

## 2022 Bronze Bidding Challenge: March

**Problem 1**    **MP Pairs:**    **EW Vul, Dealer North**

♠A64	<b>WEST</b>	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>EAST</b>	<b>SOUTH</b>
♥A92	-	P	P	1♥
♦A5	?			
♣AQ975				

*There are only 3 serious options here. Russell makes what might be the safest choice.*

**FRAME:** 2♣. A significant underbid, but partner is a passed hand and we have no idea of the relative strength between LHO and partner - unless partner can speak, this is enough for me!

*Most of the other panellists think the hand too strong for any action but double.*

**HAMILTON:** DBL, then bid NT later, showing a hand too strong to overcall 1NT. Axx isn't great in Hearts, but is better than Kxx as could duck twice.

**MALE:** DBL: 1NT is tempting. But a bit too good with 18 HCP and a fifth club.

*You might ask: how likely is it that we have game on opposite a passed hand? The opening bid plus our values account for around 30HCP, so partner would need to have more than his fair share of the remaining 10 for 3NT to have play.*

*Tim chooses to have a bit in hand while keeping alive the possibility that partner has 5 good spades*

**MCKAY:** 1NT. I could double and bid clubs to show a good hand (or even raise 1NT to game if partner bids it) but I would rather downgrade due to lack of intermediates and just bid 1NT. This also allows partner to transfer if he has a suitable spade suit.

	Votes	Marks	Competitors
DBL	6	10	21
1NT	1	9	36
2♣	1	6	14
2NT	0	3	2
PASS	0	1	1

*The problem comes from the National Women's Pairs. Partner held T82 Q53 T32 JT43, so the doublers were in some danger of getting too high.*

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

♠A9875	<b>WEST</b>	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>EAST</b>	<b>SOUTH</b>
♥KT	-	-	1♥	P
♦QJ8	1♠	P	2♦	P
♣984	?			

*Partner's change of suit is not a limit bid: all we know about the hand is that it has at least 5 hearts, at least 4 diamonds, and it is not strong enough for a game-forcing jump rebid.*

*This is a really tricky problem, summed up by Russell:*

**FRAME:** 2♥. Nothing is appealing here (can't rebid spades with only 5, can't support diamonds with 3 and can't bid NT without a stop) so, in these circumstances, support partner with this underbid but be ready to leap into action if bidding doesn't stop there!

*2♥ does not tell any lies about your distribution: it is normal to give so-called False Preference to the known 5-card suit with a doubleton and only three diamonds – a 5-2 fit is quite playable, and you keep the bidding open in case partner wants to bid again. But it does understate your strength: you would make the same bid without the ♥K.*

*The 2♥ bidders all hope that partner will bid again if game is on. Jim and Derek fear missing game and choose to lie about their distribution rather than their strength*

**TUDOR:** 3♥. There's no good bid to make. Partner will expect 3-card support in this sequence but a 3♥ limit bid looks the least bad option.

**SANDERS:** 3♥. Delayed limit raise 10-11 points but usually 3 card support. The diamond holding and ♠A compensate for the lack of a third heart, this hand should play OK in the 5-2 fit.

*Tim chooses a different lie, getting the strength across and hoping partner will remove 2NT with short clubs:*

**MCKAY:** 2NT. A bit pushy perhaps but we are vulnerable at teams and apart from clubs all my suits are working.

*Mike comes up with another suggestion: I fear this is even more likely to end the auction than 2♥, since it sounds like a weakish hand with a 6-card suit*

**GALLACHER:** 2♠. With a Ten, 2 nines and 3 eights this hand is worth more than the 10 hcps but with no club stop. I could bid 4<sup>th</sup> suit forcing, but that might take the bidding too high.

*Most experts nowadays play Fourth Suit as forcing to game. Even if it is not game-forcing, using it at the 3-level makes it very hard to stop below game. But it will get you to 3NT when partner has 3 clubs, and the 9-trick contract might just make opposite J AQTxx KTxx KTx when others are languishing in 2♥.*

	Votes	Marks	Competitors
2♥	4	10	36
3♥	2	9	2
2NT	1	7	6
3♣	0	6	9
2♠	1	5	5
4♥	0	4	1
3♦	0	3	4
3♠	0	2	2
PASS	0	1	9

*This problem came from a Junior Training event: I do not have details of the other hands so cannot tell you whether the underbidders would outscore the overbidders at the table.*

### Problem 3 Teams EW Vul, Dealer South

♠KQ8	West	North	East	South
♥4	-	-	-	1♥
♦KJ93	Dbl	P	2♣	P
♣AKJT2	?			

*This hand was surely too strong for any initial action other than double. What now when partner has unexpectedly bid your best suit? East surely has at least a 4 clubs so you might expect to make at least 10 tricks in clubs when all your high cards lie over the opening bidder. How to show your strength? The panel make several suggestions, starting with the optimistic:*

**GALLACHER:** 5♣. Partner has shown a minimum bid. We have ruffing values with a singleton heart and stops in spades and diamonds.

*Partner may well have the right cards to make 5♣, but then again, he might not have an Ace.*

**HAMILTON:** (similarly **FRAME**) 4♣. Invitational. Partner has shown 0+HCP so is expected to bid on with as little as an Ace, which will make game decent.

*Jim realises that partner may have very little, and so lack the entries to lead towards dummy's high cards.*

**TUDOR:** (also **EDMOND**) 3♣. I show my good hand by pushing up a level. Partner can pass this with few points.

*Others prefer a strength-showing cuebid:*

**MALE:** (and **MCKAY**) 2♥. Forcing for 1 round. Partner has less than 7 points, but I feel I am a bit too good to pass.

*In this situation the cuebid shows a big hand but does not promise club support. You might be angling for a heart stopper for no-trump. Partner's rebid may or may not be very helpful.*

*Derek goes for the jump cuebid that promises club support and shows the heart shortage.*

**SANDERS:** 3♥. I really like a splinter agreeing clubs here with such a strong hand, partner does not need much. This gives a choice of games or signing off in 4♣.

*Which looks a good option provided you have the club in your bag.*

	Votes	Marks	Competitors
4♣	2	10	15
3♥	1	9	1
2♥	2	7	7
3♣	2	6	30
5♣	1	5	7
2♦	0	4	3
4NT	0	2	1
PASS	0	1	10

*Another problem that was sent in: apparently partner has enough to make 3NT, so the cuebidders have made the winning decision.*

**Problem 4 Teams All Vul, Dealer East**

♠T732 ♥QT7 ♦AT6 ♣Q64	West	North	East	South
	-	-	P	3♥
	P	P	Dbl	P
	?			

*Unanimity on this one: everybody bids 3♠.*

**SANDERS:** 3♠. Partner is a passed hand so rates to be shape suitable for the double i.e. has a singleton heart. This means the opponents have a 9-card fit. So pass is not an option.

*The situation is indeed unusual: partner could not open the bidding, RHO has pre-empted, you have an 8-count. Which means LHO should have at least 13HCP, yet he has not raised his partner.*

*Some competitors believe that this double must be penalty, but that does not really stack up, given your heart holding. Still, you do have an almost certain trump trick and an Ace, so if partner can provide three tricks you might achieve a plus score by passing. Is that likely?*

*What can partner have that is not an opening bid, yet worth forcing you to respond at the 3-level? Two possibilities: a 4=4=4=1 distribution just shy of an opener; or a big distributional 2-suiter that he thought he could best describe by passing then showing the 2-suiter later.*

*Whatever, there seems little prospect of game – or even of a plus score*

**HAMILTON:** 3♠. Partner is a passed hand, so doubt we're making it, but too weak to pass or consider 3NT.

	Votes	Marks	Competitors
3♠	8	10	49
3NT	0	6	10
4♠	0	5	5
PASS	0	3	10

*Another problem that arose in a Junior Training session, I have no further details*

## Competitors Top Scores

<b>2* Master</b>	Will Iles	Stewartry	39
	Robert Gatliff	Carlton	36
	Charles Fogelman	GBC	30
<b>1* Master</b>	Alasdair Adam	Direct Member	37
	Roy Heanes	New Melville	35
	Rosa Bisset	New Melville	34
	David King	Berwick	31
<b>Master</b>	Dave Deans	Dundee	39
	Alice Wilson	Oban	36
	Neil Bulleid	Buchanan	35
	David Edelman	Maccabi	35
	Robin MacPherson	New Melville	35
	Fiona McElhinney	Dunfermline	35
	David Olive	Inverness Caledonian	35
	Alex Sutherland	New Melville	35
	Pam Warner	New Melville	35
	Louis Moore	Berwick	31
	Bill Aitken	New Melville	30
<b>District Master</b>	Ken Brown	Pentland	35
	Alastair Chambers	Cults	34
	Rosemary Hartill	New Melville	33
	David Hartley	St Andrew	31
	Alan Paterson	Johnstone	31
	Rosemary Jamieson	Carlton	30
<b>Local Master</b>	Douglas Woodburn	Doon	35
	Ken Walker	Strathspey	33
	Anna Hamilton	Direct Member	32
	May Armour	Kyle	31
	Angela Ford	Maccabi	31
	Ken Latham	Carlton	31
	Jacqueline Nicol	Maccabi	30
<b>Club Master</b>	Fiona McCourt	Bearsden Improvers	39
	Margaret Mainland	Orkney	36
	Muriel Neilson	Carlton	36
	Gavin Easton	Longniddry	35
	Brian Allan	Dundee	32
	John Ewing	Afton	32
	Jacky Lindsay	New Melville	32
	Peter Beckett	New Melville	30
	Stephen Carr	Ness	30
	James Laird	New Melville	30
<b>Novice</b>	Ian Lawson	New Melville	35
	Liz Bradley	Montrose	32