

## Bronze Bidding Challenge: November 2023. Comments and Scores.

*A set of problems from the Performance 2 event in October. A smaller panel than usual because someone forgot to send out the problems in good time.... My apologies to all concerned.*

**Problem 1 Teams: All Vul Dealer West**

| ♠AKT532 | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH |
|---------|------|-------|------|-------|
| ♥8      | 1♠   | Pass  | 2♦   | Pass  |
| ♦QJ98   | ?    |       |      |       |
| ♣K6     |      |       |      |       |

*In Acol a 2-over-1 response is not forcing to game, though it typically shows 10+HCP. Here 2♦ is forcing only as far as 2♠. The panel agree that this hand should not rebid a non-forcing 2♠.*

**HAMILTON:** 3♦. The hand is too good for a simple 2♠ rebid.

*So far, so agreed. But is 3♦ forcing? Something to agree with partner. With a spade less and a club more you might want to raise diamonds and allow partner to pass with a minimum ♠x♥KJx♦AxxxxQxxx.*

*The majority vote goes to the jump rebid that is unconditionally game-forcing.*

**BARON:** 3♠. I am worried that 2♠ could be passed out. ♦QJ are good cards, and the singleton heart looks useful.

**MALE:** 3♠. Many would count points here but with 6=4 and six losers it's a 3♠ rebid for me.

*Once you are bound for a suit contract the Milton Work point count becomes pretty useless. What matters is your trick-taking potential. Here you have great controls and no wasted Quacks in unbid suits. You can re-value using the Losing Trick Count (only 5 losers) or by adding points for extra length and shortages.*

**SIME:** 3♠. A two-over-one response becomes game-forcing when opener shows extra values. 3♠ shows extra values and points towards our most likely game. 5♦ might be in a lot of trouble on a club lead through my hand. However, if partner bids 3NT he should have a club honour; I would then bid 4♦ showing a slam try in diamonds.

*The best bid here depends on partner's hand, which, sadly, you are not allowed to see. If partner has a stuffy 5+card diamond suit and short spades you may want to emphasise the diamond support:*

**EDMOND:** 4♦. Keeping open the possibility of 4♠.

*You should have at least 10 cards in the suits you have bid to bypass 3NT here, so if partner has an undistinguished 11 count he can sign off in 4♠, even with a doubleton.*

**FRAME:** 4♦. Forcing to either 4♠ or 5♦ but, if partner is suitable, hoping that we might find a makeable slam. I would love to make a splinter bid in hearts but 4♥ would be natural and it's too dangerous to ask for Aces when we haven't agreed a suit!

*Russell hankers after slam and raises an interesting point. Since a 2♥ rebid would be forcing (the auction is forced to 2♠) it is not necessary to make a space-consuming jump to 3♥ to show extra strength. You can show extras later, once a fit or misfit is established. So in this situation an unnecessary jump in hearts should be a Splinter bid. I am not sure what 4♥ might mean – perhaps it should show a void?*

**MCKAY:** 3♥ Hopefully this will be taken as a Splinter.

| Problem 1 | Panel | Marks | Competitors |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 3♠        | 3     | 10    | 11          |
| 3♥        | 1     | 9     | 0           |
| 4♦        | 2     | 8     | 3           |
| 3♦        | 1     | 6     | 12          |
| 4♠        | 0     | 5     | 3           |
| 2♠        | 0     | 3     | 16          |
| 3♣        | 0     | 1     | 1           |
| 4♥        | 0     | 1     | 2           |

*Partner has ♠Jx♥543♦AK652♣AQ4. 6♦ looks pretty good, but a 4-1 spade break and 3-1 diamond break mean you have to take a Double Dummy line to make.*

**Problem 2 Teams: EW Vul Dealer East**

|       |      |       |      |       |
|-------|------|-------|------|-------|
| ♠T873 | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH |
| ♥KT3  | -    | -     | 1♥   | 3♣    |
| ♦AKJ8 | ?    |       |      |       |
| ♣T4   |      |       |      |       |

*Most panellists trot out a 'flexible' negative double, showing support for the unbid suits, more specifically spades, and the values to respond at the 3-level.*

**HAMILTON: DBL.** Worst case we end in 4♥ anyway, but this gives some chance of a better 3NT/4♠ contract.

**MCKAY: DBL.** For takeout but promising 4 spades even though they are not that good. I can hopefully show my 3-card heart support later if need be.

**BARON: DBL.** Keeps options open. 3♥ could lead to 4♥ on a 4=3 fit when 3NT is better

*Double seems to solve the problem of the moment, but what is the plan over partner's rebid? Will you raise 3♠ to game? What if partner rebids hearts? Will you raise to game? Is this hand really worth game opposite a minimum opener? Steve prefers to invite game.*

**MALE: 3♥.** Too good to pass. Prefer 3♥ to dbl – I can take the club force in the short hand.

*It is most unlikely that partner has only 4 hearts here so 3♥ is relatively safe and right on values. But if there are longish clubs opposite North may be able to overruff.*

*On his own, Peter has a complaint:*

**EDMOND: 3♠.** (don't know if 3♠ is weak or better)

*We should have specified a weak jump overcall. Peter will surely get to the right game when game is there: partner will raise spades with 4, rebid 3NT with stoppers, and rebid hearts with no spade support, which would be great opposite this suit. He may be heading for trouble when game is not there, since partner will surely expect a better spade suit...but as a general rule it pays to be optimistic.*

| Problem 2 | Panel | Marks | Competitors |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------------|
| Dbl       | 5     | 10    | 23          |
| 3♥        | 1     | 8     | 10          |
| 3♦        | 0     | 5     | 9           |
| 3♠        | 1     | 4     | 2           |
| 4♣        | 0     | 3     | 2           |
| Pass      | 0     | 1     | 2           |

*Partner has ♠A965 ♥AQJ96 ♦T43 ♣6. 4♥ is tricky when trump break 4-1 and the diamond finesse loses. There is a defence to 4♠, but only a Double Dummy analyst would find it.*

**Problem 3 Teams: NS Vul Dealer North**

|        |      |       |      |       |
|--------|------|-------|------|-------|
| ♠8     | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH |
| ♥AJT4  | -    | 1♠    | 2♦   | 2♠    |
| ♦A43   | ?    |       |      |       |
| ♣T9753 |      |       |      |       |

*Most of the panel simply raise diamonds, but they are not really of one mind.*

**FRAME: 3♦:** While this is non-forcing, I do intend to compete to the 4-level if necessary as partner should now have a good understanding of my limited capabilities.

**HAMILTON: 3♦.** Suggesting a 5♦ sacrifice to partner if it gets that high.

*Is this a serious raise, hoping to make? I suppose it depends on what you expect from partner's 2-level overcall. Only one player knows how good a hand East has, so you should try to describe what sort of raise you have and leave future decisions to partner. A weaker hand with 4-card support and a singleton night jump to 4♦ to suggest a sacrifice. This hand seems like a sound raise to me so a simple 3♦ does not do it justice. Put me with:*

**MCKAY: 3♠.** Perhaps overstating things a little, but I have 2 Aces.

*Iain has a different way to show a good hand in context.*

**SIME: DBL.** 3♦ risks being in the wrong denomination and at the wrong level.

*Dbl here shows the unbid suits and would normally deny 3-card support. It is possible that partner has a secondary club suit, but with 4 hearts and longer diamonds they might start with double rather than overcall. This is because of Equal Level Conversion. ELC allows a player to convert a club response to diamonds without showing extra values. Thus (1♠) – Dbl – (Pass) - 2♣ - (Pass) - 2♦ is simply a minimum overcall that wanted to keep hearts in the game.*

| Problem 3 | Panel | Marks | Competitors |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 3♦        | 5     | 10    | 25          |
| 3♠        | 1     | 9     | 0           |
| Dbl       | 1     | 7     | 13          |
| 4♦        | 0     | 5     | 2           |
| 3♣        | 0     | 4     | 3           |
| Pass      | 0     | 1     | 5           |

Partner has ♠432 ♥K3 ♦KT9865 ♣AQ, so 5♦ is a fair spot.

**Problem 4** Teams: EW Vul Dealer North

|        | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH |
|--------|------|-------|------|-------|
| ♠K63   |      | P     | 1♠   | P     |
| ♥A7    |      | P     | 2NT* | P     |
| ♦A62   | 2♣   |       |      |       |
| ♣AQT86 | ?    |       |      |       |

\*2NT = 15-19 HCP

*Slam is clearly in the air. Tim takes a simple approach.*

**MCKAY:** 6NT- I feel I am too strong to invite with 4NT as we have at least 32 points.

*Indeed. Given our crisp controls and useful 5-card suit it would be very disappointing to go down in 6NT.*

*Less optimistic panellists invite slam with a quantitative raise:*

**BARON:** (similarly **FRAME**): 4NT quantitative. Would be easier if 3♣ checkback were available.

*A Checkback 3♣ opposite the wide-ranging 2NT rebid asks about point range as well as distribution. Partner responds 3♦ with 18-19 HCP. Since a hand such as ♠AQJxx ♥Kxx ♦Kx ♣KJx guarantees 13 tricks it seems like a good idea to investigate the possible Grand before settling in a small slam.*

*Most panellists assume that Checkback is not on the menu but take it slowly by showing 3-card spade support.*

**HAMILTON:** 3♠. We are surely game forced, so no need to rush (or Checkback if you play it)

**SIME:** 3♠. A good hand for a 3♣ range ask. Lacking this toy we can check for a fifth spade before moving onwards. I will probably punt 7♠ opposite AQxxx and the club ♣K.

*Steve appreciates the worth of his hand but comes up with a bid that may be misconstrued.*

**MALE:** 3♦. Wow! A mountain, 17+ HCP. Opposite 15/19, I need to know a little more. 3♦, new minor forcing as the Americans call it.

| Problem 4 | Panel | Marks | Competitors |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 3♠        | 3     | 10    | 3           |
| 3♣        | 0     | 9     | 4           |
| 4NT       | 2     | 8     | 25          |
| 6NT       | 1     | 6     | 10          |
| 3♦        | 1     | 4     | 2           |
| 4♣        | 0     | 2     | 4           |

*Partner is minimum: ♠AQJ9 ♥Q86 ♦KQ73 ♣J3, so 6NT is not guaranteed on a heart lead, but is a good enough spot. If she had ♣K instead of ♥Q you would have 13 top winners*

## Competitors Top Scores

*A tough set to score well on, so particular congratulations to Jane Smithson on her perfect 40.*

|                        |                      |                  |    |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------------|----|
| <b>1* Master</b>       | Jane Smithson        | Berwick          | 40 |
|                        | David Edelman        | Maccabi          | 35 |
|                        | Robin MacPherson     | New Melville     | 35 |
|                        | Pam Warner           | New Melville     | 34 |
| <b>Master</b>          | Brian Rattray        | Oban             | 36 |
|                        | Ken Brown            | Pentland         | 34 |
|                        | Alan Kirk            | Bearsden Academy | 33 |
|                        | Paul Kerr            | Troon            | 32 |
| <b>District Master</b> | John Smithson        | Berwick          | 35 |
|                        | May Armour           | Kyle             | 32 |
|                        | Dawn & Peter Beckett | New Melville     | 31 |
| <b>Local Master</b>    | Margaret Mainland    | Orkney           | 33 |
|                        | Lesley Robertson     | Peebles          | 33 |
| <b>Club Master</b>     | Sandra Mair          | Carlton          | 32 |
|                        | Fiona McCourt        | Bearsden Academy | 31 |
| <b>Novice</b>          | Janet Ironside       | New Melville     | 34 |
|                        | Pauline Briody       | Direct           | 31 |
|                        | Annie Brown          | New Melville     | 30 |

*Congratulations to Pam Warner on becoming a 1\* Master*

*Also to regular competitors Will Iles, who rises to 3\* Master, and Angela & Linton Horsfall who are now Local Masters.*