

IRISH BRIDGE Journal

Autumn 2024

Welcome

Welcome along to the Autumn edition of the Irish Bridge Journal. It's nice to be able to report that we've been getting positive feedback of late.



Enda Murphy, Editor

We came in for favourable mention at the CBAI AGM, for one thing. And CEO Dermot O'Brien told me that in course of discussions with the people at Le Bridgeur [a French Bridge publication], they said our Journal was as good as any they'd come across. Affirmation is always welcome, but let me swiftly deflect the praise to where it properly belongs – our stellar panel of contributors and our amazing designer, Sue Power. Anecdotally, the thing I hear most is that the Journal really does have something for everyone – players at all levels.

That is gratifying for sure, because I set myself two principal objectives on becoming Editor two years ago. One was to broaden the appeal to all playing grades. The other was to enhance the gender balance of the contributors and bidding competition panellists, and again there's been substantial progress on that front.

All of which is by way of setting the scene for me to note, with deepest regret, the recent passing of my predecessor as Editor, Úna Walsh. Úna picked up the fallen standard when the Journal's founder, her brother [and noted international] Paddy, passed away far too early.



Irish Bridge Journal Founders Paddy Walsh, and his sister Úna

She kept it going from 1998 to 2022, a true labour of love and a prodigious feat of dedication. As a regular columnist, I found Úna to be gentle, supportive and charming at all times, and I know exactly how privileged I am to have been entrusted with her pride and joy. An appreciation, penned by Gay Keaveney, appears in this issue. May she rest in peace.

What's Inside

Úna Walsh - An Appreciation <i>Gay Keaveney</i>	3
Test Your Declarer Play <i>Tomás Roche</i>	4
Bidding Quiz 8 <i>Bob Pattinson</i>	5
CBAI News <i>Dermot O'Brien</i>	7
Results and upcoming Fixtures	8
Teacher Development Workshop <i>Fran Ronan</i>	9
Getting a Ruff <i>Peter Pigot</i>	11
Camrose Trials 2024 <i>Editor</i>	13
The Regent Bridge Club Centenary Year 2025 <i>Paul Porteous</i>	14
When I was a Boye! <i>Boye Brogeland</i>	15
Junior Bridge <i>Luca Crone</i>	16
Duais an Úachtaráin <i>BJ O'Brien</i>	17
My Bridge Journey Continues <i>Nicola O'Dowd</i>	18
Making My Way <i>Melissa Brady</i>	21
Master Declarer Play <i>Rory Timlin</i>	24
National Mixed Championships <i>Thomas MacCormac</i>	27
Friendly Fridays at the Regent <i>Editor</i>	28
Bric-A-Brock <i>Sally Brock</i>	29
Answers to Test Your Declarer Play <i>Tomás Roche</i>	30
Bidding Quiz 7 - Results <i>Bob Pattinson</i>	32

You make the news!

The Journal wants to hear from your Club!!

Send a photo and caption of a noteworthy event.

Be the next Club to be profiled in our "Club Focus" feature.

Contact editor@cbaie.ie





The World Bridge Games have just concluded in Buenos Aires. Our Open Team did very well to qualify comfortably for the last 16 knockout stages, placing an excellent 5th in their 17-team group. The agonising 3-IMP loss to eventual winners Poland was a tough one to take. Mark Moran and John Carroll excelled themselves by topping the Butler rankings. The team went on to make the final of the Transnational teams, so it was a strong showing for sure.

The Mixed squad were hamstrung by the withdrawal of the strongest pair. They started poorly but rallied late on, and moved up a few places. The Women [also after a late lineup change] finished 24th of 24, a result which can only be deemed unacceptable, and which will [rightly] re-ignite the debate as to whether funding should be contingent upon performance [it should]. The strongest pairing, Kenny-Fitzgerald, did very well to make the Pairs final, contending for a medal for a long time.

In late October, I was invited to deliver a session on "Teams Bridge" at the Teach the Teachers two-day event in Tullamore. There were 60 attendees, and the CBAI HQ team did an excellent job. More on this enlightened initiative in this issue.

Finally, let me wish all readers the very best for the holiday season and for 2025.

Enda Murphy
editor@cbaie.ie



Affordable Live-in Homecare
 Night and/or Daytime Care available
 For less than the Cost of a Nursing Home
 or Private Visiting Care Service
Nationwide Enquiry Line
087 744 0729

Carer Duties:

- ▶ Housekeeping
- ▶ Meal Preparation
- ▶ Companionship
- ▶ Personal Care (if required)
- ▶ Night only care also available
- ▶ Three week trial period
- ▶ Nationwide Service

All our carers are Garda vetted and provided with ongoing training and support.

www.alhomecare.ie

Úna Walsh

An Appreciation

Gay Keaveney



Úna, who can only be described as a Legend in Irish Bridge, died on October 1st 2024.

Úna was born in The Old Malte Bar in High Street in the Centre of Galway. She attended the local Presentation National School, followed by Dominican College Secondary School in Taylor's Hill. She decided not to attend University but went to work in accounts in a local company, although she tried a fleeting visit to UK to train as a nurse. This lasted five days, quite simply because she loved Galway.

Úna, who never played at international trials level, took up the game in the early 1970s. Her younger brother Paddy (David's dad) was one of Ireland's top international players. Paddy had started The Irish Bridge Journal and on his death in 1998, Úna took over Paddy's editorial position. She ran that journal in a manner, in my opinion, that nobody else could come close to matching. Knowing Úna, she left nothing to chance and her accountancy background meant it was always on a sound financial footing. She even proof read every article and would rectify any errors in the submitted articles. When she retired in 2022 the journal went online. She had, in effect, run it for 24 years, driving up and down to Athlone to proof read it and got different writers to provide many articles over those years. Amazing is the only word that you could use to describe what she did, and she received no recompense other than the satisfaction she got from carrying on Paddy's work.

Úna also found time to be on the committee that set up the Galway Bridge Centre. Her day job was accountancy work in Digital and with a group of other bridge players, she set up the committee that raised the funds to set up the Galway Bridge Centre. She became Secretary of that committee which raised in the region of €200,000 or its equivalent in 1983. Her work here was a carbon copy of her Bridge Journal work and she had everything always immaculately presented in the accounts sheets for every AGM. She did that work for approximately 38 years and there was never one controversial complaint made against the committee in all those years.

I also have to mention that she helped organise fund raising tournaments prior to the centre opening. Those were in pre-computer scoring days and can you imagine trying to manually score a 60 table event by hand? Well she was one of those scorers and there would not be one point amiss in the final correct total.

I mentioned earlier how Úna never played at the top level but she certainly had the ability, except she had so many other things being organised in her brain. She was so ethical at the table and knew the rules inside out. She invariably encouraged the opposition to play according to the rules when they would do something inappropriate. She always encouraged young players and gave me great help when organising the Schools competition.

Úna was thrilled to see David taking up the game and she went up to CityNorth Hotel to support him whenever he played there on the Irish Camrose team. I spoke to him about playing with her once a week in the club in recent years. As I sensed, he said she could play brilliantly if she had no other side issue to deal with while in the club.

In fact, I played with her on numerous occasions. I don't know how many of you remember the John Comyn-organised Rothman Kings where John brought a team of international players around the country to play local teams and promote the game of bridge. I remember playing against them with Úna as my partner. I think we lost narrowly by a couple of IMPs but it certainly told me that she could play at the top level if she could arrive at the table without all her other work baggage.

Úna was secretary of the Western Region of the CBAI for many years. She was President of the CBAI in 1978-1979 and also President of the IBU in 1979-1980. When President, she never missed an event where her presence was required, driving to most of those events on her own but always played in the major events at all the Congresses. She was also Honorary Secretary of the CBAI from 1991 to 2002. The like of her will never be seen again!



Test Your Declarer Play

Tomás Roche



You are West as declarer, playing teams. What is your play strategy on each board?

Board 1 Dealer North. Vul None.

♠ J1073	N	♠ A6
♥ AKJ765	W	♥ Q943
♦ -	E	♦ Q7632
♣ KJ8	S	♣ 52

W	N	E	S
	P	P	P
1♥	P	3♦ ¹	X ²
4♥	All Pass		

¹ 3♦ = Bergen Raise
² X = Lead Directing

The Play

North leads the ♦A against 4♥. How do you plan the play?

Board 3 Dealer South. Vul E/W.

♠ KJ9432	N	♠ 1085
♥ 5	W	♥ 8762
♦ A954	E	♦ QJ106
♣ AK	S	♣ 73

W	N	E	S
			P
1♠	2♥	P	3♥ ¹
3♠	4♥	4♠	P
P	X	All Pass	

¹ 3♥ = Non-Invitational

The Play

North leads ♥K followed by ♥J against 4♠x. How do you plan the play?

Board 2 Dealer East. Vul N/S.

♠ K8	N	♠ A763
♥ Q8542	W	♥ -
♦ KQ	E	♦ 9432
♣ K732	S	♣ AQ965

W	N	E	S
		P	P
1♥	P	1♠	P
2♣	P	5♣	All Pass

The Play

North leads the ♣J. How do you plan the play?

Board 4 Dealer West. Vul All.

♠ AJ108765	N	♠ K9
♥ 82	W	♥ K543
♦ Q	E	♦ A107643
♣ AJ2	S	♣ 6

W	N	E	S
1♠	4♣	X ¹	P
4♠	All Pass		

¹ X = Negative

The Play

North leads the ♦8 against 4♠. How do you plan the play?

Answers on page 30



Bidding Quiz 8

By Bob Pattinson



All eight hands are from live events. Entries to bobpattinson@gmail.com by 14th December 2024.

Good luck!

Question 1

Dealer West. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ 96
- ♥ K107
- ♦ KQ98
- ♣ AQ65

W	N	E	S
1♦	1♠	X	3♠ ¹
?			

¹ 3♠=6-9: 4 spades

Question 2

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ 7
- ♥ 102
- ♦ AJ1086
- ♣ AK1098

W	N	E	S
	1♣	3♠ ¹	?

¹ 3♠=6-9: 7 spades

Question 3

Dealer East. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ AK3
- ♥ AQ107
- ♦ A6
- ♣ J1082

W	N	E	S
		2♠ ¹	P
2NT ²	P	3♥ ³	P
?			

¹ 2♠=6-10: 6 spades

² 2NT=16+: enquiry

³ 3♥=8-10: heart honour

Question 4

Dealer East. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ AJ53
- ♥ 10
- ♦ KJ2
- ♣ AQ1074

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
1♦	2♣ ¹	2♦	2♥
3♣	3♦ ²	?	

¹ 2♣=majors: 5-5+

² 3♦=short in both minors

Question 5

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ 2
- ♥ A9
- ♦ AJ10874
- ♣ AK108

W	N	E	S
	3♣	?	

Question 6

Dealer West. Vul None. Teams

- ♠ K97543
- ♥ A1073
- ♦ Q7
- ♣ 9

W	N	E	S
1♦ ¹	P	1♠	P
1NT ²	P	?	

¹ 1♦ = 4+

² 1NT = 12-14

Question 7

Dealer West. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ J
- ♥ Q75
- ♦ KJ10865
- ♣ AJ5

W	N	E	S
4♣	X	P	?

Question 8

Dealer North. Vul N/S. Teams

- ♠ 987
- ♥ 863
- ♦ AK104
- ♣ KJ10

W	N	E	S
	P	1♥	P
2♥	X	3♥	?

Entries to:

bobpattinson@gmail.com
by 14th December 2024

In every issue a €50 CBAI gift voucher will be awarded to the leading contestant in each of the following categories:

- Novice/Intermediate
- Master (below Life Master)

Please remember to state your grade in your entry



Bidding Quiz System

General Approach:

Five card majors, three+ minors, 2/1 GF,
1NT = 15-17,
2♣ = art GF with 2♦ waiting response

Balanced Hands

4333, 4432, 5332
(with five minor)

12-14 and 18-19 open 1♣/♦

20-22 = 2NT (may include five card major hence play puppet Stayman)

Major Suit Responses

1NT = 5-10 F1:
2♣/♦/♥ = 2/1 GF

3♣/♦/♥ over 1♠ opening and 2♠/3♣/♦ over 1♥ opening = four card+ trump support: 8-11 : first or second round control in bid suit.

3M = 4-7 and 4+ trumps

2NT = Jacoby 16+:
4+ trumps:

Opener bids a singleton at the three-level, a second five card suit at the four-level, rebids 3M with 17-19, 4M with 12-14, and 3NT with 15-16.

Responses to the forcing 1NT:

example for 1♥: 1NT: 2♣ = Gazzilli : either 11-16 with 5M and 4+ clubs or any 17+ hand

2♦ = 11-16 : 3+ diamonds

2♥ = 11-16 : 6+ hearts

2♠ = 14-16: 6 hearts and 5 spades

2NT = 14-16 : 6 hearts and a 4 card minor : now 3♣ pass/ correct; 3♦ = GF asks for minor; 3♥ - to play

3♣/♦ = 14-16: 5-5

3♥ = 14-16 : 6+ hearts and strong suit

Example of Gazzilli after 1♥:1NT:2♣

2♦ = any 8+ suit

2♥ = 5-7 : 5+ hearts

2♠ = 5-7 : 6+ spades

2NT = 5=7: 3 suiter with short hearts

3♣/♦ = 5-7 : 6+ minor

After responder bids 2♦ opener rebids 2M with 11-16 and 5M and 4+ clubs
2NT = 17-19 balanced : other bids game forcing

Responses to 1nt Opening (15-17)

2♣ = non-promissory Stayman

2♦/♥/♠/NT = transfers

3♣/♦/♥/♠ = long suits with slam interest

Two-Level Suit Opening Bids

Bid	Meaning	Responses
2♣	23 + or equivalent unbalanced	2♦ = waiting bid
2♦/♥/♠	6-10 : six card suit, using rule of two, three or four depending upon different vulnerability of the two sides	2NT = enquiry: opener signs off with three-level rebid of own suit with minimum and bids a new suit to show a feature or 3NT with a feature in the opening suit

Three/Four-Level Opening Bids

Bid	Meaning	Responses
3♣/♦/♥/♠	6-10 : six or seven card suit	New suit forcing
3NT	Eight card broken minor suit	4♣ = pass / convert 4♦ = interested in club slam but only part score in diamonds 5♣ = willing to play in game in either minor 4M = asking bid; interest in game in either major: seeks control in bid major 4NT = name suit and quality: 5♣/♦ = confirms suit but denies Ace or King : 5♥/♠ = respective suit and holds Ace or King in that minor
4♣/♦	Namyats: eight card solid major in ♥/♠ : three key cards	Bid of intermediate suits 4♦/♥ asks for shortage and 4M denies any shortage
4♥/♠	Eight card broken suit: less than three key cards	4NT = Roman key card Blackwood : 1430
3NT	Ace asking	5♣ = no ace; 5♦/♥/♠/6C = ace in bid suit; 5NT = two aces

Opening Side Action over Interference

Bid	Meaning
Negative double	Shows values in the remaining two suits
Support Double	Opener confirms three card trump support, so a raise of the suit shows four card support
4th suit	Forcing: asking for more information
Cue bid	Unassuming and forcing: asks for more information
Jump cue	Has a long running suit: seeks NT stop
2NT	Relay to 3♣: this may then be passed or converted to a new long weak suit; thus a direct new suit at the 3-level is GF
Transfers after own 1NT is overcalled	Double /new suit/2NT are all transfers to the next suit (2NT over 2♠); follow up in second suit is game forcing; transfer to intervening suit asks for NT stop, and now accepting the transfer denies a stop and 3NT confirms one

Intervening Bidding

Bid	Meaning
1NT overcall	16-18
Weak jump overcalls	6-10
Two suited overcalls	Direct cue = two highest suits 2NT = two lowest suits; 3♣ = two remaining suits
Defence to 1NT	Double = minor two suiter or major two suiter: advancer assumes minors first 2♣ = three suiter with clubs; 2♦ = three suiter with diamonds 2♥/♠ = either six card suit or the bid suit plus a minor side suit: 2NT asks for the minor

Slam Bidding

Roman key card Blackwood (1430) and Kickback in the minors (1430)

Non serious 3NT: when a trump fit is found 3NT is artificial confirming a minimum hand still prepared to show controls if partner fails to sign off. By passing 3NT shows a strong hand, bidding 1st or 2nd controls up the line.



CBAI News

Dermot O'Brien



I am pleased to be able to report a positive start to the new bridge season.

Numbers attending our national competitions were strong last year, and have remained so – we had 97 pairs and 58 teams for the Mixed Weekend in October, with the Templeogue Centre full to capacity, and we expect similarly full houses for both the Master Pairs in December and the Holmes Wilson in February. The Mount Wolseley Hotel, the venue for the latter, has been booked out since the summer, which is always a good sign.

The early season congresses are also reporting that numbers are up on last year, a trend which hopefully will be maintained for the rest of the season. We are also delighted that two of our congresses will return live for the first time since the pandemic later this season – Yeats Country (Sligo) on the weekend of 6-8 June and Killarney the following weekend. At club level, four clubs that have not affiliated since COVID have returned to the fold this year, which is great news. We are also aware of lots of bridge classes all across the country, which will in time contribute new members to our clubs, as long as the newcomers are looked after well and made welcome.

The CBAI has been very busy with our programmes of teacher and Tournament Director development. On teaching, the first new teachers' accreditation weekend of the new season is imminent as I write, with thirteen candidates seeking to join the ranks of accredited teachers, and several more unable to attend this session but chomping at the bit

for the next one. If you would like to hold a new teachers' weekend in your region, all we ask is that you provide a quorum of 8-10 candidates, and the Teaching Committee will be happy to travel; just call Fran Ronan in the office if you'd like to discuss this further. We also held our first Development Workshop for existing bridge teachers in several years recently in Tullamore; it was a great success and Fran has written about it in more detail elsewhere in this edition of the Journal.

On the TD development front, we are very grateful to Fearghal O'Boyle, Huey Daly, Joe Dempsey, and John Crimmins who have added their weight to that of Bernard Higgins in providing training to new and developing TDs. There is a distinct lack of TDs at all levels of the game, so we need to work hard to bring new ones on board. At European level, it has been noted that there is a noticeable male bias amongst the top TDs. We would like to encourage any female members interested in becoming a TD, or in moving up the ranks if they already direct at club level, to put their names forward for a development programme.

While on the topic of women in bridge, both the European Bridge League and the World Bridge Federation continue their development efforts, with large online teams tournaments on RealBridge planned for 3/5 January (WBF) and 25/27 April (EBL). These are great events and each had a strong Irish presence for its first running last season; hopefully we'll see the same again this season, and perhaps an Irish winner on the virtual podium. Thanks to our women's bridge

representatives Mary Kelly-Rogers (WBF) and Joan Kenny (EBL) for all their hard work in this area.

I'd like to add my own congratulations to the Editor's to the Irish Open Team on their excellent performance in the World Bridge Games in Marrakech. Particular kudos to Mark Moran and John Carroll who topped the Butler (individual performance) rankings in their qualifying group, and then came fourth in the Butlers in the Transnational Teams. And while the Women's team did not do well, Joan Kenny and Jeannie Fitzgerald came back into form in the subsequent Pairs competition; their sixth placed finish was the highest by an Irish pair in many years. Thanks also to all the members who supported our various fundraising efforts for these Games; it was greatly appreciated by the Irish Bridge Union and by all the participants.

The calendar of events until the end of February is set out overleaf, and we hope that you will find something of interest. If you're planning to play in the Novice & Intermediate Congress on the weekend of 14-16 February, please note the change of venue; it will take place in Roganstown Hotel & Country Club in Swords, not as previously advertised.

And finally, a reminder to our club secretaries that your affiliations for season 2024/25 are due by 1 December. We have been a little underwhelmed by the level of submissions thus far. If you have sent yours in already, thank you very much; if not, we'd appreciate it as soon as possible please.



Results and Upcoming Fixtures

National Results

Duais an Uachtaráin – President's Prize (Portmarnock, 14-15 September)

1st Anna Carr & Margaret Farren

2nd BJ O'Brien & Diarmuid Reddan

3rd Marcin Rudzinski & Michelle Moloney

4th David Redmond & Liam Gaynor

Best Regional Master: Keith Clarke & Cathal Louth

Best Area Master: Nora Weafer & Mary Deane

Best Intermediate: Veronica Buttimer & Helena Browner

Spiro Cup – National Mixed Pairs (Templeogue, 12 October)

1s Suzanne Hill & Hugh MacDermott

2nd Mary Kelly-Rogers & John O'Connor

3rd Anna Onishuk & Karel De Raeymaeker

4th Deirdre O'Halloran & David O'Brien

Best Regional Master: Angela & Con MacCrossan

Best Area Master: Veronica Buttimer & Vincent Bissett

Best Intermediate: Vicky Pigot & David Pigot

Coen Trophy – National Mixed Teams (Templeogue, 13 October)

1st Joan Kenny, Enda Glynn, Teresa Rigney, Conor Boland

2nd Marjorie Michelin, Ellis Feigenbaum, Gilda Pender, Thomas MacCormac

3rd Sandra Newell, Claudiu Dima, Michelle Moloney, Marcin Rudzinski

4th Eimir Beirne, Adam Mesbur, Sonya Hillis, Huey Daly

Best Regional Master

Adrienne Purdy, Martin Purdy, Marie James, Anthony Moloney

Best Area Master

Eleanor Greene, David King, Kerri Nolan, Declan Byrne

Best Intermediate

Camilla McLoughlin, Vincent Bissett, Phyllis Carew, Joe Bissett

Lady Milne Trials (Templeogue, 10-12 November)

Winners (who will represent Ireland)

Joan Kenny, Jeannie Fitzgerald, Teresa Rigney, Siobhan Part

Runners up: Mary Brady, Mary Timoney, Maire O'Connor, Suzanne Hill

IBU Interprovincials (Cavan, 16-17 November)

Open Teams Winners: **Leinster**

Micheal O'Briain, Pdraig O'Briain, David Dunne, Paul Delaney, Teresa Rigney, Conor Boland, BJ O'Brien, Siobhan Part, Peter Pigot, Terry Walsh, Matthew O'Farrell, Peter Goodman

Area Master Teams Winners: **Munster**

Verna Brownlow, Geoff Roberts, Brian Madden, Ronnie O'Shaughnessy, Margaret Cunningham, Sean Mulvaney, Rosaleen Glasheen, Neil Breheny, Margaret Holmes, Eugene Gath, Joe Carroll, Gerry McCague

Intermediate Teams Winners: **Ulster**

Anna Shalvey, Melissa Brady, Mary Maguire, Kathleen McCabe, Judy Young, Mary Flynn, John Forsythe, George Harper, Geraldine McNamee, Michael McNamee, Lesley Agar, Liz Thomas

Upcoming Fixtures

Date	Event	Venue
2024		
Nov 30 - Dec 1	Regional Pairs Weekend	Various check venues and times
Dec 14-15	Master Pairs	Templeogue Bridge Centre
2025		
Jan 3-5	Camrose Trophy - Weekend 1	Prestwick, Scotland
Jan 3-5	Waterford Congress	Tower Hotel, Waterford
Jan 11	Men's & Women's Pairs Championships	Westgrove Hotel, Clane
Jan 12	Men's & Women's Teams Championships	Westgrove Hotel, Clane
Jan 17-19	Ennis Congress	TBC
Jan 24-26	Cork Congress	Maryborough Hotel, Cork
Jan 25	Regional Teams Weekend	Various check venues and times
Jan 31 - Feb 2	Teltscher Trials 2024/2025	Templeogue Bridge Centre
Feb 1-2	Confined Regional Masters Pairs & Teams	Templeogue Bridge Centre
Feb 8-9	Holmes Wilson	Mount Wolseley Hotel, Carlow
Feb 14-16	Junior Camrose & Peggy Bayer Trophies	Newport, Wales
Feb 14-16	CBAI Novice & Intermediate Congress	Roganstown Hotel Country Club, Swords
Feb 22-23	National Pairs Championships	Falls Hotel, Ennistymon
Feb 28-Mar 02	Malahide Bridge Congress	Grand Hotel, Malahide

Teacher Development Workshop

Fran Ronan, CBAI Teaching Committee



The CBAI recently ran its first Teacher Development Workshop since the pandemic, in the appropriately named Bridge House Hotel in Tullamore over the bank holiday weekend on 26-27 October.

In spite of the bank holiday, the event proved very popular, with more than 60 teachers, ranging greatly in experience, attending. The feedback has been excellent, with all participants enjoying themselves and reporting that they learned a good deal. The venue was extremely good – a fine room for the sessions, comfortable surroundings with plenty of space, and very good food throughout the weekend.

The purpose of these development workshops is threefold: firstly, to help the teachers develop their teaching skills; secondly, to help them to develop their bridge skills; and thirdly, to enable them to network with other bridge teachers, including those from the CBAI's Teaching Committee, to share ideas and best practices.

The Saturday sessions focused mainly on the bridge development aspect. After an introduction by CBAI Chief Executive Dermot O'Brien, stressing how vital good bridge teachers are within the Association, and how pleased he was to be able to offer the workshop at no charge to the teachers, the formal sessions started off with a class from Thomas MacCormac, ably assisted by Jason Doyle, on how to bid slams, and how to deal with this topic with your students.

After a soup and sandwich lunch, Thomas was followed by Peter Pigot, who gave a class on Bidding in Competition, and delivered his usual insightful wisdom. The final session of the day was given by Enda Murphy, who outlined the differences between teams and pairs bridge (or more accurately, between IMPs and Matchpoints scoring). This topic was felt to be particularly important. A lot of clubs find it hard to generate interest in Teams competitions, and there is a feeling that many



Thomas MacCormac working the room during his session

players are scared of venturing into the unknown, as it were. Teachers can play an important role in familiarising their students with Teams, one of the most enjoyable forms of the game for many.

The group then broke briefly and reconvened for dinner, served in a private room within the hotel. Dinner was followed by a game of bridge, with fourteen tables taking part in two sections of seven, using deals prepared specially by Paul Delaney, who did an analysis of the hands on the Sunday





morning. Dermot O'Brien acted as impromptu TD for this, while Bernie O'Halloran from the Teaching Committee managed the scoring.

The winners, presented with a bottle of wine each on Sunday by Paul, were the scratch pairing of Fíona Cafolla (Glasson) and Helen Hall (Newtownards), while there were also prizes for Margaret Forde (Galway, best declarer performance) and Verna Brownlow (Cork, a special ethics prize for passing after a break in tempo by her partner, which only came to light when Paul wondered aloud how on earth one pair had been allowed to play in 4♥ undoubled on a particular hand).

Sunday morning started bright and early with Paul Delaney's analysis of the hands from the bridge game, which included a small number of set hands designed to test the teachers' mettle.

This was followed by a session from leading National Tournament Director Fearghal O'Boyle on the laws of the game and what students (and their teachers) need to know about them. A big part of Fearghal's message was that teachers can help their students to ease themselves comfortably into club or competitive bridge after their classes by giving them some basic information about how a duplicate session operates and the behaviours that will be expected of them.

After the lunch break, Declan Byrne gave one of the most eagerly anticipated talks of the weekend, on teaching bridge online. Declan outlined his own experience in teaching online during and since the pandemic, gave guidance on the key online tools, and made the point that, even if a particular teacher does not actually wish to teach online, a lot of these online tools will also be beneficial to them for face-to-face teaching. A project to put all the hands from the CBAI Teaching Manuals into an online format emerged from Declan's session; we're hoping that volunteers from the group will effectively "crowdsource" this in the coming months.

Paul Delaney then returned to the podium to conclude the weekend's formal sessions with a very interesting presentation on the resources generally available to bridge teachers. The internet, and the rise of online bridge, has seen an explosion of these, many of them available free of charge. A bridge teacher today can research a topic in more detail in a few hours than a teacher thirty years ago could have in a week. In thanking Sunday's speakers, Dermot said that in his former life, he had been involved in or attended probably hundreds of conferences; he could not think of a single instance, before today, in which every one of the speakers could usefully have been allotted more time than they

had been given, a testament to how interested the participants had been in all the Sunday sessions.

The weekend concluded with an informal question-and-answer session during which the delegates were able to ask general teaching-related questions of the five Teaching Committee members present – Helen Holman, Máire O'Keefe, Bernie O'Halloran, Michael O'Loughlin, and myself. There were also a few non-teaching questions directed to Dermot.

A big thank you to our very distinguished panel of speakers, each of whom did a great job. Having those names on the agenda undoubtedly contributed hugely to the large attendance. In his introduction, Dermot noted with regret the lack of gender balance in the presenter line-up. Unfortunately, none of the leading women teachers he approached had been available for the weekend; he was determined that would not be the case next time around.

Thanks also to the CBAI Teaching Committee for their input into the weekend, and for all they do for bridge teachers generally. Aside from those named above, the other members are Seamus Costello, Anne Doyle, Anne Keating, and Fearghal O'Boyle. We are currently working on a set of CBAI Improver manuals, aimed at teaching players who have been playing for a couple of years and are ready for the next steps. Topics include Transfers, Negative Doubles, and some more advanced declarer and defender card play techniques, and we expect to deliver this late this year or early next. Given the success of this Workshop, we'll also be working on another one before too long, we promise!



Attendees at the CBAI Teacher Development Workshop



Getting a Ruff

Bridge Tips from the Expert

Peter Pigot



Use Suit Preference signals wisely when setting up a Ruff.

Two well respected players are having a system chat pre-tourney and they get to defensive carding. Ace for Attitude King for Count, discards, Smith Peters and the like. One of the experts simply says "Count, just show me Count and I'll work it all out! This is all very good and is a decent approach for aspiring players, as they must work out how to beat a hand. Many top players, if you ask them about their carding, will say "The situation defines the carding type...on this play which signal do I need to give...SP, count or attitude".

But to me, this is like playing a game of golf with only four clubs in the bag instead of using the full set of 14 - you will learn a load of new and innovative shots with the limited club set but you'll never shoot a low score.

To illustrate my point, consider this hand from a recent online ProTeams tourney.

Board 1. Dealer West. Vul All.

♠ A10		♠ J643	
♥ 82		♥ 975	
♦ J763		♦ 1092	
♣ Q10732		♣ K95	
♠ K9752	N	♠ J643	
♥ AK3	W	♥ 975	E
♦ 5		♦ 1092	
♣ AJ64	S	♣ K95	
♠ Q8			
♥ QJ1043			
♦ AKQ84			
♣ 8			

W	N	E	S
1♠	P	3♠	4♥
X	All Pass		

'At the Table' this is what happened with East showing a weak raise in spades forcing South into a corner. South risked bidding 4♥ rather than 4♦ for obvious reasons and felt, with a 5-5 hand, he needed to be taking a playing action...West finished the auction with a double, planning to spoil the party. West now led the ♦5 which declarer won with the jack in dummy to play a heart to the jack and West's king. What next? The logical thing to do would be to switch to a spade since East is nearly certain to have a spade honour on the bidding, hopefully the queen. Maybe declarer will rise with the ace, and when declarer plays another trump West can put East on lead via the ♠Q for the necessary diamond ruff to defeat the contract. However South wins the spade switch at trick three with the queen, plays a spade to the ace and leads another trump, West winning with the ace. Logic will still beat this contract if West decides to put all his eggs in that basket. A low club to East's king will get the diamond return for -1 and 200. However, this risks declarer making +1 and 990 if South has the king. Surely all this guesswork is unnecessary!

Let's go back to the opening lead. When West leads a singleton, and East works out that the five is a singleton, (South should falsecard the eight from hand at trick one) then East's card at trick one has one job only - to tell West where his entry lies in order to later give West the diamond ruff. This situation requires a Suit Preference card!

When do partners lead singletons? Most of the time against suits but especially when they have trump control. East will play the TWO of diamonds at trick one to say "I have a club card." This is a Suit Preference signal. Now when West gets in with the ♥K he can play his lowest club to East (the card you play on the trick prior to a change of suit is a SP card!) and receive the diamond ruff for -1.

4♥X was allowed make a few times.. just goes to show that even some of the 'Pros' don't always play best technique.

[Note that if East had held ♠Q and not ♣K, he'd have played the TEN of diamonds at trick 1 as suit preference for spades].

Now that you've got your eye in, you should be all over this next example!

Board 2. Dealer South. Vul All.

♠ Q652		♠ 43	
♥ AKQ2		♥ 109653	
♦ K32		♦ AQ	
♣ K2		♣ J976	
♠ A10	N	♠ 43	
♥ 7	W	♥ 109653	E
♦ 1087654		♦ AQ	
♣ 8543	S	♣ J976	
♠ KJ987			
♥ J84			
♦ J9			
♣ AQ10			

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	2NT ¹	P	3♣ ²
P	4♠	All Pass	

¹ 4 Card support 12+
² Weak No Trump type hand

West leads their singleton [remember the great Benito



Garozzo's line. 'If they don't lead their singleton, they don't have one,' hoping East holds the ace, will be able to give West a ruff and also tell West what to do next from the SP card they return. East doesn't hold the ♥A but does have nice cards in diamonds. The card East will play when declarer wins the opening lead in dummy is the **TEN of hearts**, suit preference for diamonds. And if declarer plays low to win trick one in hand, East should NOT play the Nine, he should again play the **TEN of hearts**, telling West where his entry lies.

Watch what happens when E/W are playing 'we show count when we cannot win the trick'. The heart is led and dummy's queen is played... TWO from East. A spade is led to the king and West has to win with the ace to preserve his small trump... what next? Should West play a club or a diamond? Very simply, it is a toss of a coin because West has no clue where East's entry lies.

TIP - when you can't win the singleton lead, the card you play is a Suit Preference card, telling partner where your entry lies.

[Be careful... try and stay away from random doubleton leads, partner will assume they are singletons!]

Board 3. Dealer East. Vul N/S.

		♠KQ1063	
		♥Q4	
		♦2	
		♣AJ1098	
♠A9752	N		♠4
♥A7	W	E	♥J108632
♦A953			♦KJ864
♣73	S		♣2
		♠J8	
		♥K95	
		♦Q107	
		♣KQ654	

W	N	E	S
		2♦ ¹	P
2♥	2♠	P	3♣
P	5♣	P	P
X	All Pass		
¹ Multi			

This hand cropped up in a recent Gold Cup match where N/S at the first table played in 4♠X after 2♥-P-3♥-3♠-4♦-4♠-X - All Pass. This went two down for -500 for a poor result.

At this second table, E/W were playing reverse attitude on aces and reverse count in play. West led the ♥A and East played the eight saying "I don't like Hearts". West now tabled the ♦A and East played the attitude four saying "I do like diamonds", even with a singleton sitting in dummy. West was NEVER

going to continue diamonds so an attitude card was simply unhelpful. It left West to work out that East might be 6-5 in the red suits, a distinct possibility with West holding five spades along with dummy. The winning defence [which West must figure out here] is to play ♠A and give East a spade ruff.

But why make it so difficult! The situation demands a Suit Preference card from East and the **JACK of diamonds** looks like the right card to tell West to play spades next to get East a spade ruff for two down, 500, and a flat board.



Camrose Trials 2024

Editor



Eight teams contested the Trials over the first weekend of September at HQ. The format was a full round-robin, followed by semi-finals and a 48-board final. The event was run with customary efficiency by Fearghal O'Boyle.

Team Moran [Carroll, Hanlon, Boland, Fitzgibbon, Mesbur] were hot favourites, but they had been run down to the wire in the most recent Trials by Keaveney [O'Connor, Onishuk, DeRaeymaeker, Goodman, McIntosh]. A reprise was not in the offing, however. Keaveney lost their semi-final by 9 IMPs to Delaney [Dunne, Rudzinski, Gorczyca], while Moran easily defeated Milne [O'Brien, M O'Briain, P O'Briain].

Delaney co-opted Coyne/Holland for the final.

Having won every match thus far, Moran coasted to a 161-57 win in the final. Fitzgibbon-Mesbur and Moran-Carroll were the top Butler performers. Hanlon-Boland were a little further down, perhaps indicating that this relatively new partnership is still gelling.

Adam and Nick set the tone early by making slams on the first two boards of the final, missed at the other table. This was Board 13 of the same set.

Dealer North. Vul All.

		♠ 10985		
		♥ K876		
		♦ AQJ		
		♣ Q5		
♠ QJ7		N		♠ A6
♥ Q4		W	E	♥ A95
♦ 1093				♦ K874
♣ KJ1062		S		♣ A974
		♠ K432		
		♥ J1032		
		♦ 652		
		♣ 83		

At both tables, North opened 1♣, East overcalled 1NT and West raised to 3NT. The lead was ♥2.

At the other table, ♥Q was covered by ♥K and the contract drifted one down. Adam felt North was favourite to hold ♥K [N/S were playing strong NT]. If he also held ♦A and ♠K, all would be well [assuming clubs come in]. So Adam played low from dummy, and was rewarded when ♥K popped up. That was 10 tricks and 13 IMPs.

In the second set, Tom Hanlon displayed keen tactical awareness on two deals. See what you'd have bid.

RHO opens 1♦ non-vul against vul and you hold:

♠ QJ108
♥ AK109763
♦ 9
♣ K

Sitting behind Tom, I was thinking to bid 4♥ directly, on the basis that you're going to bid it at some point so may as well do it now. Tom looked a lot deeper into things...

"At the vulnerability and with my shape, I wanted to play in 4♥. So I bid 3♥, confident the bidding would not end there. Bidding 4♥ initially might encourage Conor to bid 5♥, which I didn't want - ♣K is potentially valuable on defence but not in offence - if partner has ♣A I have no useful discard on it".

LHO bid 4♦, and Tom bid 4♥ when it came back to him. Partner held:

♠ K653
♥ J85
♦ 63
♣ AJ52

4♥ is making, but opponents took the good save in 5♦ for 500. The point of the hand, though, is Tom's reasoning for making an ostensibly weak jump overcall on a very good hand.

Later on, Tom heard partner open 1♦ in first seat, non-vul against vul. RHO doubled and he held:

♠ K73
♥ 732
♦ Q7542
♣ J3

Tom redoubled! LHO bid 1♥, passed back to him and now he bid 2♦. Opponents, having been sold a pup, passed this out. Plus 110. 4♥ made at the other table for a 12 IMP gain. As Tom tabled his dummy, LHO passed a comment about the understrength redouble. "I'll tell it in confession, I promise", came the straight-faced reply.

Good luck to the winners in Scotland and Northern Ireland in January and March.



The Regent Bridge Club Centenary Year 2025

Paul Porteous



Founded in 1925 by Fred Quin, Ireland's premier bridge club, the Regent, will celebrate its 100th birthday in 2025.

At first located in various premises around Harcourt Street, the club committee arranged to purchase its current premises in the 1960s, a far reaching decision that benefits the members to this day.

Celebrating the Centenary of the Club entailed a lot of preparation, most particularly in researching the history of the club. One of our members, Gerry Murtagh, had done a substantial amount of work on the history some years ago, but it quickly became apparent that volumes of club records had been lost over the decades, especially minutes of club committee meetings. Some that we have located would suggest that minute takers had magnificent handwriting and were prone to give all the details of what was said and by whom, sadly something that GDPR and FOI would mitigate against in the present day!

However, our team lead by Willy Clingan (formerly of the Irish Times), Graphic Designer Sue Power, Photographer Denis Mortell, John Corcoran, Anne Keating, Bart Felle and Marie Hutton have been painstakingly reconstructing the happenings up to today. We hope to launch the history in late spring early summer 2025.

One of the first occasions to celebrate in 2025 is one of thanksgiving and remembrance of all those club members who are gone before us and left us with such a wonderful inheritance.

This will be an interdenominational service to reflect the faith beliefs then and now. We intend to invite all those former members who are still around to thank them for their support.

During the year we intend to give all grades of our members the opportunity to play against their opposite numbers from clubs around the country; each grade will have their own date and we will invite players from the earliest clubs that still exist, as well as from the bridge centres that have been developed.

We also have two outreach programmes running this year, the first in a nursing home where two Regent members go along to play with two inpatients one afternoon each week. The second targets the other end of the age spectrum, where we are teaching bridge to 10 and 11 young men between 12 and 15 years on Friday afternoons, with the support of the CBAI.

The feature event of the year will be a **Regent Centenary Congress to be held in O'Reilly Hall, UCD, from 11th to 13th July 2025 - so SAVE THAT DATE!!** We will have all the usual events - Mixed Pairs, Congress and Intermediate Pairs and Teams and Open Pairs, and very possibly a Schools Pairs, plus a super excellent TD team, so make sure that you come along to support us. The information is circulating in Europe so we hope to have some foreign participants. We have excellent well priced superior accommodation on campus - so if you don't have friends or relations that you can visit, don't let Dublin hotel prices put you off!!! Brochures will be issued before Christmas so keep an eye out for them.



Later in the year, we are planning to have a Gala Dinner for members and their partners and friends to present some awards and to show non-bridge playing partners that we don't bite!!!!

So three takeaways:

1. Put 11th - 13th July 2025 in your diary - Regent Centenary Congress - not to be missed
2. Do try to encourage young people to take up our wonderful sport - your premises are not utilised during the afternoons and CBAI will help with funding. All you need are some members to take on the task of recruiting and teaching some youngsters a skill that will last through their lifetime.
3. I would strongly encourage all clubs to appoint an archivist to assemble and maintain all the records of the club - Officers, Trophy winners, photographs, minutes of Committee and Annual General Meetings, accounts - even if you don't have a significant occasion in the offing.



When I was a Boye!

New regular column from the 2007 Bermuda Bowl winner

Boye's bridge

The value of an overtrick

By **BOYE BROGELAND**, NORWAY



IT'S BAD enough losing, but doing so by a tiny margin is terrible. Instead of just one or two hands milling round in my brain, it will be three, four or five hands that haunt me for days to come.

It is raining heavily on a miserable day in January. My club, Flekkefjord is playing away to Naerbo in the Norwegian club championships. At half time they're leading 44 to 43. The second half starts well for us and I estimate we must be leading by about 20 imps with seven boards to go when I pick up this collection (game all):

♠ AK10 ♥ AQ7 ♦ 65 ♣ KQJ94

What do you open?

You can hardly criticise 1♣ followed by 2NT. I toyed with the idea of opening 1♦ to reduce the chance of a diamond lead against an eventual 3NT contract, a little deception many of the top youngsters employ these days. However, isn't the playing strength of this hand a bit too good for this sequence? Partner only needs five hearts to the king for 4♥ to be good, whilst 3NT has good respects even if the ♣A is partner's only picture card.

I therefore upgrade my hand to 20-21 and open 2NT. Partner quickly bids 3NT which is passed out. Reidar

Laland fishes out a red jack and I'm relieved to see that it is a heart.

This looks quite promising. Five certain winners in the majors and four club tricks adds up to nine.

Are there any dangers?

Yes, there is a potential reef on our voyage: West can win the ♣A and

NORTH

♠ J 3 2
♥ K 5 4
♦ Q 10 4 2
♣ 10 6 5

SOUTH

♠ A K 10
♥ A Q 7
♦ 6 5
♣ K Q J 9 4

switch to a diamond from three to an honour (if West has ♦A98 or ♦K98 you can disrupt the defenders' communications by playing the ♦10, whereas if West holds ♦A9x or ♦K9x he must start with the nine to ensure four diamond tricks.)

I win the first trick with the ♥A and continue with ♣K hoping that West will win immediately before East can signal. Laland is too experienced to fall for that and he ducks. He wins the ♣Q and Torill Ueland pitches an encouraging ♦3. East's diamond discard has made the contract 100% secure. Only ♦AJxx or ♦KJxx with East could have caused a problem; if this was the original position East is now down to three diamonds can only make three tricks in the suit.

Laland goes into the tank. He is obviously considering partner's suggestion to switch to a diamond but nevertheless eventually continues with a heart. I win the queen in hand and start looking for overtricks.

I have long thought that most players, including many of the best, give insufficient consideration to making overtricks in teams matches. They appear to be satisfied with bringing home the contract and are unwilling to take the slightest risk, even if the gain can be one, two or three overtricks. In the long run this must be a losing strategy, but once burnt twice shy. My most painful experience was the final of the World Championships in 2001 when I went one off in 3NT when I took a "safe" finesse to gain two overtricks.

On the third round of clubs East discards a discouraging spade. I discard a spade on the fourth round to give the impression of no interest in this suit and East parts with another spade.

West also lets go a spade on the fifth club and dummy and East throw a small diamond. I play a heart to the king and East throws the ♦9. I try the spade jack to tempt East to cover with queen third but she of course follows small. What do you do?

West clearly has five hearts and four clubs and is marked with at least one diamond since he must have been thinking about playing a diamond when in with the ♣A. Could he really have come down to a stiff or doubleton ♠Q? Not that there is much to lose as I have nine tricks if I have both the ♠A and ♠K – but everything points to East having started with 5-5 in the pointed suits and therefore the ♠Q?

I "know" this is the position. But I've been here before. And we are a likely 20 imps or so ahead. Only six cards remain to be played. It's also possible that the opponents have not bid game at the other table. How wrong can it be to bank 600 instead of 630?

Reluctantly I cash the ♠AK and concede the last three tricks. The deal:

♠ J 3 2	
♥ K 5 4	
♦ Q 10 4 2	
♣ 10 6 5	
♠ 6 5	♠ Q 9 8 7 4
♥ J 10 9 6 3	♥ 8 2
♦ A 7	♦ K J 9 8 3
♣ A 8 7 2	♣ 3
♠ A K 10	
♥ A Q 7	
♦ 6 5	
♣ K Q J 9 4	

Two boards later I find an extravagant lead against 2♠ which gives away an overtrick. With four boards to go I bid badly but I am lucky to lose only two imps despite being in completely the wrong contract.

When we compare the second half scores it's 30-29 to us, total 73-73!

A phone call to Harald Skjaeran, the director, reveals that the tie is to be broken by total points – we lose by 12320 to 12580. It doesn't get any more painful than this.

My advice: Play every hand as if it's the last one you play on earth!



Junior Bridge

Luca Crone



The Autumn period is always quiet for junior bridge. Justifiably so, as the summer is inevitably busy, and reality hits once college restarts. That said, some of our juniors got to play their fair share of bridge.

In August, we had a junior team in the annual NIBU vs CBAI match, termed the Sonya Britton Trophy. Eve Connell, Klara Flanagan, David Hoyne and Bence Orosz travelled to Dundalk to battle it out for the CBAI's honour. Along with the Officials, Open, Women's, Masters, Inter A and Inter B teams, they emerged victorious.

I have recently moved to the windy city of Chicago to pursue a PhD meaning I have had to leave the Irish bridge scene behind. That doesn't mean I am not playing, however, and four days after arriving, I set off to play in my first week-long regional. These are the American version of congresses. It has taken some adjusting to the American style, which, in a way, is more procedural than the individualistic Irish style. For one, five-card weak twos are not as big a trend, and weak NT is banned from a player's vocabulary.

Speaking of weak 2s, what do you do at unfavourable vulnerability with this hand after the auction (2S)-P-(3S)-?

♠ Jxx
♥ Qxx
♦ AKxxx
♣ KQ

Why can nobody pass these days and just let me open 1NT? I don't know about you, but my opponents are never that kind. It is an ugly X, but you have a bunch of points. Is partner certain to have overcalled at the 3-level with a random 10-12 points? But hey, Americans are solid pre-empters, even when favourable, right? Partner probably doesn't have much.

Unfortunately, wrong. If you passed, you are writing -10 imps on your scorecard as partner had:

♠ xx
♥ AKxxxx
♦ xx
♣ Jxx

4♥ was laydown.

During the regional, I did somehow end up playing with a one-in-a-million American who enjoys a form of four-card majors. I have a predicament for the die-hard four-card major players out there.

Partner opens 1♥ (showing four), and your right-hand opponent bids 2♣. What do you bid with the following hand?:

♠ Kxx
♥ xxx
♦ Kxxx
♣ Qxx

I would love to bid 2♥ and sit back for the rest of the auction. Alas, that seems unwise, given 1♥ is four and not five. Double stresses spades, which isn't ideal, so I chose to pass. Hopefully, you are with me so far and may even be thinking what the problem is. The bidding proceeds:

1♥-(2♣)-P-(3♣); X-(4♣)-?

Now what do you do?! You are surely a maximum pass, so feel obliged to do something with partner showing extras. Great, so I act, but what do I want to do? Do I

even know partner has five hearts yet? I don't think so, and if you play the modern style that you bid a four-card major over a four-card minor, you are worse off. Is partner 4432, 4441, 3541 or even 4540? A lot to think about. Who knows, but you have to guess.

I flipped a coin and chose to bid 4♥, which got doubled and went for 800 on a nasty heart split. Perhaps you think X is better, intending to try to take the money? Unfortunately, 4♣ makes. This hand is enough for me to agree never to play four-card majors again, but to each their own.

We did have some junior success at the Drogheda Congress. David Hoyne & Bence Orosz won the two-session Intermediate Pairs, and the sister duo of Denise and Sheila Walsh were 3rd in the gala pairs on the Friday night. Hopefully, we will have more success to write about next time with the Peggy Bayer and Junior Camrose Trophies coming up in the early new year. As always, if you know of any young people who may be interested in learning bridge, send them our way by emailing us at irishyouthbridge@gmail.com

[Luca no longer resides in Ireland and his studies demand a lot of his time. Happily, he plans to continue as a columnist, perhaps with occasional assistance from junior colleagues. Thanks Luca. Ed.]



Intermediate A Pairs Michael Crawley & Brigid Shearman Perpetual Cup 2024 - Winner's 2024 Bence Crosz & David Hoyne



Duais an Úachtaráin

BJ O'Brien



The first bridge Major of the new season kicked off when 164 players and two TDs descended upon the salubrious surroundings of the Portmarnock Resort and Jameson Golf links on the 14th September to play in Catherine Byrne's President's prize.

The competition was a tremendous success and the deserved winners were Anna Carr and Margaret Farren from Donegal, who overtook the leaders after the second session, B.J. O'Brien and Diarmuid Reddan, with a terrific score of 64.71% in the final session. In 3rd came Marcin Rudzinski and Michelle Moloney.

Boards 1 and 2 from that final session realistically determined the outcome.

Board 1: Vul None.

LHO opens 1♦, partner bids 1♠, pass to you. You are looking at:

♠ 10
♥ 4
♦ K5
♣ KJ10986432

Do you pass and await developments, planning to bid clubs when it comes back to you?

Do you bid clubs immediately and if so how many?

At my table the first option was chosen and there was no further bidding!!!

Partner held:

♠ AK974
♥ J1082
♦ A43
♣ Q

Making 1♠ with 5♣ cold scored you 12% [1♠ should go down].

Board 2 - You are in the hot seat again but this time RHO opens 1♥ and you hold [non-vul v vul]:

♠ AKQ1086
♥ -
♦ A32
♣ AQ84

Do you double or bid 4♠?

Double is in my opinion a much better bid [that's for sure - it's not even close. Ed.] and the auction proceeds 1♠, pass, 2♥. Now what?

I think 2♠ is the bid showing a very good hand with spades. However another double was chosen at the table and it proceeds 3♥, pass, pass back to you. There matters rested. 3♥ was made and you scored 10%.

Partner held:

♠ 43
♥ 6532
♦ Q10985
♣ 103

4♠ makes as you can ruff a club and the king falls on the third round offside.

The ♦K is also onside. Trumps are 4-1 offside and if the defence play trumps you have no spade loser.

Well done to the winners, who are in a rich vein of form.



Winners of the Duais an Uachtaráin: Anna Carr & Margaret Farren with CBAI President, Catherine Byrne.



Duais an Uachtaráin Session Prize winners: Fred Barry & Paul Porteous with CBAI President, Catherine Byrne.



My Bridge Journey Continues

Nicola O'Dowd



"Albert Einstein once said, "I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious."

This quote reflects his belief that his success was driven not by extraordinary natural abilities but by a deep passion and curiosity.

I can really relate to this.

I am currently Competition Secretary in the two bridge clubs in Trim. But when North Eastern Regional President Mary Timoney phoned and asked me to become her Vice President, I was shocked. After such a short time on the bridge scene, I never imagined I'd find myself stepping into such a role. I told Mary it was an honour to be considered, and while I would love to take on the position one day, I didn't feel nearly ready yet.

Mary, however, believed that my passion and enthusiasm for bridge were precisely why she wanted me in this position now. She believes it is important to show beginners/novice and intermediate players, that bridge offers so much more than just playing and enjoyment—there's also the opportunity to get involved and spread the joy of the game.

So with this encouragement, I humbly accepted and now look forward to working closely with Mary and the rest of the North Eastern Regional Committee for the 2024/2025 season. I'm excited for the year ahead, taking on the roles of North Eastern Region Vice President and South Meath County Development Officer, ready to contribute and help grow our bridge community.

Promoting bridge is the primary responsibility of the County Development Officer, and I'm

confident this will come easily to me. I love discussing the lessons, competitions, clubs, and the overall enjoyment of the game. People have mentioned that my enthusiasm for bridge is contagious, and my conversations often inspire and motivate others. I hope to continue this approach to help expand our clubs.

A big part of my bridge journey has been planning my schedule around the main events set by the Contract Bridge Association of Ireland (CBAI). As soon as their calendar is released, our North Eastern regional calendar is agreed and sent out. We are very lucky to have a packed calendar especially with Sunday competitions. I also participate in Mid Leinster region so when both calendars are out I create my own plan to attend as many events as possible. My friends often tease me about my detailed spreadsheet, but it helps me stay organised and involved.

Now, as County Development Officer, I want to share this keenness and approach with others, encouraging them to explore and enjoy not only our regional events but also the National Events and the wonderful selection of Congresses around the country.

Winning the Banker's Trophy last year was the highlight of my 2023/2024 bridge season. Our victory earned me, along with teammates Dara Voyles, Paul Dunne, and substitute Ena Souhan, a spot on the CBAI team for the annual match against the NIBU, competing for the Sonya Britton Trophy.

The event was held at the Fairways Hotel in Dundalk on the 17th and 18th of August. The hotel

was fantastic, the company was excellent, and the experience was incredibly enjoyable.

The teams were:

CBAI:

Officials: Catherine Byrne (captain), Mary Kelly-Rogers, Brendan Martin, LizAnn Doyle;

Open: Paul Delaney, Tomás Roche, David Ryan, David Dunne; **Women:** Joan Kenny, Jeannie Fitzgerald, Teresa Rigney, Siobhan Part;

Master: Alan Auchincloss, Deirdre O'Driscoll, Maura Foley, Andrew Cole;

Intermediate A: Dara Voyles, Paul Dunne, Nicola O'Dowd, Ena Souhan;

Intermediate B: Tom Roche, Joan Peppard, John Higgins, Dillon Murtagh;

Juniors: David Hoyne, Ben Oroc, Klara Flanagan, Eve Connell;

NIBU:

Officials: Diane Greenwood (captain), Wayne Somerville, David Greenwood, Hastings Campbell;

Open: Robin Burns, Ian Lindsay, Harold Curran, Anne Fitzpatrick; **Women:** Sandie Millership, Anne Hassan, Norma Irwin, Kathleen Cassidy;

Master: Michael Coffey, Fergal O'Shea, Michael O'Kane, Stanley Lowe;

Intermediate A: John Forsythe, George Harper, Brian Mullan, Toni Bradley;

Intermediate B: John Flynn, Jackie Flynn, Roisin McNamara, Rosalee Flanagan;

Juniors: Caleb Harley, Mark Campbell, Wiktorija Januszewska, Eleanor Murphy;



This year, we organised the Trim Summer Bridge Charity Event on Sunday, August 25th, 2024, in support of Meath Meals on Wheels—a vital service that delivers nutritious meals and friendly visits to the elderly and vulnerable members of our community.

The event was graciously hosted by the Knightsbrook Hotel & Golf Club, who provided the venue free of charge. Additionally, two local companies generously sponsored the food for 160 people.

After being approached by the committee, several local businesses contributed generously, donating prizes for the raffle and funds directly to the charity.

Through extensive social media promotion, radio advertising, and emails, we successfully attracted an impressive 40.5 tables to the event.

Huey Daly's advice to me echoed Benjamin Franklin's words, "*By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.*"

Taking this to heart, the committee and I worked hard to cover every detail—organising pre-entry, arranging tables, managing Bridgemates, setting up extra lighting, and refreshing bidding boxes. We were also fortunate to have support from local clubs, who offered to lend us equipment for the day. Trim Bridge Clubs are lucky to have their own dealing machine, which allowed me to deal four sets of boards for the event—hoping all would go smoothly.

This experience gave me a newfound appreciation for the incredible amount of preparation and dedication that our Tournament Directors invest to ensure events run seamlessly. Seeing the behind-the-scenes efforts firsthand, I now truly understand the extent of their work, and I take my hat off to them all. Their dedication and expertise are truly the backbone of the bridge community. It takes a special skill set to manage these events seamlessly and ensure a fair

and enjoyable experience for every participant.

Declan Byrne graciously volunteered his time to tournament direct at the charity event, which had four sections in a nearly full room.

The organisers were very pleased with the support from top bridge players that travelled to Trim to support the event. It was a much appreciated by the whole organising committee. A big thank you to all the players who travelled from Limerick, Clare, Sligo, Galway, Dublin and all over Meath.

The event was a tremendous success, raising €5,036 for Meals on Wheels, which was distributed between the Trim, Navan, and Summerhill branches.

Their participation, along with the support of the committee and sponsors, made this event possible. For those interested in the results, you can find them on the [Trim Castle Bridge Club website](#).

Watch this space for an event on Sunday the 24th of August 2025.

In September 2024, Dara Voyles and I received our Area Master CBAI membership cards. Dara earned an impressive 17.5 national points, while I collected 16.3 national points.

As I mentioned in my previous articles, Dara and I began online lessons with Declan Byrne in January 2021, first registering with the CBAI Sept 2021.

So in exactly three years we earned the required 10 National points to become Area Masters. We are constantly asked how we did this, and our answer is always the same. We played in as many competitions as possible, gaining most of our points from team events. We enjoyed teaming up with different partners, and loved the fun and social side of the game.

Along the way, I would like to believe we've not only improved our skills but also made lasting friendships. It's a reminder that bridge is as much about the enjoyment and camaraderie as it is about achieving goals.

I've noticed that many Intermediate players don't fully understand how the grading system works, and have found that on receiving their new CBAI membership card this year they are asking questions about it. As they progress from Novice to Intermediate B, they then become curious about how the points system and rankings work.

All that information can be found on the CBAI [Website](#).

Many Area Masters have advised me not to rush through the grades, warning that playing as a Master can sometimes take the enjoyment out of the game. From my conversations with other Intermediate players, most of them seem to agree. One person compared it to golf, saying that after a bad round, you still come home feeling better because of the fresh air and exercise. In contrast, after a long bridge session, especially when it doesn't go well, you often feel drained, frustrated, or even annoyed—sometimes with yourself, other times with your partner.

Moving from Intermediate to Area Master is undoubtedly going to be both challenging and exciting. At this new level, I'll be facing more experienced opponents who make very few mistakes and have a deep understanding of the game. Mistakes that might have been overlooked before will now be spotted and taken advantage of. My opponents will make very few errors, so I will need to be more precise in my bidding, play, and defence. I'll also have to adapt to a variety of different systems, not just mastering my own four-card major and weak NT but being prepared to face whatever system my opponents use. The competition will be more intense and mentally demanding, requiring me to stay calm, confident, and focused throughout.

The 2024 Duais an Uachtaráin, President Catherine Byrne's President's Prize (for Masters and Intermediate As), held at the Portmarnock Resort & Golf Links,



gave me a real taste of what this higher level looks like. This year, 82 pairs participated, with 10 being Intermediate A players and the rest made up of Master players—ranging from Area Masters all the way to Grand Masters. I knew I'd need to stay calm and focused, but the reality was quite different, it turned out to be tougher for me than I expected.

Declan Byrne was my partner and during the first session, nothing seemed to go right. I overbid, missed overcalls, failed to make contracts, and even missed out on overtricks. Sometimes, you play in competitions where the hands feel natural, where you know exactly how to bid, what to lead, and how to defend. But then there are days like this one—where the hands just don't "suit" you. Is it the hands? Is it me? Is it my opponents? Is it my nerves? Or is it simply my lack of knowledge?

Board 3. Dealer South. Vul E/W.

		♠AK752	
		♥A	
		♦AKQJ7	
		♣AJ	
♠J1083	N	♠Q4	
♥Q9	W	♥1073	
♦-	E	♦865432	
♣K1086432	S	♣Q5	
		♠96	
		♥KJ86542	
		♦109	
		♣97	

W	N	E	S
			3♥
P	3♠	P	4♠
P	4NT	P	5♦
X	6♥	All Pass	

When I first learned bridge, I was taught that a 3-level preempt generally requires 6-9 points and a seven-card suit. However, with more experience, I've learned that hand evaluation can push those boundaries, especially using the Losing Trick Count (LTC). On this board I had only four points, but with an eight-loser hand and being non-vulnerable, I opened 3♥. Partner told me after he was in a dilemma that slam may be in it, but

where? He wasn't sure what to do, so he bid 3♠, forcing me to bid again.

Now I am thinking well he knows exactly what is in my hand, seven hearts and 7/8 loser hand, because that is our system. So can I tell him anything new? No of course I can't I should have just rebid my hearts and he would know I had nothing else to tell him about my hand. But.... I bid 4♠.

So my partner, and my opponents now thought I had three spades.

Partner then bids 4NT RKCB, and I answer 5♦ showing 3 or 0 keycards, thinking like the opponents the trump suit is spades. My LHO doubled for a lead of a diamond. Partner thought about this and then bid 6♥.

We were lucky opponents doubled because without it we would probably be in 6♠ going down like three other pairs. So in this board my mistake and partners quick thinking scored us 77%.

Against the same opponents on the next board my mistake cost us a bottom score.

Dealer West. Vul All.

		♠5	
		♥AK975	
		♦9543	
		♣842	
♠98763	N	♠AKQ1042	
♥Q4	W	♥8	
♦Q1087	E	♦J62	
♣109	S	♣753	
		♠J	
		♥J10632	
		♦AK	
		♣AKQJ6	

Opps were in 4♠, I knew they were weak and robbing us of game but lack of confidence caused me not to double and cost us dearly.

The second session was a complete turnaround. Everything seemed to fall into place, and the cards were on our side. Every bid, lead, and decision felt right. This turnaround highlighted our concentration and focus. Despite the challenges of the first session, we stayed focused and trusted our judgment, ranking 3rd in this session.

This result wasn't just an achievement; it was a huge confidence boost. After the rough start, we were really happy and satisfied with how well things turned around. It left us feeling thrilled and energised!

Going into the third session, we were just hoping to secure some average scores to steady our position. Unfortunately, it turned out to be another tough one for us.

Despite staying focused and avoiding major mistakes, it felt like nothing went our way. It wasn't a matter of poor decisions or a lack of concentration; the cards just didn't favour us. Our opponents consistently found contracts and strategies that worked against us.

No matter how carefully we played, the results simply were not in our favour. We ended up finishing with 48.59%, placing us 50th out of 82 pairs. It was a disappointing outcome, but that's the unpredictable nature of the game.

Congratulations to everyone who played well, especially the winners, Margaret Farren and Anna Carr.

Looking back at the competition, each session's ups and downs taught me a lot about competing at this level. The second session showed me that when everything works out, success feels amazing. But the challenges in the first and third sessions reminded me that staying consistent is essential, and I need to focus on that as I try to improve as a player.

While I know the shift to Area Master level will be tough, I'm excited to settle in and remain at this stage for a long time. I want to absorb all the experiences and lessons that this next chapter of my bridge journey has to offer. Even after all this time, I feel like I've only just begun to scratch the surface of everything there is to know in this game. The learning never truly ends, and that's part of what keeps me going.

[Congrats Nicola on your grade elevation, and best wishes as an officeholder twice over! Ed.]



Making My Way

Melissa Brady



I concluded my last article by expressing my uncertainty about how we would fill our summer without much competitive bridge to keep us occupied. However, a chance phone call to good friend and fellow journal contributor Nicola O'Dowd quickly added a few dates to an otherwise empty summer calendar.

I mentioned that Anna and I planned to meet up with Mary Maguire and Kathleen McCabe to practice a new system we were learning. I jokingly suggested that we should play a match against a team from Trim. Given how long I've known Nicola, I should have realised that joking about bridge with her might lead to something more concrete.

We penciled in a date, and Nicola arranged for her mother Ena Souhan, Niamh Feeney and Anne-Marie O'Donnell to complete the lineup for her team. On a Saturday morning, we headed off to Trim, where we were greeted by Monty the dog and Nicola, who had a cheeky grin on her face. As soon as we arrived, she surprised us with a twist: it was now an individual competition, and we would be partnering with different players in each round, some of whom we had never played with before. She got the idea from Huey Daly, who used it at his wedding. Thanks, Huey—I knew there was a reason I liked you!

The day was thoroughly enjoyable, filled with plenty of bridge, food and drink, and lots of fun and laughter with friends. What more could we have asked for? Anna emerged victorious in the competition. Nicola was the perfect host, planning everything down to the last detail, including fabulous bridge-related prizes for the winners. We will have to arrange a rematch soon!

Another date Nicola added to our quiet summer calendar was the 25th of August for the Charity Day at the Knightsbrook Hotel in Trim. She and the Trim Castle Bridge Club Committee pulled out all the stops, leaving no stone unturned, and ran a wildly successful event with 40 tables of players divided into four sections. Anna and I found ourselves playing in the master section to fill a half table. It was a good eye-opener for what lies ahead this year, as the bidding was highly competitive.

This board caused me trouble! Playing a version of the Polish Club, I opened 1♣, Anna bid 1♥, and South overcalled 1♠. I then bid 1NT, North bid 2♣, and Anna bid 3♣ which I passed. Had we been playing our regular four and weak system, I would have opened 1NT, Anna would have transferred me to hearts, North would never have mentioned spades, and we'd have ended up in 3NT after she broke the transfer. I'm not sure how many people would overcall with six points, vulnerable and no honour in the suit [*not many! Ed.*], but it was enough to stop me from bidding 3NT as I assumed Anna had no spades based on the N/S bidding.

Trim Summer Charity

Board 15. Dealer South. Vul N/S.

		♠ KJ4		
		♥ A98		
		♦ 9853		
		♣ 432		
♠ AQ52	N		E	♠ 6
♥ K5	W			♥ QJ672
♦ 742				♦ A106
♣ QJ97	S			♣ AK108
		♠ 109873		
		♥ 1043		
		♦ KQJ		
		♣ 65		

The event was a huge success, raising over €5,000 for Meath Meals on Wheels. Nicola possesses strong drive, determination, and enthusiasm—qualities that our Regional President, Mary Timoney, highlighted when she nominated her as VP and qualities that will serve her well in her role as Regional President next year. When she sets her sights on a goal you can be sure it will be achieved.

This year, I've taken on three new roles: Secretary of the Cavan Bridge Club, County Development Officer, and Area Master, having been promoted from an A2 last year. I intend to fully commit to each position, especially the CDO role, as I aim to encourage more people to engage with this fascinating game. It's our duty as CDOs to nurture and promote bridge within our counties.

Regarding the Area Master promotion for myself and Anna, it unfortunately marks the end of last year's Intermediate team with Mary and Kathleen, who will remain As. After some reluctant discussions, we agreed to seek new teammates, as it seemed unfair to pressure them into competing at a level they were uncomfortable with. They will stay in the As, where I'm confident they will excel. Anyone joining them will be fortunate to partner such strong players. I remain hopeful that we can reunite as a team with them someday. Anna and I invited Josephine Brady and Frances Daly to join us for the Women's Teams in Clane. We're excited to embark on this new adventure and face new challenges with our new teammates this year.

CBAI President Catherine Byrne hosted the 2024 Duais An Uachtaráin at the Portmarnock Resort and Golf Links Hotel at the start of the season. This was Anna's and my first outing as newly



promoted Area Masters. This board sparked the most discussion. I was still pondering it the next day.

Duais An Uachtaráin

Board 4. Dealer West. Vul All.

♠ AKQ5			
♥ KQ83			
♦ AQJ			
♣ KJ			
♠ J986	N	♠ 10743	
♥ AJ42	W	♥ 1097	
♦ 75	E	♦ 10962	
♣ 1062	S	♣ Q8	
♠ 2			
♥ 65			
♦ K843			
♣ A97543			

As North, I opened 2♣, receiving a 2♦ relay from Anna. I rebid 2NT, knowing Anna might pass, and worried about missing a major fit as I had both majors. Thankfully, she bid 3NT and we played there. When Margaret Farren and Anna Carr, the eventual and very popular winners of the competition, landed at our table, I was still discussing this board. I decided to ask them about it. Margaret advised that even after 3NT, 4♣ should be used as Stayman. Anna and I later had follow-up questions, such as how to distinguish if 4NT is shutout, Blackwood, or RKC for the nominated major. I contacted Anna Carr for more information, and she kindly sent us some notes to study.

The best thing about playing in big competitions like the Duais is the opportunity to learn from more experienced players. Thanks to the Donegal ladies for their advice on that board and to Lucy Phelan for explaining why her partner, after originally passing as the dealer, suddenly put her to game after she opened a weak 2♥. It's wonderful to have experienced players willingly share their expertise.

Our first Congress of the year was in our local Drogheda, at the ABCD Bridge Centre from October 3rd to 6th. Anna and I played in the Gala and Congress Pairs on Friday and Saturday, and on Sunday, we partnered with Josephine Brady and Paddy McDermott for the Teams. The weekend concluded in a victory in the Area Master Confined Teams.

Drogheda Congress Gala Pairs.

Board 20. Dealer West. Vul All.

♠ 1064			
♥ KQ10652			
♦ 2			
♣ Q83			
♠ QJ7	N	♠ AK852	
♥ A8	W	♥ 4	
♦ AKQ65	E	♦ 10873	
♣ K65	S	♣ A72	
♠ 93			
♥ J973			
♦ J94			
♣ J1094			

W	N	E	S
Anna		Me	
2NT	P	3♥	P
3♠	P	4♦	P
4♠	P	4NT	P
5♠	P	5♠	All Pass

With the singleton heart, I'm not sure what stopped me bidding 7♠. We were one of only two pairs in the section to bid 6, but the opportunity to bid 7 occurs so seldom that I was kicking myself afterward. [7S is hard to bid with confidence. You need to be able to count 13 tricks. Ed]

Drogheda Congress Pairs.

Board 26. Dealer East. Vul All.

♠ K9854			
♥ 93			
♦ J10863			
♣ 5			
♠ QJ2	N	♠ 3	
♥ 10652	W	♥ AQJ8	
♦ A	E	♦ 9742	
♣ KJ964	S	♣ Q1082	
♠ A1076			
♥ K74			
♦ KQ5			
♣ A73			

In the last round of the Congress Pairs, Anna [South] 1♠. West overcalled 2♣, and with my singleton, doubleton, and an extra trump, I upped the value of my hand and bid 2♠. East then bid 3♣ and Anna passed, as did West. Believing that 3♣ was likely to make, I took a risk and bid 3♠, reasoning that Anna could afford to go down one if not doubled. You can imagine my shock when she then bid game! As I laid down the dummy, I said to her, "At least they

didn't double you!" 4♠ was cold and nobody else bid it!

Our team in the Confined Area Master section, finished fifth overall in a strong field and won the Frank Stack Confined Teams Perpetual Cup. We were all thrilled with our performance over the two sessions, pulling off some impressive coups, including one where I found myself in the worst possible contract—3NT!

Drogheda Congress Teams.

Board 14. Dealer East. Vul None.

♠ Q6			
♥ K74			
♦ Q9643			
♣ A32			
♠ 974	N	♠ 83	
♥ AJ108532	W	♥ 6	
♦ 7	E	♦ AJ108	
♣ J4	S	♣ KQ10876	
♠ AKJ1052			
♥ Q9			
♦ K52			
♣ 95			

Paddy opened 1♠, and East overcalled 3♥. Sitting with 11 points and no spade support (at that level, we've agreed that if I have three Spades, I can support his suit), but with a heart stopper and stoppers in the other suits, I made the only bid I thought I could: 3NT. Paddy, knowing full well that I wouldn't call 3NT with a doubleton Heart, passed instead of taking it out to 4♠, as he knew they'd be ruffing hearts.

East led the ♣K, which I let win, then she switched to the ♥6. West eagerly went up with her ♥A where her ♥8 would have sufficed (she gave me two heart tricks by doing this) and played the ♣J back to East. I let the jack win and East then put me in my hand with the ♥Q. I ran off six spade winners, another heart, and the ♣A to make my contract. Meanwhile, Anna and Josephine defeated 4♠ at their table, giving us a swing of 10 IMPs and our biggest victory of the tournament—17.99 to 2.01—providing us a comfortable lead over the next Area Master team going into the final round.



On a personal note, our success in this tournament helped me achieve one of the two goals I've set for myself in bridge. (If I ever achieve the other one, I'll be sure to let you know!) Paddy and I have won numerous bridge nights at our local clubs, the captains' competition a few times, and this year, we won the club championship. However, we had never managed to get our names on a trophy together—until now. When I realised I was becoming a decent player, I set the goal of winning a trophy with Paddy because, without him, I would never have been able to play this great game. He took me under his wing when I enquired about lessons and taught me the "Bones of Bridge," sitting at his kitchen table over six or seven lessons on cold, dark, miserable winter Monday nights. Then he brought me out to play in one of our local clubs.

I'm not sure how many teachers/masters would sacrifice their night of bridge to play with a complete novice, let alone play with them again the following week after said novice passed a 2♣ opening, having forgotten all about the 2♦ reply!! But Paddy stuck with me!

I could never thank him enough for the time he invested in teaching me because, as we all know, time is the most important thing any of us have, and once it's gone, you can't get it back. Winning a trophy with him is my way of repaying him for all the time and effort he put into helping and mentoring me on my Bridge journey so far. Thanks Paddy!



Winners of the Congress Area Master Teams 2024: Melissa Brady, Anna Shalvey, Josephine Brady & Paddy McDermott with North Eastern Regional President Mary Timoney, Congress President Sean Newcomen and CBAI President Catherine Byrne



WWW.DECLANBYRNE.IE

Learn Bridge Online

Learnbridgeonline@gmail.com

Beginner Course

Improver Course(s)

Online Bridge Club

Courses start
September &
January

Private Tuition
available for
groups





Master Declarer Play

Rory Timlin



This is the second article in a new series on Defence, Declarer Play and Bidding. It is aimed at aspiring Master players and existing Masters who want to keep sharp.

We review here eight Declarer Play problems. In each case, South is declarer.

Questions:

(1) You play in 4♠ after West deals at Nil All and opens 1♣.

North	
♠ KQ8	
♥ 752	
♦ A65	
♣ 10983	

South	
♠ AJ109764	
♥ AQ4	
♦ 84	
♣ Q	

West leads ♣A, which goes 3,2,Q. West switches to ♦Q. Plan the play. Trumps are 2/1.

(2) At Game All, you play in 4♠, no opposition bidding.

North	
♠ J10754	
♥ A6	
♦ AQ63	
♣ J4	

South	
♠ KQ9832	
♥ Q3	
♦ 54	
♣ AQ5	

West leads ♦J. Plan the play.

(3) E/W Vul. You play in 4♥, no opposition bidding.

North	
♠ AQJ	
♥ A542	
♦ K8	
♣ Q975	

South	
♠ K74	
♥ QJ1098	
♦ 63	
♣ K108	

West leads ♠10. West holds ♥K73. Plan the play.

(4) N/S Vul. You get to a poor 6♥.

North	
♠ J7	
♥ AJ4	
♦ K762	
♣ AQJ10	

South	
♠ Q93	
♥ KQ108732	
♦ A9	
♣ 4	

West leads a trump and East follows. Plan the play.

(5) E/W Vul. Dealer West.

W	N	E	S
2♥	3♣	P	3NT
P	P	P	

North	
♠ AK3	
♥ A	
♦ J96	
♣ K87543	

South	
♠ 754	
♥ K83	
♦ 108532	
♣ A2	

West opens a weak 2♥. A ropery auction to a reasonable contract! West leads ♥Q. Plan the play.

(6) All Vul. East deals and opens 3♣. You get all the way to 7♠.

North	
♠ K106	
♥ K83	
♦ A9752	
♣ A7	

South	
♠ AQJ54	
♥ AQJ62	
♦ 3	
♣ 65	

West leads ♠7. Plan the play.

(7) E/W Vul. Contract 6NT.

North	
♠ AK	
♥ KJ	
♦ KQJ863	
♣ AQ2	

South	
♠ J86	
♥ A74	
♦ 542	
♣ K1073	

West leads ♣4. Plan the play.

(8) E/W Vul. Contract 6♥. No opposition bidding.

North	
♠ A	
♥ KJ9643	
♦ 752	
♣ AQ8	

South	
♠ J95	
♥ AQ1072	
♦ AK	
♣ 632	

West leads ♠K. Trumps are 1/1. Plan the play.



Answers:

(1) The full layout was:

			♠KQ8			
			♥752			
			♦A65			
			♣10983			
♠3	N	♠52				
♥KJ8	W	♥10963				
♦QJ102	E	♦K973				
♣AKJ76	S	♣542				
			♠AJ109764			
			♥AQ4			
			♦84			
			♣Q			

The key here is to realise that you have a natural club trick. So win ♦A at trick two, cash just one top trump in dummy and lead a club, letting go a diamond if East follows low. Now win any return and play a trump to dummy. Next lead a club, discarding a heart assuming East doesn't cover the club. Now there is a trump entry to dummy to cash the good club, discarding ♥Q. 10 tricks made.

(2) The full layout was:

			♠J10754			
			♥A6			
			♦AQ63			
			♣J4			
♠A6	N	♠-				
♥K854	W	♥J10972				
♦J107	E	♦K982				
♣K872	S	♣10963				
			♠KQ9832			
			♥Q3			
			♦54			
			♣AQ5			

The best line is to go ♦A and lead ♣J, planning to discard a heart on the third club (if the club finesse loses). Now 10 tricks are assured, barring bad breaks. As the cards lie, a finesse at trick 1 and a heart switch beats the contract.

(3) The full layout was:

			♠AQJ			
			♥A542			
			♦K8			
			♣Q975			
♠1096	N	♠8532				
♥K73	W	♥6				
♦Q974	E	♦AJ1052				
♣A43	S	♣J62				
			♠K74			
			♥QJ1098			
			♦63			
			♣K108			

Win ♠K, finesse trumps and draw trumps in three rounds. Then eliminate spades and play on diamonds, not on clubs. The defence are welcome to two diamond tricks, but are then endplayed and are forced to open up clubs or concede a ruff and discard. Ten tricks made.

(4) The full layout was:

			♠J7			
			♥AJ4			
			♦K762			
			♣AQJ10			
♠K652	N	♠A1084				
♥96	W	♥5				
♦Q83	E	♦J1054				
♣K965	S	♣8732				
			♠Q93			
			♥KQ108732			
			♦A9			
			♣4			

Draw trumps in two rounds (making sure to keep a trump entry to dummy) and play ♣A, then ♣Q for a ruffing finesse. If East has ♣K, you are home. If East plays low on the second club, discard a diamond from hand (not a spade). West wins and, based on your discard, is likely to switch to a diamond. Contract made, by way of a nice deceptive play.

By the way, on a trump lead, 6♥ can be made perforce as the cards lie! Can you see how? Double Dummy solution is at the end of the article.

How should the auction go to avoid the poor slam? The key is to use cuebids showing controls, avoiding RKC when you have no spade control and partner hasn't cuebid spades.

If North is dealer, it might go:

W	N	E	S
	1NT		2♦
	2♥		4♥
	5♣		5♦
	5♥		P

1NT is 15-17 HCP. 2♦ is a transfer. 4♥ is a mild slam try (to play in 4♥ bid 4♦ Texas Transfer directly over 1NT). 5♣/5♦ are cuebids, and 5♥ is a signoff, with spade weakness.

If South is dealer, it might go:

W	N	E	S
			1♥
	2NT		3♥
	4♣		4♦
	4♥		P

2NT is Jacoby, heart fit, game forcing. 3♥ is stronger than 4♥. 4♣/4♦ are cuebids. 4♥ is a signoff. (or North might make one more effort with a cuebid of 5♦ in which case South will sign off in 5♥). [or South's first rebid might bid 3♣ to show shortage, with cuebids to follow].

(5) The full layout was:

			♠AK3			
			♥A			
			♦J96			
			♣K87543			
♠102	N	♠QJ986				
♥QJ10842	W	♥975				
♦K7	E	♦AQ4				
♣Q106	S	♣J9				
			♠754			
			♥K63			
			♦108532			
			♣A2			

Win the lead in dummy. Assuming clubs break 3/2, there are nine top tricks, but there are entry problems. If we play three rounds of clubs from the top to set up the long suit, then the defence, knowing on the bidding that you hold ♥K, can avoid the heart suit and lock you in dummy to beat the contract. The solution is simple once you spot it. Duck a club at trick two. Now you are in control and can navigate from hand to hand for nine tricks.



(6) The full layout was:

		♠K106			
		♥K83			
		♦A9752			
		♣A7			
♠73		N		♠982	
♥10954				♥7	
♦K10864	W		E	♦QJ	
♣J8				♣KQ109432	
		S			
		♠AQJ54			
		♥AQJ62			
		♦3			
		♣65			

An initial assessment leads to only 12 tricks: five trumps, five hearts and two minor aces. To make the extra trick, you need a dummy reversal, counting three trump tricks in dummy, five hearts, two minor aces and three diamond ruffs in hand. Win the lead in hand and go about ruffing three diamonds in hand, carefully using the heart entry first and making sure to unblock ♠A at some stage. Eventually lead the last trump from hand, overtaking in dummy, and draw the last trump and cash all the hearts.

The key play is to use the dangerous entry first (hearts). If you use a black entry first, East will let go a heart on the third diamond and now 13 tricks cannot be made.

Note that a heart or club lead kills an entry and beats the grand.

(7) The full layout was:

		♠AK			
		♥KJ			
		♦KQJ863			
		♣AQ2			
♠952		N		♠Q10743	
♥863				♥Q10952	
♦A1097	W		E	♦-	
♣965				♣J84	
		S			
		♠J86			
		♥A74			
		♦542			
		♣K1073			

This is easy if diamonds break 2/2 or 3/1. If East has four diamonds, you are down. The critical case is when West has four diamonds. The key play is to win the opening lead in dummy to preserve a club entry to South. Play a top diamond at trick two and now you can pick up the diamond suit for one loser by later using the club and heart entries to hand in order to lead diamonds up twice.

(8) The full layout was:

		♠A			
		♥KJ9643			
		♦752			
		♣AQ8			
♠KQ853		N		♠10762	
♥5				♥8	
♦J843	W		E	♦Q1096	
♣J95				♣K1074	
		S			
		♠J94			
		♥AQ1072			
		♦AK			
		♣632			

Win the lead and play ♥A, drawing trumps in one round. Lead ♠J, covered and ruffed. Now cash ♦AK, enter dummy in trumps and ruff a diamond. Lead ♠9. If West doesn't cover, discard a club from dummy and East is endplayed.

If West did cover with ♠10, ruff in dummy, play a trump to hand and lead a club, hoping to duck it into East to endplay him. But if West inserts ♣9, then duck in dummy and hope ♣9 is a singleton or that East holds ♣KJ10 and is forced to overtake. Failing all that, the club finesse may work.

Back to the DD solution to no. 4.

(4) The full layout was:

		♠J7			
		♥AJ4			
		♦K762			
		♣AQJ10			
♠K652		N		♠A1084	
♥96				♥5	
♦Q83	W		E	♦J1054	
♣K965				♣8732	
		S			
		♠Q93			
		♥KQ108732			
		♦A9			
		♣4			

To make 6♥ on a trump lead, you draw trumps and play four rounds of diamonds, using a trump entry to dummy along the way, and run all the trumps to reach this four-card ending:

		♠J			
		♥-			
		♦-			
		♣AQJ			
♠K		N		♠A108	
♥-				♥-	
♦-	W		E	♦-	
♣K96				♣8	
		S			

Now take a winning club finesse and exit in spades. West wins and is endplayed in clubs. If West had earlier discarded ♠K or if East takes the first spade, then East is endplayed in spades. Or if West retained only two clubs in the endgame, then three club tricks roll in after one finesse. This rare squeeze is known as a Winkle.



National Mixed Championships 2024

Thomas MacCormac



My very good American friends, Ellis Feigenbaum and Marjorie Michelin, visited Ireland in October. The social agenda allowed for some bridge, so we fetched up at HQ for the Mixed Championships.

Ellis was sufficiently impressed with the organisation of the events that he posted a very complimentary thread on Bridgewinners. Well-deserved free publicity for the CBAI team, and I hope and expect we can look forward to more visitations in the near future.

In the Pairs [Spiro], Ellis and Kathleen Vaughan placed 13th of 97 starters, whilst Marjorie and I came 17th. Well done to the winners, Suzanne Hill and Hugh McDermott. We fared better in the Teams [Coen]. A strong finish, and a 15-5 - 4.5 win in the final round over Sandra Newell [Claudiu Dima, Michelle Moloney, Marcin Rudzinski], propelled us to a second place finish. The easy winners were Joan Kenny [Enda Glynn, Teresa Rigney, Conor Boland]. Sandra's team were 3rd of the 58 participants.



Winners of the Spiro Cup: Suzanne Hill & Hugh MacDermott with Gordon Lessells

Coen Trophy. Session 1. Board 4 Dealer West. Vul All.

♠ K5
♥ AK73
♦ AK63
♣ J52

Partner (west) opens 1♣ you respond 1♦ and partner rebids 2♣ - what now?

Well if you're interested in slam that's good but what way to progress?

It's imperative that we declare the hand to protect our ♠K5.

Partner held:

♠ 1084
♥ Q4
♦ Q2
♣ AKQ976

Recommended Auction

W	N	E	S
1♣	-	1♦	-
2♣ ¹	-	2♥	-
3♣ ²	-	4NT	-
5♣	-	6NT	-

¹ 2♣ denies 4H or 4S and shows a 6 card suit +
² 3♣ by opener shows no Stopper in Spades

12 pairs made slam, with nine declaring slam by partner and failing on a spade lead through ♠K.



Winners of the Coen Trophy: Enda Glynn, Teresa Rigney, Joan Kenny and Conor Boland with Gordon Lessells

Coen Trophy. Session 1. Board 15 Dealer West. Vul N/S.

♠ KJ87
♥ AQ864
♦ -
♣ K1097

Partner deals and passes. RHO opens 2♦ [weak] - your bid?

At my table they overcalled 2♥ and played there going 1 down. At the other table our teammates doubled and got to 4♠

Partner held:

♠ AQ65
♥ 3
♦ 532
♣ QJ863

Spades are 3-2 and there's no club ruff against you, so you make 6♣ and 6♠ although nobody got there.

Coen Trophy. Session 1. Board 18 Dealer East. Vul N/S.

On hand 18 I wasn't brave enough after my partner gave me every chance.

West Partner
♠ K10
♥ AKJ973
♦ 9
♣ KQJ3

East Me
♠ AJ63
♥ Q5
♦ AQ74
♣ 1085

Auction

W	N	E	S
	-	1NT	-
2♦	-	2♥	-
3♣	-	3NT	-
2♥	-	?	-

The bidding must show a slam try 6-4, so with ♥Qx and two aces I think I should make a move, but I passed. 6♥ is cold.



Friendly Fridays at the Regent

Editor



The Regent recently invited me to compare a discussion of hands at one of their



"Friendly Fridays". This is a new initiative whereby experienced/stronger players will play with a less proficient partner and provide them with advice and guidance as they go along.

The atmosphere is entirely jovial, and the competition is scored as IMP pairs – a nice way to expose people to Teams scoring.



The discussion was lively. I played with BJ O'Brien, an association of 46 years and counting. Not that it did us any good on two hands in particular.

You hold:

♠ AQxx
♥ KQxx
♦ AKQ
♣ Ax

You open 2♣ and partner bids 2♦, relay. RHO [Peter Goodman] butts in with 3♣. You double to be going on with and partner bids 3♦. You bid 3NT, not necessarily loving it. Partner ventures 4♥. So his diamonds are longer than his hearts. What now? Is 4NT Keycard or signoff? Feeling that the very least he owed me was ♥J, I stuck him in 6♥.

He held:

♠ xx
♥ 10xxxx
♦ 10xxxxx
♣ -

Nary a jack to be seen. ♠K was offside but trumps were 2-2. No arguing with success.

A few boards later I felt the stirrings of slam possibilities again. At game all I held:

♠ xxx
♥ AQ10
♦ AKJ10xx
♣ x

BJ opened 1♠ and RHO overcalled 2♣. I bid 2♦ and he rebid 2♥. I reckoned as little as ♠AKxxx and ♣A would make 6♣ our spot. I bid 3♣ to be going on with, 4th suit forcing to game. 3♦ from the boy wonder. So now I'm thinking 7♦, because a spade can perhaps be discarded from my hand on ♥K. Perhaps 3♥ is best now, but I bid 3♠. BJ was sufficiently impressed with this that he passed it. No, that was not a typo.

He had:

♠ AQJxx
♥ KJxx
♦ Qx
♣ xx

♠K was offside so there were only 11 tricks. I'm going to draw the veil of charity over the ensuing verbal exchange, but you see what I'm up against.

The Funny Side of [Rubber] Bridge

[sent by Ranald Milne, passed down from his late mother]

A cleaning woman was applying for a new position. When asked why she had left her last employment, she replied; "Well Sir, the wages were good, but it was the most awful place I ever worked."

"They played a game they call bridge, and last night a lot of folks were there. As I was about to bring the refreshments, I heard a man say: lay down and let's see what you've got."

"Another man said: I've got strength but not much length, then another man said to a lady: Take your hand off my trick."

"I pretty near dropped dead just when a lady answered: you forced me, you jumped me twice and you didn't even have the strength for one good raise."

"Another lady talked about protecting her honour, yet two other ladies said; now it's my turn to play with your husband while you play with mine."

"Well I got my hat and coat and, as I was leaving - I hope to die, if I didn't hear one say: "Well, I guess we'll go home now. That was our last rubber."

Courtesy of Olenka Milne who sadly died on 12th January 2010



Bric-A-Brock

Sally Brock



The 2021 World Championships in Salsomaggiore Terme, Italy, were the first face-to-face bridge organised by the World Bridge Federation since Covid times.

This was an interesting deal from our Round 1 confrontation with Sweden, the eventual winners.

Dealer North. Vul All.

		♠ 7		
		♥ 84		
		♦ 109875		
		♣ A9743		
♠ AJ10642	N	♠ 95		
♥ 1092	W	♥ 53		
♦ 32	E	♦ KJ64		
♣ Q6	S	♣ KJ1052		
		♠ KQ83		
		♥ AKQJ76		
		♦ AQ		
		♣ 8		

Most tables ended up in 4♥ by South. Neither I nor the Swedish South had any opposing bidding (I opened 2♣ and my counterpart chose 4♥). Both Wests led a high heart and the basic question was whether to use dummy's one entry to lead up to declarer's spades (playing East to have the ace) or diamonds (playing East to have the king). There didn't seem much in it to me, but I could see that if I played on diamonds I could put off the key play for a bit longer than if I played on spades. Accordingly, I won the lead in hand, tried the ♠Q which West won and continued with another high heart. I ducked a spade, ran off a few trumps but eventually took the diamond finesse. My counterpart had no more chances and was effectively down immediately, luckily for us.

In several other matches where South opened 1♥ or one strong club, West overcalled in spades. This led declarer to believe that the ♠A would certainly be wrong, and less certainly the ♦K also. So there was a third line which would work if West had both those cards: win the trump, play a high spade, win the next trump, run some trumps, play a club to the ace and ruff a club, play off the rest of the trumps and the other high spade and exit with a spade to endplay West. An excellent line, but for another layout.

BRIDGE HOLIDAYS

3 NIGHT DBB + BRIDGE HOLIDAY

2025

THURSDAY 16th - SUNDAY 19th JANUARY 2025

MONDAY 10th - THURSDAY 13th NOVEMBER 2025

€299 PP | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT CHARGE

SUNDAY 19th - WEDNESDAY 22nd OCTOBER 2025

€319 PP | NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT CHARGE

- 3-night stay with Dinner, Bed & Full Irish Buffet Breakfast included.
- Bridge sessions daily, evening games led by an experienced Bridge coordinator.
- Bridge clinics daily offering top tips to improve your game.
- No single supplement for solo guests.
- Bridge games, with token prizes, adding excitement to your stay.
- Leisure time in the afternoons to explore the beautiful surroundings of Knock.
- Subsidised transfers from Claremorris train station.
- Complimentary shuttle buggy available to Knock Shrine.
- Comfortable accommodations and warm Irish hospitality throughout your stay.
- Ideal for Bridge enthusiasts seeking a blend of competitive play and relaxation.



KNOCK HOUSE HOTEL

Contact us

- +353 94 938 8088
- www.KnockHouseHotel.ie
- reservations@knockhousehotel.ie
- Ballyhaunis Road, Knock, Co. Mayo, F12 R6Y5





Answers to Test your Declarer Play

You are West as declarer, playing teams. What is your play strategy on each board?

Board 1 Dealer North. Vul None.

		♠ 852			
		♥ 82			
		♦ A95			
		♣ AQ976			
♠ J1073	N	♠ A6			
♥ AKJ765	W	♥ Q943	E		
♦ -		♦ Q7632			
♣ KJ8	S	♣ 52			
		♠ KQ94			
		♥ 10			
		♦ KJ1084			
		♣ 1043			

W	N	E	S
	P	P	P
1♥	P	3♦ ¹	X ²
4♥	All Pass		

¹ 3♦ = Bergen Raise
² X = Lead Directing

Lead:

North leads the ♦A against 4♥. How do you plan the play?

The Play

Declarer ruffed the diamond lead and drew two rounds of trumps ending in dummy. A club to the Jack lost to the queen and a second round of diamonds was ruffed. West now played ace and another spade. South won with the queen and played the ♣10 through the king. Declarer ruffed the third round of clubs in dummy but eventually finished down one.

After ruffing the opening diamond lead, suppose declarer begins with ace and another spade. South will win and switch to a trump. Winning in dummy with the ♥Q, West can play a club to the jack and queen. North does best to exit with a trump, as cashing the ♠A will set up the ♣K for declarer's tenth trick. Declarer wins the trump in hand and advances the ♠J, discarding the club loser in dummy. There are two trumps in dummy to take care of the declarer's other two losing clubs

Board 2 Dealer East. Vul N/S.

		♠ Q952			
		♥ A1097			
		♦ AJ85			
		♣ J			
♠ K8	N	♠ A763			
♥ Q8542	W	♥ -	E		
♦ KQ		♦ 9432			
♣ K732	S	♣ AQ965			
		♠ J104			
		♥ KJ63			
		♦ 1076			
		♣ 1084			

W	N	E	S
		P	P
1♥	P	1♠	P
2♣	P	5♣	All Pass

Lead:

North leads the ♣J. How do you plan the play?

The Play

Declarer should win the trump lead in dummy and at trick two, play a diamond to the six, king and ace. The diamond continuation is won in hand and a heart is ruffed in dummy. The ♠A and ♠K are followed by a heart ruff, a spade (or diamond) ruff and a third heart ruffed low. If the next spade (or diamond) lead is ruffed by South, declarer can overruff with the king. Then, after ruffing the fourth heart with dummy's high trump, a spade (or diamond) lead will allow declarer to win a trick 'en passant' with the ♣7.

Questions on page 4



Board 3 Dealer South. Vul E/W.

				♠ AQ6					
				♥ AKJ103					
				♦ 83					
				♣ QJ2					
♠ KJ9432		N		♠ 1085					
♥ 5				♥ 8762					
♦ A954	W		E	♦ QJ106					
♣ AK		S		♣ 73					
				♠ 7					
				♥ Q94					
				♦ K72					
				♣ 1098654					

W	N	E	S
			P
1♠	2♥	P	3♥ ¹
3♠	4♥	4♠	P
P	X	All Pass	

¹ 3♥ = Non-Invitational

Lead

North leads ♥K followed by ♥J against 4♠x. How do you plan the play?

The Play

In view of North's double, which is a hint that he has spade tricks, perhaps the best chance for declarer is to play South for the ♦K, but how does one gain access dummy.

Suppose declarer ruffs the second round of hearts and plays a low trump. North will win the ♠Q and force declarer in hearts. If instead West exited with the ♠K, catering for one of the defenders to have a singleton ♠Q, North will permit the king to win and now if West continues spades, North will win perforce and continue the heart attack. This defence will be sufficient to set 4♠X because West does not get to dummy to take the diamond finesse.

The solution is ruff the second (or third) heart with a spade honour. Declarer now retains two small spades, ensuring an entry to dummy sooner or later. When West finally draws trumps, ending in dummy, he is out of trumps and that means if the diamond finesse loses to the king, North will get another heart trick for down one.

Declarer could have forced his way to dummy with a diamond in order to finesse South out of the ♠Q, but now the defenders play a second round of diamonds and organise a diamond ruff.

Many hands offer various lines and the winning line is not known until the hand is over. Still, the line shown is a good line of play, you have to see the need to unblock the spade honours along the way.

Board 4 Dealer West. Vul All.

				♠ Q					
				♥ J97					
				♦ 8					
				♣ KQ1097543					
♠ AJ108765		N		♠ K9					
♥ 82				♥ K543					
♦ Q	W		E	♦ A107643					
♣ AJ2		S		♣ 6					
				♠ 432					
				♥ AQ106					
				♦ KJ952					
				♣ 8					

W	N	E	S
1♠	4♣	X ¹	P
4♠	All Pass		

¹ X = Negative

Lead

North leads the ♦8 against 4♠. How do you plan the play?

The Play

North's diamond lead has all the marks of a singleton and on the bidding it is likely that South has only one club. West won the ♦A in dummy and led the ♣6 to his ace in hand. Mindful that either opponent would over ruff a minor suit card and return a trump, declarer now ruffed a club with the trump king, led a diamond from dummy and when South played the king, he ruffed with the ♠A.

Declarer continued by ruffing the last club with dummy's ♠9. The opposition could take the ♠Q at their leisure, but the contract was assured, losing just two hearts and one trump.



Bidding Quiz 7 - Results - Bob Pattinson

All hands from live events.

Question 1

Dealer West. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠ K5
♥ 874
♦ A752
♣ KQJ8

W	N	E	S
1♦ ¹	1♥	1♠ ²	?
1 ¹ ♦=4+; 2 ¹ ♠=5+			

Votes: 2♦=14; 2♥=3; 1NT=1; 2♠=1

10 points but a nine loser hand (more likely 10 losers with ♦A behind the ♦K and ♦Q) and a flat shape. With stoppers in diamonds and spades, plus two 10s, this balanced hand may suggest 1NT as an alternative to a simple 2♥ raise.

Karel 2♦: NT could be right with the stoppers - but how many - 1NT - 2NT? I think a 2♦ bid could be more descriptive.

Rory 2♦: Shows more than a minimum raise in hearts. Second choice 2♥, with diamond honours under the diamond bidder.

Roy 2♦: A bit of an overbid, but still below 2♥.

Micheál 2♦: This shows a three card heart fit and about 10+ points.

Ciaran 2♦: Show the fit and values.

Luca 2♦: I will show my support which should make the later auction easier.

Anna 2♦: I have a nice hand and I have something in diamonds.

Peter P 2♦: Everyone is bidding and I have this lot. I suspect that partner has a minimum overcall, more for lead, rather than play. I will show my constructive heart raise by cueing their suit short of partner's suit, expecting partner to only be available to bid 2♥. I'll leave it to partner to decide what to do over 2♠ if as expected, they try and play there.

Adrian 2♦: Virtually a perfect hand for the unassuming cue bid (UCB), showing about 9-11 points with three-card support (leaving 2♥ as purely competitive). Leaves partner in place to decide whether to try for game, compete to 3♥, or sell out if opponents compete further.

Tom 2♦: Worth an UCB. My major suit tens make this better than a 10 count. I will see what happens but will probably bid 2NT over 2♥ response, we may belong in 3NT.

Joe 2♦: Cue bid.

Peter G 2♥: Despite the 10 points there is a lot of bad news about this hand relating to its playing potential in hearts. Normally I would bid 2♦ with this range but here I settle for 2♥.

Sally 2♥: Don't feel very strongly about it. Very close to 2♦ but I don't really want to encourage partner to do much bidding.

George 2♥: Some may feel that this is a limit raise but they are mistaken. You have no shape and no ruffing values. The Kaplan Ruebens Hand evaluator, which I refer to often, lists this hand as a nine-count, and that is before it knows a diamond was bid on your left. When that is considered, the hand is a seven count. *[you need to talk to Tom Hanlon! Ed]* 1NT is tempting, but they may have more points than we do. I am normally an optimist at bridge, but this hand screams to stay low and safe.

Christina 1NT: Without any doubt 4333 is made for 1NT.

Dealer West. Vul N/S. Teams.

	♠ J63		
	♥ KQ952		
	♦ 64		
	♣ A54		
♠ K5		♠ Q9874	
♥ 874		♥ A4	
♦ A752		♦ J1083	
♣ KQJ8		♣ 109	
	♠ A102		
	♥ J103		
	♦ KQ9		
	♣ 8732		

W	N	E	S
1♦ ¹	1♥	1♠ ²	?
1 ¹ ♦=4+; 2 ¹ ♠=5+			

Summary

This is an interesting hand as strong arguments have been advanced for three potential bids. First let us consider how the average club player might think. Using just high card points it would be estimated that West opened with 12, East responded with 6, South has 10, so North has only 12, so this is a part score hand.

Although there is a strong majority for the 2♦ unassuming cue bid, this seems flawed on four grounds: a 10-loser hand, 4333 shape, vulnerability, and partner may bid on expecting better values. If partner opened 1♥ would 1NT be a more descriptive response than 2♥?

Certainly bidding 2♦ prevents East making this bid to show the secondary and superior diamond fit. As Peter P notes partner probably made a weak overcall so will pass any further action by opponents.

George makes a well presented case for not bidding the UCB of 2♦, and Christina shows concern about the 4333 shape, suggesting 1NT as the best picture of a hand offering no ruffing values

This was a tight bidding situation and a lot depended upon potential further action from opponents. Hence all the more reason to give partner the best picture of the hand.



As the cards lie losing 50 at teams against opponents scoring 90 or 110 gains some IMPS. Possibly the 2♦ bid might prevent opponents bidding 2♠, whereas 2♥ might encourage 2♠. The lone vote for 2♠ certainly stops opponents making this bid, but pushes the bidding too high.

Marks: 1NT=10; 2♥=9; 2♦=9; 2♠=7

Bidding Tips

1. Unassuming cue bid is a most useful convention for distinguishing between a hand with invitational values and a simple raise in partner's suit.
2. When considering competing try to find the best bid to convey both the values and importantly the shape of your hand.

Question 2

Dealer West. Vul E/W. Teams.

- ♠ A94
- ♥ AQ864
- ♦ 52
- ♣ 982

W	N	E	S
1♦ ¹	P	1♥	P
1NT ²	P	?	
1 1♦=4+; 2 1NT=12-14			

Votes: 2♣=12; Pass=5; 2♥=21

This hand requires a decision as to the safest part-score at teams. There will be a two or three card heart fit, but is pass the winning bid, or should an invitation be made hoping the five hearts plays well if partner is maximum for the 1NT rebid? As the hand has eight losers is it likely that partner's balanced 1NT have sufficient shape to make game.

Anna 2♣: New minor forcing or check back. The cards are too good to miss a vulnerable game.

Peter P 2♣: New minor forcing.

Joe 2♣: Invites in hearts, two-way checkback.

Ciaran 2♣: Worth an invite opposite a fit.

Sabine 2♣: A light invite.

Peter P 2♣: Assuming this is new minor forcing.

Irene 2♣: rebid 2♥ over 2♦.

Tom 2♣: Assuming we play XY and rebid 2♥ over the forced 2♦ response. At these colours partner will have a proper opening. I will raise 2NT to 3NT, and 3♥ to 3NT, expecting partner to correct to 4♥ with a side suit doubleton.

Christina 2♣: In case partner has a small doubleton in clubs and a fat 14.

Karel 2♣: Checkback seems the only option. The rebid of 1NT denies four spades in my world. If partner is maximum they can bid 2NT/3♥, otherwise 2♦/2♥, and we bid appropriately over their response.

Thomas 2♣: Followed by 2♥. I rebid 1NT with three-card support for the major and an outside doubleton.

Brad 2♣: Starting a checkback sequence.

Roy 2♣: Invitational allowing 2♥ over a 2♦ response.

Peter G Pass: Aces are always good news and AQ combinations nice to have. However, 5332 shapes belong in no trumps, so I pass here, but would show five hearts if partner had opened 1♣. Especially if 1♦ tends to show a shapely hand, I tend to give up on game interests in these hands. It is another reason to open 1♣ with all balanced hands and 1♦ with shapely hands which are very rarely 5332.

Sally Pass: I only upgrade 10 counts that have AJ10 in the long suit.

Adrian Pass: 10 points opposite a maximum of 14 with a partner not often having three hearts not enough for game, and therefore I go quietly and pass.

Luca Pass: This is why I like a 14-16 1NT. On this hand we could be getting too high for no reason.

Micheál Pass: Don't push towards game with such limited values.

Rory 2♥: Second choice is pass. This may depend on bidding style. Can partner have a singleton heart? Will partner ever raise to 2♥ on a three-card suit?

George 2♥: At match points I would let it ride. It is likely that they cannot shut you out of the dummy. Hope they do not balance and beat you. At teams I just play safe. There is no game lurking.

Dealer East. Vul All. Teams.

		♠Q7652		
		♥52		
		♦10		
		♣Q7654		
♠J8	N		E	♠A94
♥J103	W			♥AQ864
♦KJ86				♦52
♣AKJ8	S			♣982
		♠K103		
		♥K97		
		♦AQ9743		
		♣10		

W	N	E	S
1♦ ¹	P	1♥	P
1NT ²	P	?	
1 1♦=4+; 2 1NT=12-14			

Summary

Another interesting hand where the cards are well placed for game with three favourable features;

- ▶ Both diamond honours in the South hand
- ▶ 5-3 spades allows declarer to hold up twice, and North has no entry
- ▶ If South wins ♠K and switches to diamonds that is a lost cause for the defence

There is still the question of whether or not the opener would accept an invitation at teams with a 13 point hand containing four Jacks?



Regardless of the result on the hand the bidding highlights five key issues:

- (1) Responder's 2♣ is conventional, either new minor forcing [XYZ], or some other agreement. This invitational bid allows opener to respond 2♥ with a minimum and thus the partnership can stop at the two level when the 1NT bidder is minimum, or to raise with a shape showing bid if at the upper range (see Tom's responses for example)
- (2) Does the 1NT rebid guarantee two or three hearts support. Thomas plays it to confirm three-card support, but most others can bid 1NT with two.
- (3) Luca explains how playing 14-16 1NT removes the necessity to seek a potential game when holding 10 points opposite a 12-14 rebid.
- (4) Peter G highlights how using 1♣ openings for balanced hands and 1♦ for unbalanced hands takes a lot of the strain away in these sequences.
- (5) George raises the issue of playing teams against pairs, suggesting the need for greater care in teams.

If game is not bid then playing a part score in either hearts or no trump produces the same number of tricks. Only if opener judges the hand as maximum will game be reached in no trump.

Marks: 2♣=10; Pass=10; 2♥=9

Bidding Tips

Playing an artificial 2♣ to begin an invitational sequence which can allow the partnership to stop well below game if not maximum can be very useful on many hands.

Question 3

Dealer West. Vul E/W. Teams.

♠ K5
♥ AJ3
♦ Q1097
♣ K1098

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	1♥	P
2♥	P	2♠ ¹	P
?			

¹ 2♠ = reverse: trial bid

Votes: 3NT=11; 2NT=7; 4♥=1

This hand is based on the bidding at the table, where the bidding style of the opening side is to raise major suit one level responses with only three-card trump support. The rationale for this approach is two-fold, firstly it aims to keep the opponents out of re-entering the bidding, and secondly the proponents of this approach like playing 4-3 trump fits. Most players would rebid 1NT with the West hand to confirm the balanced nature of the hand, as discussed in summarising hand one in this quiz, and strongly reinforced by the panel's comments.

Although West is in the minimum zone with 13 points the doubleton ♠K adds value to the hand as a cover card in the trial suit, with also a potential ruffing opportunity. The panel all agree that the balanced nature of their hand is best described with a no trump bid, with a majority jumping to 3NT, and the remainder leaving more bidding space with a 2NT bid, which is certainly forcing over partner's 2♠.

Sally 3NT: I would not have bid 2♥. I need four trumps or three trumps and a singleton to raise rather than rebid 1NT. Those tens persuade me to bid game.

Thomas 3NT: I would have rebid 1NT. Now I bid 3NT.

Peter G 3NT: Not a fan of bidding so far with a weak NT type hand shape, so let's make the auction clear to partner that I have a maximum weak NT type hand with some fitting cards and only three hearts.

Tom 3NT: Happy to accept game invite and will be happier if partner passes.

Joe 3NT: I find it ridiculous that someone would raise to 2♥ with 4432 shape and Kx in the doubleton.

Rory 3NT: With three hearts for the raise and a double club stop, the options are 3NT or 2NT. The quality of the intermediates decides it for me.

Luca 3NT: I would have rebid 1NT.

Ciaran 3NT: Hopefully partner is on the same page. Worth accepting with the great minor pips.

Roy 3NT: With 12 points and lots of pips. I can't bid less.

Adrian 3NT: I will emphasise I have only three hearts and chunky stops in the minors, so opt for 3NT

Christina 3NT: If 2♠ is a natural trial bid promising a four-card suit (as it should be) I bid 3NT, especially since it seems I forgot to bid 1NT the first time.

George 2NT: In case partner has only four hearts and is checking back with you. You are leaving plenty of room open for further exploration while right siding no trumps.

Irene 2NT: I would not have bid 2♥.

Karel 2NT: In my regular partnership we use 2NT instead of 2♠ to enquire. 2♠ is not game forcing (can pass a 3♥ bid). On the basis 2NT is unlikely to be passed out, I am bidding that to suggest 3NT as an alternative.

Sabine 2NT: As long as this is forcing, otherwise 3NT.

Micheál 2NT: This clarifies my distribution and limited values.

Anna 2NT: I have only three hearts and stoppers everywhere.

Peter P 4♥: I don't know why I am bidding 2♥ holding only three in the first place. To support with only three, either I have a singleton or an xx doubleton elsewhere. This is tight but I have Kx as fillers for partner's spade suit. I probably need South to hold ♠A to make!



Dealer North. Vul All. Pairs.

		♠ 763		
		♥ Q7		
		♦ J63		
		♣ QJ753		
♠ K5	N	♠ AQ98		
♥ AJ3	W	♥ K109842		
♦ Q1097	E	♦ A8		
♣ K1098	S	♣ A		
		♠ J1042		
		♥ 85		
		♦ K542		
		♣ 642		

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	1♥	P
2♥	P	2♠ ¹	P
?			

¹ 2♠ = reverse: trial bid

Summary

This hand reinforces the discussion on Hand 1 regarding raising responder's major suit with only three-card support, and the importance of re-bidding balanced hands with a no trump bid as soon as possible to how shape.

There was some confusion over the strength of the responding hand due to the double label of reverse and trial bid, hence the uncertainty of whether or not 2♠ was game forcing or merely seeking to advance to game only holding extra values.

Nonetheless three key points emerging from the comments of the panel are:

- ▶ Always rebid a balanced hand with a no trump bid (as all but one did)
- ▶ Only raise a major suit one-level response if you hold four trumps, with one exception, if the partnership agrees, and that is holding three trumps and a singleton.
- ▶ After a reverse by responder is game forcing and therefore 2NT is not to be passed. (Note Karel's distinction between 2♠ and 2NT, with the former non-forcing and the latter forcing).
- ▶ Jumping to 3NT takes up bidding space but for many this implies a minimum hand as shown here.

On this hand responder will continue the bidding to the slam zone regardless of opener's initial responses. The panel confirmed the raising of an immediate major suit response with only three card holding and a balanced hand as unusual when it is far better to confirm the balanced nature first.

Marks: 2NT=10; 3NT=10; 4♥=9

Bidding Tips

Always best to confirm the balanced nature of an opening hand at the first possibility, and only raise with three-card support first if the hand is unbalanced with a singleton or void side suit available for ruffs.

Question 4

Dealer North. Vul E/W. Teams.

- ♠ T842
- ♥ AJ8
- ♦ A3
- ♣ Q532

W	N	E	S
	1♦ ¹	2♦ ²	3♦
?			

¹ 1♦=4+; ² 2♦=5-5 spades and clubs: 6-10

Votes: 4♠=11; 4♦=5; 3♠=2; X=1

Although holding four-card support in both of partner's black suits, plus two red aces, the hand overall has nine losers facing at best a seven-loser hand, so a part score seems to be the destination. However, the losers should be at least one less if partner's club suit holds the king, and the two aces in the red suits look good. Finally, your side is vulnerable so partner will tend be 8-10 rather than 6-7.

Tom 4♠: Automatic bid and just a perfect hand opposite a weak 5-5, a double fit and aces v short suits. If it was not limited to 6-10 points I would be bringing out the system tools to try hard for a slam.

George 4♠: I told you I was optimistic. You have a double fit. Aces, shortness and partner has overcalled vulnerable. All signs lead to game.

Anna 4♠: If my partner's overcall is good I would expect to make game.

Luca 4♠: We have a double fit, I don't need much to make game.

Peter P 4♠: The two Aces are taking care of partner's side suit cards. With a length of eight cards in partner's known two suits 5-5+ I bid game. Opposite AJTxxx, xx, Kxxxx 4♠ is cold.

Sally 4♠: Looks fairly clear for now.

Rory 4♠: The double fit means bid to the hilt. I would prefer 2♦ to be more wide ranging than 6-10.

Adrian 4♠: I am not used to 6-10 vulnerable but 4♠ for me.

Christina 4♠: Don't see an alternative. It makes no sense to play 6-10 Vulnerable. There should be no range as shape and suit quality is much more important.

Thomas 4♦: I have a good hand with a double fit, it's likely that the opponents bid 5♦, so I want to make sure partner knows it is our hand. Also, if we end up in a slam and need a finesse in a black suit to make it it's likely to work.

Karel 4♦: 4♠ is fine if the auction ends there. If the opponents bid 5♦ partner is either shut out or may bid 5♠. So to show a "good" hand bid 4♦.

Sabine 4♦: To make sure partner knows I have something.

Ciaran 4♦: Decent slam opposite KQxxxx, xx, AJxxxx given the opening bid.

Micheál 3♠: Partner is allowed to bid game if near maximum for the vulnerable overcall.

Roy 3♠: If 2♠ is limited to 6-10, it's possible we will miss a game, but we would probably need some good luck- and I assume partner can raise with a maximum and 6-5 shape.

Peter G Double: Two nine-card fits look we must try for game despite the defensive cards. It would be nice to bid 3♥ as a game try but that sounds natural here so double has to be the game try. I can't believe double as a penalty would come up as often as a game try in this sequence.



North. Vul E/W. Teams.

	♠ A	
	♥ K1064	
	♦ KJ10982	
	♣ K9	
♠ 10842	N	♠ KJ963
♥ AJ8	W	♥ 97
♦ A3	E	♦ 5
♣ Q532	S	♣ A10764
	♠ Q75	
	♥ Q532	
	♦ Q764	
	♣ J8	

♠	♥	♦	♣	NT
N	3	2	1	
S	3	2	1	
E	3		3	
W	3		3	

W	N	E	S
	1♦ ¹	2♦ ²	3♦
?			

¹ 1♦=4+; ² 2♦=5-5 spades and clubs; 6-10

Summary

Possibly the clue to this hand is possibly the weak raise of 3♦ by East which may suggest that the overall distribution of the strength of the hands is more balanced. Therefore 4♠ may be premature at this stage, and 3♠ could well be the best spot.

Certainly 4♠ looks tempting and the majority of the panel advance varied reasons for this bid, some seeing higher possibilities if partner is more shapely than 5-5. The X implies a game chance and allows partner to take a second view of overall assets.

Marks: 3♠=10; X=10; 4S=10

Bidding Tips

1. Playing Ghestem two-suited overcalls when vulnerable means responder needs to be careful not to take a step too far opposite 6-10.
2. Peter G's suggestion of X here to invite works well as it allows partner to stop in 3♠ if this seems best.

Question 5

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

♠ J986432
♥ KQ2
♦ 63
♣ 10

W	N	E	S
	1♦ ¹	X	3♦ ²
?			

¹ 1♦=4+; ² 3♦=4+ 6-9

Votes: 4♠=14; 3♠=5

The combination of the seven card major, and only seven losers, and a side suit of KQ2 makes a jump to 4♠ seem to be a sound option.

Thomas 4♠: What's the problem?

Peter G 4♠: Not so clear partner doesn't have a hand too good to overcall 2♣ here, so will have to be careful, but 4♠ figures to have some play opposite most takeout doubles.

Adrian 4♠: Another 4♠ with seven losers opposite a takeout double. May be I am missing some nuance as to I shouldn't be doing this.

Sally 4♠: Someone should be able to make something.

Rory 4♠: Bid what you think you can make.

Tom 4♠: Surely unanimous, if partner moves for slam I am not ashamed, as with a strong one suiter we might well be in the best spot.

Peter P 4♠: Again I have good cards in both majors, however no aces. Give partner ATxx, Axxx, xx, Axx 4♠ is cold.

Anna 4♠: Not sure what else I could bid. Long suit. If partner has a big hand with clubs so be it.

George 4♠: Did I mention that I am an optimist. You can hardly do less. If you bid 3♠ you are volunteering that, so partner knows you have some tricks, but will never play you for seven trumps and a fitting KQ. Let them cash their three minors, you have the rest.

Ciaran 4♠: Partner should expect something like this - long spades, not too many points.

Christina 4♠: The opponents tend to bid 5♦ in an auction like this.

Karel 3♠: Initial reaction is 4♠, but two things to consider. Partner may have a very good club suit, or even a heart hand. 3♠ is a free bid and shows something already. If the opponents bid again it may help us. So 3♠ for me.

Micheál 3♠: game invitational.

Roy 3♠: It's a nice player, but with no spade honour, and two small diamonds, I think it's enough.

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

	♠ Q	
	♥ A653	
	♦ AJ107	
	♣ QJ73	
♠ J986432	N	♠ AK10
♥ KQ2	W	♥ 109874
♦ 62	E	♦ K8
♣ 10	S	♣ A84
	♠ 75	
	♥ J	
	♦ Q9543	
	♣ K9652	

♠	♥	♦	♣	NT
N	4	2		
S	4	2		
E		4	3	2
W		4	3	2

W	N	E	S
	1♦ ¹	X	3♦ ²
?			

¹ 1♦=4+; ² 3♦=4+ 6-9

Summary

Even if partner has a long solid suit of their own, the jump to game looks the best description of the hand.

Marks: 4♠=10; 3♠=8

Bidding Tip

With a seven-loser hand bid game opposite partner's takeout double.



Question 6

Dealer West. Vul All. Teams

- ♠ AK984
- ♥ A
- ♦ AJ832
- ♣ A6

W	N	E	S
2♣ ¹	P	2♦ ²	P
2♠	P	3♦ ³	P
?			

¹ 2♣=ART GF; ² 2♦=waiting bid;

³ 3♦=natural 5+

Votes: 4NT=10; 4♦=7; 4♥=1; 7♦=1

A helpful fit quickly established but what is the best move here?

The curse of the waiting bid now looks that the weak hand might play the hand in diamonds unless opener can play in no trumps. The system allows for 4♦ to be key card in the minors so exploration could start at a low level. Would this mean 4NT shows 27-28 balanced? (Not for the majority of the panel).

Micheál 4NT: Key card in diamonds. If partner shows one key card with a 5♣ response then follow up with a 5NT grand slam reply.

George 4NT: Key card for diamonds, and it cannot be quantitative as partner is unlimited. I considered a 4♥ cue bid but partner might retreat to 5♦ and you have lost a lot of room. This is not a 2♣ opener, but a pure two-suiter, and should be opened 1♠, followed by a jump to 3♦.

Roy 4NT: Whatever our agreement is to ask for ♣K. If one key card I would bid 7♦, if none then 6♦.

Ciaran 4NT: Key card ask, but not 4♦ as if partner has nothing to cue bid I won't be able to ask about ♦K.

Anna 4NT: I am planning to bid 7♦ if my partner has one key card and one king. The problem of bidding 3♠ or 4♦ is that partner either replies 4♠ over 3♠ or 5♦ over 4♦, and we have found nothing.

Tom 4NT: Key card. Makes it easy to get to a grand opposite ♦Kxxx and ♣K. Partner would have raised spades holding three-card support.

Sally 4NT: About to bid at least a small slam.

Rory 4NT: If partner shows ♦K I will bid the odds on 7♦. I don't fancy bidding the 5NT grand slam force unless we can distinguish between ♦K and ♦Q. It can be done by agreement, e.g. by bidding 6♦ with no top honour and 6♣ with one of the top three honours.

Adrian 4NT: If I get one key card I will ask further for ♦Q and any outside king.

Karel 4NT: Massive now. Partner doesn't have three spades, probably five+ diamonds and likely three or four hearts. The ♦K and another king makes 7♦ on.

Irene 4♦: If partner has a key card and ♣K I bid 7♦.

Luca 4♦: Slam try. Let's see can partner co-operate.

Sabine 4♦: Making sure partner knows diamonds are trumps with 4♦ as key card.

Peter P 4♦: Set the suit and hopefully get a cue (♥K to park the losing club would be nice). I will later be able to ask partner their holding in spades (assume they will be short by not giving support). If they confirm less than three spades I will bid 7♦

Thomas 4♦: I would have opened this hand 1♠. Now I bid 4♦, could I dream of a better fit.

Peter G 4♥: So much to get over to my partner and I hate making a splinter bid with a singleton ace, but 4♦ doesn't really help, especially if that is key card. I will be showing a 5143 shape at worse. Partner is better placed to decide between 6♦ and 7♦ here, and will be able to value ♣K or ♠Q highly on this auction if holding either one or both of these values.

Christina 7♦: Assuming I have only one bid 7♦

Dealer West. Vul All. Teams

			♠ Q1072
			♥ KJ63
			♦ K
			♣ KQ105
♠ AK987	N		♠ J3
♥ A		E	♥ Q1072
♦ AJ832	W		♦ 1097654
♣ A6		S	♣ 8
			♠ 65
			♥ 9854
			♦ Q
			♣ J97432

W	N	E	S
2♣ ¹	P	2♦ ²	P
2♠	P	3♦ ³	P
?			

¹ 2♣=ART GF; ² 2♦=waiting bid;
³ 3♦=natural 5+

Summary

The advantage of 4♦ as key card is that responder after a 4♣ denial of any key card can cue bid in clubs to show the singleton, allowing opener to confidently bid the small slam knowing that there are at least 12 tricks. 4♥ cue bid also allows for the 5♣ cue by responder. 7♦ works if they're 1-1 (52% chance).

Marks: 4♦=10; 4♥=10; 4NT=9; 7♦=8

Bidding Tip

Playing 4♣ and 4♦ as key card allows more space for exploring potential slams, leaving 4NT as a quantitative balanced hand with higher level points.



Question 7

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ -
- ♥ J4
- ♦ AKQ832
- ♣ AK1063

W	N	E	S
	P	P	1♦
1♥	1♠	P	?

Votes: 3♣=17; 2♠=2

South might well have opened with 2♣ but playing a 2♦ waiting bid didn't want the weaker responding hand to play a diamond contract!

Sally 3♣: I don't want to do too much bidding as partner probably doesn't have too many minor suit cards.

Roy 3♣: I would like to bid something stronger, but nothing appealing comes to mind.

Tom 3♣: Shows both minors, game forcing, and that's what we have.

Anna 3♣: I expect it to be game forcing.

Ciaran 3♣: Forcing.

Micheál 3♣: Showing a strong distributional hand.

Rory 3♣: Game forcing with a three-loser hand.

Adrian 3♣: Natural and game forcing.

Luca 3♣: What it says on the tin.

Peter P 3♣: 5-5 or 6-5 and a decent hand.

Thomas 3♣: What else?

Christina 3♣: I assume this is forcing.

Karel 3♣: seems the only bid.

Peter G 2♣: I am worth 3♣ but don't expect the auction to die in 2♣, and will push on to 5 or 6 of a minor depending on the rest of the auction. My spade void is a concern at this stage.

George 2♣: You can almost feel East salivating with a 6-card spade holding. There is no hurry here as the bidding is not over. It might even be partner who rebids spades. Then we can bid 3♣ and not get too far overboard.

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

	♠ AK1075		
	♥ 83		
	♦ J104		
	♣ 975		
♠ J2	N	♠ Q98643	
♥ AKQ87	W	♥ 10852	
♦ 65	E	♦ 97	
♣ J842	S	♣ Q	
	♠ -		
	♥ J4		
	♦ AKQ832		
	♣ AK1065		

W	N	E	S
	P	P	1♦
1♥	1♠	P	?

Summary

The advantage of the 3♣ jump rebid is that it confirms for partner both the shape and the values if the hand, whereas a simple 2♣ rebid may create later difficulties in expressing the extra values of the hand. However, the two panel members expressing caution found it pays off as game fails. The reservation about the spade void raised by Peter G is a contributing factor, though one might expect this to be a positive feature in many cases. As George points out the bidding is unlikely to stop in 2♣.

Marks: 3♣=10; 2♣=9

Bidding Tips

1. Although game fails on this hand 3♣ provides a better picture of both the strength and shape of opener's hand.
2. Note the reservation about the void in partner's suit which might not always be an advantage.

Question 8

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams

- ♠ AJ84
- ♥ QJ83
- ♦ 102
- ♣ AQ9

W	N	E	S
	1♣	X	1♥
X	2♣	2♠	P
P	3♣	?	

Votes: Pass=15; X=2; 3♥=2

A highly competitive auction, so how best to record a plus score at teams?

George Pass: And hope I beat it. Nobody is getting rich here. The less clubs that South has the more space available to fill with our suits. The law of total tricks says we only have an eight card fit, and we just sit tight and wait for the next quarterly hands to come out.

Karel Pass: Happy enough defending 3♣. Soft heart values suggest defending. Don't want to X as this suggests bidding on and a shortage in clubs. If partner doubles I will leave it in. As a side note partner's double of hearts the way I play it shows hearts, in case 1♥ was a psyche, with four spades just bid them.

Christina Pass: Not certain what partner's double means, hearts or takeout? I tend not to take chances in teams and trust my opponent to have KJTxxxx for their bidding, and pass. My partners never have the right hand for penalty doubles.

Thomas Pass: I guess from my second bid that partner's double was takeout. I would now pass: sure I think it is going down, but I don't think I should double. North could have a lot of shape, for instance a 7-4 with diamonds, in which case I don't want to gamble on where my partner's points are.

Luca Pass: I am happy for them to play 3♣.

Adrian Pass: Double might be



construed as a game try, as after my initial takeout double partner will not be expecting such good club values. I have shown my four-card spade support and 12-14, so I will now leave it to partner to decide.

Rory Pass: A tough problem. I presume partner's double shows four spades (with 1♠ showing five) rather than showing hearts to expose a psyche. It could be right to compete in spades with a non-minimum hand and well placed clubs, but hearts are not so well placed. Double may be ambiguous, penalty or game try.

Ciaran Pass: Double of 1♥ by my partner should show hearts since my double of 1♣ suggested length in hearts, so now not sure why I bid 2♠. If that is not our agreement we should. Now I pass as I've a minimum double and a defensive hand.

Roy Pass: I would like to gamble a double, but don't want to punish partner for competing.

Micheál Pass: You have shown your hand already, so leave the decision to partner.

Sally Pass: Presumably partner's double showed spades. I have already bid spades freely, and have good defence against 3♣, so don't see the reason to bid again.

Peter P 3♥: For me 1♣, X, 1♥, X is penalty, exposing the psychic heart intervention. If partner held four spades then 1♠ could have been bid over 1♥ at the first call. Partner is favourite to have no more than two clubs, therefore must hold four+ hearts.

Peter G 3♥: Not a great hand but the sort of hand we need to come in on over the short 1♣ these days. It is very important to agree West's double as showing hearts, and 2♣ would be a good hand without four hearts, but it looks as if South is not making a psychic 1♥ or a raise to 3♣ would have been made. Pass is another option if partner's double was just values without four spades.

Anna X: I expect to show extra points, exactly four spades, and happy to play in either 3♣X or 4♠ or 3NT.

Tom X: Time to take the money (hopefully), not doing this to collect +100, I expect 300 or maybe 500, the cards will not be lying great for the declarer who may not even get into dummy.

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

		♠K96			
		♥4			
		♦A4			
		♣KJ108543			
♠Q532		N		♠AJ84	
♥1062		W	E	♥QJ83	
♦KJ763				♦102	
♣2		S		♣AQ9	
		♠107			
		♥AK975			
		♦Q985			
		♣76			

W	N	E	S
	1♣	X	1♥
X	2♣	2♠	P
P	3♣	?	

Summary

When did the responsive double disappear to be replaced by a bid exposing a potential psychic bid? With so little bidding room is it not better to retain the responsive double to confirm the other two suits? Two reasons for this approach - firstly the much higher frequency of having two suits to show. Secondly, as Peter G observes, if the heart bid was a psyche, then the owner of the bid would take out into 3♣.

The more difficult decision is whether not to leave the opponents in 3♣ or bid 3♠. Assuming that the 1♥ overcall is genuine then it seems that East's heart holding is wasted values, so Pass looks the right choice.

Marks: Pass=10; 3♥=9; X=7

Bidding Tip

The responsive double is a handy convention in highly competitive situations.

Summary of the Expert Panel Results

Thomas Bessis, Luca Crone and Brad Moss tie on 78

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Sabine Auken	9	10	10	9	8	10	10	10	76
Irene Baroni	7	10	10	9	10	10	10	10	76
Thomas Bessis	9	10	10	9	10	10	10	10	78
Sally Brock	9	10	10	9	10	9	10	10	77
Ciaran Coyne	9	10	10	9	10	9	10	10	77
Luca Crone	9	10	10	9	10	10	10	10	78
Karel De Raeymaeker	9	10	10	9	8	9	10	10	75
Brad Moss	9	10	10	9	10	10	10	10	78
Peter Goodman	9	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	77
Joe Grue	9	10	10	9	8	10	10	10	76
Tom Hanlon	9	10	10	9	10	9	10	7	74
George Jacobs	9	10	10	9	10	9	9	10	76
Christina Lund Madsen	10	10	10	9	10	8	10	10	77
Peter Pigot	9	10	9	9	10	10	10	9	76
Micheál O'Briain	9	10	10	10	8	9	10	10	76
Anna Onishuk	9	10	10	9	10	9	10	7	74
Adrian Thomas	9	10	10	9	10	9	10	10	77
Rory Timlin	9	9	10	9	10	9	10	10	76
Roy Welland	9	10	10	10	8	9	10	10	77



C O N T R A C T
B R I D G E
A S S O C I A T I O N
O F I R E L A N D
S I N C E • 1 9 3 2

Templeogue House,
Templeogue Rd,
Templeogue, D6W F822

Phone: (01) 492 9666
Email: info@cbai.ie

www.cbai.ie