



## 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.

## #57683 BBO – Wednesday morning session 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021

7	♠ A98	<i>Dir: S</i>																														
	♥ KQ3	<i>Vul: Both</i>																														
	♦ J52																															
	♣ AQT2																															
♠ K63	♠ QJ52																															
♥ T86	♥ 954																															
♦ Q864	♦ 7																															
♣ 986	♣ KJ754																															
16	♠ T74	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>♣</td> <td>♦</td> <td>♥</td> <td>♠</td> <td>NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	4	4	3	3	S	2	4	4	3	3	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-
	♣		♦	♥	♠	NT																										
N	2		4	4	3	3																										
S	2		4	4	3	3																										
E	-	-	-	-	-																											
W	-	-	-	-	-																											
5	♥ AJ72																															
7	♦ AKT93																															
12	♣ 3																															

Board 7 contained some surprising results last week. Despite holding a combined 28 points, only one NS pair reached game! Yet not one of them had a contested auction. Let's see what went wrong.

South has a normal 1♦ opening but North doesn't have a completely obvious response. The pair who bid game solved the problem by simply bidding 3NT at this point. Certainly reasonable – my only concern would be that I am slightly too strong. 3NT normally shows about 13-15 balanced (with no major) here and this time I have quite a good 16 with 3 card diamond support. If partner has a better than minimum hand with the right shape, 6♣, 6♦ or 6NT could still be options. Against that, the 4333 shape isn't so nice and 3NT gives very little

information away in the bidding. A close decision.

Personally I would bid 2♣ which gives me a chance to find out more about what partner has. 2♣ normally shows 10+ points (see advanced section for "2 over one" implications) but doesn't have to be more than a 4 card suit. South should now rebid 2♦. They are not strong enough to force to game with only 12 points opposite what might be 10. Remember 2♥ is a "reverse" usually showing at least 14 points here (would be at least 16 if partner had responded at the 1 level) because we are forcing partner to go back to our first suit at the 3 level.

After 2♦, North can bid 3NT secure in the knowledge that slam is now unlikely since partner could only rebid at a minimum level.

At one table after 1♦-2♣-2♦ North bid 2NT and South passed it (as I would have done). 2NT is only invitational in that auction (remember you have only shown 10+ points when you bid 2♣ and partner has only shown a minimum opening). North is the one who knows the partnership belongs in game – they have 16 points opposite partner's opening.

At another table South did bid 2♥ and North continued with fourth suit forcing 2♠ – but South passed! Looks like an accident but it ended up scoring 9 tricks for +140 and an undeserved second top!

The last table responded 1NT as North. This also looks like an accident (did North think they were opening 1NT perhaps?) 1NT normally only shows 5-9 points here.

Let's consider the play in 3NT. After 1♦ – 3NT East not unreasonably led their 4<sup>th</sup> highest club. This ran to declarer's 10 and, after losing the diamond finesse (see advanced section for a further note on how to play the diamond suit), this meant declarer would normally have 11 tricks (1♠, 4♥, 4♦ and 2♣) – in fact they ended up with 12 after East had a discarding accident.

After the auction 1♦-2♣-2♦-3NT East should be warned off the club lead and will probably lead a spade instead. This works better for the defence and will most likely hold declarer to 10 tricks. How should the play go after a low spade lead? Declarer should duck West's ♠K at trick 1 and also duck a spade continuation (otherwise the defence

will score 3 spades when they get in with ♦Q and hold declarer to 9 tricks). After winning the ♠A on the 3<sup>rd</sup> round when declarer loses to the ♦Q West has no more spades and will probably return a club. At this point declarer has lost 3 tricks and now has the rest (1♠, 4♥, 4♦ and 1♣).

This is an example where the quick 3NT bid as North works out better than the more subtle 2♣ bid because it doesn't give away as much information. Bidding is often a trade-off between exploring further and giving away information.

Note that Deep Finesse can limit declarer to 9 tricks – see advanced section for how.

### *Key points to note*

- As soon as your partner opens the bidding, make a mental judgement whether your hand is weak (0-9), invitational (10-12) or game forcing (13+).
- Reverses (bids that require partner to return to your first suit at the 3 level) need to have at least 14 points opposite a 2 level response and at least 16 points opposite a 1 level response.
- Bidding is sometimes a tradeoff between making more bids to explore for the best game or a slam (but give more information away to the defenders) or making fewer bids that risk missing the best contract (but give little information away).
- Sometimes a suit can be played to cater for small extra chances. Most of the time it makes no difference but occasionally it can be worth a lot (see advanced section)!

### *More advanced*

If North-South are playing a “2 over one” method where a 2 level response is game forcing, the inferences in the auction change a fair bit. Firstly South may be able to bid 2♥ without showing the extra values they normally need for a reverse (this depends on partnership agreement). Secondly North can now bid 2NT on the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the auction knowing it is forcing (the partnership was committed to game when North bid 2♣). This allows more room to explore if need be.

How should declarer play the diamond suit on this hand? It is normal to take the finesse against the ♦Q (losing today). But it is possible to take one extra precaution. Cash the ♦A in the South hand first. Then cross back to the HK and now take the diamond finesse. It makes no difference today (and won't a lot of the time) but occasionally West will have a singleton ♦Q and starting with the ♦A scores 5 diamond tricks instead of 4! There is no cost to doing this here because there are enough entries between the two hands and North has 3 diamonds so if, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> round, West had shown out, North can still finesse again and pick up East's Qxxx (had North only started with Jx in diamonds it is better to just run the J on the first round as this picks up Qxxx with East which cashing the A and then being able to finesse only once doesn't do – and Qxxx onside happens 4 times as often as singleton Q offside!)

Finally how can declarer be held to 9 tricks? After a spade lead to the K ducked, instead of continuing spades (which looks natural) West must switch to a club. Declarer needs to finesse (if they take the A, when West gets in with the ♦Q, they can play a 2<sup>nd</sup> club and East scores 2 more clubs to give the defence 1♦, 1♠ and 2♣). Once East wins the club finesse they in turn revert back to ♠Q which declarer has to duck again to cut off the 4<sup>th</sup> spade. This time the defence score 1♦, 2♠ and 1♣.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

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## **The Sydney Bridge Centre is now running F2F club sessions AND online sessions on BBO**

Yes, we have reopened on Goulburn Street only. Rozelle and Henley remain closed for the time being. We are now running F2F sessions in the City AND also online sessions on BBO. Please find our full session timetable on our website:

<https://www.sydneybridgecentre.com/sbc-sessions/>

**For Face-to-Face sessions:**

All are welcome but due to Covid restrictions the numbers are limited. It is essential that you pre-book for these sessions via this [F2F Session Booking Form](#). Walk-ins are welcome for sessions which are not fully booked.

Normal table money fee.

**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.