

## December Bronze Bidding Challenge

*This set of problems comes from the Rayne Trophy Final.*

**Problem 1 Teams: EW Vul, Dealer South**

	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♠T4				
♥QJ532	-	-	-	Pass
♦843	Pass	1♥	Dbl	Pass
♣T93	?			

*An impossible problem. If only South had come to our rescue by making a bid!  
Our panellists suggest 3 different solutions, and our competitors could not come up with any others.  
The most popular suggestion was:*

**MALE: 1NT** seems the only option, to pass and hope to defeat the contract looks hopeless.

**SIME: 1NT.** The only reason for passing the double can be that we think that -260 (2♥X+1) would be an acceptable score. That seems a tad pessimistic. And sidelines partner, who could have anything.

**GALLACHER: 1NT** This is almost exactly like a board I played 2 weeks ago. I had 19HCP and partner passed my double. (Maybe 1NT would have been better). I always respond to partner's double in this situation.

*However...a 1NT response to a double normally shows more high cards than this, something like 7-10HCP.  
The auction suggests that partner has a strong hand, in which case he may raise. Vulnerable undertricks are expensive, particularly if opponents find a double.  
Some decide to take their medicine – 1♥ doubled is not game; non-vulnerable overtricks are 'only' 100 apiece.*

**MCKAY: PASS.** Hoping to limit the damage on the grounds that anything else might get us into more trouble.

**FRAME: PASS:** The only alternative is 1NT and I would probably need to take all 7 tricks in the dummy, with no entries to hand. 1♥x may well make, but is less likely to lead to -200, -500 or even -800 so I opt for the less risky alternative with no great expectation of a plus score.

*Well... we were all taught that 'takeout doubles should be taken out'. Partner asks you to bid your best suit.  
If we swapped the black suits round I suspect everybody would bid 1♠ as the weakest-sounding option. I can understand a reluctance to advance to the 2-level, but is 2♣ not the weakest-sounding choice here?*

**HAMILTON: 2♣.** Not quite enough heart strength to Pass. If partner now bids 2♠ or 2♦, I'll pass. If they bid a forcing 2♥ I'll bid 2NT.

*Seems sensible to me. I think opponents are less likely to double 2♣ than anything else I might try.*

	Votes	Marks	Competitors
<b>1NT</b>	4	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2♣</b>	1	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PASS</b>	3	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>

*Partner has his double – A853 6 AQ52 KQ87. When he raised 1NT to 2NT that did not play well. As predicted, the despairing pass sees them make an overtrick in 2♥X for -260.*

**Problem 2 Teams: EW Vul, Dealer North**

	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♠Q976				
♥J8	-	P	1♥	1♠
♦AQJ3	?			
♣Q95				

*Is this an easy problem?*

**SANDERS: 2NT.** 10-12 points and a stop in opponent's suit.

**MALE:** Double or 2NT? I think the 9 persuades me to call **2NT**.

*Some experienced partnerships play that 2NT in this situation shows a good 4-card raise for partner's heart suit, using the 2♠ cuebid for a 3-card raise. Which may explain why Tim, who hates to miss a vulnerable game at teams, goes full throttle:*

**MCKAY: 3NT.** A bit of a stretch (a "Teams Bid") but at this form of scoring it should pay off more often than not.

The dilemma here is whether to try to find out more about partner's hand, or to tell him about your spade stopper assuming that NT is the most likely game.

**SIME: DOUBLE.** Let's leave partner the maximum room to describe his hand. 2/3NT now would be more attractive if my second spade was the Ten, making two stoppers.

*A delicate distinction. Some 1♠ overcalls I have seen recently suggest that QTxx may not be two stoppers! Q9xx is enough to stop them cashing the first 5 tricks, and will almost surely make a trick if they lead spades, The negative double will find out whether partner has a secondary 4-card minor, but even if that is diamonds are we likely to play anywhere but NT? And what will partner do with a balanced hand but no spade stopper?*

**Tudor: 2♦.** This hand has a no-trumpy feel to it, but it's not certain that a no-trump contract is the final destination - and there's no rush to get there. So I start slow by bidding my suit ...

*A new suit here is forcing for one round. But if partner rebids 2♥ you will not be much further forward – they would have to rebid a 5-card suit with secondary clubs, or a balanced hand. And then you would bid NT...*

.	Votes	Marks	Competitors
2NT	4	10	18
3NT	1	8	2
DBL	2	7	1
2♦	1	6	11
1NT	0	5	2
2♠	0	2	1

*Partner has a minimum opener: 53 AK953 T764 A2. You can make 3NT by picking up ♥QTx in the North hand and finessing diamonds, but most found that too difficult.*

### Problem 3 Teams None Vul, Dealer East

	West	North	East	South
♠54	-	-	1♠	2♦
♥AK92	3♣	P	3♠	P
♦-	?			
♣AK87632				

*This auction has got rather high rather fast. Most of the panel think slam is in the air, but in which strain? Derek hopes to find partner with a little club support.*

**SANDERS: 4♣.** Since 3♣ is a new suit at the 3-level it is game-forcing. 4♣ emphasises the suit.

*4♣ is undoubtedly a good call if it is forcing. You really want to know whether partner has a partial club fit. But will partner take it as forcing? A new suit at the 3-level in an uncontested auction is certainly game-forcing, but does this apply in competition? I tend to agree with Iain here:*

**SIME:** Is 4♣ Forcing? No. What would I do with x, xxx, xxx, AKQxxx?

*There are many hands with a 7-card club suit eg x Kxx xx AKxxxxx that I could not bear to pass over 2♦, where I would like partner to be allowed to pass my 4♣ rebid with a misfit.*

*Mike does not believe in messing about:*

**GALLACHER: 6♠.** I reckon partner has 6 spades for his 3♠ bid and a better than minimum hand. I have a 4-loser hand. Slam in either spades or clubs is on but which one? My partner might have advanced in clubs if she had any. I feel spades is where we want to play.

*I am not sure that partner has shown extras by bidding 3♠ - he was forced to bid, after all. Worst case scenario he has something like AKJxx Jxx Kxxx x. The Losing Trick Count works best when you have at least a 9-card fit. Here you will need partner to have a pretty solid spade suit to make slam.*

*Danny finds a way to consult partner about his spade quality.*

**HAMILTON: 5♠.** Inviting partner to bid 6♠ with good trumps - they opened the bidding so must have points somewhere and I'm hoping it's solid spades. If I bid a forcing 4♦ instead not sure that helps.

*Danny has made a good point, but the rest of the panel bid 4♦ anyway.*

**MALE: 4♦.** A 4-loser hand, nor sure where we are going yet, let's see what partner does.

*Partner is unlikely to have a heart control to cuebid, so what do you plan to do next when partner bids 4♣?*

Russell agrees with Derek that the auction is game-forcing but adopts a different approach:

**FRAME: 4♦:** I have 2-card support for partner's 6-card suit with ruffing values and 4 top tricks in the side suits. Partner's 3♠ should be stronger than 4♠ opposite my game-forcing 3♣ bid so I feel I'm worth a slam try in case he is suitable.

*The Principle of Fast Arrival applies when you have a choice between a jump to game and a single raise.*

*Eg 2♣ – 2♦ – 2♠ - now 4♣ is weaker than 3♠, which implies that you have something to cuebid.*

*Eg 1♠ - 2NT (game-forcing raise) - 4♣, using up more space, is weaker than 3♠.*

*But I doubt that this Principle applies here, where spades have not been agreed.*

*Several competitors opt for 4NT, Ace-asking. Which is not generally recommended when you have a void, but might work well provided partner does not have the ♦A. Only one competitor is brave enough to try 5♦, Exclusion Keycard, a fine convention that is, unfortunately, often misunderstood.*

.	Votes	Marks	Competitors
4♦	5	10	10
5♠	1	9	0
4♣	1	8	2
4♠	0	7	9
6♠	1	6	0
5♦	0	5	1
4NT	0	4	12
5♣	0	3	1
4♥	0	2	3
6♣	0	2	1

*Partner has a disappointing KQT982 8 AJ765 9. 4♣ is where you want to be, though 5♠ will probably survive.*

#### Problem 4 Teams EW Vul, Dealer East

♠AQT ♥Q842 ♦A3 ♣QJ76	West	North	East	South
	-	-	1♦	P
	1♥	P	2♣	P
	?			

*There is a common misconception that when partner rebids a new suit they show a minimum opening bid. The great majority of our competitors choose the game that is most likely to succeed opposite a minimum opener. There are 2 possible scenarios where this is the wrong thing to do.*

**SANDERS: 2♠.** 3NT is fine but 2♠, 4th suit, works a treat when partner has a strong 5-5 shape.

**TUDOR: 2♠.** If I jump to 3NT then I give up on a slam in clubs. Start with Fourth Suit Forcing and see what you learn from partner's next bid.

*Indeed. Partner can still have up to 17HCP in an unbalanced hand that is not quite worth a game-forcing jump rebid of 3♣. The lazy 3NT bid might easily miss an excellent slam.*

**SIME: 2♠.** Fourth Suit Forcing, asking partner to further describe his hand. Be wary of 3NT with ♥Q8xx opposite a possible singleton- not even one stopper.

*Again with the Stopper! But you do need the 9 to be sure. LHO is unlikely to lead a heart, but if opponents win a trick later they may find a killer switch. It would be embarrassing to go down in 3NT opposite Kxx - KQxxx ATxxx with 6♣ cold.*

.	Votes	Marks	Competitors
2♠	5	10	5
3NT	3	8	29
5♣	0	7	1

*Partner has KJ 6 KQT64 AK852, a bit extra but not enough to jump to 3♣ over 1♥. If you go through 4<sup>th</sup> suit, you can raise clubs next time to reach slam. If she rebids 3♦ with a 6-4 hand you can bid 3NT and with extras she may bid on with 4NT (quantitative when no suit is agreed) Now you can bid slam. Most pairs played in 3NT*

## Competitors Top Scores

*A rather peculiar set, where I confess that I would not have scored very well!*

<b>2* Master</b>	Charles Fogelman	GBC	32
<b>1* Master</b>	Alasdair Adam	Direct	40
	Robin Macpherson	New Melville	39
<b>Master</b>	Pam Warner	New Melville	35
	David Hartley	St Andrew	28
	Neil Bulleid	Buchanan	28
	Brian Rattray	Oban	27
	Marilyn McDonagh	Carlton	25
<b>District Master</b>	Paul Kerr	Troon	35
	Graham Vincent	Linlithgow	34
	Rosemary Jamieson	Carlton	33
	Jean Cousins	Buchanan	32
	Ken Tait	Marmion	31
	May Armour	Kyle	30
	Liz Forbes	Oban	28
<b>Local Master</b>	Keith Smith	New Melville	38
	Peter Beckett	New Melville	35
	Margaret Mainland	Orkney	35
	Lesley Cochrane	Aberdeen	33
	Larry Watson	New Melville	31
	Gavin Easton	Longniddry	30
	Angela Ford	Maccabi	29
	John Ramsay	Carlton	28
<b>Club Master</b>	Wilma Currie	Kilmacolm	35
	Linton Horsfall	Carlton	33
	Fiona McCourt	Bearsden Academy	31
	Helen Adamson	Kirkcaldy	28
	Stephen Carr	Ness	28
	Debbie Bland	Bearsden Academy	27
<b>Novice</b>	Ian Lowson	New Melville	32
	Evelyn Watson	Stepping-Stone	32

# The Best of 2022

*Congratulations and thanks to all the regular competitors.*

*These are the leading scores for those who entered at least 8 times, averaging their 8 best scores. The top player for each Master Point Rank is highlighted*

			entries	Tot	Av	Best 8	Av
Robin MacPherson	1* Master	New Melville	10	369	36.9	304	38.0
Neil Bulleid	Master	Buchanan	11	379	34.5	292	36.5
Charles Fogelman	2* Master	GBC	12	409	34.0	287	36.0
Margaret Mainland	Local Master	Orkney	12	416	34.7	287	36.0
Will Iles	2* Master	Stewartry	9	317	35.2	286	35.8
May Armour	District Master	Kyle	11	373	33.9	283	35.4
Peter Beckett	Local Master	New Melville	12	398	33.2	281	35.1
Roy Heanes	1* Master	New Melville	10	344	34.4	281	35.1
Alasdair Adam	1* Master	Individual	10	323	32.3	279	34.9
Paul Kerr	District Master	Troon	9	300	33.3	278	34.8
Liz Forbes	Local Master	Oban	11	357	32.5	276	34.5
Linton Horsfall	Club Master	Carlton	12	371	31.0	274	34.2
Stephen Carr	Club Master	Ness	9	301	33.4	273	34.1
David Edelman	Master	Maccabi	8	269	33.6	269	33.6
Marilyn McDonagh	Master	Carlton	10	323	32.3	269	33.6
Gavin Easton	Local Master	Longniddry	10	309	30.9	266	33.3
Helen Adamson	Club Master	Kirkcaldy	12	356	29.7	265	33.1
Jacky Lindsay	Club Master	New Melville	10	308	30.8	262	32.8
Pam Warner	Master	New Melville	8	262	32.8	262	32.8
Angela Ford	Local Master	Maccabi	9	289	32.1	261	32.6
Keith Smith	Local Master	New Melville	8	261	32.6	261	32.6
Jane Smithson	Master	Berwick	9	289	32.1	261	32.6
John Smithson	District Master	Berwick	8	260	32.5	260	32.5
Rosemary Jamieson	District Master	Carlton	8	258	32.2	258	32.2
David Hartley	Master	St Andrew	10	305	30.5	255	31.9
Evelyn Watson	Novice	SteppingStone	10	297	29.7	254	31.7
Debbie Bland	Club Master	Bearsden Acad	11	357	29.3	249	31.1
Chris Mickley	Local Master	Nairn	11	318	29.0	235	29.4
John Ramsay	Local Master	Carlton	8	229	28.6	229	28.6

*These are the Leading Scores from those who entered 6 or 7 times (There may have been some communication problems, which we hope to sort out in 2023)*

				Tot	Av
Ken Brown	District Master	Pentland	7	252	36.0
Alex Sutherland	Master	New Melville	7	243	34.7
Fiona McCourt	Club	Bearsden Acad	7	230	33.9
Ken Tait	District	Marmion	7	221	31.6
Quentin Stephens	District	Aberdeen	7	220	31.4
Sheila Ritchie	District	Dundee	7	218	31.1
David King	1*	Berwick	7	215	30.7
Angela Horsfall	Club	Carlton	7	215	30.7
Douglas Woodburn	Local	Doon	6	209	34.8
Alan Paterson	District	Johnstone	6	206	34.3
David Olive	Master	Caledonian	6	204	34.0
Alan Kirk	Master	Bearsden Acad	6	191	31.8
Brian Allan	Club	Dundee	6	176	29.3
Ian Lawson	Novice	New Melville	6	175	29.1