

Improvers' Bidding Challenge 13 – October 2018

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We have input from a panel of 11 bridge teachers for our latest challenge. The questions for Challenge 14 appear elsewhere in this magazine and will also be posted on the SBU website – if you are a Bronze category player, please have a go and submit an entry. Let's see what our panel of teachers has to say:

Problem 1 Pairs Love All

	N	E	S	W
♠ AT532	-	-	-	P
♥ 72	1♣	3♦*	3♥	5♦
♦ -	?			
♣ KQJ983				

*pre-empt

The panel were divided on whether to pass, double or bid what they thought they could make – let's look at the passers first:

Sanders (similarly **Gallacher & McGowan**): Pass: I don't have any clear bid and am happy for partner to make the decision - this pass is forcing because partner has shown values.

Joan, Maurice & Peter chose the "flexible" double but with varying degrees of confidence as to its meaning:

Lees: Double: Very difficult decision: this is probably best (do something sensible partner); 5S might work but not if our best spot is 5C; 5H cannot be an option with only 2 card support - who knows?

Pigott: Double: This shows a black two-suiter but we first need to try to agree a suit asap and this is the cheapest call - 5S has the merit of being unambiguous but double shows my shape more cheaply and allows maximum space for slam exploration.

Those bidding suits also had disparity:

Male (similarly **Tudor**): 5♠: Very tough decision as I don't have much defence so double and 5H are both sensible options but this tells partner that I'm very shapey with longer clubs.

Hamilton: 6♣: Depends how much you trust their pre-empts but I think with such a distributional hand it's right to bid on - tempted by 5H!

Benson (similarly **Campbell**): 5♥: I'm assuming partner has 6 hearts for their bid - I might be tempted to double but possibly do not have much defence as they are obviously very shapey.

Problem 1	Votes	Marks
Pass	3	10
5♠	2	8
6♣	1	7
Double	3	4
5♥	2	2

This proved the most difficult problem of the set - at the table, S held ♠KQ86, ♥KT986, ♦Q, ♣A72 and the favourable lie of the heart Ace meant that slam could be made in either black suit but opponents barrage bidding made it very difficult to sniff this out!

Problem 2 Teams NS Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ QJ7532	-	P	1♣	1♦
♥ 7	1♠	P	2♥	P
♦ A43	?			
♣ QT9				

More variety of answers, 5 from the panel and a further 3 from improvers:

Gallacher (similarly **Edmond, Hamilton & Tudor**): 3♦: Partner has reversed so game is on but where - I don't feel the spades are strong enough to rebid but do I have reasonable clubs opposite partner's 5+ so will bid fourth suit forcing asking partner to choose between 3N & 5C.

Lees: 2N: 2S isn't forcing and 3S is an overbid - if Lebensohl is an option, follow this up with 3S after partner's forced 3C relay showing this type of hand but my second choice is 3C which agrees clubs, is forcing and shows at least 8HCP.

Male (similarly **Sanders**): 2♠: Partner has reversed, which should be forcing to game, (unless we use Lebensohl) so I will repeat my suit for now, intending to support clubs later.

McGowan (similarly **Benson**): 3♣: Rather than repeating my poor 6-card suit after a reverse, I show my C support - partner will now show 3-card S support if he has it but otherwise will be happy to hear about my clubs.

Pigott: 3♠: Game is on after partner's reverse and, with a 6-card suit, this seems right - if partner bids 3NT, I can pass but otherwise 5C should make with a cross-ruff in hearts & spades.

Problem 2	Votes	Marks
3♦	4	10
2N	1	9
2♠	3	8
3♣	2	6
3♠	1	5
4♣	0	5
4♠	0	4
3N	0	1

Partner held ♠K, ♥AKQ3, ♦87, ♣KJ6432 and the friendly 3-3 spade split meant that 11 tricks were available in either black suit.

Problem 3 Teams Love All

	N	E	S	W
♠ QJ643	-	P	1♥	P
♥ KQJ3	?			
♦ AT3				
♣ 3				

The majority vote:

Campbell (several similarly): 4♣: A splinter bid showing a fit plus a singleton/void although, if not playing this, I suggest 1S as this hand is too strong just to bid 4H.

There were a few dissenters, however:

Edmond: 2N: Baron, a game raise asking for shortage if partner is suitable for slam.

Benson (similarly **Gallacher**): 1♠: A waiting bid to find out more about partner's hand - if partner is minimum, I'll settle for 4H but, otherwise, will try for a slam.

Lees: 3♠: Not good enough for a splinter in my system and I'm too good for 4 hearts - I play that a jump in the other major agrees the suit and is game-forcing to game but not as good as a splinter and shows a singleton somewhere.

Problem 3	Votes	Marks
4♣	7	10
2N	1	9
1♠	2	8
3♠	1	7
4N	0	6
4♥	0	4
2♠	0	3
3♥	0	2

Partner held ♠AK92, ♥A9762, ♦2, ♣A75 leading to a lay-down grand slam in either major on a combined 28HCP but just about biddable after a series of cue-bids!

Problem 4 Teams EW Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ Q4	-	1N	Dbl	2♣*
♥ JT3	?			
♦ 3				
♣ KQT9652				

*transfer to diamonds

Once again, there was a clear majority:

McGowan (Gallacher, Lees, Male & Sanders) similarly): 3♣: Bidding at the 3-level shows a good suit and some values and partner can bid 3NT with a diamond stop - if I double to show clubs, I have another problem if partner doubles 2D.

Beryl & Peter wanted to bid what they thought they could make:

Campbell (similarly **Edmond**): 5♣: Double would suggest a club lead, but you don't want to be defending with this hand after partner has doubled 1NT - an alternative would be to double first and then bid 5C but, if you plan to play there, bid it immediately.

Jim, Joyce & Maurice, however, preferred to show their suit by doubling the artificial bid:

Tudor (Benson & Pigott) similarly):

Double: Partner's bid after opponents bid 2♦ might be helpful, i.e. a double (for penalties) might indicate that 3N is our best spot - partner could even have a 5-card heart suit!

Danny preferred to bide his time for now:

Hamilton: Pass: Double would suggest clubs, but not much point so I'll pass for now and then later compete with 3C.

Problem 4	Votes	Marks
3♣	5	10
Double	3	9
Pass	1	8
3N	0	7
5♣	2	6
2♦	0	5
4♣	0	2

Partner's hand was ♠J32, ♥K874, ♦AQJ, ♣AJ7 – with a shortage of entries to the N hand, 2♦ was makeable by W but 3NT was the only game for NS, 5♣ failing by a trick.

*Congratulations to the following top scorers
in the various categories, particularly
Yvonne on her excellent score on an
especially difficult set of questions:*

2*	Bettina	St Andrews	32
Master	Debon		
	Iain Bannatyne	Ardeer	32
Master	Maureen Annan	Dundee	34
	Audrey Gardiner	Buchanan	32
District Master	Yvonne Elrick	Colinton Castle	37
	Fiona McElhinney	Dunfermline	34
	Robin Crouch	Buchanan	33
	Mike Royden	Randolph	33
Club Master	David Hartley	St Andrew	35
	Duncan McIlwraith	Buchanan	32
	Janice McIlwraith	Buchanan	32
	Alice Wilson	Oban	32