



## 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.

### #57486 BBO – Saturday ARVO session 12<sup>th</sup> June 2021

1	♠ J109	<i>Dir: N</i>
	♥ K53	<i>Vul: None</i>
	♦ AQ10653	
	♣ 4	
♠ 872	♠ 4	
♥ 8	♥ AJ9764	
♦ J4	♦ 98	
♣ Q1087532	♣ AKJ9	
	♠ AKQ653	♣♦♥♠NT
10	♥ Q102	N - 3 - 3 -
3	♦ K72	S - 3 - 3 -
14	♣ 6	E 4 - 2 - -
		W 4 - 2 - -

This week when I started looking through the boards I didn't get very far! Board 1 saw every table playing in 4♠ which can go off but made 10 or 11 tricks every time. Let's see what happened and how the defence could have got it right.

Starting with the auction some Norths opened the bidding (a couple with 1♦, most with 2♦) and others passed. These days I would open 1♦ despite only holding 10 points. I have a good 6 card suit which is indicating a good lead and I have shape.

East has an easy 1♥ overall (or 1♥ opening if North passed) and South will bid spades (see advanced section for more on bidding after 1♦ 1♥ in this situation). North may choose to raise spades but, even if they bid or rebid their diamonds, South will force to game and find the spade support leading to the normal 4♠ contract.

West will lead their singleton heart and the spotlight is on East. Looking at the hand now we can see the winning defence is to win ♥A, give partner a ruff, get back in with ♣K and give partner a 2nd heart ruff. How come this didn't happen at any table?

Almost all tables led ♥8 and East won the ace. But at this point a lot of Easts cashed the ♣A. Those who then continued hearts gave their partner one ruff but that was all so declarer made 10 tricks. Those who switched (usually to a trump) let declarer make 11 tricks because declarer could win, draw trumps and later discard their club loser on the long diamonds in dummy. One table did return a heart but the card led was the ♥9. When West got in they played back a diamond which also allowed declarer to make 11 tricks.

If East does win ♥A and return a heart, which one should they play? There is a common signalling method available when you are giving partner a ruff (or hope you are!) McKenny - also referred to as suit preference. The heart card East uses to give partner the ruff should indicate where their entry is. Here they should lead their LOWEST heart (the 4) to indicate their entry is in the LOWEST side suit (clubs). Had the hand been different and they held the ♦A, they should lead back a high heart (probably the J) to indicate their entry is in the higher side suit. If they return a middling heart it means they either don't have another side suit entry at all or it might be in trumps.

Is it clear for East to return a heart at trick 2? A lot of tables didn't. One reason for this might be a worry that partner had a doubleton heart (in which case we probably do need to cash our club trick before it is later discarded on the long diamonds in dummy). Another might be what card declarer played at trick 1 (see advanced section).

We are sometimes told that with a shortage in dummy the defence should consider playing trumps to stop declarer ruffing losers in dummy. That's true but it's not the only consideration. There are basically only two ways declarer can deal with their losers in a suit contract:

1. Ruff them in dummy (done before drawing trumps)
2. Discard them on winners in dummy (done after drawing trumps)

Defending as East on this hand you can see the North hand as dummy. You might think declarer could be wanting to ruff club losers in dummy (we don't know declarer only has one club as well!) However that long diamond suit in dummy is more dangerous. We can see that even if declarer needs a finesse in diamonds it's going to work. So here it doesn't make sense to play trumps as that will just help declarer draw trumps and run that long diamond suit to discards as many losers as they need. On this hand the minute declarer gains the lead they have 12 tricks available to them in spades and diamonds. So the defence have only one chance to take the first 4!

### Key points to note

- Don't be afraid to open hands with only 10 points if they have a good suit and shape.
- When giving partner a ruff use McKenny suit preference signals to tell partner where your entry is to be able to give them another ruff.
- As declarer try to scramble the defence's signals by concealing small spot cards (see advanced section).
- After 1m 1♥ you can distinguish between hands with 4 and 5 spades (see advanced section)
- When defending if there's a good long suit in dummy we usually need to try and take our tricks quickly before declarer can draw trumps and run that suit discarding all their losers.

### More advanced

In the auction after 1♦ 1♥, many pairs make a distinction between bidding 1♠ and doubling. A common treatment is double shows exactly 4 spades and 1♠ shows at least 5. That helps partner with whether to raise or not. An alternative treatment is to use double as a hand that would like to compete but doesn't have a sensible other bid (i.e. they don't have 4 spades or a heart stop or the ability to raise directly - perhaps a 3424 shape with 4 small hearts and 7-9 points). Then bidding 1S becomes 4+. As usual either method can work on any particular hand.

When giving signals in defence you should be as clear as you can afford. But sometimes declarer can scramble the signals. For example at trick 1 if it goes ♥8, 3, A what card should declarer play? The 10 not the 2! If they play the 10 this leaves open the possibility for East that their partner has led from ♥82. Now a ruff won't work and, looking at the diamonds in dummy, they might decide to just cash the ♣A before all declarer's clubs can be discarded.

If declarer plays the 2, the only hearts missing from East's perspective are Q,10,8. Yes partner MIGHT have led the 8 from that but, at least some of the time, wouldn't they have raised our hearts in the bidding then? So the singleton holding is more likely and you should probably continue hearts.

Assuming East does return the ♥4, declarer should try to confuse again by playing the Q and concealing the 2. When West ruffs he might wonder where the 2 is and consider if his partner was returning the 4 from 42 - i.e. it wasn't his lowest. He shouldn't fall for that, however, because East has plenty of hearts to choose from and West can be sure the 4 is NOT his highest, probably isn't a middling one, and MIGHT be his lowest. But on some other hands just concealing a small spot card like the 2 can be surprisingly effective at muddying the defensive waters! Especially true if East only has 2 or 3 cards in the suit to choose from when leading back.

Doubletons are a lot more common than singletons. You might wonder therefore if East should consider ducking at trick 1 hoping that if West gets in next they can play their 2<sup>nd</sup> heart to us to get their ruff. Why should East win the ♥A at trick 1 and not duck? A few reasons:

1. It might be essential if the lead is a singleton.
2. If the lead is a doubleton it's going to be 82 and not 108 or Q8. So declarer has ♥Q10 and will be able to get 2 tricks even if we play the 9 or J (would be a harder problem if we had AJ10 - now playing the A might give declarer 2 heart tricks they aren't entitled to but on this hand that probably doesn't matter as the long diamonds in dummy are such a threat).
3. The long diamonds in dummy are a large threat. So when playing matchpoints it might be critical to take what tricks we can quickly!
4. We have another entry so it's not like it's critical to keep communication with partner's hand (if they win a trick that's our 2<sup>nd</sup> and a club to us followed by a heart ruff will still beat the contract; if they don't win

another trick we weren't going to beat the contract anyway!) If we didn't have the club entry we might be more inclined to duck at trick 1 to allow partner to reach our hand when (if) they get in again.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

## The SBC Christmas In July Congress – Pairs on 17<sup>th</sup> July, Teams on 18<sup>th</sup> July



Why not? Celebrate Christmas when we can! There will be TWO events for the **SBC Christmas in July Congress** –

- Saturday 17th July – Swiss Pairs
- Sunday 18th July – Swiss Teams

\$50 per player (a Christmas theme lunch included).

Attractive prizes to be announced – Guarantee you won't be disappointed!

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

## 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, 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.

### 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.