

IRISH BRIDGE Journal

Summer 2025

Welcome

Welcome to the
Summer 2025
Journal.



Enda Murphy, Editor

I wrote last year about the potentially thorny issues arising when convicted cheats finish their “sentence” and seek to return to the fold. We’ll have a high-profile case of our own on our hands in a few months. It’s not my purpose to push my own viewpoint – in fact I’m not yet settled on one – but I do think it is useful to draw attention to the issues. Better that people reflect on them now rather than stumble across them unprepared on a future date.

Having done the crime and done the time, is that end of story? Is the perpetrator entitled to be rehabilitated and we all move on? Is that not a central tenet of jurisprudence? Or might there be other ramifications? In 2021 [European Qualifiers for World Championships], Scotland refused to play against an Italian team featuring Fulvio Fantoni, a convicted cheat.

Other countries followed suit. That’s what I’m getting at – even after officialdom has had its say, and justice has taken its course, are there other shoes to fall?

As a matter of fact Scotland subsequently won a Sydney Lazard Award for sportsmanship for their stance. The wording of the citation specifies that recipients “*play hard but fair and hold no grudges*” [the italics are mine]. You see the point I’m sure.

I’ve praised the Regent Premier League in the last two Journals, and have only just woken up to the fact that I neglected to mention the generous sponsorship of Audico, whose CEO is my good friend Anne Tuite. The league finished up in April. Our squad, under skipper Fred Barry, had a good run, coming second in qualifying and losing narrowly in the semi-final.



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Contact editor@cbaie.ie



Well done to the winning Seamus Costello team [Deirdre Tuckey, Carol-Ann Cummins, John Noonan]. Not only did they defeat Tom Hanlon's team in the semis, they despatched BJ O'Brien's outfit in the final. And they played four-handed throughout.

On the international front, Ireland let a winning opportunity slip in the Camrose, but did not threaten in the Lady Milne. Team Ireland rebounded by winning the Spring Fours, a major UK event which attracts the world's best – which John Carroll reports on in this issue. As reported in the Spring Journal, Team Ireland also won the Lederer Invitational in the UK, so they've recorded a most notable double.

In the Teltscher Trophy [Seniors] both Irish teams held winning chances deep into the final match, but in the end lost out to Wales in a real nail-biter. We finished runners-up in the Junior Camrose, whilst the Peggy Bayer allowed future stars to be "blooded".



From June 2013 - Mesbur Fitzgibbon strike GOLD in Ostend at the European Senior Pairs

This year, the towering partnership of Nick Fitzgibbon and Adam Mesbur marks its 50th year. Ireland's pre-eminent bridge historian, Séamus Dowling, paid fulsome tribute in the Irish Times. It was well-deserved. This is the longest partnership in international bridge history. Nick and Adam have put Ireland at the forefront of world bridge and kept us there. And thankfully for us, their partnership shows no signs of waning.

At the time of writing, I'm hearing of plans to run a US Regional tournament, as well [I think] as an Irish competition, in Dublin in early September. It's a Thomas MacCormac initiative and if it does come to fruition, would be a most interesting development.

As I sign off, I've just received a photo from a friend. It shows two young men in Ibiza in 1985. One went on to become Ireland's GOAT, the other became Journal Editor. Sic transit Gloria mundi.

Enda Murphy
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Test Your Declarer Play

Tomás Roche



You are West as declarer, playing teams. What is your play strategy on each board?

Board 1 Dealer North. Vul None.

♠ AKJ8	N	♠ 72
♥ 2	W	♥ Q98743
♦ A84	E	♦ K
♣ AKQJ3	S	♣ 6542

W	N	E	S
	P	P	P
2♣	P	2♦	P
3♣	P	4♦ ¹	P
4NT ²	P	5♦ ³	P
6♣	All Pass		

¹ 4♦ = Splitter, support for clubs

² 4NT = RKCB for clubs

³ 4♠ = 0 or 3 key cards

The Play

North leads the ♠7 against 6♣. How do you plan the play?

Board 3 Dealer South. Vul E/W.

♠ AQ3	N	♠ 1064
♥ -	W	♥ AJ10842
♦ AK864	E	♦ Q53
♣ AK954	S	♣ 8

W	N	E	S
			P
1♦	P	1♥	P
3♣	P	3♦ ¹	P
3♠	P	4♥ ²	P
4♠ ²	P	5♣ ²	P
6♦	All Pass		

¹ 3♦ = With Hxx in diamonds, it is rarely wrong to show preference for partner's suit

² = Cue bid

The Play

North leads the ♠7 against 6♦. How do you plan the play?

Board 2 Dealer East. Vul N/S.

♠ K873	N	♠ AJ64
♥ KQ4	W	♥ AJ9
♦ Q62	E	♦ AK53
♣ 432	S	♣ AK

W	N	E	S
		2♣ ¹	P
2♦ ²	P	2NT	P
3♠ ³	P	3NT	P
4NT ⁴	P	5♦ ⁵	P
5♠ ⁶	P	6♠	All Pass

¹ 2♣ = Strong

² 2♦ = Relay

³ 3♠ = Transfer to 3NT.

⁴ 4NT = Invitational

⁵ 5♦ = Natural, 4 cards

⁶ 5♠ = Natural, 4 cards

The Play

North leads the ♣Q against 6♠. How do you plan the play?

Board 4 Dealer West. Vul All.

♠ K4	N	♠ AQ1083
♥ 95	W	♥ AQ76
♦ K10764	E	♦ Q
♣ A1073	S	♣ 952

W	N	E	S
P	P	1♠	P
2♦	P	2♥	P
2NT	P	3NT	All Pass

The Play

North leads the ♦5 against 3NT. South wins ♦A and returns ♦3, to the 6 and 8. North switches to a low heart. How do you plan the play?

Answers on page 30



Bidding Quiz 10

By Bob Pattinson



All eight hands are from teams events. Entries to Bobpattinson@ymail.com by 7th August 2025. Good luck!

Question 1

Dealer North. Vul None. Teams.

♠ -
♥ AK54
♦ AQ84
♣ A8652

W	N	E	S
	3♠ ¹	P	?
¹ 3♠=7 suit: 6-10			

Question 2

Dealer West. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠ AKJ2
♥ 98
♦ Q832
♣ KQ3

W	N	E	S
1♦ ¹	?		
¹ 1♦=4+			

Question 3

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

♠ Q4
♥ A87
♦ J1087
♣ Q1053

W	N	E	S
	P	1♠	2NT ¹
P	?		
¹ 2NT= 5-5: 6-10 or 14+			

Question 4

Dealer North. Vul None. Teams.

♠ -
♥ AJ1064
♦ A75
♣ KQJ93

W	N	E	S
	1♥	2♠ ¹	P
P	?		
¹ 2♠=6 suit: 6-10:			

Question 5

Dealer East. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠ KQ
♥ AKQ6
♦ K
♣ KQJ932

W	N	E	S
		P	1♦ ¹
?			
¹ 1♦=4+			

Question 6

Dealer South. Vul E/W. Teams

♠ 5
♥ J632
♦ 7
♣ AKQJ987

W	N	E	S
			1♣
P	1♥	1♠	?

Question 7

Dealer South. Vul None. Teams.

♠ 85
♥ A7654
♦ 3
♣ Q10732

W	N	E	S
			P
1♠	X	P	1NT
P	P	?	

Question 8

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams

♠ 84
♥ 105
♦ 65
♣ AKJ9632

W	N	E	S
		1♥	X
?			

Entries to:

bobpattinson@ymail.com

by 7th August 2025

Please remember to state your grade in your entry

- Novice/Intermediate
- Master (below Life Master)



Bidding Quiz System

General Approach:

Five card majors, three+ minors, 2/1 GF,
1NT = 15-17,
2♣ = art GF with 2♦ waiting response

Balanced Hands

4333, 4432, 5332
(with five minor)

12-14 and 18-19 open 1♣/♦

20-22 : 2NT (may include five card major hence play puppet Stayman)

Major Suit Responses

1NT = 5-10 F1:

2♣/♦/♥ = 2/1 GF

3♣/♦/♥ over 1♠ opening and 2♠/3♣/♦ over 1♥ opening = four card+ trump support: 8-11 : first or second round control in bid suit.

3M = 4-7 and 4+ trumps

2NT = Jacoby 16+:
4+ trumps:

Opener bids a singleton at the three-level, a second five card suit at the four-level, rebids 3M with 17-19, 4M with 12-14, and 3NT with 15-16.

Responses to the forcing 1NT:

example for 1♥: 1NT: 2♣ = Gazzilli : either 11-16 with 5M and 4+ clubs or any 17+ hand

2♦ = 11-16 : 3+ diamonds

2♥ = 11-16 : 6+ hearts

2♠ = 14-16: 6 hearts and 5 spades

2NT = 14-16 : 6 hearts and a 4 card minor : now 3♣ pass/ correct; 3♦ = GF asks for minor; 3♥ - to play

3♣/♦ = 14-16: 5-5

3♥ = 14-16 : 6+ hearts and strong suit

Example of Gazzilli after 1♥:1NT:2♣

2♦ = any 8+ suit

2♥ = 5-7 : 5+ hearts

2♠ = 5-7 : 6+ spades

2NT = 5=7: 3 suiter with short hearts

3♣/♦ = 5-7 : 6+ minor

After responder bids 2♦ opener rebids 2M with 11-16 and 5M and 4+ clubs
2NT = 17-19 balanced : other bids game forcing

Responses to 1nt Opening (15-17)

2♣ = non-promissory Stayman

2♦/♥/♠/NT = transfers

3♣/♦/♥/♠ = long suits with slam interest

Two-Level Suit Opening Bids

Bid	Meaning	Responses
2♣	23 + or equivalent unbalanced	2♦ = waiting bid
2♦/♥/♠	6-10 : six card suit, using rule of two, three or four depending upon different vulnerability of the two sides	2NT = enquiry: opener signs off with three-level rebid of own suit with minimum and bids a new suit to show a feature or 3NT with a feature in the opening suit

Three/Four-Level Opening Bids

Bid	Meaning	Responses
3♣/♦/♥/♠	6-10 : six or seven card suit	New suit forcing
3NT	Eight card broken minor suit	4♣ = pass / convert 4♦ = interested in club slam but only part score in diamonds 5♣ = willing to play in game in either minor 4M = asking bid; interest in game in either major: seeks control in bid major 4NT = name suit and quality: 5♣/♦ = confirms suit but denies Ace or King : 5♥/♠ = respective suit and holds Ace or King in that minor
4♣/♦	Namyats: eight card solid major in ♥/♠ : three key cards	Bid of intermediate suits 4♦/♥ asks for shortage and 4M denies any shortage
4♥/♠	Eight card broken suit: less than three key cards	4NT = Roman key card Blackwood : 1430
3NT	Ace asking	5♣ = no ace; 5♦/♥/♠/6C = ace in bid suit; 5NT = two aces

Opening Side Action over Interference

Bid	Meaning
Negative double	Shows values in the remaining two suits
Support Double	Opener confirms three card trump support, so a raise of the suit shows four card support
4th suit	Forcing: asking for more information
Cue bid	Unassuming and forcing: asks for more information
Jump cue	Has a long running suit: seeks NT stop
2NT	Relay to 3♣: this may then be passed or converted to a new long weak suit; thus a direct new suit at the 3-level is GF
Transfers after own 1NT is overcalled	Double /new suit/2NT are all transfers to the next suit (2NT over 2♠); follow up in second suit is game forcing; transfer to intervening suit asks for NT stop, and now accepting the transfer denies a stop and 3NT confirms one

Intervening Bidding

Bid	Meaning
1NT overcall	16-18
Weak jump overcalls	6-10
Two suited overcalls	Direct cue = two highest suits 2NT = two lowest suits; 3♣ = two remaining suits
5-5 : either 6-10 or 15+	
Defence to 1NT	Double = minor two suiter or major two suiter: advancer assumes minors first 2♣ = three suiter with clubs; 2♦ = three suiter with diamonds 2♥/♠ = either six card suit or the bid suit plus a minor side suit: 2NT asks for the minor

Slam Bidding

Roman key card Blackwood (1430) and Kickback in the minors (1430)

Non serious 3NT: when a trump fit is found 3NT is artificial confirming a minimum hand still prepared to show controls if partner fails to sign off. By passing 3NT shows a strong hand, bidding 1st or 2nd controls up the line.

CBAI News

Dermot O'Brien



As we close the books on another season, I think we can look back on another good year for bridge in Ireland.

- ▶ Our **membership numbers are up by 3%**, which is in line with our expectations at the start of the season;
- ▶ Our **national competitions have all been very well supported, with aggregate numbers up around 10%** on the previous year's already solid figures. Congresses too have seen their numbers grow strongly, and we have welcomed (or are about to welcome) Ennis, Sligo, and Killarney back live, with Carlow scheduled to return next season;
- ▶ We have lots of teachers giving classes to new students, and the Association has been able to support the development of accredited teachers and the training of new Tournament Directors during the season (although we could still do with more of the latter, at both club and national levels);
- ▶ We continue to be in good shape financially, and have the funds to invest in projects which will help bridge to grow.

As I trust you already know, the CBAI offices stay open all summer. The main body of work in that period is the collection and application of masterpoints in readiness for the new season in September. Things do get a bit quieter, of course, which means we have the time to devote to some longer-term issues. We have two big projects on the go currently – the exploration of an amalgamation with our counterparts in Northern Ireland, the NIBU, and the revamp of our member database – and will report progress on both these items at the upcoming AGM.



Ireland's Open Team, Conor, John, Mark, Grainne (NPC) Nick, Adam and Tom - winners of the Lederer Trophy and the Spring Fours.

Ireland did not have much luck in the various international competitions this season, I'm afraid. Our Camrose team led with a few boards to go, but could not seal the deal, while in the Teltscher Trophy (Senior Camrose) recently both the Ireland and CBAI teams each held the lead in the final session, only to see Wales snatch victory in the final few boards. Our Lady Milne team, for which we had high hopes, never really got going, while our two Junior teams repeated their previous year's achievement of comfortably beating everyone bar England but finishing well adrift of the winners. There were two major successes to report, however, with our Open Team winning not one but two of the most prestigious EBU events – the Lederer Trophy in February and the Spring Fours in May. So take a bow Team Moran.

While I am on the international front, we also have the exciting news to report that, courtesy of the work of Thomas MacCormac, Jade Barrett, and Rory Egan, Dublin will host the first American Contract Bridge League tournament ever to be held outside North America, a sectional tournament scheduled for 1-4 September in Lansdowne Football Club. This event will be held under ACBL regulations (so no cash prizes!), and will be followed over the weekend of 5-7 September by the Grand Master

Bridge Congress, where it is hoped that our overseas visitors will stay to enjoy a congress Irish-style. Local players will be very welcome at both events. All next season's fixtures are published on the CBAI website calendar.

One other noteworthy event is the Regent Bridge Club's Centenary Congress, in the O'Reilly Hall, UCD, from 11-13 July – again, all are welcome!

I'd like to thank all the club and regional committees for all their hard work during the season. If there is anything more we can do to help you, or to make our processes work more smoothly for you, we'd welcome your suggestions. Thanks also to the members of the various CBAI committees and governance bodies; all our volunteers are always ready with their time and advice whenever the need arises. The same is true of our Tournament Director cohort, without whose hard work and expertise our events would not be anything like as successful as they are, so my thanks to all our TDs too.

Finally, I am delighted to invite you to the CBAI AGM on Saturday 5 July in the Greenway Manor Hotel in Waterford, at 2pm, at which we will inaugurate John Phelan, from the South Eastern Region, as our CBAI National President for 2025/26. All CBAI members are welcome to attend, and the AGM will be followed by a game of bridge for anyone wishing to play.

Results and Upcoming Fixtures

National Results

Camrose Trophy (Belfast, 7-9 March)

- 1st England
2nd Ireland (Nick FitzGibbon, Adam Mesbur, Mark Moran, John Carroll, Tom Hanlon, Conor Boland, Gráinne Barton (NPC))

IBU Inter-County Teams Championships (Cavan, 8-9 March)

Burke Trophy (Open) Winners

Paul Delaney, Tomás Roche, David Dunne, Martin Brady

O'Connor Trophy (Intermediate) Winners

Simon Burrell, Vicky Pigot, Sarann Doyle, Kay Falkner-Sheridan

National Teams Championships (Enistymon, 22-23 March)

Kelburne Cup - Master Winners

Dublin South: Paul Delaney, Tomás Roche, David Dunne, Martin Brady

Bankers Trophy - Intermediate A Winners

North Midland: Kevin Woulfe, Mary Macken, Padraig McKenna, Pat O'Halloran

Tierney Trophy - Intermediate B Winners

North Midland: Tom Roche, Joan Peppard, John Higgins, Dillon Murtagh

Lady Milne Trophy (Bristol, 11-13 April)

- 1st EBU
4th Ireland (Jeannie Fitzgerald, Joan Kenny, Siobhan Part, Teresa Rigney, Louise Mitchell, Lucy Phelan)

IBU Seniors Congress (Cavan, 22-24 April)

Gala Pairs Winners

John Hopkins & Keith Clarke

Congress Pairs Winners

Maria Donegan & Sean Mulvaney

Congress Teams Winners

Conor Moore, David Ryan, Jim McAndrew, Finian O'Donoghue

Confined Events Weekend (Loughrea, 26-27 April)

Lambert Cup (Pairs) Winners

Sean Whelan & Brendan Rushe

Cooper Cup (Teams) Winners

Alan Auchincloss, Kyrle Allen, Hugh Twomey, Declan O'Brien

JJ Murphy Trophy (Novice Pairs) Winners

Mary Devine & Ruth Keogh

Moylan Cup (Malahide, 26-27 April)

Winners

Anna Onishuk & Karel De Raeymaeker

IBU Club Pairs Championships (Templeogue, 10 May)

Master Pairs Winners

John Noonan & Carol Ann Cummins

Intermediate Pairs Winners

Charles Alken & Anthony Alken

Teltscher Trophy (Gormanstown, Dublin, 16-18 May)

- 1st Wales
2nd CBAI (Gay Keaveney, Enda Glynn, Donal Garvey, Pat Quinn, Fred Barry, Paul Porteous, Joan Kenny (NPC))
3rd Ireland (BJ O'Brien, Randal Milne, Padraig Ó Briain, Micheal Ó Briain, Peter Goodman, Terry Walsh, Derek O'Gorman (NPC))

4Fun Inter-County Teams Championships (Westmanstown, 24 May)

Winners

Offaly: Doreen McInerney, Patrick Martin, Pattie Ryan, Patricia Mahon

Egan Trophy (All-Ireland Teams Championships, Belfast 24-25 May)

Winners

John Carroll, Conor Boland, Adam Mesbur, Nick FitzGibbon

Upcoming Fixtures

Date	Event	Venue
2024		
June 6-8	Yeats Country (Sligo) Congress	Clayton Hotel
June 13-15	Killarney Congress	Castleross Park Resort
June 21-July 5	11th European Transnational Championships	Poznan, Poland
July 5	CBAI AGM	Greenway Manor Hotel, Waterford
July 11-13	Regent Bridge Club Centenary Congress	O'Reilly Hall, UCD
Aug 24	Boyne Valley Bridge Bash	Knightsbridge Hotel & Golf Resort,
Aug 30-31	Trials Pre-Qualifier Event 2025	TBC
Sept 1-4	American Contract Bridge League tournament	Lansdowne Football Club, Dublin 4
Sept 13-14	Duais An Uachtarain	Tower Hotel, Waterford



Winners of the 4Fun Inter-County Teams: Offaly: Doreen McInerney, Patrick Martin, Pattie Ryan, and Patricia Mahon with CBAI President Catherine Byrne and Trophy Sponsor, Frank Kelly.



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UPCOMING



BRIDGE TRAIN to CORK



Date- 10th June, 2025

Departure- 10am, from Heuston station, Dublin

Arrival- Ceant station, Cork @12:32pm

Return- 6:32pm, to Dublin (same day)

Arrival in Dublin @9:02pm

Enjoy lunch in Dean Hotel

(4 star, sister hotel to Dean in Dublin and Galway)

Menu to follow..

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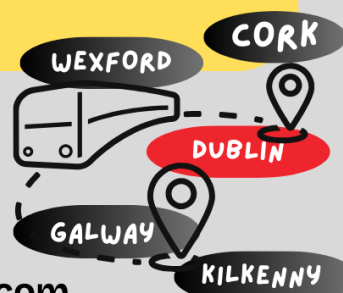
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My Bridge Career - 1971 to date

Gay Keaveney



I took my first steps in Portadown in August 1971 when I went there on a week's holiday to my first cousin Des Scully and his wife Joan, who were both avid bridge players. Des was a first cousin on my mother's side of the family.

I played with Des in Portadown bridge club that week and my first opponent was Greer McKenzie who remained a great friend over the years. Both Greer and Des played many times for Northern Ireland and Des was later president of the CBAI when he moved to county Meath. On returning to college in September I joined the bridge club there with Rory Timlin. We were class mates in school but neither of us played in our first year in University. The bridge club in UCG was started by Arthur Kavanagh who was also a first cousin of mine on my father's side of the family. His mother and father played Solo Whist in my home with my parents and an aunt of mine about three nights per week. Arthur was always at her to get me to start playing bridge. If one of the four solo players, on a particular night was late, I always sat in. This was right through secondary school. Since the playing of the cards in Solo Whist is in effect the same as in bridge, I never had to learn how to play the cards when I started playing bridge. Arthur played international bridge himself for Ireland with Paul Barrett. *[If memory serves, he was also the first international partner of a youthful Nick FitzGibbon. Ed.]* I have to say the standard in UCG at that time was amazing with many players who later played for Ireland at junior and senior level playing

there. Paddy Walsh (David's dad), Rory Timlin, Michael McDonagh, Denis O'Donovan, Paul Barrett and Johnny McKeown is just to name a few but there were many others too who won many national competitions.

When Enda Murphy asked me to write this article I said of course but I have to say I am the world's worst historian. I am a man of the moment bridge player but only have vague recollections of winning certain competitions. Certain moments in my bridge playing career do stand out and many of those are not the fact that I might have won the tournament, but certain occurrences that happened during the event. Enda said he could help me by sending on a compilation by Seamus Dowling of what I had done. There were facts in there about myself that I did not know. Seamus has done amazing work but someone pointed an error to me in his book

which I assume is there and I will recall that later. I don't blame Seamus for the error if it is there, because I would have made the same mistake myself.

When the facts arrived from Seamus they told me I was the first Grand Master in Ireland. I cannot believe that! I'm just wondering was the Grand Master grade only invented after I took up playing bridge? I also did not know until Enda sent me my record that when I won the Moylan in 2015 with Enda Glynn, I overtook Ruth Giddings' record of 54 National titles. Mine stands at 60 or 63 depending on whether you count the online ones played during Covid. *[The CEO tells me you don't count the online ones, Gay. Ed.]* I have to say I'm not a fan of the online game because of the cheating that goes on. So blatant some of it. I honestly don't know if they count my first Major [the Shamrock



Gay Keaveney and Enda Glynn, winners of the Moylan Cup in 2015, presented by the late Ciara Burns, then President of the IBU. This landmark occasion saw Gay overtaking Ruth Giddings' record of 54 National titles. Gay's current National title count is 60.

Lodge Trophy with Rory Timlin in 1977] or the first Four Session event with Eddie Fitzgerald. The Master Pairs has replaced that tournament which used to be played in December. I have to mention Marie Gleeson here who organised The Shamrock Lodge Trophy and was CBAI secretary for many years. She was so efficient at manually match pointing and made a huge contribution to Irish bridge. Another woman who made a similar contribution was Una Walsh, who took over the running of the IBJ after her brother Paddy died. She was a workaholic and did everything for that Journal, keeping it in print.

My first international event was on an Irish Junior team in Edinburgh with John Wood. He is currently a member of the RBPA. (Retired Bridge Players Association). After that I played with Paddy Walsh and I know we won National events both pairs and teams on numerous occasions. I remember one European Championship in Wiesbaden in Germany when Pat Walshe and Niall Tóibín were also on the team. Niall had taken vaccinations before he left home as he was on his way to work in Africa. This made him ill and unable to play for a couple of days. So I sat in and played with Pat. Now Pat and I had previously played as we had won the Revington three years in a row. I think this might be recorded as Paddy Walsh in Seamus Dowling's book (so I'm told). Apologies if I'm wrong Seamus. I even remembered being kibitzed by Rory Boland in one of those as he was just starting out in his bridge career. Anyone would benefit by watching Pat as he was a genius at the game. We used to argue a bit on differences in opinion on situations but nothing major. However I must recall one hand with him from Wiesbaden against Hungary which I will always remember. Pat was dealer and passed and the Hungarian opened 1♦. I made a Ghestem bid holding 5/4 in the Majors when I was showing 5/5. I had a 12 or 13 count which also included a stiff ♦A. Anyway Pat jumped to 4♠ and

my right hand opponent bid 5♦. I doubled and it went for 1400. Pat's face appeared under the screen and he said "Stop making arbitrary decisions!". I don't know if it was my double or my Ghestem bid he was referring to and I didn't ask. I just said "For F—k sake be satisfied with your lot". It was one of those freak hands where everything lay right for us. It was played in a part score at the other table. I smile every time I recall his face appearing under the screen and the words exchanged. Pat was not exactly behind the door when it came to arbitrary decisions – but most of them paid off.

One of the most underrated players I played with on an Irish team was Michael McGloughlin. We only played in trials once and made the team. He had not played in trials for years previously but he only did so for that one year as he did not like the stress of international competition. What a pity - he was so talented and rock solid. We played in Salsomaggiore in Italy, a venue I've played in on a few occasions in European Championships. It was Paddy I played with on the previous occasions. In pre-computer scoring days there were TVs displaying the time left to get your boards played. We were never slow but I recall playing Scotland in the dungeon room and on my right hand side was probably one of the slowest players I've ever played against. I was watching the seconds left approach zero coming near the end and I let fly... "For Feck sake will you play the 2 or the 3 it's not

gonna make one bit of difference!" (I was declarer). He is back playing international bridge again having been away for quite a number of years. It's occurrences like that which stick out in my mind. That team finished 12th and it was like The League of Nations. Monty Rosenberg, Ramin Sai, Hastings Campbell, Brian Senior and Paddy and myself. Because of differences in opinion on the team Monty ended up playing with three different partners in the event. Some of you might work out the reason but we won't go there. Monty was a great character with words at will, just like his original partner Des Deery (a super player) who emigrated to Spain. One of Monty's quotes at the table on one of the European teams I played on with him was. "Success at last at the slam level", after he made a slam on day 12 of the event. All previous efforts had gone down.

I have also played many times on international teams with Rory Timlin and twice I'm told with Enda Glynn. One of my most notable achievements was winning the Revington with John Comyn. I don't know how many National titles John won but not too many I think. That pairs event has been lucky for me and I also won it twice with Martin Jones and also with Tom Hanlon. I think nine times in total.

My list of partners who I won National titles with apart from all those I've previously mentioned is quite long: Peter Goodman, Adam Dunn, Les Steel, Rory Boland and Teresa Rigney.



Enda Glynn, Gay Keaveney, Peter Goodman and Diarmuid Reddan - winners of the Egan Trophy in 2018, presented by then CBAI President, Fearghal O'Boyle.

I also played in a European Pairs championship event with Adrian Thomas and European mixed teams with Teresa. I have to say Adrian is also a very talented player but we have yet to play together in an Irish event. I play in RTC club every Monday night in winter with Enda Glynn and act as tournament director.

Away from the bridge table I was on the committee that purchased the Galway Bridge Centre site in 1982 for over £200,000. A lot of money then, but every bridge player who took out a life membership contributed £200 and we had a very manageable mortgage. It was at that time that I started the Irish Schools bridge team championship. We had five teams the first year but then it snowballed and increased in size every year reaching a maximum number of the mid-60s in team numbers. We got the bridge players of Galway and their friends to give all the players free accommodation. Many of today's players started their bridge career in that event.

I am actually a National Tournament Director but haven't directed as I'm often playing. I have often been texted by Fearghal O'Boyle when he is one of the directors in a European Championship, seeking my opinion on a dispute that has arisen in the Championship. I suppose it is because I am a player and would be aware of all the angles on the dispute that has arisen. A few times he has told me I have given perspectives that they had not thought of. I suppose I will always give an unbiased view solely based on the rules of the game but I would never know the identity of the players when giving my opinion.



David Walsh, Enda Glynn, Gay Keaveney and Paul Scannell, winners of the Kelburne Cup in 2023 with then CBAI President, Pat O'Mahony. This same team also won this event in 2018, 2019 and 2022.

I have a few simple principles which I use all the time.

- ▶ **First** is one that most of you will never have heard of "Out, Out Damn Spot!" [Lady Macbeth]. It is about the only line of Shakespeare that I know and I use it when I'm tempted to make a bid that I know I should not really be making.
- ▶ **Second** one is Show Your Hand Once and don't be tempted to bid again unless your partner makes a forcing bid or if you are asked are you maximum or minimum for your bid and you raise when maximum.
- ▶ **Third** one is The Law of Total Tricks. Basically in a part score competitive auction with opposition bidding too, it's the number of trumps that your side holds that is the level of bidding to which your side can bid to in the auction. Nine trumps usually gives you permission to bid to nine tricks which is a contract at the three-level. A mistake that many make is going one level higher when they have something like a 14 count after just opening a bid of 1. It usually is the number of trumps that you hold between you that is the deciding factor.

All these conventions are designed to stop you overbidding which is endemic with a lot of players in Ireland. If you apply them, you won't go far wrong.

[Editor's note. I'm indebted to Gay for penning this illuminating piece. He's never one to trumpet his achievements, so I had to coax and cajole. His achievements alone make him a titan of our game, but his equable temperament and demeanour at the table also stand as an exemplar we should all aspire to. Thanks Gay!]

Moylan Cup 2025

Dónal Garvey



The Moylan Cup, played in the Malahide Bridge Centre in April, was won by Anna Onishuk and Karel De Raeymaeker who finished just 0.15% ahead of Cian Holland and Pat Quinn, with Mark Moran and John Carroll third.

It was a remarkably tight competition with just two tops separating the leading eight Pairs after 78 Boards.

I was playing with my son, Tommy. We finished eighth of the 40 pairs, with a 55% score.

Board 16. Session 1 Dealer West. Vul E/W.

		♠ A62	
		♥ 10954	
		♦ 64	
		♣ AK104	
♠ 10943	N	♠ K7	
♥ A6		♥ KQJ832	
♦ 10853	W	♦ K7	
♣ J76	E	♣ 832	
		♠ QJ85	
		♥ 7	
		♦ AQJ92	
		♣ Q95	

♠	♥	♦	♣	NT
N	5	4	4	1
S	5	4	4	1
E		1		
W		1		

Tommy doubled East's 1♥ opening and I decided I didn't really have a stop so I bid 1♠ and was promptly raised to 4♠. The favourable lie of the cards allowed me make 10 tricks for a shared top with two others. The leading two pairs defended 2NT+1 and both scored 58% while the third pair were N/S and played in 4♣ for 18%.

Board 4. Session 2 Dealer West. Vul All.

		♠ QJ65	
		♥ 98754	
		♦ 952	
		♣ 10	
♠ 1097	N	♠ 8	
♥ J102		♥ 63	
♦ J76	W	♦ AKQ10843	
♣ J984	E	♣ Q52	
		♠ AK432	
		♥ AKQ	
		♦ -	
		♣ AK763	

♠	♥	♦	♣	NT
N	4	6	7	
S	4	6	7	
E	1			
W	1			

A few days before the competition Tommy sent me a system which was quite different to the one I usually play. I said I would give it a go, but completely forgot three or four times - certainly enough to cost us the competition. On this Board East opened 1♦ and Tommy overcalled 3♦. Playing my usual game that shows a solid minor and asks me to bid 3NT with a diamond stop - but playing with Tommy I forgot that it showed a black two-suiter. Anyway I bid 3♥ and he bid 3♠. I got it into my head that he was scrambling and decided to Pass with 7♠ cold!! Cian and Pat scored 100% when their opponents played in 6♥ and went off after the ♦K lead. In fact 6♥ can still make after ruffing the diamond lead; you play ♣A and ruff a Club, then ♥K and ruff another Club; back to the ♥A and start running the Clubs throwing Diamonds. The defence can only get the ♥J. On this hand the winners played in 4♠ while 6♠ was bid against Mark and John.

Board 6. Session 3 Dealer East. Vul E/W.

		♠ 8643	
		♥ K109643	
		♦ 9	
		♣ A9	
♠ A10	N	♠ QJ9752	
♥ J		♥ Q82	
♦ AJ6542	W	♦ K3	
♣ 8542	E	♣ 73	
		♠ K	
		♥ A75	
		♦ Q1087	
		♣ KQJ106	

♠	♥	♦	♣	NT
N	2	4		
S	2	4		
E	1	3		
W	1	3		

This is a fascinating hand. It was usually played in 4♥ from my North hand on the lead of the ♠Q and a diamond switch from West.

This defence poses no problem and the contract made 11 times. Tommy played it from the South hand, knowing that East held a six-card spade suit. He got the lead of the ♠A from Jeannie Fitzgerald and the wicked ♠10 continuation which he ruffed. He cashed the ♥A and saw the ♥J on his left. He decided to play trumps to be 2/2 and had to go down when East ruffed the third Club. An alternative line is to go to the ♣A and ruff a Spade, but if this is over-ruffed by the ♥Q when West has ♥QJ a club return leaves him stuck in his hand and the third Club will be ruffed by the outstanding trump. The winners bid and made 4♥ while the runners up defended 4♥ making; while the third pair were allowed play 2♦-1 as E/W getting 72% on the Board.

Board 20. Session 3 Dealer West. Vul All.

		♠ J9643	
		♥ 5	
		♦ 84	
		♣ AJ1082	
♠ AKQ1052	N	♠ 7	
♥ KQ8		♥ AJ10963	
♦ K1053	W	♦ AQ9	
♣ -	E	♣ Q93	
		♠ 8	
		♥ 742	
		♦ J762	
		♣ K7654	

♠	♥	♦	♣	NT
N	1			
S	2			
E	5	7	5	2
W	5	7	5	2

On this Board the stone cold Grand Slam was bid only five times out of 20, including by Fred Barry and Paul Porteous against us. Practically everyone is playing 2/1 FG so when West opens 1♠ and hears 2♥ from partner he has a monster of a hand. I think you should bid 5♣ (exclusion KCB) and you will sail into 7♥. The first and second pairs defended 6♥ while the third pair declared 6♥.

UK Spring Foursomes 2025

Team Ireland wins

John Carroll



55 teams contested this prestigious event, which is part of the World Bridge Tour and dates back to 1962.

I've played this tournament over 20 times, I've got to the final five times with four different partners, each time I've faced a team captained by Allfrey. I've lost by 1 imp and I've lost in extra boards. You can probably imagine from this history what an incredible feeling it was to finally win!

We won five out of our six qualifying matches, then our quarter-final. This was hand #17 of the semi-final vs team Ashe:

As North I held:

♠ K109
♥ K4
♦ 1076
♣ AK1052

W	N	E	S
	1♣ ¹	1♦	2♦ ²
P	4♥	4♠	5♦ ³
P	6♥		

¹ 1♣ = 2+

² 2♦ = 6+ hearts inv+

³ 5♦ = cuebid

6♥ might look a little pushy considering I'd already accepted a game try, and East's bidding suggested things would be breaking badly. However, partner has also heard the bidding and has managed to make a slam try missing the good controls [AKKK] that I held.

Opening lead is ♦A and dummy has:

♠ AJ74
♥ AQ109752
♦ 5
♣ 6

It looks like the ♠Q will be onside (or singleton offside) because of East's bidding so I just have to consider taking a first round finesse against West's potential Jxxx of hearts. But East switches a trump so no problem there.

East had taken a couple of minutes to bid 4♠ so I decided he was more likely to be 7-4 rather than 6-5 shape. So I took the precaution of playing five rounds of trumps ditching a spade and two clubs from my hand (there's no future in clubs as east is unlikely to have more than one but I keep AK10 just in case QJ doubleton) I then cross on a club and ruff a diamond. I know from the carding that east has sole guard of diamonds so I can play my last trump and then cross to the ♠K to lead the ♣K in this position:

♠ ?		♠ x	
♥ -		♥	
♦ -		♦ 10	
♣ QJ		♣ K	
	W	N	E
			♠ ?x
			♥ -
			♦ K
			♣ -
		S	
		♠ AJ7	
		♥	
		♦	
		♣	

A typical show up squeeze. To keep the ♦K, east has to throw a spade and then a spade to the ace finds an unlikely Q in the west hand - phew. Opps were in 4♥+2 at the other table, we won the Semi-final by 13imps so going down in 6♥ would have cost the match.

The full hand:

♠ Q5		♠ K109
♥ J83		♥ K4
♦ Q9		♦ T76
♣ QJ8743		♣ AKT52
	N	
	W	E
		♠ 8632
		♥ 6
		♦ AKJ8432
		♣ 9
	S	
		♠ AJ74
		♥ AQ109752
		♦ 5
		♣ 6

We went on to win the Final by 100—45 IMPs against - Allfrey!!



Winning Team: Mark Moran, John Carroll, Tom Hanlon, Conor Boland, Nick Fitzgibbon, Adam Mesbur, NPC Gráinne Barton.

Just One Second More

Jim Doyle



Go to almost any bridge club in the world and you will hear complaints about the slow play. Some players play fast, some play slowly and a few play very slowly. In an ideal world it would be nice if we could get all the real slow players to speed up. Sometimes however the speedier ones could gain if they slowed down just a little.

In a recent club game, declarer played too fast and should have lost one more trick.

		♠AQJ10	
		♥10	
		♦	
		♣K9	
♠86	N	♠K9543	
♥-	W	♥	
♦	E	♦8	
♣107654	S	♣2	
		♠7	
		♥J	
		♦	
		♣AQJ83	

South (declarer) was playing in 4♥ in a 4-4 fit. Trumps had been drawn and the remaining cards are as shown above. South starts to run the clubs starting with the ♣K from dummy but doesn't spot that East shows out on the 2nd club. Accordingly having cashed the ♣KAQJ, South think that the ♣8 is a winner. In practice they can ruff the ♣8 anyway and ruff the last spade in hand with their remaining trump making their 4♥. However having played the ♣8 from hand and having touched the ♠Q in dummy, they notice that the ♣10 was beating the ♣8 so they immediately say "no ruff that".

This was the local friendly club game where the director (me) is rarely called. When they are called it is almost invariably "lead out of turn", "a revoke" or "I only have 12 cards". This being the case, I said

nothing as I would have to rule against the declarer in favour of myself. So result was scored as 4♥ making. (My partner was not impressed!!).

In the above case the change by declarer to ruff the last club was clearly not an unintended designation.

- ▶ They themselves had touched the card
- ▶ They clearly thought the ♠8 was winning the trick.
- ▶ Rule says that they cannot change the card played, so the 4♥ should have been scored as 4♥-1.

Perhaps the best known example of the above ruling came about in the last board of the 2003 Bermuda Bowl final where USA gained 12 IMPs over Italy on the last board of the event to emerge with an amazing 304-303 victory over Italy.

The issue was not settled, however, until an appeals committee had rendered a ruling on a disputed ending to the final board.

In the closed room, USA NS had gone plus 400 against 4♥ by Italy's E/W.

		♠2	
		♥AJ93	
		♦KQ109865	
		♣5	
♠J10	N	♠A6543	
♥542	W	♥KQ1086	
♦A7	E	♦42	
♣K107642	S	♣A	
		♠KQ987	
		♥7	
		♦J3	
		♣QJ983	

In the open room, USA 1 doubled Italy's North [Lauria] in 5♦. If Italy could get out for down one – minus 100 – it would be an 11-IMP gain and the match would be tied.

East [Soloway] led the ♣A and switched to a top heart.

With no play for Lauria's contract, it was a case of damage limitation; down two would be another 300 for the US and 12IMPs – and the world championship. Down one would be a tie. Lauria adopted a straightforward line; heart ruff, club ruff, heart ruff and the ♠K.

The layout was then as shown, East [Soloway] to play:

		♠	
		♥9	
		♦KQ10965	
		♣	
♠10	N	♠6543	
♥	W	♥10	
♦A7	E	♦42	
♣K1076	S	♣	
		♠Q987	
		♥	
		♦	
		♣QJ9	

Declarer had lost two tricks, ♣A and ♠A. Dummy was out of trumps and North still had the ♦A to lose as well as a losing heart.

Soloway could cash the master ♥10 and win the Bermuda bowl. Instead he unaccountably played a spade.

Lauria could now win the Bermuda Bowl by playing the ♠Q, discarding his heart loser. But he had convinced himself East would cash his heart winner, so discarded a spade, the seven. West followed with the ten and only now Lauria realised what had happened. He attempted to change Dummy's card to ♠Q.

The director was called and ruled the ♠7 was played - resulting in two down for minus 300. This ruling was upheld on appeal, citing rule 45B from the law book, backing the director. The rule states that when a card is touched it is played.

The USA had won the Bermuda Bowl by a single IMP.

Making My Way

Melissa Brady



Anna Shalvey and I had an absolutely unbelievable start to 2025 – we unexpectedly secured a spot as runners-up in the Jackson Cup, the National Women's Pairs event in Clane.

We found ourselves at the top of the leaderboard after the first session! As you can imagine, we weren't accustomed to being in that position and my biggest fear going into the second session was that we would crash and burn and be exposed as a pair of frauds. If that happened people would be able say we just got lucky in the first session. I wondered how on earth we were going to manage to put together two solid sessions. I wondered would we be able for it or would we crumble under pressure? Thankfully we were able to hold our own.

Women's Pairs, Clane

Session 1 Board 6.

Dealer East. Vul E/W.

♠ A1063		
♥ J		
♦ J107		
♣ K10654		
♠ 2	N	♠ Q7
♥ Q10753	W	♥ A96
♦ Q82	E	♦ AK54
♣ J987	S	♣ AQ32
♠ KJ9854		
♥ K842		
♦ 963		
♣ -		

In the first session, playing as East, I picked up a 19-point balanced hand. We use the Multi 2 Diamonds to cover a 21–22 2NT rebid, so with 19–20 points, we open 2NT. That decision worked out brilliantly on this board—it shut South out from mentioning her spades, unlike many others who ended up playing in 4♠ as most of the room went that route, but we

were one of only two pairs to play in 4♥—and we were the only pair to actually make it earning ourselves an outright top.

After I opened 2NT my partner transferred me to hearts and then had to make the tough call to push to game, as she can't tolerate being in no trump, but risked me having only two hearts. When the dummy went down, I was relieved not to be in 3NT, but I knew I'd be put to the pin of my collar to bring this contract home.

I got the lead of the ♦6. I played the ♦2 from dummy, North came in the 10, and I won with the Ace. Missing both the King and Jack of trumps was far from ideal in such a tight spot, so I led the ♥A from my hand. South played low with the 2, I followed with the 3 from dummy, and North dropped the Jack. That's when I started to worry about a dreaded 4–1 trump split. Still, I stuck to my plan and led low to the Queen. South rose with the King, confirming my suspicion of the unfavourable split and returned the ♦9, which gave me a glimmer of hope—it looked like a MUD lead. I won that trick in dummy, then played a Heart to the nine and sent the ♦K around the table. Thankfully, South followed suit, so I played my fourth Diamond with my plan being that if South ruffed, I'd discard the singleton Spade instead of over-ruffing. She let my ♦5, pitching a Spade instead and allowing me to discard my losing Spade from dummy. Now I led a Spade from my hand, ruffed it in dummy with the 10, then drew South's last trump, held my breath and finessed the ♣Q, cashed the Ace, and happily conceded the last two tricks to the ♣K and the ♠A. Phew!

Before the start of the second session, I mentioned to Anna that, no matter what, we could head

home with our heads held high with the satisfaction of having won a session prize, as that was a guaranteed win if things had indeed gone belly up. We were thrilled to keep our composure and ensure things stayed on track. I think it's fair to say we exceeded all expectations in the tournament. We can't even say we were disappointed to have missed out as we entered solely for the experience of playing against some of the best in the country. Although we didn't win, I felt this was our best performance in any competition, especially considering the calibre of players we were pitted against. It was incredibly gratifying to see the work we put into our game pay off after the disaster we had at the Donegal Congress after which we completely overhauled our system. I guess the saying "you reap what you sow" really rings true! To finish as runners up was beyond our wildest dreams. We may never replicate that performance again, but we'll sure have fun trying to!

I must give a special shoutout to a pair of ladies who've been incredible to us ever since we crossed paths two years ago at the Interprovincials. Since then, they've been a constant source of wisdom, advice, and encouragement. I'm referring to none other than Margaret Farren and Anna Carr who during their break, took the time to give us an amazing pep talk. I'm pretty sure I told them they were wasting their time as there was no way they could expect us to maintain that standard in the second session. It would have been remiss of us not to heed their advice as it clearly works for them being two-time winners of the competition in the past five years and winners of the Teams that weekend also. Their



advice? To play a steady game, don't gamble, take our averages and the top scores would follow, to have confidence in ourselves and believe in our own ability. Rock-solid advice from a rock-solid pair! Advice that does not go unappreciated. Thanks very much ladies.

A capacity crowd of 124 teams gathered at Mount Wolesley for the Holmes Wilson Competition, my favorite event of the year. We entered a complete Area Master team with Frances Daly and Josephine Brady. We were delighted to leave Tullow with the Best Regional Masters prize. However, for Anna and me, it was far from our best performance—we made numerous mistakes throughout the weekend. Some of our conventions failed, leading to missed games and slams, and our defence was way off the mark. I'd had a tough few weeks personally leading up to the event and thought playing bridge might be a good distraction. But looking back, I probably should've sat this one out—it wasn't fair to my partner or our teammates. I must admit, they carried us this time. It was frustrating to perform so poorly in the biggest competition of the year, and it's a mistake I don't intend to repeat. Here's an example of one of my many errors from that weekend.

Holmes Wilson

Session 2 Board 3 Dealer South. Vul E/W.

		♠ Q543	
		♥ 742	
		♦ -	
		♣ AJ7543	
♠ K108762	N	♠ A9	
♥ -		♥ KJ86	
♦ Q7542	W	♦ AJ1093	
♣ 108	E	♣ KQ	
		S	
		♠ J	
		♥ AQ10953	
		♦ K86	
		♣ 962	

Anna opened 2D Multi, P, 2♥ (relay), X, P, 2♠, P, 3NT. She led the ♥10 which was won by the Jack. East played the ♠A and then low to the King on the table and a small spade back around. I didn't take the Queen as I wasn't sure he couldn't get back to the table with the ♦Q or that my partner held the ♥A letting an absolutely hopeless 3NT make!

Burke Trophy

Second Session Board 6 Dealer East. Vul E/W.

		♠ AK83	
		♥ QJ4	
		♦ 7	
		♣ 98642	
♠ J1096542	N	♠ Q	
♥ A93		♥ 8652	
♦ Q95	W	♦ J842	
♣ -	E	♣ KQ73	
		S	
		♠ 7	
		♥ K107	
		♦ AK1063	
		♣ AJ105	

It's always a treat to have major competitions close to home, so we couldn't pass up the opportunity to play in the Burke when it was held at the Cavan Crystal Hotel.

On this board the bidding went 1♦ - 2♠ - 2NT - p - 3NT at our table while at our teammates table the bidding went 1♦ - 1♠ - P - P - X - P - 1NT - P - P - P

I received the lead of the ♠Q, which I let win. East, clearly recognising his partner's heart signal, switched to the three of hearts. I played low from dummy, though in hindsight, I should have gone up with the King to establish two heart entries into my hand. I tend to make things more complicated than they need to be. West returned a spade, which I won with the King while East discarded a diamond as did I. I then led the ♦7 from hand to the Ace, followed by the King and a low diamond. West won that trick, but East's Jack fell under the Queen, making my ten a winner. West returned another spade, which I took with the Ace. Having already seen seven points from West, I hoped she didn't hold the ♣Q or

♣K. I finessed the 10 into her — and to my surprise, it held! I then cashed the ♦10, led low to the ♥J, and returned with the ♣8. East rose with the Queen, which I took with the Ace, then cashed my last heart and conceded the ♣K. At our teammates' table, their opponents made the same number of tricks but were only in 1NT+2.

I was given the opportunity of a lifetime to play in the Kelburne Cup as part of President Catherine Byrne's team alongside Nicola O'Dowd and Declan Byrne. This has been a competition I've dreamed of playing in ever since I had the privilege of winning the Tierney Trophy for the National B teams with Kathleen, Mary, and Brid three years ago. A few days before the tournament began, we received the lineups and match details. Just seeing some of the names on the list was enough to get my adrenaline rushing. The chance to compete against some of the top partnerships and teams in the country was incredibly exciting for me. My one hope for the weekend was to finally get the opportunity to play against Gay Keaveney.

Declan and I set off for the first match of the second session, our first time ever playing together, heading down to the Western table. We knew there was no guarantee that Gay would be playing N/S, but he was, and he was teamed up with David Walsh (a big congratulations to him for receiving his salver for Grandmaster status at the Holmes Wilson). I got my wish and was delighted to make my 4♠ contract at the table.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Catherine for giving me the opportunity to play in this competition. She could have chosen the strongest players who didn't qualify, but instead, she gave players like Nicola, Declan, and me the chance to compete. I can assure you, we all truly understand the significance of that invitation. It is a competition I hope to compete in on my own merit one day.

To finish I have this great hand that we played in the Kathleen Sullivan Trophy in Cavan Bridge.

Can anyone get to 7♦?

Board 12. Dealer North. Vul None.

♠K1074			
♥-			
♦J987642			
♣96			
♠QJ82	N	♠953	
♥8642	W	♥AKQ103	
♦10	E	♦Q5	
♣5432	S	♣K108	
♠A6			
♥J975			
♦AK3			
♣AQJ7			

W	N	E	S
	P	1♥	1NT
P	2♦	2♥	2NT
3♥	P	P	X
All Pass			

Opps ended up in 3♥x-5 for 1100. Had my partner called 3NT I'd have taken it out to 5♦.



CBAI President's Team at the Kelburne Cup - Nicola O'Dowd, CBAI President Catherine Byrne, Melissa Brady and Declan Byrne



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My Journey Continues

Nicola O'Dowd



"It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop."

– Confucius

When I was first asked to write for the New Irish Bridge Journal back in the very first issue January 2023, I was a novice. Only two years since first lesson. I was honestly shocked to be asked, flattered and nervous too. But I believe the idea was to share a fresh point of view, something that might speak to newer players who didn't always see themselves in the kind of articles the magazine normally had. *[Very much so, Nicola. Ed.]*

Now, ten issues later, I'm still learning, still on the journey. I would say I am in that middle space. Not brilliant, not hopeless, just somewhere in between. And honestly, that's where a lot of us feel like we are, and that's completely okay.

Bridge has been an incredible journey for me, one that started with enormous enthusiasm and a deep desire to improve. From the minute I played my first online event on BBO (pulled in to fill a half table,) I was hooked. I threw myself into every competition I could find, eager to learn and improve.

Now, at a higher level of play, I find myself in a different phase of my bridge journey, one where I recognise that, for all my dedication, I am only one competitor among many talented players.

But as much as I love playing at this level, I'd be lying if I said it was always smooth sailing, I find I am struggling in ways I hadn't expected. The competition is tougher, the mistakes matter more, and sometimes I feel completely out of my depth. I forget conventions I know inside out, second-guess my bids, or just

brain freeze. It's frustrating. It's humbling. And some days, it's overwhelming.

But even with all that, I wouldn't change a thing.

I know progress isn't always steady, it's full of ups and downs, little wins, and moments where I wonder if I'll ever fully get it. But I keep reminding myself that I'm learning at my own pace, and I'm trying to enjoy the journey. Some days my confidence wavers or the cards just don't go my way, but I still turn up and try to play my best.

While I'm still finding my feet at this level, my friend and co-writer Melissa Brady has been flying. Her skill, focus, and love for the game are incredible to watch. She and her partner Anna Shalvey recently finished 2nd in the CBAI Women's Pairs 2025 (Jackson Cup), and then teamed up with Josephine Brady and Frances Daly to win the Regional Master prize in the Holmes Wilson although they are all Area Master level. Just brilliant.

Melissa, congratulations on these outstanding accomplishments! I have no doubt that this is only the beginning of many more successes to come. Wishing you, partner Anna and teammates, all the best as you continue your journey, you all have more than earned every bit of recognition coming your way.

In early January, I had the unexpected opportunity to take part in the World Bridge Federation 2025 Online Women's Teams event, which ran from the 3rd to the 5th. It turned out to be a really enjoyable experience. A total of seven Irish teams participated, among 74 teams overall. The event was hosted on Realbridge, allowing us to compete against players from all over the world—Australia, Bermuda, New York, and more.

The top-performing Irish team was "Triers" (Gilda Pender, Jeannie Fitzgerald, Joan Kenny, Louise Mitchell, Lucy Phelan, Rebecca O'Keeffe-Brown, Siobhan Part, and Teresa Rigney), who finished 11th - a fantastic result.

Unlike the last time I played, this event wasn't three straight days of bridge. The 96 boards made up of 12 matches were spread out over the three days, which made the timetable easier to manage and gave us time to recharge between rounds. The competition was fierce, but the atmosphere was friendly and fun. I loved every minute of it.

One hand from the weekend really stuck with me. It was Board 42, and we were playing weak NT. In this field the weak NT and four-card major was not played by many pairs. In my opinion playing NT's biggest advantage is that its preemptive, but you definitely need a rescue option when playing it. My partner, LizAnn Doyle sitting East, opened 1NT. South doubled. LizAnn and I play Helvic, so holding 10 points and a balanced hand I passed. North also passed, LizAnn redoubled, as the Helvic convention requires. That ended the auction, and she made the contract. Redoubled into game!! The result gave us a fantastic swing and earned us 12 VPs, a real highlight of the match!

Board 42. Dealer East. Vul All.

♠ Q98		
♥ 9432		
♦ 872		
♣ J85		
♠ AJ4	N	♠ 653
♥ 105		♥ AQJ
♦ KQ54	W	♦ J109
♣ 7632	S	♣ KQ104
♠ K1072		
♥ K876		
♦ A63		
♣ A9		



After winning the Bankers Trophy (Intermediate A Teams) last year and playing in the Tierney Trophy (Intermediate B Teams) the two years before that, I was already feeling serious FOMO about missing this year's National Teams.

So when Catherine Byrne, CBAI President, invited me, along with Declan Byrne (no relation) and Melissa Brady, to play on her President's Team in this year's National Master Teams for the Kelburne Cup, I was honestly shocked. Being personally invited by the President to take part in such a big event was something I never expected. It was a huge honour and meant so much to me, especially because I knew there's no way I would have qualified for it otherwise.

The event took place at the Midlands Park Hotel in Portlaoise, with three tough sessions of 30 boards each, played across Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd March 2025. The standard was extremely high, with many top players taking part. Congratulations to the winners David Dunne, Paul Delaney, Martin Brady, and Tomás Roche.

One of the interesting things about this team event is that everyone has to play with all of their teammates during the tournament. That gave me the chance to partner not just with Declan and Catherine, but also with Melissa.

Playing with the CBAI President at a national event is definitely something I'll never forget. And getting to partner with Melissa was a highlight too. Over the past few years we had played against each other loads, chatted about systems and discussed hands, so sitting on the same side of the table for once was a new experience. Of course, with all the partners switching around, there were some tricky moments and plenty of mix-ups, but that's just part of how this event is set up.

One board that really stands out from playing with Melissa is this one.

Board 6. Dealer East. Vul E/W.

♠ A9654		
♥ AJ5		
♦ 5		
♣ 10762		
♠ J1072	N	♠ Q3
♥ K104	W	♥ Q976
♦ AKQJ2	E	♦ 10
♣ J	S	♣ AQ8543
♠ K8		
♥ 832		
♦ 987643		
♣ K9		

We didn't know it at the time, but this board ended up earning us a draw, the other table played in 2♥. What made it feel especially good was that the rest of the match had been tough. The atmosphere was intense, and it was hard to settle at the table, which made it even more important to stay focused but we did and trusted each other.

There was something especially satisfying about bidding and making this contract against such strong players. It boosted our confidence not just because of the result, but because we held our own under pressure, against that top opposition, finding the right contract and playing it well felt like a small personal win. Moments like that stick with you. And while we made plenty of good and bad decisions across the 90 boards we played that weekend, this one stayed with us a reminder of what's possible when things come together.

All in all, getting the chance to play in such a serious and high-level competition, alongside people I know and respect, is something I'll always remember. I'm especially grateful to the CBAI President for inviting us.

One of my greatest joys in bridge is encouraging others to do the same. I love helping players find their way in the world of bridge, giving them the confidence to play out of their local club and experience the excitement of national competitions and congresses.

Of course, for many, the local club is exactly where they want to be. Bridge is a great social game, and plenty of players are happy to enjoy it in a familiar and friendly setting. To them that's just as valuable as any high-level competition.

No matter where you are in your bridge journey, there's a place for you. Most of all, it's so important every player, regardless of their level, has the chance to enjoy the game for what it is, a wonderful, challenging, and endlessly fascinating experience.

Beyond the game itself, bridge has introduced me to incredible people, and I look forward to making even more connections as I continue my journey.

Whether it's partners, teammates, or opponents who push you to be better, we're all part of the same society. And cheering for each other, makes the journey better.

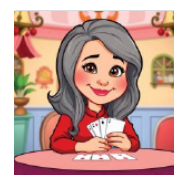
So if you're feeling a bit stuck lately, if things aren't clicking, if the progress feels slow or the setbacks are getting to you, know that you are not on your own. Keep going. Every board, every mistake, every small win is shaping you into a better player.

If you need a boost or just a day to rediscover the joy of the game, join us in Trim for the One Day Bridge Bash on Sunday, 24th August, for a single or a double session.

It's the perfect chance to reset, have fun, and remind yourself why you love this game of bridge.

Just for fun, I made a [SONG](#) about the ups and downs of this great game.

Hope it makes you smile!



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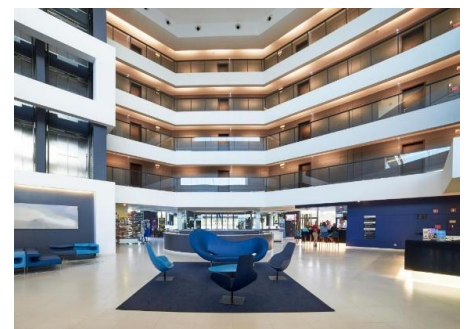
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Junior Bridge Focus

Luca Crone



There haven't been many junior events since the Junior Camrose in February. I will have more to update after the European Youth Pairs Championships in June, but learning has still been ongoing.

One topic of intense discussion among Irish juniors is what 1NT looks like. This is a highly controversial topic, depending on whom you speak to. Styles differ vastly, but I will try to give you a taste of the modern approach. I won't come down on any side, but hopefully will give some prompts for discussion with your partner.

I give you five hands, try to decide which ones you would open 1NT, presuming 15-17, before reading the discussion.

Hand 1

♠ Jx
♥ AKxxx
♦ KQx
♣ Kxx

Hand 2

♠ Jx
♥ AQxx
♦ Qx
♣ AQxxx

Hand 3

♠ QJx
♥ Ax
♦ KJ10xxx
♣ KJ

Hand 4

♠ xx
♥ AQJ10
♦ AKQxx
♣ Jx

Hand 5

♠ AQx
♥ KJxxx
♦ Kxxx
♣ K

Flexibility in 1NT is important since these intermediate strength hands are difficult to show after opening a suit. We all have robust 1NT systems to show almost every hand type opposite a 1NT opening. This should make us want to open 1NT if we have any excuse. That being said, there is an art form involved. I have taken all these hands from the table. It is widespread to open 1NT with a five-card major now. If you aren't doing so, you should, as you will have impossible rebids otherwise. Look at **Hand 1**, if you open 1♥, what do you bid over partner's likely 1♠ or 1NT response? You are stuck and even over 2m response, you never get to show your hand properly as partner will never believe you have 15-17 balanced.

What about **Hand 2**? The days of two doubletons not being balanced enough for 1NT are gone. If partner bids 1♠ over 1♣, you have severe rebid problems. Note, honours in short suits makes a hand look closer to NT than suit play, as they may be useful as stoppers in NT but will be the equivalent of low cards if trumps are involved.

Hand 3 has a six-card minor. That makes it not balanced, right? Misconception! This hand is ideal for opening 1NT with a six-card minor. You want to be careful though. If you are maximum with a good five-card major or six-card minor then you should tend to open that suit as you will have too much playing strength for 1NT. If you open 1♦ on this hand, how would you convey your strength over a 1M response?

Finally, we get to a **Hand [4]** that I think shouldn't be opened 1NT. This hand is definitely a maximum, evaluating closer to an 18-count. The ♥AQJ10 and ♦AKQ are worth more than their face value points. Your values are also concentrated only in two suits, which screams for playing in a suit. This hand fits the philosophy of if it looks vaguely like balanced 15-17, then open 1NT. That mindset is a bit too difficult to respond to, in my opinion. In this hand you care about hearts. If partner transfers to hearts, we have a GF, which shouldn't really exist in a 1NT opener.

Leaving the most controversial to last, according to pro players, **Hand 5** is a 1NT bid. If you have struggled to agree with the ideology so far, maybe you should skip this paragraph. I am

still getting used to this style, but these hands are quite hard to show otherwise, even using sophisticated methods like gazzilli. You might think you would prefer a singleton Ace instead, but singleton Aces lend themselves well to suits and not as much to NT. I attended a talk recently given by top Israeli player Eldad Ginossar, who has just qualified to represent the US at the Bermuda Bowl. He couldn't stress enough how good singleton Kings are for NT. They are terrible in suits as they will just be captured by the ace, but in NT they will almost certainly count as a stopper opposite as little as Jxx. It is tricky to believe that a hand with a singleton should be opened 1NT, but everything must be in balance [pun intended]. First of all, ideally, you want the singleton to be in a minor so you are not stuck if partner transfers. Secondly, you want your values to be spread out and not purely concentrated in your long suits. Thirdly, that singleton should be a K.

The biggest advantage of opening 1NT is that it gets your hand off your chest very quickly; there is little to no ambiguity. I hope this gave some food for thought on ideas that have been floating around the junior scene of late. I will keep you updated on all the excitement to come in June.

Davidson 2025

Derek O’Gorman



The Davidson, Laird Cup and Civil Service Cup competitions were held in the Falls Hotel, Ennistymon, Co. Clare. There were 55 tables in total, which were accommodated in this very suitable and picturesque venue.

These were three session events held over two days. Our excellent TDs for the events were Diarmuid Reddan, Mairead Basquille and Fearghal O’Boyle.

Qualification for these events is the Regional Pairs so all CBAI Regions are represented.

The winners were:

Davidson

Cian Holland and Derek O’Gorman

Laird Cup

Celine Smyth and Anne Kearney

Civil Service Cup

Joan Peppard and Tom Roche

Ennistymon is 25kms from Ennis and 3kms from Lahinch. As a venue, it should certainly be considered for other CBAI events.

The featured hand is Board 12 from the third session. The same boards were played in all three events, so this adds to the comparison value.

Board 12. Dealer West. Vul N/S.

♠ A76			
♥ -			
♦ AQ742			
♣ A10985			
♠ K54	N	♠ 10832	
♥ J532	W	♥ 10764	
♦ 1085	E	♦ J9	
♣ K43	S	♣ J76	
♠ QJ9			
♥ AKQ98			
♦ K63			
♣ Q2			

W	N	E	S
P	1♦	P	1♥
P	2♣	P	2♠ ¹
P	3♣ ²	P	3♦ ³
P	3♠ ⁴	P	4♦ ⁵
P	4♠ ⁶	P	6♦ ⁷
All Pass			

¹ 2♠=4th suit forcing, game force

² 3♣=natural, minimum 5/5 distribution

³ 3♦=natural, sets the suit

⁴ 3♠=cue bid, 1st or 2nd round control

⁵ 4♦=key card in diamonds

⁶ 4♠=0 or 3 controls

⁷ 6♦=to play

At the table, a trump was lead. As the trumps break, the hand plays very well in 6♦ with one club loser for declarer. Clubs break with the ♣K onside so no need to take the spade finesse with the ♥AK taking care of the potential spade losers.

Playing 4th suit forcing as a game force bid allows a 3♦ bid from South, and 4♦ as key card. If North only has two key cards, then sign off in 5♦ is possible.

Of the five pairs in the Davidson who bid slam, two made their contract. 6NT scored 100%, and 6♦ on this hand scored 95%.

Two pairs bid and made 6NT in the Laird Cup.

Bric-A-Brock

Sally Brock



Here's an interesting lead problem.

Dealer East. Vul All.

<p>♠ QJ542 ♥ A74 ♦ 102 ♣ Q108</p>			
♠ 108763	N	♠ 9	
♥ 96		♥ K10852	
♦ KQ76	W	♦ 854	
♣ 96	S	♣ J732	
<p>♠ AK ♥ QJ3 ♦ AJ93 ♣ AK54</p>			

W	N	E	S
		P	2♣
P	2♦	P	2NT
P	3♥ ¹	P	3♠
P	4NT ²	P	6NT
All Pass			

¹ 2♥=transfer showing 5 spades

² 4NT=natural, minimum 5/5 distribution

Such an auction would normally suggest a passive opening lead, a spade for example. However at the table, the unfortunate West chose a top diamond and was soon taught a sharp lesson.

Declarer, Xiaodong Shi, playing in the 2009 US Team Trials, won the ♦A and played a diamond straight back. West won and exited with another diamond. Declarer won, cashed the ♠AK discovering the bad news, and played the ♣A and a club to dummy's queen.

Now he cashed dummy's spade winners and this was the position:

<p>♠ 5 ♥ A7 ♦ ♣ 10</p>			
♠ 10	N	♠	
♥ 96		♥ K10	
♦ 6	W	♦	
♣	S	♣ J7	
<p>♠ ♥ Q ♦ J ♣ K5</p>			

Declarer now played the ♠10 to the jack and king. West discarded a diamond, but when declarer now cashed the ♦J, both West and East had to throw hearts, leaving the outstanding hearts 1-1, so the ♥7 was declarer's twelfth trick. A neat double squeeze.

The USA Trials are held on a double-elimination format. The undefeated team becomes USA1 while the leader of the once-defeated pool plays the last-defeated team for the right to be USA2. In 2010 the battle for the USA2 spot was an exciting match, eventually won by Nick Nickell, Richard Freeman, Jeff Meckstroth, Eric Rodwell, Bob Hamman & Zia Mahmood. Jeff Meckstroth is generally considered to be one of the top declarer players in the world, but this deal saw him outplayed.

Dealer South. Vul All.

<p>♠ AK3 ♥ 10742 ♦ AQ ♣ Q764</p>			
♠ J7	N	♠ 98	
♥ KJ985		♥ Q6	
♦ J103	W	♦ 876542	
♣ A109	S	♣ K52	
<p>♠ Q106542 ♥ A3 ♦ K9 ♣ J83</p>			

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	2♣	P	2♠
P	3♦	P	3♥
P	3♠	P	4♠
All Pass			

I'm not quite sure about North/South's bidding but the final contract was normal.

West led the ♦J. Meckstroth won with dummy's ace and immediately played a club to his jack and West's ace. West continued with the ♠10 and, when it held, switched accurately to a heart, thus establishing a fourth defensive trick for his side.

In the other room Michael Kamil, who had been given a little help because West had overcalled 2♥, found his way home. He won the diamond lead, drew two rounds of trumps, cashed his other top diamond and played ace and another heart. When East won his queen (and it would not have helped him to unblock), he had to choose between giving a ruff and discard and opening up the clubs.

It seems that to play this line would not have lost Meckstroth any of his options. If trumps do not break 2-2, then he can still play a club from the dummy, thus making his contract when East has either both honours or one honour doubleton. Alternatively, suppose trumps are 2-2: when declarer exits with a heart, if the defenders can safely play a third heart, he can still cross to dummy with a trump and play a club.



Master Defence

Rory Timlin



This article on Defence is aimed at aspiring Master players and for Masters who want to keep sharp.

Assume that it is Teams scoring, unless otherwise advised. Assume lead style is fourth highest and defensive signals are normal. We examine six defensive problems.

Problems:

(1) Dealer South. Vul E/W. Teams.

North (Dummy)		East (You)	
♠A4		♠9862	
♥Q5		♥AJ4	
♦Q97632		♦105	
♣1083		♣KJ94	
N			
W	E		
	S		

W	N	E	S
			1NT ¹
P	3NT	All Pass	

¹ 1NT=15-17

West leads ♠Q. Declarer wins in dummy and leads ♥5. Plan the defence

(2) Dealer North. Vul E/W. Teams.

North (Dummy)		East (You)	
♠KJ8		♠764	
♥5432		♥QJ6	
♦AJ6		♦742	
♣Q83		♣J752	
N			
W	E		
	S		

W	N	E	S
			1♠
2NT ¹	3♠	P	6♠
All Pass			

¹ 2NT=both 5+ card minors

Partner leads ♣K. Declarer ruffs and draws three rounds of trumps (West is void in trumps and discards ♣2 and a diamond) and now leads ♥AK9, West playing ♥8, ♥10 and ♠10.

On lead with ♥Q, what do you return?

(3) Dealer West. Vul None. Teams.

North (Dummy)		West (You)	
♠854		♠AQ107	
♥A7		♥643	
♦K86432		♦105	
♣J6		♣AQ72	
N			
W	E		
	S		

W	N	E	S
1NT ¹	P	P	X
P	P	2♣	3♥
P	4♥	All Pass	

¹ 1NT=12-14

1NT was 12-14. You lead ♦10. Declarer wins ♦A and leads ♦7 to ♦K and ruffs a diamond with ♥2, East having three diamonds. Plan the defence.

(4) Dealer South. Vul E/W. Teams.

North (Dummy)		West (You)	
♠KQ		♠-	
♥AJ5		♥Q1082	
♦A		♦J109643	
♣AKQ7643		♣J98	
N			
W	E		
	S		

W	N	E	S
			1♠ ¹
P	3♣ ²	P	3♠
P	4NT ³	P	5♦
P	5NT ³	P	6♥
P	7♠	Pass	All

¹ 1♠=5 card; ² 3♣=strong ³ 4NT=RKC♣

Against 7♠, you lead ♦J. Declarer wins in dummy, cashes ♣K, then ♣A, then a club ruff, then leads ♥6. How do you propose to get a setting trick?

(5) Dealer South. Vul All. Teams.

North (Dummy)		West (You)	
♠J10		♠75	
♥QJ6		♥10987	
♦109543		♦KJ2	
♣K63		♣AQ85	
N			
W	E		
	S		

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	1NT	P	3♥
P	3NT	P	4♥
All Pass			

Against 4♥, you lead ♣A, East playing ♣2 and South ♣4. How do you continue?

(6) Dealer South. Vul All. Teams.

North (Dummy)		West (You)	
♠AJ		♠KQ975	
♥74		♥93	
♦Q65		♦10872	
♣AK8643		♣Q9	
N			
W	E		
	S		

W	N	E	S
	1♣	1♥	1♠
P	2♣	P	2NT
P	3NT	All Pass	

Against 3NT, you lead ♥9. East plays ♥10, then ♥K, then ♥Q. South wins ♥A at trick three. What do you discard?



Answers:

(1) The full layout was:

North (Dummy)		East (You)	
♠A4		♠9862	
♥Q5		♥AJ4	
♦Q97632		♦105	
♣1083		♣KJ94	
♠QJ1073	N	♠K5	
♥9862	W	♥K1073	
♦8	E	♦AKJ4	
♣A65	S	♣Q72	

♠Q is led against 3NT. At trick two, ♥5 is led from dummy. On the play so far, you know declarer has ♠K and ♥K and ♦AKx or better. So declarer will win ♥K (if allowed) and romp home with nine tricks. Best defence is to rise with ♥A and switch to ♣J, a Surround(ing) Play. The defence cannot be now stopped from cashing four club tricks, as long as West has ♣Axx at least. Note that switching to any other club may not be good enough if declarer gets it right.

Other examples of **Surround(ing) Plays** are:

(A)

North (Dummy)		East (You)	
♠973		♠K108	
♠Q542		♠AJ6	

Let's say you need to get two tricks quickly in spades before declarer's spades are discarded on dummy's long suit. Lead ♠10, the higher of the two cards surrounding dummy's ♠9. Partner will need a quick entry to come through a spade.

(B)

North (Dummy)		East (You)	
♦J85		♦AQ10	
♦764		♦K932	

Again you need two quick tricks in this suit and partner has a quick entry in another suit. Lead ♦Q. Note that these plays can be effective against notrump or suit contracts. They can also be used when sitting under dummy, i.e. imagine that North is declarer in the above cases.

(2) The full layout was:

North (Dummy)		East (You)	
♠KJ8		♠764	
♥5432		♥QJ6	
♦AJ6		♦742	
♣Q83		♣J752	
♠-	N	♠AQ109532	
♥108	W	♥AK97	
♦KQ983	E	♦105	
♣AK10964	S	♣-	

In 6♠, South has ruffed the club lead, drawn trumps (West is void in trumps) and led three rounds of hearts, West following suit twice. The hand is an open book. You know declarer is 7420 and has 11 top tricks. If she has ♦Kx or ♦Qx, the slam makes, so assume she has ♦xx. Now the key play is to **return a diamond**, to beat the contract. Note that on a club return, declarer ruffs and runs a heart and the long trumps, squeezing West in the minors, whereas the diamond return **breaks up the Simple Squeeze**.

(3) The full layout was:

North (Dummy)		You	
♠854		♠J93	
♥A7		♥95	
♦K86432		♦QJ9	
♣J6		♣109843	
♠AQ107	N	♠K62	
♥643	W	♥KQJ1082	
♦105	E	♦A7	
♣AQ72	S	♣K5	

You led a diamond against 4♥. Declarer plays three rounds of diamonds, ruffing the third one with ♥2. The key to the defence is to see that declarer could have ruffed higher, so he wants you to overruff. So **do not overruff**. This **stops the run of the diamonds** and the contract goes down. Beware of Greeks bearing gifts.

(4) The full layout was:

North (Dummy)		You	
♠KQ		♠J532	
♥AJ5		♥9743	
♦A		♦872	
♣AKQ7643		♣102	
♠-	N	♠A1098764	
♥Q1082	W	♥K6	
♦J109643	E	♦KQ5	
♣J98	S	♣5	

In 7♠, declarer wins the diamond lead in dummy, cashes one high trump, plays ♣A and ruffs a club and leads a heart. Can you see what is going on? Declarer has not drawn trumps and is preparing for a **Trump Coup**, but is an entry short to dummy. If declarer has ♥K6, he will finesse ♥J and now has enough entries to complete the trump coup. The winning defence is to **play ♥Q to block an entry** and defeat the grand. If declarer is allowed the second heart entry to dummy, then dummy can be on lead at trick 12 and declarer's ♠A10 will be sitting over ♠J5, a standard **Trump Coup** ending.

Note that double dummy, the grand can be made by ruffing a club before playing a round of trumps. Note also that 7♠ is an inferior contract, as it is down if trumps are 4/1. As the cards lie, a spade lead by East beats 7♠ (West may make a lead-directing **Lightner Double of 7♣**, at the risk of N/S running to 7♠ or 7NT).

(5) The full layout was:

North (Dummy)		You	
♠J10		♠8632	
♥QJ6		♥3	
♦109543		♦A86	
♣K63		♣J10972	
♠75	N	♠AKQ94	
♥10987	W	♥AK542	
♦KJ2	E	♦Q7	
♣AQ85	S	♣4	



You led ♣A against 4♥, knowing that declarer is at least 5/5 in the Majors. You need to try to cash some diamonds, before a diamond is discarded on ♣K. Best defence is to **lead ♦K and then ♦2**. Partner wins the second diamond and returns a diamond. Declarer now **fears a diamond ruff**. So she ruffs high and runs into an unexpected 4/1 trump break. One down.

(6) The full layout was:

North (Dummy)			
♠AJ			
♥74			
♦Q65			
♣AK8643			
You			
♠KQ975	N	♠8	
♥93	W	♥KQJ1086	
♦10872	E	♦J93	
♣Q9	S	♣J105	
♠106432			
♥A52			
♦AK4			
♣72			

Against 3NT, the defence starts with three rounds of hearts. As West, you know on the bidding that declarer holds ♦AK. The winning defence is to discard ♣Q in the hope that partner holds ♣Jxx. Now East will gain the lead in clubs to cash some hearts. If you retain ♣Q, declarer can lead clubs twice from hand and duck in dummy when ♣Q is played, thus setting up clubs and keeping East off lead. This is known as an **Avoidance Play**, aiming to stop the **Danger Hand** (East in this case) from getting on lead.

Note that declarer can make the contract by winning the second heart (the lead of ♥9 looks like top of a doubleton) and then making the avoidance play in clubs.

Last Word:

To sum up, we have here some hands where the defence need to be able to (1) be aware of the clues that can be picked up from the bidding and play so far, and (2) be aware of what declarer is planning and (3) apply good technique. Also look for deceptive defensive plays.

A lot of this can be learned by **reading bridge** in books, magazines and newspapers.

Again many thanks to Paul Scannell for his invaluable input to these articles.

Lederer Trophy 2025

Editor

The annual Lederer Invitational, first played in 1945, has evolved into a most prestigious event. The Mark Moran squad [Nick Fitzgibbon, Adam Mesbur, John Carroll, Tom Hanlon, Freddie Volcker of France, NPC Gráinne Barton] successfully defended their title in February, a very noteworthy achievement.

The runners-up were the Jonathan Harris team [Zia Mahmoud, Ola Rimstedt, Mikael Rimstedt, Denis Bilde, Steve Root].

Moran took an early lead and stayed at the head of affairs. Ten teams competed. The venue was the RAC in London.

John Carroll was winning his fifth Lederer, putting him in first place among Irish players. He reported this deal from Round 4 to the Journal. The opposing team was the Chairman's Team.

Dealer North. Vul N/S.

♠K64			
♥84			
♦K10975			
♣J109			
♠J1072	N	♠Q9	
♥J96	W	♥KQ73	
♦J642	E	♦Q8	
♣72	S	♣AKQ63	
♠A853			
♥A1052			
♦A3			
♣854			

The bidding went:

W	N	E	S
	P	1♣	X
P	1♦	1♥	P
P	2♦	All Pass	

"three rounds of clubs, west pitching a heart, followed by ♥K switch. It looks like I have to lose three clubs, one heart, one spade and one diamond but the Heart switch gave me a chance.

I ducked the heart won the heart continuation. Now I ruffed a heart, cashed ♠K, ♠A and followed with a ruff of dummy's fourth heart.

With five tricks in the bag, I was looking at:

♠ 6
♦ K109

♠ 85
♦ A3

The spade exit was ruffed by West who, with only trumps remaining, now had to open up the trump suit. He led a low one and I made the contract via a finesse after East put up ♦Q. The form of scoring is Imps and Board-A-Match, 50 VPs available in each match, 30 from Imps and 20 from BAM.

So making 2♦ for +90 flattened the Imps score when our teammates scored -80 in 1♠, but won a precious VP in BAM.

The defence could have beaten the contract by switching a spade instead of ♥K, this ruins the communication for two heart ruffs. Also, the defence could have switched ♦J in endgame to give me a slightly more challenging problem but the bidding gives me enough clues to drop East's Q".

Tralee International Bridge Congress 2025:

A Celebration of Competition and Community

The Tralee International Bridge Congress once again delivered a superb weekend of competition, camaraderie, and excellence when players gathered at The Rose Hotel from 4th–6th April 2025.

Now firmly established as a favourite on the national bridge calendar, the congress balanced high-level play with trademark warmth and hospitality.

Organised by Bridgelreland.com, with valued support from Dovidá (formerly Home Instead), The Rose Hotel, and "Bridge With Trish," this year's congress drew record numbers. Special credit must go to the organisers for their commitment to accessibility, ensuring that all players—including wheelchair users and those with mobility needs—could enjoy the weekend's programme in comfort and dignity.

Proceedings were opened with addresses by Congress President Pat Fitzgibbon and CBAI President Catherine Byrne, setting the tone for what proved an exceptional event.

A Strong Start

Friday evening launched the competitions with the Gala Pairs and the Intermediate B & Novice Pairs, with a lively field producing excellent bridge.

Eugene Gath and Phyllis O'Regan took top honours in the Gala Pairs with an impressive score of 67.05%.



Gala Pairs Winners: Eugene Gath and Phyllis O'Regan, presented with prizes at the Tralee International Bridge Congress 2025.

They were followed by Mary O'Sullivan and Jerome Scanlan in second place, with Donal Garvey and Nicky Fitzgibbon finishing third in a high-quality contest.

Meanwhile, in the Intermediate B & Novice Pairs, Liam and Elizabeth Lynch achieved a notable second-place finish, a strong result against a broad and competitive national entry.

Saturday Highlights

Saturday's packed programme saw the staging of the Congress Pairs, Intermediate Pairs, and Open Pairs.

Top honours in the Congress Pairs went to Rory Boland and Derek O'Gorman, who were worthy winners of the prestigious Marie Fleming Trophy.



Congress Pairs Winners: Rory Boland and Derek O'Gorman, presented with the Marie Fleming Trophy by CBAI President Catherine Byrne and Congress President Pat Fitzgibbon.

They were closely followed by the father-and-son team of Justin Spratt Snr and Justin Spratt Jnr, a particularly popular success given their long-standing connection with the Congress.

Session victories included Trish Stack and Nicky Fitzgibbon, who topped the first session of the Congress Pairs, while Joan McNerney and Patricia O'Sullivan led the morning session of the Intermediate Pairs.

Adding to the weekend's richness was a special seminar led by Donal Garvey on competitive awareness and advanced tactics, attended by over 30 players and widely praised for its clarity and engaging style.

A Fitting Finale

The Congress concluded on Sunday with the keenly contested Congress Teams competition.

First place was claimed by the team of Donal Garvey, Cian Holland, Pat Quinn, and Derek O'Gorman, while second place went to Justin Spratt Snr, Justin Spratt Jnr, Mark Burke, and Gordon Lessells.

The prize-giving ceremony, conducted by Maureen Pattinson and Pat Fitzgibbon, wrapped up the weekend in fitting style, closing what many described as one of the most enjoyable and smoothly-run congresses of recent years.

Final Thoughts

The 2025 Tralee Congress showcased not only the competitive spirit and high skill level of players from across Ireland, but also the unique camaraderie that continues to make bridge such a valued part of the national sporting and social fabric.

Players departed with trophies, memories, and friendships renewed—testament to the organisers' dedication and the players' enduring passion for the game.

We look forward already to the next edition.



Congress Teams Winners: Donal Garvey, Cian Holland, Pat Quinn, and Derek O'Gorman, with prizes presented by North Munster CBAI President Maureen Pattinson and Congress President Pat Fitzgibbon.

You can't keep a good Yorkshireman down

Editor



Anthony R [Tony] Forrester is England's most capped and most successful player. A superb technician and possessed of flair in abundance, "ARF" has always been box office. He is also an excellent writer, and I can strongly recommend "Secrets of Success".

Forrester has won 14 Gold Cups, eight Spring Foursomes and 10 Crockfords', all domestic records. He also holds seven Premier League titles. In partnership with Andrew Robson, he became the first Briton to win a US National Title – the Reisinger in 1998 [they retained it in 1999].

In 2015, England made the knockout stages of the World Championships [Bermuda Bowl]. In the match against USA, ARF encountered the slings and arrows, as two deals demonstrate.

Dealer South. Vul All.

N [Robson]

♠ A9876
♥ 1032
♦ 2
♣ AK109

S [Forrester]

♠ J105
♥ AQ7654
♦ K
♣ J32

Forrester opened 2♥, Robson raised to 4♥ and West [Joel Wooldridge] led the ♠2. How would you play?

The lead looks a bit ominous. If it's a singleton, you could lose two spades to East, or one plus a ruff to West [two ruffs if East has ♦A]. After some thought, Forrester played low from dummy and East [John Hurd] won ♠Q, Forrester playing ♠10. Hurd returned a spade, which went Jack, King and Ace. So West had led from Kxx. What now?

If you finesse ♥Q and it loses, East will get a spade ruff and that's one down. Forrester played a heart to the Ace, both defenders following low. He entered dummy with a club and led another heart towards his ♥Q. Hurd won ♥K, West showing out. The diamond return went to West's Ace and a third round of spades was ruffed by East with ♥J for down one. The full deal:

		Robson	
		♠ A9876	
		♥ 1032	
		♦ 2	
		♣ AK109	
Wooldridge		N	Hurd
♠ K32			♠ Q4
♥ 8			♥ KJ9
♦ AJ654	W	E	♦ Q109873
♣ Q654			♣ 87
		S	
		Forrester	
		♠ J105	
		♥ AQ7654	
		♦ K	
		♣ J32	

One of those contracts our dear old Aunt Jemima would have made! It would be safe to say that ARF was less than enchanted with developments.

But Yorkshire folk are gritty and relentless, unfazed by fleeting adversity. This after all is the County that gave the world Captain Cook and WH Auden, not to mention Michael Palin, Fred Trueman and Sir Geoffrey Boycott.

In the next segment, ARF picked up as Dealer [Vul None]:

S [Forrester]

♠ K32
♥ A32
♦ AQ10654
♣ K

Without hesitation he opened 1NT [!]. Robson responded 2♦ [transfer], and Forrester complied. 2♥ was passed around to Vince Demuy as East, who reopened with a takeout double. ARF redoubled to show his maximum with heart support and West [John Kranyak] bid 2♠. Robson now found a leap to 4♥, which Kranyak doubled on the way out, concluding a lively auction. The full deal:

		Robson	
		♠ 2	
		♥ Q10953	
		♦ J92	
		♣ A765	
Kranyak		N	Demuy
♠ Q1076			♠ AJ954
♥ KJ76			♥ 8
♦ K	W	E	♦ 873
♣ Q432			♣ J1098
		S	
		Forrester	
		♠ K82	
		♥ A32	
		♦ AQ10654	
		♣ K	

Looking at all four hands, how do you think 4♥x will go? A forcing defence looks problematic. A spade to ♠A and another to ♠K. Now West can force dummy to ruff a third spade when he wins ♥K. A losing diamond finesse [East is favourite to hold ♦K given his takeout double of 2♥] is now curtains.

Such considerations became academic when Kranyak [understandably enough] opted to lead ♦K. Forrester won and played Ace and a heart. Kranyak took ♥K and led a spade to Demuy's Ace. Demuy could have limited the damage by returning a diamond for a ruff, but he played back a spade and ARF had a doubled overtrick. Quite an odyssey from 2♥ passed out!

Still waters run deep. 'Ey up and 'appen – tha' can't keep a good Yorkie down.



Answers to Test your Declarer Play

You are West as declarer, playing teams. What is your play strategy on each board?

Board 1 Dealer North. Vul None.

<p> ♠ 10953 ♥ AJ10 ♦ Q1072 ♣ 97 </p>			
♠ AKJ8 ♥ 2 ♦ A84 ♣ AKQJ3	N W S	♠ 72 ♥ Q98743 ♦ K ♣ 6542	
<p> ♠ Q64 ♥ K65 ♦ J9653 ♣ 108 </p>			

W	N	E	S
	P	P	P
2♣	P	2♦	P
3♣	P	4♦ ¹	P
4NT ²	P	5♦ ³	P
6♣	All Pass		

¹ 4♦ = Splinter, support for clubs
² 4NT = RKCB for clubs
³ 4♠ = 0 or 3 key cards

Lead:

North leads the ♣7 against 6♣. How do you plan the play?

The Play

Declarer wins the lead in hand and plays a heart to try to establish that suit. North wins and plays a second trump. Winning in hand, cross to the ♦K and ruff a heart. Follow with a diamond ruff and another heart ruff. If the hearts break 3-3 or either opponent has AK alone you are home; failing that you will need the ♠Q to appear on the first three rounds of that suit.

Board 2 Dealer East. Vul N/S.

<p> ♠ 10 ♥ 107653 ♦ J8 ♣ QJ986 </p>			
♠ K873 ♥ KQ4 ♦ Q62 ♣ 432	N W S	♠ AJ64 ♥ AJ9 ♦ AK53 ♣ AK	
<p> ♠ Q952 ♥ 82 ♦ 10974 ♣ 1075 </p>			

W	N	E	S
		2♣ ¹	P
2♦ ²	P	2NT	P
3♠ ³	P	3NT	P
4NT ⁴	P	5♦ ⁵	P
5♠ ⁶	P	6♠	All Pass

¹ 2♣ = Strong
² 2♦ = Relay
³ 3♠ = Transfer to 3NT.
⁴ 4NT = Invitational
⁵ 5♦ = Natural, 4 cards
⁶ 5♠ = Natural, 4 cards

Lead:

North leads the ♣Q against 6♠. How do you plan the play?

The Play

Winning the club lead, enter hand with the HK to play a low trump. When North follows with the ten, win with the ace and continue with a low spade, covering South's five with the seven. If North discards on this spade, play a club to the king, cross back to the ♦Q, ruff a club and play the ♠J losing only one trump trick. This safety play in the trump suit ensures only one loser over 90% of the time.


Board 3 Dealer South. Vul E/W.

♠ 8752 ♥ K7653 ♦ 107 ♣ 72			
♠ AQ3	N	♠ 1064	
♥ -	W	♥ AJ10842	
♦ AK864	E	♦ Q53	
♣ AK954	S	♣ 8	
♠ KJ9 ♥ Q9 ♦ J92 ♣ QJ1063			

W	N	E	S
			P
1♦	P	1♥	P
3♣	P	3♦ ¹	P
3♠	P	4♥ ²	P
4♠ ²	P	5♣ ²	P
6♦	All Pass		

¹ 3♦ = With Hxx in diamonds, it is rarely wrong to show preference for partner's suit

² = Cue bid

Lead

North leads the ♠7 against 6♦. How do you plan the play?

The Play

The diamond slam needs reasonable breaks in the minors. Declarer won the spade lead in hand, cashed the ♣A and ruffed a club. Next, he came back to hand with the ♠A and played another club. When North ruffed in with the ♦7, declarer over-ruffed with the Queen, discarded a spade on the heart ace, ruffed a heart and played another club. North ruffed in front of dummy with the ♦10 and South took a trump trick at the end for one down.

When North ruffed the club for the first time, disclosing the 5-2 club break, declarer can get home by discarding a spade in dummy. He wins the trump exit with the Queen, ruffs a heart in hand, a spade is ruffed in dummy and the losing club is discarded on the ♥A. This line depends on North holding two trumps, but if North has started with three trumps, an initial trump lead would have defeated the contract.

Board 4 Dealer West. Vul All.

♠ J52 ♥ 10832 ♦ J9852 ♣ J			
♠ K4	N	♠ AQ1083	
♥ 95	W	♥ AQ76	
♦ K10764	E	♦ Q	
♣ A1073	S	♣ 952	
♠ 976 ♥ KJ4 ♦ A3 ♣ KQ864			

W	N	E	S
P	P	1♠	P
2♦	P	2♥	P
2NT	P	3NT	All Pass

Lead

North leads the ♦5 against 3NT. How do you plan the play?

The Play

South wins the diamond lead with ♦A and returns the three which drew the six and eight, dummy discarding a club. When North switched a low heart it is tempting to play the queen but declarer should postpone that decision and play low from dummy. In 3NT you require nine tricks, but the last nine are just as good as the first nine. South wins with the jack and switches to a low club. That went to North's jack and back came the heart three. Declarer went up with dummy's ace, came to hand with the ♠K and cashed the ♦K, pitching a heart in dummy before going back to spades. When the suit broke 3-3, the last spade squeezed South in the rounded suits, his last three cards being the ♥K along with the ♠K and ♣Q.

Regent Premier League

Carol-Ann Cummins



The key to our League win was the semi-final against Terry Walsh's team. We played against Mark Moran and John Carroll in the first stanza.

Dealer South. Vul All.

I was South and held:

♠ QJ10x
♥ xx
♦ -
♣ AKJ10xxx

John Noonan and I play four-card majors, strong NT.

John opened 1♥ and Mark Moran bid 3♦, weak. I doubled and now John Carroll bids 5♦ – great barrage by our opponents. John passes and now it's back to me – what would you bid?

It felt like a big decision [unbeknownst to me we were 17 imps up at this stage]. Opponents had the diamonds so I felt it was a 30-point pack and I bid 6♣.

John Carroll thought for a while before making his lead!!

		Noonan	
		♠ Kxxx	
		♥ AKQx	
		♦ xxx	
		♣ Qx	
Carroll		N	Moran
♠ Axxx			♠ x
♥ Jxxx			♥ xxx
♦ KJxx	W	E	♦ AQ10xxx
♣ x			♣ xxx
		S	
		Cummins	
		♠ QJ10x	
		♥ xx	
		♦ -	
		♣ AKJ10xxx	

John put the ♠A on the table and gave Mark a ruff – the only lead to defeat 6♣. That sure put a large dent in our lead (great lead John), since at the other table they were in 4♠ making!

Last hand of semi-final, we are now against Terry Walsh and Peter Goodman, and I pick up...

Dealer East. Vul All.

♠ A
♥ AKxxxx
♦ AQx
♣ Kxx

East open 2♠ and I double. West passes and John bids 3♦. We play Lenbenson here, so 3♦ shows values. East passes and I bid 3♥ [forcing]. John bids 4♣ natural. Another 30-point pack I feel – so I bid 6♦!

		Noonan	
		♠ xx	
		♥ x	
		♦ J98xx	
		♣ AQ1095	
Goodman		N	Walsh
♠ xxxxx			♠ KQxxxxx
♥ QJx			♥ xxx
♦ 10xxx	W	E	♦ K
♣ xx			♣ Jxx
		S	
		Cummins	
		♠ A	
		♥ AKxxxx	
		♦ AQx	
		♣ Kxx	

The ♠K lead was won perforce on the table. ♦A next, crashing singleton K – end of story, 6♦ made +1! Flat board.

In the final the boards were all much more straightforward, we just had to bid and play them well and not give anything away. We were delighted with our win. Our partners were Seamus Costello and Deirdre Tuckey, and we played four-handed throughout. We look forward to defending our title next year.



Winners of the Regent Premier League, sponsored by Audico are Carol Ann Cummins, Seamus Costello, John Noonan, Deirdre Tuckey with Anne Tuite (Audico Sponsor), and Paul Porteous, President Regent Bridge Club.



Bidding Quiz 9 - Results - Bob Pattinson

Question 1

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

♠ A10
♥ 32
♦ AK109843
♣ 82

W	N	E	S
	1♦ ¹	2♣ ²	X
3♣	?		

¹ 1♦=4+ ² 2♣=6-10: 6 suit

Votes: 3NT=9; Pass=3; 4♦=2

A decent seven-card suit, the Ace of the suit bid by both opponents, a six-loser hand, and a partner making a negative double to show some values, with a likely shortage in spades. Prospects look bright, but how bright?

Sally 3NT: Got to bid it now if we're ever going to be in it.

Karel 3NT: On the basis that partner has one quick trick and two to three diamonds (unlikely) 3NT is a good bid. Could there be more? A vulnerable 3♣ bid will have something outside. Therefore partner will have to be very good for 6 to make. Pragmatic 3NT for me.

Roy 3NT: seems the most likely game, even if it would be better to play from the other side, but that's life.

Adrian 3NT: It's now or never, and could go pear shape.

Ciaran 3NT: Diamonds might run or partner might have spade help.

Peter P 3NT: Partner has the values for the three-level and no simple five-card suit, so must have some diamond support. I will probably need nine quick tricks without losing the lead based on the bidding, unless partner shows up with Jxx in spades. Seems practical.

Anna 3NT: Partner doubled 2♣ so I expect a reasonable hand. It's my only chance to bit it. It would put tremendous pressure if I pass. With

11 points there would be nothing to bid over 3♣.

Micheál 3NT: A shot in the dark, hoping the diamond suit will run.

Sabine 3NT: Hoping for seven diamonds, one spade and one trick from partner without them running five tricks first.

Luca Pass: I am not afraid partner will bid 4m. Almost certainly if partner with more values will double and I can bid 3NT. Bidding 3NT now feels too risky for no reason.

Joe Pass: Not anything I can bid with this hand.

George Pass: Partner can reopen with a double, over which I will bid 4♦.

Peter G 4♦: Don't object to 3NT as they are unlikely to bid 4♠ now. My concern is we are converting +130 into -100 too many times.

Rory 4♦: Happy I have eight tricks, and partner will bid on with three more.

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

		♠ A10			
		♥ 32			
		♦ AK109843			
		♣ 82			
♠ K652	N		♠ QJ9754		
♥ QJ107			♥ A98		
♦ J5	W	E	♦ 6		
♣ QJ6			♣ 543		
		♠ 8			
		♥ K654			
		♦ Q72			
		♣ AK1097			

W	N	E	S
	1♦ ¹	2♣ ²	X
3♣	?		

¹ 1♦=4+ ² 2♣=6-10: 6 suit

Summary

As the cards lie the position of the ♥A enables 12 tricks to be made in diamonds but such dizzy heights are difficult to see with the North hand.

A clear majority of the panel make the case for 3NT, some more reluctantly than others. This reluctance is shared with the 4♦ bidders, whilst the passing trio aim for a safe part score, unless partner can find another balancing bid.

Marks: 3NT=10; 4♦=9; Pass=8

Bidding Tip

When a hand looks close to game it is worth taking calculated risks, as missing game can be more costly than playing safe in a part score.

Question 2

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

♠ 2
♥ K1074
♦ AKQJ8
♣ 974

W	N	E	S
	P	1♣ ¹	1♦
1♠	P	2♣	?

¹ 1♣=3+

Votes: X=8; Pass=6

Enough for a competitive double? Two useful red suits offer a potential landing space if partner has any kind of fit for one of them. On the other hand partner is dead silent.

Peter P X: A frisky bid but worth it once we are playing support doubles and the heart suit may have got lost. Partner could have xxx AJxxx xx Kxx and game could be a decent shout. On another front I don't think I will get into too much trouble unless partner decides to pass with QJ9x xx xx K10xxx, as I expect defeating 2♣ will be very tight.

Joe X: Trying to compete.

Sally X: Partner should play me for four hearts.



Peter G X: Low on points but ideal shape, noted that partner could have doubled 1♠ with a suitable hand. So partner's hand is more likely to hold four spades, and I am not keen to defend 2♠.

Anna X: I have diamonds and hearts.

Adrian X: To compete further in any of the other suits.

Sabine X: Seems perfect with four hearts, shortage in spades and opening values.

Ciaran X: Takeout, suggesting something like this.

Luca Pass: I like for 1♦ over 1♠ to be a good hand. Partner has passed twice, so I don't want to force a three-level bid for no reason.

Rory Pass: Close to a value double.

Micheál Pass: Partner has passed twice already, so little chance of making a contract.

George Pass: Partner has denied hearts and could re-open with a double, over which I will bid 3♦. Sounds familiar.

Roy Pass: Such good diamonds and hearts make double tempting, but partner also could have doubled (or raised diamonds), so even though it might be tough for partner to balance with spade length, I'll leave it to them.

Karel Pass: I honestly can't find a bid here. West is unlimited and partner passed twice.

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

		♠ QJ98 ♥ Q9862 ♦ 43 ♣ Q2			
♠ AK643	N	♠ 1075			
♥ 3		♥ AJ8			
♦ 875	W	♦ 1092			
♣ J1063	S	♣ AK85			
		♠ 2 ♥ K1074 ♦ AKQJ8 ♣ 974			

W	N	E	S
	P	1♠ ¹	1♦
1♠	P	2♠	?
¹ 1♠=3+			

Summary

This is a tight decision, with good points raised on both sides by the panel. As the cards lie double will produce a plus part score, whilst pass is dependent on partner entering the bidding after passing twice. The vulnerability comes into play so at green the risk of the double is unlikely to be too costly, unless partner has no values at all.

Marks: X=10; Pass=9

Bidding Tip

With two potential places to play a competitive double can help find a suitable fit.

Question 3

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

♠ 92
♥ Q942
♦ AK2
♣ AQJ9

W	N	E	S
	1NT	P	2♥
P	2♠	P	3♦
P	3NT	P	4♦
P	?		

Votes: 5♠=13; 4NT=1

To cue or key card?

Peter G 5♠: I can see some potential if partner is 5152 shape and working points.

Anna 5♠: Should show I like diamonds and don't have a major suit cue bid.

Joe 5♠: Cue bid denying a heart control.

Sally 5♠: Seems my diamonds are as good as they could be, so I'll cooperate.

George 5♠: We will likely have a diamond slam, and I have great support. As I cannot bid Blackwood with two unsupported suits, I make the first cue bid available to me. Bidding 5♠ denies a control in both majors, but shows interest. I have described my hand to the best of my ability.

Rory 5♠: Cue, supporting diamonds. Partner will know about my weakness in the majors.

Karel 5♠: Opposite partner's 5-5 in spades and diamonds my ♦AKx and ♣A are huge. Partner also knows we hold two spades precisely (else we bid 3♠ over 3♦). 5♠ cue denies a heart cue, and agrees diamonds.

Luca 5♠: I have a good hand for saying no, but my majors are precarious. 5♠ should get the message across pretty clearly and then partner has the choice of going on.

Sabine 5♠: With ♦AKx I feel I owe partner a cue bid.

Ciaran 5♠: Showing a diamond fit, ♣A and denying major suit control. Partner is unlimited so I must compete.

Adrian 5♠: Cue bid seems mandatory looking at AKx in trumps.

Roy 5♠: My hand isn't amazing, but I do have ♦AK (and my hearts might be a problem in no trumps).

Peter P 5♠: Agreeing diamonds and denying a heart cue or a doubleton honour in spades.

Micheál 4NT: My hand is minimum with little fit, so 4NT is natural and non-forcing. [Clearly no Keycard here].

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

		♠ 92 ♥ Q942 ♦ AK2 ♣ AQJ9			
♠ QJ104	N	♠ 86			
♥ J10765		♥ K3			
♦ J6	W	♦ 1075			
♣ 64	S	♣ 1087532			
		♠ AK753 ♥ A8 ♦ Q9842 ♣ K			

W	N	E	S
	1NT	P	2♥
P	2♠	P	3♦
P	3NT	P	4♦
P	?		



Summary

4NT will discover two key cards plus ♦Q. Now 5NT will reveal two outside Kings, so 12 top tricks look safe, with a strong chance of a ruff for 13.

The 5♣ route also works well for further cue bids to help reach the grand.

Marks: 5♣=10; 4NT=10

Bidding Tips

Cue bids are most helpful in filling the gaps required to decide whether or not a slam can be. In this hand responder was able to show the 5-5 shape and slam going values, and the 5♣ cue confirmed the ♠A, but equally importantly denied the major suit controls, thus indicating there were useful honours elsewhere.

The more traditional Blackwood route asking for key cards also worked well on this particular hand.

When cue bidding start with first round controls at the lowest bid possible, If you skip a suit partner knows you have no control in that suit. You can later show second round controls, such as Kings or singletons if there is still bidding space to do so.

Question 4

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

♠ J
♥ 52
♦ AK103
♣ AQ10832

W	N	E	S
	2♠ ¹	P	4♠ ²
?			
¹ 2♠=6-10: 5-5 or 5431 or 5440 Any second suit ² 4♠=barrage			

Votes: 5♣=9; 4NT=2; Pass=2; X=1

East is marked with some values outside of spades so is there a decent minor suit fit? What if partner bids 5♥?

Roy 5♣: Terrible choices, but because some finesses are more likely to be made than off, bidding seems a worthwhile gamble.

Ciaran 5♣: Tough hand, and 5♣ could work out very badly. Double is a close second, but I don't like it with two small hearts.

Peter G 5♣: It looks like they are 5-5 in the majors so we should have a fit in the minors.

Sally 5♣: What can I do?

Luca 5♣: With less disparity I would bid 4NT. I think this rates to make.

Micheál 5♣: A shot in the dark.

Rory 5♣: Pre-empted, but I have to get involved.

George 5♣: Why not? We will get a poor score for letting them play in 4♠, and we will have earned a reputation as a pushover, and we cannot have that can we?

Sabine 5♣: With spade shortness I think I need to act.

Joe Pass: I'm not bidding 5♣ with this hand.

Anna 4NT: Showing the minors.

Adrian 4NT: 5♣ seems too unilateral and double with two small hearts all wrong.

Karel Pass: On the basis partner is likely to have four hearts and didn't double suggests partner doesn't have 12+. I think bidding is a gamble. If I was forced to bid then 4NT would be my choice and maybe I'd get lucky. Pass for me.

Peter P X: Since the opener has a two suiter I am not going to commit my side to play and try and get "lucky" with a 4♥ or 5♣ bid. Double looks like a sensible bid with hopefully three tricks. I'm hoping my partner has one or two more... and even if partner holds xxx AJxx Jxx Kxx we are not sure to make 5♣, but would get plus 300.

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

				♠ A10985																																					
				♥ J864																																					
				♦ J864																																					
				♣ -																																					
♠ J				N				♠ K42																																	
♥ 52				W				♥ KQ1073																																	
♦ AK103				E				♦ 2																																	
♣ AQ10832				S				♣ 9754																																	
				♠ Q763																																					
				♥ A9																																					
				♦ Q975																																					
				♣ KJ6																																					
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E	5																																								
W	5	4																																							

W	N	E	S
	2♠ ¹	P	4♠ ²
?			
¹ 2♠=6-10: 5-5 or 5431 or 5440 Any second suit ² 4♠=barrage			

Summary

Possibly the tightest decision in the set, with the majority of the panel feeling uncomfortable in bidding 5♣ with a decent six-card suit and a five-loser hand. As opponents appear to hold the majors there is a reasonable chance of a minor suit fit - 4NT offers two chances whereas 5♣ will likely work if partner holds two or more clubs.

Double risks a 5♥ response, and pass may bring in few IMPs.

Marks: 5♣=10; 4NT=10; Pass=8; X=8

Bidding Tip

Again when the choice is between a potential game and letting the opponents play in a part score then it is probably best to bid on as the majority did in this case. As George notes you can't let the opponents push you around.

Also if there are two potential places to play try to make a bid allowing partner a choice of the best fit.



Question 5

Dealer South. Vul All. Teams.

♠ K853
♥ AKQJ863
♦ –
♣ 42

W	N	E	S
			1♦ ¹
P	1NT	?	
² 1♦=4+ ² 1NT=6-10: F1: denies 4 card major			

Votes: 4♥=7; X=6; 2♥=1

Pass or bid? Hard not to take some action here and all the panel did so.

Anna 4♥: Could be totally wrong.

Rory 4♥: Partner will usually have some values.

Adrian 4♥: They are obviously not making 3NT but let's make them guess first in case five of a minor is on.

Ciaran 4♥: Strange that a limited 1NT is forcing. I'm bidding what I hope I can make.

Peter G 4♥: 7-4 shapes are usually suitable for 4♥ bids and I am not really good enough to double first.

Sabine X: Start by doubling. Maybe I get lucky and everyone passes.

Peter P X: The score is everything. Take out of diamonds. If partner has decent diamonds, which we all suspect, and passes, we are very well placed with me on lead. If they pull to 2♣ I will then bid my hearts.

Sally X: It might go down! If not I can bid quite a lot of hearts.

George X: let's get partner involved. We could bid 4♥ as our suit plays well opposite a void, but what if we also have a spade fit? This could be anywhere from a part score hand to a slam. If we jump to game we will find out too late. Bidding just 2♥ is a poor choice.

Roy X: Pass could be interesting and double is an overbid, but I think trying to get to 4♥ seems worthwhile.

Karel X: See does partner have spades. Partner may even decide to defend 1NT. If the opponents bid diamonds I will bid some number of hearts.

Micheál 2♥: 1NT unlikely to be the final contract so show the good hearts.

Dealer South. Vul All. Teams.

♠ J97 ♥ 9 ♦ Q63 ♣ AJ8763			
♠ T62	N	♠ K853	
♥ 82	W	♥ AKQJ863	
♦ AJ985	E	♦ –	
♣ QT5	S	♣ 42	
♠ AQ4 ♥ T74 ♦ KT742 ♣ K9			

W	N	E	S
			1♦ ¹
P	1NT	?	
² 1♦=4+ ² 1NT=6-10: F1: denies 4 card major			

Summary

The opponents appear to hold limited values so partner may have a few of their own. 4♥ takes up the bidding space but may well miss a superior spade fit. 2♥ fits the bill in that respect, and you would be delighted to defend 3NT!

In practice 2♥ brings in 110 but it is almost certain this will not be passed as a minor suit contract is on the other way. At game all you can't afford going two down, especially if doubled.

Marks: X=10; 2♥=9; 4♥=9

Bidding Tip

Again if there are two places to play try to keep both options open.

Question 6

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams

♠ 7
♥ 3
♦ AQ2
♣ AK987532

W	N	E	S
		2♠ ¹	?
¹ 2♠ = 6-10: 5-5 or 5431 or 5440			

Votes: 5♣=8; X=2; 3♣=2; 3♠=2

Yet another weak opening, and a four-loser hand with the minors dominating.

Peter G 5♣: 4♣ would usually be leaping Michaels, and 3♠ needs to be discussed if 5-5 in the minors or a solid minor looking for a 3NT bid from partner.

Micheál 5♣: Another shot in the dark, but the opponents have a difficult decision also.

Sabine 5♣: Bid high before they find out what opener's hand type is.

Peter P 5♣: Should show a self-supporting club suit and a good hand. I expect my partner to move with an Ace and a King and a couple of clubs.

Rory 5♣: I prefer to show my main asset.

Adrian 5♣: Too good for 3♣ and I play 4♣ as leaping Michaels, so has to be 5♣.

Luca 3♣: I am not afraid the auction will die now. I can always bid later. I think it is likely to be our hand, so I don't want to take too much room.

Sally 3♣: I'm a bit good, but for me and probably most people, 4♣ would be leaping Michaels. I don't think my clubs (and hearts) are good enough for a 3♠ cue, which is my alternative.

George X: There is no number of clubs you can bid to show this strength. Double followed by clubs does the trick. Say it goes 2♠-X-4♠-P-P. Now 5♣ is just right.



Roy X: Planning to bid 5♣ next, and hope for a raise.

Anna 3♣: Intending to bid clubs later.

Karel 3♣: I don't play leaping Micheals so 4♣ is out, as it also prevents 3NT. Going to hedge with a forcing 3♠.

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams

					♠ A76 ♥ QJ74 ♦ 1097 ♣ QJ4																																							
♠ 10984					N					♠ KQJ53																																		
♥ AK8					W					♥ 109852																																		
♦ KJ84										♦ 653																																		
♣ 105					S					♣ -																																		
					♠ 2 ♥ 3 ♦ AQ2 ♣ AK987532																																							
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¹ 2♠ = 6-10: 5-5 or 5431 or 5440																																												

Summary

This is a powerful hand and the problem is how best to express the true strength and still allow partner a role in determining the final contract. 5♣ gets you directly to a making contract, it helps to take up the bidding space for the opponents, but does it describe the full potential of the hand? Partner may hold decent diamonds and that might be a better spot.

Double has the advantage of opening the door for partner to participate and still allows a 5♣ bid later in the auction, especially if the opponents find a major suit game. 3♠ certainly highlights the strength of the hand but moves the bidding up a level from a double.

The leaping Micheals convention appears to restrict a range of alternative bids in these type of competitive situations, which raises the question of how often does the convention arise?

Marks: X=10; 5♣=9; 3♠=9; 3♣=8

Bidding Tips

With very powerful hands where partner may have some useful cover cards it often pays off to keep the bidding low initially, with the reserve position of later bidding the hand to the full.

Question 7

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

♠ 1052
♥ K85
♦ A
♣ AKJ1086

W	N	E	S
	P	3♥ ¹	?
¹ 3♥ = 7 card pre-empt			

Votes: 3NT=11; Pass=2; 4♣=1

A simple 3NT or is there anything better?

Peter P 3NT: A heart stop and a source of tricks for no trumps.

Sally 3NT: And cross my fingers.

Karel 3NT: Fairly routine. If it gets cracked a retreat to 4♣ may be wise.

George 3NT: I do not feel great about it, but if not now, then when? If you are doubled you have a safe retreat.

Anna 3NT: An awful hand but if not now when?

Ciaran 3NT: Hope for the best.

Peter G 3NT: The features of my hand are the club suit and the heart stop, double would emphasise the desire to play in 4♣ which I don't have.

Luca 3NT: I don't like that partner is a passed hand but this will certainly have some chances.

Adrian 3NT: Again now or never. Partner may have some useful cards.

Roy Pass: 3NT is tempting, but partner is a passed hand and can balance with values and shortness, so pass seems sager.

Micheál Pass: A close decision between pass and 3NT. I choose pass as partner has already passed.

Rory 4C: Well worth it.

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

					♠A6 ♥A6 ♦J10763 ♣9742																																		
♠KQ84		N		♠J973																																			
♥-		W		E		♥QJ1097432																																	
♦KQ9852						♦4																																	
♣Q53		S		♣-																																			
					♠1052 ♥K85 ♦A ♣AKJ1086																																		
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W		N		E		S																																	
		P		3♥ ¹		?																																	
¹ 3♥=7 card pre-empt																																							

Summary

Hard to resist 3NT with this hand and although expressing some anxieties the majority of the panel made the call. As was noted if the contract was doubled there was the escape route of 4♣. The 4♣ bid may get raised to game, but passing doesn't work on this hand.

Marks: 3NT=10; 4♣=9; Pass=8

Question 8

Dealer South. Vul All. Teams

♠ A986
♥ K108752
♦ J
♣ 42

W	N	E	S
			P
P	?		

Votes: 2♥=7; 1♥=3; Pass=3; 3♥=1

Third in hand with seven losers and 6-4 in the majors and seven working points.

Do you open a Weak 2 with a second four-card major or just 1♥ to allow for a 4-4 spade fit to be established?

Sabine 2♥: Third seat needs to open something with this.

Ciaran 2♥: Not worried about missing a better spade contract third in hand.

Sally 2♥: Or maybe 3♥. Certainly not 1♥.



Peter G 2♥: Weak. Most rules go by the board when third in hand and green. I am hoping to steal the part score here.

Luca 2♥: Third in hand I can have some fun.

George 2♥: If you wait for perfect hands you will have rust on your bidding box.

Roy Pass; Could bid some number of hearts but getting to spades after that might be difficult and I might be asking for the right hand.

Rory Pass: With a side four-card major I won't open with a weak two.

Micheál Pass: It looks like the opponents have the balance of strength.

Adrian: 1♥: Better to open 1♥ third in hand rather than a weak two telling everyone you are weak.

Karel 1♥: I want a heart lead most of the time. Light openings will invariably find East placing me with cards I don't have. I prefer 1♥ to 2♥ as we may have a spade fit. Light third in hand opening are huge longer term winners.

Peter P 1♥: My partner is used to me opening these poor hands in

third seat, and we have methods to cope. More to the point, opening 1♥ keeps the possible spade fit in the picture.

Dealer South. Vul All. Teams

				♠A986			
				♥K108752			
				♦J			
				♣42			
♠Q72				N		♠43	
♥J3				E		♥A	
♦1083				S		♦AK52	
♣K9876						♣AQJ1053	
				♠KJ108			
				♥Q964			
				♦Q9764			
				♣-			
				</			