



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.

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.

#84417 BBO – Saturday ARVO session 1st May 2021

6	♠ K65432	Dir: E																														
	♥ 65	Vul: E-W																														
	♦ 752																															
	♣ 62																															
♠ AT9	♠ J7																															
♥ J872	♥ AKQ4																															
♦ KT9	♦ AJ86																															
♣ Q85	♣ A94																															
3	♠ Q8	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>♣</td> <td>♦</td> <td>♥</td> <td>♠</td> <td>NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>3</td> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>3</td> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	3	5	5	2	5	W	3	5	5	2	5
	♣		♦	♥	♠	NT																										
N	-		-	-	-	-																										
S	-		-	-	-	-																										
E	3	5	5	2	5																											
W	3	5	5	2	5																											
10	♥ T93																															
19	♦ Q43																															
8	♣ KJT73																															

This week I will focus more on declarer play and defence rather than bidding. Board 6 last week saw almost everyone playing in 4♥ by West.

The auction is likely to be quick and simple by EW: 1♦ 1♥ 4♥.

4♥ here frequently shows a big balanced hand (18-19). This is because many pairs play jump bids as splinters to show shortages and a good raise. Hence 4♥ tends to deny a shortage or have a holding like singleton K or Q where splintering can be misleading. Here West is a balanced 10 count so isn't interested in slam but they might have been had their hand been a bit stronger.

Everyone made either 10 or 11 tricks on the hand but the play is worth thinking about. North will probably lead a spade which will go to the Q and A. As declarer we should first consider our losers. Assuming nothing unpleasant happens in trumps, we have one definite spade loser, no hearts, one possible diamond loser if we fail to guess the Q and two possible club losers if the K sits over the Q. So, as usual, we should consider what we can do about those possible losers. Here we have balanced hands that don't have a lot of losers we might want to ruff in dummy so we should start by drawing trumps (which behave nicely here and break 3-2). There is no rush to guess diamonds but what we can (and should) do is play another spade to knock out the K and set up declarer's 9. We can use that to discard a club from dummy - that now means that even if the ♣K did sit over the Q there is only ever one club loser (West's 3rd club would now get ruffed in dummy).

That reduces our losers to at most 3 which makes the contract safe and it's then about finding the ♦Q for an overtrick which will be worth a lot playing pairs.

Of course another good reason for knocking out the ♠K next is that whoever wins it (probably North as they will have led a small one to start with) doesn't necessarily know what suits are safe to lead. So they may help you by underleading the ♣K or leading a diamond themselves. Always remember the defenders cannot see your hand!

There's a way for South to indicate they prefer clubs though (see advanced section). If North does lead a club we duck it to South just in case North is underleading the K. After South wins they probably exit another club and that leaves declarer to try and guess the ♦Q. There is very little to go on on this hand although an advanced declarer can still get more information (see advanced section for how).

Key points to note

- Jump raising partner's 1 major response straight to game shows a strong hand (18-19) with support. It's typically balanced if you play other jump bids as splinters.
- Count your definite and your potential losers as declarer and if there are more than you can afford you need to work out what you can do about them (usually discard them on other winners or trump them).
- Don't rush to guess a key suit - play other suits first. The defence may help you!

- Suit preference signals by defenders can be very valuable (see advanced section)
- Counting the hand's shape and considering the auction can give you clues too (see advanced section).

More advanced

So how can South help North know what to play when they win the ♠K? The answer for advanced defenders comes in the trump suit! As declarer draws three rounds of trumps South follows with the 3, 9 and 10. The order that they play these cards makes no difference to how many trump tricks anyone has - but they can be used to signal. Playing the lowest cards first indicates the lowest suit (clubs here), playing the higher trumps first indicates the higher suit (diamonds).

What else can declarer do after setting up their spade trick and winning the 2nd round of clubs? The answer is count the hand. Counting is an advanced declarer play technique but it can sometimes turn what looks like a guess into a certainty. Here for example when declarer cashes their ♠9 they find South discards. That tells them South only had 2 spades to start with. We had 5 between our two hands so North must have started with the other 6. Similarly if we play a 3rd round of clubs ourselves we will find North discarding. Which means South must have had 5. We also know (if we were watching!) the hearts were 2 with North and 3 with South.

Doing all of that means we know North was 62x2 and South was 23x5. Simple arithmetic therefore tells us that both defenders started with 3 diamonds.

Of course all that requires remembering who has played to what in each suit which is hard work and why this is expert level play. In fact on this hand after doing all that work we are, annoyingly, no better off as all we have found out is that diamonds are definitely 3-3! However if we had discovered one defender had 4 diamonds and the other had 2 then it would be twice as likely the ♦Q was with the defender with 4 and we would finesse against them. That would work a lot more than 50% of the time. This sort of thing is why the expert's finesses seem to win more often than the average player's!

So do we have anything else to go on? Not much. The only other slight clue might come from the auction. Even though neither defender bid we can still consider what they did NOT do just as much as what they DID do. We now know North's hand was Kxxxx xx (Q)xx xx. They were at favourable vulnerability so after 1♦ P 1♥ it's perhaps possible that they might have made a 2♠ weak jump overcall had they held the ♦Q (giving them 5 points) but they almost definitely would not have with just 3 points. So perhaps there's an inference that South has the ♦Q based on that? It's not much to go on but it's better than a blind guess - and it would be right on this hand!

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

Play in the Same League – A special event for Novice players ONLY



The Sydney Bridge Centre is running a **F2F Australia Wide Novice Pairs Event** on Wednesday 26th May at Level 1, 162 Goulburn Street, Sydney. A no-fear morning session from 10am – about 1.15pm. **ONLY players with less than 100 masterpoints** will be accepted in this competition. Refreshment included.

Your results will be compared to other participating players who are of similar level in the whole country – a much better indicator to see where you are in the bridge journey! ALL participants will be given a booklet of hand analysis after the session. An invaluable and meaningful prize for the winners – a **Complimentary SBC Workshop by Will Jenner-O'Shea** of your choice.

Please refer to our website for details and [enter online](#).

Players with more than 100 masterpoints are welcome to join our normal Open duplicate on the side.

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.