

Improvers' Bidding Challenge 14 – January 2019

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We have input from a panel of 9 bridge teachers for our latest challenge. The questions for Challenge 15 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 NS Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ 542	-	-	1♣	1♠
♥ J7654	P	3♠*	Dbl	4♠
♦ K9875	?			
♣ -				

*pre-emptive

The majority of the panel decided upon action but were divided on whether to consult partner or to opt for one of the red suits:

McGowan (similarly several others): 4N: 2 places to play as, if opponents have a 9-card fit, we should have one too and if partner bids 5C, I'll convert to 5D to show the red suits - I know we are vulnerable, but you have to take some risks to score well!

Maurice & Jim both chose a penalty double but were prepared for partner to bid again:

Pigott (similarly **Tudor**): Double: Partner has shown strength but this is not enough to inspire me to the 5 level and we should hopefully get club ruffs to defeat 4S but, if partner takes it out, I'm no worse off so all options remain open.

Peter decided to opt for his major suit:

Edmond: 5♥: I am hoping that partner has Hearts and a void in Spades!

Finally, Mike decided that his values were not sufficient to enter the auction:

Gallacher: Pass: Partner's double shows a good hand - on the bidding, he will have no spades, however we are vulnerable and I have 2 weak, red 5-card suits.

Problem 1	Votes	Marks
4N	5	10
5♥	1	9
Double	2	5
5♦	0	3
Pass	1	1

This hand came from the 2018 Celtic Spring Pairs and partner held ♠A, ♥AKQT, ♦AT3, ♣AJ986 so, although 4♠ resulted in a 500 penalty, 650 (or even an unlikely 680) was available in 5♥!

Problem 2 Pairs EW Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ AK532	1♣	1♥	Dbl	2♥
♥ 5	?			
♦ -				
♣ AQT8643				

The greatest variety of answers, 5 from the panel and a further 5 from improvers:

Hamilton (similarly **Benson**, **Edmond** & **Pigott**): 3♥: I'd like to show my Spades but not sure what's forcing and a splinter in Diamonds might look natural - if partner bids Spades next I'll cuebid, and if he bids 3NT I'll bid 4S showing a strong hand as we don't need much for slam.

Derek & Jim decided to go straight for slam but with varying expectations:

Sanders: 6♠: Two bites at the cherry - either to make or as a sacrifice.

Tudor: 6♠: Partner should have a four card Spade suit so no point dilly dallying.

Liz opted to cue in Hearts but preferred to show game values immediately:

McGowan: 4♥: Trust partner to understand that this shows a raise to at least 4S with a heart control - if they bid more, so shall I!

Steve opted for his major suit and hoped for another opportunity to show more later:

Male: 2♠: I have a great hand, and intend to bid out my shape.

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

This hand also came from the Celtic Sims where partner held ♠QT97, ♥AQ7, ♦AJ84, ♣92 so this proves to be an excellent slam.

Problem 3 Teams Love All

	N	E	S	W
♠ A4	-	-	-	P
♥ AKJT62	1♥	P	2♣	P
♦ K65	3♥	P	4♦	P
♣ J2	?			

Panel members were equally divided between a Spade cue bid and a simple rebid in Hearts but, as slam is available, I have split the tie in favour of the cue bid:

Benson (similarly Edmond, McGowan & Sanders): 4♠: If 4D is a cue bid agreeing hearts, I'll now cue SA on the way to bidding 6H - if it's natural, this is still a cue on the way to 6D.

Male (similarly Hamilton, Pigott & Tudor): 4♥: Partner's cue bid has passed 4C so we are missing a control there - I have bid my hand, so am happy to hand the captaincy over to partner.

Gallacher: 6N: Partner's 4D by-passes 3N and has reversed so I assume he has a minor suit slam in mind with both minor suit aces and 10/11 minor cards - I have the majors stopped so will bid the NT slam.

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

Partner held ♠J8, ♥-, ♦AT873, ♣AKT843 leading to a lay-down slam in either minor or NT on a combined 28HCP but just about biddable given partner's distribution and your controls!

Problem 4 Teams Love All

	N	E	S	W
♠ T6	-	-	P	1♠
♥ AQ832	?			
♦ K				
♣ AJT97				

This time, there was a clear majority:

Gallacher (similarly many others): 2♠: Over 1S by RHO we have 5 cards in the rounded suits but feel the Hearts aren't good enough to bid at the 2-level so try a Michaels cue bid showing Hearts and a minor.

Jim & Danny preferred to show their major and hope to complete their shape later:

Tudor (similarly **Hamilton**): 2♥: I prefer this to a Michaels cue bid as it keeps the auction lower and gives less information to the opponents about my distribution.

Peter preferred a take-out double:

Edmond: Double: A take-out, prepared to convert partner's likely response of 2D to 2H showing a strong hand with both rounded suits.

Problem 4	Votes	Marks
2♠	6	10
2♥	2	8
Double	1	5
3♥	0	4
2♣	0	3
Pass	0	1

Partner's hand was ♠KJ, ♥T7654, ♦T63, ♣K86 – picking up QC in opener's hand led to a possible Heart game with a combined 21HCP but not easy to bid!.

Congratulations to the following top scorers in the various categories, particularly Clare and Rosemary on their excellent scores on an especially difficult set of questions:

2*	Anne Kerr	Dundee	31
Master			
1*	Liz Alexander	Western	27
Master			
	Marie Milne	Antonine	27
Master	Clare Douglas	Carlton	39
District Master	Robin Crouch	Buchanan	33
	David Edelman	Maccabi	32
	Fiona McElhinney	Dunfermline	31
	Norma Kerr	Dundee	30
	David Olive	Caledonian	30
Local Master	Rosemary Jamieson	Carlton	36
	Graham Barnes	GBC	27
	Jean Wheeler	Stirling & Union	27
Club Master	James Ross	Phoenix (N)	30
	John McManus	Afton	29
	Keith Smith	New Melville	27
Novice	Helen Adamson	Kirkcaldy	33
	Helen MacGregor	Cairngorm	30
	Dorothy Middleton	New Melville	30
	Alistair Smillie	Moray	29
	Judith Rankine	Kirkcaldy	27