



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.

#98279 BBO – Saturday ARVO session 5th June 2021

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		♥ QT6432																										
		♦ AJ43																										
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♠ AQ965		♠ J43																										
♥ J7		♥ AK98																										
♦ 8		♦ KQ76																										
♣ QT873		♣ 94																										
12	♠ K872	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>♣</td> <td>♦</td> <td>♥</td> <td>NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </table>			♣	♦	♥	NT	N	-	1	-	-	S	-	1	-	-	E	2	-	1	3	W	2	-	1	3
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Board 10 last week saw most of the field playing in a spade contract East West although several pairs were too high. The auction started the same at every table 1♦-P-1♠-2♥, all of which is pretty normal.

At this point things varied. Several Easts made a support double. I have discussed this in a previous column but it's a bid where partner has responded 1 of a major and the opponents have overcalled below your 2 major level. Double is used to show 3 card support and an immediate raise guarantees 4 card support. This can be useful to diagnose the level of fit you have (if any!) However it can also cause you to miss out on a juicy penalty (see advanced

section)!

After such a double West has a fairly easy 2♠ bid for several reasons:

- They now know there is an 8 card fit but not a 9 card fit (remember 9 card fits are hugely more powerful)
- They have a singleton in partner's first bid suit
- Despite their 5♠ shape they still only have 9 points and partner doesn't have to be any more than minimum (besides, if they are better than minimum, they will bid again anyway)

Even though some pairs reached as much as 4♠, I think 2♠ should probably end the auction. North has some shape but their heart suit isn't great quality and 1♦ was opened on their left which downgrades the value of their ♦AJ. So they shouldn't bid any more. East has a minimum 13 points and a lot of values in the opponent's heart suit so should not be raising any further either.

Some Easts chose to raise directly to 2♠ over 2♥. Reasonable if you are not playing support doubles but it could be a 4-3 fit. I think pass is a better option – see advanced section.

If West is playing in spades (whether 2♠, 3♠ or 4♠) North should probably lead their trump. A singleton trump isn't usually a good choice (it often helps declarer pick up partner's trump honour that they might otherwise have had to guess) but on this hand it's probably the least bad option.

Trick 1 will probably go ♠10JKA, or possibly ♠1032Q. What should West do at trick 2? I would lead my singleton diamond. Firstly North doesn't know I have a singleton so might duck, secondly even if he takes it, that sets my KQ up as 2 more tricks. Either way declarer is gaining something! I lead it early on like this because if the A is taken I need an entry to dummy to get to the ♦KQ – so I want to leave the heart there.

When declarer led a diamond most Norths took the ♦A and played a heart. Every declarer won this in dummy. They then continued trumps and, after finding out the bad news, continued a 2nd heart which South ruffed. Depending on what had happened in trumps earlier, this either left South with ♠K (declarer having A65 and dummy J) or South with ♠8 (declarer having Q65 and dummy 4).

Every South at this point led a club. But better defence is to exit your last trump removing the 3rd trump from dummy. Here that traps declarer in hand as they don't have a 2nd diamond to get to dummy with but even if they did it is still the right defence. See advanced section for more on this.

A couple of Norths led a heart at trick 1. Both declarers won in dummy but I'd have been very tempted to run it round to my hand. North is vulnerable and they have overcalled 2♥. Are they really likely to have done this on a suit missing AKQJ987? I don't think so! Having won in dummy declarer led the ♠J. Should South cover this? No. Even though it might later promote the 87 there is a bigger risk here – partner might have singleton Q or even singleton A!

Later in the play the defence usually scored 2 or 3 club tricks. Most declarers ended up making 7 or 8 tricks.

The outlier result was 3♥ by North going 4 off. The defence was ruthless, spade to the Q, diamond switch. Declarer won and tried ♥Q but East could win ♥K, cash ♦KQ and give their partner a ruff. That's 5 tricks for the defence already and East still has A98 of trumps which were worth 3 more tricks. It made no difference to the matchpoints but EW should be doubling this – see advanced section.

Key points to note

- If you choose to play support doubles they apply after your partner has responded 1M and the opponents have overcalled in front of you below 2M. Double shows exactly 3 card support for partner and bidding the major directly shows 4 card support.
- Shortages in partner's first suit and lots of points in the opponent's suit are both poor features for taking lots of tricks and hands with these should generally be downgraded.
- Leading singletons towards KQ holdings gives a defender with the A a problem – they might lose their A if they don't take it but if they do take it, declarer now has 2 more tricks set up.
- Cover honours to promote tricks in your or your partner's hand – but be very careful when you have length and might crash a short honour in partner's hand.
- Don't be afraid to re-open with a double if you are happy for partner to pass for penalties (see advanced section).

More advanced

Let's consider the point where the play went heart lead won in dummy, ♠J holding, S to the 9, diamond (north taking the Ace), 2nd heart ruffed by South. Why should South exit their last trump?

At that point South knows declarer has 5 spades and 2 hearts. So they have 6 cards in diamonds and clubs but we don't know exactly how many in each. If they only had 1 diamond, they have 5 clubs and a trump exit will cut dummy off totally. If they have a 2nd diamond, they have 4 clubs. Yes they can now get to dummy with a diamond to discard one club but they are probably still going to lose 3 of them.

We are really just looking at the principle of leading trumps to reduce ruffs in dummy but at a later, perhaps less obvious, point in the hand. The risk of NOT exiting our last trump but playing clubs instead is allowing declarer to score a club ruff in dummy AND take at least one discard on the diamonds. Now they might only lose 2 club tricks. North is probably going to win the club switch but we know they can't play any more trumps.

Returning to the auction after 1♦ P 1♠ 2♥ East might decide they would like to try defending. In which case they should pass over 2♥ (smoothly so as to not give partner an ethical dilemma). Should West re-open with a takeout double? I think so. They have a 5th spade and a good club suit so the only bid from partner that will cause us a problem is 3♦. My rule of thumb here tends to be to ask myself the question "if we'd been playing penalty doubles and partner had made one, would I have left it in?" If the answer to that is yes, then I tend to re-open with the double to give partner the chance to pass. Here partner should be extremely tempted to pass:

- a) They have 3 virtually certain trump tricks
- b) They have an easy spade lead that hopefully will start forcing declarer
- c) The opponents are vulnerable so if our side can't make game even 1 off doubled will be a great result

As we saw on the occasion where North did unwisely bid hearts a 2nd time, 3♥ went 4 off. So even 2♥ will be going 3 off which is a potential 800!

What if West doesn't have so many clubs? Should they still double? Yes because now they will have more diamonds or more spades. So if partner does bid clubs, we can just return to diamonds or repeat our own spades. Hence we don't always have to have a "perfect" takeout double shape for these re-opening doubles – we are merely giving partner the chance to take a penalty first. If they don't, we can still bid on.

One final point about doubling. One auction went 1♦ P 1♠ 2♥, 2♠ P P 3♥. At this point a double from East should be penalties. The primary purpose of takeout doubles is to help our side find a fit. We have already done that (spades). We have also concluded we are not going to play in game (we passed 2♠). Therefore we don't need double to mean anything else – it should be blood! And on this hand it would have been a lot (1,100)!

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

Queen's Birthday BBO Pairs on Monday 14th June



Because of online games, there is a fear that Face-to-face club sessions may disappear. We believe that there is value for our players in running both! We invite you to join us to this experiment on **Queen's Birthday Monday on 14th June**. Both our BBO session (10.15am start) and our Face-to-Face club session (10.00am start) will issue **RED** masterpoints!

- **RED** 14th June – BBO Monday morning, 10.15am – 12.30pm
- **RED** 14th June – F2F Monday morning, 10.00am – 1.15pm

Because of time difference, they will play different hands.

Normal table money fee. Visitors and walk in are welcome.

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.