

WESTERN CAPE BRIDGE UNION NEWSLETTER



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Message from the Editor

Dear Bridge Players

Cape Town is generally well known for its wet winters and, after the previous dry winters, we have been delighted to see so much rain falling on to our gardens and into our dams. What a pleasure it has been to be sitting at the bridge tables indoors while the rain has poured down outdoors. At the time of writing, the dams are over 80% full, which is very comforting, and hopefully our summer gardens can, once again, glow with colour!

There has been a lot of activity in the bridge world in Cape Town and further afield, with numerous club and Western Cape events. There are reports of these in this newsletter, as well as an early alert of forthcoming events over the next few months. Please take advantage of these, whether competitive events or training workshops – details are contained in the content of this edition.

Tim Cope continues his series on pre-emptive bids – this time focusing on the nature of pre-empts at the three level; while Diniar Minwalla continues his very instructive series on defence, concentrating on signals. In regard to the latter, please look at the details for Tim and Diniar's workshop on defence in November that will contain both theory and practical examples – and be sure not to miss it!

We have another excellent article on uncontested bidding by Kathryn Herz & Eckhard Böhlke, as well as some information from Neil Hayward on opening a strong NT. An interesting history of the Buccaneer League is included in this edition, as well as its current status.

As you are aware, there are a number of contributors to this newsletter who are willing to share their expertise with us on a regular basis, and we are most grateful to them. Some of their articles are part of a series over numerous editions. You may wish to print some of the series, rather than whole newsletters. If you do, you can file these away for easy future reference on particular aspects of bridge. If you no longer have previous editions, there is an archive available on the landing page of our website, on the left side, under *Etc – WCBU newsletters*.

Once again, our sincere thanks to Warwick Wealth for their continuous support.

Happy reading!

Shirley Kaminer

President's Message

Dear fellow Bridge Players,

Nothing gives me greater pleasure than being able to share with you the fantastic achievements of our very own Cape Town players. So, please put your hands together for...

Maureen Narunsky and Imtiaz Kaprey who defeated stiff opposition to be crowned National Pairs Champions 2019 at Congress in Durban in July. In spite of the seemingly unassailable position of the leading pair going into the final round, Mo and Imti soldiered on, took no prisoners and showed South Africa's other top pairs who is boss. It has been a long time since the trophy returned to its rightful home – Cape Town – and we all salute you!



It seems that we excel not only at the tables. Each year the Cape Town Sports Council – of which the Bridge Union is an active member – recognises major achievements by our local sportsmen and women and by the hundred or so organisations to which they belong. Nominations are received in some 20+ categories and the top three nominees in each are invited to attend a prestigious awards ceremony hosted by Minister Anroux Marais of the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport. I am delighted to report that your very own Newsletter Editor, Shirley Kaminer, graciously accepted the award for Sports Journalist of the Year 2019 – richly deserved as those reading this Newsletter will agree. Well done, Shirley, and thank you!

Spring is sprung, the grass is riz and the Cruise team has done the biz! They successfully defended their title of Western Cape Teams Champions, for the second year running, by narrowly pipping the Hayward team to the post in a long board head-to-head final. Please join me in wishing both teams all the best when they represent us in the SABF Interprovincials later this month. We are with you all the way – win or win!

When it comes to bridge in South Africa, Cape Town is definitely the place to be for the foreseeable future. First, we have the Impala Open Red Point Teams taking place at WPCC on Sunday 20 Oct. Then we have three further events not to be missed all taking place at the Bridge Centre in Green Point – the SABF Interclub Teams (31 Oct.-3 Nov.), a workshop on “Signalling” hosted by Tim Cope and Diniar Minwalla (10 Nov.) and the Festival of Bridge (14-16 Dec.). Finally, your local committee of over-worked, masochistic volunteers will be organising the SABF National Congress to take place at the Italian Club from 9-16 March 2020 – it's a wonder we find any time to play bridge.

Best wishes and (hoping to) see you at the tables,
Steve Bunker

Pre-empting at the 3 level

by Tim Cope

The 3NT Opening

Moving down the line from 4 level pre-empts contained in the previous newsletter, the next pre-empt that we deal with is the 3NT opening. This is often called the gambling 3NT and shows a solid minor of 7+ cards – the minimum holding for deemed solidity is AKQxxxx. It denies holding any outside Ace or King.

So, as a bid, that is quite simple – but how does partner react to such an opening bid?

Their options are:

- a) If they believe partner has a realistic chance of making 3NT, they can pass.
- b) If they have a weaker hand and no game aspirations, they will bid 4C – this is what is known as a pass or correct bid, asking partner to pass if their suit is clubs or correct to 4D if their suit is diamonds.
- c) They can bid 4 of a major which is to play.
- d) They can bid 5C which is, again, pass or correct – this bid can either be made as an advance sacrifice or in the hope (or expectation) of making the contract.
- e) They can bid 4D – this would only be done on a strong hand with slam aspirations and asks partner to bid a shortage if held. If partner has a shortage in:
 - i) A major – they bid where that shortage is
 - ii) In a minor, they bid the minor where they have the solid suit – not the shortage
 - iii) With no shortage, they bid 4NT

So, for instance, looking at this last possibility, we might bid the following hands in this way:

S xx S AKxxxx

H xxx H AKX

D AKQJXXX D xx

C x C xx

3NT 4D (do you have a shortage?)

5D (yes, in C) 6D

Four bids to get to the top spot in the knowledge that the 12th trick can be developed in the spade suit.

The three level pre-empts

A three level pre-empt will again show a 7-card suit (whether we should pre-empt or not is determined again by the rule of 2 and 3 as mentioned earlier). In general, it should all be

about suit quality and lack of outside defence, though adhering to this is not always an exact science.

I do believe that the minor suit pre-empts should be distinguished from the major suit pre-empts, so let us look at them separately.

a) Opening 3C or 3D

Apart from using the pre-empt as a destructive tool, we live in the hope that partner may be able to bid 3NT over an opening pre-empt of 3 of a minor. So here there must be a far greater emphasis on suit quality (or a sure outside entry with some suit quality), as partner rates to bid 3NT only when they have a fitting honour in our suit and stoppers in the other suits. So, if we open 3D on a suit such as Jxxxxx, partner would be entitled to be upset. My personal law is that if I open 3 of a minor and were partner to bid 3NT, would I be happy to hang around for the opening lead and put down my dummy, or would I make an excuse that I had to leave the table and ask a kibitzer to put down my dummy? If the latter, then I should not have pre-empted!

But I would be happy to open 3C on either:

S Ax	S x
H xxx	H xxx
D x	D xxx
C QJ10xxxx	C AQJxxx

I would open 3C on the first one because, whilst the suit is not fantastic, it is respectable and if partner does have a fitting honour in the club suit (say Kx), the suit can probably be set up and I do have a certain side entry when the suit has been established.

You will notice on the second one that I only have a six card club suit – but the suit is respectable, I do have some distribution, and in the club suit I do not have the option of a weak two opening bid as I do have in diamonds, hearts and spades – so a club suit pre-empt can be stretched to 6 cards whereas all other pre-empts should be 7 cards.

When we have pre-empted how should partner respond?

- i) They can pass
- ii) They can raise pre-emptively to 4 of the minor
- iii) They can bid 3NT
- iv) They can bid a new suit which is natural and forcing. By doing this they are asking the opening pre-emptor to describe the length of their holding in responder's suit and the responses are:
 - a) 3NT = I have a singleton or void in your suit
 - b) Raising the suit shows a doubleton support and a side singleton somewhere
 - c) Repeating our own suit shows a doubleton support but no side singleton
 - d) Bidding a new suit shows 3 card support and a singleton in the suit that we bid

So, an example of this might be:

S xxx	S AKQxxx
H x	H Axx
D AQJxxxx	D x
C xx	C AQJ

3D 3S

4H – showing a singleton H and 3 card spade support

4N (Keycard)

5C (1/4) 6S (hoping to make 7 on the club finesse)

a) Opening 3 of a major

Unlike 3 of a minor where we are often looking to play 3NT, when we open 3 of a major, we are usually looking to play in 4 of a major either to make or as a sacrifice. So, whilst there still should be some suit quality, it is not as paramount as when we open 3 of a minor.

So, at the right vulnerability, I would be happy to open 3S on:

S K10xxxxx	or	KQJxxxx
H x		xx
D x		xx
C J10xx		xx

Keycard after a pre-empt

One last twist to mention – normally when we play Keycard, we bid 4NT and partner responds accordingly. After a pre-empt, we could use the same methods of jumping to 4NT, but occasionally this might get us too high when partner's suit is of insufficient quality.

The standard method played worldwide is that over the pre-empts of 3D,3H or 3S then a bid by the responder of 4C is Keycard – it starts Keycard at a much lower level and allows us to put on the brakes when partner has the wrong hand at a lower level. We use the same step responses to Keycard as we normally play – so over 4C the first step would be 4D showing 1 or 4, the second step 4H would be 0 or 3, the third step 4S would be 2 without the queen and the fourth step of 4NT would be two with the queen. We have given ourselves an advantage by using Keycard at a lower level and, let us be honest, how often would you ever want to use a natural bid of 4C after partner has pre-empted?

You may have noted that I said that this 4C bid as Keycard can be used over a 3D,3H or 3S opening. This is not the case where partner has opened 3C – here if we bid 4C that would just be a pre-emptive continuation. So, **when partner opens 3C we use 4D** (again not needed as natural) as the Keycard bid, with step responses as appropriate.

An example hand might be:

S QJ10xxxx	S xxx
H Kxx	H x
D x	D AKQJxx
C xx	C AKx

3S	4C (Keycard)
4H (0 or 3)	4S

Now we have stopped at a low level (as we can be assured the 4H response is 0 rather than 3, as partner would not be pre-empting with 3 keycards). But, if partner had AKxxxx in spades, slam would have been a possibility and this is better than 5S down 1.

Quizzes

1. What would you open on the following hands?
 - a) S Qx H Kx D xx C Qxxxxxx
 - b) S Kx H xx D AKQJxxx C xx
 - c) S K109xxxx H Axx D xx C x

2. What would you respond on the following hands?
 - a) Partner opens 3C – S xxxxx H AKx D Axx C Ax
 - b) Partner opens 3NT – S xxx H AKQx D x C AKxxx
 - c) Partner opens 3C - S AKxxx H xxx D A C Axxx

ED: Try to work out the answers yourselves and then check with Tim's answers and explanations towards the end of the newsletter.



DEFENSIVE SIGNALS

by Diniar Minwalla

In the last bulletin, we examined the different kinds of defensive signals that a partnership can employ to assist in successfully defending a bridge hand. We also discussed “attitude signals” in detail.

In this article, we shall discuss the manner of operation of “count” signals, and also touch briefly on the use of suit preference signals.

COUNT SIGNALS

A count signal gives an indication of the number of cards held in a suit. The signal usually applies when the first card to the trick has been played by either declarer or dummy. The defenders can follow suit in a particular order to indicate the number of cards they hold in that suit. Standard count signals use high-low to show an even number of cards in the suit, and low-high to show an odd number. You can choose to play upside down count signals, where high-low shows an odd number of cards in the suit and low-high shows an even number.

Let's look at some examples of the use of count signals:

EXAMPLE 1:

A count signal has great value when dummy has a long but not solid suit and no outside entry.

T2
874
654
KQJ93

J94
K95
8732
A85

South opens 2NT and North raises to 3NT. West leads the 5 of spades which goes to the ten, jack and ace. Declarer plays a club to the king, and you hold up your ace. Declarer now continues with the queen of clubs. Should you hold up a second time, or take your ace? The answer depends upon the count signal you received from your partner on the first round of clubs. Playing standard count, if your partner played a high club, say the ten, then you would know that he started with 2 or 4. Declarer cannot have a singleton on the bidding, so partner cannot have 4 clubs and must have therefore started with 2. You now know that declarer has 3, and you must hold up your ace a second time to restrict declarer to only 2 club tricks. If, on the other hand, your partner played the 2 of clubs on the first round of clubs, you will know that the next card is a higher one, and therefore partner started with 3 clubs, which means that you must take your ace on the second round, restricting declarer to only one club trick.

Count signals usually apply when the trick has been started by declarer or dummy. However, sometimes you want to give a count signal even when your partner has started to the trick. Since you would normally pass an attitude signal when your partner leads an honor, you should only switch to a count signal where the attitude is already known.

EXAMPLE 2:

Defending against a heart contract, partner leads the king of diamonds (king-queen), and dummy comes down with J842 of diamonds. If you are in possession of the ace of diamonds, you should signal attitude. If you do not hold the ace of diamonds, you must know that declarer is going to win this trick with the ace, and later try and make a trick with the jack. In other words, your partner will know your attitude in diamonds as soon as declarer has won the trick with the ace. Therefore, rather than telling partner what he already knows, you should show your count in the diamond suit, in case this information is helpful to your partner.

Some general points of interest when using count signals:

- 1) Only give a count signal when this is helpful to your partner. Otherwise, follow suit normally. When the count signal is of no use to your partner, then showing your count will help declarer to play the suit correctly.
- 2) Do not give a count signal with a card that may later cost a trick.
- 3) Count signals can also be passed when discarding for the second time. Since the first discard always shows attitude, then the second discard in the same suit should show count from the remaining cards (playing standard count, this would mean high from an even number of remaining cards, and low from an odd number of remaining cards).

SUIT PREFERENCE SIGNALS

A suit preference signal says nothing about the suit in which the signal is given, but instead directs partner's attention to one of the other two suits. A low card indicates a switch to the lower ranking suit, whereas a high card indicates a switch to the higher ranking suit.

Here are some of the conditions where it is appropriate to signal suit preference:

1. Attempting to give partner a ruff

Say your partner leads what you suspect is a singleton. You win the ace and give your partner a ruff. The card you play when giving your partner the ruff can have a suit preference meaning attached to it. Play a high card if your re- entry to give partner another ruff is in the higher of the remaining two suits, a low card if your re-entry is in the lower of the remaining two suits.

2. Partner leads an ace in a suit contract and dummy has a singleton

In this scenario, it is unlikely that you want the suit to be continued because dummy has a singleton. Play a high card to indicate a switch to the higher ranking of the remaining two suits, and a low card to indicate a switch to the lower ranking of the remaining two suits.

Before concluding this article on signals, it is important to understand the concept of **signal priority**. In general, we have discussed that attitude signals apply on partner's leads, and count signals apply on declarer's leads.

However, an effective signaling system should incorporate varying your signals on a "need to know" basis. For example, when your partner makes a lead and dummy's holding in the suit makes your attitude very clear, you should pass a count or suit preference signal instead, as partner already knows your attitude in the suit.

To summarise the concept of signal priority:

On partner's leads:

1st priority = attitude; 2nd priority = count; 3rd priority = suit preference

On declarer's leads:

1st priority = count; 2nd priority = suit preference

Record Score

It was very late in the duplicate with its unusual wild results and the Director called for order.

"Ladies & Gentlemen, we have a new record, someone has scored minus 3400."

As the triumphant declarer took his bow, a tipsy voice came from a far corner:
"Could he have made it on a different line of play?"

Festival of Bridge

The very popular Festival of Bridge, a Red Point event, will be taking place from **Saturday 14th to Monday 16th December** at the Bridge Centre in Green Point. There will be a one day teams event followed by one-and-a-half day pairs competition. It is suitable for all levels of playing ability, so please diarise. Further details will be available on the website.

Signalling Workshop: The Case for the Defence

Tim Cope and Diniar Minwalla will be presenting a workshop about defensive strategies at the bridge table on **Sunday 10 November** from 10am – 1.30pm at the Bridge Centre. The cost is R100 per person for affiliated members and R150 for non-affiliated members.



This workshop will be both stimulating and instructive and should not be missed!

Further details and booking information will be found on the Western Cape Bridge website.

Forthcoming events:

Sunday 8 September	Youth Bridge Open Day (WPCC bowling club – Keurboom)
Saturday 14 – Sunday 15 September	Inter-Regionals on BBO
Sunday 20 October	Impala Open Teams – Red point event (WPCC bowling club / Keurboom)
Thursday 31 October – Sunday 3 November	Inter-Club (Cape Town Bridge Centre)
Sunday 10 November	Workshop on Signalling – Tim Cope & Diniar Minwalla (Bridge Centre)
Saturday 14 – Monday 16 December	Festival of Bridge – Red point tournament (Bridge Centre)

The Bay Open

The Bay Open took place at the Bridge Centre on Sunday 28 July. It ran very smoothly and everyone enjoyed the bridge, as well as the hot lunch and scrumptious tea.

Hilary Sacks and Linda Bloch won the morning session with Joyce Hessen and Merle Bracher winning the green section. Glen Holman and Brian Pincus won the main blue section in the afternoon. Congratulations to all!



Nightmare Defence against a Grand Slam

by Steve Becker (from Business Day 4 June 2019)

Note from Editor: Are any readers alert enough to spot the problem of this defence?

Contract: Seven Diamonds.
North-South vulnerable.

NORTH		
♠ A 6 5 3 2		
♥ A J 10 9		
♦ K 9		
♣ 4 3		
WEST		EAST
♠ Q J 10 9		♠ 8 7
♥ K Q 8		♥ 7 6 5 4 3
♦ 7 6		♦ 5 4 3 2
♣ K Q 8		♣ 7 6 5
SOUTH		
♠ K 4		
♥ 2		
♦ A Q J 10 8		
♣ A J 10 9 2		

Dear Mr. Becker: I suffer from nightmares — bridge nightmares, that is. I have this recurring dream in which I hold the West hand and find myself on lead against seven diamonds.

I always lead a trump, and South draws four rounds of trumps. I discard a club on the third trump lead, and so does dummy, but on the next trump lead I run into a serious problem.

Sometimes I discard the eight of hearts. When I do, South plays a heart to the ace and ruffs a heart, establishing the J-10 as tricks. He then plays the K-A of spades and cashes dummy's two high hearts, whereupon I get squeezed and declarer makes the rest of the tricks — to the tune of 2,440 points.

Sometimes I discard a spade at trick four. When I do, South cashes the K-A of spades and ruffs a spade, establishing two spade tricks in dummy. He then plays a heart to dummy's ace and cashes the 6-5 of spades. I discard a heart on the fourth round of spades, but on the fifth spade I'm again hopelessly squeezed. Whether I discard my king of hearts or a club from the K-Q, South makes the rest of the tricks.

Sometimes I discard the queen of clubs at trick four, hoping declarer won't realize I've unguarded the king. But South is a real smart cookie and invariably sees through my scheme.

Now, even though the stakes are nominal and the whole thing's only a dream, the fact is that psychologically, I can't afford to continually lose that many points on one deal. I was therefore wondering whether you can suggest any way for me to escape this awful dilemma. I would be most appreciative of any help you might give me.

— Cordially yours, Constant Reader

Dear C.R.: Happy to oblige. The next time this terrible dream recurs, I suggest you ask for a new deal. You have only 12 cards! Cordially yours, S.B.

Ten week intermediate bridge course

Glen Holman will be running a ten week intermediate bridge course at the Bridge Centre in Green Point on Friday mornings from 10am to 12.30pm commencing on 23 August and finishing on 25 October. The cost per person per session is R120 for SABF members and R150 for non-members. The range of topics over the duration of the course is varied - there are leaflets containing details at the Bridge Centre. Even though the course will already have started at the time of going to press, it is not a problem to attend the other weekly sessions. If interested, players can contact Percy telephonically on 065-3866459.

Darling Bridge Club

On Saturday 15 June, the Darling Bridge Club held its second tournament at the Darling Golf Club. The tournament was again a wonderful success due to the flawless organisation at the club, the catering done by Groeneweide and the hard work of our tournament director, Andre Truter, from Cape Town. We received many sponsors from the Darling community, which went towards a raffle which helped raise funds for the day.



The event was attended by 56 people, and more than 20 people stayed over on Saturday night and attended local eateries, including a wonderful show at Evita's. Many commented on the success and asked for their names to go down for the next event!

The winners for this event were, again, Graham Spolander and Nick Buckland, with Cheryl Maritz and Anita Croucher in second place overall.



A bumbling bridge player explained to his friend how he planned to improve his game:

“Every night when I go to bed I think about the mistakes I made that day at the bridge table.”

“Gee,” his friend said, “How do you get any sleep?”

Strategy at Matchpointed Pairs Tournaments

Part 2: Uncontested Bidding

by Kathryn Herz & Eckhard Böhlke

I. Introduction

Bridge books and basic bridge lessons tend to concentrate on the strategy of team tournaments with IMP scoring. Nevertheless, Matchpoints players usually know about the basic differences between Matchpoints and IMP scoring, such as the importance of overtricks, the “-200 kiss of death” score, and the necessity of fierce competition at the part-score level. In this series of articles, we try to provide a better understanding of the more subtle issues of Matchpoints strategy. Some principles of bidding strategy at Matchpoints we already dealt with in our part 1:

- At Matchpoints, all that counts is how many of the pairs holding our cards we outscore or tie. Therefore, we need to gauge what the field will be doing. Though sometimes difficult, it is absolutely essential to consider the potential consequences of alternative actions by comparing them with likely results at other tables.
- At Matchpoints in uncontested auctions when the bidding will follow a similar course at most tables, experienced players will go with the field. Your overall strategy should be one of conservatism when bidding in the game and slam zones.

II. Quiz: Constructive Bidding at Matchpoints

Let us look at some hands to demonstrate how some principles of bidding strategy at Matchpoints can be applied. Please answer the following questions before reading the solutions below.

1. Dealer South, none vul: what is your rebid as responder after unopposed $1\clubsuit-1\diamond$, $1NT^{12-14}$? holding $\spadesuit J4 \heartsuit J43 \diamond AKQ9543 \clubsuit 7$?
2. Dealer North, NS vul: what is your third rebid as opener after unopposed $1NT^{15-17}-2\heartsuit^*$, $2\spadesuit-3\clubsuit$, $3\diamond-3\spadesuit$, ? with $\spadesuit AJ \heartsuit 1074 \diamond AK87 \clubsuit A987$? (*transfer)
3. Dealer North, all vul: what do you bid after unopposed $1\diamond-1\spadesuit$, $3\diamond^*-3\spadesuit$, $4\spadesuit-4NT^{**}$, $5\heartsuit^{***}-?$ with $\spadesuit KQJ95 \heartsuit K65 \diamond Q6 \clubsuit AJ4$? (*strong, one-suited hand with c. 15-17 HCP, including distribution worth c. 17-19 points; **Key Card Blackwood; ***two key cards, no trump queen)
4. Dealer South, none vul: what is your second rebid as opener after unopposed $1\diamond-1\heartsuit$, $3NT-4\diamond$, ? with $\spadesuit AKJ \heartsuit Q6 \diamond QJ82 \clubsuit KQJ3$?
5. Dealer South, EW vul: what is your rebid as opener after unopposed $1\heartsuit-1\spadesuit$, ? with a. $\spadesuit 7 \heartsuit AJ9873 \diamond 8752 \clubsuit AK$ or b. $\spadesuit 7 \heartsuit A87432 \diamond KJ82 \clubsuit A5$, respectively?
6. Dealer North, NS vul: what is your rebid as responder after unopposed $1\spadesuit-1NT$, $2\diamond-?$ with a. $\spadesuit Q5 \heartsuit 1054 \diamond AJ52 \clubsuit 8754$ or b. $\spadesuit Q5 \heartsuit 1054 \diamond AJ52 \clubsuit Q854$, respectively?

Answers to the Quiz

Hand 1) Topic: 5 in a minor suit or 3NT?

In his rebid responder has to prefer 3NT to $5\diamond$, even taking some risk of an unstopped suit:

$1\clubsuit-1\diamond$, $1NT^{12-14}-3NT$ holding $\spadesuit J4 \heartsuit J43 \diamond AKQ9543 \clubsuit 7$. Why 3NT? When you have the balance of power most of the pairs playing your way will achieve plus scores. Therefore, you need to aim at the highest possible plus score. With seven tricks in your hand $3\diamond$ would be a clear underbid. At Matchpoints, **it can NEVER be right to play in 5 of a minor suit if there is any playable alternative***. Just imagine that in order to beat e.g. 10 tricks in 3NT (+630) you have to take 13 tricks in a minor suit game (for +640). If you have a solid suit to run, whether it is a minor or a major, 3NT will often be the best spot. You hope for a partner's hand like $\spadesuit Kxx \heartsuit A10x \diamond 43 \clubsuit AQxxx$.

*There are some rare exceptions in favour of 5 in a minor suit based on the following criteria:

- a. For a NT-contract one suit is not adequately stopped;
- b. For a major contract the suit in the combined hands is not long/strong enough;
- c. You have extra strength to ensure a contract at the 5-level with 11 tricks to be made

Hand 2) Topic: part score or 5 in a minor or 4 in a major?

Bid 1NT-2♥*, 2♠-3♣, 3♦-3♠, 4♠ with ♠AJ♥1074♦AK87♣A987. (*Transfer). Why?

- 3NT: no, because there is no ♥stopper
- 4♣: no, with three aces a part-score would be an under-bid
- 5♣: no, since minor suit games should be avoided at Matchpoints; furthermore, to make 11 tricks you need extra values compared to 3NT and 4 in a major.
- Thus: bid 4♠ with your strong doubleton. Partner's hand might be ♠KQ953♥93♦96♣KJ103. (NB: His 3♣ was a slight overbid, though justifiable as it led to finding the best denomination.)

Hand 3) Topic: slam and if yes which one?

What does responder rebid after unopposed 1♦-1♠, 3♦*-3♠, 4♠-4NT**, 5♥***-? with ♠KQJ95♥K65♦Q6♣AJ4? (*strong, one-suited hand with about 15-17 HCP worth c. 17-19 points including distribution; **Key Card Blackwood; ***two key cards, no trump queen)

Slams play an important role at IMP matches. At Matchpoints, however, slam bidding takes a definite back seat to all other constructive and competitive bidding. Only about 10% of all boards are in the slam zone. Therefore, if you think about bidding a slam it is very important to try to determine what the field will be doing. You can assume that most of the field will bid slams based on HCP (33+ HCP), but not those based on distribution. Therefore, it does not pay to strain after borderline slams at Matchpoints since you would play against the field's choice.

If at all possible, "HCP" slams bid by everyone should be played in 6NT, even if there is an 8+ card fit in a major suit. However, even at Matchpoints it is not advisable to select 6NT when bidding a slam with limited HCP based on distribution. Quite often six of a minor will prove to be a (near) top. Any slam you make should give you a good score, so choose the safest denomination.

Based on these considerations bid 6NT in quiz hand 3. Partner's hand could look like this: ♠762♥AJ♦AKJ1085♣Q2.

Hand 4) Topic: can 5 of a minor still be avoided?

Bid 1♦-1♥, 3NT-4♦, 4NT denying slam interest with ♠AKJ♥Q6♦QJ82♣KQJ3. South has to show that his hand (with six queens and jacks) is unsuitable for slam.

<p>N</p> <p>♠4</p> <p>♥A10942</p> <p>♦AK54</p> <p>♣987</p>									
<p>S</p> <p>♠AKJ</p> <p>♥Q6</p> <p>♦QJ82</p> <p>♣KQJ3</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 80%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; width: 50%;">S</td> <td style="text-align: center; width: 50%;">N</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3NT</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4NT (!)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	S	N	1♦	1♥	3NT	4♦	4NT (!)	
S	N								
1♦	1♥								
3NT	4♦								
4NT (!)									

(Hand from: David Greenwood: The Pairs Game, 1978.)

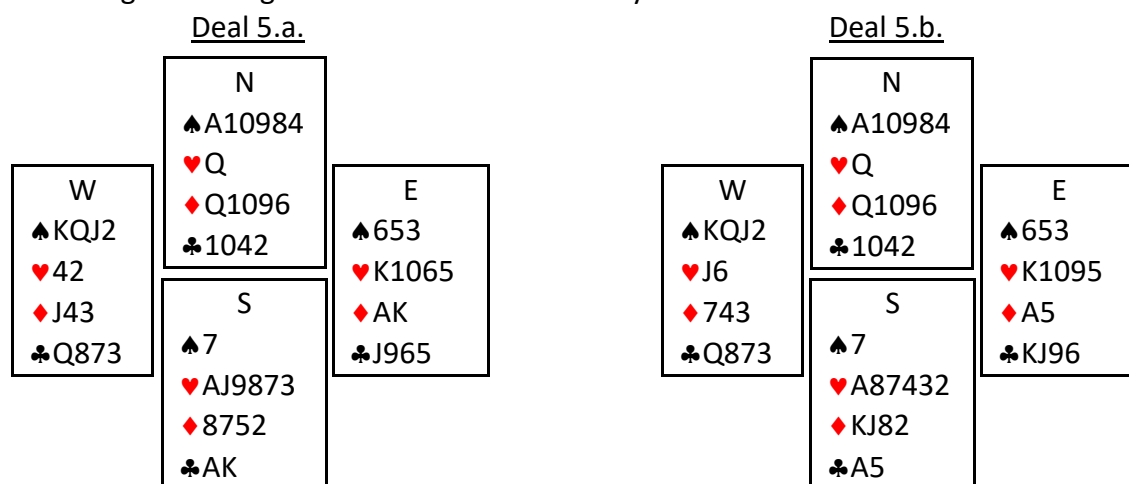
At Teams you could well bid 5♦ denying slam interest. However, at Matchpoints, you know that many pairs will play 3NT making 10 to 11 tricks scoring +430 or +460. Therefore, 5♦ (scoring +400, maybe +420) is not an option at Matchpoints. Your bidding system MUST include a means to stop in 4NT. Thus, 4NT has to be a sign-off (not key card Blackwood in this case!).

What about key card asking for minor suit contracts? In modern bidding there are alternative tools you could build into your system, e.g.:

- 4♦ would be optional key card Blackwood with 4♥ as the negative response followed by 4NT as a sign off by inquirer or, with a very strong hand, by 4♠ as repeated key card Blackwood
- Alternatively, you could play “kickback” Blackwood (next highest suit by opener; here: 4♥)

Hand 5) Topic: which part-score?

What is your rebid as opener after unopposed 1♥-1♠, ? with a. ♠7♥AJ9873♦8752♣AK or b. ♠7♥A87432♦KJ82♣A5, respectively? In hand 5.a. with a good 6-card ♥suit and a bad ♦suit 2♥ is South’s correct rebid. With hand 5.b. 2♦ would be preferable since the 6-card ♥suit is bad whereas the ♦suit is good enough to mention. The deals may look as follows:



Score sheet (6 tables) deal 5.a. (*=Matchpoints)						Score sheet (6 tables) deal 5.b.					
Contract	NS	MP*	NS	EW	EW MP*	Contract	NS	MP*	NS	EW	EW MP*
S 2♥+2	10		170		0	S 2♦+2	9		130		1
S 2♥+1	7		140		3	S 2♦+2	9		130		1
S 2♥+1	7		140		3	S 2♦+1	3		110		7
S 2♦+2	4		130		6	S 2♦+1	3		110		7
S 2♦+1	2		110		8	S 2♥=	3		110		7
N 2♠-1	0			50	10	S 2♥=	3		110		7

In hand 5.a. ♥contracts achieve the best scores. Even a lucky +130 (2♦+2) is not good enough. In hand 5.b., however, ♦contracts often making 10 tricks (through a cross ruff) will score better than ♥contracts making only 8 tricks. Only a trump lead and continuation holds the ♦contract to 9 tricks (now declarer establishes the ♥suit). For a part-score contract, minor suits are nothing to be ashamed of (unless you hold 22-24 HCP, i.e. the balance of power).

Hand 6) Topic: which part-score?

Dealer N, NS vul: what is your rebid as responder after unopposed 1♠-1NT, 2♦-? with a. ♠Q5♥1054♦AJ52♣8754 or b. ♠Q5♥1054♦AJ52♣Q854, respectively?

Here we need to bear in mind the following principles:

- If both parties hold about half of the HCP (c. 19-21), our primary objective is a PLUS score! Therefore, you try to play in the safest possible contract, minor suits being a good option.
- If one side holds values close to game strength (c. 22-24 HCP) they are likely to win the auction at most tables. Now, holding the balance of power, it is important to play in the highest scoring major or NT contract, i.e. to avoid the minors.

Therefore, holding hand 6.a. responder South should pass, whilst with hand 6.b. 2♠ is the correct Matchpoints bid. The deals may look as follows:

Deal 6.a.			Deal 6.b.		
	N			N	
	♠AK842			♠AK842	
	♥Q7			♥Q7	
	♦Q943			♦Q943	
	♣K6			♣K6	
W		E	W		E
♠J963		♠107	♠J963		♠107
♥AJ86		♥K932	♥AJ86		♥K932
♦87		♦K106	♦87		♦K106
♣QJ3		♣A1092	♣J73		♣A1092
	S			S	
	♠Q5			♠Q5	
	♥1054			♥1054	
	♦AJ52			♦AJ52	
	♣8754			♣Q854	

In deal 6.a. 2♦ by NS will usually make, 2♠ going down if ♠ fail to divide 3-3. (At some other tables EW may enter the bidding, thus a plus-score will certainly provide a good result to NS). In deal 6.b. however, NS hold the balance of power and the riskier contract of 2♠ stands a good chance simply due to the sheer power of HCP, even though the outstanding trumps may not divide 3-3.

III. Points to remember

- The **objective of bidding** at Matchpoints is not to arrive at makeable contracts, but to **beat par**, i.e. the result of a hand if both sides have done as well as possible. (The term “par” score originates from the game of golf). In other words, we like to **beat the average score of a hand**.
- Game Level
 - When the choice lies between game in a major suit and game in no-trumps one should **lean towards the major suit contract** (at Matchpoints even more heavily than at Teams) because it might produce more tricks by ruffing.
 - At Matchpoints, **it can NEVER be right to play in 5 of a minor suit if there is any playable alternative** (such as 3NT or even a 4-3 or 5-2 major suit fit); (see hands 1 and 2)
 - If the denomination is clear-cut across the field, **do not bid marginal games**. However, if various denominations come into consideration choose bidding that leads to the best denomination, even though you may have to overbid slightly (see hand 2).
- Slam level
 - Slams should only be bid if the chance of success is higher than 50%. You can assume that most of the field will bid “HCP” slams (33+ HCP), but not those depending on distribution. Therefore, **it does not pay to strain after borderline slams at Matchpoints**.
 - **“HCP” slams bid by everyone should be played at 6NT, if at all possible**, even if you have an 8+ card major fit (see hand 3). Slams based on distributional values should be played in the safest denomination, since even six of a minor will prove to be a (near) top.
- Part-score level
 - **At strength level 1** (c. 16-18 HCP) we try to **minimise our minus score**
 - **At strength level 2** (c. 19-21 HPC) **our primary objective is a “plus” score** (hands 5 + 6.a.)
 - **At strength level 3** with values close to game (c. 22-24 HCP) pairs with our cards are likely to win the auction at most tables. **Holding the balance of power, it is important to play the highest scoring major or NT contract**, i.e. to avoid a minor suit contract (see hand 6.b.)

In the next WCBU newsletter we will deal with “competitive bidding at part-score level” elaborating in more detail on the three strength levels of the part-score battle.

Acknowledgement: We would like to express our thanks to our friend Helmut Häusler, top player of the German masterpoint ranking. Helmut provides some of the deals we used to illustrate our points. He also helps us double-checking our rationales.

Tournament Director, please!

1NT Openings

by Neil Hayward

When your partner opens 1NT, you announce the range, and, if applicable, “could contain a 5-card major”. The last bit is, if nothing else, a courtesy. Players typically use a range such as 12 to 14, 15 to 17, or 16 to 18. You could add, if you wanted, one point to these popular ranges, but not two. A four-point spread is the maximum allowed.

A singleton A, K or Q in your 1NT opening is deemed to be acceptable, but, if you have a partnership agreement that you might choose to open 1NT with a smaller singleton than just indicated, that needs a special announcement. Furthermore, if you hold a singleton when opening 1NT, you cannot have a doubleton as well.

A 1NT opening is permitted to include two doubletons.

One thing to add: any natural no trump re-bid by Opener is also announced (not alerted) in terms of its range.



The Buccaneer League

Background

The League was formed in the early 70's as a breakaway group of non-affiliated clubs that wished to enjoy some inter-club competition. The exact history of the people that formed this League is not recorded, although Andre Truter and his now deceased wife, Pat, ran the League very successfully for many years.

Eligibility

Each player in a team needs to be a member of a recognized Bridge Club within Western Cape. It is preferable that the 4 players in a team are all members of the same club, although we have had situations where it has been necessary for some clubs to lend players to another club to make up a full team. There is NO requirement for the players to be affiliated to the SABF, via WCBU, although many of the players are, because they wish to record Red points by participating in events run by either body.

League structure

The League currently has 4 divisions, referred to as League's 1-4. Within each League there are 6 teams, who play each other twice per season for a total of 10 Matches. The playing dates are, unless notified, on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, at the Bridge Centre in Green Point, commencing at 19:20.

Teams finishing at the top of their respective League, at the end of the season, are promoted to the League above and those finishing at the bottom of their League, are relegated to the League below. This ensures that stronger teams get to play against teams of their current ability and weaker teams get to play against more appropriate opposition. In our last season we had a total of 212 people participate in the League, and the full complement on a Match evening is 96. Within each team, there is obviously scope for handling leave, illness and other reasons for unavailability!

Season

The Buccaneer season runs from August one year to June of the following year, with December being bypassed. July has traditionally been set aside for the AGM, which is followed by a fun Team of Four event, and the catering is provided by the Committee.

On that topic, at every fixture, half the teams are designated as Home and the other half as Visitor. This has traditional roots, where the matches used to be played at actual Clubs, with locations varying from Durbanville to Somerset West. Each Home team, between the four of them, is required to provide sufficient snacks (both savoury and sweet) for 8 players, essentially for themselves and their opponents.

Format

The style of competition has always been Team-of-Four. For a long time, each team consisted of 8 players, and each pair played 6 boards against each pair of the opposing team. Several years ago, we realized that some clubs found difficulty in fielding 8 players, and the format was changed to 4-person teams. This meant that smaller clubs were now able to field a team.

We now have 13 different Bridge clubs fielding one or more teams in the League. Now we have each pair in a team playing each opposing pair for 12 boards before tea and a further 12 boards after tea.

Playing fees

The playing fees for the following season are decided at the AGM and apply for each team fielded for the following season. For the 2019-2020 season this figure has been set at R650 per team, which translates into R16,25 per player per evening.

Scoring

This is done on the basis of converting the results of each hand into IMPS (International Match Points) and at the end of the evening converting the Nett IMP position into VP's (Victory Points), which are then used to develop a cumulative Log position for the season. The log is updated after each fixture, providing a ranking position within each League.

Further information

The Buccaneer League has a link on the WCBU web-site, where the fixture list, Rules for the League, Monthly results and any other pertinent information may be found. It is labelled as "Buccaneer League" under "Event Results" and is reached via <http://wcbridge.co.za>

Buccaneer Committee

July 2019



from Charles M. Schulz's "Its Only a Game"

Western Cape Teams Championships

The annual Western Cape Teams Championships took place on two Sundays in August, with morning and afternoon sessions on each day – a total of 108 boards played by 16 teams over the duration.

The unique format of the event saw the teams fight it out for a place in the head-to-head final long board match. The teams initially played in 4 seeded groups of 4 teams. The top two in each group qualified for a second round robin (again two groups of four), with the balance of the teams going into a Swiss teams – at the end of the day the Swiss was an equally important event as it was the last-chance saloon where the eventual winners would achieve a place in the head-to-head final. So, as the sessions went by, the teams went from 16 to 8 then 4 and finally 2 who then played off for a place in the final. As teams got knocked out from the round-robin phase, they entered the Swiss – the later they were knocked out, the higher the score they were awarded in the Swiss – this gave the K.O'd teams ample opportunity to fight their way back into the final – provided they won the Swiss. The eventual undefeated team was the Cruise team comprising Andrew Cruise, Tim Cope, Glen Holman, Brian Pincus, Rob Sulcas and Malcolm Siegel.

The Swiss thus eventually had the other 15 teams pitted against each other for the other spot in the final. The final match went down to the wire, as the difference in VPs among the leading teams was extremely close. The winner of the Swiss was the Hayward team – Neil Hayward, Cary Roberts, Jocelyn Ashberg and Shirley Kaminer. So, congratulations to the final qualifiers – CRUISE versus HAYWARD in the final. Commiserations to the Bernstein Team (Harold Bernstein, Jeanette Schewitz, Alan Simmonds, Lorraine Weers and Toni Hendler) who made it to the last two in the round-robin before being eliminated and then were pipped in the Swiss by only one victory point.

The two winning teams competed in a head-to-head final the following week and the winner was the Cruise team who will represent the Western Cape in the A Section (Medwin) of the national inter-provincials in September against teams from the other provinces. The Hayward team will represent the Western Cape in the B section (Berkowitz). This event will be played on BBO, as last year. Anyone will be able to watch and we expect a large contingent of local supporters tuning in. The advertised playing times of the Interprovincial will be available on the website shortly.

Bridge Players

There are three kinds of bridge players:

1. Those who can count; and
2. Those who can't.

Answers to Tim's quizzes

1. What would you open on the following hands?

- a) S Qx H Kx D xx C Qxxxxxx
- b) S Kx H xx D AKQJxxx C xx
- c) S K109xxxx H Axx D xx C x

Answers

- a) Pass – this is not a pre-empt in a minor – the suit lacks quality and those bits on the side look right for defence. Wait and see what happens.
- b) 1D – not 3NT because, although you have a gambling type hand based on the solid minor, a gambling 3NT denies a side Ace or King and you would not want partner to remove 3NT just because they do not have a spade stopper.
- c) 3S – this is fine for a major suit pre-empt where great suit quality is not mandatory.

2. What would you respond on the following hands?

- a) Partner opens 3C – S xxxxx H AKx D Axx C Ax
- b) Partner opens 3NT – S xxx H AKQx D x C AKxxx
- c) Partner opens 3C - S AKxxx H xxx D A C Axxx

Answers

- a) 3NT – you may not have an actual spade stopper, but you have a stopper by length. You should trust that partner will give you a respectable club suit and claim your 9 tricks.
- b) 4D – you know partner has a solid diamond suit – now all you need for slam is for partner to have a spade shortage. 4D asks for a shortage and, if they do not have a spade shortage, I would probably still prefer to play 5D than 3NT where I might lose the first 5 spade tricks.
- c) 3H – the toughest of the set – we are certainly interested in at least 5C and maybe 6. Remember, when we change suit after a pre-empt, we will find out about partner's length in that suit and the suit we are interested in is hearts. If partner would be nice enough to bid 3NT to show a singleton or void in hearts, we can bid 6C with some confidence.



South Africa makes up less than 1% of the world economy.

Where are you invested?