



## Tuesday Night Tips The Sydney Bridge Centre mini lesson

If you have joined our F2F session on Tuesday night, you probably already know the host Martin Clear. He is a big fan of the evening game because of his daytime job, and has been leading the group for bridge discussion after the session. This “discussion” will now continue online - Each week Martin will play in the field and pick an interesting hand from the Tuesday night BBO session. Join your bridge buddy for a game on Tuesday night (7.15pm start)!

### The Pub Rule

#8762 BBO – Tuesday Night 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021

15		N		W		N		E		S	
♠ A8		♠ A8		P 2♣ 2♦ 2♥		P 2NT P 3NT		P P P		1♠	
♥ 73		♥ 73		P 2NT P 3NT		P P P					
♦ Q72		♦ Q72									
♣ AJ10632		♣ AJ10632									
W		E									
♠ 642		♠ J73									
♥ KJ82		♥ 1094									
♦ 96		♦ AJ10854									
♣ 9754		♣ Q									
S		S									
♠ KQ1095		♠ KQ1095									
♥ AQ65		♥ AQ65									
♦ K3		♦ K3									
♣ K8		♣ K8									
										3NT N NS: 0 EW: 0	

I am going to take a very small incident in a hand played in the Sydney Bridge Centre & Friends competition on BBO on Tuesday Night 5th October, and expound a general principle from it that I think is very important for intermediate bridge players. We will also look at a broader principle of playing into the safe hand. On Board 15, there was a standard 3NT contract that everyone bid to, and which everyone made. Happy days! But this is Pairs, and that means some declarers were rather disappointed at their 21.4% score for making 10 tricks, and even 57% for 11 tricks and 79% for 12 tricks should have left them looking for more. In Pairs, you have to be greedy.

The bidding started with 1♠ by South and 2♣ by North. At most tables East then found a 2♦ overcall. Some people feel a 2-level overcall requires a stronger hand than this, but I would recommend in Pairs that you think about your suit quality rather than your hand quality when you are not going to be winning the auction. With this hand, you definitely want your partner to lead diamonds whenever possible, so I'd bid. With a 10-count and J98642 of diamonds, I wouldn't bid, where many - especially those who play IMPs more than Pairs - would. There are generally three possible reasons for any overcall:

1. to try to win the contract;
2. to interfere with the opponents' bidding; and
3. to suggest a lead to partner. In Pairs, the last of these is the most important, which is why it's crucial to come in on suits that need to be led towards instead of away from.

Whether East bids 2♦ or not, South should bid 2♥ to show the 5-4 shape. In some systems, perhaps partner's 2♣ bid denied having 4 hearts, but I find this forcing and descriptive bid simple and obvious. North then bids 2N, raised to 3N by South. Some Norths went for 3N directly themselves.

The opening lead by East was mostly the ♦J, the normal lead from this sequence of cards. Declarer has Kx in one hand and Qxx in the other, and the most likely play to get two stoppers is to go up with the ♦K. ♦K wins and now declarer has a standard situation where he can play into the safe hand. Taking a finesse into East leaves East unable to safely attack the protected QD. If a trick had been lost to West, a diamond through the ♦Q would have given the defenders 5 diamond tricks.

Consequently all declarers took the club finesse the safe way. However at least one played the 8 of clubs at trick 2 to the lone ♣Q at trick 2. It is important to know your suit combinations: when there is a suit you wish to take a finesse in, to take the maximum tricks, you should routinely cash other winners in the suit before taking the finesse. Here with Kx opposite AJTxxx, you should cash the King before playing toward your Ace-Jack finesse combination. In this case, the ♣Q drops singleton off-side and you avoid losing a trick to it. Now you have six club tricks, a diamond and a heart and three spades making 11, and you'll get 13 more than half the time when the ♠J is not in a 4-card or longer spade holding.

Now I do have to tell you there are some cases when you DO have to vary from this play. There are hand where you might need an entry later after finding if the finesse works, for instance. But here is where I would like to introduce you to a general principle for intermediate players: never vary from the normal card combination line just because you are vaguely aware that sometimes it is necessary; vary from the normal card combination line ONLY when you will be able to explain in the pub afterwards precisely why you did it. I call this The Pub Rule, and it is very important in preventing declarers 'running from shadows': inventing scenarios where things could go wrong.

On this hand the ♠J does drop tripleton, and everyone should have made 13 tricks after the normal diamond lead. One declarer however managed a fairly spectacular 'UNsafety play'. Knowing that East was the danger hand, once the ♣K had dropped the ♣Q, he finessed the S8! This would give him 13 tricks if ♠J had been with West, and he reasoned that if East won, the diamonds could not be attacked. The finesse duly lost to East, but now declarer suddenly realised there was a greater danger: a heart back would have left him with the ugly options of taking the heart finesse into the danger hand which would have left him with a total of 6 tricks when a subsequent diamond ripped through ♦Q; or rising with ♥A. But now the spade suit was blocked, and he'd only be able to get one spade, one heart, one diamond and 6 clubs, for 9 tricks (and a 0% score)... rather disappointing when prior to the 'safety play', he had 11 or 13 winners! East however failed to find the heart continuation, and ♦A-and-another allowed declarer 11 tricks.

The Pub Rule has a lot of other applications, and is just as common in defence. "Why did you hold up your winner, partner?" comes up fairly often. Players know that holding up is sometimes good, so they do it in situations where it is not good. Sometimes players play 'false cards', for instance winning with a higher card than necessary when defending. I would strongly recommend you only do this when you will be able to explain why in the pub afterwards. So often, the only one fooled by such false cards is your partner, not the declarer ... and then it might need to be YOU buying the drinks in the pub.

Martin Clear (SBC Tuesday Night host)

## The greatest learning experience – The Online Teams of Three



A fun event for players to learn directly from an advanced player in a relaxed environment. We invited these advanced players based on the recommendation of the NSWBA Event Committee to play Captains, who will take turn to partner with each team member throughout the day. You are not only learning from the Captain of your own team, you will also learn from other Captains when they are your opponents!

The [NSWBA Online Teams of Three](#) will be held on RealBridge, an online bridge program with built-in video support, so your Captain can give you "face-to-face" feedback.

**RED masterpoints awarded.** \$30 per player to be paid in advance via our online payment portal. We intend to run 3 separate fields for Novice, Restricted and Open players, so we can assign the most appropriate Captain to your categories. Please nominate the field you would like to compete in.

[Enter in advance](#) required on the NSWBA website. There will definitely be 3 separate fields for Novice, Restricted and Open players, so you can compete in your own league. Please nominate the field you would like to compete in.

## The Sydney Bridge Centre online sessions on BBO

Our clubroom on Goulburn Street is temporary closed under the current restriction. We are running regular club session online on BBO for the moment and will resume our F2F sessions once we can. Please keep an eye on our [website](#) for the latest announcement.

**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.

24 boards, BB\$4 per person per game.