South African Mixed Trials

Bulletin: Number 12

STILL 4 MATCHES TO GO AND IT'S VERY EXCITING!

When the carryover scores were worked out by Steve Bunker there was a little bit of movement within the top 5 pairs at that stage. After the first day of play in the Finals (3 matches have been completed), there has been a change of leaders.

The field has almost split into 3 sections - a leading 3, a chasing group of 3, and 2 pairs further back. Currently in the lead are the Gauteng based pair of Larry Chemaly and Sharon Lang with the married couple, Terry and Jan East, from Plettenberg Bay in 2nd position, and Duncan Keet and Carol Stanton from Cape Town in 3rd place. Not a lot of points between them either 98.36, 93.59 and 90.52 respectively.

The chasing pack are a little further back with scores from 84.88 going downwards. So, Glen Holman and Michele Alexander in 4th, with Phil King and Merle Bracher currently 5th, and Andre Van Niekerk with Rose Duff in 6th position just behind. Well done to Phil and Merle and Andre and Rose, not as well-known contenders as those ahead of them, for really playing so consistently and steadily. Hang in there! Also, to the next two Pairs Paul Reynolds and Erica Zimet and Peter Ward and Merle Modlin who are further back at the moment (almost 12 behind) but we all know how quickly scores can change!

It's another full day of 3 matches on Thursday so we wait with bated breath to see how the leader board looks tomorrow evening when there will be only one match to go!

As always Good Luck everyone and don't forget to ENJOY too!

♥ Deirdre Ingersent

DAY 4 – MATCH SCHEDULE

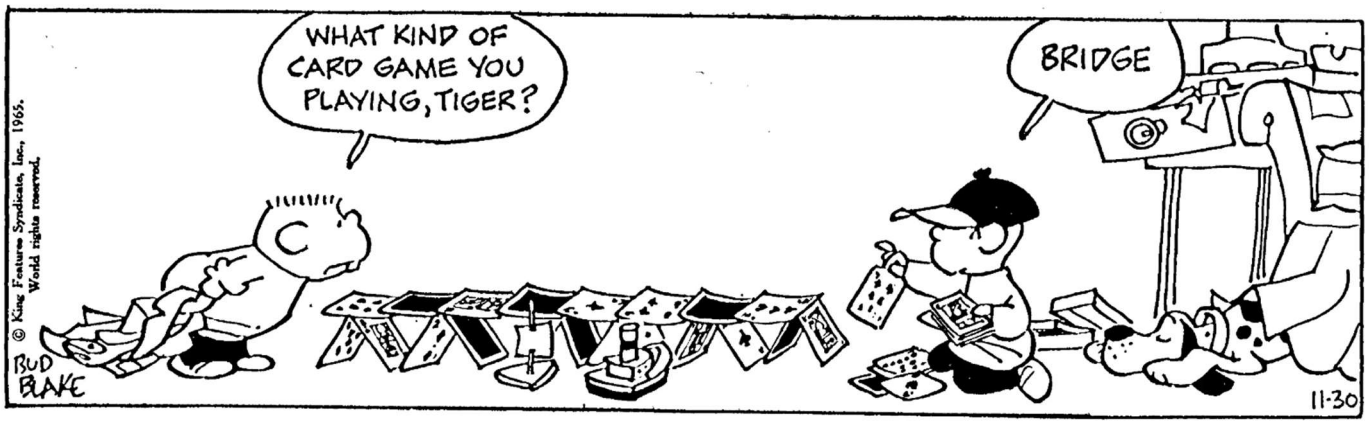
Thu 09-May 10:00	4	1	KEET, Duncan	STANTON, Carol	LANG, Sharon	CHEMALY, Larry
		2	WARD, Peter	MODLIN, Merle	BRACHER, Merle	KING, Phil
		3	EAST, Terry	EAST, Jan	ZIMET, Erica	REYNOLDS, Paul
		4	HOLMAN, Glen	ALEXANDER, Michele	DUFF, Rose	VAN NIEKERK, Andre

Thu 09-May 12:00	5	1	KEET, Duncan	STANTON, Carol	EAST, Jan	EAST, Terry
		2	KING, Phil	BRACHER, Merle	DUFF, Rose	VAN NIEKERK, Andre
		3	HOLMAN, Glen	ALEXANDER, Michele	MODLIN, Merle	WARD, Peter
		4	REYNOLDS, Paul	ZIMET, Erica	LANG, Sharon	CHEMALY, Larry

Thu 09-May 15:30	6	1	KEET, Duncan	STANTON, Carol	ALEXANDER, Michele	HOLMAN, Glen
		2	VAN NIEKERK, Andre	DUFF, Rose	LANG, Sharon	CHEMALY, Larry
		3	REYNOLDS, Paul	ZIMET, Erica	BRACHER, Merle	KING, Phil
		4	WARD, Peter	MODLIN, Merle	EAST, Jan	EAST, Terry

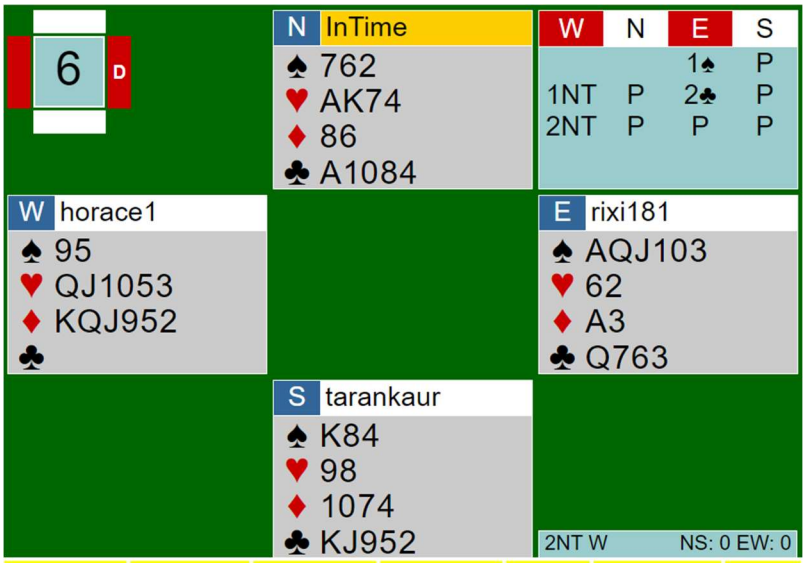
MIXED PAIRS FINALS – RESULTS BY ROUND

Players	Rank	TOTAL VPs	C/O	Round 1		Round 2		Round 3	
			VPs	IMPS	VPs	IMPS	VPs	IMPS	VPs
Larry Chemaly & Sharon Lang	1	98.36	59.39	33	17.17	18	14.60	-10	7.20
Terry East & Jan East	2	93.59	67.41	1	10.31	-2	9.39	-13	6.48
Duncan Keet & Carol Stanton	3	90.52	51.47	17	14.39	3	10.91	14	13.75
Glen Holman & Michele Alexander	4	84.88	58.13	-1	9.69	-24	4.26	10	12.80
Phil King & Merle Bracher	5	81.94	56.50	-33	2.83	-3	9.09	13	13.52
Andre Van Niekerk & Rose Duff	6	79.82	48.99	15	13.97	2	10.61	-14	6.25
Paul Reynolds & Erica Zimet	7	67.58	33.26	-15	6.03	24	15.74	9	12.55
Peter Ward & Merle Modlin	8	63.30	44.84	-17	5.61	-18	5.40	-9	7.45



The Finals

In this article, I am going to be fairly critical of our finalists. Please understand that all my criticisms are meant in good faith with the hope that some of the ideas I present will improve the overall standard. Remember it is easy to be critical when viewing all four hands. I may have missed important inferences that were present at the time. If you feel I have been unfair, please let me know.



InTime	tarankaur	rixi181	horace1	2NW-2	**200**	**4.33**
impalaphil	stacey31	sharrie	larryc777	3NW-1	**100**	**0.67**
teeast	SweetieE	lady macb	glensa	3NW-1	**100**	**0.67**
Dunx	carol2007	merl66	peter3202	2♠E=	**-110**	**-5.67**

This auction suggests a misfit and we therefore need partner to have significant extras to make any game or high-level contract. Get out as quickly as you can to a makeable spot by bidding 2♦. I realise that this may miss a game occasionally when partner has a perfect minimum, but my partners never have the perfect cards required. Those pairs who bid 2NT were lucky that their partners had doubleton Ace of diamonds or they would have very few tricks in 2 or 3NT.

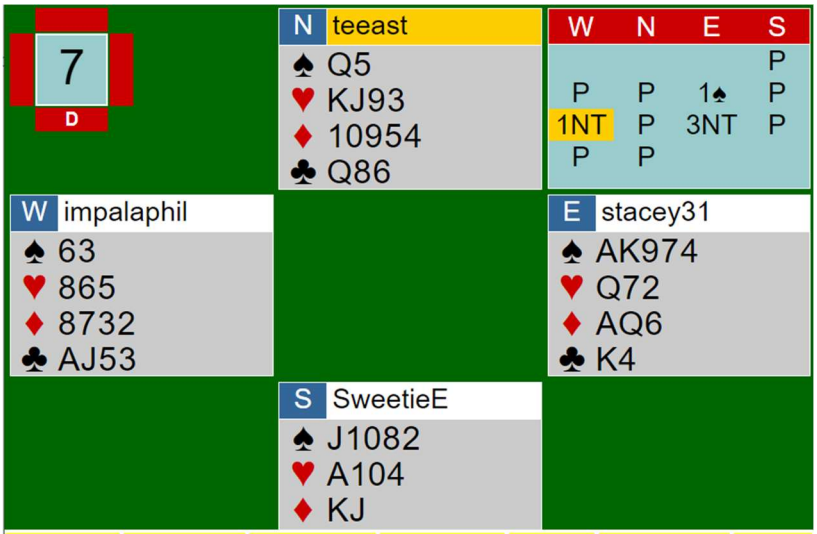
No fewer than 3 pairs got to the unmakeable 3NT. One pair made a strange decision to give false preference to 2♠ which would have looked silly if partner had poor spades and no ace of diamonds.

This issue has come up multiple times during the trials.

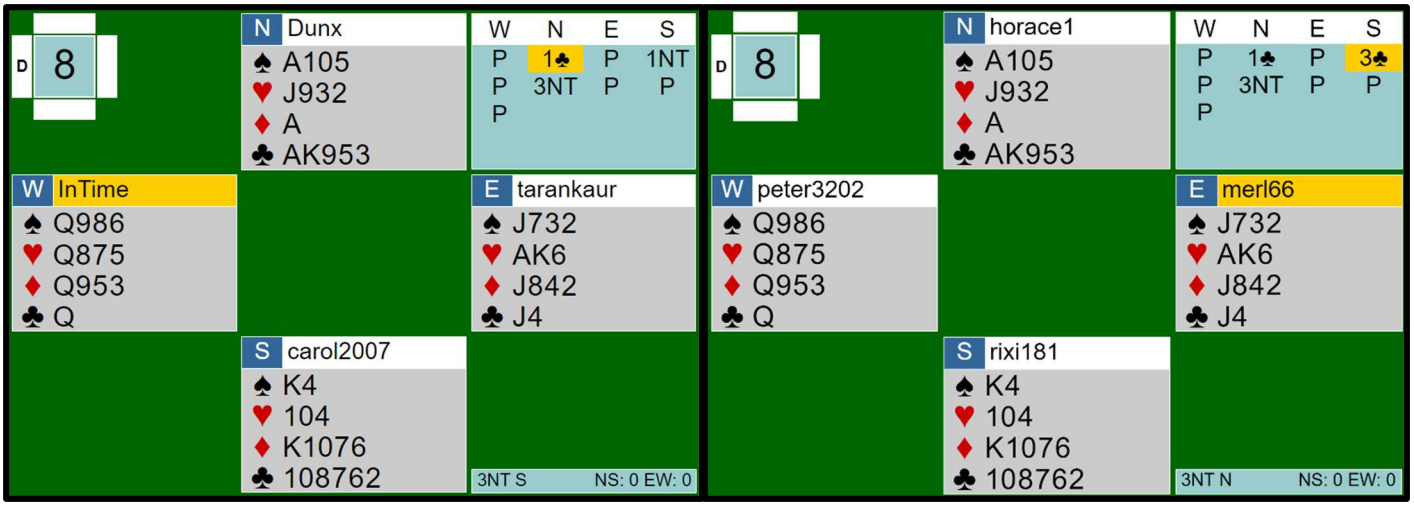
I would like to ask our trialist what 2NT would mean by East on this auction? For standard bidders, 2NT shows 18-19. I don't see any reason to bid 3NT on the East hand.

3NT went 5 down! The defence was merciless after North guessed to lead 4th best heart.

Should West respond to the 1 ♠ opening? Despite the result, I think responder should strain to bid when holding an Ace. Going down some number in a NT contract is one of the risks of playing wide-range opening bids.



teeast	SweetieE	stacey31	impalaphil	3NW-5	**500**	**8.33**
Dunx	carol2007	tarankaur	InTime	2NW-2	**200**	**-0.33**
horace1	rixi181	merl66	peter3202	1♠E-1	**100**	**-4.00**
larryc777	sharrie	lady macb	glensa	1♠E-1	**100**	**-4.00**



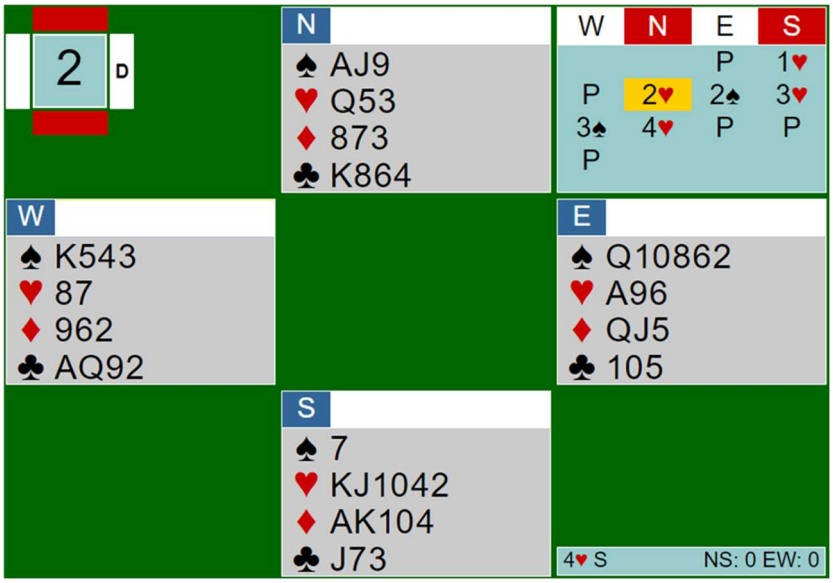
2 pairs reached the excellent 3NT contract on the above hand. The 2 hands fit perfectly making 3NT cold whenever clubs break (78% chance).

Unfortunately, I cannot commend either of the auctions above.

a. If 3 ♣ on the first auction shows about 5-8 HCP, it is unlikely that 3NT will be the correct contract. Partner needs to supply 2 tricks unless he is maximum. A more reasonable auction might be 1 ♣ - 3♣ - 3 ♥ - 3NT
b. I strongly disapprove of the 1NT response by South on the second auction. A 1 ♦ response looks much more reasonable if 1♣ only promises 2.

Cannot argue with success, however.

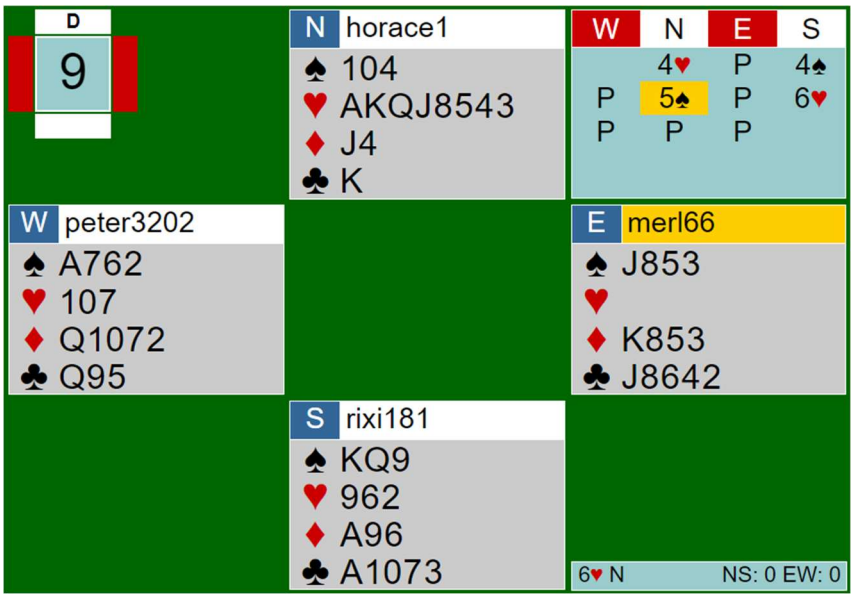
Bidding your hand, Twice



I've seen this type of error too often.

North judged well with his 3334 shape 10 count to only give a single constructive raise. However, when partner competed to 3♥, he couldn't resist bidding 4. In these auctions, when partner just competes, she is emphatically saying that whatever your hand, there is no game. There was plenty of room for South to make game tries of 3♣ or 3♦ on the auction given.

What can I expect, partner?



On the hand below 6♥ is cold. Let's see how our trialists faired...

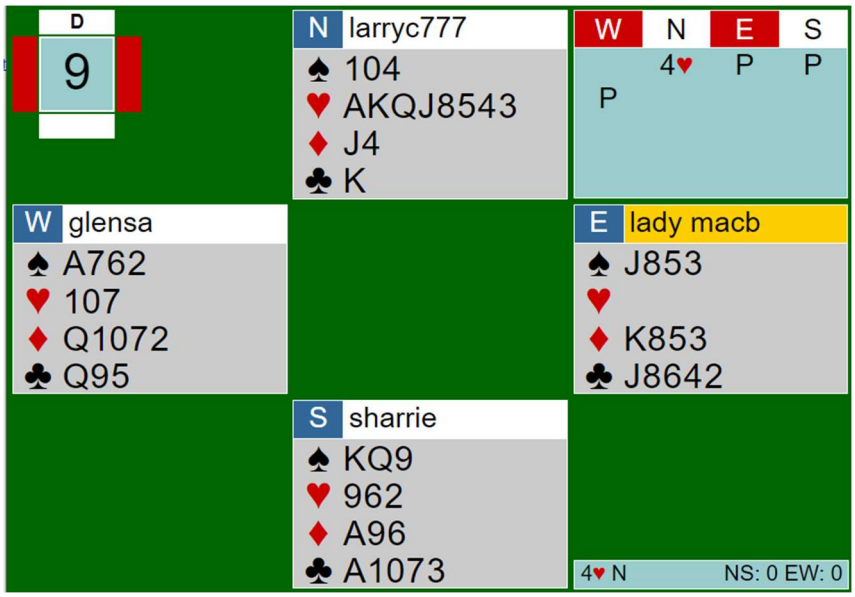
We'll start with the 2 pairs who thought the North hand was a pre-empt. 8 solid tricks with an outside king is not my typical 4 level pre-empt not vul vs vul. I follow a simple rule that I do not pre-empt with opening hands. Having said that, it certainly can work.

I am shocked that despite the fact that players have been told numerous times that all bids are alertable when playing online, South failed to alert 4♠ as Keycard Blackwood. 5♠ response was alerted as 2 with the queen. Really? I wonder what 5♥ would mean? Perhaps North was embarrassed by the opening with such a strong hand and did not want to risk partner passing 5♥?

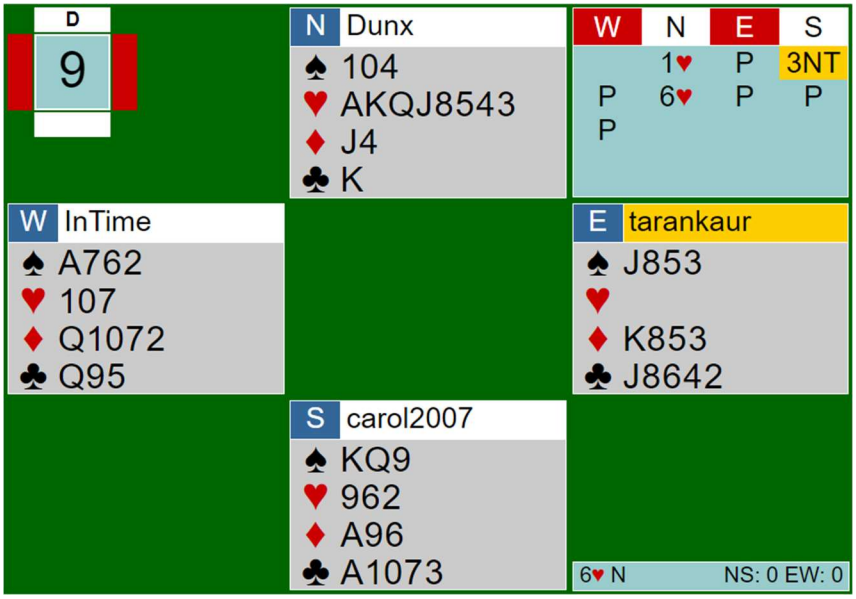
When I go keycard after this start, my partner usually turns up with:

♠ x
♥ KJxxxxxx
♦ xx
♣ xx

4♥ is already too high opposite this hand.



Another pre-emptive 4♥ opening but here South sensibly felt that on a bad day even 4♥ might be too high and passed. Slam missed.



A more sensible 1♥ opening. 3NT showed 3 card support and about 12-15 HCP.

North jumped to 6♥. It was good judgement to realise that 12 tricks were possible opposite 12-15 HCP but…

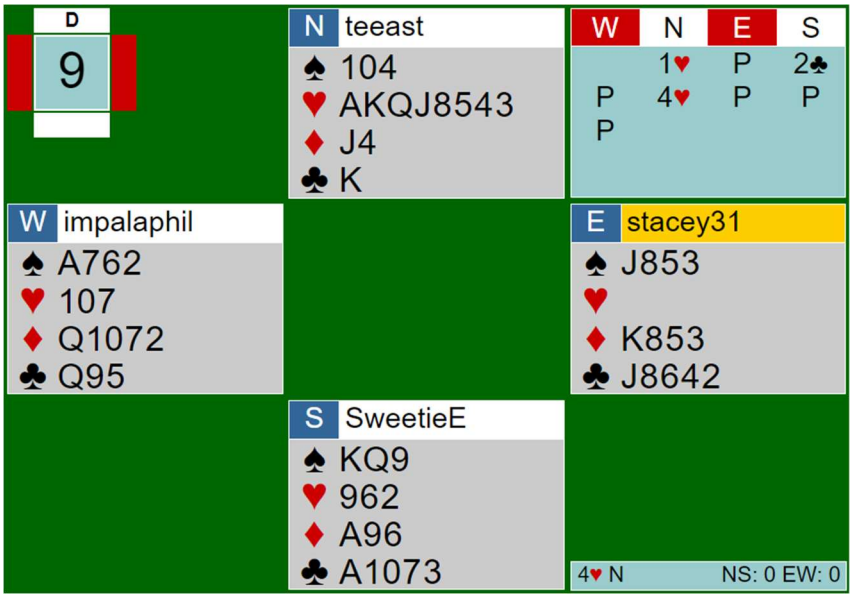
a. There could easily be 2 losers in either of the black suits.
b. We could easily be off 2 aces. Does this pair not play blackwood? That would at least be an improvement.
c. Only advantage of bidding this way is that opponents may make the wrong lead allowing you to make an impossible contract.

My suggestion after this start

1♥ – 3NT
4♣* – 4♦*
4♥ …

* Cue bidding

Now south should realise that her cards are good and she has a spade control as well. Blackwood would be reasonable.



This is the most interesting.

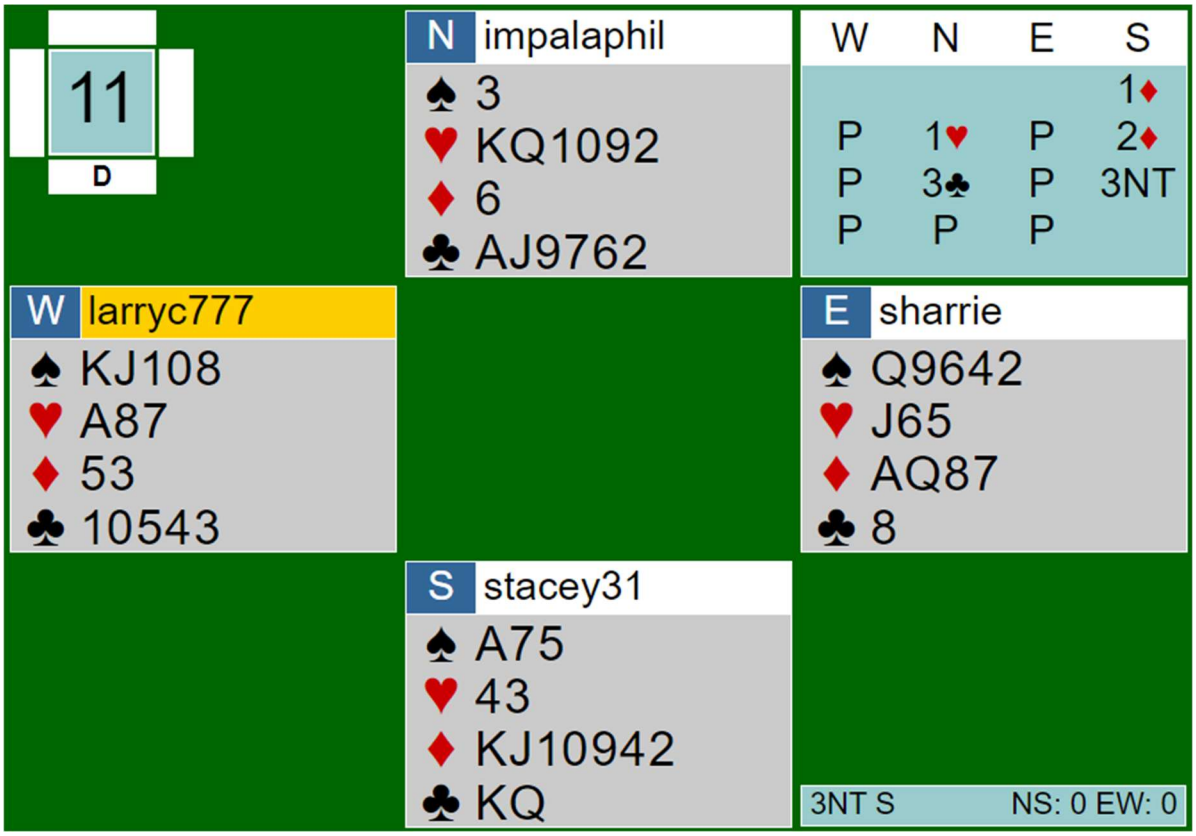
After partner has made a game forcing 2 over 1 bid (2♣), North has the option to bid 2, 3, or 4♥. What should each bid mean?

My suggestion

1. 2♥ Default bid. Could be anything.
2. 3♥ Solid or 1 loser suit including the Ace with slam interest, setting trumps.
3. 4♥ Good heart suit, 12+ hcp, no slam ambitions unless partner has substantial extras.

I recommend 3♥. South with excellent controls will have no problem bidding slam after this.

Judging Misfits



I was taught early on in my bridge career that when you have a misfit, stop bidding ASAP before you really get into trouble.

It would be nice if we could bid 3♣ non forcing but I don't think any system would allow that. Bidding 3♣ with the North hand is almost guaranteed to get you to a very poor 3NT and so it transpired – down 3 for -150

impalaphil	stacey31	sharrie	larryc777	3NS-3	**150**	**5.00**
InTime	tarankaur	rixi181	horace1	3NS-3	**150**	**5.00**
Dunx	carol2007	merl66	peter3202	3♣N+1	**-130**	**-4.33**
teeast	SweetieE	lady macb	glensa	2♥N+2	**-170**	**-5.67**

One pair after a similar start made a possibly acceptable bid of 2♥. Every couple of 100 years partner will have 3 card support and game will be possible.

One pair decided to treat the North hand as game forcing and bid out their shape by starting with 2♣. While this is an aggressive action it has the upside of getting to a reasonable game when possible. Strangely after North showed at least 5-6 shape in hearts and clubs, South felt that 3NT would be the correct contract. Had South just given preference to 4♣, a makeable contract might have been reached. South just has to ask if it will be possible to take the next 9 tricks when opponents lead an obvious spade. The answer is that if this is possible, 5♣ or maybe even 6♣ will make.

Novice & Advancing Players' Corner

What are the odds?

W	N	E	S
			1♥
2♦	P	3♦	3♥
P	P	P	

You are playing in the SA Mixed Pairs Trials final and reach 3♥ on the auction given above and receive the K♦ lead. This is what you see:

Dummy (North)
- ♠ 105432
- ♥ J2
- ♦ A4
- ♣ J854

Your Hand (South)
- ♠ AQJ
- ♥ AK10843
- ♦ 72
- ♣ Q9

Let's count our losers. We have to lose 1 diamond and 2 clubs and therefore, we must keep our Major suit losers to 1 only. When we win the A♦, this may be last time we will be in dummy. There are 2 finesses we can take;

a. The Heart finesse.
b. The Spade finesse.

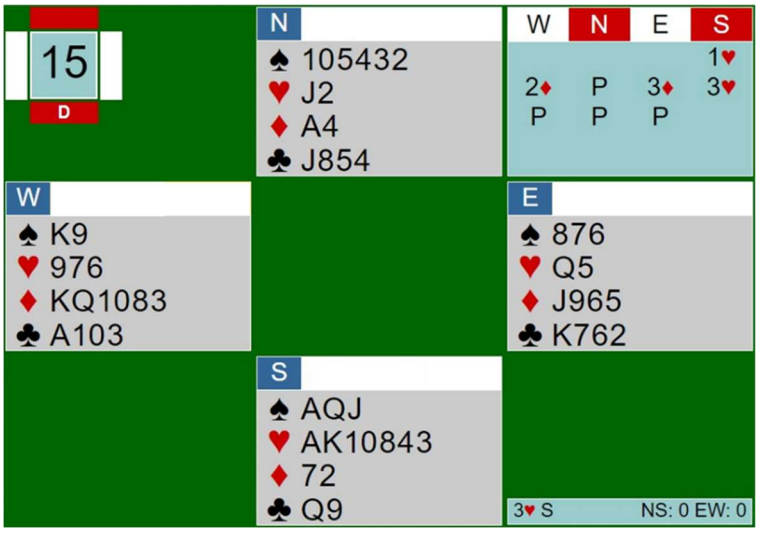
Decide which finesse you are going to take before reading on.

Taking the spade finesse works whenever the K♠ lies with East on our right **and** it is doubleton. If the King is 3 or more, it will not drop when I next play the Ace and I will still have to lose a spade.

Taking the heart finesse works whenever the Q♥ is on our right to a maximum of 3 times. Taking the heart finesse first has an additional advantage. If I play a low heart to the 10 (ignoring the rule to play the high cards from the short suit first), and it loses to the Queen. The Jack of hearts, remaining in the dummy, will serve as a second entry that will allow me to take the spade finesse. Clearly, this makes taking the heart finesse superior to taking the spade finesse.

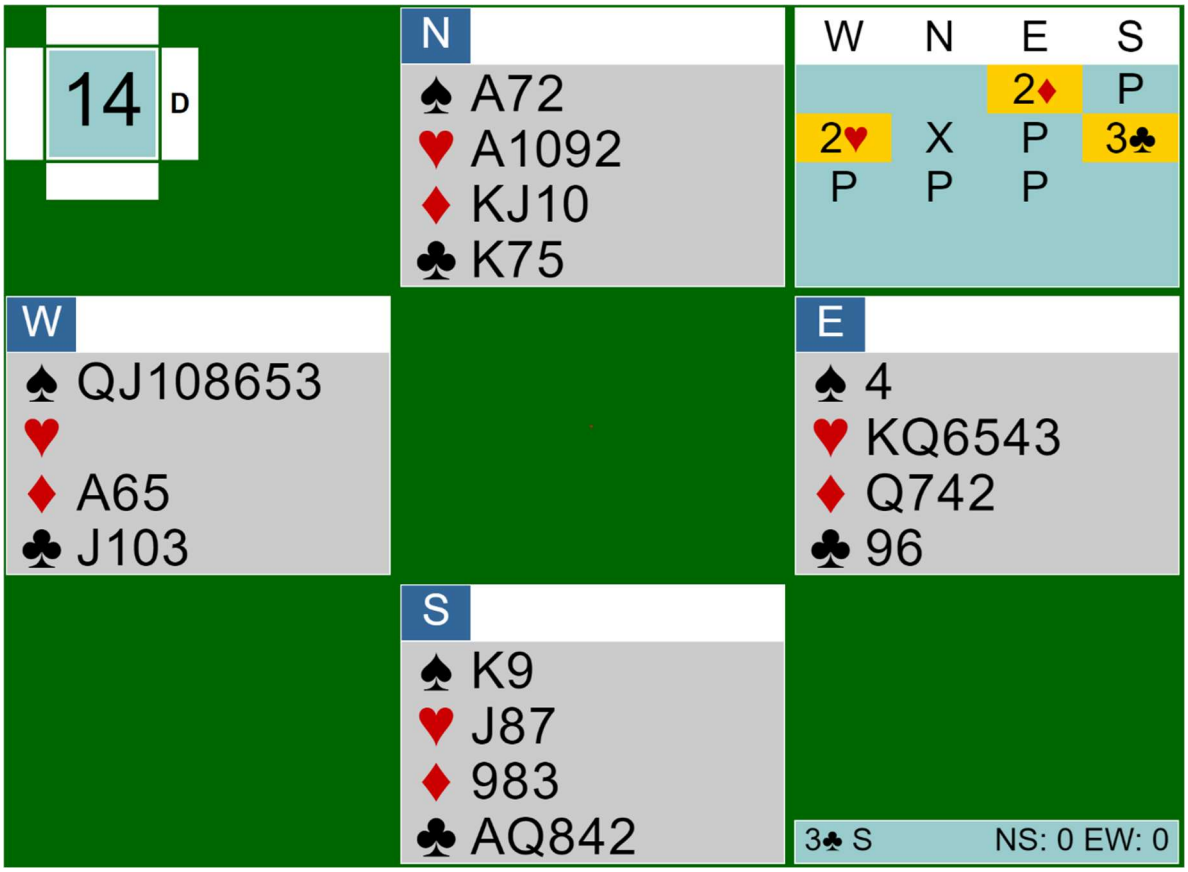
Don't worry if you got that wrong. No fewer than two Mixed pairs trialist who played in 3♥, took the spade finesse. They got lucky when the Q♥ came down doubleton.

The full hand:



Submitted by Bernard Donde

MULTI(ple) Problems



Day 4 of the mixed trials have come and gone and I guess that everyone is starting to feel the pressures of getting over the final hurdle. It will be an interesting race to the finishing line. Good luck to everyone in that final race.

In this segment I'm going to look at a few issues regarding the Multi 2 Diamond convention. I'll try and shed some light on issues that the opening side as well as the defending side might experience.

Let's first address some agreements that I believe the opening side should have to optimize the convention.

1) **Responder's Major is very unlikely to be the Major that the opener will have and we are happy to play in our own suit at the 3-level**
   The correct way to deal with this situation is to bid our suit and when opener corrects to his suit we simply rebid our suit again E.G.
   2♦ – 2♥ - 2♠ – 3♥ OR 2♦ - 2♠ – 3♥ - 3♠ = To play but with a good fit in hearts and some "correct" values the opener is allowed to raise to game.
   Two well fitting hands might be:

   These hands would justify an auction like 2♦ - 2♠ – 3♥ - 3♠ - 4♠. Note that the A♥ which must be opposite a probable singleton is a huge card and the Spade fit drastically improves the West hand. Note that the hand at the top of this page is not one where West should try and get out into his own suit as the hand is not strong enough and we'll be a level higher. Simply bid 2♥ and hope for the best. If someone doubles, we can now pull to 2♠ as this would probably be a better spot to play than 2♥.

2) **Responder has a forcing hand and wants to investigate game/slam in his own Major**
The way forward is to bid 2NT and over partner's response to bid your own suit. This action would be FORCING and be looking for the best place to play which might include NT.

3) **Responder bids 2♠ which generally indicates more suitability to play in Hearts than Spades**
How does the opener show a "better" heart hand that would have accepted an invite. I have an agreement with my partner that 3♣ shows the better hand. If responder's hand is good he can now bid game in hearts.

4) **Pass/Correct bids that are often pre-emptive**
Play 3♥/3♠ and 4♥ as Pass/Correct bids. This is one of the nice benefits of playing the multi. We can bomb the auction with uncertainty for another round as to what our suit actually is.

5) **Bids of 4♣/4♦**
4♣ asks partner to bid the suit below their suit. This is in a way potentially pre-emptive but also "right sides" the contract.
4♦ asks partner to please bid their suit.

6) **The issue of playing the multi to also include 17+ 4441 hand types**
When last did you have this specific hand type crop up??
If this hand cropped up, did you show a real gain compared to dealing with such a hand in a more "normal" fashion?
How many times did you get overboard after all your fancy asking bids?
How many braincells that should be free to deal with other matters at the bridge table did you engage by learning and remembering the complex continuations that this hand type requires??
I won't ask anymore questions but my recommendation is **TURF IT**!!

Bridge hands get won by having clear, precise and easy to remember agreements that don't come up once in 2 years. Free your energy up for other things at the table!!

Defence against the multi

Now for a discussion of some competitive agreements to help us deal with the multi.
The main complexity playing against the multi stems from the fact that we have no "anchor suit" to work with for another round.

Here are a few guidelines that will help us in defence. Due to the issues around an "anchor suit" we need to distinguish 4 different seats.

Direct seat/2nd seat

2NT = 16-18 HCP, balanced, stoppers in BOTH Majors
X = 12/13-15 Balanced OR 19+ Balanced
Jump to 3-Major = Strong i.e. +- 16-19 points, 6+cards, the equivalent of about 7 ½ playing tricks.
2-Major = 5+card suit and about opening hand values – Hereafter a bid by advancer of the OTHER Major = A Cue bid raise
3-Minor = Really GOOD hands as we have an option to Pass and bid later, 5+ cards looking as a final contract most likely for NT's, If advancer now bids a Major consider this mainly as a stopper SHOW angling the contract towards 3NT, so tend to bid 3NT whenever a stopper in the other Major. If no stopper try and raise partner's Major.

4th Seat after 2♦ – 2♥

2NT = 16-18, Stoppers in Majors
X = Takeout of Hearts, as if we are dealing with a 2♥ opening bid

Overcalls in suits = Good opening + Hands(11-16), here we have to be slightly more aggressive as we might not get another chance as in 2nd seat
Jumps in Majors = STRONG (see above)
4♣/4♦ = Leaping Michaels = That minor and SPADES (Hearts is our anchor suit) = 16+ Total points e.g. ♠ AK1097 ♥ 3 ♦AKJ102 ♣ 109 would be about minimum for a 4♦ bid.

6th Seat 2♦ – 2♥ – Pass OR 2♦ – 2♥ - 2♠ – Here we know what their suit is so now:

2NT = MINORS (We didn't bid 2NT to start)
X = Takeout of the known (anchor) suit
Overcalls in a Minor is not as good as an immediate overcall
Jumps to 4♣/4♦ = Leaping Michaels – The shown suit + the OTHER Major STRONG

8th Seat 2♦ – 2♥ - 2♠ – Pass

2NT = Minors
X = Takeout of Spades
Overcalls are Balancing (not as good as immediate)
Jump to 4♣/4♦ = Leaping Michaels = That suit and Hearts

Lebensohl
After Takeout Doubles in all seats Lebensohl applies where:
1) A direct bid at the 3-level promises 9-11 points, Invitational in essence
2) 2NT = Relay to 3♣ attempting to show a hand with less than invitational values

I am sure I have not covered absolutely everything you need to know regarding the Multi but have tried to touch on most relevant situations for which you and partner might not have had proper agreements. The suggestions above should give you a pretty good framework with which to work in the future.

Happy bridging until next time

Submitted by Hennie Fick

BRIDGE ETIQUETTE!

Firstly, PLAYING TO TIME and KEEPING A REGULAR TEMPO!

Playing to time

Nothing is more irritating or inconsiderate to other players than failing to keep to the time limits set by the Tournament Organiser, usually 7 minutes a board for face-to-face events and 6 minutes for BBO. Writing up your personal scoresheet or conducting postmortems is not a right and this should never be done when you are already running over-time!

Keeping a regular tempo

Acquire the habit of playing smoothly and in tempo. Avoid mannerisms, meaningful eye contact, sighs, grimaces and using words such as 'I guess I need to pass'. Avoid hesitations by being consistent and deliberate in your bidding. A hesitation followed by a pass places an extra burden on partner to justify continuing with the bidding as this may have communicated information to your partner. If you have a difficult decision, you have a right to think but partner may not take advantage of knowing you had a problem. This means that if partner takes time to bid or bids out of tempo and then passes, you should pass too unless that action would be totally illogical with the cards you held in your hand. The same strictures apply by bidding too quickly, out of tempo.

In play avoid 'snapping' the card or playing with undue emphasis as it may reveal special interest to either partner or your opponent.

Slow play can be caused by bad habits like

1. Too much general conversation. (a waste of valuable time)
2. Not concentrating on bridge when the opponents pause to think about bids or plays.
3. Spending too much time discussing results from the last board.

Remember that consistently slow play may be subject to penalty at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

Secondly, POSTMORTEMS!

It is best to wait until the game is over for post-mortems. Post-mortems at the end of a hand often do more harm than good, as they tend to 'rattle' your partner who made a play based on their best judgement at the time. This could affect their bidding and play on the next hand to the partnership's detriment. It is furthermore irritating to the opponents who have to listen to your comments (often hastily made without any real thought). For example, when your partner does not drop the singleton king, but takes a losing finesse, do not criticise this play which may have been the right percentage play anyway, but this time did not work out. Never try to teach or criticise a player at the table unless advice is asked for.

And, most importantly, keep postmortem discussions and comments on Bridgemate results to a minimum and at a voice level whereby they cannot be heard at an adjacent table.

To be continued

Submitted by Deirdre Ingersent