

IRISH BRIDGE Journal

Winter 2025

Welcome

Welcome all to the
Winter 2025 Journal.



Enda Murphy, Editor

Can you believe it's now three years since the Journal went online and yours truly became Editor? *Tempus fugit!*

Please bear with me while I thank the people I ought to thank. Let me start with all the contributors, regular and occasional. Collectively, you are the Journal, and the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. I can count on the fingers of one hand [luckily for me!] the number of times anyone has declined my invitation to contribute. Massive thanks are due to Sue Power, who designs and produces the Journal to such a high standard, and whose consistent excellence makes my job ridiculously easy. Finally, thanks go to Dermot O'Brien for his consistent support and encouragement. Onwards and upwards!

Back in August, the World Championships were held in Denmark. The home team almost

produced a fairytale win in the Bermuda Bowl, losing the final narrowly to USA. Netherlands won the Venice Cup [women], USA the Seniors and Italy the Mixed. For me there were two takeaways. First, the "Swiss" team suffered a heavy defeat to Sweden in the Bermuda Bowl quarter-finals, then failed to raise a gallop in the transnational teams event. If you've been reading my previous Editorials [and why should you], you'll understand both the inverted commas and my lack of empathy. The "Swiss" team is an expensively assembled squad comprising three Poles and two Dutch, all handsomely rewarded by captain Pierre Zimmermann for adopting a flag of convenience. The previous incarnation was team "Monaco", comprising Pierre plus two [cheating] Italians, two Norwegians and a Frenchman. As I've noted before, no rules are being broken, but it doesn't mean I have to like it – and I don't.

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You make the news!

The Journal wants to hear from your Club!!

Send a photo and caption of a noteworthy event.

Be the next Club to be profiled in our "Club Focus" feature.

Contact editor@cbaie.ie





The other takeaway was the controversy over the Polish women's quarterfinal victory over USA, by a margin of just one IMP after 120 boards. There was an adjusted score late on, 3NT-1 being adjusted to reflect the likelihood of making, had there not been misinformation from the American defenders. You'd need to read the full discussion thread on Bridgewinners, but it boiled down to the explanation for the lead of the ten from J10x by the Americans. A strict [but correct] reading of their Convention Card said that it showed four or more cards including the Jack. Once again my empathy is in short supply, not least because some of the posts were unacceptably partisan and unpleasant. Rules is rules. Suck it up. Lose with grace and class.

Moving on to more agreeable matters, this edition features a compelling piece by Dónal Garvey, recounting his life and times in Bridge. A titan of our game, Dónal's recollections evoke many memories.

When I became Editor three years ago, I wanted to broaden the appeal by including something for all ranks and classes of players. So I'm especially pleased that this issue includes contributions from Isabel Burke and Matthew O'Farrell, both Juniors. Take a bow, guys! [Luca Crone will be back next time].

Well done Team Europe for winning the Buffet Cup. First contested versus USA in 2006, it is now a three-sided affair with China the new team. There are twelve on each team [board a match], and in the individual phase you must play

with them all. Our columnist Boye Brogeland, in unfamiliar partnership with Justyna Zmuda of Poland, picked up AKQx, AQJ10987, Void, AK. Justyna opened 3♦ in front of him! They groped their way to 7♥, and told their opponents that neither had much clue what the other's bidding meant. Boye's LHO had the stiff ♥K and led a club. Justyna tabled X, X, KJxxxx 109xxx. Boye could ruff his spade loser with dummy's trump and cash ♥A for thirteen tricks. The only lead to beat 7♥ was.....♥K!!

Finally, news of an Xmas Spectacular Double Quiz!! See details on page 4. Generous prizes on offer, plus your name in lights in the next issue!

Season's greetings to you and yours, and every good wish for 2026.

Enda Murphy
editor@cbai.ie

What a Difference a Day makes!! Editor

The above title comes from a song originally written in Spanish, but translated to English in time for Dinah Washington to win a Grammy for singing it in 1959. Journal readers of – ahem – a certain age are likely to recall it.

In any case, it provides an apt summation of the 2025 Venice Cup Final – women's team world championship, held in August in Denmark. After four of the eight segments on Day 1, China led Netherlands by an apparently decisive 59 IMPs. Nothing daunted, and perhaps having consulted Ms. Washington overnight, Netherlands roared back on Day 2, winning all four segments and taking the gold by a margin of 38 Imps. A turnaround of 97 IMPs – wow!

This deal contributed in no small way. It was board 2 on the 2nd segment on Day 2.

Dealer North. Vul N/S.

			♠ AJ65		
			♥ AJ8432		
			♦ AK2		
			♣ -		
♠ Q		N		♠ K1097432	
♥ Q109				♥ K7	
♦ Q10	W		E	♦ 4	
♣ AKQ10963		S		♣ 542	
			♠ Q		
			♥ 65		
			♦ J987653		
			♣ J87		

Open Room [Netherlands N/S]

W	N	E	S
	1♥	3♠	P
3NT	X	All Pass	

Closed Room [Netherlands E/W]

W	N	E	S
	1♣ ¹	3♠	P
P	4♥	All Pass	
¹ 1♣=16 +			

In the Open Room, West must have had her reasons for not running to 4♣, but I confess they escape me. North led a top diamond and the defence collected the first nine tricks for 1100.

In the replay, East's 3♠ overcall highlighted a frequent issue for strong Club pairs. What was North meant to do when 3♠ came back around? 3♠ or 3♣ doubled could be their last plus score, but 4♥ could also be cold. Put to the guess, the Chinese North made the winning bid of 4♥ and collected 650. Deep must have been her chagrin to discover that her good judgment/guess had resulted in a loss of 10 IMPs.

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Irish Bridge Journal spectacular

“At the Double”
Xmas Quiz!

QUIZ

- 1 What was the full name of the Hideous Hog's arch-enemy in Victor Mollo's "Menagerie" books?

- 2 Who was Nick FitzGibbon's first partner at Open international level?

- 3 Which player has won the most Bermuda Bowl titles?

- 4 As of December 2024, who was the top-ranked woman player in the world, based on Master Points?

- 5 In David Bird's books on the monks of St. Titus, who was the monastery's best resident [English] player?

- 6 Which female Irish player has won the most National titles?

- 7 According to the late David "Banzai" Jackson, how many points is an Ace worth in a balanced hand?

- 8 In which year did the Journal Editor first partner BJ O'Brien?
 - a) 1976
 - b) 1978
 - c) 1980
 - d) Too painful to remember

- 9 Solve these anagrams. One is a Journal contributor, the other is a Bridge Convention [may or may not be in that order]:
 - a) Backroom Cowardly Naked
 - b) Bonbon Pittas

- 10 Which current Irish Congress is the longest-running?

To enter, you **MUST BOTH** answer the Quiz Questions below **AND** attempt the Bidding Quiz.

80 points are available for each, highest total wins.

Quiz answers to:

Editor@cbaie

Bidding answers to:

bobpattinsonymail.com@yahoo.com

Prizes

Best Combined Score	€100
Best Bidding Quiz Score	€75
Best Quiz Score	€50

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.

♠ 52	N	♠ AK4
♥ Q6	W	♥ 9872
♦ 2	E	♦ AJ643
♣ AKJ109764	S	♣ 3

W	N	E	S
	1♦	P	1♥
4♣ ¹	P	5♣	All Pass

¹ 4♣ = Pre-Emptive

The Play

North leads ♥K, ♥A and a third heart which you ruff. Plan the play.

Board 3 Dealer South. Vul E/W.

♠ AQ	N	♠ 632
♥ A103	W	♥ J94
♦ A1075	E	♦ J84
♣ AQ102	S	♣ K653

W	N	E	S
			P
2NT	P	3NT	All Pass

The Play

North leads ♠J, South playing ♠K. Plan the play.

Board 2 Dealer East. Vul E/W.

♠ AJ106542	N	♠ KQ
♥ AKQ	W	♥ 10842
♦ A107	E	♦ KJ8
♣ -	S	♣ 9653

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

¹ 2NT = Balanced 8-10 HCP
² 4♦ = Cue Bid, denies ace or king in clubs
³ 4NT = RKCB for spades
⁴ 5♣ = 1 key card
⁵ 6♦ = Queen of trump suit plus DK

The Play

North leads ♣Q. Plan the play.

Board 4 Dealer West. Vul All.

♠ AQ2	N	♠ 108
♥ 4	W	♥ A752
♦ AJ10763	E	♦ KQ54
♣ AK3	S	♣ 1085

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

¹ 2♣ = Too strong for 3D, both 2S and 3C would be FG
² 4NT = RKCB for diamonds
³ 5♠ = Two key cards and diamond queen
⁴ 6♣ = Asking bid in clubs
⁵ 6♦ = Denies 3rd round control in clubs

The Play

North leads the ♥6. Plan the play.

Answers on page 32

Bidding Quiz 12

By Bob Pattinson



All eight hands are from teams events. Entries to bobpattinsonmail.com@yahoo.com by 7th February 2026. Good luck!

Question 1

Dealer West. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠ 73
♥ AKJ73
♦ Q53
♣ KQJ

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	1♥	P
2♦	P	2♠ ¹	P
3♣	P	?	

¹ 2♠=Bourke Relay: ARF game force

Question 2

Dealer North. Vul None. Teams.

♠ QT75
♥ QJ
♦ Q842
♣ 982

W	N	E	S
	1♦ ¹	P	1♠
P	1NT ²	P	?

¹ 1♦=4+
² 1NT=12-14

Question 3

Dealer East. Vul All. Teams.

♠ A732
♥ KT853
♦ J54
♣ A

W	N	E	S
		1♠	P
?			

Question 4

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams.

♠ T765
♥ AJT
♦ QJ832
♣ T

W	N	E	S
	1♠	P	?

Question 5

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams.

♠ 962
♥ AQ82
♦ J2
♣ KT53

W	N	E	S
		1♥	1♠
?			

Question 6

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams

♠ 954
♥ K875
♦ AK9732
♣ -

W	N	E	S
	1♣	P	1♦
P	3♣	P	?

Question 7

Dealer South. Vul All. Teams.

♠ AQ3
♥ T5
♦ 765
♣ AK862

W	N	E	S
			3♣
4♥	?		

Question 8

Dealer South. Vul All. Teams

♠ AK9
♥ AT9432
♦ 75
♣ J5

W	N	E	S
			3NT ¹
?			

¹ 3NT=solid 7 card minor no outside control

Entries to:

bobpattinsonmail.com@yahoo.com
by 7th February 2026

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
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



I am pleased to report further positive news as we make our way through the 2025/26 bridge season. Affiliations are still coming in (although the deadline has passed!) and it seems likely that member numbers will be up again this season. We have registered nine new clubs (including three re-affiliating for the first time since covid), but have lost three others.

Numbers attending our national competitions are up even on last year's strong numbers, to the point where we have had to move the Master Pairs event from its original venue to a larger one, the O'Reilly Hall in UCD. CBAI historian Seamus Dowling tells me that the entry of 130 pairs is a record for this event; you will see some pictures elsewhere in the Journal. And in perhaps the best news of all, congress attendances thus far are well up on last season in most cases – hopefully, a trend that will be maintained for the rest of the season.

We have been successful in attracting two new sponsors for our competitions. Cantor Fitzgerald Ireland, a financial services firm, will sponsor the Holmes Wilson in Tullow in February. We are very grateful for their sponsorship, and participants will have the opportunity to meet representatives from the firm at that competition. And Travel Counsellors, a provider of tailor-made holidays for individuals and groups, will sponsor the Mixed Weekend (Spiro and Coen) next October. We'll be featuring both these sponsors in a little more detail in the next edition of the Journal.

In terms of our "projects", the news is more mixed. The amalgamation discussions with the NIBU are progressing positively, and it is hoped to present a draft proposal

to our regional committees for their input early in the new year. The NIBU will do the same with their clubs. Assuming all are happy to proceed, the next step will be to put the proposals to the two sets of members for a formal vote. The project to revamp the member database, on the other hand, is taking a lot longer than we hoped. I was warned at the outset by those with more of an IT background than I have that the devil was always in the detail on these kinds of projects, and so it is proving. So there is no useability for members or clubs as yet, unfortunately, but we will keep plugging away with the design and testing effort.

We also have news of an exciting new online competition for members early in the new year. Our online partner 52 Entertainment owns both the BBO and FunBridge platforms. While BBO is very well-known in Ireland, as the platform used by nearly all our clubs during covid, and still in use by some clubs including our online virtual clubs, FunBridge is much less well-known, despite the fact that its devotees swear by it, and argue that it is in fact in some respects a better platform than BBO. The competition will be an individual head-to-head knockout tournament, with decent prizes, and masterpoints, on offer. A few of our top players have offered to volunteer as seeds, with a bounty on their heads for anyone who beats them, so it should also be a bit of fun. We'll be in touch with more news on that shortly, and we hope lots of people will give it a go.

Both the European Bridge League and the World Bridge Federation continue their development efforts for Women's bridge, with large online teams' tournaments on RealBridge planned for 9/11 January (EBL) and 27/29 March

(WBF). These are great events and each has had a strong Irish presence in its two runnings to date; hopefully we'll see the same again this season, and perhaps an Irish winner on the virtual podium. Thanks to our women's bridge representatives Mary Kelly-Rogers (WBF) and Joan Kenny (EBL) for all their hard work in this area.

Congratulations to two of our National Tournament Directors, Diarmuid Reddan and John Phelan, who achieved Grade A rankings in the recent WBF/EBL TD exam in Warsaw, Poland, last weekend, elevating them both to International Tournament Director status. This is a great achievement for them personally, for their clubs, for their home province of Munster, for Ireland, and for their mentor Fearghal O'Boyle. It serves as another reminder of just how fortunate the Irish bridge community is to have such skilled and dedicated TDs running our competitions.

The calendar of events for the early part of the new year is set out elsewhere in the Journal, and we hope that you will find something of interest. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all CBAI members a very happy Christmas and a peaceful, healthy, and bridge-filled 2026. Our offices will be closed from lunchtime on Friday 19 December until the morning of Monday 5 January. Just in case you think we'll be slacking over the holidays, the new year starts with two major events – the Lady Milne trials in Tallaght on 2/4 January, and the first weekend of the Camrose Trophy in CityNorth Hotel, Gormanstown, on 9/11 January. So I can assure you we'll be keeping busy!

Results and Upcoming Fixtures

National Results

Duais an Uachtaráin – President's Prize (Waterford, 13-14 September)

- 1st** Tom McCarthy & Pat Quinn
2nd Cian Holland & Dermot Cotter
3rd Katherine Lennon & Michael Lennon
4th Martin Garvey & Andrea Knox

Best Regional Master: Niamh Harty & Sue Power

Best Area Master: Mary Santry & Renee Flanagan

Best Intermediate: Robert Wolfe & John Corcoran

Spiro Cup – National Mixed Pairs (Templeogue, 18 October)

- 1st** Siobhan Part & BJ O'Brien
2nd Brid Kemple & Terry Walsh
3rd Aoife MacHale & Peter Goodman
4th Lucy & John Phelan

Best Regional Master: Angela Murphy & William Enright

Best Area Master: Joan Peppard & Tom Roche

Best Intermediate: Veronica Buttmer & Vincent Bissett

Coen Trophy – National Mixed Teams (Templeogue, 19 October)

- 1st** Carol-Ann Cummins, John Noonan, Deirdre Tuckey, Seamus Costello
2nd Maria Barry, Pat Barry, Siobhan Part, BJ O'Brien, Thomas MacCormac
3rd Joan Kenny, Enda Glynn, Teresa Rigney, Conor Boland
4th Maeve Delaney, Sean Maguire, Marie James, Anthony Moloney

Best Regional Master

Anne Moylan-Cleary, Brian Cleary, Brid Galligan, Sean Galligan

Best Area Master

Mary Whooley, Tom Woulfe, Léan McMahon, Brian McCann

Best Intermediate

Phyllis Carew, Joe Bissett, Camilla McLoughlin, Vincent Bissett

Camrose Trials (Templeogue, 27 October)

Winners

Mark Moran, John Carroll, Tom Hanlon, Conor Boland, Adam Mesbur, Nick FitzGibbon, NPC Gráinne Barton

IBU Interprovincials (Knightsbrook Hotel Trim, 29-30 November)

Open Teams Winners: Leinster

Paul Delaney, Martin Brady, David Dunne, Matthew O'Farrell, Conor Boland, Peter Goodman, Tomas Roche, Roisin deJong, Mairead Haugh, BJ O'Brien (capt), Teresa Rigney, Karel deRaeymaker

Master Teams Winners: Munster

Liam Hyde, Margaret Holmes, Joe Carroll, Derek O'Gorman (NPC), Noel Bradfield, John Lyons, David Walsh, Sean Mulvaney, Eugene Gath, John Whelehan, Rose White, Mary Santry, Gerry McCague.

Intermediate Teams Winners: Munster

Eilish Ryan, Mary Beausang, John O'Connell, Mary Frost, Shirley Mangan, Derek O'Gorman (NPC), Mary Doherty-Ryan, Geraldine Brown, Elizabeth Dobbs, Hugh Dobbs, Triona Hegarty, Margaret MacDonald, Margaret Aylward.

Upcoming Fixtures

Date	Event	Venue
2026		
Jan 2-4	Lady Milne Trials	Plaza Hotel, Tallaght
Jan 2-4	Camrose Trophy - Weekend 1	City North Hotel, Gormanstown
Jan 9-11	Waterford Congress	Tower Hotel, Waterford
Jan 17	Men's & Women's Pairs Championships	Westgrove Hotel, Clane
Jan 18	Men's & Women's Teams Championships	Westgrove Hotel, Clane
Jan 23-25	Cork Congress	Maryborough Hotel, Cork
Jan 24	Regional Teams Weekend	Various - check venues and times
Jan 31 - Feb 2	Teltscher Trials 2024/2025	Templeogue Bridge Centre
Jan 31 - Feb 1	Confined Regional Masters Pairs & Teams	Templeogue Bridge Centre
Feb 6-8	IBU Mixed Trials, Weekend 1	Templeogue Bridge Centre
Feb 6-8	Ennis Congress	The Inn, Dromoland
Feb 14-15	Holmes Wilson	Mount Wolseley Hotel, Carlow
Feb 20-22	Junior Camrose & Peggy Bayer Trophies	Scotland
Feb 20-22	Galway Congress	Ardilaun Hotel
Feb 27 - Mar 1	IBU Mixed Trials, Weekend 2	Templeogue Bridge Centre
Feb 27 - Mar 02	Malahide Bridge Congress	Grand Hotel, Malahide
Mar 2-6	CBAI Sims Week	
Mar 6-8	Camrose Trophy - Weekend 2	Wales
Mar 7-8	National Pairs Championships	Falls Hotel, Ennistymon
Mar 10-12	IBU Senior Trials	La Mon, Belfast
Mar 13-14	British Isles Trophy	Online - Realbridge
Mar 21-22	IBU Burke & O'Connor Trophy	Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim
Mar 27-29	WBF Women's Online Teams	Online - Realbridge
Mar 27-29	Clonmel Congress	Talbot Hotel, Clonmel



The CBAI presents

THE FIRST IRISH INDIVIDUAL BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIP

Starts January 18th 2026Played ONLINE at funbridge.com

12-BOARD 1 VS 1 KNOCKOUT ROUNDS

Entry: ♦ 100 Diamonds (~€5)

The CBAI is delighted to launch a new national knockout tournament. In each round you play a 12-board match, with three robots and using IMPs scoring, against a single opponent. Each round stays open for 48 hours, so you can play whenever suits you. Aside from the national title, there will be a series of prizes, including for the overall winner, a free weekend's accommodation at an Irish congress of your choice in 2026.

National masterpoints will also be awarded. To add an extra bit of fun to the tournament, four of our top players, Tom Hanlon, Peter Goodman, Joan Kenny, and Paul Delaney have volunteered to act as seeded "stars" with a bounty of €100 on each of their heads for anyone who beats them at any stage of the tournament. There will also be an optional plate competition for everyone knocked out in the first round. We hope you'll take the opportunity to play in this exciting new event. You'll need a Funbridge account to do so, but Funbridge have very kindly offered two months' FREE Premium membership for any new members signing up using the code below.



Enter here

(or via funbridge.com)

CEO, CBAI



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2 months free **Premium**

For more information visit funbridge.com or cbai.ie.



From Millstreet to West Kerry - a Bridge journey

Dónal Garvey



We played cards at home - Whist, Solo, 45 and partners 110. God help you if you made a mistake at 110! When I was about 12 my mother and some of her friends started Bridge lessons. They used to get together around the kitchen table, bid and play the hands and then set out the cards and chat about the bidding and the play.

I was often an interested observer. Around then, I started setting out the daily newspaper Bridge hands and studying the bidding and play. I gradually got a feel for the game of Bridge by osmosis.

There were no "modern" diversions in Millstreet when I was young but I loved the sense of freedom which I felt when I was running. I loved to run long distances but I was never "top notch". I remember running in a mile race at an athletics meeting where I thought I had a chance; but one of the other lads left me for dead. He was Donie Walsh of Leevale AC who went on to represent Ireland at the infamous Munich Olympics 1972 and also won a team silver medal at the World Cross Country championships. I realised that I was nowhere near that standard! There was a little mountain (Clara) behind the town and I often enjoyed jogging up and down - this love of the hills became an important feature years later.

When I was about 16 Mom was due to play in an Open Pairs at the Killarney Congress (her first foray into the big wide Bridge world) but her partner had to drop out (probably panic) at the last minute. Rather than be disappointed she decided that I would play with her. On the way to Killarney she advised me to play as many hands

as looked reasonable in NT. We won comfortably and it was a special win for both of us.

College Years

When I was in UCC I continued to play cards but not Bridge. I played 7-card Stud and Pontoon (21 or Blackjack) and I was fairly successful. Student loans had become popular and often the lads with a bit of extra cash were not always the best gamblers. My subjects were Maths, Maths Physics, Physics and Chemistry; and then I specialised in Maths and Statistics. I always enjoyed solving probability questions and I am sure this helped in sometimes selecting the right line of play at the bridge table.

I also dabbled at Chess which I learned out of a book. I remember spending hours studying the intricacies of the "French Defence". I had a little book of 100 Soviet miniatures - very short games which generally ended because of a blunder. In 1968, my final year at UCC, Prof Mulcahy played about 20 students simultaneously where the rule was you were required to move immediately he came to your table. As the numbers dwindled you had less and less time to consider your move. I was down to the final two players with a clear winning position until I blundered and allowed him escape with a draw. Prof Mulcahy was killed the following week in the Aer Lingus plane crash off Tuskar Rock.

Dublin

I joined the CSO towards the end of 1968 and played Chess for St Columba's chess club for a couple of years. However, I found

chess to be time consuming and fairly unsociable so I decided to investigate the Dublin Bridge scene. It's interesting how many of the good chess players switched to Bridge at some stage.

Around 1971 I became aware of Owen and Nancy Rowe who had a club called "The New Deal" and who were doing a lot to promote junior bridge in Dublin. I remember playing in the Rowe Cup in the Grand Hotel in Malahide with over 100 entries. Their daughter, Aileen O'Keeffe, had a very strong Bridge partnership with Ann Montwill. Interestingly years later, neither Ann nor Micheál O'Briain were available and Aileen asked me to play in the 1993 Master Pairs which we won with a bit to spare - it was the only time we played together!

Civil Service Bridge Club

I started to play in the Civil Service Bridge Club around 1972 where there were many strong experienced players and the competition was fairly strong. Jimmy Powell who acted as tournament director around the country, took an interest in me - largely I think because I was very quick and accurate at matchpointing and scoring. In 1973 I won the National Intermediate B Team of 4 playing with Jack Downing, Hugh McDermott and Malcolm Ryder. I also won a Dublin Region Intermediate A Pairs playing with Dermot Downes.

Ireland participated in the 1973 EC championships and Jimmy (who was NPC) suggested that I partner Hugh McDermott for the Junior teams. Our teammates were the O'Briain brothers [Pádraig and Micheál] along with PB Barrett



and Paddy Walsh. Hugh recently reminded me of the conversation I had with Omar Sharif in The Hague. Another humorous memory from that event was at the end when the Irish players from all events got together for a few beers; and Conor O'Hara intoned "if Mammy O Briain could see her boys now"!

Micheál O Briain

I started a partnership with Micheál in the second half of the 1970s. At this stage I was playing my club bridge in the Regent. Micheál was and still is a very fine player. We had a very successful partnership for about 25 years until I had to step back from Bridge for work reasons. Our personalities suited one another and we never had a cross word at the Bridge table. I had a young family and Micheál always understood that I had to be choosy about the competitions to play in.

On the other hand we worked hard on our system at home. We would take about 50 hands from international competition - one of us with the North hands and the other with the South hands. We would use blank bidding records and record our bids and then give the bidding record to partner who would record his responses at home. We continued to exchange the record until the bidding on all hands was complete. We would then have a detailed discussion about the entire bidding sequence. It was a really good approach to understanding the strengths and weaknesses of our system.

National Competitions

In the first couple of years we came second in a few national competitions, usually behind Nick and Adam who have been the main powerhouse of Irish Bridge for the last 50 years - they have an incredibly successful record nationally and internationally.

We started to win national competitions in 1979 and were successful in the Moylan twice; the Davidson; the Holmes Wilson

twice; the Geraldine three times; and the Egan twice. I also won the Holmes Wilson in 2009 playing with my son Tommy, Adam and Pat Walshe - I think it may have been the last national competition which Pat won before his untimely death *[it was. Ed.]*. There was also the Geraldine in 2014 playing with Bob Pattinson, Norbert Van Woerkom and Justin Corfield. I also won the online Moylan during COVID playing with Tommy.

Micheál and I came second a number of times in the Master Pairs but never won it. I did win with Aileen O'Keeffe in 1993 and again with Pat Quinn in 2014 (ironically just beating the O'Briains by a fraction of a VP).

Interprovincials

Micheál and I were part of the winning Leinster team in 1975 and on five further occasions. In 1975 I recall Peter Pigot [senior] standing up very politely when two ladies came to his table and introducing himself and Joe McHale. I recall that part of the introduction was "you probably read my Bridge Column every day in the paper" - the poor ladies could hardly hold their cards!

I got a great kick out of being on the winning Munster team, partnering Pat Quinn, some 42 years later in 2017.

Rothmans Kings

John Comyn had a great nose for publicity. He also believed that there was far too much focus on the Pairs game in Ireland and not enough on Teams Bridge. There was a lot of banter between himself and Paddy Kiely of Mitchelstown who felt that John gave far too much publicity to Dublin based players. Paddy stated that Cork players were just as good as, or better than, Dublin players. John persuaded Rothmans to sponsor a Bridge team - the "Rothmans Kings". We were provided with a uniform - trousers, shirts and sweaters with Rothmans logos. Kiely wrote that the Cork Aces would trump Kings any day!

Micheál and I, playing with Pat Walshe and Niall Tóibín played Kiely, John Coman, Denis and Anne Dillon in Fermoy. The banter generated a lot of publicity and there was a huge crowd of onlookers. Kiely's team were all very fine players but we won. The funny thing was that Micheál was the only Dublin born player, the others of us being from Cork, Kerry and Wexford.

Maurits Caransa was a wealthy Dutch businessman who at one stage was kidnapped for ransom. He sponsored a bridge tournament in Amsterdam with big money prizes which attracted all the big names in the bridge world. Rothmans sponsored us to play in 1979. Momentum is important in Bridge and we played well from the start. We beat many well known teams and starting the final round we were one of three or four teams who might win. Micheál and I finished our match and hurried to the Vugraph room to learn that with one board to go we were the shortest of noses ahead in what was essentially a triple tie. When the dust settled on the final board we were beaten by a whisker into third place - we would have swapped the very substantial cash prize for the prestige of winning.

Pat Walshe was a genius of a Bridge player with an exceptionally sharp mind and an uncanny table presence. He could be withering towards partner if partner didn't see the "obvious". But Bridge isn't an individual game - even a genius needs the right foil as partner across the table. I always thought Niall Tóibín was a wonderful foil for Pat - he managed to stay calm sometimes under a lot of pressure. They were a great pair.

I enjoyed an occasional psyche against strong players. Once I opened the bidding against Pat who became declarer. He took a few losing finesses against me. Three cards from the end and missing a Queen, he turned to Micheál and asked him "Micheál is Donal more likely to psyche with zero points or with two points?" Micheál said "Pat you know Donal

as well as I do". Pat announced that I wouldn't have the nerve to psyche against him with zero points and promptly took another losing finesse!

Bridge Systems

I have played a number of different systems - weak NT and four-card suits; Precision Club for about three years; a version of Blue Club for the entire time I partnered Micheál (and for a short time with Bob Pattinson many years later); and finally Strong NT and five-card Majors. I think Micheál and Pádraig still play something very similar to what I played with Micheál. All systems have their own advantages. Doing well is probably mostly due to maintaining concentration and minimising mistakes especially in long tiring competitions. I always felt that being physically fit is also important.

International Bridge

I have been very fortunate and honoured to represent Ireland on a number of occasions mostly playing with Micheál. We first qualified through International Trials to play in the Rosenblum Cup in Miami in 1986 with Nick and Adam. We won the trials four years later to play in the same competition in Geneva with Hugh McGann and Derek O Gorman. (Seamus Dowling seems to have missed these in his history of Bridge in Ireland).

Political differences meant that Ireland didn't participate in the home internationals for over 47 years. In December 1998 I played with Micheál, Pat Walshe and Niall Tóibín, Tom Hanlon and Hugh McGann with Gráinne Barton as NPC, in Ireland's first Camrose match returning to the competition. We beat Wales 48-12 in Wales. We played in a number of Camrose matches subsequently.

I was NPC of the Open team in Brighton in 1987 and also of the Senior team in Beijing in 2008.

Partnering Micheál, I played in the World Open teams in 1992 in Salsomaggiore. We also played in

the European Championships in 1989 in Turku, Finland; in 1993 in Menton, France and 1997 in Montecatini, Italy.

I have a humorous recollection from Turku. It was our turn to sit out and Ireland then had a bye, so with some hours to fill, Micheál and I thought we would hit a few golf balls at the local golf club. As we approached the first tee we saw Zia about to tee off (golf was his latest craze) with a local golfer. He insisted that we join them. We proceeded to spray our golf balls all over the course until we arrived at the par 3 ninth hole. That night on Vugraph, Zia told the story — "they were terrible, golf balls everywhere except near the green. So at the short ninth I announced that the pair furthest from the hole would buy the drinks. We (Zia) had the honour and both of us hit nice shots into the green side bunker. Then the first guy (me) who had been really terrible hit his ball on the green; and the other guy (Micheál) who hadn't been much better hit his ball to within 5 or 6 feet. I should have known better than to mention drink!" He had the Vugraph crowd in stitches.

The Government decentralised most of the CSO to Cork in 1994 and it was a significant challenge to keep existing projects going while also satisfying the demand for new Statistics with staff who were mostly new to the CSO. Because of these work pressures I almost gave up Bridge at that time. However, I could see that my son Tommy was very talented at the game and I had a dream of playing along side him for Ireland at the European Championships. Micheál and I playing with Tommy and John Carroll won the trials to represent Ireland in Montecatini and selected Tom Hanlon and Hugh McGann to join the team. I think we are the only father and son to play on the same Irish team at a European Championships. Ireland finished a very respectable 13th of the 37 competing countries.

Can I allow myself a little vanity and describe a hand I played as Declarer in that Championship? We

were playing Russia in round 20 and I was East:

			♠ 10874			
			♥ 764			
			♦ Q3			
			♣ AK75			
♠ J52		N			♠ KQ6	
♥ 2					♥ AKQJ1053	
♦ K9842	W	E			♦ A76	
♣ Q1062		S			♣ -	
			♠ A93			
			♥ 98			
			♦ J105			
			♣ J9843			

I opened a strong 1♣ with the East hand and Micheál responded 1♦ (0-7). I now rebid 2♥ to show my powerhouse and Micheál rebid 3♦ to show a five+ card suit and almost a positive. I bid 4♦ to show support, Micheál raised to 5♦ and I converted to 5♥. Micheál bid 6♦ and I converted to 6♥. The ♠A was placed on the Table. It looked to me that my only chance was to find one defender with both the ♣A and ♣K along with three or more Diamonds in which case I would have an automatic squeeze - a fairly small probability!

But sometimes the defenders help. North played the ♠8 and I unblocked the ♠K. South now switched the ♣4, I played the ♣2 from Dummy, North played the ♣K and I ruffed. I now knew a lot about the hand - I knew that South had the ♣J and four or five Clubs while North had an even number of Spades (probably four), both the ♠A and ♠K and four or five Clubs. When I pulled trumps it seemed certain that South held the ♣J and three or more Diamonds. Now I played the ♠Q and a spade to the ♠J. I played the ♣Q forcing North to cover with the ♠A (if not I discard my losing diamond) which I ruffed. Now all the trumps coming down to ♦K9 and ♣10 in Dummy. South couldn't hold on to the ♣J and three Diamonds and the Slam rolled home.

Taking a break from Bridge

Given the demands at work which only increased when I took over the lead role in the CSO, I knew I had to ease off Bridge - it is a very

strenuous game mentally to play at the highest level. It was a very difficult decision coming after a championship where we played fairly well. It was also very difficult in the context of my friendship and partnership with Micheál.

I determined to spend every Sunday in the mountains enjoying the physical exertion and fresh air. I enjoyed map reading and navigation and came to know most every inch of the McGillycuddy Reeks, the Brandon range, the Comeraghs and Knockmealdowns. There are also wonderful lesser known walking routes in West Cork and West Kerry. I have an extensive Bridge library and regularly dipped in and out of my books so I never completely lost touch with the game. As a proud Dad, I also followed Tommy's many successes at the game.

I retired in 2007 and moved to the little village of Cloghane under Mount Brandon in the Dingle Peninsula - and what a wonderful place to live. Health considerations allowing, I have continued to walk in the hills regularly.

In 2008, David Jackson persuaded me to take on the NPC role for the Senior Team in Beijing. I became a bit more interested in playing again and, as mentioned already, I won a couple of National competitions playing with Bob Pattinson and Pat Quinn. I have been playing with Pat for about 10 years or so, not nearly as often as he would like because Pat would play seven days a week! However, West Kerry is a long distance from most Bridge Championships and I still greatly enjoy my hillwalking. I have been very fortunate in my Bridge experiences and the wonderful partners I played with.

Fortune Favours...

Editor

In August of this year, the American Contract Bridge League [ACBL] held its Summer Nationals in Philadelphia.

One of the most prestigious events was the Grand National Teams, where Districts compete against each other to be crowned National champions. A little bit like our Kelburne Cup - but on steroids. The New York team emerged victorious, and it included Joe Grue, a valued member of our Bidding Panel.

As a player, Joe is pure box office. He's an ultra-aggressive bidder and a lightning-quick player. He lived up to his reputation on this deal:

Grue			
♠ QJ108754			
♥ -			
♦ Q8732			
♣ 4			
♠ A3	N	♠ 92	
♥ J86	W	♥ AQ109	
♦ J654	E	♦ A109	
♣ QJ109	S	♣ K875	
♠ K6			
♥ K97542			
♦ K			
♣ A632			

What would you open, vul against not, in first seat?

Joe opened 4♠!! Let me borrow a phrase from Ted Hastings [Line of Duty] - "Jesus, Mary and Joseph - and the little donkey!"

All pass. What would you lead as East?

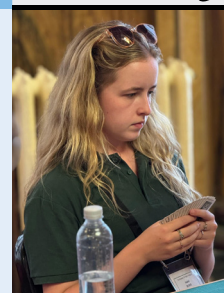
The lead was ♦A. What now? A trump switch beats it, but East switched to a club. ♣A, heart ruff, diamond ruff, heart ruff, diamond ruff, a third heart ruff and ♠Q. Plus 620. The play took less than a minute. Amazingly, 4♠ was not bid at the other table.

Next time you get a chance to watch Joe Grue in action, I suggest you take it - and buckle up!



The Coen Trophy 2025

Isabel Burke



The weekend of the Spiro/Coen [National Mixed Championships] is always one we look forward to – filled with competitiveness and chaos. This year, Tom Gorey and myself teamed up with Matthew O’Farrell and Sheila Walsh as a junior team (Sheila would appreciate me calling her a junior!). Although not finishing as well as we would have liked, we had some fun hands along the way.

You are dealer holding this hand and everyone is vulnerable:

♠ A842
♥ 107643
♦ -
♣ J876

You chose to pass and your LHO opens a weak 2 in diamonds. Partner doubles and RHO passes. You take a leap of faith to 3♥ and partner shrugs and says “ah sure we’re vulnerable and it’s IMPs” and raises you to game. 10 tricks can be made without too many issues and we were surprised to see less than half of the field in the game. While scoring up it was a nice surprise to see our team mates kept their opponents out of game – they got off lightly in 3♦= for +110.

Full hand:

Dealer West. Vul All.

♠ J103			
♥ J2			
♦ KQ8543			
♣ 54			
♠ A842	N	♠ KQ7	
♥ 107643	W	♥ K985	
♦ -	E	♦ 106	
♣ J876	S	♣ AK102	
♠ 965			
♥ AQ			
♦ AJ972			
♣ Q93			

The next hand is another diamond save against hearts:

You’re first seat vulnerable against not and you open 2♦ with the following:

♠ KJ2
♥ 3
♦ A108765
♣ Q108

Upon reflection, it is probably worth a 1♦ opening with seven losers but I had my bidding boots on and felt the need to compete after a poor previous round. Pass from LHO and partner jumps to 4♦. RHO, South has a lovely hand but was unsure what to do over 4♦ so opted to pass. We went minus 1 for +9 imps while our team mates were making 12 tricks in hearts. It pays off to be aggressive!

Full hand:

Dealer West. Vul E/W.

♠ A543			
♥ J874			
♦ 92			
♣ J94			
♠ KJ2	N	♠ Q96	
♥ 3	W	♥ K62	
♦ A108765	E	♦ KQJ43	
♣ Q108	S	♣ 52	
♠ 1087			
♥ AQ1095			
♦ -			
♣ AK763			

Whether we were being squeezed for an overtrick or got overwhelmed by a “OMG what just happened?!” feeling, our spirits and hope stayed high throughout. Bring on next year!

Other matters

Our two junior teams will be going to Scotland the weekend of the 20-22 February 2026 to represent Ireland for the Junior Camrose. We’re all looking forward to it and are trying to get as much practice in in the meantime – despite being busy at college and other commitments. We can always find time for bridge!

Hopefully we will also be sending a team to Latvia next July for the Junior Youth European Teams Championships!

On a more personal note, I recently qualified as a Beginner’s Bridge Teacher – having passed two exams in August and attended a seminar in September where I made a presentation on a topic of my choosing to demonstrate teaching skills. It was a great weekend and I learned loads – a huge thanks to Anne Keating, Séamus Costello, Fran Ronan, Máire O’Keeffe, Dermot O’Brien and the rest of the committee. I hopefully plan to set up my own classes at some point in the near future. *[Well done Isabel and best of luck with the teaching. Ed.]*

Bric-A-Brock

Sally Brock



A few years ago I had a great run in the Hubert Phillips (the national mixed pivot teams competition), but recently have failed to reach the later stages.

One year we drew the holders in an early round and, despite an early lead, lost our match. That is not to say that we did not have our minor successes:

Dealer South. Vul All.

<p>♠ Q87 ♥ A762 ♦ KQ3 ♣ 1065</p>			
♠ 62	N	♠ KJ9	
♥ KJ853	W	♥ Q104	
♦ J984	E	♦ 76	
♣ K8	S	♣ Q9432	
<p>♠ A10543 ♥ 9 ♦ A1052 ♣ AJ7</p>			

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	1NT	P	2♦
P	4S	All Pass	

In this competition, where every team member plays with every other team member in rotation, we play a strong no-trump and four-card majors, a system which I enjoy but with which I am unfamiliar.

With no special agreement, it was unclear what I should bid as North over one spade. I decided to temporise with one no-trump, expecting partner to pass only if he had a balanced 12–14 points. When he rebid a suit in which I had such golden cards, I felt I had to bid the game.

Declarer was Colin Simpson, one of the English team that had just won the World Senior Championship, so I knew the contract was in safe hands.

West led the ♥5 which Colin won with the ace and ruffed a heart. He then played a spade to the queen and king. The ♥Q was returned and ruffed. Declarer now played a

diamond to dummy and a club to his jack. West now made a fatal error of continuing with a fourth round of hearts. Declarer ruffed, cashed the ♠A and played ace and another diamond. East discarded, but now declarer exited with a trump and East had to give declarer the last two club tricks.

How would you play this hand in 4♥?

<p>♠ 75 ♥ 53 ♦ AQJ8764 ♣ J7</p>			
♠ KJ83	N	♠ Q10642	
♥ Q92	W	♥ 10	
♦ 5	E	♦ K2	
♣ KQ1084	S	♣ A9532	
<p>♠ A9 ♥ AKJ8764 ♦ 1093 ♣ 6</p>			

West leads the ♣K and switches to the ♦5.

At the table declarer was frightened of a ruff and so rose with the ♦A, but then had to go one down, losing a trick in each suit. However, if West gets his ruff you can't go down so it's best to finesse and hope East does not find the spade switch.

When Jack Mizel chose to play in the 2010 Open Teams in San Remo with Brian Senior, he knew he was playing with an expert. And when you're playing with an expert you can expect him to justify your optimistic bidding.

Dealer West. Vul All.

<p>♠ A86 ♥ 52 ♦ AJ9 ♣ Q9743</p>			
♠ J93	N	♠ Q2	
♥ KQJ87	W	♥ A109643	
♦ 75	E	♦ 102	
♣ KJ10	S	♣ 852	
<p>♠ K10754 ♥ - ♦ KQ8643 ♣ A6</p>			

At one table Andrew Robson and Alexander Allfrey were E/W and went for 800 in 4♥X. With four spades cold for an overtrick N/S this looked like a small loss. However, the English N/S had a more exciting auction:

W	N	E	S
1♥	P	4♥	4♠
P	6♠	All Pass	

The slam looks to have two losers: one in each black suit, as declarer can only discard three of dummy's clubs on his diamonds. But look at what happened.

West led the ♥K, ruffed by Brian Senior, who played a spade to the ace, ruffed dummy's last heart, cashed the ♠K and then started on his diamonds. The last four cards were:

<p>♠ 8 ♥ ♦ ♣ Q97</p>			
♠ J	N	♠	
♥ 8	W	♥ A10	
♦	E	♦	
♣ KJ	S	♣ 85	
<p>♠ 10 ♥ ♦ 6 ♣ A6</p>			

When declarer played the last diamond West had three unpalatable choices: he could ruff and be endplayed, he could discard a heart and be thrown in with the ♠J to broach clubs, or do what he actually did which was to come down to a singleton club. However, Senior had not come this far to go wrong in the ending, and he had a complete count of the hand so he cashed the ♠A, dropping West's king and made his slam.



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Jim Doyle



Bidding after Partner's Hesitation

Many situations, which can occur at the bridge table, are quite clearly specified in the rules of bridge. Revokes, exposed cards, insufficient bids etc are relatively easy to clear up. However, when there has been a hesitation by someone, particularly when a person hesitates and then passes, it does put quite a responsibility on the partner of the hesitator [a hesitation is frequently referred to as a "break in tempo" in the Laws].

		<p>♠ K7 ♥ A10875 ♦ K108 ♣ AJ7</p>			
♠ Q1032	N	♠ A864		♠ Q	
♥ 96		♥ Q2		♥ 10863	
♦ 954	W	♦ Q632	E	♦ AKQ83	
♣ 6543		♣ KQ2		♣ KJ10	
		<p>♠ J95 ♥ KJ43 ♦ AJ7 ♣ 1098</p>			
W	N	E	S		
	1♥	P	2♥		
P	P	2♠	3♥		
3♠	4♥	All Pass			

The above hand and bidding came up recently at a local club game. NS are very conservative bidders. After South's 2♥ bid, North paused for a while before passing. East (me) should have known better but I hate letting the opponents off at the two-level so I chanced 2♠, assuming my partner had a few points.

South had no problem now in bidding 3♥. [I'll bet they didn't! Ed.]

My partner had four-card spade support and bid 3♠.

North then bid 4♥.

My immediate feeling was that South might have only bid because of North's hesitation.

In such a situation one can "Reserve my Rights".

NOTE: A player is entitled to "reserve his rights" to summon the Director later when he suspects unauthorised information may have been made available by his opponent's break in tempo. The opponents should summon the Director immediately if they dispute the claim. It is better to summon the Director anyway if s/he is non-playing. This reserving of rights is primarily to establish that the unauthorised information occurred.

I can only recall someone reserving their rights once in this club in the last 40 years. People don't normally make too much of a fuss over anything.

Once I saw dummy's hand on the table I was glad I hadn't said anything as South should probably have bid 3♥ in the first place. They were full value for their 3♥ bid.

On the lead of the ♠A, North had no problem making their contract.

If a Director was called how should they deal with the situation?

If the hesitation is agreed it is easier. If the hesitation is not agreed the director has the difficult task of establishing whether there was a hesitation.

The following hand, involving a hesitation, was the subject of an appeal at the 2000 English Bridge Union Summer meeting at Brighton. It provides a good insight into how one should proceed after a hesitation by partner.

		<p>♠ K954 ♥ J754 ♦ 94 ♣ A73</p>			
♠ J872	N	♠ Q		♠ A1063	
♥ K2		♥ 10863		♥ AQ9	
♦ 10	W	♦ AKQ83	E	♦ J7652	
♣ 986542		♣ KJ10		♣ Q	
W	N	E	S		
		1♦	P		
P	1♥	P	1♠		
P	P	2♦	P		
P	2♠	All Pass			

It was agreed by all at the table that there was a hesitation by South before their first pass.

The result at the table was 2♠ making by South, NS +110.

Director was first called to the table at the end of the auction by East-West, who wished to reserve their rights.

Director was subsequently recalled at the end of play and asked to rule on North's 1♥ bid after his partner's agreed hesitation.

Director's ruling: Director adjusted the contract to 1♦ by East making seven tricks, as Pass is a logical alternative with the North hand as per Law 16A Part of 16 states:

"A player may use information in the auction or play if: (a) it derives from the legal calls and plays of the current board (including illegal calls and plays that are accepted) and is unaffected by unauthorized information from another source;..."

"Extraneous Information from Partner that might suggest a call or play is unauthorized. This includes remarks, questions, replies to questions, unexpected alerts or failures to alert,

unmistakable hesitation, unwonted speed, special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement or mannerism. A player may not choose a call or play that is demonstrably suggested over another by unauthorized information if the other call or play is a logical alternative. A logical alternative is an action that a significant proportion of the class of players in question, using the methods of the partnership, would seriously consider, and some might select."

Appeal lodged by: North-South

Comments by North-South: North admits that South hesitated but felt he must reopen in a pairs event, and thought that 1♥ was the only choice.

The **Appeals Committee** upheld the Director's ruling as they felt that North's bidding is based mostly on the hesitation.

Their comment on the ruling included: "Law 73C reads as follows:

When a player has available to him unauthorised information from his partner, as from a remark, question, explanation, gesture, mannerism, special emphasis, inflection, haste or hesitation, he must carefully avoid taking any advantage that might accrue to his side. Regrettably, this Law is not as well known as it might be.

Many players believe that, when they are in receipt of unauthorised information from partner, that it is good enough to bid as they would, without the unauthorised information. However, careful study of this Law says that that is not good enough: players are required to go a good deal further to avoid an advantage. It is very easy for a player to delude himself into thinking that the action which he knows will be successful because of the unauthorised information is, in fact, the action he would have taken anyway.

If you consider North's comment you will realise that he has not followed Law 73C. He says "... he must reopen in a pairs event ..." which in effect means that he decided to make the bid he believes he would have made anyway. However, if he stopped to think about it his partner's hesitation has made his reopening safe. To avoid taking advantage, he must pass."

It is very easy for any of us to say after a partner's hesitation something similar to "I would always make that bid with that hand anyway". However the rules are quite clear. The director must be quite happy that a significant proportion of the class of player in question would bid. The rule does not state what is meant by a significant proportion but I believe that directors are normally looking for about 70%.

They will normally carry out a poll of other layers without mentioning the hesitation and make their decision based on the poll.

Manno Magnifico!!

You are South, playing in the quarter-final of the Bermuda Bowl.

West deals at Nil All. He opens 1♣ and E/W have an uncontested auction to 6♣. West has shown clubs and around 15 points. Partner leads ♠8 and this is the position:

		Dummy	
N	E	♠	♥
		J42	QJ6
		♥ QJ6	♦ AKJ98
		♦ AKJ98	♣ A10
S			
		You	
		♠ Q9753	
		♥ 9843	
		♦ 2	
		♣ K53	

The lead is taken in hand by Declarer's ♠10. He now runs the ♠Q. How do you defend?

Would it help you to see the full deal?
Ok...

♠ 86			
♥ K107			
♦ Q107654			
♣ 72			
♠ AK10	N	♠ J42	
♥ A52		♥ QJ6	
♦ 3	W	♦ AKJ98	
♣ QJ9864	S	♣ A10	
♠ Q9753			
♥ 9843			
♦ 2			
♣ K53			

If you duck ♣Q, declarer can cash ♣A next, come to hand with a spade and give you your ♠K. You return a heart but declarer can win ♥A, finesse ♦J and pitch his heart losers on ♦AK.

If you win ♣K and return a heart, declarer can win ♥A, cash ♣A, come to hand with a spade, draw your last trump and again finesse ♦J.

Italy's Andrea Manno found a brilliant defence – he won ♣K and returned his singleton diamond! This left declarer unable to pitch his heart losers, as Manno could ruff in. Bravissimo!!



East is East

Justin Corfield



Like the man said, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet. The twain most certainly didn't meet on Board 15 of the National Mixed Teams (Coen Trophy). N/S vul, dealer South, imps. It looks like an innocuous enough hand of bridge, but at many tables it descended into a scene of carnage and devastation.

Let's sift through the wreckage.

			♠ J42		
			♥ Q53		
			♦ 63		
			♣ A10753		
♠ K10853		N		♠ Q	
♥ 4				♥ AJ986	
♦ 7		W	E	♦ AQ942	
♣ KQJ984				♣ 62	
			♠ A976		
			♥ K1072		
			♦ KJ1085		
			♣ -		

There are hands with proven strength, and then there are hands with potential. Two-suited hands, in particular, tend to have potential. Here, you will notice that both East and West are blessed with a promising two-suited hand, but unfortunately this is a relationship with no shared interests, so they need to call the whole thing off at as low a level as possible.

If you have this West hand, you might think that 'as little as' ace-fourth of spades opposite would be enough for a playable game contract. Which indeed it would be, if only East were clever enough to hold those cards. Meanwhile, across the table, East is also busily imagining his own 'as little as' hands where 4♥ or 3NT are easy.

So, South opens 1♦, and West can choose his poison.

Overcalling 1♠ might seem normal enough, but to my mind it is a mistake. A 1♠ overcall will be fine if your partner raises, but what exactly do you plan to do after your partner bids 2♥? If you press on with 3♣, how happy will you be when your partner gives you preference back to spades, in what rates to be a 5/2 fit, which can be tapped immediately?

It seems much wiser to overcall 2♣, with the point that whichever of your three opponents sees fit to bid hearts, you will be able to continue with spades, even bidding 4♠ over an opposing 4♥ if it comes to that. A 2♣ overcall will not be best if all pass and your ox puts down ♠Axxx ♥J10xx ♦J10xx ♣x or so, I realise, but you can't have everything. A 2♣ overcall better anticipates the rest of the auction.

Let's say that West, untroubled by any such thoughts, overcalls 1♠, leaving any future bidding problems for future West to deal with. What should East then do after (1♦) – 1♠ – (Pass) – ?

Reasonable choices include 1NT, 2NT or 2♥. My guess would be to go low with 1NT, and I don't care who knows it. If there is no heart fit, what you really have is two tricks. Any 2♥ bidders presumably intend to continue with 2NT over 2♠, which is a bit pushy on a misfitting hand. Where are nine tricks going to come from?

Back to West. Suppose you have perpetrated (for that is what you have done) a 1♠ overcall, and your partner has perpetrated (for that is what he has done) a 2♥ reply to it, what now? A 3♣ rebid is likely to see your partner preference you back to spades – which is what you should have anticipated before putting the 1♠ card on the table in the first place. Still, in the absence of any alternative, 3♣ it is. East,

with a couple of diamond stoppers, completes this slice of bidding excellence with 3NT.

And so it came to pass that on a hand that belongs in a partscore, no fewer than 26 E/W pairs tried their luck in 3NT with a misfitting combined 22-count. N/S duck a round of clubs, and the contract is ridiculous. Speaking of ridiculousness, six more E/W pairs attempted four of a major suit of their choosing in a 5/1 fit.

What does this debacle teach us? For one thing, it teaches us not to make one bid at a time – try to anticipate how the auction is going to proceed. For another, it teaches us that any time you have a two-suited hand, bid very cautiously until you find a fit with your partner. As the same chap said, if you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs, you get to go plus while they are getting rinsed at the other table, my son. Or words to that effect.

East and South can make a grand slam together, but you have got the partner you have got, with the hand they were dealt.

[Much obliged, Justin. Kipling was quite the lad – all that wonderful poetry and prose, plus he made exceedingly good cakes. Ed].

My Bridge Journey Continues

Nicola O'Dowd



"If you build it, they will come." - W. P. Kinsella, *Field of Dreams*.

That's what Mary Timoney said to me when I mentioned my Bridge Bash idea. People wondered where the name came from, why not mini congress? I wanted to call it something different. Bridge Bash wasn't your usual name, and that was the whole point. I thought it might make people look at the flyer twice. What's a Bridge Bash? What's this all about?

I didn't know if it would work. I didn't know if people would play or support it. But I put the work in, gave it everything I had, tried to make it something special and hoped for the best.

I wanted the Bridge Bash in Trim for a few reasons. First, many local players had never played outside their own clubs or in a two-session event. I hoped that if they tried it close to home, they'd see how enjoyable these competitions can be. It's also a great location just down the road from Dublin, fairly central to other counties, and with a fantastic venue in Knightsbrook Hotel & Golf Club, big enough to hold the crowd and lovely to deal with.

And then there was the personal reason. Since I started bridge, I've dragged my mam to congresses all over the country. I loved the competition, the buzz, the laughs, and the people you meet along the way. I wanted to bring that feeling to my hometown. Each trip gave me ideas what I'd include, what I'd leave out, and what kind of day I'd want to create in Trim.

For this inaugural year, there were no sponsors, no charity raffle, no big organisation behind it. It was just me, my idea, my determination and months of preparation.

I actually feel sorry for my bridge friends and my mam, I was sounding out my ideas to anyone who'd listen, and they had to sit through more late-night whatsapp and calls asking "What do you think of this?" than they probably expected.

I couldn't have done it without all the tips and advice I received along the way. I had great people around me who shared their experience, answered my questions, and gave me the confidence to make decisions myself.

Huey Daly, since first letting me shadow him at the Donegal Congress, has given me a huge amount of his time and shared so much information and insight when it comes to tournament directing and how things actually run behind the scenes, what I need to think of and prepare for. Dermot O'Brien and the staff in the CBAI office were a great help too. I've also picked up so much from organisers, TDs, and committees around the country tips, practical advice, and chats that all helped when the doubts crept in.

I worked hard on advertising flyers went on every congress table. Posters went up, emails went out, and the WhatsApp groups were buzzing. Huge thanks to all the clubs, TDs, and organisers who shared it on their websites or social media pages that support really made a difference. Facebook was full of reminders. And yes I even made a Bridge Bash song (whether you loved it or hated it, you just couldn't get it out of your head).

I wrote to our local paper the Meath Chronicle, explaining about the Bridge Bash and how much events like this depend on local support. I even gave an interview on LMFM radio and wow, do I admire the speakers I've listened

to over the years, like Dermot O'Brien, Tom Hanlon, and Gay Keaveney. I got completely tongue-tied myself, but at least I managed to get a few words out.

I pushed it everywhere I could think of and then I pushed it again.

By the week before, entries looked strong. Players entered from every corner of Ireland from North to South, East to West. But still, I wasn't sure. However I knew in my heart that if it didn't work, it wasn't for the want of trying.

On the Saturday, myself, Huey, my son and his friends, the hotel staff, and volunteers from local clubs all came in to help set up the room. We put out everything the way we wanted it tables, tablecloths, Bidding boxes, all the little touches, even the balloons !

Then on the morning of the 24th, I was back out at Knightsbrook by 7am, working with the hotel staff to make sure everything outside the room was sorted too, the coffee station, etc. By that stage, I'd already had two coffees and one minor meltdown about the tablecloths not being the same colour!

And then suddenly, after all the months of planning, it was here. People started arriving. That's when I knew it was actually happening. And it felt right.

Some were there early. Some I'd never met before. Some were clearly nervous especially the novices. I'd encouraged a lot of them on the phone to give the two-session event a go. So meeting them when they arrived was special and the buzz in the room was brilliant. The experienced players seemed happy with the setup too. People chatted over tea and scones, caught up with each other, found their seats.



The room filled, and it started to feel real. We ended up with a great mix right across the grades. A total of 95.5 tables.

- ▶ Supreme Pairs (Masters): 22½ tables (two session)
- ▶ Intermediate A: 20 tables (two session)
- ▶ Intermediate B: 18 tables (two session)
- ▶ Novice Pairs: 16½ tables (two session)
- ▶ Open Pairs: 6 tables (A.M.) + 12½ tables (P.M.)

What really made me excited and proud was the number of novices who played in the full two-session event. You don't often see that many Novice's taking the plunge but they did.

I said it in my welcome speech that morning, and I meant every word: "First off, a huge thank you to each and every one of you for being here today. Whether you came from five minutes down the road or drove hours to get here. Your support is what's made this day happen"

When I stood up to speak, I looked around the room and knew that what I'd hoped for was happening, the buzz, the smiles, the energy. All the things I loved about going to congresses with my mam I had now brought to Trim.

What made me proudest was seeing the novices and locals. It was their first time in a two session event. But they came, they played, and I hope they went home buzzing for the season ahead. That's what it was all about.

The day wasn't perfect - no big event ever is. But it ran smoothly, and the atmosphere carried it. People were laughing, playing serious bridge but enjoying it too. It felt like more than just another competition. It felt like the start of something. If I learned anything from organising the Bridge Bash, it's that bridge players love their game, love the buzz, and will travel half the country just to be part of it especially if there's a scone at the end of it. You can't ask for more than that.

But here's the truth it wouldn't have been the success it was without the people who got behind it. I might have been the organiser, but I definitely didn't do it on my own.

The ones who shared the flyer, spread the word, or just asked, "Are you going to Trim?" The helpers who asked, "What do you need?" and just got stuck in. The TDs, calm, organised, and brilliant! Huey Daly, Declan Byrne, and John Royds. And of course, every single player who gave up their Sunday to come and play.

After prize-giving, loads of people stayed back to help pack everything up. And when the last table was folded, the cards boxed away, and it was really over, we all made our way to the bar. When I walked in, I got a round of applause. It completely caught me off guard. I'd been in organiser mode all day, and suddenly I just felt everything hit me. It had actually happened. People were happy.

And then the messages started. Even before I'd taken my first mouthful of my drink, people were already texting me saying how much they'd enjoyed the day and asking if there was going to be another one.

The next morning, the emails followed. A few said thanks, others shared what they liked but the big thing that kept coming up, again and again, was: "Let me know when the next one is on I'm not missing it." And that meant more to me than the numbers.

The Bridge Bash has made its mark. People came, they enjoyed it, and they want to come again. That's all I could have asked for.

So yes, we built it, and they came. Now we just need a bigger room, more scones, and maybe a stronger microphone for next year, two days next time. 22nd and 23rd August 2026. See accompanying flyer for dates, sessions and hotel rates.

The photos taken on the day captured the atmosphere of it all so well. You can see the photos, hear the radio interview, the Bridge Bash song and full results now <https://www.bridgewebs.com/boynevalleytd/>

[A huge well done to Nicola!! A super initiative which is surely replicable elsewhere. Ed.]

BOYNE VALLEY BRIDGE

2026 BRIDGE BASH

PRE-ENTRY ONLY

**SATURDAY & SUNDAY
AUGUST 22 & 23, 2026**

BOYNE VALLEY BRIDGE

FRI & SAT
€159 BB SINGLE PN
€179 BB DOUBLE PN

SUNDAY
€149 BB SINGLE
€169 BB DOUBLE

**SATURDAY 22ND AUG
EVENT SCHEDULE**

11:00	Supreme Pairs Masters 2 Sessions
11:00	Intermediate A & B 2 Sessions
11:00	Novice Pairs 2 Sessions
11:15	Open Pairs (all grades) 1 Session only
4pm	All Pairs 2nd Session
4pm	Open Pairs (all grades) 1 Session only

**SUNDAY 23RD AUG
EVENT SCHEDULE**

11:00	Supreme Teams Masters 2 Sessions
11:00	Intermediate & Novice Teams 2 Sessions
3pm	Open Pairs (all grades) 1 Session only
3pm	All Teams 2nd Session

CASH PRIZES

DOUBLE SESSIONS
€25.00

OPEN PAIRS
€12.50

SUBJECT TO ENTRIES

TD Huey Daly
& Team

KNIGHTSBROOK HOTEL & GOLF RESORT
📍 TRIM, COUNTY MEATH 📍

PRE ENTRY ONLY

Please Contact Nicola O'Dowd

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🌐 www.bridgewebs.com/boynevalleytd

☎ (086)8577118

SCAN HERE

When in Romania?

Peter Stewart

Playing in the Contra Cup in Bucharest in May 2025 and hope to go again this season – 20th to 24th May 2026

Romania is a successful modern EU state. It is the largest country in the Balkans and borders the Black Sea, Ukraine, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Moldova. The capital is Bucharest a bustling town of two million people with a great mix of the old and the new. The old town features narrow cobbled streets and amongst the sights we saw was the beautiful Russian Orthodox, St Nicolas Church and of course the famous Peoples Parliament building started by the Communist era dictator, Nicolai Ceausescu. This building is reckoned to be the heaviest building in the world and has a ludicrous 1,100 rooms and a heating and electricity bill of €6m per annum. We lunched in the old town at the 130-year-old Caru Cu Bere restaurant (At the Beer Wagon, in Romanian) and enjoyed the local specialities; Sarmale, stuffed cabbage rolls, and Ciorba de Fasole cu Afumatore, bean and smoked pork soup that comes within a bread bowl.

The food was great and so was the Bridge. May is the time for the WBF listed Contra Cup in Bucharest. In the first match we sat down against a World Championship medal winner and in the next few days we met top quality teams from all over Europe, Egypt, and Australia. The tournament begins on Wednesday evening and teams play until Friday and then the top 16 teams go to the knock-out phases and us lesser players go into the pairs competitions on Saturday and Sunday into the Caro Cup which splits on the Sunday into four divisions with prizes for leaders in all the divisions. With

local sponsorship there is a total prize fund for the week of a huge €40,000. A French international team led by Alexander Lucaciu won the main event from a Bulgarian internationals team and the A final of the Caro Cup was won by a top Hungarian pair.

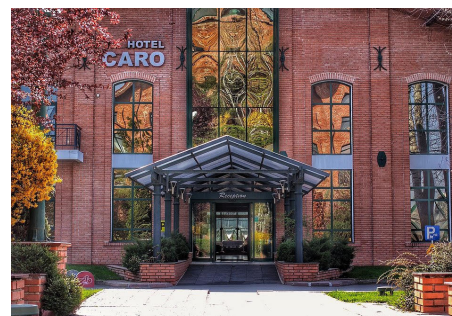
We stayed, and we played in the 4-star Caro hotel which was most reasonably priced, with a great breakfast, first class pool and leisure centre, and kind and caring service throughout. The event was superbly organised at the bridge level and at the social level. It started on the Wednesday evening with two ten board matches and then we had an outdoor barbecue in the hotel's spacious grounds with no effort spared in providing sumptuous fare for the visiting players. Friday night was gala dinner night with much singing and dancing.

In thinking of an away trip for bridge next year, the Contra Cup in Bucharest will be top of my agenda. If anyone wants to be included on the mailing list, you should contact Florinfilip27@yahoo.com. Florin is the principal event organiser from the Contra Club in Bucharest and he was our wonderful host for our time there.

"The event was superbly organised at the bridge level and at the social level."



Marcin Rudzinski and Peter Stewart



Duais an Úachtarán

Matthew O'Farrell



The 2025/2026 kicked off in our incumbent president's [John Phelan] hometown of Waterford at the very enjoyable tower hotel. 37 tables (a slight decrease on last year) were deftly managed by Diarmuid Reddan and there was a lovely atmosphere throughout the event.

The standings were topped by President Phelan in tandem with Louise Mitchell. However, John had played to avoid the need for a sitout and under the condition he would be ineligible for prizes in his own tournament. What a gent! Consequently the revised standings were topped Tom McCarthy and Pat Quinn, with just roughly half a board separating them from the second placed pairing of Cian Holland and Dermot Cotter

The adage "bridge is a bidders game" is oft thrown around these days. Whilst sounding nice in theory, in practice revealing your hand in the auction can make declarer's life much easier if you end up defending, especially when you have marked all the high cards. There was one 3NT made somewhat easier to play thanks to the opponents' bidding [see Board 13 diagram]. North opened 1♣, east overcalled 1♠ alerted as effectively a takeout double of clubs, 11+ HCP, Without any agreements south doubled to show values, north bid 1NT and south raised to 3NT.

The ♠10 lead was ducked round to the jack with west producing the queen. A club was switched playing small from north and east playing the 9. It seems as if the cards are marked now, east having to have the red aces and the round suit queens for their bid. Diamonds were played next, low to the king and small towards dummy, east

winning the ace and returning the ten, looking like someone trying to avoid being stuck if they won the third diamond.

It is safe to overtake the jack now with your eight being high. The fourth diamond is cashed to throw a club from dummy and now three rounds of spades throwing a heart from north on the fourth spade, east showing out on the third round of spades. In the four-card ending north has ♥Kx and ♣KJ, south having ♥Jxx and a singleton club. If you presume east has all the HCP it is safe to play king and another club forcing him to lead away from ♥AQ into your Kx, but that would give north a 4333 shape which vulnerable is a very unappealing takeout double. Perhaps best is to play him for a 4432 hand in case east had found a takeout double with that shape without the black suit queens. For this endplay you cash your ♣K and now exit the ♥K forcing east to win and leaving him with ♥Qx and dummy ♥Jx.

Board 13 Dealer North. Vul All.

		♠ J76	
		♥ K84	
		♦ KQ82	
		♣ KJ2	
♠ Q3	N	♠ 10985	
♥ 1072	W	♥ AQ63	
♦ 743	E	♦ A105	
♣ Q10876	S	♣ 95	
		♠ AK42	
		♥ J95	
		♦ J96	
		♣ A43	

Now to compliment the opponents on a properly well played hand [see Board 20 diagram below]. Pairs really is a game of overtricks so when you reach the normal contract +1 or +2 is the name of the game. Whilst you shouldn't

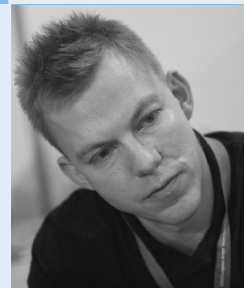
really risk your contract to go plus one you should try to take your maximum number of tricks. The opponents had the following unopposed auction : 1♣-1♦-1♥-4♥. On the ♦K lead north won and played ace and another club to start preparing the cross ruff. A heart was returned to the queen and ace. Now three rounds of spades were cashed (to prevent the opponent with short clubs being able to discard one on a club). Now a club is played [east showing out] and ruffed low, another diamond ruffed and north has effectively a high cross ruff, If east ruffs in with the ♥6 north can now over ruff and revert to drawing trumps (which are now 1-1) and cash their fourth high spade. Twelve tricks - well played and a deserved 90%.

Board 20 Dealer West. Vul All.

		♠ AQJ9	
		♥ KJ74	
		♦ 8	
		♣ A1086	
♠ 1075	N	♠ 643	
♥ 98	W	♥ Q63	
♦ 1032	E	♦ KQJ65	
♣ KQJ52	S	♣ 43	
		♠ K82	
		♥ A1052	
		♦ A974	
		♣ 97	

When I was a Boye

By **BOYE BROGELAND, FLEKKEFJORD**



"I've got a hand for your article."

Some contributions arrive by email, others in person at tournaments. It's nice, although the hands are often of mixed interest. When Fredrik Nyström utters these words in Swedish, I know however that I have a treat coming.

Nyström has been a regular on the Swedish national team in partnership with Bertheau. Now they have gone their separate ways in search of fresh inspiration. Nyström has joined Johan Upmark, whereas Bertheau is playing with Per-Ola Cullin, Upmark's previous partner.

Sometime late April or early May I met Nyström in Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare's birthplace, during the Schapiro Spring Foursomes. The Spring Fours, as the tournament is usually called, is England's strongest and each year around 40 to 50 teams turn up to play. Nyström was hired to play with Pablo Lombardi together with Juan Carlos Ventin and Frederic Wrang.

In the Spring Fours you have two "lives" which means that you can afford to lose one match before you're playing with the knife to the throat. Ventin lost by one imp in the second round (and discovered the following morning that they had mis-scored one deal, but it was too late to correct the error at that time). The fourth round brought another tight loss. Although that meant no success for the Spanish-Argentinian-Swedish team, Nyström at least had a hand to report from the consolation event, the Punchbowl:

N/Nil JT76
QT87
T
AT95

KQ5432
K5
J965
Q

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Lambardi		Nyström
	pass	pass	2S
dbl	4S	all pass	

West leads a trump to East's ace. He continues with another trump whilst West throws a diamond. Your plan?

You can count nine tricks: seven trumps (including two diamond ruffs), CA and a heart. A tenth trick can come from a finesse of the H10 or by ruffing out jack third, this latter line being slightly inferior. The club suit offers another possibility if the king is with West and East has the jack. You start by playing the CQ (which West must cover or you let it run) and then take the ruffing finesse against East's presumed jack.

Nyström surely must have had a better line in mind for giving me this hand in the bar of the Holiday Inn in Stratford. Can you see how you can guarantee ten tricks assuming West has the HA and the CK for his takeout double (something which looks highly likely as he might well have led a high diamond from ace-king)?

Win the second spade in hand, lead the CQ (covered or you have your tenth trick). Next ruff a club and play a small (!) heart from hand. West cannot afford to rise, so the queen wins. You continue with the C10 throwing the HK if East follows small, alternatively ruffing out East's jack. Either way, you've set up your tenth trick in clubs without losing a heart trick, or made two heart tricks without losing a club.

This was the full deal:

JT76		
QT87		
T		
AT95		
8	A9	
AJ92	643	
AQ87	K432	
KJ32	8764	
	KQ5432	
	K5	
	J965	
	Q	

A nice variation of Morton's Fork, where West has two losing options when a small heart is led from hand. Compliments to Fredrik Nyström for finding this line at the table. Even when presented as a play problem the solution is not obvious – even a few Norwegian Team players were scratching their heads in Stratford.

The next hand also requires exercising the grey cells. This grand appeared when the Gillis team (Simon Gillis, Boye Brogeland, Per Erik Austberg and Erik Sælensminde) came up against a young and talented Dutch team in the sixth round of the Spring Fours:

N/EW A75
KQ9
J7
AKT95

K8
A8642
AK3
J86

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Hop	Gillis	Drijver	Brogeland
	1C ¹	2S ²	3H
pass	3S ³	pass	3NT
pass	4C ⁴	pass	4D ⁵
pass	4NT ⁶	pass	5H ⁷
pass	5NT ⁸	pass	6D ⁹
pass	7H	pass	7NT
all pass			

1. At least two clubs.
2. Weak.
3. Asking for stopper.
4. Cuebid with heart support.
5. "Last train" cuebid.
6. Roman Key Card Blackwood.
7. Two without the queen.
8. Invites grand; asks for specific kings.
9. King of diamonds.

A bit of an optimistic contract which for a start requires five tricks from both hearts and clubs. In my view Gillis did a bit too much. I probably need to have the CQ in addition to the cards shown for the grand to be good. In that case I should be able to bid it myself after partner's invitation.

Jacco Hop leads the ten of diamonds. Before you form a plan here are a few "case notes":

- 1) The Dutch are aggressive bidders.
- 2) When you play a heart to the king the jack appears from East.
- 3) West follows to the first round of spades.
- 4) If you bring home the contract, you've made the quarter finals of the Spring Foursomes by a healthy margin, whereas you're knocked out by a two-imp margin if you go down.

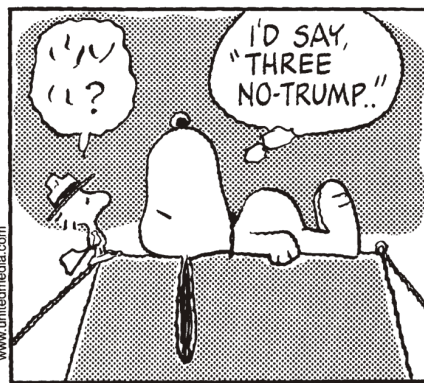
Before reading on, decide on your line and your reasons.

When I presented this as a problem to my magazine's readers, I received several excellent answers. With the help of hindsight and the arguments from readers, this is the optimum line:

Play a small diamond at trick one, East follows low (suggesting he has Qx), ace then top club, HK (jack from East), play both spades (you now know East had six). Now, CJ covered and you have a club entry to hand verifying the count. East has been shown to have nine black cards which tilts the odds in favour of the heart finesse (losing, on this hand).

As we know sometimes the best line does not lead to the best result!

[Editor's Note: first published in Australian Bridge, 2018]



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A Rather Expensive Double Editor

This hand came from an ACBL Platinum Pairs final earlier this year. The website carries lots of videos with [mostly] excellent commentators, hosted by Rob Herrington. Check it out. The action was lively, to put it mildly.

Dealer South. Vul N/S.

♠ KQJ42			
♥ 765			
♦ 5432			
♣ 2			
♠ 53	N	♠ A109876	
♥ 4		♥ Q10	
♦ KJ9876	W	♦ Q10	E
♣ QJ104		♣ 753	
♠ -			
♥ AKJ9832			
♦ A			
♣ AK987			

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

After West's normal 3♦ overall, East psyched 3♥. Marion Michielsen doubled and then made the practical leap to 6♥. However, Andrew Rosenthal could not convince himself that this was



"It was his fault!!"

natural. His 6♠ obliged Michielsen to try 7♣. Now East, who had passed 6♠, found a double of 7♣. Was he looking for a spade lead?? 7♥ ended the auction.

There was nothing to the play. South merely had to ruff two clubs in dummy. 2220 to the good guys. 7♣ is down 2. 6♥ making, or 7♦ doubled minus 6, were the common results.

There must have been an interesting discussion afterwards between Rombaut pere et fils!!

Out and About...



Spiro National Mixed Pairs Winners: Siobhan Part and BJ O'Brien with CBAI President John Phelan.



Coen National Mixed Teams Winners: Carol Ann Cummins, John Noonan, Deirdre Tuckey and Seamus Costello with CBAI President John Phelan



Master Pairs Winners: Anna Onishuk and Karel de Raeymaeker with CBAI President John Phelan.



Duais An Uachtarain Winners: Tom McCarthy & Pat Quinn with CBAI President John Phelan.

Master Pairs 2025 at O'Reilly Hall UCD

Book Review - Editor

Regent Bridge Club 100 years 1925-2025

Just to hand at the time of going to print is this outstanding 192-page production. It is a superb feat of research, adorned by the highest of production values.

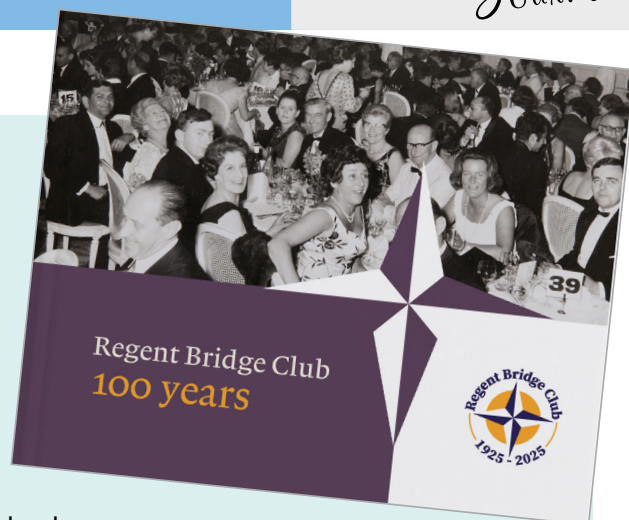
The result is an utterly absorbing read. It is no exaggeration to say that this book, taken together with Séamus Dowling's magnum opus "Thank You, Partner" represents an invaluable repository of the history of our game.

It matters not where you have or have not played your Bridge. If you are of "a certain age", then the illustrious names of yore will come alive for you. If your years are somewhat more tender, you will glean an invaluable appreciation of how and why we are all here.

My own involvement in our great game spans half a century, and I was completely entranced by this book. So many memories triggered. So many personalities remembered. I will offer a few highlights, but they are purely personal.

It turns out that the President from 1933 to 1936 was one JP Morgan – it couldn't be, could it?? I chuckled out loud as Mary Trench recalled Doreen Cairnduff puffing on two cigarettes at a time [also recalled by this lifetime non-smoker]. Photos of the redoubtable Grace Finegan brought back Seán Ó' Lúbaigh's memorable nickname for her – "Amazing Grace".

Another vignette; in December of 1945, the Committee deemed afternoon Bridge to be "satisfactory", and approved the engagement of a waitress, to be paid "a maximum of £1 per week".



There are more than a few hilarious stories. My favourite is Nick FitzGibbon's telling of an auction by Pat Walshe and Niall Tóibín against Spanish opponents. Niall bid 3♠ looking for a stop and Pat bid 3NT. The opponent on lead asked what 3♠ showed and Pat replied "denies spades". A club was led and Niall tabled a doubleton spade. The Spanish player roared for the Director. "I was told he had de nice spades", he wailed. The ruling – result stands. Lost in translation!

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Making My Way

Melissa Brady



Each new season brings a wave of fresh opportunities and experiences waiting to be discovered. When I first started playing bridge, I had no idea just how profoundly it would shape my journey—introducing me to incredible people, new perspectives, and moments of growth I never anticipated.

Looking ahead to this year, I've made a conscious choice to face every challenge with openness and curiosity, seeing them not as obstacles to overcome, but as chances to learn, evolve, and deepen my love for the game.

The toughest and most thrilling challenge to date popped up in August, when I found myself playing alongside Anna in the Lady Milne and Camrose pre-trials — and you might well wonder how that came about. It all started the day after the Holmes Wilson. I was at work when my phone rang and, to be honest, when I saw the name on the screen my first thought was that the call had been made in error. To my surprise, though, a warm voice greeted me with "Hello, Melissa" and what began as a friendly chat took an unexpected turn.

Somewhere in the conversation, the idea emerged that Anna and I put our names forward for the pre-trials. Pre-trials? I barely knew what they were, let alone that we might qualify. After our unexpectedly good results in the Interprovincials, Jackson Cup and Holmes Wilson, it appeared that even though we hadn't reached the full 50 points, we'd still meet the alternative criterion of 25 points accumulated over the last three years.

At the time, I thought the notion was completely mad and brushed it off with a laugh, changing the

subject as quickly as I could. That evening, while sitting at the kitchen table helping William with his homework, my thoughts drifted back to the call. He noticed, of course — children always do. He asked me what was up and I told him about the call — in the simplest terms — and, to my surprise, the ten-year-old launched into a motivational speech worthy of a TED Talk, as if he'd been waiting for this moment to remind me of everything I'd ever told him about believing in himself. How the tables had turned.

Even then, I couldn't quite bring myself to make the call, so I sent a quick text admitting my curiosity had been piqued. About 20 minutes later, the phone rang — laughter on the other end from someone who clearly knew I was already halfway convinced. She promised to dig up the information and send me the details. When the file arrived, I sat on it for a week or two before finally mentioning it to Anna — I knew she'd jump at the chance, but I had to talk myself into it first.

So yes — our participation in the Lady Milne pre-trials was down to an unexpected phone call... and a shove from a small child.

We entered the pre-trials purely for the experience, with no expectations. My only aims were to enjoy the experience of the competition and hopefully avoid finishing last. Honestly, if someone had promised us second-to-last place beforehand, I'd have taken it in a heartbeat. The lead-up to the tournament was both exhilarating and challenging. Having never participated in an event of this magnitude, we felt somewhat unprepared, almost like lambs to the slaughter. We had incorporated a few additional elements into our system, and there was concern

that we might forget them when partner introduced them at the table. Fortunately, that only occurred once. While I cannot speak for Anna, I personally had a very poor night's sleep before the competition.

One of the things that worried us at first was the partition; we'd never used one or even seen one up close. Luckily, we started with two lovely ladies who were very understanding of our unfamiliarity. By the end of the first round, we had grown accustomed to the screen.

It took us a little while to settle in, and we ended Saturday night in 8th place. On Sunday morning, a wise woman reminded me: "Remember, it's not a sprint, it's a marathon." She couldn't have been more right. I received quite a few messages and calls that morning advising me that we keep our heads and don't gamble too much. We lost the first match but managed to win the rest of our matches in the final session and somehow ended up finishing 5th overall—and coming in as the 2nd ladies' pair thus earning ourselves a spot in the Lady Milne Trials. We shocked ourselves—and probably a few others too!

Lady Milne Pre-trials

Board 17

Dealer North. Vul None.

			♠K106			
			♥K963			
			♦K72			
			♣AJ10			
♠J983		N			E	♠A7
♥Q82						♥J105
♦65	W					♦QJ1093
♣K765		S				♣432
			♠Q542			
			♥A74			
			♦A84			
			♣Q98			



On this particular board, I was the only player in the room who squeezed out every possible trick – some only made nine tricks and a few went down 1. It earned us a nice score of 10.04 but at the time, I didn't know that. At the time, all I could think was: How am I going to make this contract? There were holes in every suit.

The auction began simply enough. I opened 1♣ as North, East came in with 1♦, and my partner bid 1♠. West passed, and I rebid 1NT. My partner raised to 2NT, saying, "If you're maximum, go to game – I've got the diamond stop also." So I bid 3NT.

The lead was the ♦10, and I paused to take stock. Between dummy and myself, it was clear East could have no more than two diamonds. So, I decided to duck the first trick, letting the ten hold. East continued with the nine, and I won it in my hand.

Now to work on hearts. I led up to the ace, came back to the king, and then led a third heart. West obligingly beat his partner's jack with the queen – just what I needed. A flicker of hope. West shifted to the ♠9. I let it run – sometimes you have to give the opponents enough rope. East pounced with the ace and quelle surprise returned another diamond. I won it in dummy and paused, counting, and planning.

A low spade to my king, then the good ♥9 – discarding a small spade. Next came the ♠10 to dummy's queen. Now or never.

I played the ♣Q from the table, holding my breath. Would it hold? East's king appeared instantly – the exact card I'd hoped for. My ace took it, and with that, the jack and ten of clubs were winners. A sigh of relief!

From a nice board to a real mess!

Board 13 - Match 9 Dealer North. Vul All.

♠43 ♥A1094 ♦J54 ♣10852		
♠AK5	N	♠QJ86
♥KQ76	W	♥J52
♦108	E	♦A93
♣KQ94	S	♣AJ6
♠10972 ♥83 ♦KQ762 ♣73		

I've often heard people in our club say they've had a senior moment when they do something daft. Well, I'm going to flip that around – on this board, I had a junior moment: a truly spectacularly stupid, unforgivable one!

I picked up a lovely 17-point hand as West and was delighted – until the tray came under the partition and I saw that my partner had opened the bidding with 1♣. I responded 1♥, and Anna rebid 1♠. Then panic set in. I stared at my hand, options swirling: undersell and rebid 3NT? Raise to 4♠ on three-card support? Try 3♣ to show a good hand? Nope. I went for the one bid guaranteed to make everyone gasp – 4NT, asking for aces when we hadn't even agreed on a suit!

Next thing I know, we're in 5NT, down two, and there it was on the scoresheet for all to see: -17.02. My masterpiece of disaster.

A week or two later, a friend rang about the pre-trials and quite rightly gave out to me for that ridiculous bid, reminding me that with one silly lapse of judgement I'd managed to blow the whole competition wide open. I really should have asked our resident maths genius, Gordon Lessells, to calculate how the scores might have looked if I'd shown a bit more restraint in my bidding!

Anyway, lesson learned...or at least I hope so. Though if there's a prize for creative self-sabotage, I'd say I'm in strong contention.

When the results were announced the ladies pair who finished ahead of us – Fiona O'Gorman and Rachel Connellan – hadn't yet decided whether to enter the Lady Milne or Camrose Trials so all we knew was that we had earned a chance to play. A few days later, Rachel reached out to let us know they had chosen the Lady Milne Trials – which meant we now had new teammates.

We arranged to meet up and have a proper chat at John Phelan's Duais An Uachtaráin event in Waterford. I don't recall ever having played against Rachel or Fiona before; I'd seen them around at competitions, but our paths had never crossed. The meeting felt almost like a blind date! We came away delighted, knowing we had two lovely ladies to team up with who are very much on the same wavelength. Since then, we've spent a few evenings playing online together in Sligo teams, the EBL womens online training and arranged to play a live game at the Donegal Congress.

The weekend of the Spiro and Coen is usually my annual outing with Paddy McDermott. However, as Paddy was unable to play this year, I hadn't made much effort to find another partner – I've always believed it's better the devil you know than to play with a new face every time!

As part of the ongoing Regent Centenary celebrations, the North Eastern Region was invited to participate in the Alfie Sexton Memorial Trophy. I was delighted to be asked to join a team with our President, Nicola O'Dowd, and her partner, Dara Voyles. My partner for the event was Declan Byrne, with whom I had played once before at the Kelburn earlier in the year.

We had a thoroughly enjoyable game. Declan was a pleasure to play with – calm, consistent, and committed to the system we'd agreed on the week before. Everything just clicked. Afterwards, he remarked that we'd made only four mistakes across both sessions.

I knew I'd made two, so I can only assume he made the other two!

Our team finished as runners-up in the Area Master competition and also placed second overall when our scores were combined with those of our North Eastern Region Regional Masters team. On the drive home, Declan rang to ask if I'd be interested in partnering with him for the Spiro — an offer I couldn't possibly refuse!

On the day of the Spiro, we had some great auctions and were the only pair to bid 6♠, which Declan played and made look effortless. My favourite hand, though, was one where we defended and defeated 4♠. East opened 1♠, I passed as South, and West responded 1NT. Declan then bid 2NT, showing both minors. East rebid 3♥, I passed again, West supported to 3♠, and East went on to game.

Spiro

Board 25 - Second Session

Dealer North. Vul E/W.

♠ 64			
♥ -			
♦ AJ9542			
♣ Q10987			
♠ 105	N	♠ AQJ873	
♥ J6		♥ AKQ73	
♦ KQ876	W	♦ 3	
♣ K652	S	♣ 4	
♠ K92			
♥ 1098542			
♦ 10			
♣ AJ3			

I led my singleton diamond. Declan won and returned a small diamond, which I ruffed. It didn't take a genius to try the heart next, giving Declan a ruff. He returned another diamond, and when East rose with the queen of trumps, I was well placed with my king. Another heart from me brought a second ruff for my partner. Declan sent back yet another diamond, but the party was over — my nine wasn't high enough to beat East's jack, and declarer claimed the remaining tricks. *[A high diamond back at trick 2 would be suit pref for hearts, I think. Declarer can ditch his club. A heart is ruffed by North and a third diamond played back. Ruff with ♠A and play a trump — one down. Ed.]*

A few other pairs allowed declarer to make nine or ten tricks on this board, so we were delighted with our defense. While I enjoy declaring hands and watching my partner at work, my favourite part of bridge has always been defending — and when it all comes together like that, it's especially satisfying.



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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 All.

<p>♠ J1086 ♥ AK3 ♦ KQ975 ♣ 2</p>			
♠ 52	N	♠ AK4	
♥ Q6	W	♥ 9872	E
♦ 2		♦ AJ643	
♣ AKJ109764	S	♣ 3	
<p>♠ Q973 ♥ J1054 ♦ 108 ♣ Q85</p>			

W	N	E	S
	1♦	P	1♥
4♣ ¹	P	5♣	All Pass

¹ 4♣ = Pre-Emptive

Opening Lead:

North leads the ♥K

The Play

North leads two top hearts followed by a third heart, ruffed by declarer. Cross to the ♦A and ruff a diamond. A spade to the ace is followed by another diamond trumped by declarer. On the bidding, the spades must be 4-4, placing South with three cards in clubs. Enter dummy with the ♠K and finesse the ♣J, South should have some values for the response of 1♥. If South had shown up with three diamonds, declarer would play for the drop in trumps.

Board 2 Dealer East. Vul E/W

<p>♠ 83 ♥ 75 ♦ Q96 ♣ QJ10842</p>			
♠ AJ106542	N	♠ KQ	
♥ AKQ	W	♥ 10842	E
♦ A107		♦ KJ8	
♣ -	S	♣ 9653	
<p>♠ 97 ♥ J963 ♦ 532 ♣ AK7</p>			

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

¹ 2NT = Balanced 8-10 HCP

² 4♦ = Cue Bid, denies ace or king in clubs

³ 4NT = RKCB for spades

⁴ 5♣ = 1 key card

⁵ 6♦ = Queen of trump suit plus DK

Opening Lead:

North leads ♣Q

The Play

Ruff the opening lead. Use the trump king and queen as entries to ruff two more clubs. As the trumps are 2-2, play the three top hearts. If the ♥J does not fall, play two more trumps coming down to A,10,7 of diamonds in hand. On the last trump North will discard a diamond (to keep the ♣jack) and South will discard a diamond to keep the ♥J. Now declarer knows that the remaining diamonds are 2-2, so can cash AK with confidence. The location of the ♦Q was not a guess after all.

**Board 3** Dealer South. Vul E/W.

<p>♠ J10854 ♥ KQ752 ♦ Q ♣ 97</p>			
♠ AQ	N	♠ 632	
♥ A103		♥ J94	
♦ A1075	W	♦ J84	E
♣ AQ102		♣ K653	
<p>♠ K97 ♥ 86 ♦ K9763 ♣ J84</p>			

W	N	E	S
			P
2NT	P	3NT	All Pass

Opening Lead:

North leads ♠J, South playing ♠K.

The Play

Declarer wins the lead in hand. Initial thoughts might be to try the double heart finesse using the ♣K and ♣6 as entries, provided the club suit breaks 3-2. But first, there is no harm in cashing the ♦A, if a top diamond honour falls you will have nine tricks and can take the safety play in clubs of the ace followed by low to the king, in case South has four clubs headed by the jack.

Board 4 Dealer West. Vul All.

<p>♠ 94 ♥ KJ963 ♦ 8 ♣ Q9762</p>			
♠ AQ2	N	♠ 108	
♥ 4		♥ A752	
♦ AJ10763	W	♦ KQ54	E
♣ AK3		♣ 1085	
<p>♠ KJ7653 ♥ Q108 ♦ 92 ♣ J4</p>			

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

¹ 2♣ = Too strong for 3D, both 2S and 3C would be FG

² 4NT = RKCB for diamonds

³ 5♠ = Two key cards and diamond queen

⁴ 6♣ = Asking bid in clubs

⁵ 6♦ = Denies 3rd round control in clubs

Opening Lead:

North leads the ♥6. Plan the play

The Play

Declarer wins the heart lead with dummy's ace and immediately ruffs a heart with ♦10. Crossing to the king and queen of trumps allows declarer to ruff the last two hearts in hand. Declarer now exits with ace, king and a third club hoping North will win. Even if South won the third round of clubs, declarer can fall back on the spade finesse.

Bidding Quiz 11 - Results - Bob Pattinson

Question 1

Dealer South. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠ QT752

♥ J3

◆ AJ94

♣ A6

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

¹ 3♣=4th suit forcing

Sounds that partner is 6-4 diamonds/hearts with 16+ values so there is a potential diamond slam. To cue bid or key card ask with 4♦?

Votes: $4\spadesuit=13$; $4\clubsuit=2$

Adrian 4♦: Setting the suit and inviting a cue bid. Some might play 4♦ as minor suit key card, in which case I would cue bid 4♣ immediately.

Peter P 4♦: Partner's likely shape is 1462 (spot on) with 17-18 or thereabouts. I need to set the suit to allow partner to control the hand. I expect us to find the grand slam if partner is A, AKxx, KQxxxx Kx: or void, AKxx, KQxxxx, Kxx

Rory 4: Setting the suit in a game forcing auction. With the lack of controls in the majors the hand is unsuitable for Roman Key Card Blackwood or Kickback.

Luca 4♦: As 6♦ seems quite likely let's start the conversation.

lan 4♦: Following partner's reverse we must be worth a slam try holding four trumps, two aces and 12 points. As 4♣ might be construed as a natural suit a 4♦ cue allows partner to cue bid 4♥ or 4♠, alternatively RKCB.

Roy 4♦: I hope this doesn't deny a club control (in our system it would be treated as RKCB) but maybe partner can bid key cad over my 4v, and I can show my two aces. There

are other concerns but I need very little to make a slam, so I'm aiming to bid one.

Joe 4♦: I would have bid 3♦ the first time to show a forcing hand with support. 4♦ allows partner to cue bid a major, and I will then use RKCB.

Matt 4♦: A bit of a cop out, and I am not certain how I will continue over partner's next bid.

George 4♦: Set trump and stay low. Cue bidding will follow. By the way over a reverse 3♦ is a positive response showing nine or more and game forcing. This helps to save an entire level.

Tom 4♦: I would have bid differently before now but unless we are off ♠AK I will be slam bound. Hard for partner to appreciate how strong my diamond suit is, so over 4♥ I bid 5♣. Partner likely to have a spade control with 6-4 shape in the red suits or hasn't a club stop. At the table I would probably key card as this makes bidding the grand easier, but for a bidding panel it is technically wrong.

Karel 4♦: Setting trumps and await partner. Earlier in the bidding it is advantageous to play over a reverse the 2NT Lebensohl convention asking partner to bid 3♣, and now 3♦ would be a weaker hand signing off in a part score. This allows the direct 3♦ bid to be forcing.

Ciaran 4♦: I normally play that a direct 3♦ over 2♥ is natural and positive, which would have let me show support a level lower.

Peter G 4♦: Our lack of a 3♦ bid on the previous round implies that we have a club control when we bid This not a check back auction as partner has the bigger hand here. If we have ♣A, ♦A and ♠K we would have bid 3♦ first so partner is well able to understand the spade control is missing.

Diane 4♣: Cue bid agreeing the last bid suit, since I have gone beyond 3NT.

Sally 4♣: Earlier I would have bid 3♦ forcing over 2♥.

Dealer South. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠K9864
 ♥976
 ♦-
 ♣KT975

♠Q10752
 ♥J3
 ♦AJ94
 ♣A5

N
 W E
 S

♠A
 ♥KQ72
 ♦KQ8653
 ♣Q3

♠J3
 ♥A865
 ♦T72
 ♣J842

	♠	♦	♥	♣	NT
N					
S					
E	6				
W	6			5	

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

¹ 3♣=4th suit forcing

Summary

An interesting hand raising two important bidding points. When is it best to cue bid or to employ a direct key card asking convention? Also, responder employing a conventional 2NT bid over a reverse to distinguish a weaker hand with trump support from a stronger hand which can then make a direct raise of the suit, forcing and still keeping the bidding low at the three level. This leaves plenty of room for cue bidding.

The advantage of cue bids is that they help to identify specific weaknesses in one suit when neither partner holds first or second round controls. On the other hand direct control asking bids work well when information is simply required on the number of controls held rather than the location of the controls.



As Rory points out the lack of controls in the major suits suggests that cue bidding will be superior to directly seeking the number of controls. This is why most of the panel would have bid 3♦ earlier in the bidding rather than the 3♣ 4th suit forcing, thus confirming the diamond fit and leaving plenty of bidding space to cue bid controls.

There are two approaches to cue bidding, either bidding first round controls first, or bidding first or second round controls starting with the lowest suit in which a control is held. Note that the system for this quiz uses the second approach, and also in the system 4♦ is kickback, directly agreeing trump support and asking for controls using the 1430 responses.

So on this hand 4th suit forcing was far less effective than the direct 3♦ bid, assuming you could use 2NT to enable a sign off in 3♦ following the mandatory 3♣ response to 2NT. This then made it more difficult for the panel to decide where to begin cue bidding as highlighted by Sally and other members. The problem of the doubleton heart weakness is resolved by playing first or second round cues opener will show the ♥K, and now as Tom mentioned a 5♣ cue helps partner bid the slam.

Marks: 4♦=10; 4♣=10

Bidding Tips

- ▶ Over a reverse use 2NT as a relay to 3♣, so that with a weak hand in a suit below the level of the reverse bid can be signed off in 3♣ or 3♦. This then means direct raises at the three-level show stronger values and are forcing. Reverse = 16+, 2NT = 6-8, direct three-level bid = 9+, 16+9 = 25 game level target
- ▶ Agree with your partner which variation of cue bidding you wish to play, either showing first round controls (Ace or void) starting with the lowest one, or alternatively, showing first or second round controls (Kx or singleton)

- ▶ Note that 4th suit forcing seeks more information from partner without necessarily showing an established fit, and it takes up more bidding space than playing the 2NT relay for weaker hands and the direct three-level bid as confirming both higher strength as well as a fit.

Question 2

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams.

♠ AKT92

♥ AQ9

♦ AK98

♣ J

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
1♠	P	2♣ ¹	P
?			
¹ 2♠=6+			

Votes: 2♦=15

This hand raises an interesting convention called the Bourke Relay whereby following a non-jump rebid of opener's original suit, responder's rebid in the cheapest unbid suit is an artificial game forcing relay asking opener to describe the hand further. It is similar to 4th suit forcing but maximises bidding space. Also it allows for responder to directly raise opener's suit to the three-level as an invitational bid.

At expert level, as the unanimous view of the panel shows, this bid is a very practical device for keeping the bidding low and differentiating between game forcing hands seeking more information and invitational raises in opener's suit.

Roy 2♦: 7♣, or even 7♦, might be possible, so unless partner responds 3♦, I bid 4♣ key card hoping to discover that partner holds ♣AKQ, and if so bid the club grand slam.

Sally 2♦: Another everyday modern sequence. I play 2♦ as artificial and game forcing, but even before that 2♦ was natural and forcing for one round.

Joe 2♦: Should be artificial and forcing for one round.

Diane 2♦: Forcing and leaving as much room as possible to investigate.

Matt 2♦: Forcing and not necessarily promising diamonds. Hoping to find out about 3 spades or 4 diamonds from partner, before driving to slam.

George 2♦: Artificial game forcing. Partner's first obligation is to bid hearts if holding four, or spades holding three. With neither a seventh club can be shown or 2NT with less than seven. Once you know opener's shape you can take control. There are five potential grand slams. No need to rush this.

Tom 2♦: Forcing and we can find a 4-4 diamond fit or other shapes of opener's hand, whether four hearts or three spades. Over 3♣ I raise to 4♣ to set clubs as trumps.

Luca 2♦: Forcing and helping me gain more information about partner's hand.

Adrian 2♦: Forcing here and 3♦ would be agreeing clubs and shortage in diamonds (splinter raise by partnership agreement).

Ciaran 2♦: Semi-natural and forcing.

Karel 2♦: Common expert treatment to use 2♦ as an artificial force to avoid using up bidding space with a jump to 3♦.

Peter P 2♦: I need to check if partner has a third spade as 7♠ may be on if the holding is Qxx, Kxx, x, AKTxxx. If not I will support clubs and use key card to check the texture of the clubs. I doubt the clubs are solid, but AKT9xxx and ♥Ks would be good. Slam looms.

Ian 2♦: Forcing and allowing room for a sensible spot to be located. Partner can't have much less than AKQxxx plus an outside entry. Maybe a 7NT punt is the answer?

Peter G 2♦: Not sure where we are going at this stage but 6NT or a grand in a suit contract seem possibilities worth investigating.



Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams.

		♠ J742	
		♥ 32	
		♦ JT32	
		♣ T83	
♠ AKT92	N	♠ 5	
♥ AQ9	W	♥ K875	
♦ AK98	E	♦ 74	
♣ J	S	♣ AKQ972	
		♠ Q86	
		♥ JT64	
		♦ Q65	
		♣ 654	

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
1♠	P	2♣ ¹	P
?			
¹ 2♠=6+			

Summary

The consistency of the panel in employing this convention suggests that more players should try this out as there are no obvious disadvantages.

Also note that several members of the panel are thinking about possible grand slams and the Bourke relay helps to keep the bidding low to allow room for opener to show the shape of the hand.

Marks: 2♦=10

Bidding Tips

Discuss with your partner about adding the Bourke relay to your system as it occurs quite frequently, is easy to remember, and is very useful for keeping the bidding low.

Question 3

Dealer South. Vul All. Teams.

♠ QJ754
♥ 8
♦ AQJ
♣ QT85

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	?		

Votes: 4♥=7; 3♥=3; 2NT=3; 2♠=2

At least a game going hand with 12 points, five good trumps, and an outside singleton. A number of possible ways to proceed, but which is the best choice?

Adrian 2NT: Jacoby game force. I would play 4♥ here as a splinter with 8-11.

Peter G 2NT: Too good for a 4♥ splinter, especially with the fifth spade.

Sally 2NT: Game forcing with a spade fit. For me a splinter is less than an opening bid.

Peter P 3♥: After recent visits to the USA I now play splinters as shortage, trump support, 9-13, and only one outside control. This hand fits that idea perfectly. (With two outside controls I use Jacoby 2NT).

Matt 3♥: If this a splinter it defines the hand well with slam likely to be good when partner has significant extras or has no wasted heart cards when knowledge of my singleton heart may be of real help.

Tom 3♥: Playing Jacoby 2NT at 16+ doesn't occur that frequently. Much better is to play it as game forcing with any 12+ hand, four+ trumps and a singleton. The system prevents me bidding 2NT so 3♥ is the next best option.

Joe 4♥: Splinter showing an opening hand with four+ spades and short hearts.

Luca 4♥: For me this is a splinter. It would be helpful to have minimum/ maximum splinters. This hand would be in the maximum camp.

Rory 4♥: I play this as a splinter bid.

George 4♥: You have a textbook splinter with an extra spade. If slam is possible partner will not be disappointed with your hand.

Diane 4♥: Splinter with good spade support.

Roy 4♥: Assuming this is a splinter. I know I'm a little light in high card points but it might be our best chance to reach a slam.

Ciaran 4♥: As there is the possibility of misunderstanding 2♣, then a 4♥ splinter is the best option.

Karel 2♣: A splinter 4♥ is totally reasonable, but for me a splinter is game only interest unless partner has a fitting hand. Here I will bid a simple 2♣ game forcing. If I hear hearts from either one or both opponents then my hand improves hugely. Partner bidding hearts is not so good but as I have game forced low I can agree spades and look for a club cue.

Ian 2♣: If splinters are unlimited then 2♣ looks better here.

Dealer South. Vul All. Teams.

		♠ QJ754	
		♥ 8	
		♦ AQJ	
		♣ QT85	
♠ T98	N	♠ -	
♥ KQT95	W	♥ AJ63	
♦ 8753	E	♦ KT62	
♣ 6	S	♣ J9742	
		♠ AK832	
		♥ 752	
		♦ 94	
		♣ AK3	

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	?		

Summary

The current system for the quiz has minimum splinters of 8-11 strength and Jacoby 2NT as 16+ balanced, thus 4♥ has to fill the gap as the stronger splinter. 12+.Tom's suggestion on modifying Jacoby 2NT to 12+ points, four+ trumps and a singleton would fit the bill here in that it keeps the bidding much lower for exploring shape. Also the frequency of this modified 2NT would arise more often than the traditional Jacoby convention.

This is a hand with potential slam prospects, so it would be of great help to partner to know about the singleton heart. The 2♣ response is a slower approach but does leave maximum bidding space to show the singleton heart at a later stage.



The 3♥ bid is 8-11 in the system and the given hand is marginally stronger than this.

Marks: 4♥=10; 2♠=9; 3♥=8; 2NT=8

Bidding Tip

Being able to show singleton controls in suit contracts work well the lower you can do so, thus leaving space for other cue bids.

Question 4

Dealer West. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠ KQ63

♥ AJT74

♦ J2

♣ 83

W	N	E	S
1♠ ¹	P	1♥	P
2♥	P	?	
¹ 1♠=2+			

Votes: 4♥=9; 2♠=5; 2NT=1

Adrian 2♠: In case we have a 4-4 spade fit, but if not I am bidding 4♥.

Sally 2♠: I like to play 2NT as game forcing and all other suit bids as non-forcing.

Ian 2♠: We are arguably worth game rather than a try. However, there could be a 4-4 spade fit, with 4♠ on but not 4♥. The only real downside is giving the opponents the information to find the killing minor suit lead.

Karel 2♠: We have two options here, a 2NT enquiry as to whether partner has three or four hearts and/or minimum/ maximum, or a 2♠ trial bid. I prefer 2♠ here, giving a better picture of the hand.

Peter P 2♠: I expect a weak no trump with four hearts. I need to know where the good cards lie, so I simply make a long suit game try. Partner should bid game with Axx, KQxx, Axx, xxx, but will only bid 3♠ with xxx, KQxx, Kxx, Axx. However, if partner has shape game will be bid with x, KQxx, xxx, AKxx.

Matt 4♠: Good trumps and nine-card fits always require fewer high card points than the book says.

Joe 4♥: 11 points, 5-4 shape and five trumps.

Ciaran 4♥: Maybe it doesn't make it won't be the last time I bid a non-making contract.

Diane 4♥: Well worth game with the fifth trump.

Roy 4♥: It's too hard to know if a part score is right, so instead of giving away any (potentially valuable information) to opponents I'll just blast game.

George 4♥: Hope I make it. No need to get fancy here. I have 11 high points and five trumps. I would have opened this hand.

Luca 4♥: It depends on how light are openings are. Having said that why have fear, if it goes off on non-optimum breaks, so be it.

Tom 4♥: Tell them nothing Paddy!

Rory 4♥: With a nine-card fit (almost always) and a combined 23+ points, this hand is well worth a game bid. A bid of 2♠ has some merit, as a 4-4 spade fit may play better than a 5-4 heart fit, but it may not be that simple and it may ensure an unwanted minor suit lead.

Peter G 2NT: Tough not to look for a heart game, but ♦J looks to be worthless. 2♠ is an option too, but that is probably game forcing.

Dealer West. Vul N/S. Teams.

		♠T94	
		♥K9	
		♦AK95	
		♣JT92	
♠87	N	♠KQ63	
♥Q852		♥AJT74	
♦84	W	♦J2	
♣AKQ76	E	♣83	
		♠AJ52	
		♥63	
		♦QT763	
		♣54	

W	N	E	S
1♠ ¹	P	1♥	P
2♥	P	?	
¹ 1♠=2+			

Summary

If the partnership agreement is that the single raise in hearts promises four-card support than Diane's point about holding a fifth trump suggests a final destination of game in hearts. The only issue remaining is whether the two minimum hands have enough values for game. A minority of the panel suggest that 2♠ is one route to check on the strength of the opening hand, or even discover a superior 4-4 spade fit.

The majority of the panel recognise that while there may be potential problems, jumping to game as Tom and Rory highlight keeps the opponents in the dark.

Marks: 4♥=10; 2♠=9; 2NT=8

Bidding Tips

- ▶ In suit contracts extra trumps and some shape, such as two outside doubletons for potential ruffs, readily compensate for fewer high card points.
- ▶ The single trump raise shows a minimum hand and normally promises four trumps, unless holding an outside singleton and three trumps.

Question 5

Dealer South. Vul None. Teams.

♠ Q985

♥ AQT98

♦ -

♣ AT75

W	N	E	S
			1NT ¹
P	2♦	P	2♥ ²
P	2♠	P	3♠
P	?		
¹ 1NT=14-16; no 5 major			
² 2♥=2+ (no super accepts)			

Votes: 4♠=6; 5♦=5; 4♦D=2; 4♠=1; 3NT=1

This hand raises the issue of whether to use Stayman or transfers with 5-4 in the majors. The advantage of Stayman is that when opener



rebids 2♦ [no major], now the Smolen convention sees responder bidding the four-card major at the three-level, confirming five cards in the other major. Thus the 5-3 major fit is firmly established, and this leaves the 2♠ bid to be free for some other purpose.

Karel 4♣: First/second cue, and if partner fails to bid 4♦ now we are rocking as no wasted ♦A or ♦K. Over a likely 4♦ I can try once more with 4♥.

Joe 4♣: With this type of hand I start with Stayman, planning on splintering after partner's 2♥/♠, and over 2♦ can bid 3M forcing with 5-4 majors or use the Smolen convention by bidding the four-card major to show five cards in the other major.

Ciaran 4♣: I guess- as long as partner knows that this is a fragment so I've got this shape or 4513. Grand is possible opposite the right minimum: AKxxx KJxxx Kxx, so I have to make a try.

Diane 4♣: A cue bid having agreed spades.

Rory 4♣: Cue bid agreeing spades. Hoping to hear a cue bid showing ♥K, and thus by bypassing 4♦ confirming no wasted values there.

Peter P 5♦: Exclusion: checking for key cards excluding diamonds, and then try to look for the ♥K if partner shows the ♠A and ♠K.

George 5♦: Exclusion. If partner has only one key card you will be in 5♠ and make it. Some play the earlier 2♠ as passable, so using Stayman 2♣ and follow up with the Smolen convention works well to show a holding of four spades and five hearts.

Matt 5♦: Exclusion: 2♠ is game forcing so partner's 3♠ shows more than minimum, so the five-level should be safe.

Roy 5♦: Exclusion- it's a bit of an overbid, and if we can make only 4♠ and not 5♠ I'll regret it. The difficulty is trying to convey everything about the hand while still staying below the five-level.

So I'll gamble, maybe we can get to 7♠.

Tom 5♦: Exclusion.

Adrian 3NT: A slam try to help me discover if partner holds the ♠K. If not, I can still bid 4♥ over 4♦ which should confirm I have a club control too.

Sally 4♦: Suit bids here should be shortage, with 3NT having no shortage.

Peter G 4♦: Seems to imply a diamond shortage, but we are also looking for a heart cue bid from partner.

Ian 4♠: We might have a perfect fit, but Mike Lawrence says "Don't play me for a perfect fit-I don't have it." There are highly likely to be wasted values in diamonds, and even 4♠ could be a struggle.

Adrian 3NT: A slam try aiming to discover if partner has the ♠K. If it is not held I can still bid 4♥ over 4♦, and this would also confirm I have a club control too.

Dealer South. Vul None. Teams.

		♠Q985	
		♥AQT98	
		♦-	
		♣AT75	
♠4		N	♠KJ76
♥542			♥76
♦KQJ543	W	E	♦AT986
♣943		S	♣63
		♠AT32	
		♥KJ3	
		♦72	
		♣KQJ8	

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

¹ 1NT=14-16: no 5 major

² 2♥=2+ (no super accepts)

Summary

Whether using transfers or Stayman, the spade fit will be established at the three-level, and the question is which route to take to explore slam prospects. The suggestions of the panel are the

4♣ cue bid and the 5♦ Exclusion Blackwood convention. This jump bid asks for key cards outside of the diamond suit, and has the advantage over 4NT by limiting the possible key cards to the remaining three suits outside of diamonds. Very useful for this hand with a diamond void. Exclusion on this hand gains more precise information than the longer route of 4♣, and as George points out it is easy to stop in 5♠ should partner's key cards be limited to just one. This is a frustrating hand for those advocates of 4-4 over 5-3 fits, due to the 4-1 break in spades and forcing diamond lead.

Marks: 4♣=10; 5♦=10; 3NT=9; 4♦=8; 4♠=7

Bidding Tips

► Exclusion Blackwood helps to distinguish between a singleton and a void. Once trumps have been agreed an unnecessary jump to a suit at the five-level shows a void in that suit and asks partner for key card outside of the jump suit. The first step response denies a key card, and the next step one key card, etc. Thus in this hand the response would be 5♠ to confirm one key card. The big advantage is this convention helps to identify wasted values held in the void suit.

► As stated in the system for the quiz when a suit is agreed then a 3NT bid becomes a non-serious interest in a potential slam, confirming a minimum hand still prepared to show controls if partner fails to sign off in the trump suit. By passing 3NT this shows a strong hand bidding 1st or 2nd round controls up the line. The view of the panel was this hand came into the second category of the strong hand, hence the direct 4♣ cue bid.



Question 6

Dealer East. Vul All. Teams

♠ T52
♥ AKQJ53
♦ A5
♣ 73

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
1♠	P	?	

Votes: 3♥=13; 2♥=1; 2♣=1

A six-loser hand with 14 points and a strong six-card major, is a simple 2♥ rebid sufficient to show these values?

Sally 3♥: I might settle for 2♥ at pairs but don't want to miss a game at teams.

Peter G 3♥: Desperately minimum but concentrated points in the red suits.

Tom 3♥: Worried I might miss 3NT with my seven tricks but anything else is overstating my values or my shape. If partner has ideas about higher contracts I can now go forward enthusiastically.

Adrian 3♥: Six good hearts more than minimum.

Ian 3♥: Just about worth the slight overbid vulnerable at teams. Hard to know if holding three spades is a plus or a minus. We have a solid suit and our outside card is an ace, so not much of an overbid.

Matt 3♥: 14-16 and a good suit is what the system says and I like to keep to the system.

Diane 3♥: I have my spade support, but well worth showing my great heart suit.

Joe 3♥: Too much for a 2♥ bid.

Rory 3♥: Jump rebid with seven playing tricks. My granny taught me that 60 years ago.

Luca 3♥: Too good to bid 2♥. I should be okay that partner can bid 3♠ so we don't miss the 5-3 spade fit.

Karel 3♥: Tiny bit short on points but what a suit.

Roy 3♥: Again an overbid, but 3NT seems like the target contract, and with seven tricks I don't think I can afford to bid at the two-level since partner will downgrade their hand with short hearts.

Ciaran 3♥: The 1♠ bid improved my hand.

Peter P: 2♣: Gazzilli. If I bid 3H things are going to get messy with partner unsure that we have a playable trump suit opposite a singleton or void, and short of space to keep the spade suit in the picture.

George 2♥: Close to 3♥, but not good enough. Don't even think of a spade raise.

Dealer East. Vul All. Teams.

					♠ Q6					
					♥ 72					
					♦ QJT93					
					♣ K542					
					N					
♠ AK98	W		E	♠ T52						
♥ 864				♥ AKQJ53						
♦ K86				♦ A5						
♣ AJ8				♣ 73						
					S					
					♠ J743					
					♥ T9					
					♦ 742					
					♣ QT96					

	♠	♥	♦	♣	NT
N					
S					
E		6	5	6	
W		6	5	6	

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
1♠	P	?	

Summary

A strong majority view of the panel for this hand meriting the jump rebid to 3♥.

Employing Gazzilli has the benefit of keeping the bidding low. Either of these bids will probably result in reaching the small slam in hearts. It is worth noting Tom's point about keeping in mind a 3NT contract if partner held a weaker hand with

the two extra winners needed to make the nine trick game. Also some members of the panel might have considered the single raise playing pairs and not teams.

Marks: 3♥=10; 2♣=9; 2♥=8

Bidding Tips

- ▶ It helps to distinguish minimum hands from invitational hands, so that responder can best judge how well their assets fit the description of the opening hand.
- ▶ The quality of the heart suit plus the ♦A made it relatively safe to rebid at the three-level with a likely seven top tricks, as partner could pass with minimum values, with reasonable chances of adding just two tricks.

Question 7

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

♠ T2
♥ AQT7
♦ AKT
♣ 9742

W	N	E	S
	2♠ ¹	P	P
X	P	3♣ ²	P
?			

¹ 2♠=6-10 5431 or 5-5: any 2nd suit
² 3♣=constructive (2NT = weak)

Votes: Pass=13; 3♠=2

West with a flat 13 point hand has risked balancing with a takeout double, and partner has made a constructive bid of 3♣. The range of the opening 2♠ bid is 6-10, and partner has passed, so does this suggest the remaining two hands have a fairly equal share of the rest of the points? The constructive 3♣ bid should be 9+. Partner may be short in hearts and could not make a takeout double and yet have some useful values. On the other hand you have stretched to balance and the 3♠ cue bid has not been used.



Adrian Pass: 3♣ is constructive but shouldn't be forcing, and I have basic values for doing any more.

Sally Pass: Clear in my opinion.

Matt Pass: Maybe partner has Kx xxx xxx AKxxx, but partner is allowed to be minimum for their bid too.

Joe Pass: Partner only showing 8-10 opposite my 13

Ciaran Pass: Constructive is not forcing, and I have two low spades and no extras or club honour.

Peter G Pass: Partner appears to have three or four spades from South's pass, as 3NT would be bid before 3♣ if holding 10-11 points and ♠K with five decent clubs.

Luca Pass: I am minimum for doubling. 3♣ doesn't show a good enough hand here that I feel obliged to bid.

Ian Pass: We have a decent chance of going plus here, having hopefully found a playable fit. Whilst double in fourth seat can be shaded I don't feel we are worth an advance. If we were to move the only sensible bid would be 3♠, which could take us too high in clubs, or into a poor 3NT with only one spade stop.

Tom Pass: Phew I've found a fit and some points, and may have a chance to make a contract. Remember all I have is a weak no trump. If 3NT had any chance partner would have bid already.

Diane Pass: Haven't any more than promised.

George Pass: I can't imagine a second choice. I have a minimum opening and partner has 9ish and we have a likely nine-card fit, so I put my bids back into the box.

Peter P Pass: I have what I said I had, no further bidding required. If partner has AKJxx in clubs plus a stopper in spades we need to talk.

Karel Pass: I think the initial double is close enough. Why? If partner has sufficient points to act earlier why didn't they? They don't have a penalty double and don't have hearts. Also the 2♠ opening wasn't

raised as a barrier bid - it doesn't really look great. You have found a fit and haven't been doubled so I pass quickly. Way too optimistic in my opinion to try 3♠ for 3NT.

Rory 3♠: Angling for 3NT or 5♣. Game may be borderline and I am prepared to pass 4♣.

Roy 3♠: My cards look pretty nice, maybe we can keep opener off lead in 3NT, and 4♣ rates to make if partner can't bid 3NT.

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

		♠ KJ984	
		♥ KJ82	
		♦ 8	
		♣ K65	
♠ T3	N	♠ A5	
♥ AQT7		♥ 654	
♦ AKT	W	♦ Q64	
♣ 9742	S	♣ AQJT3	
		♠ Q763	
		♥ 93	
		♦ J97532	
		♣ 8	

W	N	E	S
	2♠ ¹	P	P
X	P	3♣ ²	P
?			

¹ 2♠=6-10 5431 or 5-5: any 2nd suit
² 3♣=constructive (2NT = weak)

Summary

A clear majority of the panel are content to pass having found a likely makeable fit in 3♣. As the cards lie partner has more than expected values, but not enough to have taken stronger action earlier. The minority duo take a more optimistic view by trying 3♠ on the basis that 4♣ is still a safe berth if 3NT is a non-runner, and as the cards lie this would have been rewarded at the table. 3NT and 5♣ make due to the strong fit in diamonds and the location of the ♣K, and in 5♣ an elimination and end play of North in hearts.

Perhaps the crux of this hand is the respective ranges agreed for the weak 2NT response, the direct three-level bid in a new suit, and the cue bid of the opponent's suit.

Marks: Pass=10; 3♠=9

Bidding Tips

- ▶ The 2NT bid for weaker hands over opponent's two level weak openings allows direct three-level suit bids to be constructive. You need to agree the range of each category with your partner should you make use of this convention.
- ▶ Try to avoid bidding your hand twice when balancing the bidding in competitive situations.

Question 8

Dealer West. Vul N/S. Teams

♠ A32
 ♥ KJ83
 ♦ -
 ♣ KQ9642

W	N	E	S
1♠	1NT ¹	?	

¹ 1NT=16-18: 2 stops

Votes: X=11; 4♠=4

A demanding competitive hand to complete the quiz. Do you support partner straight away or double?

Peter P Double: Surely we are making 500+ on this hand, especially if the clubs can run. If partner can't stomach defending, as I suspect might be the case, and bids 2♦ or 2♠ then I bid 4♠.

Rory Double: If they bid diamonds I hope to compete in the black suits. In 1NT doubled I will lead a club, as the odds are partner has at least one club honour.

Ian Double: Has partner psyched? Has North a running diamond suit and an ace, plus some sort of spade stop? It hardly matters as one of the opponents will surely run. What will happen next is surely the question?

Matt Double: If partner makes a penalty double of 2♦ D I will leave it in at at these colours.

Roy Double: I'm happy to lead a club and see what happens. If they run to 2♦, I would bid 3♦ (unless partner doubles for penalty)



risky, but they are vulnerable and sometimes you get a huge number.

Adrian Double: To show we have the balance of points.

Diane Double: Just worried that the opponents may have a long running diamond suit, but with not a lot of points in spades then partner is likely to have something in diamonds.

George Double: If they run to diamonds I jump to 4♠. With the ♠A behind North two stoppers can easily become one. I have so many extras that even with two trump losers we will still roll this. If they sit for the double, thank you for not asking what my opening lead will be!

Luca Double: 1NT is starting to sound like a psyche. I want to make sure these opponents don't think they can this against me in future. If all hell breaks loose, I can bid 4♠ but time will tell.

Joe Double: I intend to jump to 4♠ later depending on how the bidding goes. If I know my opponent isn't capable of psyching 1NT I would jump to 4♠ right away.

Sally 4S: At this vulnerability I don't think North would have psyched.

Peter G Double: Have to start somewhere, but probably heading to 4♠.

Ciaran 4♠: I think this is the value bid. If I double declarer may take six diamonds and the ♠A. Is 4♦ a splinter bid?

Tom 4♠: We may miss a slam and the 1NT over-caller might have just ♦AKQJx, ♠K, ♥Q and some variation, so I bid what I expect to make.

Karel 4♠: Most would look no further and double, but my fear is that opponents have five diamond tricks and possibly one or two overtricks, or go for just one off when we have a game on. Is 4♦ a splinter bid? 4♠ is the practical bid in the absence of other agreements.

Dealer West. Vul N/S. Teams.

		♠KJ8	
		♥A6	
		♦QJ954	
		♣AJ8	
♠QT865	N	♠A32	
♥QT94	W	♥KJ83	
♦AK62	E	♦-	
♣-	S	♣KQ9642	
		♠74	
		♥532	
		♦T873	
		♣T753	

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

W	N	E	S
1♠	1NT ¹	?	
¹ 1NT=16-18: 2 stops			

Summary

North has his bid, despite some suspicions of 1NT being a psyche.

Many of the doublers were planning to jump to 4♠ if the opponents escaped into 2♦. Possibly other variations might occur over the double, but at teams undue risks tend to be avoided, so the spade game looks to be safe.

Ciaran and Karel raised the interesting point about whether 4♦ would be a splinter. This probably would be interpreted correctly, as a jump to 3♦ would be showing long diamonds.

The advantage of a direct 4♠ is that any complications over the alternative choice of double are avoided. On the other hand, double offers more potential outcomes such as reaching the 4-4 heart game or 1NT going for a number, or even ending up in 4♠. As the cards lie 4♠ produces the best return, but double is the first bid in the auction and many of the panel have mentioned later possible actions which might well reach 4S.

Marks: 4♠=10; Double=10

Bidding Tip

Sometimes 1NT overcalls contain long minors so be aware if this when doubling with a void as a better contract may be available.



Summary of the Expert Panel Results

Ciaran, Luca and Joe all hit the maximum.

James Heneghan also recorded a max among readers' scores.

Readers' scores:

Willie O'Gorman 73

Dolores Walsh 70

Fiona McGoldrick 69

Rajnish Guta 61

Dolores and Rajnish are Novices – well done!

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Sally Brock	9	10	8	9	10	10	10	10	76
Ciaran Coyne	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	80
Luca Crone	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	80
Karel De Raeymaeker	10	10	9	9	10	10	10	10	78
Peter Goodman	10	10	8	8	10	10	10	10	76
Diane Greenwood	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	79
Joe Grue	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	80
Ian Hamilton	10	10	9	9	7	10	10	10	75
Tom Hanlon	10	10	8	10	10	10	10	10	78
George Jacobs	10	10	10	10	10	8	10	10	78
Matt O'Farrell	10	10	8	10	10	10	10	10	78
Peter Pigot	10	10	8	9	10	9	10	10	76
Adrian Thomas	10	10	8	9	9	10	10	10	76
Rory Timlin	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	79



C O N T R A C T
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