



Wednesday Wisdom

The Sydney Bridge Centre mini lesson

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative) will be analysing an interesting hand from each Wednesday morning session. This hand commentary will be sent to participants before the next Wednesday session.

You are also welcome to [send questions](#) about hands that you have played. We will collate them and let our panellists (Julian Foster, Marcia Scudder and Paul Roach) answer them.

#1980 BBO – Wednesday morning session 5th August 2020

4		♠ A	Dir: W	
		♥ Q	Vul: Both	
		♦ AQ97		
		♣ KQ76542		
♠ T8742	♠ KJ963			
♥ J9532	♥ A74			
♦ JT2	♦ 8653			
♣	♣ 3			
17	♠ Q5			
2	♥ KT86			
8	♦ K4			
13	♣ AJT98			
		♣♦♥♠NT		
		N 6 5 1 - 6		
		S 6 5 1 - 6		
		E - - - 1 -		
		W - - - 1 -		

Continuing last week's theme of slams board 4 last Wednesday was a NS slam that only one pair managed to bid.

Let's look at how the hand could be bid. We'll assume for now that EW don't get involved.

North will clearly open 1♣ and South would respond 1♥ (it being normal to look for major suit fits first). The first decision rests with North. I would bid 2♦. That's a "reverse" bid. It means our 2nd suit is higher ranked than our 1st and if partner wants to go back to our 1st suit they have to do so at the 3 level – that is the basic definition of a reverse. You need extra strength to do this

(typically at least 16) because partner might have responded on as few as 6 points so you don't want to force to the 3 level with only a minimum 11/12 point hand opposite what might only be 6.

Note I bid 2♦ even though I have 7 clubs. Some won't agree with that but I think of it as just showing more cards in my hand. When I bid 2♦ I am telling partner about 9 cards in my hand (4♦ and 5♣). If I bid, say, 3♣ that's only really telling partner about 6 of my cards. Partner could easily be something like 4450 shape anyway! Why not show our 2nd suit where we could still have our best fit?

Because 2♦ is a reverse it is forcing. Partner cannot pass it. That gives us time to go back to clubs later if we need to. It also means you don't need to bid any MORE than 2♦. One auction last week I saw this hand bid 3♦. As long as both players understand 2♦ is forcing you don't need to bid 3♦ – that takes up a whole extra level of bidding which might make it harder to bid slam on some hands.

What should south do over 2♦? They now know there is a good club fit and that they want to play in at least game. 3♣ you might think? The trouble with that is what would you also bid with this hand?

Qx K10xx xx J109xx

You want to bid 3♣ with that as well – only this time to potentially play there.

Clearly you cannot bid 3♣ with both these hands – partner cannot possibly bid accurately then!

The answer is fourth suit forcing. You bid the 4th suit (2♠ here) as an artificial game forcing bid asking partner for more information. In this case you don't actually really care what partner says, you are just going to bid clubs next to say you wanted to agree clubs strongly (as opposed to just give preference back to partner's 1st suit). Once North hears that they will be off to the races with their huge hand – probably with blackwood. The whole bidding sequence might be 1♣-1♥-2♦-2♠-3♣-4♣-4NT-5♦ (1 key card – or 5♣ if that shows 1 in your methods) -6♣. North will probably be disappointed to find out you are missing one A and cannot bid a grand slam!

[Note there is a convention that can be used here called "Blackout" which does allow South to bid 3♣ and mean it as a game force – but that's getting too advanced for now. I'll cover it some other time if a suitable hand comes up.]

Key points to note

- A reverse bid shows extra values and is forcing. So you don't have to bid any higher than the reverse. Doing so can take up too much room.
- Before making a bid, don't just think about the hand you have – think about what other hands you could have had. If you find yourself wanting to bid the same thing on two hands of very different strength then one of those bids is wrong!

More advanced points

a) a 3♦ rebid by north = “splinter”

We mentioned earlier that North should rebid 2♦ and doesn't need to bid 3♦. So does 3♦ exist? And if so what does it mean? Most good pairs play it as a “splinter” – that is a hand with shortage in diamonds and showing good agreement for partner's hearts. The general rule is that if a bid is forcing (2♦ here) then an unnecessary jump in the same suit is artificial. Splinter bids are very useful because knowing where partner has shortage can help evaluate how well your hands fit together. I'll try and find an example hand in future weeks.

b) Will EW actually remain silent?

I don't think so! These days a lot of experienced players sitting East would overcall 1♠. Yes you only have 8 points but 1♠ over 1♣ takes a whole level of bidding space away – and it is rare to get into trouble at the 1 level. Here that would dramatically change the auction. South will start with a negative double to show their hearts – but West will probably now pre-empt all the way to 4♠ knowing they have a big fit and plenty of shape. Now North South have no room for reverses, blackout, blackwood or anything! Given how powerful a hand they have North will probably bid 5♣ anyway (but now they do this without the luxury of knowing partner has any clubs at all). South MIGHT now raise to 6♣ but it's not obvious – they are missing a lot of aces. North could have almost the same hand they do have but with the ♠K instead of the ♠A. Now 6♣ has 2 aces missing. The point is the pre-empt to 4♠ takes all their room away and makes North South guess. Some of the time, even if they are world champions, they are going to guess wrong!

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

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The SBC online session timetable

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To book an Introduction to BBO session

Join our [BBO Training session on Zoom](#), we will be able to show you how a tournament table looks like on BBO, how to make alerts, how to find out the meaning of opponent's bids, etc. It's a live session running on Zoom teleconference application, completely free of charge. You can book a session with us by picking a time suitable for you via this [booking form](#).