sacrificing.

1. Balancing

After an initial opening bid by the opponents there are countless occasions when you need to decide whether or not to keep the auction open in the balancing position. We'd like to focus on relatively easy cases when the opponents have opened the bidding, showed limited values and stopped at a low-level contract. When they have found a fit in a suit, letting them play at a low level is unlikely to earn us many matchpoints. Thus we must consider whether we stand a chance to score better by making them play at a higher level (hoping to beat their contract) or by reaching a contract for our side as opposed to risking an even worse score for our (doubled) under-tricks.

Experienced Matchpoints players know about the "Law of Total Tricks". (See our article on page 14 of the WCBU newsletter edition Dec. 2019). The following key principle is derived from the "Law":

Don't let the opponents play in an 8-card-fit at the 2-level!

The classic example: (1♠)-p-(2♠)-p, (p)-?

If you pass the opponents will usually score +110 or +140. However, if we find our fit at the 3-level we will often score better, i.e. +110 (in a minor contract) or +140 (in 3♥) if our contract makes or -50 or -100 if our contract fails by one trick. The risk is to go down for minus 200, which is why we need to be careful when vulnerable. Notwithstanding this risk, it is probably right to re-open the bidding in about 75% of the cases. Why? **The "Law" protects you!**

If both parties hold an 8-card fit and they can make 8 tricks in their fit, we are likely to make 8 tricks in ours. Furthermore, they do not always hold the majority of the HCP, or at least they do not know for sure; so they may not double and rather pass or bid one more. The opponents have limited themselves to 18 to 22 HCP. If you have e.g. 10 HCP partner will hold some 8 to 12 HCP (the less you have the more he has). So with ♠42♥Q754♦K984♣AJ9 you would double in the balancing seat; with ♠42♥Q754♦K9♣AJ984 you would bid 2NT showing any two suits.

Consequently, after partner made a balancing double in the pass-out-position, advancer has one task: to steer the partnership towards finding their fit. Remember: they have a fit, so will we (most probably). However, it is not necessarily in the other major. After (1♠)-p-(2♠)-p, (p)-X-(p)-? advancer should therefore bid a "scrambling" 2NT denoting "two places to play" when holding e.g. 3=2=4=4 or 2=4=2=5 or 3=4=5=2. Intervener will bid his lowest-ranking four-card suit.

**The objective is not to get to the highest scoring denomination,
but to help the partnership fall on their feet in their best fit!**

Bidding after they found a minor fit like (1♣)-p-(2♣)-p, (p)-? is a lot less risky, as you are still at the 2-level whilst there is no (major) suit the opposing responder is likely to double for penalty.

One thing must be pointed out, however: borderline re-opening bids are far less attractive at Teams as compared to Matchpoints. Whether the opponents score +110 by making their contract

or +100 by us going down at the 3-level does not make any difference whatsoever at Teams, whereas **at Matchpoints the “10 penny” bonus is worth a million.**

(1♦)-p-(1♥)-p, (2♦)-p-(p)-?

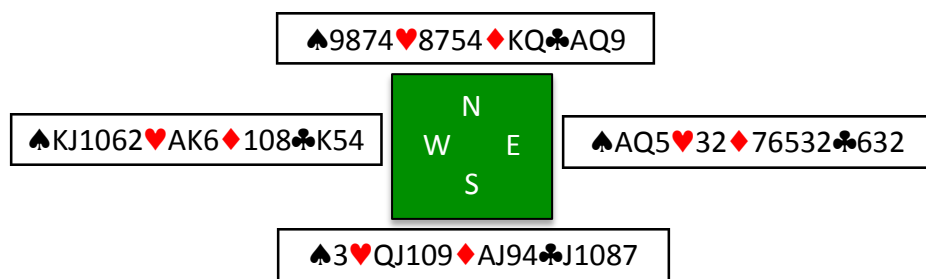
Here the key issue is the risk that no party may have an 8-card fit and no makeable contract. At the same time it may be wrong to pass. Have a good guess, use your intuition or “Fingerspitzengefühl” (sense of your fingertips).

(1NT¹⁵⁻¹⁷)-p-(p)-?

1NT is one of the most difficult contracts to defend against. Therefore, try to get them out of the comfort of 1NT. Holding good distribution in the re-opening position you should bid. You do not need many points, as those you do not have (hopefully!) partner may have. Risk: with a good hand, advancer might get overly excited. Knowing of 15-17 HCP in opener’s hand he should only raise with a good hand AND a fit.

Special Subject: Pre-Balancing (HANDLE WITH CARE!)

Imagine this familiar situation: pairs, dealer West, EW vul: sitting North in the balancing position after (1♠)-p-(2♠)-p, (p)-? with ♠9874♥8754♦KQ♣AQ9 what would you bid? You will most probably pass. Now, assume this distribution:



2♠ will score +110 for EW – a bad score for NS who could make at least 9 tricks in ♥ if only they came into the bidding. This is where “OBAR BIDS” come into play:

Some pairs have a special understanding for bidding in the sandwich position when the opponents bid and raise. In this situation it is worthwhile to consider “balancing in the direct position”, i.e. pre-balancing. The American expert Marty Bergen popularised this concept with the **mnemonic “OBAR BIDS” (if the Opponents Bid And Raise, Bid In Direct Seat)**, a philosophy for aggressive, direct-seat balancing. The crucial requirement is shortness in the opponents' suit. OBAR BIDS are an adjunct to the “Law of Total Tricks” as promoted by e.g. Larry Cohen in his book “To Bid or Not to Bid”. In a nutshell, the concept can be summarised as follows:

- As pointed out earlier, allowing the opponents to play at the 2-level in an 8-card fit is the antithesis of the philosophy of “The Law”. Playing OBAR BIDS, in the deal shown above South should double in the pre-balancing position, i.e. in direct seat: (1♠)-p-(2♠)-X!
- If the opponents end up outbidding you, OBAR BIDS may provide lead direction to partner. With ♠xx♥xxx♦x♣AKxxxxx after the auction: 1♥-p-2♥-? OBAR comes into effect. You bid 3♣. Knowing that you bid on any excuse playing OBAR BIDS, your partner (who may hold an opening bid, perhaps the strongest hand around the table) must not punish you by bidding on but be grateful you tipped him off to a good lead if the opponents go on to bid 3♥.

Before bidding OBAR BIDS you must consider the following factors:

- Suit length and quality. The weaker your hand, the more likely it is that the opponents will bid on. If partner is on opening lead, it is important he can safely lead your suit, e.g. king from Kx.
- Distribution. Relatively flat hands (e.g. 5-3-3-2, 4-4-3-2) have a lower trick-taking potential.
- Vulnerability. At unfavourable vulnerability, the risk of a big penalty double increases.
- The opponents' suit rank. A take-out double of 2♣ is much safer than a take-out double of 2♠ since the latter forces partner to bid at the 3-level.

After intervener (“OBAR”) doubled in the direct seat, however, advancer’s task is not the same as above when the bid was made in pass-out position. Since game is still possible for the defenders, advancer must show his strength using the Lebensohl convention (also known as “good/bad 2NT”). “Good” hands (opening+) are bid directly on the 3-level, “bad” hands (below opening strength) are bid via 2NT (puppet to 3♣) followed by pass or another suit bid denoting weakness. After (1♠)-p-(2♠)-X, (p) bid 3♥ with ♠9874♥A754♦Kx♣AQ9 denoting a “good” hand; After (1♠)-p-(2♠)-X, (p) bid 2NT^{puppet to 3♣}-(p)-3♣, (p)-3♥ with ♠9874♥8754♦Kx♣AQ9.

Why complicate matters in such a way? Well, nobody promised Bridge was easy! The difference is that when partner re-opens the bidding in the pass-out-position, advancer has already had an opportunity to bid with a good hand. Therefore, game is hardly on the horizon, and we employ “scrambling 2NT” to find a safe landing place. In an OBAR BIDS situation, however, advancer may still have a good hand. The following principle is worth remembering:

**Use 2NT “scrambling” to find your fit and fall on your feet, however,
if game is still a possibility, employ 2NT “Lebensohl” to show weakness!**

The concept of (pre)-balancing contradicts the standard requirements for overcalling or doubling for take-out, yet it is proven as a winning strategy. Once the opponents have found an 8-card-fit at the 2-level, we need to act, and the person with shortness in the opponents’ suit is the one who needs to do the acting. To experienced players we recommend using OBAR BIDS non-vulnerable at Matchpoints (combined with Lebensohl advances), but always remember that it is a weapon that can easily backfire, so HANDLE WITH CARE!* Never forget that the player with shortness in the opponents suit is taking his partner’s assumed values into account bidding ON BEHALF OF the partnership without promising a good HCP hand of his own.

*Most top-players do not use OBAR BIDS, as their bidding systems are geared towards Teams, and as teachers they prefer not to over-complicate matters for their clientele (balancing is difficult already). Therefore OBAR BIDS are not a well-known concept amongst club players.

2. Sacrifice Bids (to save or not to save?)

If you sacrifice you take a sure minus. Think twice before you do so, as your action may turn out as a phantom sacrifice. At Teams it would not be a disaster if you misjudged slightly, conceding -500 through a sacrifice instead of -420 for the opponents making game. At Matchpoints, however, this is pretty certain to result in a bottom score.

A sacrifice bid has to meet three conditions in order to be successful:

- The opponents must be able to make game (otherwise we bid an expensive phantom sacrifice)
- AND our doubled sacrifice must turn out cheaper than their game (e.g. -500 instead of -620)
- AND you need to be certain that game will be reached throughout the field (as otherwise even -300 won’t earn you any matchpoints)

As a rule, you should only sacrifice if you are 100% certain that at least two of these three conditions apply. The late American expert Barry Crane, probably the most successful Matchpoints player of all times, went even further when reminding his partners that

“Only Jesus saves!”

This may be slightly exaggerated, though usually right. Indeed, it is mostly better to defend against the opponents’ game, trying to beat it or to make them score one trick less than the field.

Sacrifice bids are mainly to be considered at favourable vulnerability, when holding few defensive values (i.e. small honours and intermediates in the opponents’ suits) and mostly offensive values (i.e. many trumps) and shortage in the opponents’ suits.

Sacrifice bids are **most effective** when placed **before** the opponents had the opportunity to exchange much information and bid their game (“**advance sacrifices**”). Bidding e.g. (1♣)-3♦-(X)-5♦ is usually more successful than ill-advised (1♣)-3♦-(X)-4♦, (4♠)-p-(p)-5♦.

Points to remember

Even when holding only few points, try to make life as difficult as possible for the opponents by applying one of these key tactics:

- **Balancing** when the opponents stop at a low level – particularly when they have found an 8-card-fit at the 2-level (combined with “scrambling 2NT”)
- **Pre-balancing** at Matchpoints non-vulnerable following the concept of OBAR BIDS (if the **O**pponents **B**id **A**nd **R**aise, **B**id **I**n **D**irect **S**eat) combined with “2NT Lebensohl” advances (also known as “good/bad 2NT”)
- **Sacrifices**, provided they are cheap, the opponents’ game is highly likely to be made and will be bid across the field. Advance sacrifices are the most effective.

Furthermore, we’d like to at least mention some other important areas of defensive bidding, even though the appropriate bidding strategies hardly vary between Matchpoints and Teams.

- **Pre-empts or overcalls** designed to take up bidding space
 - Regarding pre-empts see Tim Cope’s contributions, WCBU newsletter editions 5 to 7.
 - Regarding overcalls see Tim Cope’s contributions, WCBU newsletter editions 3 to 4.
- **Lead-directing bids** (doubles, suit overcalls, light openings in third hand)

Quizzes: defensive bidding

Let’s look at some deals demonstrating how the basic principles of defensive bidding strategy described above can be applied at Matchpoints. Also, see our part 3 quizzes #5-7 at WCBU newsletter of December 2019 for some further examples of balancing. After completing the quizzes, look at the solutions towards the end of this newsletter.

- Deals 1 to 4) What should South bid in the following situations?
 - Deal 1) W, EW vul: (1♦)-p-(1♥)-p, (2♥)-p-(p)-? South with ♠K985♥A9♦1043♣Q542
 - Deal 2) W, EW vul: (1♦)-p-(1♥)-p, (2♦)-p-(p)-? South with ♠K985♥A9♦1043♣Q542
 - Deal 3) W, EW vul: (1♠)-p-(1NT)-p, (2♠)-p-(p)-? South with ♠109♥93♦KJ52♣KQ1085
 - Deal 4) W, none vul: (1NT¹⁵⁻¹⁷)-p-(p)-? South holding
 - 4.a. ♠KJ985♥KQ109♦52♣53
 - 4.b. ♠KQJ642♥965♦64♣82
 - 4.c. ♠64♥K109865♦8654♣4
- Deal 5) Dealer East, none vul: what should North bid after (1♥)-p-(2♥)-p, (p)-2♠-(p)-? with ♠653♥75♦KQ43♣AJ97?
- Deal 6) Dealer East, none vul: what should North bid after (1♠)-p-(2♠)-p, (p)-X-(p)-? with ♠J95♥K953♦K3♣AJ97?
- Deals 7 to 10) What should North bid in the following situations?
 - Deal 7) Dealer East, none vul: (1♠)-p-(2♠)-? with ♠5♥A753♦KJ32♣AJ97?
 - Deal 8) Dealer East, none vul: (1♠)-p-(2♠)-? with ♠5♥A753♦KJ32♣J976?
 - Deal 9) Dealer East, none vul: (1♣)-p-(2♣)-? with ♠Q1076♥J753♦A632♣6?
 - Deal 10) Dealer East, none vul: (1♥)-p-(2♥)-? with ♠KQ1096♥75♦J1032♣42?
- Deal 11-12) What should South bid with the following hands?
 - Deal 11) Dealer East, none vul: (1♠)-p-(2♠)-X, (p)-? with ♠10874♥Q87♦Q4♣KQ84?
 - Deal 12) Dealer East, none vul: (1♠)-p-(2♠)-X, (p)-? with ♠10874♥KQ7♦Q4♣AK105?
- Deal 13) Dealer South, none vul: what should East bid after (1♥)-1♠-(4♥)-? with ♠K762♥QJ5♦A987♣75?
- Deal 14) Dealer North, EW vul: what should North bid after p-(1♣)-3♦-(p), ? holding ♠3♥87643♦KQ87♣1072?
- Deal 15) Dealer East, EW vul.: what should North bid after (1♠)-2♦-(2♥)-? holding ♠42♥53♦Q862♣A9532?

Lament for a Lost Bridge Social Life

by Brian Paxton

Right from the beginning I understood that one played bridge to be sociable, as well as for the intellectual challenge. As a young teenager, I was sent to spend a holiday on a Karoo farm learning Afrikaans and, purely by accident, also learned to play Auction Bridge the old Ely Culbertson way. We would sit around the table discussing everything from shooting spring hares to boerewors recipes as we played the hands.

The school I attended had a bridge club where I converted to contract bridge so I was somewhat prepared for the university bridge club where highly intelligent physics and maths students predominated. After each game we'd adjourn to the pub, there to dissect past hands and debate abstruse bidding conventions. All in all, it was highly stimulating and a great learning experience.

My varsity bridge partner was also my girlfriend and on Thursday nights we would make our way to the old Crockfords Club in Hillbrow where people played bridge for real money. The old ladies there were delighted to welcome a young couple into their fold and most nights we came away with enough cash to fund Saturday night dinner and dancing. After graduating, Roselyn left for America where she wrote a book about playing bridge with your spouse – not me – with an introduction by none other than the legendary Dorothy Hayden Truscott.

For the next few years I was confined to home with a growing family, all of whom learned to play and love the game. Many was the night when a last few hands competed with a bedtime story in popularity. When the kids eventually fled the nest, I returned to competitive bridge.

But the social side of bridge seemed to be missing. So often our new opponents would nod a curt hello before resuming a private conversation completely cutting me off from my partner. Their perfunctory "thank you" at the end of the round left me feeling that they didn't even know my name. And couldn't care less.

I decided to be different and subtly interrogate each opponent. Were they married? Did they have children and grandchildren? What did they do in their working lives? Amazingly, it turned out that they were all real people with families and feelings. To begin with coffee breaks seemed to be where partners huddled to discuss their mistakes or small in-groups clustered round the cake but gradually things improved as I got to know people better.

Every so often we would invite six of our new bridge friends home for dinner. Between courses and glasses of wine we would play a team of four tournament where each person played with each of the others as partner for a few hands. And a couple of times a year we'd take three couples to our beach house in Betty's Bay for a weekend long tournament interspersed with fine dining and blissful walks in the fynbos and along the beach.

Each October a group of us would head off to the Eastern Cape to play in the Bedford bridge tournament. There, between intensely competitive rounds, we would reminisce with the locals around tables groaning under the weight of scrumptious delights prepared by the local farmers' wives and their kitchen assistants.

That, then, was social life in the bridge world till a couple of months' ago. Now, suddenly, with the advent of Covid lockdowns and physical distancing, that old life has completely disappeared. Will it ever re-emerge?

The Western Cape is fortunate in having a proactive bridge organising committee. In no time at all BBO tournaments were taking place every day of the week. We even have the luxury of live expert tournament directors.

Now, my ten year old granddaughter is also learning to play on BBO. When she takes too long to bid or play, she is ousted by a robot who woodenly completes the bidding and play. Sometimes when I play in a WCBU tournament I have that same feeling of playing with a series of robot pairs.



Is *bkpsc* really the same Brian Pincus who always threatened to take tops off me at Impala and never did? Are *lady macb* and *WC GB* the Keurboom ladies with the dazzling smiles who forever tempted me to rashly overbid? Never again will they lead me astray now that I can't see their smiling lips, lost somewhere far behind my laptop screen.

But I'd like to make some suggestions for making our tournaments more sociable. For a start the WCBU should insist that all players change their BBO profiles to show their real first and last names. Each round should be extended by a minute so that players have the time to identify their opponents and bid "Good morning, Rob and Jane". And if there's time to kill at the end of the round, why not find out more about the others at your table before you say "Thank you, Pete and Jessie, and good luck". Where do they live? What clubs did they belong to? It won't be too long before the robots morph into real people with families and feelings. Let's try it!

South, writing in the score: '5 Diamonds doubled — by East — down four vulnerable — minus 1100.'

North, to East: 'You got yourselves in a knot there.'

East: 'We certainly did. Our path was paved with nothing but good conventions.'

Answers to Kathryn's & Eckhard's quizzes on defensive bidding

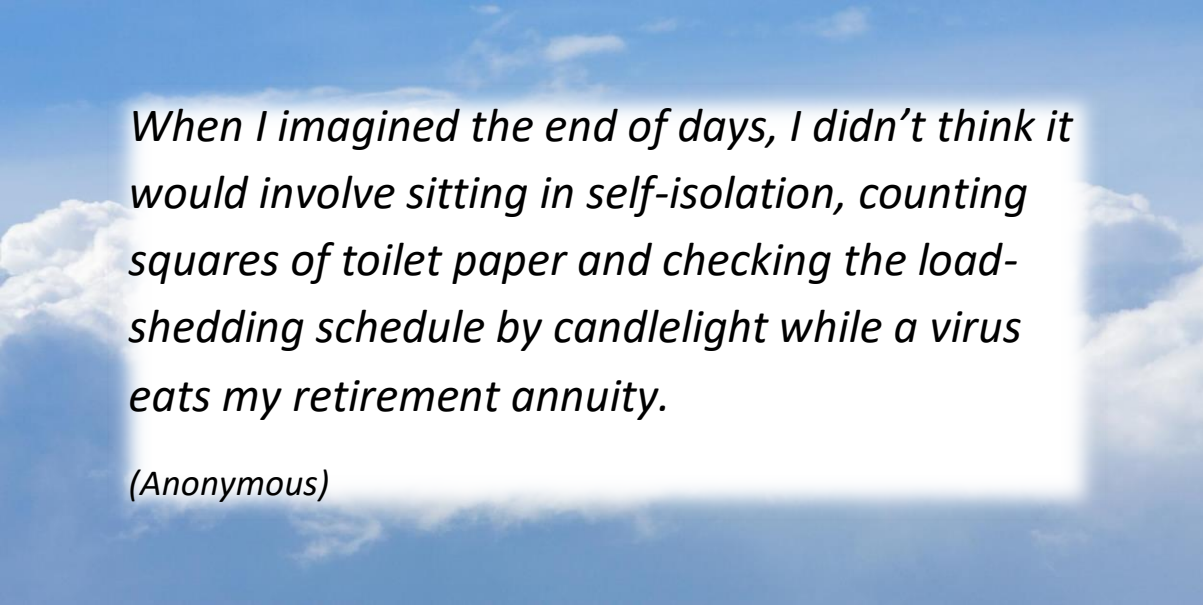
Deals 1 to 4) Topic: to balance or not? What should South bid in the following situations?

- Deal 1) W, EW vul: (1♦)-p-(1♥)-p, (2♥)-p-(p)-? South holding ♠K985♥A9♦1043♣Q542
Re-opening X: the opponents hold about 18-22 HCP. Thus partner holds some 9-13 points. As the opponents have at least an 8-card fit, we are very likely to have one as well, ideally in ♠. We mustn't allow the opponents to play in their fit at 2-level, particularly as we are non-vul.
- Deal 2) W, EW vul: (1♦)-p-(1♥)-p, (2♦)-p-(p)-? South holding ♠K985♥A9♦1043♣Q542
Pass. As the opponents have not established an 8-card fit, we may not have one either. Partner is likely to hold 4 (or even more) hearts. With opening values he would have doubled 1♦ in second seat holding a hand such as ♠QJ62♥K876♦76♣AJ7; with e.g. ♠QJ62♥K87♦76♣AK76 he would have doubled 2♦. North might hold ♠QJ2♥K876♦J76♣AJ7. Let's defend!
- Deal 3) W, EW vul: (1♠)-p-(1NT)-p, (2♠)-p-(p)-? South holding ♠109♥93♦KJ52♣KQ1085
Again pass. Why: it is not certain the opponents have an 8-card fit whilst we would have to bid at the 3-level. However, if non-vulnerable you may consider 2NT (any 2 suits) at Matchpoints.
- Deal 4) Dealer West, none vul: What should South bid after (1NT¹⁵⁻¹⁷)-p-(p)-?
Try to get them out of the comfort of 1NT. If you have good distribution in the reopening position, bid! You do not need many points, as those you are missing partner may have.
 - 4.a. South holding: ♠KJ985♥KQ109♦52♣53
South should bid whatever shows both majors in your system. The American expert Michael Lawrence recommends in his classic "The Complete Book on Balancing" to re-open here even with ♠QJ985♥J10965♦2♣53! However, bidding in this style you need a partnership agreement that against a strong 1NT very weak re-openings are possible.
 - 4.b. South holding: ♠KQJ642♥965♦64♣82
Bid whatever shows a ♠1-suiter in your system.
 - 4.c. South holding: ♠64♥K109865♦8654♣4
Michael Lawrence recommends showing a ♥1-suiter. However, the main risk is that partner, with obviously a good hand, will get overly excited. He should keep in mind that opener has 15-17 HCP and therefore only raise with a good hand AND a fit.
- Deal 5) Dealer East, none vul: what should North bid after (1♥)-p-(2♥)-p, (p)-2♠-(p)-? holding ♠653♥75♦KQ43♣AJ97? Partner has about 8-12 HCP, yet he has not overcalled 1♥ with 1♠. Thus he is most likely to have only a 4-card ♠suit! He did not double 2♥, so likely he is short in one remaining suit, holding e.g. ♠KQ82♥1032♦109♣KQ108. So bid a "scrambling 2NT", asking partner to bid his second suit.
- Deal 6) Dealer East, none vul: what should North bid after (1♠)-p-(2♠)-p, (p)-X-(p)-? holding ♠J95♥K953♦K3♣AJ97?
Again, 2NT scrambling is correct since partner does not promise a 4-card ♥suit. He could hold: ♠104♥Q87♦A876♣Q1083, finding your ♣fit by (1♠)-p-(2♠)-p, (p)-X-(p)-2NT*, (p)-3♣.
- Deal 7) Dealer East, none vul: what should North bid after (1♠)-p-(2♠)-? with ♠5♥A753♦KJ32♣AJ97? Double. This is automatic.
- Deal 8) Dealer East, none vul: what should North bid after (1♠)-p-(2♠)-? holding ♠5♥A753♦KJ32♣J976? Bid a pre-balancing double since dealer East will pass with a minimum. Without our OBAR BIDS double, partner South will hardly be able to balance holding 3 or 4 spades.

- Deal 9) Dealer East, none vul: what should North bid after (1♣)-p-(2♣)-? with ♠Q1076 ♥J753 ♦A632♣6? Double with this hand as well! The risk of a penalty double is even lower compared to hand 8 since partner will answer at the 2-level.
- Deal 10) Dealer East, none vul: what should North bid after (1♥)-p-(2♥)-? holding ♠KQ1096 ♥75 ♦J1032♣42?
At first glance the following recommendation by American expert Larry Cohen is surprising: "Bid 2♠!" However, he explains: "Textbooks will say we can't overcall at the two-level in the direct position with only 6 points. Nonsense. This is an OBAR BID. Yes, we have to alert our opponents and tell them that this could be a weak bid in this situation. However, that doesn't prevent us from trying to stop them from having a comfortable auction."
(At the following website Larry Cohen explains the principles of balancing including OBAR BIDS: <https://www.larryco.com/uploaded/product/44b5ae8f-5e4c-4256-8921-5d2645c54591>)
- Deal 11) Dealer East, none vul: what should South bid after (1♠)-p-(2♠)-X, (p)-? holding ♠10874♥Q87♦Q4♣KQ84?
(Playing OBAR BIDS including "good/bad 2NT") Bid 2NT and pass partner's required 3♣.
- Deal 12) Dealer East, none vul: what should South bid after (1♠)-p-(2♠)-X, (p)-? Holding ♠10874♥KQ7♦Q4♣AK105?
South should bid ("good") 3♣. Think about the distribution of points around the table. Opener East has usually at least 12 HCP, responder West at least 6 HCP. You have 14 HCP. That leaves at most 8 HCP for partner. Your great partner has protected you in the direct seat with a pre-balancing double holding a hand like: ♠5♥A1096♦K875♣J976. Now do not punish him by bidding too ambitiously. You show a hand with opening strength by bidding a direct 3♣, just in case the opponents' opening was super-light, based on only 10 HCP and distribution whilst responder has raised with as little as 4 HCP, leaving partner with e.g. ♠5♥AJ96♦KJ75♣QJ76.

Deals 13) to 15) Topic: to save or not to save?

- Deal 13) Dealer South, none vul: what should East bid after (1♥)-1♠-(4♥)-? Holding ♠K762♥QJ5♦A987♣75?
Pass! Why? Never sacrifice against a game that may be beaten. There is no reason to save in 4♠, a contract unlikely to make. Double should also be avoided since a plus score will usually be above average.
- Deal 14) Dealer North, EW vul: what should North bid after p-(1♣)-3♦-(p), ? holding ♠3♥87643♦KQ87♣1072?
Bid 5♦, an advance sacrifice at favourable vulnerability causing great difficulty for the opponents who certainly have a great ♠fit and sufficient values for game! (See part 4 deal #1 in WCBU newsletter, March 2020 where this hand was illustrated from the E/W point of view).
- Deal 15) Dealer East, EW vul: what should North bid after (1♠)-2♦-(2♥)-? holding ♠42♥53♦Q862♣A9532?
Bid 5♦, putting the opponents under maximum pressure, before they had an opportunity to agree their major suit fit(s). Opener East is unlikely to double 5♦ with a ♥-fit, whilst West will be reluctant to let a double by East stand with a ♠-fit. Most probably they will end up in either 5♥ or 5♠, both of which we may be able to beat.



When I imagined the end of days, I didn't think it would involve sitting in self-isolation, counting squares of toilet paper and checking the load-shedding schedule by candlelight while a virus eats my retirement annuity.

(Anonymous)

Eckhard Böhlke has brought our attention to a new bridge website, which is not a bridge club per se, but has a number of features that may be of interest to you.

Details are below . . .

NEW TRICKS BRIDGE CLUB

<https://newtricksbridge.club>

Welcome to New Tricks! We bring something new to the **bridge** table, with in-depth tutorials, tips and, of course, tricks. Watch episodes of our New Tricks Tournament Series, featuring eight of the world's best **bridge** players battling it out for individual glory.



**How much of
your wealth is in
South Africa?**

Diversify with the experts.

 **WARWICK**
Financial Maturity

International Investment Solutions

0800 50 50 50 | warwickwealth.com

An owner of Authorised Financial Services and Credit Providers