

Scottish Bridge News

The Official Magazine of the Scottish Bridge Union
Issue 128



Nigel Guthrie and Ian Crorie

Scottish Bridge News

Editorial

This issue covers the European Youth championships held in July. A new Under-31 category was introduced in an attempt to maintain interest among younger players no longer eligible for the traditional under-26 Junior category. It proved quite popular with an entry of 16 teams, just two fewer than the Junior event.

This innovation is opposed by the EBU, who already send teams to all four other categories. However, they do support the Under-26 Women's event, introduced in 2015. The entry in that category was just 8 teams, all from the largest NBOs. Most of the smaller NBOs struggle to produce one Under-26 team, let alone two. Seems to me that Scotland should support the Under-31 event, and lobby to abolish the Under-26 Women.

We have lost two of our greatest characters: Nigel Guthrie finally succumbed to cancer and Ian Crorie suffered a sudden massive heart attack. This edition is dedicated to them, with contributions from their many friends

and partners. Another loss is Helen McEwing, a staunch supporter of Scottish events prior to the pandemic.

We have a new Conductor for the Bidding Panel, Arend Bayer. There is some confusion abroad because there is another bidding competition the Bronze Bidding Challenge, a brainchild of Russell Frame. The BBC is a monthly event with 4 problems, which are published on the website at the beginning of each month, together with a commentary and marks for the previous month's problems. The Scottish Bridge News Bidding Panel has 8 Problems and is open to all comers. The problems are published in the Ezine every 2 months alongside the article for the previous set.

As you may imagine, there is a lot of work involved in collating and marking the entries. There must be someone out there with time on their hands who would be interested in taking on that part of the job?

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European Youth Championships

The first European Junior Championships were held in 1968. They continued in even-numbered years till 2004, then moved to odd-numbered years. The postponed 2021 event was held this year in Eindhoven in the Netherlands.

The qualifying age has varied: currently Juniors are defined as Under 26 on the 1st of January in the year of competition. In 1994 a new Youngsters category was introduced for Under-21s. 10 years later came a more controversial Girls event. In 2015 Under-16s were invited to participate. This year, for the 27th event, a new Under-31 category appeared.

Extra categories put extra pressure on NBOs. Only 4 countries sent 5 teams: France, Hungary, Netherlands and Poland. England, Germany, Israel, Norway and Türkiye sent 4 teams. Scotland sent 2.

There were 18 teams in the Under-26 event, and they played a Round Robin of 18-board matches over 7 days. The other teams all played 12-board matches. The 14 Under-21 teams played a double Round Robin, 26 matches over 7 days. The other events were played over 4 days. The Under-26 Women had just 8 teams and played a double Round Robin; the Under 16s had 15 teams and the Under 31s 16.

The Under-31 category gave some of our talented recently ex-Juniors a chance to compete. The team was Jake Milne & Jun Nakamaru-Pinder; Liam O'Brien & Ronan Valentine; Glen Falconer and Gints Freimanis.

The Under 31s Adventures in Double Land. Match 1 v Spain

Board 8	♠J ♥AT84 ♦A873 ♣AKT4	None Vul Dealer W									
♠8 ♥K92 ♦J92 ♣Q98753	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠T96543 ♥Q7 ♦KQT4 ♣J
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠AKQ72 ♥J653 ♦65 ♣62										

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	1♦	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	End	

Our East was not alone in overcalling his magnificent suit; only two found a pass. Luckily, there were only 5 trump and 3 Aces to lose. Our NS scored 430 in 3NT, holding the loss to 2 imps.

Match 3 v Israel

Board 5	♠A72 ♥AT652 ♦K5 ♣976	NS Vul Dealer N									
♠KQJ5 ♥- ♦QJ98432 ♣32	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠96 ♥QJ874 ♦A ♣AK854
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠T843 ♥K93 ♦T76 ♣QJT										

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	1♥	2♣	2♥
Dbl	End		

This was the auction at both tables. West's double showed the unbid suits.

There is no record of his feelings when partner passed. Ronan somehow escaped for one down. Jun and Jake achieved 3 down for 800 and a pleasing 12 imp gain.

The next exhibit was less successful.

Match 6 v Poland

Board 15	♠A4 ♥KQJ964 ♦J53 ♣75	NS Vul Dir S									
♠KQ9 ♥T7 ♦9742 ♣AJ42	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠T732 ♥A8532 ♦KT8 ♣K
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠J865 ♥— ♦AQ6 ♣QT9863										

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-			Pass
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	Pass	3♣
Dbl	End		

Our North played 2♥, which he might have made but did not. The Polish weak 2 opener is quite stuffy, and it is hard to criticise the re-opening double. The second double of 3♣ is hungry for 200, but is the extra 100 worth the extra pressure? The winning defence is to lead a low club and hope partner returns a spade. Declarer wins the ♠A, ruffs out the ♥A and plays a second spade. You cash ♣A, removing dummy's last trump, and play a diamond, relying on partner to have a good holding there. You make 3 clubs, 2 spades and a diamond for 2 down, +500. On a more normal spade lead you might play ♣A and another, crashing partner's King, to stop the spade ruff. But dummy's ♣7 is now an entry for a diamond discard unless you sacrifice your ♣J. -670 cost 13 imp.

Match 9 v Romania

Board 5	♠QT87532 ♥A ♦J2 ♣A52	NS Vul Dealer N									
♠J6 ♥Q976 ♦Q93 ♣8743	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠AK ♥J432 ♦AT87 ♣KJ9
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠94 ♥KT85 ♦K654 ♣QT6										

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	1♠	1NT	Dbl
End			

A thin 1NT overcall followed by a light double. Which might pay dividends provided we remember to lead partner's suit. Hard to see why a heart lead seemed like a good idea – it certainly fooled North who did not switch to spades because he was sure partner could not have more than one. -280 was disappointing when there was relatively easy 300 on offer. -9 instead of +5.

Should North pull the double to the making 2♠ with such a weak suit? He does have two Aces as entries...

Match 10 v Belgium

Bd 19	♠9754 ♥KQT4 ♦3 ♣QJ94	EW Vul Dealer S									
♠— ♥9752 ♦AK54 ♣AT852	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠QJT8632 ♥3 ♦QJ92 ♣3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠AK ♥AJ86 ♦T876 ♣K76										

This board produced big swings in almost every match.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	2♣*	2♠	1NT
Pass	4♥	Pass	Dbl
Dbl	End		Pass

The Belgian NS reached what looks like a perfectly reasonable game. But Glen led the ♠Q. Gints ruffed, gave partner a club ruff, ruffed a second spade and cashed a diamond for two down. This looks like a good result?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♥	2♠	1♦
End			Dbl

Our South downgraded his hand (or did he miscount?) and followed with a 'flexible' double (or did he missort and think he had only 3 hearts?)

Best defence is to lead a diamond, but two diamond ruffs are not enough to beat the contract. We actually allowed an overtrick for -870, 11 imps away,

Match 12 v Portugal

Bd 14	♠ T653	None Vul
	♥ A962	Dealer E
	♦ 2	
	♣ A753	
♠ AQ9		♠ 872
♥ KJT8		♥ Q7
♦ Q95		♦ J763
♣ KQT		♣ J962
	♠ KJ4	
	♥ 543	
	♦ AKT84	
	♣ 84	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-		Pass	1♣
1NT	Dbl	End	

Our NS open 1♣ on all balanced weak NT hands. Another thin double of a 1NT overall but this time there was no defence. North found the spade lead that held declarer to 7 tricks, but this did not look good.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1NT	Dbl	2♣	1♦
2♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
End			Dbl

Not to worry! Our East tried to wriggle out of 1NT doubled, but West assumed he was using Stayman. There is a defence to the 4-2 fit: singleton diamond lead for Ace-King-ruff, club switch to organise a ruff for South. This was too tough for the Portuguese and our hero made an overtrick for +570, 9 imps in.

Match 13 v Serbia

Board 7	♠ 98	All Vul
	♥ AJ92	Dealer S
	♦ A3	
	♣ A9642	
♠ J4		♠ KQ52
♥ K8543		♥ QT76
♦ T762		♦ KQ
♣ 53		♣ KJ8
	♠ AT763	
	♥ -	
	♦ J9854	
	♣ QT7	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	1♣	1NT	Pass
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	End

Our turn to overcall 1NT. West broke the transfer, optimistic opposite a passed hand with an Aceless collection. The spade lead meant he had to guess clubs, and with no clue to the bad trump break he went one down.

In the other room

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	1♣	1NT	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Dbl
End			

South's decision to compete went wrong when partner passed. Warned about the bad trump break declarer might have lost just the 4 missing Aces, but he held himself to 8 tricks. -670, just the 13imps away.

So in spite of a couple of good results the net result of our low-level doubles was -27.

They say that if you never double a contract that means you are not doubling enough. The big question is: might we defend better without the added pressure of a double?

The Youth championships had an electronic innovation: players entered their bids on a tablet before playing the hands normally. There is a complete record of every auction in every match on the EBL website:

www.eurobridge.org

*Click on **Competitions**, then choose **Championship Archives** from the menu.*

*Select **28th European Youth Teams Championships** and you find the **Results** page. Select a match, pull up the scorecard, hover over a contract and the auction appears. Magic!*

The Under 26 Teams

Juniors have a limited lifespan, and our experienced players had graduated to the Under 31s, so this was a learning experience for our new team. They were: Jamie Day & Tamsin Munro; Lydia Foale & Jack Shearer; Michael Kennedy & Donald MacKillop; npcs Danny Hamilton / Alisdair McLeod.

Hand evaluation beyond the point count is rarely discussed with learners, but it can be very important.

Match 3 v France

Board 13	♠ A43	All Vul
	♥ KT8753	Dealer N
	♦ AK	
	♣ J8	
♠ KJ82		♠ T96
♥ Q2		♥ J6
♦ 75		♦ JT8432
♣ AKT63		♣ 75
	♠ Q75	
	♥ A94	
	♦ Q96	
	♣ Q942	

At both tables North, playing 5-card Majors, opened 1♥. South raised to 2♥ (For all its 10 HCP this hand has little trick-taking potential in a suit contract. The 4=3=3=3 shape means you cannot ruff anything and the Queens may be wasted opposite partner's doubleton.) Our North passed; the French North leapt confidently to 4♥.

North has only 14HCP (we do not count a point for Jx in a suit contract) but he has an extra trump, an Ace more than his fair share, and only 6 losers, one fewer than a minimum opener. And because he now knows partner has heart support he can deduct a loser 'for trump control'.

4♥ is not guaranteed to make: you can throw one loser on the ♦Q, but you still need trump to behave. But it was bid at 14 of the 18 tables and failed only once (did declarer apply Restricted Choice?). Far more points are lost by missing vulnerable games than by bidding games that fail.

Match 6 v Norway

Board 6	♠ 2	EW Vul
	♥ KQ97	Dealer E
	♦ AQ7	
	♣ AQ862	
♠ A		♠ QJT3
♥ T6542		♥ 3
♦ QJ62		♦ T985
♣ K94		♣ JT53
	♠ K987643	
	♥ AJ8	
	♦ 43	
	♣ 7	

Most Souths opened a fairly normal 3♠. Our South was not the only one to open 4♠, but the other Norths were more used to this sort of Junior pre-empt. They passed. Our North expected a better suit and drove to an optimistic slam. Declarer tackled trump by playing low to the King, so lost 4 trump tricks for 3 down. But -150 would lose just 3 imps provided Norway were one down in 4♠.

In the other room the Norwegian South opened 2♠! (Their style was to use the Multi 2♦ for really weak 2s.) Our West made a takeout double, North redoubled and poor East was left to play 3♣X, losing 1700. Ouch!

A light takeout double with perfect shape can work well, but... West has 7 losers; his long suit lacks quality; and a singleton Ace in opponent's suit is no great asset. Should he really force to the 3-level opposite a passed hand?

We did better on this board.

Match 10 v Italy

Board 3	♠ 742	EW Vul
	♥ A3	Dealer S
	♦ KQ82	
	♣ T952	
♠ Q6		♠ 83
♥ Q82		♥ JT765
♦ AT753		♦ 6
♣ KQ4		♣ AJ863
	♠ AKJT95	
	♥ K94	
	♦ J94	
	♣ 7	

When South opened 1♠ the Italian West could not resist a double. Donald raised to 2♠ and East naturally bid 4♥. This propelled Michael into 4♠ and the perfect fit game rolled in. (Yes, there is a defence: but who leads the ♦A?)

Jack did not double: the ♠Q is wasted in offence; he has only 3 hearts; and the 5=3=3=2 distribution is nearly as bad as 4=3=3=3. And so Italy languished in 2♠ and we gained 6 imps.

Match 13 v Poland

Board 1	♠ Q6	None Vul
	♥ KJ975	Dealer N
	♦ J54	
	♣ T83	
♠ 54		♠ AJT92
♥ -		♥ Q83
♦ AT9762		♦ K8
♣ KQ752		♣ A94
	♠ K873	
	♥ AT642	
	♦ Q3	
	♣ J6	

This East hand has only 14HCP but contains no Jacks and has reasonable intermediates and a stuffy 5-card Major.

The strong no-trumpers all upgraded to a 1NT opener; we opened 1(weak)NT.

Over 1NT West has an interesting problem. Only 9HCP, but a 5-loser hand. Assuming partner does not open 1NT with 5-4 in the Majors there are at least 5 minor suit cards opposite. Seems worth a punt at game. But can you show a big minor 2-suiter? Perhaps bid diamonds, via a transfer if necessary, then bid and rebid clubs? The Poles bid 5♦, we languished in 3♦.

Match 15 v Turkey

Board 10	♠ AJ762	All Vul
	♥ 5	Dealer E
	♦ T542	
	♣ K43	
♠ KQT843		♠ 95
♥ 32		♥ KQ876
♦ AQ		♦ 97
♣ QJ2		♣ A865
	♠ -	
	♥ AJT94	
	♦ KJ863	
	♣ T97	

The Turks, older, larger and much more experienced, taught our team a hard lesson.

When East passed as dealer the Turkish South opened 1♥. Only 9HCP! He upgraded the 5-5 distribution, aware that if he did not open he might be frozen out of the auction, Our West overcalled 1♠ and North bid a rather aggressive 1NT. East had nothing sensible to say, and South introduced his second suit. Our West had probably intended to rebid spades but was put off by the 1NT call and passed. North raised to 3♦, ending the auction.

Our South passed. West opened 1♠ and East, playing 2-over-1 forcing to game, had to respond 1NT. South

passed again, West removed to 2♠ and East passed that round to South. Were opponents stealing? It seemed like a good idea to compete – but 3♥ was not a success. East doubled gleefully and collected a very painful 1400.

Our South was not the only player to pass in second seat: half the field agreed. (Some could open 2♥, a weak 2-suiter with hearts and a minor.) But the other passers either passed throughout after East responded 2♥; or took some action on the second round, when competing was rather safer. Even as it went, South does best to compete with 2NT, ostensibly showing the minors, but planning to convert 3♣ to 3♦ to show the red 2-suiter.

Our EW pair might have done better also. A club lead and switch to trump beats 3♦. But they lost the board in the auction. If West rebids his spades, showing a sound overcall with a 6+card suit, (no weak jump overcall), nice things might happen. Two pairs collected 870 from 2♠X with an overtrick; and one scored +930 when East competed to 3♠ over 3♦.

This was not a very successful outing for our Juniors, but one of our team commented that she had learned more in one week in Eindhoven than from all her bridge lessons put together. A hopeful sign for the future!

This article was compiled with much help from npc Danny Hamilton's blog.

<https://bridgedanny.blogspot.com/>

In Memoriam:

Nigel Guthrie

29 October 1940 - 29 August 2022.



Nigel was the son of Charles Guthrie – a few of us still remember this kindest of men and his formidable partnership with Rosemary Cadell.

Born in Lusaka, Zambia, Nigel studied Maths at Edinburgh University, and later gained a Masters degree at Heriot Watt. He worked as an IT specialist for DEC in Reading. When he retired in 2010 he relocated to Glasgow. Nigel is survived by his second wife Sandra, three children (Resi, Barbara, David), and a granddaughter Eve.

He made his mark on the Scottish bridge scene early, one of the extremely talented young players in the 1960s.

John Matheson remembers...

I have known Nigel for almost 60 years. He is one of those rare people who are even more fanatical about bridge than myself!

In 1966 we travelled to London to play in the British University Pairs Championship. It was held on a

Saturday and Sunday. We arrived on Friday afternoon at Stefan's Bridge Club in Edgeware Road. We were challenged by two semi-professionals against whom we held our own.

We tumbled out of Stefan's at 2 am still to find accommodation. We wandered about the Marble Arch area. I was focusing on B&B's whilst Nigel was still engrossed in post mortems: eg "against 3NT if I lead a club and you find the spade switch we might have beaten it"

Liz McGowan partnered Nigel for several years.

I first met Nigel soon after I joined the Melville Bridge Club in 1971. He was spectating when I stumbled into a 'rhubarb squeeze' and he promptly invited me to play with him. It is to Nigel that I owe much of my success. He inspired me with his enthusiasm and sheer love of bridge.

We played in the Portland Cup – the British Mixed Pairs championship – in 1973. In those days there were huge Scottish heats. I was very green, but with Nigel's skilful play and a lot of luck - we won!

The prize was free entry and accommodation at the Guardian Easter Tournament. – a big event that attracted the top players of the day. Sandy Duncan and Brian Short invited us to play in the Teams on Sunday. That was going quite well till we came to play Omar Sharif immediately after dinner. Fearing that I might be too starstruck to follow suit Nigel decided to put me at my ease. "Have you got a cigarette, poxy?" he enquired of Omar. The match went very badly, but the abiding memory is of Omar returning to our table to point out an error in the score. Instead of losing 20 - -2 we had 'only' lost 20 - 0.

Nigel was fascinated not just by the play of the cards – he has been known to make 6♥ when others were failing in game – but also by the auction. He invented a system which he called Nottingham Club. (In those days you could play any named published system, and Marjorie Burns' book was thin enough on detail to allow a pretty free hand.)

We enjoyed some success: we won the SBU Congress Teams in 1974 – it took me 25 years to repeat that success – and reached the last 8 of the Gold Cup a couple of times. We were even invited to play in the Camrose Trials.

While working on his post-graduate thesis, Nigel got a job in Fife. It came with a company car and, in Nigel's case, company driving lessons. In 1981 we drove to Birmingham to play in the Pairs at the Common Market Championships. Nigel's car was an automatic. As we approached a narrow bridge he had a 50-50 shot on which pedal to hit. He had more success with these at the table...

In 1983 we were selected to play in the British Mixed Team at the Common Market Championships in Ostend along with a Welsh pair, Jessie Newton and Alan Pierce. This was our first experience of playing abroad. In one match our opponents were Benito Garozzo and Leah Dupont. We bid to 6♠, and the Italian maestro made a lead-directing double. His partner duly led a heart for him to ruff – but she chose the Queen from QJxxx. Nigel played carefully to pick up the hearts and make his slam. 6♠X against Garozzo!

There was no happy ending. At that time boards were duplicated by hand. When you needed a board you collected one from a central table. Our

other pair collected one where the East-West cards were interchanged. The score was cancelled.

I am sure that, with a better partner, Nigel would have been a regular in the Camrose team, even in that era of Scottish greatness. He did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the *History of the Scottish Bridge Union* but surely deserves a place.

Paul Gipson knew Nigel from his time at Reading BC.

My relationship with Nigel has revolved purely around bridge since we met in the mid-1980s at Reading Bridge Club. I've never met his wife or family and we rarely discussed work. (He has met my wife, but then she plays bridge.)

At that time, he played in the traditional conservative Scottish style: get through the bidding as quickly as possible, it was the play that mattered. He was a very strong pairs player.

He became fascinated with system development as he got older and had more time on his hands. He was always fiddling, tweaking, and seeking victims who would play his latest ideas.

He won the British Mixed Pairs three times, each time with a different woman: Carolyn Peplow in 1970, Liz McGowan in 1973 and Hedy Brown in 1997 (when Hedy was in her eighties); and the EBU Grand Master Pairs with long-time friend David Barnes in 2008.

His primary partner at Reading was Stuart Maurice and I played in their team for a few years. Stuart always complained that Nigel took far more time at the table than anyone else; a problem that he never overcame; falling asleep at the table didn't help!

The most frustrating part of this was that, more often than not, he was not

thinking about the hand he was playing. It would be a previous hand, not necessarily the last one, and he'd spotted some line, defence or position that would have allowed him to do better on the hand. Nigel was the only person I knew who could take five minutes to respond to Stayman; eventually his partner would get fed up and tell him to concentrate on the hand in play.

In the days long before double dummy solvers, if you ever played with Nigel, either as a partner or teammate, you'd always receive comments about interesting hands afterwards. There was never blame, but it was always about the beauty of a hand or position.

Like Paddington Bear, Nigel could rarely be separated from his duffel coat. He was often seen wearing it at the EBU Summer Congress when most were wearing very little. It was not particularly scruffy; he wore a suit jacket under it.

The unstoppable force met an immovable object during one of our matches in the county league. This was an era where head-to-head matches were played in people's homes and, to many, the tea was more important than the bridge. We were playing in a lovely house and, while the rest of us were dealing the hands, our host was trying to remove the coat in her warm, centrally-heated home.

We were well down at half-time and a lavish buffet was laid out: sandwiches, sausage rolls, canapes and lots of different cakes. It was here that Nigel won us the match. Having been playing for some time, he was keen to remain standing and loaded up his plate. He then wandered around the living room talking to both us and the opponents about the interesting hands in the first half and how badly he'd done.

This was all done with cake precariously balanced in his right hand. Our host followed him around the room with a small dustpan and brush, clearing up all the crumbs after him. I believe it was the mental exhaustion caused by this that allowed us to turn the match around. I should add that Nigel always denied this happening when I told this story, but he was giggling away since he really had no idea what happened save he could probably recall a hand from the match.

Nigel loved playing bridge and, if he could not play, then discussing bridge. He was well-known on various forums for his strong, often eclectic, views (BridgeWinners came too late for the full force of his views as his health declined).

His desire for a simpler law book was insatiable but he struggled to articulate how it could be done. He was forever disappointed that the WBF did not enforce a uniform set of regulations on all NBOs: he did not support different system and alert policies around the world – he thought that allowed local politicians too much sway.

His ability to comment on the world of bridge confused me, given that he'd hardly ever played outside the UK. Why did he care that countries had different rules? He never played in America, despite his strong views on how the ACBL should run things. But he was an avid online player, initially on OKBridge and then BBO. This international experience in an environment of little regulation and common understandings reinforced his views.

As others have said, Nigel was a friendly, kind and generous man. One who would greet you warmly and then give you a bridge hand before asking about the family.

Ying Piper played with Nigel on his return to Scotland

I met Nigel in 2010 not long after his retirement from Reading. A much more experienced player than I was, Nigel took me under his wing. I was so excited, lucky and grateful. He was kind and supportive, and he named our card system after my daughter.

Nigel would travel to the playing venue with plenty of time to spare, walking slowly with his hands crossed behind his back. Nothing seemed to worry him. Before the competition, Nigel would have a cup of tea with a piece of cake, catch up social formalities with others, then quickly move to bridge topics. We always had an enjoyable lengthy post-mortem after a match. John Matheson was often our arbitrator if we needed a third opinion.

Nigel was passionate about bridge, he travelled to England by train to play the Spring Foursomes every year; he would regularly take two buses and a taxi to Edinburgh for a good game. When travelling became increasingly difficult, Nigel formed a partnership with Jim Forsyth, and they became my teammates.

Nigel spent endless hours helping others to improve their bridge. He encouraged less experienced players by playing with them, speaking out for them, standing by them if there was any slight injustice in his eyes. He never criticised his partner. He was the only player I know who is able to maintain a calm dignified manner when things could explode at the bridge table. Nigel always treated all his opponents with respect and welcomed everyone with a warm gentle smile. No strangers were at his table.

Nigel was also a bridge theorist (he created an advanced system called Jasmine), an enthusiast on Laws and Ethics, a regular contributor to Bridge Winners (BBO ID nige1).

A true fighter and inspiration, Nigel was unwell in the last 7 years with multiple operations due to bladder cancer, but this would not stop him playing competitive bridge.

A few weeks before Nigel passed away, his daughter Barbara came from London to see him in the hospital in Glasgow. Nigel was very poorly, he didn't recognise or respond to her. But as soon as Barbara mentioned the word "bridge", Nigel's eyes lit up, and he asked "what's happening?"

Farewell partner, thank you so much for your encouragement and kindness, you will be so greatly missed.

Jim Forsyth wrote on BridgeWinners

I was lucky to partner Nigel for the last 10 years or so and he guided us to many National successes.

Nigel would greet everyone with a cheery "Hello Partner" and when I made one of my frequent mistakes he would say "unlucky, you took the wrong view".

He developed his own strong club system The Jasmine Club and I have a handwritten copy on my desk at home. This was a work in progress which we only played twice.

We played together in the Scottish Senior Team in 2018 in the Teltscher Trophy, winning every stanza and every match leaving Nigel with a 100% international record.

I am lucky to have so many happy memories.

Gleaned from the SBU website

Game to the last, Nigel won the 2022 National Pairs with Charles Outred. He won the Benjamin Individual in 2019; the Scottish Swiss Pairs with Ying in 2011, and again with Jim in 2017; the Diamond Senior Pairs in 2015 with Jim; and the Winter Swiss Teams in 2011 with Ying, Ian Hunter and Tony Wilkinson.

Here is a Double Dummy problem invented by Nigel in 1989

	♠ 98	
	♥ T43	
	♦ QT432	
	♣ KT8	
♠ QT		♠ 7654
♥ K9		♥ J765
♦ 98765		♦ KJ
♣ J765		♣ 432
	♠ AKJ32	
	♥ AQ82	
	♦ A	
	♣ AQ9	

South to make 6♠ against any lead
(Solution on Page 30)

He also invented this freak, which was included in the Charity Challenge Cup in the days when experts submitted hands that had tickled their fancy,

	♠ K742	NS Vul,
	♥ J9632	Dir S
	♦ Q	
	♣ KQ5	
♠ -		♠ T985
♥ -		♥ T754
♦ AJ9864		♦ T7532
♣ 9876532		♣ -
	♠ AQJ63	
	♥ AKQ8	
	♦ K	
	♣ AJT	

He had challenged himself to invent a deal where a Grand Slam could make with the fewest possible high card points. Your editor played in the event with her mother but has no recollection of how they came to 'sacrifice' in 7♦x. Opponents were more than miffed when they realised that 7♥ was a good save (only -2) and even 7♠-3 would score better.



Winners of the Summer Peebles Congress Teams in 2011

Nigel, Peter Moss, Ying Piper and George Plant

In Memoriam

Ian Crorie

1956 - 2022

Ian was younger than Nigel, but better known in the Scottish bridge world because he never left Scotland.

Ian hailed from Falkirk. He studied in Edinburgh University, then worked in the IT department at Heriot Watt. He was compelled to retire early because of ill-health, after which he devoted himself largely to bridge.

His first interest was chess, and his first bridge partner was Irish chess internationalist Chris Orr. Of whom he said: "his real talent was chess; my talent... well, I haven't discovered it yet." They based their system on the only bridge book to be found in Falkirk Library: "The Quintessence of CAB" (outdated even in the early 1970s).

Ian entered the Edinburgh bridge scene in 1980, playing with Alan Ferguson. They quickly made their mark, winning the Kennedy Local Masters Trophy in 1982, then, just 5 years later, the Alan Fairlie Pairs for Scottish Masters. That same year, 1987, Ian also won the Harrison Individual.

Shortly thereafter Alan abandoned bridge in favour of chess, and Ian formed several successful partnerships with players from the East.

With Malcolm Cuthbertson he won the National Pairs and the Spence Cup; with Les Steel he won the Farquharson Trophy; and he won the Men's Teams a remarkable 4 times – once with Alan, twice with Alex Adamson, and once with Jim (Bif) McGeorge.

His most successful partnership was undoubtedly with Bif. Together they won the Scottish Cup, the Winter Fours

twice; the Edwin Berry Swiss Teams; the Bowman Life Masters Pairs and the Arthur Grand Masters Pairs twice. (Ian became a Grand Master in 1994.)

Although he reached the quarter-finals of the British Gold Cup four times, and played in numerous Trials, Ian was never selected to play for Scotland in the Camrose team. He became so disillusioned with the SBU Selection policy that he gave up trying.

He was nonetheless appointed non-playing captain of many Scottish teams. He dipped his toe in the water by captaining the Junior Camrose team in 1997. He captained the Lady Milne teams in 1998 and 1999. When Scotland became eligible to play in the European Championships he captained the Open teams in 2001 and 2002. His final outing as npc was with the Camrose team in 2002.

In 1993 Ian became the Bridge Correspondent of '*Scotland on Sunday*' writing the weekly column until its demise. He wrote over 800 articles in his unique witty, erudite style, which made the column very popular among bridge players, but sad to say, their combined wrath could not save the column when SoS decided to scrap it.

Many players will remember Ian as a teacher. He developed a programme for the Carlton Bridge Club and helped with the development of the original SBU course. He was an inspiring teacher, patient, competent and entertaining.

More will remember him as a Vu-Graph commentator, from pre-BBO days when large numbers of spectators could only follow play in Camrose matches in the Vugraph room. He was good-humoured and witty and kept us all entertained even when the play was rather dull.

In 2005 Ian married the love of his life, Lucia Barrett. She occasionally persuaded him to play, reluctantly, in the Eastern District Flicht, but his declining health kept him away from the bridge club.

At his funeral Ian was described as a 'gentle' man, in every sense of the word. Quiet-spoken, even-tempered and modest, he will be missed by all who knew him.

Alex Adamson remembers:

I first got to know Ian in my early 20s (his late 20s) and we became friends and team-mates. A few years later we became partners and, briefly, flatmates. I was experiencing the transition from leading junior to aspirant in the Open game who was way off the pace. As I grumped and groaned my way through this period, Ian was a good and patient friend and partner.

I was often my own worst enemy. One year we reached the Rayne Cup Final, playing with Hugh Kelsey and Liz McGowan. Ian opened a Multi 2♦, a weak 2 in a major or a strong balanced hand. I was sure that the hand on my right was squirming uncomfortably – wanting to bid but not sure what to say – so when he passed, I did too. Of course, Ian had the strong balanced hand, we missed a slam and I have no idea what my RHO was thinking about. That swing cost us the event, but as far as I recall Ian didn't have a cross word to say (though he did remind me about it around 20 years later!)

These were days when National events and congresses attracted big fields and those that were held at weekends tended to involve us in going to parties on the Friday or Saturday night, followed by me being perplexed at my bad play the day after. But they were a

lot of fun. On one occasion, the Autumn 4s (now the Winter 4s) was played in St Andrews and a lot of the participants were staying in a block of student accommodation. On the Friday night we were at a packed party in one of the rooms. I noted that Ian and one or two others were in stitches with laughter. Eventually they told me that they had gone down to my room and taken all of the furniture out into the corridor. I went down the stairs and found that was almost true. They had taken it from Ian's room not mine!

We shared a lot of interests, including politics. We went to the pub to celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall and marvelled that such a thing could happen. We did a bit of cultural cross-fertilisation. I think I got him into Red Dwarf and from him I learned a love of the music of Kevin Ayres. As others will know better than me, he was a great teacher. I helped at some of his classes and was impressed by the respect he gave to his students and the clarity of his answers to their questions.

You had to get used to having less time than normal playing with Ian. At any opportunity he would slip out for a cigarette between rounds and always seemed to be the last back in. If you were at the far end of a hall with a hundred closely packed tables (at the Aviemore Congress) then you could write off a couple of minutes per round.

Ian and I were not successful in Trials, though there was a strong case for him to have been picked when he trialled with Jim (Bif) McGeorge, performing well and having won the Scottish Cup. However, for a few years we were a regular double act, providing live commentary in the Vugraph room at international matches in Scotland. This was, to remind people, in the pre-BBO

days, and these matches were well attended by Scottish players, with often a couple of hundred coming along. We enjoyed doing them a lot – verbally bouncing off each other – and the audiences seemed to enjoy them too.

When I got married I presented Ian with the bridge column in 'Scotland on Sunday' which he wrote with great style for many years.

Ian was my best man and he is still one of the very best men I have known.

A contribution from Jim Hay:

One of Ian's great strengths as a bridge journalist was that he was an excellent Vu graph commentator and I had the pleasure of working with him on numerous occasions. I suspect that my role was to explain the mysteries of the sometimes impenetrable ultra-modern bidding sequences while he was analysing how the hand was to be played or, as sometimes happened, misplayed. He was a very skilful speaker and in the days before Double Dummy solvers were commonplace he would invariably regale the audience as to how a seemingly impossible contract could be made.

I recall on one occasion we were dubbed the McCoist and MaCauley of Scottish bridge. There was no doubt that I was everybody favourite buffoon while he was quieter, more restrained and sensible Fred MaCauley.

I played with him only once at a Congress, with modest success. We won the Consolation Pairs at Peebles, memorable for two well played hands by Ian on the first round after tea against the formidable Sandy Duncan and John MacLaren. After the second board, where perhaps the defence could have been better, John took a great deal of effort in tearing up his scorecard into

what seemed like 100s of tiny pieces and adding to his partner "Sandy we should have stopped playing at tea-time and remained friends". A memorable moment for the two of us callow youths. RIP Ian: the world is a lesser place now.

Bif McGeorge recalls:

I've can't recall any particular anecdotes which would be suitable for publication, though there are a few which are not.

One thing mentioned by Ian's brother at the funeral was Ian's rather unusual and somewhat nocturnal work schedule. I shared a flat with him as his lodger for a few years and it was not unusual for me to leave for work in the morning as Ian was about to run a bath, only to return 9 or so hours later to find Ian still in said bath having spent the day reading. Then off to work all night.

Les Steel contributes:

Ian was a team-mate of mine, playing for 49ers in the East District League.

One night we played at the old Melville. 3 tables finish their 24 boards, but Ian and Alan Ferguson have 6 boards left to play. The rest of us retire to a nearby tavern.

Eventually they turn up and we have contrived to lose by about 200.

We go through the hands.

'What happened on 24 Ian?'

'Oh... it appears we forgot to play it'.

Board 24 was a trivial 4♠ with 10 top tricks. The rules stipulated that they got the average of the other 3 tables – so we scored +420 for a 2-1 win?

No! Inexplicably 2 tables had floored the game so the datum was 320 divided by 3 and we still lost 2-1.

An example of his gentle nature.

Playing in league match a misdefence allowed a game through.

Ian immediately apologised whilst I said nothing.

Eventually, going through the hands in the pub afterwards:

Ian: "Hang on, Steel, that was your fault!"

Les: "Well spotted, I was wondering how long it would take for you to notice."

Many moons ago several 'experts' were asked for a tip by Elena Jeronimidis for her "Best Book of Bridge".

My tip was inspired by this hand, playing with Ian.

♦ Kx	S	♦ xx
♣ xxxxx		♣ KJT9x
	♠ AQxxx	
	♥ Jx	
	♦ AQxxx	
	♣ Q	

The inexperienced South opened a 'strong' 2♠ and was raised to game

Ian led a club to dummy's Ace, declarer dropping the Queen. The trump finesse lost and Ian played another club.

Since I had a choice of 4 clubs to play the ♣K was a clear suit preference signal for hearts. Or maybe not.

(As a little light relief for those who know him, Les' tip was "Make life easy for partner".)

	♠ JTxx	NS Vul,
	♥ xx	Dir S
	♦ JTxx	
	♣ Axx	
♠ Kx	N	♠ xx
♥ AQxxx	W E	♥ Kxxx

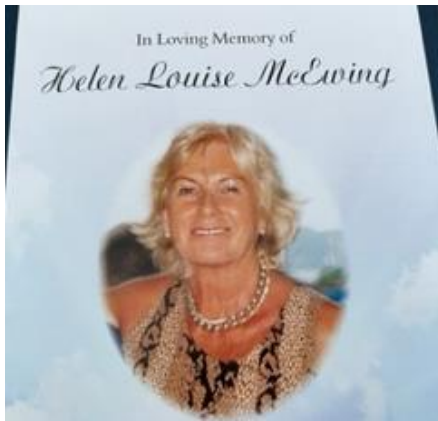


The expert commentary team at the 1995 Camrose match against England in Edinburgh, when Scotland won the Trophy.

Jack Paterson, Ian Crie and David Burn

Obituary

Helen McEwing



After a short illness, Helen passed on 2nd September, peacefully, at a nursing home.

Helen, born in Paisley and a pupil at Paisley Grammar, was a successful businesswoman, running an estate agency in the Inverclyde area. She built this from scratch into a thriving business. Her first love was sailing and she was a member of the Royal Yacht Club in Gourock. She partook in many regattas off the West coast and beyond.

Helen was a kind, gentle woman who never had a bad word about anyone (except Ivan's bridge). She could talk for Scotland, but her wide experience of life kept you engrossed as story after story entertained you. Vivacious, elegant and hostess supreme were all used to describe Helen.

The extent of Helen's involvement in bridge is known only to a few. From the 1980s she was involved in running foreign bridge holidays, priding herself

in achieving the best financial packages for the benefit of her clientele. All of this, many years before the advent of foreign congresses. She along with Bobby Brodie and Jack Melville organised the Isle of Mull Congress, so popular was this event, places were like gold dust.

Helen was a regular at Peebles, Aviemore and Strathpeffer. She supported the more local Congresses, - Renfrewshire, Ogilvie, Firth of Clyde, Lochgilphead – sadly most are no longer held.

Helen loved to talk bridge, her parties at Seamill Hydro were greatly anticipated and enjoyed by all.

Despite her love of spending time with friends at Scottish events, Helen adored mixing with the best. Brighton, Eastbourne, Biarritz, Toronto, nothing phased her. Nothing could be better than dressing in her finery when crossing swords with the elite. She jumped at the opportunity to attend the NABC, her only concern was that the 46 kilo baggage allowance would be insufficient. The purchase of light weight luggage and a reminder that laundry services were available put her mind at rest.

She continued to play competitive bridge until the pandemic struck, but this affected her to the extent that she moved into residential care. She will be missed by friends, team-mates and opponents alike.

Bob McKinnon

Play Challenge

Jim Patrick

1 None Vul Dealer North

♠T97
♥KT853
♦J
♣A765

♠A
♥AJ76
♦A652
♣QT42

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	Pass	Pass	1♥
1♠	4♥	End	

Contract: 4♥ Lead: ♦T.

East covers dummy's ♦J with the Queen.
How do you play?

2 None Vul Dealer West

♠97652
♥532
♦A
♣J973

♠AKT84
♥AJ7
♦QT5
♣A4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	Pass	2♣	2♠
Pass	4♠	End	

Contract: 4♠ Lead: ♥K

You duck the first trick and win the diamond switch in dummy. When you play a spade from dummy at Trick 3 East discards a club.

What now?

3 NS Vul Dealer North

♠QT76
♥J4
♦T97
♣K965

♠A5
♥7
♦AQ64
♣AQJT72

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	Pass	Pass	1♣
2♣ ¹	Dbl ²	4♥	5♣
End			

¹2♣ = Michaels, at least 5-4 in the Majors

²Dbl = club support

Contract: 5♣ Lead: ♥A

West leads the ♥A and a heart to East's ♥K.
How do you escape for one more loser?

4 None Vul Dealer North

♠-
♥JT542
♦QT76
♣J742

♠T862
♥AK873
♦A
♣AK5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	3♥	Dbl	6♥
End			

Contract: 6♥ Lead: ♣T.

You win the club in hand and ruff a spade.
When you play a heart from dummy, East discards a spade.

What now?

Play Challenge Solutions

Jim Patrick

1 None Vul Dealer North

	♠T97										
	♥KT853										
	♦J										
	♣A765										
♠K8654	<table style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠QJ32
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥9		♥Q42									
♦KT983		♦Q74									
♣J9		♣K83									
	♠A										
	♥AJ76										
	♦A652										
	♣QT42										

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	Pass	Pass	1♥
1♠	4♥	End	

Contract: 4♥ Lead: ♦T

How do you play this when East covers dummy's ♦J with the Queen?

You have a virtual certainty here.

Win the diamond, cash the ♠A and the ♣A. Then ruff 2 diamonds in dummy and 2 spades in hand.

If all this passes off quietly, as it should unless West has 6 diamonds or someone is void in clubs, you have taken 7 tricks and your trump suit is now:

♥KT8

♥AJ

Exit with a club and wait for 3 trump tricks.

2 None Vul Dealer West

	♠97652										
	♥532										
	♦A										
	♣J973										
♠QJ3	<table style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠-
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥KQT		♥9864									
♦K98742		♦J63									
♣2		♣KQT865									
	♠AKT84										
	♥AJ7										
	♦QT5										
	♣A4										

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	Pass	2♣	2♠
Pass	4♠	End	

Contract: 4♠ Lead: ♥K

You duck the first trick and win the diamond switch in dummy. When you play a spade from dummy at Trick 3 East discards a club. What now?

A good declarer misplayed this hand at the table. Opponents have just 17HCP between them. What can East have for his old-fashioned response at the 2-level but a 6 or 7 card club suit? Draw another round of trumps and cash the ♣A.

Put West in with his trump winner and his red suit lead will give you a 10th trick

3 NS Vul Dealer North

	♠QT76		
	♥J4		
	♦T97		
	♣K965		
♠KJ92		♠843	
♥AQT95		♥K8632	
♦J2		♦K853	
♣84		♣3	
	♠A5		
	♥7		
	♦AQ64		
	♣AQJT72		

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	Pass	Pass	1♣
2♣*	Dbl*	4♥	5♣
End			

Contract: 5♣ Lead: ♥A

West cashes the ♥A and you ruff East's ♥K. If you are to avoid a diamond loser East must hold the ♦K. You could run the ♦T and, when it is covered, return to dummy to run the diamond ♦9 hoping to pin ♦8x. But you can make the contract any time West has a doubleton diamond and the ♠KJ (or ♠Kxxxx). Play ♣A and a club to ♣K. Finesse the ♦Q, cash ♦A and play ♠A and another. West must win, leaving himself on lead in this position:

♠QT
♥-
♦T
♣96
<input type="text"/>
♠-
♥-
♦64
♣QJ2

What can he play? A spade gives 2 discards. A heart allows you to discard dummy's diamond and ruff in hand. The only problem is when West exits with a low spade. Do you play West for ♠KJxx or East for ♠Jxx?

4 None Vul Dealer North

	♠-		
	♥JT542		
	♦QT76		
	♣J742		
♠KJ53		♠AQ974	
♥Q96		♥-	
♦K542		♦J983	
♣T9		♣Q863	
	♠T862		
	♥AK873		
	♦A		
	♣AK5		

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	3♥	Dbl	6♥
End			

Contract: 6♥ Lead: ♣T

You win the club in hand and ruff a spade. When you play a heart from dummy, East discards a spade.

That is annoying. You appear to have a spade loser and a club loser unless the ♣Q is doubleton.

You may as well cash your minor suit winners, but no luck, the ♣Q does not drop

Now your only chance is to pull off the disappearing trick trick.

Ruff 3 spades in dummy and 3 diamonds in hand. If West has to follow suit throughout you have made 12 tricks, and at trick 13 West has to ruff his partner's master club with his master trump.

September 2022 Bidding Challenge

Arend Bayer

You recently convinced your SBU Bidding Panel partner to switch to 5-card majors. No good deed goes unpunished, and you promptly have two problems dealing with partner's now ill-defined minor openings.

Problem 1 Teams None Vul

	S	W	N	E
♠654	-	-	1♣	1♠
♥T84	?			
♦KQT2				
♣KQJ				

They are not a problem for:

SHORT: DBL. Completely automatic. It is unplayable to agree that double here guarantees 4 hearts (though it is wise to have 4 hearts if dead minimum).

Brian compares this to 1♣ (1♥) where the agreement that double or 1♠ denies 4 spades is very popular.

Systematically allowing double on hands without 4 hearts saves us from a big headache in the situation we are in, and I am easily convinced that it is superior if the opponents remain silent from here on. The price to pay -- that Brian is of course aware of and is willing to pay -- comes when opponents raise to 2♠ or 3♠, and partner, with 4 hearts and perhaps some extras doesn't know whether to compete. For whatever that may be worth, [Bridgewinners majority consensus](#) is closer to the "double promises four hearts" side.

Agreeing with Brian:

SIME: Hands such as this illustrate why double should not guarantee 4 cards in the other major. If we belong in No-Trump, it is better that partner declares.

GORDON *thinks the only awkward rebid is 2♥, which he will pass. Other doublers are less enthusiastic about their choice:*

ROSS: DBL. I don't particularly like double but can't think of anything else.

SYMONS: DBL. Close between double and 2♦. Although it would obviously be better to have 4 hearts, sometimes you just have to make the best of a bad job.

DRAGIC: DBL. Least misdescriptive compared to the alternatives. And cheapest.

Just as many panellists vote for 2♦.

ASH and PATERSON *rightly point out that 2/1 GF does not apply; 2♦ should be forcing but not game-forcing.*

ASH: 2♦. I would prefer a fifth diamond, but nothing else appeals.

SMITH: 2♦. Firstly, I like my double in these situations to be as close to a guarantee as possible that I will have 4 hearts. Secondly, if he supports my diamonds I am more likely to be able to persuade him back to his clubs, and even if we end up in a diamond Moysian, at least the ruffing value will be in the short trump hand.

SHIELDS: 2♦. After a double, a pre-empt in spades could see partner bidding 4♥ and my confidence in getting to the right minor suit then is low. Which makes 2♦ a safer choice for now. 2♦ also gives us a resting place (3♦) if partner is balanced without a spade stop, much more difficult to find if we double and then continue with a cue bid.

WHYTE *votes for 2♠, in part because he thinks partner would open 1♦ with 4=4 in the minors: I deny 4 hearts and the ability to bid the other minor. I invite him to bid 3NT if better than minimum plus stopper, or 2NT if minimum with a stopper. With no stopper and minimum, he returns to clubs, and I pass. We may*

miss a 4-4 diamond fit, but this is of little consequence if we have a 5-3 club fit.

FREIMANIS: 2♠: Partner will usually find a 2NT bid with a balanced 12-14 HCP (with or without a stop) or 3♣, both of which I will pass out.

Two panellists make an eloquent case for going low with 1NT.

VALENTINE: 1NT. I don't feel the need to be overly aggressive in these spots at this vulnerability. I don't have a spade stop but the alternative is to show a club raise and I don't have that either. There is a risk that I will lose 6 IMPs against 3NT making but I am happy to take that risk. The reason I prefer 1NT to 2NT/2♠ is that these actions artificially inflate the auction when partner has their traditional 11-14 balanced hand. 3♣ could be a total misfit and 2NT could already be too high.

McGOWAN: 1NT. Whatever I do is technically wrong! The alternatives are double, which might get us into a ridiculous 4-3 heart fit; and 2♦ which should promise at least a 5-card suit. 1NT lacks a spade stopper, but my extra values compensate. I would expect to make 7 tricks opposite a weak no-trump even if opponents can cash the first 5. The lead through partner's likely spade stopper is a disadvantage, and we may miss a nonvulnerable 3NT when partner is balanced, but at least we should achieve a plus score. If partner has an unbalanced opener she will remove to 2♣ and I can raise.

Where do we want to play opposite partner's most likely hand, a weak NT?

VALENTINE & McGOWAN are surely right that it probably isn't 2NT or 3♣/3♦. How will they do if partner is unbalanced with extras, when we might belong in game? Hard to tell, especially as everyone else might not reach the best game.

I am also sympathetic to the case to go even lower, and Pass, and will abuse my moderator privileges to give it a score to add to the discussion; that style does need to be agreed on, so we can later suggest a hand like ours (values, but no suitable bid in the first round) with a double or cuebid. If we don't get the chance and 1♠ gets passed out, we are unlikely to miss anything. In the scoring, I gave the top mark to 2♦, as 2♠ is closer in spirit to 2♦ than to double.

Problem 1	Votes	Marks
2♦	7	10
Dbl	7	9
2♠	3	7
1NT	2	6
2♣	1	4
PASS	0	3
3♣	0	1

Problem 2 Teams All Vul

♠9832 ♥A82 ♦A82 ♣AJ6	S	W	N	E
	-	-	1♦	1♠
	?			

Again, this hand is not a problem for SHORT, but this time fewer panellists join him in doubling. SYMONS does, hoping she won't end up in a 3-3 fit!

Also joining, unlike in Problem 1:

McGOWAN: DBL. This may seem inconsistent, but this time I think we must look for the vulnerable game. The 4-3 heart fit may actually be playable, and if partner has ♠Hx(x) I would prefer her to declare 3NT. If North raises spades partner will be short and we might have a go at 5♦. Double seems the best way to keep all options open.

This is a very interesting thought – if partner has a weak NT with 2=4=4=3 and no stopper, the heart game is our

best hope, sometimes playable by an unusual dummy reversal in the 4-3 fit by ruffing two spades in partner's hand. I am left wondering whether we can get back to NT if partner has 4 hearts and a spade stopper.

A clear plurality votes for 2♣. Everyone is hoping to find 3NT.

VALENTINE: 2♣. This simplifies the auction. Moreover, diamonds look like our most playable strain should we not play 3NT. If partner bids 3♦ after 2♣, I will bid 3♠ asking for a stop.

SIME points out that denying 4 hearts limits partner's options, which may be an advantage as he will bid NT more often with a stopper. **ROSS** hopes that partner makes it easy for me with his next bid.

There are different views about what that next bid might mean: **WHYTE** says he would raise 2NT to 3NT, as I think would most panellists; **FREIMANIS** expects partner to bid 2NT with a weak NT whether or not he has a spade stopper, and so will bid 3♣ to check for a stopper. **DRAGIC** is the only 2♠ bidder to mention exploring the heart Moysian if partner doesn't have a stopper.

I wonder how this might work in practice, as partner won't ever expect us to have 3 diamonds. Will he offer 4♥ on the auction 2♠-3♦-3♠-4♥ with 2=4=4=3, or is that a control bid looking for a diamond slam?

The third option receiving votes is 2♣.

ASH: 2♣. This is more difficult than Problem 1, but bidding clubs is not particularly risky. If partner raises to 3♣ then 5♦ looks 'on'.

Maybe he expects partner to open 1♣ with 4=4 in the minors, unlike **WHYTE** (see Problem 1)? **SHIELDS** will also insist on diamonds if raised, and so will

GORDON, who adds that 2♣-3♣-3♦ would be forcing. **SMITH** thinks of 2♣ as a waiting bid, planning to bid 2♠ over 2♦ to look for a stopper, and go back to diamonds otherwise. **MURDOCH** thinks that other actions tell bigger lies.

Having read all the comments, I am left wondering whether double has the best chance of intelligently choosing among the three likely targets (3NT, 5♦, 4♥).

Problem 2	Votes	Marks
2♠	10	10
2♣	6	8
Dbl	4	7
1NT	0	3
Pass	0	2

Problem 3 Teams NS Vul

	S	W	N	E
♠Q9	-	-	-	1♦
♥AKQT9	1♥	P	1♠	P
♦AT	?			
♣T963				

From this year's Bermuda Bowl Round Robin match between USA1 and Denmark (vulnerability unintentionally changed). Levin / Weinstein stopped in 2♥ after the continuation 2♦-2♥. This should not have been a success opposite partner's AKTx xx xxx QJx (3NT is excellent, and both Major suit games are very good) – but it was: with all suits breaking badly, they were one of very few pairs going plus. Would our panel have done better, i.e., worse?

Reaching 3NT the quick way:

WHYTE: 3NT. At teams, I bash. Partner does not have heart support, so there is no value in playing in hearts. He promises a minimum of 8 points, probably better since not fitted... The problem with 2NT, second close choice, is that it undervalues my 6 solid tricks. The other alternative is 2♦, which is

beguiling but a cul-de-sac. You have a stopper; why are you asking your partner if he has one? If he rebids 2♣, are you any the wiser?"

Three panellists vote for what SHENKIN calls the value bid of 2NT.

PATERSON: 2NT. Since partner is unpassed 1♠ must be forcing – a cue bid or a new suit jump would show a fit (fashionable methods problematic again!), and so 1NT would merely show the character of the hand. With a good 15 points we must invite game (AKJxx spades would be enough!)

If 2NT is the value bid, is 1NT an underbid? Some don't think so.

ASH: 1NT. Shows my extra values and a diamond stop.

MURDOCH: 1NT. I must make a positive move, and I don't think 2♣ is that. Maybe I should have overcalled 1NT?

Worried about underbidding:

McGOWAN: 1NT. A bit wet, perhaps, but in this situation I expect partner to keep the bidding open with any old misfit and a few points. This shows a hand nearly good enough for a 1NT overcall and promises a diamond stopper. I trust partner will bid again if we have game.

But cf PATERSON: if 1♠ is forcing, and a 1NT rebid promises extra, we have an ugly choice to make with a minimum 2=5=3=3 or 2=5=4=2 overcall.

The majority of the panel wants to explore more. Some chose 2♣.

SIME: 2♣. Partner may have 4 (or even 5) clubs. If we bid 2♦/♥/♠, we risk losing clubs forever.

Why wouldn't advancer show his club suit over 2♦?

SHIELDS: 2♣. No reason not to bid my second suit here (suppose partner was 5125 shape) and over a preference to 2♥ I can continue to 2NT to show extras.

MCKAY plans to raise a 2♥ preference to 3♥.

VALENTINE: 2♣. I potentially have a very good hand, but partner can bid 1♠ on a 4-card suit/weakish hand just looking for a better strain. Therefore, patterning out seems to make sense. If partner bids 2♥/2♠ over 2♣ then I can make a further game try. If they pass 2♣, I am probably happy playing where I am.

GORDON considers 2♣ to be forcing.

Just as many voted for 2♦.

Short: 2♦. General force – I'm miles stronger than I might be. If partner reads this as spade support, no problem. He/she will almost have 6.

We went from 1♠ showing a 4-card suit to almost always showing 6 quite quickly – that would be a good topic to discuss with partner!

Dragic: 2♦. I am maximum for my bid, game is possible, let's explore.

SYMONS: 2♦. I'll temporise with this, and if partner can bid NT we'll play in that game, if not we'll get to game in a major.

After a 2♥ preference, SHORT, ROSS, and DRAGIC are planning to bid 2♠, while SMITH will jump to 4♥ and FREIMANIS will bid 2NT.

With the votes tied between 2♣ and 2♦, I gave the nod to 2♦, as this seemed more consistent with the view expressed by the NT bidders that we have to show extras now.

Problem 3	Votes	Marks
2♦	6	10
2♣	6	9
1NT	4	7
2NT	3	7
3♣	0	5
3NT	1	4
2♥	0	3

Problem 4 Teams All Vul

	S	W	N	E
♠KT764	-	-	1♣	P
♥K542	1♠	P	4♣	-
♦AK87	?			
♣-				

4♣ = 6 clubs, 4 spades, GF.

This hand caught my attention as two world-class players (John Hurd and Daniel Korbel) chose the simplistic 4NT – despite the void! - instead of the seemingly automatic 4♦. On reflection, it is easy to understand the appeal of 4NT. We clearly have the required playing strength to play in 6♣. And for 7♠, partner's Ace opposite our void is not irrelevant: if partner has AQxx-Ax-x-???xxx, we have 5 spade tricks in hand, four top tricks in the red suits, and three ruffs in partner's hand (assuming a trump lead). So the ♣A can easily be our 13th trick.

The 4NT bid does get limited support in the panel.

SHIELDS: 4NT. If partner doesn't have the ♣A, I need to be able to ruff it out [to establish tricks to pitch red suit losers]; missing that Ace and another key card makes the slam very doubtful, so the club ace is a vital key card despite my void. Hence RKC with a void makes sense this time.

The overwhelming majority votes for the natural choice of 4♦. But first, let's discuss the 4♣ bid. Partner must have a shortage somewhere, which raises the question whether some 6=4 hands would splinter.

SIME: I had better cue, but we ought to refine this agreement. We should be able to differentiate this hand from a splinter. My preference is that 4♣ is a specific hand – minimum with very good clubs.

WHYTE: 4♣ shows 4-card support for spades and rather good clubs, clubs

being AKQ or AKJ with 6 cards. Maybe AQJ with other compensating cards. However, he does not have ♣AKxxxx, ♥A and ♠AQxx. That is too good for 4♣. Since 4♣ burns up bidding space, it has to be precise.

The argument by Sime and Whyte is compelling. But most panellists will allow for stronger hands and are willing to explore a grand.

MCGOWAN: This convention may work on some hands, but it gives me a headache on this one. I could bid 4NT, but which suit is agreed?

Perhaps initially it should be the suit where we are known to have a fit, namely spades? We can still offer 6/7♣ later.

SHIELDS and MURDOCH think that 4♣ denies a void (other panellists disagree), and Murdoch adds that it should show a powerful suit.

Here are some of the comments from the 4♦ bidders:

DRAGIC: 4♦. Just in case partner is void in hearts and he can bid 5♥ Exclusion Keycard. Normally with this type of hand I would like to take control of the auction and apply Keycard as I know a lot more about partner's hand than the other way round.

VALENTINE will continue with 4NT over 4♥ but jump to 6♠ over 4♠. **PEDEN** is also planning to bid Keycard next.

WHYTE is worried about a weak trump holding – Qxxx or Jxxx – and considered bidding 5♠ directly. Should 4♣ show good trumps in addition to good clubs?

SYMONS is unsure what to do over 4♥ since it might be the Ace or shortness.

GORDON and PIPER are planning to follow up with 5NT, the Grand Slam force; **GORDON** adds that partner

shouldn't bid the Grand without a first-round heart control in that case.

Finally, the sole 5♠ bidder:

McGowan: I hope this shows controls in the red suits and looks for good cards in the blacks. A convention known as Pass the Headache – at the table I might just punt 6♠.

The panellists were too polite to complain – mostly – but the problem didn't work as well as I had thought, since anyone planning to bid 4NT has little to lose by starting with 4♦.

Problem 4	Votes	Marks
4♦	16	10
4NT	3	8
5♠	1	4
6♠	0	4
4♠	0	1
4♥	0	1

Problem 5 Matchpoints All Vul

♠A2	S	W	N	E
♥AKQT4	-	1♣	P	3♠
♦J96	?			
♣A94				

3♠ = weak preemptive

If double meant “I have a 2=5=3=3 18-count with a spade stopper”, we would all feel good about the contract partner chooses. But it doesn't, and we don't. So what imperfect bid gives us the best odds?

SIME thinks bidding will, on average, turn a plus into a minus, or -140 into -200, and passes. **SHIELDS** expects 7+hcp from responder [Maybe the moderator could have clarified the range of 3♠?? -Moderator], leaving about 4 hcp from partner, and thus little prospect for game. **PATERSON** would bid non-vulnerable, where down two might be a good score, but passes vulnerable.

But everybody else bids:

SHORT: I can't pass...

SYMONS: 4♥. It's risky but even riskier to take no action.

VALENTINE: If my side is going to get into the auction then it has to be from my action now.

The moderator has, however, this nagging doubt, wondering whether everyone noticed that it's **Matchpoints**...

Several panellists make a strong case for 4♥.

SHORT: 4♥ the red suit disparity is too big for double.

ASH: 4♥. A penalty double is unlikely with our strong trumps. 4♥ might be ok opposite a couple of hearts and the ♦KQ diamonds – whereas 3NT requires two quick tricks from partner.

Slightly more vote for 3NT:

MURDOCH remembers conceding 800 the last time on a similar auction but is undeterred from trying again.

McGOWAN: 3NT. 3 small spades and the minor suit Queens might be enough to escape for -100, which would outscore -140.

FREIMANIS: 3NT. With a balanced hand I prefer the 9-trick game.

But there is also a smaller group of panellists that argue convincingly for double.

DRAGIC: (Similarly **SMITH**) **DbI**. I shall be happy if partner passes or bids 3NT; if partner bids 4♦ I can convert to 4♥.

VALENTINE: **DbI**. Partner should know that I don't always have a traditional T/O hand given the room that has been taken away from us. Any other action feels pretty unilateral and at least double keeps options on the table, both in terms of defending or declaring, and

invites partner to be part of the decision making process.

Whether our hand type is possible for double-then-bid-4♥ is another good discussion to have! Is the focus on “Too good for 4♥” or “Too flexible for 4♥”? Here, where slam is very unlikely, there is even more to be said for the latter than the former style. Playing that style, the case for double instead of 4♥ seems very strong.

Having read all the comments, I still don't know what to do; thankfully, I am not at the table and can defer the scoring to the panel vote.

Problem 5	Votes	Marks
3NT	7	10
4♥	6	9
Dbl	4	8
PASS	3	5

Problem 6 Teams EW Vul

♠T2	S	W	N	E
♥93	-	-	P	1♦
♦KQT3	P	1♥	P	2♥
♣QJT53	P	P	2♣	P
	?			

A huge majority of the panel votes for Pass, considering this a non-problem

Short: PASS. Another “what else?”

SYMONS: PASS. Is this a trick question?

GORDON: PASS. Is this a misprint?

SIME: PASS. Thinking is an overbid and might [unethically!] deceive opponents.

PATERSON: PASS. Hopefully partner has 6 small spades.

SMITH goes further: PASS. No alternative if you ever hope to play with this partner again.

No alternative?

FREIMANIS, VALENTINE and (I think) PIPER are all worried that partner might have a 4-card suit but stick with Pass.

VALENTINE wonders why partner didn't double if she has 4 spades. Would double show spades and clubs, or is it a takeout of hearts, or could we also double with 4 spades and 5 diamonds?

ASH, WHYTE, MCGOWAN, DRAGIC and SHIELDS are all convinced that partner cannot have five spades.

SHIELDS: 2NT. If partner has 5 spades and didn't overcall, then the opposition must be close to making a slam.

Hence they all pull, with WHYTE and DRAGIC removing to 3♣, and ASH, MCGOWAN and Shields to 2NT.

For some, reopening 2♠ with a 4-card suit is routine:

MCGOWAN: I like partner to re-open with a 4-card spade suit and would pass with 3-card support. 2NT shows the minors and asks partner to choose one. She will likely choose clubs, but I do not want to insist in case she is 4252 or similar.

So who is right? Having partnered both Smith and Ash I – naturally – fully agree with both of them! I'd pass with Smith, but no one who has seen Ash's 1♠ overcalls would or should pass playing with him. (The same goes for anyone who has seen mine!) There is no right or wrong here – whether you should bid depends on how partner understands 2♠. (Do you know?) But I wonder whether the majority is giving the McGowan style enough credit – it pays to have many ways to find your best fit when the opponents want to play in 2♥, and being able to bid 2♠ here on 4=2=5=2 has many ways to win; perhaps more than bidding a 5-card spade suit that wasn't worth bidding at the 1-level?

This was a hand held by Zia Mahmood playing with David Gold in the Spingold. It caught my attention when he pulled 2♠ to 3♣, and I wondered whether he

would have considered 2NT. He kindly explained his reasoning by email; he, of course, gets the last word:

MAHMOOD: I have an 8 count which suggests partner has 10-12. With 5 spades he would probably have bid 1♠ earlier, so this suggests 4 or very bad 5. I would have loved to bid 2NT for the minors. But it wasn't clear that this would be 2 suits – could it have been natural? I prefer not to make too many dangerous bids. (Some would say that's an underbid!!!) And my club pips suggested safety. And partner was likely 4=3 in the majors and so had 6 minor suit cards. So clubs were safe.

Problem 6	Votes	Marks
Pass	15	10
2NT	3	8
3♣	2(+Zia)	7

Problem 7 Teams All Vul

♠AKQJ	S	W	N	E
♥Q742	1♦	P	1♥	P
♦AQJT5	4♣	P	4♦	P
♣-	?			

4♣ = short clubs, 4+ hearts

Undoubtedly, we are worth a move to or towards slam. How? We get no fewer than 8 different suggestions from the panel. As GORDON points out, it is a complex hand, with both level and choice of strain a possible topic of discussion.

Let's start with partner's 4♦ bid: MURDOCH and VALENTINE worry that 4♦ might be Last Train – which does not promise a diamond control, just shows a hand good enough to play slam opposite a maximum 4♣ splinter, but not good enough to go beyond game opposite a minimum splinter.

In contrast, MCGOWAN, SYMONS and GORDON specifically mention that

partner will have the ♦K, as they would not cue in our suit with shortage.

More than half the panel forces to slam in hearts. The majority chooses 5NT, asking partner to bid 7 with both top trump honours.

DRAGIC does have worries: On a really bad day partner will have Kxxx but more likely we have 9+ card fit or good trump density.

Others choose 5♣: ASH and SMITH “hoping” that 5♣ is Exclusion Keycard Blackwood, FREIMANIS “expecting” it to be, while one goes further:

MCGOWAN: 5♣. Since I have already shown a shortage this is clearly Exclusion.

I find that less clear – it's a common agreement that a direct jump to 5♣ would have been exclusion, whereas after 4♣-?-5♣ shows a void, asking partner to continue to cuebid.

Avoiding any ambiguity:

SHIELDS: 6♣. It is possible that partner would show some slam interest with xx-JTxxx-Kx-Axx, but in all other cases partner will have a top heart, and if partner has a top heart I'll take a chance in a slam. It is possible that diamonds would be a better place than hearts but I will struggle to find that out. There are two ways of checking on the top hearts – either a Josephine 5NT or an Exclusion Keycard ask of 6♣. These days 5NT is often used as 'pick-a-slam' so I will choose the route with less ambiguity.

A number of panellists take the slow route with 4♣. Presumably unsure about the meaning of 5NT (could it be pick-a-slam?) or 5♣ (see above):

SYMONS: 4♣. I just want to know about the trumps and not sure how I can do that, so I'm hoping that by cueing above

game level, partner, with decent trumps, will be the one to ask.

Disagreeing with the plurality vote for 5NT:

SIME: 4♠. Anybody who wheels out Josephine (5NT asking for 2 of ♥AKQ) deserves to be in 6♥ opposite xx, Kxxx, Kxxx, Axx. Second choice - 6♦.

Also unsure about strain:

PATERSON: 4♠. Diamonds may be the right strain opposite xx-Kxxx-Kxxx-AJx, or 7♥ may be good opposite xxx-AKJx-Kx-xxxx. If I take control I cannot deal with both, but by taking it easy I give partner a chance to help - eg with the first hand he might bid 6♦, or 5♣ when I might bid 6♦, while with the second he might bid 4NT and I would respond 6♣ to show the void.

Finding an easier path to diamonds:

GORDON: 6♦. With the ♥AK and ♦K, partner will know what to do. Which is bid 7♦ if he has only 4 hearts – with 5 or more, he should bid 7♥. If partner has only 4 hearts, 6♦ or 7♦ are preferable to 6♥ or 7♥.

It is the lone vote for 6♦, but I find the case very compelling. Partner would surely be worth 4♦ with many hands with just two top cards (A/K) in the red suits; so with three, why shouldn't he bid one more?

Finally, two panellists bid 5♥, asking for good trumps; presumably they would stay out of slam opposite Kxxx. Would partner have a way to show the 2 top trumps if he has them, so we can get to the Grand?

The case by SIME, PATERSON and GORDON against fixing hearts as the strain is very convincing. Since no one in the majority explicitly made the case for staying with hearts, I will play the advocate. Maybe, as Dragic says, the hand with Kxxx Kxxx in the red suits is

not all that likely: by itself, these holdings may not be worth 4♦, so it would have to have specifically the ♣A in addition; additional trump strength seems quite likely. So maybe there is a case for keeping the auction simple and robust?

Problem 7	Votes	Marks
5NT	6	10
5♣	4	9
4♠	4	8
5♥	2	7
6♦	1	7
6♣	1	6
6♥	1	4
4NT	1	4

Problem 8 Matchpoints NS Vul

♠KQ862 ♥KT9 ♦95 ♣JT9	S	W	N	E
	P	1♣	1♦	1NT
	End			

What is your lead?

This problem is a simple choice between our own suit and partner's and a clear majority opts for partner's suit. Let's hear from the spade leaders first.

ROSS: ♠6. 4th best from longest and strongest.

ASH: ♠6. I shall apologise if this is wrong, but here are a lot of match-point upsides if partner has some help in spades. Declarer has not got 4 hearts or 4 spades.

SHIELDS: ♠6. The odds are high that declarer has four diamonds so I am not encouraged to lead that suit.

VALENTINE: ♠6. I want partner to overcall aggressively at the 1-level, even at this vulnerability, and so don't put too much stock into the 1♦ overcall. I have a potential entry to my hand, and a good suit to establish and that's what I will aim

to do. I am slightly concerned that leading a diamond will establish tricks for declarer/make timing easier. Given that RHO has denies a 4-card Major, it also has reasonable odds to hit partner with a suitable holding Hxx for example. In short, I think it's more important to start on spades immediately, and I think that we can always attack diamonds later in the defence.

On the other side of the argument:

SHORT, SMITH, SIME, FREIMANIS, SYMONS and **PATERSON** all point out that the 1♦ overcall, which consumes no space, should deliver a good suit – especially as partner cannot have much in terms of values.

WHYTE: ♠6. The golden rule when defending 1NT is – “Do not give away a trick on the lead.”

DRAGIC *disagrees with Valentine.* If spades are our best suit we might still have time to recover.

Finally, who can argue with SHENKIN?

I like to get the curse out of my hand asap.

Solution to Nigel's DD Problem

	♠ 98	
	♥ T43	
	♦ QT432	
	♣ KT8	
♠ QT		♠ 7654
♥ K9		♥ J765
♦ 98765		♦ KJ
♣ J765		♣ 432
	♠ AKJ32	
	♥ AQ82	
	♦ A	
	♣ AQ9	

Assuming West leads a minor card declarer wins both minor suit Aces then plays ♠A and a small spade to West.

If West returns:

a) a diamond: declarer ruffs away East's King, draws trump and cashes clubs ending in dummy. West is squeezed in the red suits.

b) a club: declarer has 2 club entries to dummy (win the Ten on a low club lead; unblock ♣Q under the King if West tries the Jack) Declarer ruffs a diamond and draws trump as before.

c) If he returns the ♥K declarer wins and plays all his trump, discarding diamonds from dummy. Now 2 more rounds of clubs squeeze East in the red suits.

Problem 8	Votes	Marks
♦9	13	10
♠6	7	7
♠K	0	5
♠2	0	4
♣J	0	4

Panel Answers

September 2022

Problem		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Top Scoring Choice		2♦	2♠	2♦	4♦	3NT	Pass	5NT	9♦	Tot
1=	John Murdoch	2♦	2♣	1NT	4♦	3NT	Pass	5NT	9♦	75
	Douglas Piper	2♦	2♠	2♣	4♦	4♥	Pass	5NT	6♠	75
	Harry Smith	2♦	2♠	2♦	4♦	Dbl	Pass	5♣	9♦	75
4=	Miro Dragic	Dbl	2♠	2♦	4♦	Dbl	3♣	5NT	9♦	74
	Bob Ferrari	Dbl	2♠	1NT	4NT	3NT	Pass	5NT	9♦	74
	Gints Freimanis	2♠	2♠	2♦	4NT	3NT	Pass	5♣	9♦	74
7=	Irving Gordon	Dbl	2♣	2♣	4♦	3NT	Pass	6♦	9♦	73
	Anne Symons	Dbl	Dbl	2♦	4♦	4♥	Pass	4♠	9♦	73
9=	Tim McKay	2♠	2♠	2♣	4♦	4♥	Pass	5NT	6♠	72
	Bill Ross	Dbl	2♠	2♦	4♦	Dbl	Pass	4♠	6♠	72
	Brian Short	Dbl	Dbl	2♦	4♦	4♥	Pass	5♥	9♦	72
12=	Barnet Shenkin	2♣	2♠	2NT	4♦	3NT	Pass	5NT	9♦	71
	Iain Sime	Dbl	2♠	2♣	4♦	Pass	Pass	4♠	9♦	71
14=	Mike Ash	2♦	2♣	1NT	4♦	4♥	2NT	5♣	6♠	68
	Jack Paterson	2♦	2♣	2NT	4♦	Pass	Pass	4♠	9♦	68
16	Bill Whyte	2♠	2♠	3NT	4♦	3NT	3♣	5♥	9♦	65
17=	Derrick Peden	2♦	Dbl	2NT	4♦	4♥	Pass	6♥	6♠	64
	Patrick Shields	2♦	2♣	2♣	4NT	Pass	2NT	6♣	6♠	64
	Ronan Valentine	1NT	2♠	2♣	4♦	Dbl	Pass	4NT	6♠	64
20	Liz McGowan	1NT	Dbl	1NT	5♠	3NT	2NT	5♣	9♦	61

Competitors Top Scores

High scores were a bit easier to achieve this time. Congratulations to our top scorer,
Ena Wood (Stirling & Union) on equalling our panel's best with **75**.

Other good scores:	Robert Clow (GBC)	74
	Paul Maiolani (GBC)	74
	Maurice Franceschi (Carlton)	73
	Bob Brown (GBC)	72
	Douglas Mitchell (Buchanan)	72
	Anne Perkins (New Melville)	70
	Danny Hamilton (Buchanan)	69
	Ken Rae (Lerwick)	68
	David Welsh (Stirling & Union)	67
	Dave Duddell (New Melville)	66
	Russell Frame (GBC)	66
	Walter Ewing (Perth)	65

SBNews Bidding Problems

November 2022

You are always South, playing with an excellent first-time partner. You had time to agree only a basic system:

5-card Majors, 15-17 No-trump,
2/1 forcing to game,
1♣/1♦ = 3+.

(not that it will help much here).

Please send your answers to the Editor:

liz.mcgowan@blueyonder.co.uk

quoting your SBU Membership number.

Closing date: 26 November 2022

Problem 1 Teams All Vul

♠976	S	W	N	E
♥Q543	-	-	-	1♣
♦T5	P	3♣*	Dbl	P
♣AK43	?			

1♣=3+♣ (15-17NT); 3♣*=5+♣, 6-9HCP

Problem 2 Teams NS Vul

♠A52	S	W	N	E
♥Q7	-	2♦*	P	P
♦QJ87632	?			
♣K				

2♦*=Multi (usually a weak2 in a Major)

Problem 3 Teams EW Vul

♠QJT	S	W	N	E
♥KQ652	-	-	1NT	P
♦QJ2	?			
♣K4				

1NT = 15-17

Problem 4 Teams All Vul

♠AKQ8543	S	W	N	E
♥63	-	3♦	P	3NT
♦54	?			
♣Q3				

Problem 5 MatchPoints All Vul

♠AQ87	S	W	N	E
♥AK986	-	-	-	1♥
♦42	P	P	Dbl	2♣
♣J3	?			

Problem 6 Teams NS Vul

♠A	S	W	N	E
♥2	-	-	3♥	P
♦AKJ86543	?			
♣KT6				

Problem 7 Teams NS Vul

♠-	S	W	N	E
♥KQJ96532	-	-	1♠	P
♦7	2♥	4♦	4♠	P
♣AQT2	?			

4♦ = pre-emptive

Problem 8 Teams NS Vul

♠AJT92	S	W	N	E
♥AJ8		1♣	P	1♥
♦AQ	1♠	3♥	P	4♥
♣432	End			

What is your lead?