



## Weekly Wisdom

### The Sydney Bridge Centre mini lesson

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative) will be analysing an interesting hand from each Saturday ARVO BBO session. To subscribe, please email your name and email address to [office@sydneybridgecentre.com](mailto:office@sydneybridgecentre.com).

You are also welcome to [send questions](#) about hands that you have played. Please use “Weekly Wisdom” as email subject. We will collate them and let our panellists leading by Julian Foster to answer them.

### #17429 BBO – Saturday ARVO session 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2021

<b>14</b>		♠ T9	Dir: E
		♥ T9762	Vul: None
		♦ 873	
		♣ 762	
♠ KQ8652		♠ AJ73	
♥		♥ 543	
♦ AKJ96		♦ Q2	
♣ AK		♣ JT94	
0		♠ 4	♣♦♥♠NT
20		♥ AKQJ8	N - - 1 - -
8		♦ T54	S - - 1 - -
12		♣ Q853	E 2 7 - 7 2
			W 2 7 - 7 2

I focused on Board 14 last week and this week it seems worthwhile to do the same!

East West can make 7♠ but only 3 tables out of 16 even reached 6♠ with everyone else playing in 4♠. Let's see how they could all have done better.

East passes, South opens 1H and West has the first decision. At the table the bids chosen were:

1♠ – 7 times  
 4♠ – 3 times  
 X – 4 times  
 2♥ – 2 times

Of the 3 pairs who did bid slam, two started with 1♠ and one started with 2♥.

West's hand is absolutely enormous with only 2 losers. Even though the range for 1 level overcalls is getting wider and wider these days, I would not consider 1♠ here. Imagine how ill you would feel if it went all pass?! Give partner just the ♦Q and nothing else and you are almost cold for 6♦. Likewise I would not consider 4♠. Give partner a void in spades and Qxxx in diamonds. You could be making 7♦ and might not even make 4♠ at all. There is also no need to jump around because we hold spades – we can always outbid the opponents' hearts.

So the only two bids I would consider are X or 2♥ (Michaels showing at least 55 in spades and another suit).

My preference would be 2♥ mainly because X could give you a problem on the next round. You will have to bid one of your suits (showing a hand too good to overcall that suit the first time) but you may not then be able to show both of them. 2♥ enables you to show both which could be critical in reaching slam. Note that some pairs choose to bid Michaels on any strength of hand, others (like me!) prefer to play it as either weak or strong but not intermediate. See advanced section for more discussion on this.

Whatever West does, North then has to decide what level to raise hearts to, if any. 4♥ puts the maximum pressure on but could be silly if partner is the one with a good hand. The hand also has 11 losers! I think I would content myself with 3♥ pre-emptive. Note that hearts will make 6 tricks (5 trumps and eventually a club ruff in dummy). So even 4♥ is going for 800, 6♥ or more will cost more than the opponent's slam!

East may well make a voluntary bid of 3♠ over 3♥ (they have 4 card support and their minor holdings are going to help partner whatever his minor is).

One of the successful auctions to 6♠ went 1♥ 2♥ 4♥ 4♠ P 6♠. Once East voluntarily bids 4♠ West should be thinking of 7♠ but, without agreements, it is not so easy so 6♠ was a good practical decision that was well rewarded with a joint top. See advanced section for possible ways of getting to 7♠.

Suppose East passes though and 3♥ returns to West. What now? 4♦ is probably most descriptive provided this shows a strong hand and is forcing (it's no good if you could have an intermediate hand as you can't afford East to

pass). Over 4♦ East is now far too good for 4♠ which they would have to bid on a yarborough with 3 low spades. Always think what you COULD have had in the auction for your bidding to date. 5♠ might be reasonable and now West should certainly get to at least 6♠.

There is nothing to the play on this hand as West can claim 13 tricks immediately (the only chance of losing a trick is if diamonds were 6-0 and there was an opening ruff. Even if spades were 3-0 and diamonds were 5-1 you can still draw trumps and just ruff the 5<sup>th</sup> diamond with dummy's remaining trump). Grand slam despite holding only 28 points between the hands – once again the shape is far more important than high card points.

### Key points to note

- 1 level overcalls are wide range but there are limits. Consider how ill you will feel if it does go all pass! That will guide whether you should start with something else.
- When you have a choice of bids, prefer one that will reduce your problems on the next round; or which will describe more of your hand.
- Don't prematurely jump to game in one suit if there is a chance of slam in another.
- When bidding always consider what you COULD have had in the auction for your bidding to date. What seems like a bad hand can actually be extremely valuable!
- Exclusion key card is blackwood but asking partner to ignore key cards in one suit (see advanced section)

### More advanced

I discussed shape showing bids like Michaels and the unusual 2NT recently in the column on 19 June. This is another example. On this hand we bid 2♥ on the first round and, if we are playing the style where we make these bids on strong or weak hands but not intermediate ones then this is clearly the strong version! West shows this by taking another action on the next round after, perhaps, 1♥ 2♥ 4♥ P P (whether X, 4♠ or 5♦). There is now a case for East to move again. They know their 3 low hearts are opposite shortage, they have AJxx spades when they might have had nothing and both minor suit holdings will help with whatever minor partner has. If East makes any further noise at all, West should clearly be bidding at least 6♠.

Had it been possible for West to be any strength when they take a 2<sup>nd</sup> action they do not have to be as strong so East cannot really push beyond game.

How might EW reach 7♠?

If there is room (likely only if North has not jumped to 4♥) and East has agreed spades then West could consider an advanced type of blackwood known as "Exclusion". This is basically key card but asking partner to exclude key cards in a particular suit. It's normally done on extreme hands with a void (where an Ace held by partner could be useless to us) and is an unusual jump in the auction (partnerships need to discuss exactly when it applies).

Responses vary but some plausible steps might be 0, 1, 1+Q, 2, 2+Q.

Here for example if the auction went 1♥ 2♥ P 2S P (or maybe 1♥ 2♥ 3♥ 3♠ P) back to West they might consider it – they could bid 5♥! When partner shows 1 key card outside hearts, West knows it's the ♠A so they will be bidding to at least 6♠. From their perspective they now have to consider what they need in the diamond suit to make all 13 tricks. Whenever partner has the ♦Q, 7♠ will be almost cold. When partner has a doubleton there will be good chances of being able to ruff diamonds in dummy to set the suit up. The only bad holdings partner can have are 3 small (where we will probably need a finesse) or 4 small (where we need a finesse or the Q to drop). But a finesse is going to be through the opening bidder's hand so there's a better than even chance of it working. I would be very tempted to try 7♠ anyway. If, however, the partnership has sufficient agreements West can make a specific try for a grand slam – perhaps by bidding 6♦. This must logically be a grand slam try because, without any interest in a grand, West would just bid 6♠. 6♦ cannot rationally be a suggestion to play at matchpoints (you would always play in the higher ranking major). East should then trust their partner and accept – ♦Qx is an enormously valuable holding compared with what they could hold.

There are other methods available after regular key card blackwood where you can ask for the K and Q in a side suit. They don't often come up (frequently there isn't room to use them) but can be very valuable when they do. If West could do that on this hand and find out East holds  $\heartsuit Q$  below the  $6\spadesuit$  level that will allow them to confidently bid  $7\spadesuit$  as well.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

### The SBC Online Charity Pairs on BBO – Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July, 10am start



We won't be able to run a F2F Christmas in July Congress as originally scheduled on 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> July, but we can still get into the spirit of the season – let's give hope to those in need. For each entry, Sydney Bridge Centre will donate AUD 4.00 to the Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal, half of which comes from BBO generously reducing its fees. All are welcome to join us for this **charity game on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July on BBO**, including interstate players – you play, we donate. BB\$12 per player.

**RED masterpoints** awarded. Please find the [program brochure](#) and [enter online](#) on the NSWBA website.

### The Sydney Bridge Centre online sessions on BBO during temporary lockdown

Our clubroom on Goulburn Street is temporary closed under the current restriction. We are running regular club session online on BBO for the moment and will resume our F2F sessions once we can. Please keep an eye on our [website](#) for the latest announcement.

#### For BBO sessions:

All are welcome. No need to book. Please find us on BBO / Featured Areas / Virtual Clubs / ABF-Australia. Tournament title "Sydney Bridge Centre & Friends". Tournament will open only 2 hours before the game starts.

BB\$3 per person per game.

#### For Face-to-Face sessions:

All are welcome, you don't need to be a member to join us for a game in SBC. We have sessions for different level of players. If you need a partner, please come in 15-20 minutes before the game start, our directors will try to find you a partner.

Normal table money fee.