

Worcestershire Bridge News

September & October 2011

Editorial

The editorial in this issue is contributed by David Thomas, the incoming Chairman of the County Association.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN TO CLUBS AND MEMBERS

By David Thomas

I took over as chair of the WCBA from Richard Jephcott in May. Having decided not to hold a meeting of club representatives in the immediate future, I felt that I should communicate to you all via the newsletter.

Following the meeting of club reps last July, the committee listed five action areas and, together with the extra one I have added, these remain in my view key to the way we should be looking to go forward.

1. Finance

I am pleased to report that all 14 clubs took up the offer of the county paying their EBU affiliation fee for 2011. The county also held the county P2P element at 6p. Finances remain strong and we look to give further support to clubs.

2. Education

Mike Theelke continues to coordinate the education program. Ian Thompson has given further one day courses with the next scheduled for Stourbridge in the autumn. Try duplicate sessions are now being run at several clubs and I urge beginners to sample these sessions-details on the website.

3. Events

The Grand Prix teams continues successfully but further teams can be accommodated. Getting clubs to run heats of WCBA events has not been so successful and league entries are down. We need to reconsider this whole area.

4. County Representation

Several new people have played for the county this year but we would welcome further additions to our squads. Players don't be shy, clubs let us know of promising players.

5. Promotion

Other activities have come in the way of our attempts at promoting bridge around the county. We will look further at this during the coming year.

6. EBU Club Representation

The EBU has set up a new National Club Committee. Whilst we have had contact points from most clubs it would be excellent if a volunteer other than a WCBA committee member could be found to attend these meetings and progress actions through the clubs. The county will cover reasonable expenses

I would welcome comments on any of the above items and also on other areas that clubs or individuals feel should be addressed. Rest assured that I will pass your views/comments on to the relevant committee member and personally follow up the more important ideas.

Wishing you all a satisfying year's bridge.

David Thomas

Chairman WCBA

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To receive this newsletter straight to your inbox send a blank email to:

wcba-newsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
or download from www.worcestershirebridge.co.uk

Our thanks are due to this issue's contributors.

All contributions are welcome for future issues:

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Peter Edwards

By Alan Reid

(A brief Obituary for Peter was published in the previous Newsletter. Another one was received after the copy date and is published in full on the website. Some extracts are shown below as it neatly complements the previous one – Ed)

It was a great loss to lovers of bridge in Worcestershire with the recent passing away, after a long illness, of Peter Edwards at the age of 75. Peter was born in Stourbridge and spent his early life in Kingswinford. He had two brothers, John and Frank, and was a doting and loving grandfather.

Peter was a keen sportsman and a county squash player and well remembered his “needle” matches against Dieter Baer - also a Worcestershire bridge player, of course. Peter also played for, and then supported, Stourbridge Rugby Club.

At the bridge table, Peter was great fun, with his cheeky wit - he always had a bag of sweets to “bribe” the “girlies”. I played for many years with Peter at County level and in the Corwen and we qualified as county directors on the same course. Peter was always trying out new systems, which either he got wrong in practice or else a “confused” me did likewise. The remarkable thing was that every time they went wrong we finished getting a top score.

(Two amusing examples, which I commend to you, can be found on the website – Ed)

Yes, Peter, I treasure some great memories and I know I speak for the many you taught and guided in bridge throughout the years when I say that I will always both miss you and also miss playing with you.



Mike Brettell

By Annie Croot

It is with great sadness that I report the death of

Mike Brettell on September 4th 2011. Before I met him he played at the Raven in Droitwich and represented Worcestershire in many County Matches. Mike was a founder member of Tettenhall Bridge Club in Wolverhampton, and in recent years has played mainly at Stourbridge Institute Bridge Club. He has been a good friend and Bridge partner for over 30 years. I shall miss him and send my condolences to his wife Jan and their Family.



News & Forthcoming Events

The John Armstrong Award for Outstanding Sportsmanship at Bridge

By Mike Willoughby

I make no apology for putting the title of this piece of news in full in big letters! The County should be extremely proud of their two Members who received this award – Dennis Loynes and Sue Evans. The story was written up in English Bridge and, in brief, Sue and Dennis, playing with Val and Steve Kennewell in the Hubert Phillips, found only three of the opposing team turning up due to a series of mishaps. Rather than simply claim a walk-over, they asked Sue Lane to play for their opponents, whom she duly led to victory! Our Members demonstrated very clearly that it's not just winning or losing, but how you play the game that counts. Bravo!



Blue Points

The Blue Point Scheme is to be introduced in 2013. Both Clubs and Counties will be able to award Blue Points at a limited number of events but these will

have to be licenced, 2-session events that are open to any EBU Member. Also, EBU Simultaneous Pairs events will award Blue Points rather than Green Points. For ranking purposes, they can be considered to be equivalent to one third of a Green Point, up to a maximum of fifty Green Points. For example, the rank of National Master, which has hitherto required seventy-five Green Points, can now be achieved with twenty-five Green Points and one hundred and fifty Blue Points. Further information can be found on the County Website and the scheme will be publicised on the EBU website in due course.



County Events

Check the County Website for a range of events, but don't forget the following: -

- September 19th – Men's and Ladies Pairs
- October 3rd - Closed Teams Qualifier
- October 8th – Irene Allen "Non Expert" Swiss Pairs
- November 14th – Children-in-Need Simultaneous Pairs



Midland Counties Congress

Whether or not you are able to play in the Malvern Congress (there may be one or two places left!), the Midland Counties Congress offers a further opportunity to play at this attractive venue. This is timed on 6th-8th January as the ideal finale to the Christmas/New Year period. More details in the next Newsletter.



Promotions

We are pleased to announce the following promotions in the County – well done to all: -

- National Master**
- Mrs J M Rutter
- 5 Star Premier Master**
- Dr S Forward
- 1 Star Premier Master**

- Mr D Philpott
- 1 Star Tournament Master**
- Mr A D Gilmour
- 2 Star Master**
- Mr M Bunegar
- Mr K Southwell
- Master**
- Mr J A Cotton
- Mrs S Parsons
- Mr W Parsons
- County Master**
- Mr P B Adams
- Mr R Harrell
- Mrs Margaret Jones
- District Master**
- Dr M Georgui
- Mr M Pharaoh
- Mr S Simmons
- Mrs Betty Southwell
- Mr B Tyrrell
- Area Master**
- Mrs Gwen Altoft
- Mrs A V Bussey
- Mr Dave Hope
- Mrs Doris Newman
- Mrs P Perry
- Mr Richard Taylor
- Club Master**
- Mrs Joan Andrews
- Mr E Gibbs
- Mrs Edna Lines
- Mrs Joan Partridge
- Mr Eric Silverstone
- Ms W Silverstone
- Mr Alfred Thompson
- Mrs Sheila Williams
- Local Master**
- Mrs Mary Dickinson
- Mrs Norma Haines
- Dr D Jones
- Mrs Margaret Lampard
- Mrs Iris Lane
- Mr Graham Nicholls
- Mr Terry Nicholls
- Mr J R Spence
- Mr Clive Watson



Bidding Panel

Moderated by Nick Forward

You are invited to Test your skill on the following hands before reading the Panels views later in the Newsletter. On all hands you are sitting South.

Hand 1

Pairs	Dealer W		Love All	
♠ K	<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
♥ KQ874				
♦ 962	1D	1S	Dbl*	?
♣ KT76				

*Normally shows 4 hearts

Hand 2

Teams	Dealer E		All Vul	
♠ KQ93	<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
♥ 5				
♦ AQ87			1D	P
♣ A863	P	1H	P	?

Hand 3

Pairs	Dealer E		N/S Vul	
♠ AJ9832	<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
♥ 2				
♦ -			1S	P
♣ K98432	1NT	P	P	?

Hand 4

Teams	Dealer W		N/S Vul	
♠ KQT764	<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
♥ A2				
♦ J7	1D	P	1S	P
♣ AJ8	1NT*	P	P	?

*12-16

Hand 5

Pairs	Dealer S		E/W Vul	
♠ AT2	<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
♥ 965				
♦ J876				P
♣ AQ8	1H	Dbl	P	?



COMPETITIONS UPDATE

Brighton Congress

Pride of place this month must go to John Sansom and Pam Pearce, who won the Mixed Pairs at the Brighton Summer Congress.



BGB Pairs

Having said that, David Thomas and Jimmy Ledger finished second overall out of some 2,500 pairs in the Bridge Great Britain Summer Pairs!



AROUND THE CLUBS

Bewdley B C

<http://www.bewdleybridgeclub.co.uk/>

Bewdley Bridge Club held its AGM on 15th June. Andrew Gilmour stood down as Chairman after 6 years of devoted service to the Club, and Brian Varley was elected as the new Chairman. The Committee is now:

- Chairman Brian Varley
- Treasurer John Neale
- Secretary Wendy Silverstone
- Committee Linda Symonds

The Remembrance Trophy is usually awarded to the pair winning the competition held on the evening of the AGM, but this year as it was impractical to have a movement giving outright winners it was awarded to Bill Cumberworth and Chad Chadwick who had the highest score - 65.08%.'

(My apologies to the Members of Bewdley Bridge Club for my inadvertent omission of this item from the July/August newsletter – Ed)



Malvern Hills B C

www.bridgewebs.com/malvernhill

Diary notes: Our annual participation in the national Children in Need Sim Pairs will take place on Thurs. Nov. 17. Sat. Feb 18, 2012 will be the next in our popular Tuition Days. The topic has not yet been agreed as of this date but should be available in the next Newsletter.

We will also be able to reveal in the next issue the winner of our 2010-11 Club Pairs champions. As of this date the top three pairs are bracketed within two percentage points. Clearly this is going down to the wire.



LESSONS TO LEARN!

The Director Rules - 2

By Mike Theelke

One of the more interesting aspects of playing bridge is that people are allowed to use different bidding methods, and even in a club duplicate one may come across two or three different bidding systems and numerous different conventions. A very logical result of this is the alert regulation, which basically requires a player to alert the opposition by waving the Alert card when their partner makes an artificial bid. A few years ago the English Bridge Union decided to develop this idea further by also introducing situations in which partner's bid is announced, rather than alerted – I'm sure it seemed a good idea at the time – but I'll deal with that in a future article. This month, I want to look at a partnership's responsibilities to their opponents to explain their bidding methods, and what can be done if there's a problem.

First of all, players are expected to complete a convention card, and your convention card must say the same as your partner's. Obviously there's an element of common sense to be applied here – if you turn up for a game with the host and agree to play basic Acol, you don't have to spend half an hour completing a proper convention card, although it would probably help you if you did. On the other hand, if you play with the same partner on a regular basis, it is discourteous to the opposition not to have a proper convention card even if you use fairly straightforward methods, and if you play a complicated system where it is likely that your opponents will have to refer to your card it must be fully completed. One point that people often miss here: it is not sufficient just to write the name of a convention that you play. You shouldn't assume that your opponents will know what a convention means, and even if they do, perhaps their understanding of the convention is different to yours. So if your defence to 1NT is Landy, you should write "2♣ shows 5-4 in the majors", or whatever your agreement is. If there isn't room, there's a section for

Supplementary Details, so write it there and cross reference the details to the Defence to 1NT section.

If the opposition make a bid and you need to know what it means, of course you can ask, or you can refer to their convention card. In both cases, you should do so only at your turn to bid. Although people do sometimes innocently read the opponents' card when it's not their turn to bid it's not a good idea as it implies you have some interest in the auction, and in some circumstances may influence your partner at their turn to bid; for exactly the same reason you can't ask questions when it's your partner's turn to bid. You need to be aware that if you do ask questions and then pass you may put your partner in an awkward position as you've implied you were considering action, so on the whole my advice is not to ask questions unless you intend to bid yourself. If you do ask questions, just ask what the bids meant – don't try and show off your bridge knowledge by guessing the convention, and certainly don't say something like "did the 2♣ bid show clubs" even if that's what you're actually interested in because you hold clubs yourself.

Next, players are expected to know the alerting procedures, and to be able to explain their system to the opponents if asked. Suppose North opens 1NT and East overcalls 2♣. If East-West are using Landy as their defence to 1NT, West should alert. If West doesn't alert, North-South are entitled to assume that 2♣ was natural. Maybe on this occasion West has forgotten that EW are playing Landy: it might now go 1NT-2♣-no-no-no, and East ends up playing the contract. Before the opposition lead, East should explain that 2♣ should have been alerted, and call the director immediately. You do this only if the pair that have had the misunderstanding end up playing the contract; if they end up defending, they should still confess, but not until after the hand has been played, when the director will have to try and sort it out.

Even in this simple example, there are actually two possible situations: either East-West have agreed to play Landy and West forgot, or else East-West agreed that overcalls over 1NT are natural and East forgot. Surprisingly, the laws treat these two situations differently. If East was right then 2♣ should have been alerted, and West's failure to alert is treated as a wrong explanation of the bid, so if

North-South have been damaged the director has the option to award an adjusted score. Maybe NS can make 3♣, and would have bid it had they known 2♣ was conventional – the director could adjust the score to NS +110, if that's better for NS than the actual score obtained. On the other hand, if East was wrong, then West was correct not to alert – it's the bid that's wrong, and in this instance the director cannot make an adjustment. Sometimes the facts are not as clear cut as this and there is some doubt as to whether a bid is right or the explanation is right. In this situation the director will refer to the partnership's convention card, and if that doesn't settle the issue one way or the other, will have to decide who is likely to be right – but if it's unclear, the director will normally assume the explanation is wrong and that therefore an adjusted score may be appropriate.

One more point about alerting and explanations: if your partner makes a bid that you think may be conventional you should alert it, even if you're not sure what it means. If the opposition ask what a bid means – alerted or not - and you don't know, don't guess, just tell them you don't know. If you can tell them something useful about your general methods that may be helpful, or can suggest the answer may be on your convention card, that's fine. An example: you open 1♣, 3♥ on your left, double from partner. You can't remember how high you play negative doubles, so you're not sure whether this should be takeout or penalty. If it's penalty it should be alerted, so alert anyway. If the opposition ask what the bid means, explain what's happened – if you really don't know, don't guess one way or the other. This can still be sorted out, because either the opposition can refer to your card, and the information should be there; or alternatively if your card isn't fully completed and the opponents are desperate to know what the double means, the director can ask you to leave the table so that your partner can explain what he believes your agreement is.

Finally, all of the above are designed to help the auction run smoothly, not to punish players who have forgotten their system. Surprisingly often the director is called to the table because one pair have forgotten what a bid means, or omitted to alert, and the opposition are unhappy about it. Now if the non-offending pair have been disadvantaged by the mistake, the director can sort that out, but sometimes

the mistake hasn't made the slightest difference to the non-offending pair, who either still feel their opponents should be punished in some way or think they can gain an advantage from the situation. That is not in the spirit of the game, and the laws should ensure it doesn't happen.



Bidding Panel

Moderated by Nick Forward

The Panel is reduced to five this month but as always, Sue Evans, Jimmy Ledger, Mike Willoughby, John Sansom and Stewart Fishburne have come up with some interesting answers to the bidding problems posed.

Hand 1

Pairs	Dealer W		Love All	
	<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
♠ K				
♥ KQ874				
♦ 962	1D	1S	Dbl*	?
♣ KT76				

*Normally shows 4 hearts

Votes: 2 for Pass; 1 for Rdbl; 1 for 2♣; 1 for 2♥
 Marks: Pass = 5; Rdbl = 4; 2♥ = 3; 2♣/1NT = 2.

A divergence of views from the panel on this hand with a small majority for pass;

John: Pass. Wait to see what develops. There are a lot of points in this hand so suits are likely to break badly for whoever declares. Best to try and defend on this hand.

Stewart: Pass. It looks like the points are fairly evenly split on this hand with everyone in the action already. And it looks like a misfit, too, which suggests it may be better to defend than declare the hand. I have the values to redouble, but think that should show something better in partner's suit. I think I'll **pass** for the present. If LHO bids a simple 2♦ and that comes back to me, I could consider balancing at that point with 2♥, which must be natural, mustn't it?

Mike is on a similar wavelength but clearly believes that he has the values to Redouble;

Mike: Rdbl. Suggests that our side has the majority of points and so may look for a penalty. If partner is weak he will probably bid again in front of me

otherwise I will have to bid again, which I'm happy enough to do.

Sue is not sure about Redoubling as for her that does not get over to partner her heart length;

Sue: 2♥. I want to show that I have 5 hearts. If partner bids 2♠ or 3♦, then I'll bid 3NT. Redouble would show only 4 hearts at most, and implies 8+points, but my hand is better than that.

Jimmy is on a very different tack;

Jimmy: 2♣. May as well show partner I have points and when I double hearts for penalties he will not take it out.

The snag is of course that it is very unlikely that the opponents will seek to play in hearts, I agree with Stewart that it is more likely that West will rebid diamonds so pass or Redouble should work out OK.

Hand 2

Teams	Dealer E		All Vul	
	<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
♠ KQ93				
♥ 5				
♦ AQ87			1D	P
♣ A863	P	1H	P	?

Votes: 2 for 3NT; 1 for 2NT; 1 for 2♦; 1 for 1♠

Marks: 3NT = 5; 2NT = 4; 2♦/1♠ = 3.

Again only a small majority this time - for the workmanlike 3NT in this case. Much depends on this hand how strong you play 1♥ in the balancing position.

Sue: 3NT. My partner has overcalled at red, so his overcall will be up to strength. He will not hold spades as well, or he would have doubled. If he had doubled instead of bidding 1♥, then I would make a cue bid first, to show my strength.

John: 3NT. With diamond controls well placed and 15hcp opposite partner's vulnerable overcall, this should make game a reasonable proposition.

But surely you would want partner to protect with ♥ AKxxxx and, say, the black suit jacks? Catering for this was;

Stewart: 2NT. Partner has only protected and can be quite weak. In these situations the advice is for partner to bid as if he was a King stronger than he is, and I need to make allowance for that. So I bid as I would as if I had a 12 count, not the 15 I actually have. The only strain that seems worth bidding is NT. I'm definitely not good enough for 3NT so the choice is between 1NT and 2NT. Of these 2NT feels best. Partner should raise with a 'full-value' overcall
wcb-newsletter-subscribe@yahoo.com

(an 11-count, for example).

Jimmy also likes his hand and chose to make a more forcing move;

Jimmy: 2♦. I must tell partner I have a good hand for my pass.

The problem is however that 99 times out of a 100 you will hear 2♥ from partner and are really no further forward. One player was less enamoured with the hand and certainly not interested in No Trumps.

Mike: 1♠. This is not a No Trump hand – the singleton heart is bad news from that point of view. With quick tricks the best chance of a game may well be in spades, even on a 4-3 fit, so an encouraging (not forcing, even if you play it as such, since I've passed) bid of 1♠ is the best way to explore further.

I am with Stewart on this hand – No Trumps does seem a logical strain but I do not want to punish partner for an adventurous balancing bid. One other point on this hand – many club players would double with this hand rather than pass – the snag is that if partner jumps to 4♥ you simply have no-where to go. Pass is better as long as you know partner will protect wherever possible. So all the more reason not to punish him when he does!

Hand 3

Pairs	Dealer E		N/S Vul	
	<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
♠ AJ9832				
♥ 2				
♦ -			1S	P
♣ K98432	1NT	P	P	?

Votes: 4 for 2♣; 1 for Pass.

Marks: 2♣ = 5; Pass = 4; Dble = 2.

There is considerable agreement amongst the panel on this hand with just one dissenter – let's see what Stewart has to say first;

Stewart: Pass. It appears that both West and partner must be loaded with red cards, which suggests that defending might be better than declaring. On the other hand we might make 6♣! I think I've caused myself a problem by not bidding 2♣ over the initial 1♠ (which looks sensible to me). But what to do now? A double would ask for a Spade lead but partner is far too likely to remove this to a non-making red-suit contract. No the choice is between 2♣ and pass. I think I'll assume other N/S's are going off in something (hopefully doubled) and pass.

Yes – overcalling 2♣ immediately may have been a good idea. But it seems that passing now is taking a bit of a punt. One member of the panel does not believe INT will play badly;

Jimmy: 2♣. My hand is useless in defence and I do have 6 clubs.

Mike: 2♣. Partner should work out that the reason that I've passed on the first round is that I have spades so he won't overvalue red cards.

Sue: 2♣. Mmmmm! If I double, partner is sure to bid a red suit, and if I pass he will lead a red suit into declarer's tenace, so 2♣ it is.

John: 2♣. With good distribution and what few points you have being well placed you want to be playing this hand. Analysis would indicate your partner has at least an 8 point hand with a spade shortage. (NB South has 8pts; East has max 16pts and West has 5-9pts). Partner is very likely to have some clubs or enough length in other suits to make life difficult for EW to win the auction

Mind you if partner has length in the other suits then defending could be the best option as INT will be no cakewalk and by bidding you may run into a misfit.

Hand 4

Teams	Dealer W		N/S Vul	
♠ KQT764	<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
♥ A2				
♦ J7	1D	P	1S	P
♣ AJ8	1NT*	P	P	?

* 12-16

Votes: 2 for Dbl; 2 for 2♠; 1 for Pass.
 Marks: 2♠ = 5; Dble = 4; 3♣/Pass = 3.

The question here is does Double promise a spade suit. The two doublers on the panel clearly think so;

Mike: Dble. Must show spades rather than the rounded suits. Partner won't have much so will know that I have a big hand but have some reason not to have bid on the first round.

Sue: Dble. Nice and LOUD (difficult with bidding boxes) I want partner to lead a spade. If partner is asleep, and bids instead of passing, I did not double loud enough!

Not sure about the ethics there Sue but I understand the sentiment! Two other panelists believe if you have spades why not bid them;

Stewart: 2♠. My choices are between double ("please lead a spade" NOT "please bid clubs or hearts" – I'd have doubled 1♠ if that's the hand I

had) and 2♠ - natural and quite a good hand. I'm never going to get very rich defending 1NT doubled (they are green and we are red) and there is still a chance that we can make 4♠ so I bid 2♠.

John: 2♠. A nice hand and 2♠ cannot be anything but natural in this sequence. EW might well make 1NT and a 2♠ contract despite the known distribution should still play well.

Jimmy opts for a more passive bid but interestingly his comment seems to favour bidding;

Jimmy: Pass. Although 2♠ could be right as long as partner will pass it.

I strongly agree with bidding 2♠ here. It must be natural in this position and game in spades is still a distinct possibility. It should also be borne in mind that East may have psyched and it would go massively against the grain to let East get away with it.

Hand 5

Pairs	Dealer S		E/W Vul	
♠ AT2	<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
♥ 965				
♦ J876				P
♣ AQ8	1H	Dbl	P	?

Votes: 3 for 2♥; 2 for 3♦.
 Marks: 2♥ = 5; 3♦ = 4; 2♦ = 3; 2NT = 2.

A broadly split panel with the majority plumping for the forcing bid;

Jimmy: 2♥. I want to be in a game somewhere – let's hear what partner bids.

Sue: 2♥. I am interested in game, but I do not have 4 spades, or a heart stop. It asks partner where he wants to play.

John: 2♥. Slightly aggressive and forcing for one round. You need to hear more about partner's hand – I would expect partner to bid 2 or 3NT with a maximum hand and one or two Heart tricks or indicate hand strength and shape knowing you have a reasonable 11-12 minimum hand that is balanced.

However two of the panelists were distinctly unconvinced about the efficacy of 2♥ and instead chose to make a limit bid on the hand;

Stewart: 3♦. The value bid is 3♦ (natural and non-forcing) even on this horrible suit. Is there any reason to try something else? And if so what? I can't think of anything that doesn't open a can of worms (2♥ for instance - what do I do over 2♠ or 3♣ from

partner? I've no idea).

Mike: 3♦. Great problem! Modern style is to bid 5 cards suits rather than doubling so partner is either balanced-ish (possibly 4-1-4-4) weak-ish (13-14) or balanced or unbalanced strong. If he's weak, this hand isn't going to play well (repeated forces in hearts), so I'm happy to have a bit in hand. My options are 2♥ or 3♦. If I bid 2♥ I'm forcing to suit agreement so realistically won't be able to stop below the 4 level (2♥ – P – 2♠ – P – 3♦ – P – 4♦). So 3♦ is the only bid that caters for partner having both a strong and a weak hand. Sure, I owe him a diamond but have a couple of points in reserve to compensate, so it's the better of bad options!

Partner's hand was ♠Kxx ♥Kx ♦KQxx ♣KJxx; and no game makes so the limit bid in diamonds brings success. It is often these intermediate hands that prove most tricky.

Thanks again to the panel and well done to John this time who scored a maximum 25 with Sue and Stewart joint second on 22.



Grand Prix Teams

By Mike Willoughby

With thanks to John Sansom and Steve Allerston

I wasn't able to play in the September Grand Prix Teams session unfortunately, but understand that I missed a lot of excitement. I won't name names, except to say that I think there is a fair chance that I'd have got both these two fascinating hands wrong!

The first hand was Board 5: -

♠ K82	Dealer North
♥ T9583	NS Vulnerable
♦ 976	
♣ 752	
♠ QJT97	♠ A3
♥ AQ7	♥ 6
♦ Q2	♦ AT8543
♣ QJ8	♣ AK43
♠ 654	
♥ KJ842	
♦ KJ	
♣ T96	

North	East	South	West
P	1D	P	1S
P	2C	P	3NT
P	4NT	P	5D
P	6D		

The key decision here is East's and it is whether to proceed over 3NT. Given the key card in partner's spades, a further effort, while aggressive, seems merited. On the actual sequence, 4NT is invitational – West may choose to pass. However, he is maximum for his bid, so chooses to proceed, showing his one key card on the way just in case! Given his controls, East is always likely to go on. An alternative approach for East to make a positive move is for her to bid 4D over 3NT. This is clearly forcing and makes the shape a bit clearer. The outcome, however, is likely to be the same. However, what would you prefer to play in – 6D by East or 6NT by West? If West plays the hand, a probable heart lead eliminates the need for any decision as to whether to take the spade or heart finesse. Leaving only the small matter of bringing in the diamonds for one loser! Not a gold-plated slam, but the sort that aggressive players will be happy to be in - if it makes.....

Then the nightmare board! I looked at the results on this and tried to work out how the defence had prevailed. Let's follow the story on Board 31 (and applaud the defence, by the way!).

♠ QT952	Dealer South
♥ -	NS Vulnerable
♦ Q9754	
♣ 974	
♠ AJ3	♠ K74
♥ KT	♥ AQ9642
♦ K3	♦ AJT2
♣ AKJ632	♣ -
	♠ 86
	♥ J8753
	♦ 86
	♣ QT85

North	East	South	West
P	1H	P	1C
P	4NT *	P	3NT
P	6NT		5C

* Roman Key Card Blackwood

