

Improvers' Bidding Challenge 10 – January 2018

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We have input from a panel of 11 bridge teachers for our latest challenge. The questions for Challenge 11 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 Teams Love All

	N	E	S	W
♠ KT542	-	1♣	P	1♥
♥ A6	P	2♣	P	P
♦ T632	?			
♣ Q2				

The panel were divided on whether or not to compete but, while a slim majority voted for action, the largest group chose the opposite:

Pigott (similarly **Hamilton, McGowan, Merriman & Tudor**): Pass: It's teams and we might just manage 2S when 2C makes, but there's no guarantee partner has a fit and there's a lot of risk of being doubled so I would err on the side of caution with points fairly equally divided.

A number voted for the most flexible of competitive bids:

Benson (similarly **Campbell, Edmond & Sanders**): Double: As you have already passed, partner will know you are protecting their hand and will bid one of the other suits at the lowest possible level.

Two others opted to emphasise their 5-card major suit:

Lees (similarly **Male**): 2♠: I always balance in these situations and think that this is superior to a takeout double as now E will have to go to the 3-level to give 3-card support for his partner's hearts.

Problem 1	Votes	Marks
Pass	5	10
Double	4	9
2♠	2	8
2♥	0	3
4♠	0	1

At the table, W had responded on a miserable 5-count and partner had felt forced to pass in the "sandwich position" with a healthy ♠A983, ♥K87, ♦K5, ♣A965 so the spade game made quite comfortably.

Problem 2 Pairs Love All

	N	E	S	W
♠ A732	-	-	-	P
♥ AT532	P	1♣	1♠	2♣
♦ Q9	?			
♣ T6				

The panel was unanimous in wanting to raise partner's spades but were divided on how to do so – most chose the Unassuming Cue Bid (UCB) which shows a value raise in partner's suit as opposed to a pre-emptive one:

Campbell (many others similarly): 3♣: This hand is just worth a UCB - with a weak hand South can sign off in 3♠ so hopefully this will not be too high.

The remainder, however, chose to raise partner's suit directly:

Male (similarly **Merriman**): 3♠: I would bid to the fit, partner has 5 plus 4 of mine gives 9 so we should be ok at the 3-level according to the Law of Total Tricks.

Others mentioned the possibility of the UCB although were perhaps concerned that partner may misunderstand the meaning – a very valid point!:

Sanders (similarly **Tudor**): 3♠: 3S value raise if this is available - otherwise I would have used 3C as an UCB.

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

Once again, the spade game could be made as partner held ♠KQJT5, ♥KJ84, ♦T63, ♣7 but the danger was that you might push the opponents into a making 5 clubs with both sides holding a double fit!

Problem 3 Teams All Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ 87	-	-	-	P
♥ 873	P	4♥	Dbl	P
♦ QJ74	?			
♣ Q632				

Again, the majority of the panel voted for action but with most leaving the choice of minor to partner:

Tudor (similarly many others): 4N: Pick your best minor, partner - passing for

penalties doesn't look right on this hand with little to offer in defence.

Beryl preferred to select a minor rather than risk any misunderstanding:

Campbell: 5♣: Not ideal - partner was hoping to find a spade fit, but double promises tolerance for all other suits and you certainly don't have any defensive values.

Others felt that partner's double was for penalties:

Pigott (similarly **Edmond**, **Hamilton & Merriman**): Pass: I don't want to venture to the 5 level and, although 4N asks partner to pick a minor, he might misread this as Blackwood - there may be a double game swing here but, over the 4 level pre-empt, I prefer to defend.

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

Partner had a classic take-out double with ♠AK63, ♥-, ♦KT862, ♣AJ84 and, although 4 hearts could be beaten, 5 diamonds was the best spot for our side.

Problem 4 Teams EW Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ AQ54	-	-	2N*	P
♥ KQJ6	3♣**	P	3♦***	P
♦ 63	?			
♣ 542				

*20-22HCP; **Stayman; ***no 4-card major

The panel were closely split between inviting the no trump slam...

McGowan (many others similarly): 4N: Quantitative when no suit has been agreed - we have no 4-4 fit, so partner needs to be maximum before we can hope to make slam.

...and just bidding it:

Hamilton (similarly **Campbell, Edmond & Sanders**): 6N: At least 32 points between the two hands and a good concentration of points in suits.

Note: Asking for aces is not recommended where no suit has been agreed (or implied).

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

Partner actually held ♠K62, ♥A5, ♦AKQT4, ♣AJT so the invitation would be accepted and the no trump slam always made.

Congratulations to the following top scorers in the various categories, particularly David, a Novice, Ken and Jennifer on their highly commended scores:

2* Master	Bettina Debon	St Andrews	35
	Will Iles	Stewartry	32
1* Master	Joe Duxbury	Banchory	37
	Les McConachie	St Andrews	34
Master	Maureen Annan	Dundee	37
	Archie Hunter	Biggar	36
	John Kelly	Aberdeen	36
	David King	Berwick	36
District Master	Rob Hickling	Bon Accord	37
	David Olive	Caledonian	37
Local Master	Kathryn Cons	Montrose	36
	Jean Cousins	Buchanan	36
	Pat Sinclair	New Melville	36
Club Master	Ken Brown	Pentland	38
	Jennifer Bute	Carlton	38
Novice	David Ripley	Ayrshire Associates	38
	May Armour	Prestwick	35