



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 BBO 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.

#42902 BBO – Wednesday morning session 16th December 2020

16	♠ A98	Dir: W										
	♥ Q62	Vul: E-W										
	♦ KT752											
	♣ 42											
♠ QJ5	♠ T764											
♥ J74	♥ AT953											
♦ AJ	♦ Q6											
♣ QJT63	♣ K5											
9	♠ K32	<table border="1"> <tr><td>♣♦♥♠</td><td>NT</td></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>- 2 - - 1</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>- 2 - - 1</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>1 - 2 1 -</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>1 - 2 1 -</td></tr> </table>	♣♦♥♠	NT	N	- 2 - - 1	S	- 2 - - 1	E	1 - 2 1 -	W	1 - 2 1 -
♣♦♥♠	NT											
N	- 2 - - 1											
S	- 2 - - 1											
E	1 - 2 1 -											
W	1 - 2 1 -											
12 9	♥ K8											
	♦ 9843											
10	♣ A987											

Board 16 last week was a typical competitive part score bidding hand with assorted results. This week I'll discuss some handy competitive bidding tools that could have been used by both sides.

West will start with 1♣ (although the weak NT mentioned in last weeks column could also win on this hand - see advanced section).

Most North's overcalled 1♦ which, these days, is fairly normal given the favourable vulnerability. If you are going to bid, doing so early is often better before the opponents know whose hand it is - even if your bid could be doubled and go for a big penalty it probably won't be. In fact if North doesn't overcall it is unlikely NS will get into the auction at all. East will respond 1♥, West will rebid 1NT and that will probably be it (as it was at one table last week). Neither North or South then has a good way into the auction.

It's very different after a 1♦ overcall. East will still bid 1♥ but now South can get involved and raise diamonds. Most tables last week bid only 2♦. I would have done more. I would have made a **cue-raise**. This is a bid of the opponents suit which shows a good raise of partners suit (around 9 points or better). Here I'd bid 2♣ (maybe even 2♥ - see advanced section). Weaker hands with support just raise partners suit immediately. The advantage of a cue raise is partner can then judge whether to go on or not. Here it's trivial as they have overcalled a very average 9 point hand so they would just rebid diamonds at the lowest level. But imagine they had 15 points (these days a 1 level overcall can be anything from about 8-18 points!) Now the knowledge that partner has 9+ will allow them to bid game.

After 2♦ from South most Wests raised to 2♥. This is not unreasonable but should be done with the knowledge that partner might only have 4 hearts when they bid 1♥. Another popular convention these days is a **support double**. Opener doubles to show 3 card support and raises directly to show 4 card support. Once again this helps responder know the size of their fit (or if they have one at all!) Support doubles apply by OPENER (only) when responder has bid 1M and they apply to bids through to 2 of that major. Had South bid 3♦ a double is typically not support - it's just takeout. If the intervention is itself double, some pairs use redouble as showing 3 card support (e.g. 1♣ P 1♥ (X) XX).

North won't do more over X or 2♥, East will be happy to bid 2♥ or pass it knowing there is a fit and it's back to South again. Now I would push on to 3♦ - I have 4 card support (the cue raise only guaranteed 3), ♥K is probably well placed and my cards are A,K,K (better than Qs and Js). East West may not bid on - it is quite dangerous vul against not. Getting doubled for 1 off and -200 would be a disaster. Both have fairly balanced hands with values in the opponents diamond suit.

2 tables did bid on and played 3♥-1 for NS+100. One NS pair were allowed to play 3♦ scoring +110.

Should 3♦ make? If we look at Deep Finesse, it can be beaten but it's not easy (see advanced section). 3♥ goes off very easily once South leads the normal diamond (the defence get 2♠, 1♥, 1♦ and 1♣).

Key points to note

- Overcalls at the 1 level these days are wide ranging - but can be the only way your side will get into a competitive auction. Don't be scared to get in there!
- Cue raises of partners overcalls are a valuable tool - they allow you to distinguish good raises from weak raises so partner (with one of those wide ranging 1 level overcalls!) can better judge whether to look for game.
- In competitive auctions where opener starts with 1m, responder bids 1M, and the next hand bids something, support doubles are a useful method by opener to distinguish between hands with 3 card support and 4 card support.
- Be wary of pushing too much vulnerable at matchpoints - getting doubled for -200 is usually disastrous!
- Covering honours is only right if there is a chance of promoting cards in your, or your partner's, hand (see advanced section).

More advanced

Observe again the weak NT's effectiveness. If west opens it (12-14), neither North or South can easily bid. East can stayman and, over the 2♦ response, bid 2♥ to show 45 in the majors and a weak hand. That will probably end the auction which should result in EW+110. NS just don't find their diamond fit.

Cue raises can get quite detailed for pairs willing to discuss a lot of situations. Here there are two available because the opponents have bid 2 suits. One (2♣) doesn't commit us beyond the 2 level, the other (2♥) commits us to 3♦. Some pairs decide to play both as diamond raises and have one better than the other. Others make 2H the only cue raise and play 2♣ as natural (because 1♣ openings can so often be only 2 these days). Some pairs use 2NT in competitive auctions as raises too - particularly of major suit overcalls. There are lots of possible methods for those willing to invest the time to research and discuss them. As usual doing so is a trade off. You may have some more detailed bidding tools available to you - but you both need to remember them!!

When East plays hearts a diamond lead will fairly quickly scupper the contract as already mentioned. In fact East is at some risk of going 2 off. They need to take two heart finesses to make 4♥ tricks - but they only have one obvious entry (♦A). Assuming the defence start with 2 rounds of diamonds, East will start with a losing ♥ finesse (they should try ♥J from dummy to try and tempt North to cover - then they could use the ♥109 from hand to drive out ♥K). Why should North not cover? Because they know their partner is short. The ONLY purpose of covering is to promote cards in either yours or your partner's hand. But partner has at most 2♥ and your next best is the 6. Therefore covering cannot gain. In fact it could be disastrous if partner has singleton K! When South win the ♥K they can only lead a spade safely at that point (a heart takes the 2nd finesse, a club allows a 2nd entry to dummy). Because spades are 3-3 the defence cannot stop East reaching dummy to take that 2nd heart finesse. They will end up with 2♠, 4♥, 1♦ and 1♣ for 8 tricks. If they bash down the ♥A though they will lose 2♥ and go 2 off for the dreaded -200.

What about NS's 3♦ contract? On the face of it there seems to only be a loser in each suit and, in practice, that's probably what will happen. To beat it East needs to lead ♣K. Whether declarer ducks and wins a 2nd club or wins immediately doesn't matter. West jumps up with the ♦A and plays winning clubs. This will promote a trump trick for East. Try it - declarer can ruff low and East will overruff with the Q or they can ruff with the K in which case the Q is the highest trump left. Declarer's only other option is to discard losers instead of ruffing but that's only effective for 1 spade. After that West just plays more top ♣s. The defence will score ♥A, 2♦ and 2♣ (or 1♠ and 1♣ if declarer doesn't discard their spade loser).

One final advanced matchpoints consideration. If NS think they are making 3♦ (which South should do as they are holding a nice hand) they should consider doubling 3H. Taking it 1 off for +100 won't score enough if they are making +110. If they are unlucky or misdefend and let 3Hx make they will get a bottom score (-730). But it may not be much worse than -140 would have been anyway! That's the big difference betweenimps and matchpoints. Atimps -730 is a calamity and you wouldn't dream of risking it by doubling. At matchpoints doubling gives you the chance to convert a below average score (-140 or +100) to a top (+200). Even when it goes wrong it's just one board and you can make it up on the very next one as they are all worth the same!

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

RED Masterpoints for ALL our online BBO sessions during the holiday break

The Sydney Bridge Centre (vABF2006) is going to give out RED masterpoints in all the BBO sessions during the holiday break from 21st December to 3rd January (inclusive).

To join the SBC online sessions on BBO

Please follow this [Step by Step Guideline](#) to join the Sydney Bridge Centre duplicate session on BBO.

The SBC online session timetable

We have morning sessions on Monday and Wednesday, and afternoon session on Monday, Thursday and Saturday. Morning session starts at 10.15am, and afternoon session starts at 1.45pm. Please find our [session timetable](#) on our website.

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](#).