

Bronze Bidding Challenge April 2023: Comments and Scores

This set comes from the 2023 Junior Camrose.

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

♠A975	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♥AJT987	-	-	1♠	2♣
♦AT	?			
♣5				

This is quite a promising hand. How best to keep slam in the picture?

The majority of the panel opts for a Splinter bid:

MALE: . 4♣. A splinter bid. Agreeing spades showing a shortage in clubs. Hoping partner can find a cue bid. As I have all the Aces I would expect partner to cue a King.

*This appears to assume that partner **must** cue bid any control if held. Something to discuss!*

HAMILTON: 4♣. A splinter agreeing spades and showing singleton or void in clubs. If partner bids anything other than 4♠ we'll go on with Blackwood.

*4♣ does leave space for partner to cuebid below game, but if they can choose **not** to cue bid I would be concerned that they might not fancy a forward move on an aceless hand, such as KQJxx Kx xx Kxxx.*

Some panellists choose a slower route.

TUDOR: 2♥. Keeping the bidding low to leave as much space as possible to find out if partner has a fit, or partial fit, for hearts. This would improve my hand nicely!

Indeed it would. If partner has the ♥K our slam prospects are much better. If they bid anything other than 2♠ and we jump to game in spades next time we have made a Delayed Game Raise, focussing attention on hearts but perhaps not showing 4-card spade support. After a 2♠ rebid, perhaps the most likely response, we want to make another slam try but there might be some confusion about where we want to play.

How about setting trump and keeping it lower than the Splinter?

MCLEOD: 3♣. Showing a good raise in spades. It is sooo tempting to bid 2♥ (which is what I'll do if I don't have a good raise in spades available), but it is also so short-sighted. When is the heart fit going to be better than the spade fit? When partner has 4 spades and 3 hearts? Then they'd have opened 1NT – unless they're strong, in which case, slam here we come – and I just have to hope it isn't one of those hands where 6♥ is the only slam that makes, because we'll find any other one. When partner has 5 spades and 4 hearts? Cool; let's play in the 5-4 fit and use the 10-card fit with a 6-card suit as a source of running tricks.

For many experts the 3♣ Unassuming Cue Bid (UCB) promises only 3-card support. They use 2NT to show a 4+card raise of partner's Major in competition. Such an agreement might be useful here, but perhaps not one to try if undiscussed!

Another possibility is the Fit Jump: after the overcall a jump to 3♥ shows a good suit with 4-card support for spades. Normally the values are concentrated in the 2 suits, so this hand has a spare Ace, but assuming partner does not pass you can make another strong move next time. Iain weighs up the options, but plumps for

SIME: 4♣. Splinter. I don't mind 3♣, allowing more space, but revealing nothing (to partner as well as the opponents). I am not so keen on 3♥ (Fit Jump). Partner might assume a better suit for a source of tricks.

One thing the panel is agreed on: an Ace-asking bid will not help us this time.

Problem 1	Panel	Marks	Competitors
4♣	4	10	6
2♥	2	9	12
3♣	1	8	6
3♥	0	7	11
2NT	0	6	2
4NT	0	3	2
4♠	0	2	1

Partner held KQJT8 5 K9832 Q4. 12 tricks were easy when diamonds broke 3=3

Problem 2 Teams: EW Vul, Dealer West

♠KQ95	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♥AQ5	1♦	Pass	1NT	Pass
♦AQ432	?			
♣3				

Partner does not have a 4-card Major, but may have up to 9, occasionally even 10 HCP. Should we make a move? If so, what is the best way forward?

MALE: . 2♣. To bid 2♣ or 2NT? Partner is denying a 4-card major. But they should have 6/9 points. It's teams so we. must try for game. 2♣ shows the fifth diamond and the values for 2NT.

TUDOR: 2♣ . It's possible diamonds could be the contract. My partners would normally show a 4-card major rather than say NT so I'm making a forcing bid rather than expecting spades to be the trump suit.

Partner will realise that you have a strong hand, probably looking for game in diamonds. Is 5♦ a realistic proposition? Certainly, opposite JTxx Kxx Kxx xxxx. But as Bob Hamman was wont to say: "Don't play me for perfect cards: I don't have them!" With a hand like JTxx Jxx Kxx QJTxx partner may decide against 3NT, expecting hearts to be wide open.

The alternative game possibility is 3NT.

MCLEOD: 2NT. The "trap" answer here is 2♣ , since that would show 16+HCP, 5+diamonds and 4+spades – in other words, describe the hand perfectly! So why would I reject such a bid? 2NT is not going to be a worse bid than 2♣ when Game is on, because 3NT will be preferable to 5♦. (I can guarantee partner has clubs covered on this bidding – or a diamond fit. Possibly both). When partner is weak I need to give them a choice of 2NT or 3♦ as a contract. 2♣ is unlikely to do this, especially if playing a Blackout 2NT over a reverse. Note the ♥AQ5 is crucial in this decision – switch them with the club suit, and 2♣ is the better option, because there are two potential minor fits, and hearts are vulnerable to attack in NT.

Most of the panel is quite optimistic about game prospects. Perhaps more realistically:

EDMOND: PASS with a very poor 17 and partner doesn't have 4 spades.

FRAME: PASS: Partner has shown a maximum of 9HCP with a club suit so, with no prospects of game and a misfit, stay as low as possible.

It is possible that partner has a balanced hand with 4 diamonds, but I tend to agree with Russell that they are more likely to have a club suit, so where are we going for tricks?

Problem 2	Panel	Marks	Competitors
2♣	4	10	20
PASS	2	9	0
2NT	1	8	13
2♦	0	7	1
3NT	0	4	2
3♣	0	2	3
2♣	0	1	1

Partner held T76 932 T5 KQJ42, so this was a good time to pass 1NT.

Problem 3 Teams All Vul, Dealer West

♠AQ5	West	North	East	South
♥A9	1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
♦KT8743	?			
♣A3				

Another deal where the choice is between diamonds and no-trump. Only one panellist favours a jump rebid:

TUDOR: 3♦. The suit's not great but a jump in NT might mean a farewell to any potential diamond slam.

I was taught that a jump rebid in a minor should show a strong suit that will normally play for no more than one loser opposite a singleton. So I would also worry about reaching a diamond slam with inadequate trump.

HAMILTON: 1NT. Between 1NT and 2NT. Don't like rebidding 3♦ when so balanced. I'd often upgrade to 2NT with a more solid minor, but here settling for 1NT.

This is the popular choice for the panel. But some think this 17-count is too strong for a 1NT rebid.

SIME: 2NT. Aces and a long suit make this too strong for 1NT. Many hands, such as xx, xxxxx, Ax, Kxxx, would pass 1NT, missing the vulnerable game.

I tend to agree: even a ropey 6-card suit is an asset in no-trump, so best to upgrade with maximum HCP.

Problem 3	Panel	Marks	Competitors
1NT	4	10	15
2NT	2	9	16
3♦	1	7	5
2♣	0	4	1
2♦	0	3	3

Partner held J96 KT842 AJ J76. It was possible to make game in any denomination except clubs, but 3NT was easiest.

Problem 4 Teams EW Vul, Dealer South

	West	North	East	South
♠KJ3	-	-	-	1♦
♥A976	?			
♦-				
♣AK9642				

It is tempting to double to get the Majors into play.

SIME: DBL. Those who bid 2♣ deserve to play in 2♣, missing 6♥ or 6♠.

It is possible, but not easy, to construct a hand where 2♣ is passed out and you have slam in a Major! Iain has a point though – you might miss a Major suit game by starting with a simple overcall.

MCLEOD: Double. A takeout double generally shows the Majors (at least 4-3 distribution if not 4-4) or a strong hand. In this case, I have both, so I can't possibly call anything else! The worst-case scenario is partner having 4 spades, and in this situation there is no reason to fear playing in a Moysian. If there's no Major fit, I can bid clubs, showing my strength and suit.

Double may work well if partner has length in hearts, but two panellists are aware of possible problems ahead.

TUDOR: DBL. I'm hoping partner doesn't pass for penalties.

EDMOND: DBL. Running the risk of partner bidding spades with only 4 cards.

Or opponents might pre-empt in diamonds: what will you bid after 1♦ – dbl – 3♦ – Pass – Pass?

Swap the black suits round and this hand is clearly too strong for a simple 1♠ overcall. Nothing can stop you bidding the Boss suit next time. Here it might be better to get the clubs in first.

MALE: 2♣. A super suit. I like 2-level overalls in a minor to be 6 cards. Too many players bid 2 minor on AJxxx. If I get a second chance to bid again I would now double to get my majors into the auction.

FRAME: 2♣: Hopefully, I will get an opportunity to show my 4-card heart suit later but, if this is passed out, I won't be disappointed!

HAMILTON: 2♣. Will double on next round if I can.

Looking ahead at possible developments to the auction I think I prefer this approach.

Problem 4	Panel	Marks	Competitors
Dbl	4	10	33
2♣	3	9	5
3♣	0	7	1
3NT	0	4	1

Partner held Q97 854 QT42 T83, so best not to get too high. 3♣ was the last making spot, but opponents can make 3♦.

Top Scores

A high-scoring set for the competitors: particular congratulations to Sandra Mair on her perfect score.

2* Master	Will Iles	Stewartry	37
	Charles Fogelman	GBC	35
1* Master	Robin MacPherson	New Melville	37
	Roy Heanes	New Melville	36
	Alasdair Adam	Stirling	31
Master	David Hartley	St Andrew	39
	David Olive	Caledonian	38
	Jane Smithson	Berwick	38
	David Edelman	Maccabi	37
	Pam Warner	New Melville	37
	Brian Rattray	Oban	36
	Alan Kirk	Bearsden Academy	34
District Master	John Smithson	Berwick	39
	Graham Vincent/Andy McKinnel	Linlithgow	39
	Ken Brown	Pentland	38
	Elizabeth Rose	Direct	38
	Paul Kerr	Troon	37
	Alan Paterson	Johnstone	36
	May Armour	Kyle	35
	Ken Tait	Marmion	35
Local Master	Angela Ford	Maccabi	39
	Margaret Mainland	Orkney	36
	Peter Beckett	New Melville	34
	Keith Smith	New Melville	32
	Larry Watson	Buchanan	31
Club Master	Fiona McCourt	Bearsden Academy	36
	Debbie Bland	Bearsden Academy	35
	Wilma Currie	Kilmacolm	33
	Linton Horsfall	Carlton	32
Novice	Sandra Mair	Carlton	40
	Mairi Lowson	New Melville	39
	Evelyn Watson	Stepping Stone	32
	Kimberley Munro	New Melville	31
	Ian Lowson	New Melville	30