

Improvers' Bidding Challenge 9 – October 2017

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We have input from a panel of 9 bridge teachers for our latest challenge. The questions for Challenge 10 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 EW Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ A3	-	1♣	2♣*	3♣
♥ Q85	?			
♦ T642				
♣ AT72				

*at least 5-5 in majors, weak or strong

The majority of the panel felt that game was on so I have split the tie in favour of those bidding it:

Pigott (similarly **Benson, Male & Tudor**):
4♥: A slight stretch, lacking a fourth heart but game is worth bidding at teams and 3C makes a 3H bid ambiguous (competing or a game try) - grasp the nettle! Hopefully we can defeat 5C if our bid drives them to it.

An equal number opted for the minimum H raise but were divided on whether this was constructive or merely competing:

Campbell (similarly **McGowan**): 3♥: We are unlikely to have any losing Cs but not so in Ds - W could pass 3C so 3H is constructive.

Hamilton (similarly **Edmond**): 3♥:
Tempting to double but, on the auction, partner likely to be weak so we don't want to defend.

I am very supportive of the only panel member to deviate from a H "raise":

Sanders: 4♣: An Unassuming Cue Bid asking partner to bid his better major or even investigate slam if very strong.

Problem 1	Votes	Marks
4♥	4	10
4♣	1	9
Double	0	6
3♥	4	5
3N	0	4
Pass	0	3

I'm afraid I haven't been able to find my hand records following a recent house move but I do recall that 4H did make.

Problem 2 Pairs NS Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ KJ964	-	3♦	P	P
♥ KQJ2	?			
♦ -				
♣ AQ74				

The panel was almost unanimous in making a take-out double:

Benson (many others similarly): Double:
Prepared to go to game in any suit partner bids.

Liz, however, was alone in considering the implications of partner passing to convert our take-out double for penalties:

McGowan: Double: Not ideal with the diamond void, but if partner passes we should manage a plus score. Partner will pass only if short in the majors and long in diamonds – go after your own contract before stopping off to double opponents!

The single dissenter elected to take-out with a cue bid but didn't comment on whether this was to avoid partner passing a double or whether it was a mild slam try:

Male: 4♦: prefer 4D to double - I have a fit for all 3suits.

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

Problem 3 Pairs All Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ A8763	-	P	P	1♣
♥ A854	?			
♦ AK9				
♣ J				

The clear majority of the panel elected once again for the take-out double:

Tudor (similarly many others): Double: This describes my hand more accurately than overcalling in Spades.

Others disagreed:

McGowan (similarly **Benson & Hamilton**): 1♠: This will not end the bidding, I can show the other suits later, probably with a takeout double. If I double now I cannot bid a suit next – that shows 18+HCP.

Problem 3	Votes	Marks
Double	6	10
1♠	3	7
2♣	0	3
2♠	0	2

The choice here is between showing both majors or emphasizing your 5-card H suit. Sadly I can't recall which worked out best at the table but would suggest that this should be a matter for partnership discussion!

Problem 4 Teams Love all

	N	E	S	W
♠ KQ7	-	-	1♥	P
♥ 8	2♣	P	2♠	P
♦ A976	?			
♣ KJ872				

The vast majority of the panel elected to make a fourth suit forcing bid (Note: a bid of the 4th suit in an auction may be natural but is more often game-forcing and used to ask partner if they have a "stopper" in this suit by bidding NT - NT is usually chosen instead of the 4th suit if the responder has a decent stopper themselves):

Campbell (many others similarly): 3♦: You have a lot of points after partner has reversed, although perhaps not an ideal fit. Slam is not impossible. Bid "good" hands slowly.

A "reverse" by opener following a 2-level response creates a game force so Derek has come with a creative sequence here:

Sanders: 2N: This is natural & forcing – let's see what partner does next. I plan to raise 3NT to 4NT, quantitative. (Note: this is not ace-asking but invites partner to slam with extra values & to pass without)

Peter, on the other hand, decided to simply bid the NT game but without comment:

Edmond: 3NT

Problem 4	Votes	Marks
3♦	7	10
2NT	1	9
3♠	0	8
3NT	1	7
4♠	0	3
4♦	0	2
4N	0	1

Congratulations to the following top scorers in the various categories, particularly John, Michael & James on their perfect scores:

2* Master	Libby Crone	Savoy	37
Master	John Glen	GBC	40
	David King	Berwick	37
District Master	Ronan Valentine	Montrose	37
	Frank Gillone	Kilmacolm	36
Local Master	Rosemary Hartill	New Melville	37
	Ian Stevenson	Carlton	35
Club Master	Michael Smyth	Hamilton	40
	Keith Smith	New Melville	38
Novice	James Ross	Phoenix	40
	Donald Bain	Comiston	35
	Pauline Briody	Buchanan	35
	Miriam Drysdale	Kyle of Lochalsh	35
	Ken Grigor	Comiston	35
	Anita Jaglarz	East Associates	35