

Improvers' Bidding Challenge 16 – July 2019

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We have input from a panel of 9 bridge teachers for our latest challenge. The questions for Challenge 17 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 All Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ 3	-	-	1♥	Pass
♥ KQ984	?			
♦ AQT95				
♣ Q5				

The majority of the panel decided to show their heart fit and spade shortage by means of a splinter bid:

Benson (similarly **Hamilton, Male & Pigott**): 3♠: Splinter but, if not part of system, 2D as you are too strong to bid 4H directly - that would show a weaker, more pre-emptive type of bid.

Liz and Derek decided to show where their supporting values lay:

McGowan (similarly **Sanders**): 3♦: It is unusual to make a strong jump shift in a 5-card suit but we make an exception for 2-suiters with good support for partner - my next bid will be 4H, denying any outside first round controls.

Jim also decided to show his diamonds:

Tudor: 2♦: A choice between a splinter bid in spades or to show the diamond suit – the latter might help partner better assess their hand for slam prospects.

Mike opted for a more general game raise:

Gallacher: 2N: Jacoby, agreeing hearts and asking partner to further describe her hand as I have good hand with at least game values.

Peter simply wanted to find out about partner's controls:

Edmond: 4N: Roman Keycard Blackwood - I don't see the point of bidding 2D as there's a slam if partner has 3 keycards.

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

At the table, partner held ♠A72, ♥AJT75, ♦K8, ♣A97 and, with J♦ falling, even the grand slam was a comfortable make although it can't hurt to explore first!

Problem 2 Teams Love All

	N	E	S	W
♠ AJT96532	-	-	1N	Pass
♥ A3	2♥*	Pass	2♠	Pass
♦ Q	?			
♣ Q7				

**transfer*

The panel was split between settling for game and exploring slam possibilities with the latter in the majority:

Male (similarly **Hamilton, McGowan & Pigott**): 4♦: An autosplinter, setting spades as trumps and showing a singleton diamond - the fact it's a queen is not too important but I would not do this with an Ace or King.

Mike preferred to ask for controls:

Gallacher (similarly **Edmond**): 4N: We have at most 27HCP and partner will have to have a very good 1N opener with the majority of the remaining control values for a spade slam just possible but, as it is teams, let's ask for Aces - I should be able to duck out at 5S if he only has one.

Derek, Joyce & Jim settled for game in view of the need for precise cards from partner but Derek would have taken a different approach on the first round:

Sanders (similarly **Benson & Tudor**): 4♠: I'm not a fan of the transfer as I should have responded 3S, a traditional slam try.

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

Although partner's hand was ♠K7, ♥87542, ♦KT7, ♣AKT and slam is laydown, once again it is better to explore.

Problem 3 Pairs NS Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ -	-	1♣	Pass	Pass
♥ AKQ5	?			
♦ A432				
♣ K8542				

This was clearly the most difficult problem of the set but the majority of the panel elected to defend:

Sanders (similarly many others): Pass: The opponents probably have a spade fit and 1C could go several down.

Jim and Mike wanted to hear from partner:

Tudor (similarly **Gallacher**): Dbl: Partner will inevitably bid spades but, over 1S, I'd try 1N although this is far from ideal with the void - it does, however, show 15-17 as an initial 1NT overcall would be protective (11-14) so Dbl followed by NT shows more.

Maurice took a creative approach to this most unusual problem:

Pigott: 2N: A hand outside the text books but, having eliminated everything else, it leaves 2N, Unusual No Trump, showing the red suits - this isn't ideal when I'm only 4-4 but, given partner's failure to overcall in spades despite my void and RHO's pass, there must be every chance of a red suit fit.

Problem 3	Votes	Marks
Pass	6	10
2N	1	9
Dbl	2	7
1♥	0	4
1♦	0	2
1N	0	1
others	0	0

Partner held ♠KJ8, ♥T9862, ♦KQT5, ♣3 so, while the heart game was a comfortable make, passing would have seen us go minus!

Problem 4 Pairs NS Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ 4	1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
♥ K64	2♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
♦ AKQT863	?			
♣ J3				

The majority of the panel settled for the heart game so earned top marks....:

Tudor (similarly others): 4♥: Whilst bidding 4D would be forcing and might lead to partner rebidding Hearts, which you would like to hear, it could also present partner with a difficult decision.

Maurice's creative juices were flowing once again:

Pigott: 4♣: Delayed Fourth Suit Forcing, indicating I'm really good for my 2D rebid and suggesting I lack the clubs for a NT response - this gives partner a chance to rebid hearts if he's 5-5 in the majors, when there may be a slam on in view of his jump.

Danny & Mike preferred to emphasise the length of their own suit:

Hamilton (similarly Gallacher): 4♦: We are game forcing and this keeps hearts in the picture - if partner bids 4H (showing 5-5) we might bid on or, if not, settle in 5D. Although 3N by partner might be best, there's no way to get there now!

Liz seems to have been somewhat stymied by her (not unreasonable) interpretation of 3H:

McGowan: 5♦: I guess I could abstain...3H in my world is a splinter, because 2H would be forcing in this auction - if 3H is natural, I still cannot very well raise a second suit with just 3-card support but fortunately, whatever it means, I can jump to show a very good suit with little on the side..

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

Partner's holding was ♠AKT972, ♥AQT87, ♦54, ♣- so 13 tricks are possible in either red suit.

Congratulations to the following top scorers in the various categories, particularly Alex and John on their excellent scores on an extremely difficult set of questions:

2* Master	Bettina Debon	St Andrews	35
	Iain Bannatyne	Ardeer	30
1* Master	Les McConachie	St Andrews	35
	Graham Dempsey	Carlton	32
Master	Alex Sutherland	New Melville	38
	Roy Heanes	New Melville	35
	Janet Unsworth	Carlton	30
District Master	Robin Crouch	Buchanan	32
	John Smithson	Berwick	29
Local Master	Stewart Green	Carlton	32
	Ken Brown	Pentland	31
Club Master	John Gough	GBC	38
	May Armour	Prestwick	36
	Donald Bain	Comiston	33
	Linton Horsfall	Carlton	33
	Chris Mickley	Nairn	31
	Sydney Stewart	Stirling & Union	31
Novice	Zbigniew Sekowski	Pecten	35
	Helen Adamson	Kirkcaldy	34
	Jane Lamb	Buchanan	33
	Iain Mitchell	Dundee	30