



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.

#67974 BBO – Saturday ARVO session 11th September 2021

8	♠ J9863	<i>Dir: W</i>																								
	♥ J62	<i>Vul: None</i>																								
	♦ Q																									
	♣ QT52																									
♠ T42	♠ 75																									
♥ AKQ83	♥ T75																									
♦ J63	♦ T542																									
♣ 86	♣ AK94																									
6	♠ AKQ	<table border="1"> <tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>	N	2	1	-	2	-	S	2	1	-	2	-	E	-	-	1	-	1	W	-	-	1	-	1
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S	2		1	-	2	-																				
E	-		-	1	-	1																				
W	-	-	1	-	1																					
10	♥ 94																									
7	♦ AK987																									
17	♣ J73																									

Last week board 8 saw most North-South pairs playing a spade partscore but East West might have scored better had they played in hearts undoubled.

At almost all tables it started with 3 passes to South. One West opened 1♥ but, as discussed recently, I think that’s probably a bit too much in 1st seat with a balanced 10 count. 11 Souths opened 1NT and 7 opened 1♦. The reasons for opening 1♦ would be either that you are not playing a 15-17 1NT or that you are concerned about having no stopper in either hearts or clubs. Where I was playing 15-17 NT I would definitely have opened it despite the concentration into two suits – for the following reasons:

- 1NT is a descriptive bid which puts my partner in charge of the auction (they are now the only one who truly knows whose hand it is).
- Just because I am open in two suits shouldn’t stop me. After all:
 - partner may have stoppers;
 - partner may be about to transfer somewhere else;
 - even if we are left in 1NT they haven’t led our weak suit yet!
- 1NT has a pre-emptive element. 1♦ allows West to overcall 1♥ and on this hand, as we will see later, that could be very significant. It is much riskier to bid over 1NT as you have to do so at the 2 level.
- 1NT avoids rebid problems. Suppose I did open 1♦ and partner responded 1♥. What am I supposed to rebid? 1NT would show 12-14 so I am way too good for that. I really don’t have a sensible rebid at all.

Almost all the 1NT openers saw North transferring to spades and usually the pair landed in 2♠ (see advanced section for a discussion on super-accepts). That’s reasonable all round – it would be risky for West to overcall 2♥ (although it may work well today).

After 1♦ West has a clear 1♥ overcall and normally the auction continued 1♠ 2♥. Usually 1♠ after a 1♥ overcall shows 5 so South could immediately raise spades. Now East West can and should compete to 3♥ for reasons I have discussed before – the love all vulnerability. While in theory 3♥ can be doubled and go two off, in the real world it is unlikely to be doubled and may escape for 1 off anyway.

Against 3♥ North usually led ♦Q (because South had opened 1♦). After what looks like a clear spade switch, South can cash 2 spades and 2 more diamonds. That’s already one off but if South now plays another diamond, North’s ♥J will score a trick for 2 off (West has to ruff high and now the remaining top two trumps cannot draw the J – this is known as a “trump promotion”).

This is where the scoring of the nil vulnerability matters. Even 2 off undoubled is only +100 for North South which is less than the +110 they could have scored themselves in 2♠ (in practice several pairs made +140 and 3 made +170). So the two pairs that did play in 3♥ going off scored very well.

If South plays in 2♠ as happened at most tables, West obviously leads a top heart. If he plays 3 rounds, declarer should end up with 9 tricks (losing 2 hearts and 2 clubs). However if West switches to clubs, he can also score a club ruff and hold South to 8 tricks (see advanced section for how the defence can get this right).

Key points to note

- When you have a hand in your 1NT range, it is almost always right to open it (even if you don't have stoppers in one or more suits) – especially if you don't have a sensible rebid otherwise.
- Super-accepts of transfers by a 1NT bidder usually show 4 card support and a maximum (with the aim of reaching a light game) but there are exceptions and there are different methods used to show super-accepts (see advanced section).
- At nil vulnerability it's worth bidding on because you only lose 50's when you go off and that frequently scores better than letting the opponents make their contract.
- Accurate defence is almost impossible without getting signals from partner (whether count, attitude, or suit preference).

More advanced

If North does transfer to spades after 1NT, should South “super-accept”? A super-accept is a bid other than just completing the transfer which typically shows a maximum and particular interest in the suit – the aim being to allow the pair to reach game where partner has a marginal hand. One common thing is that a super-accept tends to show 4 card support for the transfer suit. This hand could, however, be an exception to that. It is super maximum, has 3 top spades and a good 5 card side suit. I think it's well worth a super-accept. Even then I think North should still settle for 3♠ - their hand is a poor 6 count so there is still a maximum of 23 between the hands.

So what bid(s) do you make to super-accept? There are different schemes – some pairs just play a jump to 3 of the major, some play 2NT, some bid another suit (either showing a source of tricks or a weakness). Personally I find the bids of other suits tend to give too much information away so I prefer one of the first two options. Another scheme uses a jump to 3 of the major showing a MINIMUM with 4 card support (the aim being to block the opponents out from protecting).

Where South hasn't bid the transfer suit, a common method is to play “re-transfers” (so North would bid 3♥ here) so that the strong hand still plays the contract.

What about defending 2♠? A method I like is to lead “A/Q for attitude, K for count” – this allows you to get the signal you want. Here West would lead the ♥K to find out how many East has so that he knows how many rounds to cash. Playing reverse count, East should start with the 10 (make the clearest signal you can afford). On the next heart, East should play the 5 instead of the 7 which is a suit preference signal indicating a preference for clubs. This should help West to switch to clubs and find the ruff.

As a final comment, I am an advocate of the weak NT. It does have many advantages but it's only fair to also consider the disadvantages:

- It can occasionally get doubled and go for a large penalty (most people cite this as the primary downside of the weak NT but I strongly disagree – in the real world this hardly ever happens – all of the points below are actually more important).
- A strong NT hand has to be opened 1 of a suit and this can allow the opponents to overcall more easily (this is what happens on this particular hand).

- A strong NT hand can be harder to show in a competitive auction – if you open 1 minor and the opponents both bid, you can frequently find yourself wanting to bid on the 2nd round because you have a good hand but it's now risky as the level is higher. Playing a strong NT you don't have this problem because you can just pass on the 2nd round with a weak NT hand in a competitive auction.
- You can get left in 1NT when you have a 4-4 major fit that would score better (and which strong NT players will probably find).

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

Repeat on Demand - The SBC Encore! Mid-Week Swiss Pairs



A lot of players really like the idea of a weekday congress and asked us to run it again. If you didn't manage to join our last time, here comes the opportunity!

The [SBC Encore! Mid-Week Swiss Pairs](#) is a one-day congress to be held on Wednesday 29th September, 10am start. We will play six 8 boards round with a lunch break in the middle.

RED masterpoints awarded. BB\$12 per player. Winners (of 3 categories) will receive FREE entry to the NSWBA Online Teams of Three, details will be announced very soon!

[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.