



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.

#73217 BBO – Saturday ARVO session 16th October 2021

6	♠ QJT	Dir: E																														
	♥ 986	Vul: E-W																														
	♦ KJT42																															
	♣ K8																															
♠ A96	♠ 852																															
♥ KT54	♥ AQJ2																															
♦ A75	♦ Q6																															
♣ 954	♣ QJT6																															
10 ♠ K743	<table border="1" style="font-size: 0.8em;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>♣</td> <td>♦</td> <td>♥</td> <td>♠</td> <td>NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	1	-	1	-	S	-	1	-	1	-	E	1	-	2	-	1	W	1	-	2	-	1
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On board 6 last week most of the field played in a heart part-score. But most made 9 tricks rather than the 8 they are meant to (the defence should score 2 spades, 1 diamond and 2 clubs). Let's have a look why.

First the auction. East normally opens 1♣ and West responds 1♥ (although see advanced section for another method). Many Norths overcalled 2♦ at this point. That's pretty risky for several reasons:

- The hand is balanced.
- The ♣Kx isn't looking that good with the suit opened on your left.
- We only have 5 diamonds.
- The hand on our left could still be large – it's opened the bidding so could easily have up to 20 points.

On a bad day 2♦ could easily be doubled and go for a large penalty! Today, however, isn't that bad a day and East will, in practice, raise hearts.

If North has bid 2♦ South might raise to 3♦. West might want to make an invite in hearts now (see advanced section for a way of doing that) but might also content themselves with 3♥ which is then likely to be the final contract.

How should the play go? North should lead the ♠Q – a lead from a sequence of honours in an unbid suit is one of the safest in bridge. South should encourage this. West might duck one round and win the 2nd (it doesn't make much difference). After drawing trumps declarer will play on clubs. Most often this was a low club to the 9 and North's K. At one or two tables declarer had only drawn two rounds of trumps (an error) so, after winning the ♣K North tried another club hoping for a ruff. Alas when South got in, they assumed (reasonably enough) that declarer had drawn all the trumps so they played a diamond through instead. Declarer could now win the ♦A, complete drawing trumps and discard a spade loser on one of dummy's clubs. After getting in with either the 1st or 2nd club the defenders need to continue spades to cash their two tricks. Those are the critical tricks to take. A diamond discard on the 4th round of clubs isn't actually of any use to declarer because they will still lose the ♦K and the 3rd diamond would later have been ruffed in dummy anyway (see advanced section for more discussion on this).

Other ways that 3♥ was allowed to make were:

- Declarer led a low diamond towards the Q and North didn't take the K (it is very dangerous not to rise here knowing there are only 2 diamonds in dummy!)
- North switched to a diamond which allowed the Q to score a trick in dummy (again very dangerous to switch from a suit like that but sometimes, as we will see below, North was not given any choice in the matter!)

At some tables both the ♣A and ♣K had been taken and then the defence cashed their two spade tricks. But North was left on lead after doing so and only had diamonds left. This meant they had to lead the suit away from the K so declarer scored two diamonds without losing any. That in turn meant 9 tricks in total (1 spade, 4 hearts, 2 diamonds, and 2 clubs). South should not have allowed this to happen – they should have overtaken the 3rd round of spades to be on lead with the K. See advanced section for why.

Two tables in fact made 10 tricks when North led a diamond at trick 1 allowing the Q to score, and later the defence took both their clubs before switching to spades so a spade loser was discarded on the 4th round of clubs as well.

Key points to note

- Overcalling on balanced hands with 5 card suits is dangerous (especially if the opponents bidding is still relatively unlimited).
- Leads of an honour sequence in an unbid suit are one of the best and safest in bridge.
- It can be important to distinguish between hands that want to invite to game and hands that just want to compete. Game try doubles can help do that (see advanced section).
- Be wary of leading away from broken honour holdings at any stage – they regularly cost tricks.
- As a defender give thought to whether partner might have a problem on the next trick and whether it may be better for you to be on lead.
- Consider what losers declarer might be threatening to discard – that will help guide which suit the defence may need to play as soon as they can (see advanced section).

More advanced

These days a common method after a 1♣ opening is to play transfer responses. This gives plenty of advantages as both partners can show more hands (including, most usefully, whether opener has 3 or 4 card support). So on this hand West would respond 1♦ showing hearts. If North were to overcall, now East's 2♥ bid would specifically show 4 card support (because they could use a support double to show 3 card support). Without any opposition bidding there are different methods used but a common one is that completion of the transfer (i.e. 1♥) by East shows exactly 3 hearts and a 2♥ bid shows 4 hearts (equivalent to a raise of a natural 1♥ response). This comes in very handy to West as they quickly know the extent of the fit they have.

If there was a competitive auction where South raised North's 2♦ bid to 3♦ this might allow West to make use of another handy competitive bidding tool – a game try double. This is a double of a bid that is immediately below your own 3 major contract. It is not penalty – it shows a hand that is a genuine invite to game in your suit (distinguishing it from 3 of your suit which now shows a hand that just wants to compete without inviting partner to bid more). This only occurs because there is no room left below 3 of your own suit (i.e. here because our suit is hearts and they are bidding diamonds).

Assuming the defence start with the ♠Q lead and North gets in with the ♣K and plays more spades, South should overtake the 3rd round of spades. Why? Because there is nothing to lose. Once they see their partner play the 3rd round of spades, either the spades are 4333 round the table or partner has 4 spades and declarer is ruffing this round. In the 2nd case it doesn't matter what we play. In the 1st case it might be critical – we need to be on lead to play a diamond through for partner. A good defender is always alert to try to protect their partner from being endplayed. It might not make any difference but it doesn't cost to consider the possibility just in case!

In fact if South does overtake and finds themselves on lead with the 3rd round of spades they can relax. Why? Because they can count the shape. They now know declarer has 3 spades. They know declarer has 4 hearts because 3 rounds of trumps have been drawn. That leaves declarer 6 cards in the minors which is the same as the number in dummy. So it doesn't actually matter what the rest of the shape is! Here declarer is 3-3 in the minors but a discard of a diamond on dummy's 4th club isn't of any value. Suppose they were 4-2 in the minors instead. It still doesn't matter. Now they might be able to discard 2 diamonds on clubs but that still leaves declarer with 2 diamonds and a loser.

An important skill as a defender is to identify what losers from declarer might be usefully discarded and what ones can't be. Here the spade losers are the critical ones. Diamonds are relatively short in dummy so it's less of a concern if they are discarded from declarer's hand (a longer diamond card could be ruffed in dummy anyway). So it's essential for the defence to take their spade tricks – the diamond trick isn't going anywhere (unless of course North gets endplayed and is forced to lead one!)

As a final thought, if the defence had not found the spade lead declarer should try a low diamond towards the Q himself. When North has the K there is time to win a spade switch, cash the ♦Q and cross back to hand with a trump to this time discard a spade loser from East on the ♦A. But there is no point trying that once the spade has been led because the defence's spade tricks are already set up.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

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.

We have REOPENED for Face-to-Face bridge on Monday 18th October 2021

For Face-to-Face sessions:

Welcome back! Our clubroom on Goulburn Street has opened from Monday 18th October 2021. We will start with 6 regular sessions on the first week: Monday – Thursday morning, 10am – 1.15pm and Tuesday night 7.15pm – 10.00pm. There will be a separate field for Supervised players on Wednesday morning.

A Bad Hair fun competition will be held on the first week of reopening. A bad hair pair will be picked from each session to win a free game voucher. Each pair is limited to win once.

For BBO sessions:

We will continue to run the 5 regular club session online on BBO. Please check our [session timetable](#) here.

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.