

Improvers' Bidding Challenge 8 – July 2017

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We have input from a panel of 11 bridge teachers for our latest challenge. The questions for Challenge 9 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 Game All

	N	E	S	W
♠ AK963	-	-	-	P
♥ Q	1♠	P	2♠	P
♦ Q972	?			
♣ AQ6				

The panel all felt that game was on but the majority wanted to explore further through the use of a trial bid – for those not aware of how this works, it allows for more input from partner to help determine the final level (in this case 3 or 4 Spades), the trump suit already having been agreed:

Sanders (many others similarly): 3♦: A traditional trial bid asking partner to bid game with a maximum or with less values and help in D.

The remainder decided to bid game themselves, some because they were confident it would make...

Tudor (similarly **Edmond**): 4♠: I can construct several minimal hands for my partner where there'd be a good play for game so I leave partner out of the decision!

...or because they weren't sure if Checkback was part of their system:

Campbell: 4♠: The more advanced would use a trial bid but most Improvers have not been taught that.

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

Partner actually held ♠T872, ♥K43, ♦AT4, ♣953, so the spade game would be bid and made comfortably.

Problem 2 Pairs Love All

	N	E	S	W
♠ K	-	-	-	P
♥ Q9532	P	P	1♠	P
♦ J864	1NT	P	2♠	P
♣ KT7	?			

The panel was unanimous in passing:

Merriman (all others similarly): Pass: Partner should have 6+ spades and I have nothing better to offer.

Problem 2	Votes	Marks
Pass	11	10
3♠	0	7
2NT	0	5
3♥	0	3
3NT	0	2

Partner actually held ♠AQ9762, ♥AJ, ♦AT32, ♣4 and, although computer analysis made the spade game, this was only by "pinning" the ♦9, a line that would be beyond most players!

Problem 3 Pairs NS Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ T5	P	P	1♦	P
♥ AJ976	1♥	P	1NT*	P
♦ J763	?			
♣ AT				

*15-17 HCP

This was the question that caused the greatest diversity of answers, three from the panel and nine in all from participants – let’s see what the teachers have to say:

Pigott (similarly **Hamilton, Male, McGowan & Merriman**): 2♣: This gives us better chances than 5D, so 3D is a dangerous choice - 4H might be better if partner has 3-card support so I would use Checkback if it is in our system as 3N might be difficult on a C lead.

The others felt that the Checkback convention would not be available but chose different ways of dealing with this constraint (Note: after a NT re-bid by opener, a club bid can be agreed by partnerships as the Checkback, convention, asking for details of opener’s major suit holdings):

Benson (similarly **Lees, Sanders & Tudor**): 3♦: Forcing - if partner has 3H they will bid 3H but, if not, 3NT.

Edmond (similarly **Campbell**): 3NT: It would be nice to use Checkback but, if you do not have that convention available, this seems the best option, despite the potentially devastating spade lead!

Problem 3	Votes	Marks
2♣	5	10
3♦	4	9
3NT	2	8
5♦	0	6
2NT	0	5
3♥	0	4
2♦	0	3
2♥	0	2
Pass	0	1

In reality, partner had ♠K93, ♥K4, ♦AKT94, ♣KJ8 and there were actually 12 tricks available in NT due to a favourable lie of the diamond & heart suits.

Problem 4 Pairs Game all

	N	E	S	W
♠ T8	P	P	1♠	2♥
♥ J62	3♣	P	3♠	4♦
♦ K6	?			
♣ AT8763				

Most of the panel elected to take no further action:

Campbell (many others similarly): Pass: 3C is already an overbid as a new suit at the 2-level generally shows 10+HCP - partner has not shown a strong hand so don’t encourage him any further, especially as he does have another chance to bid.

Despite disagreeing with the initial bid, however, Steve felt that bidding game was better than defending:

Male: 4♠: I would not bid 3C to start with, however KD & AC for partner look to be working.

Two, on the other hand, felt that defending was best and doubled for penalties:

Sanders (similarly **Pigott**): Double: I have two certain tricks and partner has opened the bidding - there is no chance that this will make!

Problem 4	Votes	Marks
Pass	8	10
4♠	1	9
3NT	0	5
Dbl	2	3
3♣	0	2

Partner held ♠AKJ7543, ♥A4, ♦A, ♣J95, perhaps more than we might have expected. While doubling would gather +200, 11 tricks could be made in NT and, with a favourable lie in spades & clubs, slam was actually available in spades!

*Congratulations to the following top scorers in the various Master Point categories, particularly **Ken on his perfect score**:*

2* Master	Ann Kerr	Dundee	38
1* Master	Bettina Debon	St Andrews	34
District Master	John Scrimgeour	Aberdeen	38
	Roy Heanes	Falcon	37
Local Master	Ken Latham	Carlton	38
	Eoin Rutter	Carlton	38
	David Olive	Caledonian	38
Club Master	Ken Brown	Pentland	40
	Jean Cousins	Buchanan	35
Novice	Donald Bain	Comiston	36
	Cecilia McRitchie	New St. Andrew	36