



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.

#54048 BBO – Saturday ARVO session 24th July 2021

16	♠ 7642	Dir: W Vul: E-W																														
	♥ Q832																															
	♦ A753																															
	♣ 9																															
♠ QJ8	♠ KT53																															
♥ J654	♥ A9																															
♦ QJ42	♦ KT9																															
♣ 43	♣ AT62																															
6	♠ A9	<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>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	-	1	-	-	S	2	-	1	-	-	E	-	1	-	2	1	W	-	1	-	2	-
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13	♣ KQJ875																															

Last week board 16 saw South faced with what to do after their own bid has been opened on their right! With West as dealer the typical auction started P 1♣. What should South do?

Usually pass. Although these days a lot of people open 1♣ with only 2+, the normal treatment of bidding 2♣ over it is still artificial (usually showing 55+ in the majors). If you DO have the agreement that 2♣ is natural then it's fine to bid it - but that's fairly unusual. Otherwise your only choice is to pass. You cannot double because that is takeout of clubs! How will you feel if partner bids 2♠ or something? The way to show you have this hand is to pass initially and THEN bid clubs later if you can. Here most Souths were able to.

After a pass from South, West's response should be 1♥ not 1♦. This is because we may only get one chance to bid our hearts. If partner rebids 1NT (11-14) we are not strong enough to bid again. But if he can do this with any balanced hand then he might also have hearts – hence we need to bid them now to find that fit (see advanced section for more).

That brings us back to East's rebid. Many players bid 1♠ which is OK but some bid 1NT (again see advanced section). Over 1♠ or 1NT, South should NOW bid 2♣ - as many players did at the table. This bid is natural now, having passed over 1♣ the first time. Their hand is a perfectly reasonable one with good clubs. Neither West or North can bid (even though North doesn't like 2♣, they are too weak to move anywhere – they might just make things worse). So it's back to East who should simply pass it out – they aren't strong enough to do more and should be happy to defend with no guarantee they can make anything.

One pair found a more "interesting" route to a 2♣ contract. South overcalled 1NT to start with. This normally shows 15-17 points so they are a bit light but I have seen plenty worse bids. North now, perfectly reasonably, tried 2♣ stayman hoping to find a major fit. And South passed! I imagine North had a heart attack momentarily but would have found dummy better than he might have been fearing! They made 9 tricks for a 76% score so all was well!

Club contacts were played several times and typically made 7, 8 or 9 tricks.

What to lead as West? I would choose ♠Q. Heart could easily cost a trick, diamonds are similar to spades but with more of them we have less chance of setting up tricks, a trump could easily pick up an honour in partner's hand. A spade is even more attractive if partner did rebid 1♠. Declarer will probably win and play clubs. East wins and plays more spades forcing South to ruff. When they continue trying to draw trumps they discover East has a 2nd trump trick. With one certain diamond loser the contract depends on only losing 1 heart trick. Most declarers played a heart to the Q and A though which led to 2 heart losers and only 7 tricks in total. See advanced section for how declarer might tackle hearts.

A few tables played no-trumps East West. If South chose not to overcall 2♣ on the 2nd round, West rebid 1NT over 1♠ which is fine. A couple of East Wests bid 2NT over 2♣. I wouldn't have risked this myself but they did well, ending with as many as 9 tricks (3♠, 1♥, 3♦, 2♣). It should make less (see advanced section for the defence).

Key points to note

- If your main suit is opened on your right, normally you need to pass on the 1st round and then bid the suit naturally on the next round if possible.
- Some pairs do play that bidding 2♣ over 1♣ is natural but not many – it usually shows both majors. Definitely needs agreeing with your partner!
- Prefer to respond 1 of a major ahead of 1♦ with a weak hand over 1♣ – it may be your only chance to bid.
- Rebidding 1NT with any balanced hand (11-14) has several advantages.
- Delay the play in a key suit as long as you can to find out as much information as possible (see advanced section).

More advanced

I have discussed the concept of rebidding 1NT with any balanced hand in previous columns (e.g. 17 February). The main benefit is the inference available to your partner when you DON'T rebid 1NT – i.e. that you then have an unbalanced hand (so a 1♠ rebid from East would then show either 4144 or at least 5 clubs and 4 spades). With stronger hands West will be able to continue over 1NT with various "checkback" methods to find a fit in an unbid major. With weaker hands, however, it does make it even more important to respond in the major first. Imagine West's majors were swapped over. If they responded 1♦ instead of 1♠ and East rebids 1NT then the spade fit is missed. Likewise imagine East's majors were swapped over and they would rebid 1NT over 1♦ and miss the heart fit.

Assuming the play in clubs has gone ♠Q to the A, ♣K to the A, 2 more rounds of spades, south ruffing and then playing ♣QJ, what now? We need to play the hearts for one loser. If West has responded 1♥ in the auction we know East has at most 2 hearts. One choice is to play East for Ax, cross to ♦A, lead a heart to the K and duck one on the way back (the winning play here). Another is to play East for Jx and lead a heart to the Q from hand or to the 10 from dummy.

Can we tell which? No. We know the spade and club honour positions. But that isn't enough – West could have QJx Axxx Jxxx xx and East K10xx Jx KQx A10xx and they'd still probably have bid and played the same way.

Can we find more out? Yes! Play another trump to knock out East's 10. The defence will surely play the 4th spade to try and force our last trump. Indeed, if we do ruff we can no longer afford to cross to the ♦A as that would set up 3 diamonds for the defence before we have knocked out ♥A. But just don't ruff. Discard the diamond loser from hand instead! This just swaps losers but has two big benefits:

It will force West to make a 2nd discard which might be revealing. Here it will probably be a reluctant heart as he will likely have already discarded one diamond on ♣J and now won't want to unguard ♦QJ.

It will force East to lead a red suit next – he might try ♥A! But even if it's diamonds the cards both defenders play may give a clue about their honours which will in turn help us decide our play in hearts. After all, surely with my alternate hand above East would now lead ♦K without much pain? If he doesn't do that perhaps prefer to play him for the original hand?

It all comes down to delaying the key suit as long as you can to gather the maximum possible information.

Finally, if East West are playing a weak no-trump East could open that. Many people play 2♣ as something artificial over that so South may not easily be able to bid at all unless they want to risk 3♣. 1NT is then likely to be the final contract which should make.

In fact the defence to no-trumps is quite tough. After a club lead knocks out the A, declarer will play spades or diamonds. The defence then need to switch to hearts. If North gets in with the $\spadesuit A$ they need to lead a low heart through declarer. If declarer wins, South needs to unblock the 10 and if declarer ducks South needs to win $\heartsuit K$ and then play the 10. In both cases they need the 10 out of the way so when they get in with $\spadesuit A$ they can lead the $\heartsuit 7$ to North's 8 and Q. The defence take $1\spadesuit, 3\heartsuit, 1\diamondsuit, 2\clubsuit$. If South gets in first with $\spadesuit A$ they need to switch to the $\heartsuit 10$! This squashes the 9 in East and effectively unblocks, thus also setting up 3 heart tricks. Very hard to find at the table! In reality I am sure they would just set their clubs up. But that gives declarer time to set up more tricks in diamonds before their own $\heartsuit A$ is knocked out.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

RED The SBC Mid-Week Online Swiss Pairs



A congress that is not held during weekends!

The [SBC Mid-Week Online Swiss Pairs](#) is a one-day congress to be held on Wednesday 18th August, 10am start. We will play six 8 boards round with a lunch break in the middle.

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[Enter in advance](#) required on the NSWBA website. We intend to run separate fields for Open and Restricted & Novice players, if number allows. 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.