

Scottish Bridge News

The Official Magazine of the Scottish Bridge Union
Issue 126



Scotland's Venice Cup Team

Scottish Bridge News

Editorial

In this issue we have coverage of the World Championships. Scotland's Women received a surprise invitation to the Venice Cup when Russia was forced to withdraw. Iain Sime was watching the USA. And Sam Punch contributes to the debate about whether there should be separate events for Women in bridge.

The Camrose season is over. Scotland has won both the Lady Milne (by .46 of a VP) and the Teltscher Senior Camrose (by a much more impressive .88 of a VP). Phew!

On to the European Championships in Madeira, originally scheduled for June 2020. Our Open Team is: Alex Adamson & Derek Sanders; Archie Bouverie & Finlay Marshall; Steve Levinson & Barnet Shenkin. Our Seniors are: Mike Ash & Bob

Ferrari; Roy Bennett & Harry Smith; Sandy Duncan & Bob McPaul. The Mixed Team is Gints Freimanis & Liz McGowan; George Plant & Gosya Rozman; Stephen Peterkin & Sam Punch.

Unfortunately we have no Women's Team this year. Some of our best women players are not available; others have chosen to play in the Mixed where they thought they had a better chance of success. Although our Women have the best record in the Camrose (See page 12) we have had difficulty over the years in finding enough pairs for a meaningful trial. Many of our aspiring women players seem to find it difficult to form compatible partnerships. Time for a Training Scheme?

CONTENT

Issue 126

The 2022 Venice Cup	Liz McGowan	2
Kit's Conner	Iain Sime	5
Should the Women's bridge world championships continue?	Sam Punch	6
Lady Milne 2022	Liz McGowan	7
Teltscher Trophy 2022	Harry Smith	9
Scotland's Home International Record		12
Play Challenge Problems	Jim Patrick	13
Famous Bridge Names	Eddie Kantar	14
Thinking it Through		15
Fantasy Football League	Iain Sime	16
Play Challenge Solutions	Jim Patrick	17
May Bidding Panel	Patrick Shields	19
Panel Answers		28
July Problems		29

The 2022 Venice Cup

The Venice Cup is the Women's World Championship, which is run alongside the Bermuda Bowl for Open teams; the d'Orsi Senior event, and the relatively new Wuhan Cup for Mixed teams. They all run in two stages: 24 teams play a Round Robin and the top 8 qualify for a knockout competition. This year's event was held in Salsomaggiore (Italy), 7 March to 9 April.

Teams qualify for these events from their Zonal Championships. Scotland's Women made history in 2018 by qualifying in 7th place in the European Championships. We travelled to Wuhan in 2019 and returned home just before the pandemic struck.

In 2021 the zonal qualifiers were held online. Our Women finished an undistinguished 15th out of 20 teams in the European Qualifier and returned to the drawing board. Then came a surprise. An invitation to play in the Venice Cup. Surely someone was having a laugh?

Research indicated that several Zones had not been able to run qualifying events. Italy qualified as the Home team, and a further 13 teams from Europe had been invited to make up the numbers. When Russia was forced to withdraw we were next in line!

We found a suitable team: Fiona Greenwood / Julia Palmer; Liz McGowan / Fiona McQuaker; Sam Punch / Anne Symons. Brian Short volunteered to be npc. The sixth essential member was Andrew Symons, Coach and Coach Driver.

Documentation was required. We printed off letters of invitation; vaccination certificates; and passenger locator forms. It was quite annoying that no-one seemed to want to look at them!

The SBU found accommodation in Tabiano, a small town about 5 kilometres from Salsomaggiore itself. A great choice – the family that owned it could not have been

more helpful. When our minibus battery went flat our host organised a mechanic and drove us to the venue in his own car. Tasty meals were made available at times to suit us. When covid curtailed the subsidiary event and some of us left early they sorted out our minibus hire problems. Wow!

The bridge was a bit of a mixed bag: good results alternated with the not-so-good.

In a 16-board match the last 4 boards are often decisive. It is important to remain focussed. Against France we were 23 imps down after 12 boards. We gained 13 on Board 13 when Fiona M found a better line in a vulnerable game; and an overtrick imp on Board 14. So we were only -9 going into the last board .

Match 1 v France

Board 16	♠T853 ♥A4 ♦QT8 ♣AJ96	EW Vul Dealer W									
♠Q97 ♥J9832 ♦J5 ♣T83	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠AK64 ♥75 ♦AK6 ♣KQ75
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠J2 ♥KQT6 ♦97432 ♣42										

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1NT	Dbl	2♦
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
2♥	Pass	3NT(!)	End

Many players dislike the weak NT but it can be a potent weapon against opponents unfamiliar with the style. A French player might double with far fewer points than this. Fiona wriggled into the lower of her two suits. My pass promised at least 3-card support, so the diamond lead was easy to find. Declarer has 7 tricks but tried to make more by playing on clubs; which left her 4

down for -400. When we scored up Sam was incredulous: how could you make 3NT when we beat 1NT? The 10imp gain gave us the narrowest of wins.

In our second match against Hungary we gained 11 imps on board 15 when Fiona G and Julia bid a nice slam to cement a 19 imp win. Match 3 was against the United Arab Emirates, newcomers to the event.

What would you lead against 4♠ after this auction?

♠JT42	RHO	LHO	
♥J7	-	Pass	
♦K2	1♠	1NT	
♣AT953	4♠	End	

The UAE North led the ♥J. In my ongoing campaign against such doubleton leads I am pleased to note that this was the only lead to give 4♠ any sort of a shot.

Match 3 v UAE

Board 14	♠JT42	None Vul
	♥J7	Dealer E
	♦K2	
	♣AT953	
♠AKQ653		♠9
♥A95		♥Q864
♦AJ		♦T8653
♣84		♣K76
	♠87	
	♥KT32	
	♦Q974	
	♣QJ2	

Even after this start Sam did well to come to 10 tricks without losing 4. In case you are interested my lead was the ♣A. We were the only team to score +420, gaining 10 imps. (6 teams scored 400 when West raised to the practical 3NT and South led a heart.)

Day 2 was less auspicious. We lost 13 imps on Board 16 against Germany when we missed a vulnerable slam; 6 imps on Board 14 v Denmark when they bid a nonvulnerable game on a finesse; and 11 on

Board 13 v Turkey when we missed a fortunate vulnerable game.

We have a tough Day 3 with 4 matches. Against England we pick up 11 imps on Board 14 when they overreach to a silly slam, and a further 4 on 16 when they overreach to a nonvulnerable game. In between we lose 7 when our vulnerable game is scuppered by a 5-1 trump break.

Next up are Morocco. We pick up a nail-biting 11 on Board 15 when they misguess a finesse in a slam we do not bid; but lose 15 on boards 14 and 16 by not bidding enough. Against Italy we pick up 11 on Board 13 when Fiona G leads a suit partner can ruff against their thin slam; but the earlier boards were not so good and we lose badly. But we end the day on a more cheerful note with a big win against Brazil – including 13 imps on Board 16 when we make a vulnerable slam off a cashing AK (you need a bit of luck).

Day 4 starts with eventual champions Sweden. After 12 boards we are just 2 imps down, but they show their class over the last 4 boards. How would you tackle this 4♣ contract as West?

Match 11 v Sweden: Board 13

♠AJ9765		♠KT3
♥T864		♥K3
♦J52		♦AT
♣-		♣AQT765

You opened a weak 2♠ and partner raised to game. North leads the ♣J, which looks like a singleton, or perhaps a doubleton. You decide to cover with the Queen and ruff South's King. If spades behave you now have 9 tricks, with a tenth if the ♥A is onside, or perhaps from a ruff in dummy.

You cash the ♠A, both opponents follow. What now?

Nine Never? There is quite a good case for finessing on the second round of trump.

North's lead suggests she may have trump length; and if South can win she will be endplayed, forced to open up a red suit or create a ruffing finesse in clubs. When South shows out on the second spade you can cash the King, drawing trump and forcing South to make two discards. She cannot afford a club, so must weaken her red suit holdings.

Board 13		EW Vul	Dealer W
♠ AQJ765	♠ Q82	♠ KT3	
♥ T864	♥ 975	♥ K3	
♦ J52	♦ 98743	♦ AT	
♣ -	♣ J2	♣ AQT765	
	♠ 4		
	♥ AQJ2		
	♦ KQ6		
	♣ K9843		

The Swedish transfer methods got the hand played by East and the ♦K lead did not upset declarer too much. This board helps them pile on 22 imps in the last 4 boards.

The next match against Poland is on VuGraph, and they get everything right till Board 15 where they miss a good slam in very un-Polish fashion. We accept 11 imps gratefully. The third match is against Portugal, another late substitute, and nothing much happens on Boards 13-16 except that we lose 6 imps by overbidding to a vulnerable game.

By Day 5 we lie in 15th place, our worst position. Can we turn things around v Argentina? In a word – no. And we even lose a nonvulnerable game swing on Board 15. Things perk up against Spain. We are 1 imp ahead after board 12 – but we hit them with 25 imps on the last 4 boards. In the third Match of the Day USA 1 lead 10-7 after 12 boards – but we win the match by

22 imps after another storming 25 imp finish.

Match 15 v USA1

Board 16	NS Vul	Dealer S									
♠ AK7	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ JT932
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ A73		♥ KQ982									
♦ AK32	♦ Q5										
♣ AQ5	♣ 3										

Which slam would you want to be in? Both USA teams settled in 6♥, one down when trump broke 4-1 and the spade finesse lost.

Anne and Sam stumbled into 6NT, making easily when South, with 4 hearts and the ♣K, was the victim of a show-up squeeze.

Day 6 is the second 4-match day. We start against India, the team that will finish in last position. After 6 boards the score is 34-0. On Board 13 my RHO tries to stop me doubling her partner's 5♣ by doubling it herself – my team tell me later that I should redouble. On 14 they bid the wrong game and we record our largest win of the event. Against Egypt we pick up a slam swing on Board 14; and we have a third win when Norway decide that doubling Fiona M in part scores is a good idea. It is not. The last match is against USA2, and it does not go well, in spite of some light relief when Kerri Sanborn goes four down in a freely bid vulnerable slam.

Going into the last day we have clambered back into 11th place with an outside chance of qualifying. But we fail to beat Canada and Belgium, and the disappointment leads to a complete disaster against Australia where we lose 35(!) imps on boards 13-16.

Overall we are +76 imps on Boards 13-16. If only we had done as well on the others!

At the end of the Round Robin 7 of the top 8 teams are from Europe. We lie in 12th position, the 9th European team.

A Covid outbreak curtails the subsidiary event, and we return home early, dreaming of what might have been....

Kit's Conner

Iain Sime

There was a lot of interesting bridge in the 2022 (2021) World Championships in Salsomaggiore. One hand that caught my eye was in the Seniors match between USA1 and USA2.

First a bidding problem. You are in 4th seat, vulnerable against not vulnerable.

♠ A52	N	E	S	You
♥ Q7	2♦*	P	P	?
♦ QJ87632	*Multi			
♣ K				

When the Multi 2♦ is passed, you expect / assume that the passer has diamonds. You proceed to bid as though they have opened a weak two in diamonds. Your agreements are therefore that double is take out of diamonds, and 2NT in 4th seat shows about 14/17 with a diamond stopper.

Well, you have the diamond stopper. Some play that 3♦ is Michaels, some that it is a stopper ask. Whichever, it is not diamonds. At least these were your agreements until this hand appeared. You might want to reconsider.

What is going on here? Has South forgotten that they play Multi 2♦ and not a weak 2♦? One glance at your opponents tells you that South forgetting is not on today's agenda. They are Kit Woolsey and Bart Bramley, a long-standing world-class partnership. Kit is trading on the vulnerability to give you a problem. Can you solve it?

Pass, Double, 2NT or something else?

(The full deal is at the top of column 2.)

If you bid 2NT, you are in luck. East has enough to raise and not enough to go further. But if you doubled East is probably bidding suits you don't have until the cows come home. Your attempts to correct to diamonds will be interpreted as cue bids.

	♠ K87643	EW Vul
	♥ KT5	Dealer N
	♦ K	
	♣ 963	
♠ A52		♠ Q9
♥ Q7		♥ AJ96
♦ QJ87632		♦ 54
♣ K		♣ AQJ74
	♠ JT	
	♥ 8432	
	♦ AT9	
	♣ T853	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	2♦	Pass	Pass
?			

West chose to Pass and defend 2♦. Declarer made only his two top trumps to go six down. East/West plus only 300. That was a loss of seven imps against 5♦ bid and made at the other table. Only 11 tables out of 96 failed to reach either 5♦ or 3NT.

The title of the article is a play on "*Kit's Korner*" which is a feature on the Bridge Winners website. If you want to keep up to date with what's going on in the bridge world, Bridge Winners is the site to look at. There are regular contributions from Kit, Michael Rosenberg and other top players. However, you do need to sift through a lot of rubbish to find the nuggets. Bridge Winners is twitter for bridge players. Whilst rude messages are censored, inane contributions from Bridge Losers abound.

One useful feature is polls, usually about bidding, leads etc. but sometimes about administration and rules. After you have voted (abstain if in doubt) you can find out how everyone else voted. My advice here is to ignore the majority and see what Kit voted. If you didn't agree, you were probably wrong.

Should the women's bridge world championships continue?

If the women-only game both helps and hinders women's progression in the card game bridge, should we consider the radical move of abolishing women's bridge? The latest academic paper by *Bridge: A MindSport for All* (BAMSA) argues that no, there are good reasons for the existence of the women-only game.

BAMSA's fifth and sixth academic papers have recently been published, and both are about gender inequalities and bridge

Rogers, A., Snellgrove, M.L. and Punch, S. (2022) '[Between Equality and Discrimination: The Paradox of the Women's Game in the Mind-sport Bridge](#),' *World Leisure Journal*.

This paper discusses the existence of women's events in the mindsport bridge. It shows how the women-only game can be viewed as both hindering women's progression in bridge whilst also providing opportunities for women to compete internationally.

Punch, S. and Rogers, A. (2022) '[Building, not Burning Bridges in Research: Insider/Outsider Dilemmas and Engaging with the Bridge Community](#),' *Journal of Leisure Research*, 53(2): 272-289.

The above paper offers insights into some of the exchanges that have taken place between two sociological researchers working on the thorny topic of sexism within the bridge community. The BAMSA team reflect on the challenges of balancing their commitment to funders, academic institutions, and the pursuit of knowledge, as well as to those individuals, communities and organisations that they are researching.

Both papers are based on 151 email questionnaires from bridge players largely from the USA and UK (84 men, 67 women) covering a range of ages and levels.

In a recent interview with [Sorry Partner podcast](#), Prof Samantha Punch talks about the *Bridging Gender* BAMSA research project. She discusses potential ways of addressing neurosexism and gender inequalities within the game.

Practical two-page summaries are on the *Bridge: A MindSport for All* (BAMSA) website:

[Summary on the paradox of women's bridge](#)

[Summary on the process of doing research on gender and bridge.](#)

The development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy by the World Bridge Federation, the ACBL and the European Bridge League would enable recognition and awareness-raising about (neuro)sexism and gender inequalities. An EDI policy could be followed up with unconscious bias training for coaches, mentors, tournament organisers and team selection committees.



As always, BAMSA is interested to hear what you think about the latest published papers. If interested in helping to develop an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy, please email: bamsa@stir.ac.uk

Sam Punch

The Lady Milne 2022

Since 2012 Scotland has won the Lady Milne in even-numbered years – apart from an online blip in 2020. Would the return to face-to-face mean business as usual?

Wales were the host nation, and they put on a good show, with sensible Covid precautions. One Tournament Director (from Madeira!), sagely points out the importance of big wins against the other nations before taking on England in the last match.

On Friday evening we play Northern Ireland, the team destined to finish last. Our journey by train has been a little stressful, which may explain a couple of expensive slam decisions. Still, we record 14.96VP. England beat Ireland by more – 17.01VP.

Saturday morning brings Wales, who take their responsibilities as hosts very seriously and shower us with imps. +76 after 16 boards, and a pleasing 19.62VP. England have beaten Northern Ireland by exactly the same margin.

The second Welsh team are not so generous. We win a low-scoring match with 14.24VP. But Wales do us another big favour by beating England. The overnight scores are:

1	Scotland	48.82
2	England	43.68
3	Wales	31.78
3	Ireland	24.61
5	WBU	16.24
6	Northern Ireland	14.77

Sunday starts well against Ireland, and we lead by 29 imps at half-time. Then comes the blip - our first minus session and a win by just 13.46VP. Meantime England have hammered the WBU and scored 19.44 VP. England lead by .84VP and it is all to play for in the final match.

Board 2 (rotated thru 180°)	♠ K42 ♥ KJ432 ♦ KJ93 ♣ Q	NS Vul Dealer W
♠ J ♥ QT97 ♦ Q75 ♣ JT853	N W E S	♠ QT9873 ♥ A8 ♦ 6 ♣ K742
	♠ A65 ♥ 65 ♦ AT842 ♣ A96	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>McGowan</i>	<i>Dhondy</i>	<i>McQuaker</i>	<i>Brown</i>
Pass	1♥	2♠	Dbl
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT

A club lead beats 3NT, but declarer might still play it off after West's wooden spade. Fiona Brown takes her time. She wins the ♠A and plays a heart to the Jack and Ace. She wins the spade return and, having listened to the bidding, takes the diamond finesse for +600.

Our South prefers 3♦ to Double and plays in 5♦. The spade lead is an obvious singleton, so she quickly draws trump with a finesse. But that leaves her a trick short – better to encourage East to ruff her spade loser. 12 imps out added to various imps lost on careless part score swings, and we are 28 down after 4 boards.

Time to pull up our socks, put our shoulders to the wheel and our noses to the grindstone. It is a grind – but we claw back 21 imps over the remaining 12 boards and are only -7 at the half. But we need to win this match!

After boards 17-23 we lead 10-6. But England hit back on Board 24.

(Heather Dhondy, a late substitute in Salsomaggiore because of illness, has had to fill in again for the same reason. She has not played much with Fiona Brown.)

♠ KT ♥ AQ65 ♦ 7 ♣ AKJ652	N W E S	♠ AQJ93 ♥ KT82 ♦ AQ8 ♣ 3
-----------------------------------	--------------------	-----------------------------------

West <i>Brown</i>	East <i>Dhondy</i>
1♣	1♠
2♥	3♥
4NT	5♣
5♥	5NT
7♥	End

7♥ makes easily in spite of a 4-1 trump break (singleton ♥J!) At the other table Catherine Curtis throws a spanner in the works by opening a truly disgusting Weak 2♦ on ♠754 ♥J ♦J965432 ♣87 and the Grand is missed. 11 imps out.

“There’s a breathless hush in the Close tonight...10 to make ...and the last man in”

14 down with 8 to play...

Two flat boards, an overtrick imp, then comes 4♥X with a 5-0 trump break. We escape for -1; the English declarer is -2. +5.

Then comes a gift. On Board 29 you hold

♠ AK ♥ T6 ♦ AT753 ♣ Q932

RHO opens 1♥. LHO responds 1♠. RHO rebids 2♥. Do you really want to get involved? Our English friend bid 2NT, and her partner struggled in the subsequent 4-3 club fit. 4 down went nicely with 2♥-1 in the other room. +11 and into the lead!

But Board 30 sees a careless defence to 1NT (Deep Finesse makes it on a Deep Line, but real people need help). -4, Oh no!

Another overtrick imp on Board 31 and the match is tied.

The last gasp has arrived.

Board 32	♠ 42 ♥ KJ764 ♦ 65 ♣ JT98	EW Vul Dealer W
♠ KQ97 ♥ T3 ♦ QJT43 ♣ 76	N W E S	♠ T3 ♥ 85 ♦ A87 ♣ AKQ432
	♠ AJ865 ♥ AQ92 ♦ K92 ♣ 5	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	1♣	1♠
1NT	Pass	3NT	End

Sam leads a heart, and declarer throws a spade from dummy on the third round. Anne carefully cashes the ♠A before leading her 4th heart and declarer finds herself stranded in dummy. 3 down.

Fiona gets a spade lead, and carefully unblocks the Ten. South wins and switches to hearts, but she keeps that small spade in dummy so that when clubs do not break she has three spade tricks for a triumphant -2.

Never in doubt!

Lady Milne 2022		
1	Scotland	72.93
2	England	72.47
3	Wales	44.55
3	Ireland	42.52
5	WBU	36.60
6	Northern Ireland	29.93

The Team:

Sheila Adamson & Abi Milne

Liz McGowan & Fiona McQuaker

Sam Punch & Anne Symons

NPC Gints Freimanis

Teltscher Trophy 2022

Harry Smith

We did it! We may have won by only 0.88 VP, but that's almost twice the margin by which our Women won the Lady Milne. They really knew how to make it a cliff-hanger!

It started well. We beat Wales on Friday evening by 44 IMPs, leaving us comfortably at the top of the table overnight. We felt we needed to do that to frighten the English and what a successful tactic that was. We beat them by only 24 IMPs, but that was quite enough to keep broad smiles on our faces as we ate our late buffet lunch.

It got better still. We put 40 IMPS past the main Northern Irish team, putting us in what looked like an unbeatable position with the top of the VP table overnight being:

Scotland	47.75
England	31.33
Others	28.22 or lower

It was at breakfast on the Sunday morning when we thought how boring this would be for the spectators and, aware of the exciting nail-biting finish to the Lady Milne, we decided to try to emulate our Women. This might be difficult: our first match on Sunday was against bottom-of-the-table NIBU, the second Northern Irish Team, and the last match was against Ireland, who, while on paper a strong team, were lying a poor second last.

We judged it perfectly. A small loss by only 6 IMPS to NIBU left us in a commanding position but it was mathematically possible for England to catch us from 14.5 VPs behind. They needed to trounce NIBU in the last match by at least 80 IMPs, and even if they had a maximum 20-0 win we could still ensure victory provided we lost by less than 25 IMPs to Ireland.

And so to the last match. Roy and I sat out the first half, and our team-mates kept the suspense going with a marginal 13imp loss over these 16 boards. In the meantime, the English team was rampant against NIBU and had almost secured a maximum win by half-time. We knew they would make sure of it in the second half, and indeed they did.

Our table played quite slowly for this session and the rest of the team were focussed on Anne's laptop as the results came in. It started badly, very badly. We bid a slam that failed, which turned out to be a flat board, and we found a phantom sacrifice, which actually was a bad score.

Our spectators were hopeful knowing that Bob and Sandy had made a good 3NT on board 28; all four tables in the other matches played in the failing 4♥. Fate intervened to stop us getting too far ahead. At our table the cards for board 28 at our table were accidentally misboarded into board 27, and we started bidding it before the Vugraph operator realised. Board 28 was cancelled. Despair for the rest of the team. Blissful ignorance for us.

As we reached the end of the match the team was trailing by 35 IMPs, and the English team was chilling the champagne. Then on Board 31 Bob held:

♠	Q975
♥	AKQ2
♦	KT6
♣	54

Sandy as dealer passed and LHO opened 1♠. Bob found a double, and East bid 1NT. Sandy held:

♠	KT2
♥	JT9764
♦	—
♣	A872

He found the automatic 4♥ bid and made 10 tricks in comfort.

At our table North decided to pass and await developments. He is still waiting.

♠ AJ863	N W E S	♠ 4
♥ -		♥ 983
♦ AQ943		♦ J8752
♣ JT9		♣ KQ63

The auction was:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	-	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♦	End

As we were behind time, I claimed my 10 tricks as quickly as possible. 13 IMPs in and we trailed by 22 IMPs. The last board was a quiet part score played extremely well by Sandy while failing at every other table, to add 4 more to our tally.

Success! And not only that, but we had succeeded in giving the spectators a thrilling finish. And that was in addition to some amusing events:

- David and Cameron came back with a score of 700 in the correct column, a score rarely seen since the Rules revision of 1987 prior to which it was 4 down doubled nonvulnerable. They had taken the first 11 tricks defending 3NT.
- Roy and I had been unable to revoke for 26 months playing only online. We took the first available opportunity to do so, in the Friday evening match. Fortunately, it was spotted on time and the revoke not established.
- Roy gave the spectators a chance to enjoy a different approach to Stayman, responding 2♦ while holding ♥KJxxx! With the hand not automatically sorted for him by BBO or RealBridge, he had taken the opportunity to have a 5-suited hand!

It was a good team that worked well together. Discussion was all positive and greatly assisted by having the unflappable Anne Perkins as captain.

This was Roy's sixth appearance in this event, but only his second win. It was my fifth and Bob's second: for both of us it was our first win. Sandy has a huge list of international appearances, but this was his first Teltcher. For David and Cameron it was their first Teltcher, but they kept up their phenomenal record in international events. Cameron played 3 times in the Junior Camrose, winning every time, and David 6 times, winning 4 of them.

The organisation was superb and the accommodation and hospitality well up to the usual high Irish standard. My only complaint would be the lack of Covid precautions. Three of our team wore masks throughout, but no one else did. The result has been unfortunate. Three of our team are currently ill with Covid as I write, and, while I do not have full details, I know that a significant number of others have also been affected. Covid has not gone away and although the Omicron variant generally leads to milder illness it is still an unpleasant and dangerous disease. I am pleased to see that the EBL has taken heed of the problems at the recent WBF event and will be making mask-wearing obligatory at the forthcoming European Championships in Madeira.

<u>Teltcher 2022</u>		
<u>1</u>	<u>Scotland</u>	<u>62.86</u>
<u>2</u>	England	61.98
<u>3</u>	Ireland	49.62
<u>4</u>	Northern Ireland	47.79
<u>5</u>	Wales	46.45
6	NIBU	32.22

The Team:

Roy Bennett & Harry Smith
 Sandy Duncan & Bob McPaul
 Cameron McLatchie & David Shenkin
NPC Anne Perkins

Our Triumphant Teams

Lady Milne Winners 2022



L to R

Abi Milne, Sheila Adamson, Liz McGowan, Fiona McQuaker,
Anne Symons, Sam Punch, Big Panda, Gints Freimanis (npc)

Teltscher Winners 2022



Back Row
Seated

Cameron McLatchie, Roy Bennett, Bob McPaul
David Shenkin, Harry Smith, sandy Duncan

(Anne Perkins, npc, was too busy to pose for the photo)

Scotland's Recent Home International Record

The Camrose series is played between England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The English Bridge Union has the largest membership and the greatest resources. The Republic of Ireland comes second in size, then Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

To quote last year's SBUNews:

Scotland's record in the 2021 Camrose series is slightly disappointing, we would normally hope to win one of the Women's, Senior or Junior events. In 2021 we have to settle for two second places and one third. Roll on 2022!

2022 rolled on – and this year we have won both the Lady Milne and the Teltscher Senior Camrose.

We had a look at some Scottish statistics for the 15 years since 2008, the year that the Senior Camrose was introduced.

Camrose Trophy	
Wins	0
2 nd	0
3 rd	1
4 th	5
5 th	6
6 th	3

Pretty dismal! The last time Scotland won the Camrose was in 1998. England and Ireland have the advantage of being able to call on professional players, but we should have expected to come at least third from time to time...

The Camrose always has its full complement of 6 teams, and when England are hosts they are able to field two teams, making it even harder for the rest. Scotland's second team has had 3 outings, finishing 4th twice and 5th once.

Lady Milne	
Wins	7
2 nd	5
3 rd	2
4 th	1
5 th	0
6 th	0

(One of the wins was actually a tied first place with England.) When the professional English women players enter the Lady Milne they usually partner paying clients, and Ireland has no professionals. The sixth team was introduced into the Lady Milne in 2009: the SBU team has finished 3rd and 5th.

Teltscher	
Wins	5
2 nd	3
3 rd	2
4 th	2
5 th	2
6 th	1

In the early days of the Senior Camrose the 6th team was provided by the Sponsor, Bernard Teltscher. He signed up lots of top-ranked players and won the weekend on 2 occasions. But he could not be declared Camrose winner and on both occasions Scotland scored a win by coming second.

Junior Camrose	Peggy Bayer	
Wins	3	2
2 nd	9	7
3 rd	2	4
4 th	1	2

The Junior events rarely achieve the full complement. Wales has difficulty finding Junior players. Northern Ireland somehow manage to cobble teams together, but they are generally extremely inexperienced. England and Ireland have extensive Junior Training schemes. We have had to rely on a small band of extremely talented youngsters, and they have done us proud

Play Challenge

Jim Patrick

1 All Vul Dealer West

♠AJ83
♥764
♦Q73
♣T86

♠Q2
♥AK9
♦AT82
♣KQJ4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	-	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	3NT
End			

Contract: 3NT Lead: ♥3

East plays the ♥Q, which you duck. You win the heart continuation and play a club to the Ten, then a club to the King and Ace. West plays another heart, on which East discards a spade. You cash ♣Q and East discards another spade. How do you play?

2 NS Vul Dealer East

♠Q863
♥J6
♦T753
♣Q95

♠JT942
♥AQ53
♦K
♣AKJ

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♠	Pass	End

Contract: 3♠ Lead: ♣8

How do you play?

Solutions on Page 17

3 None Vul Dealer North

♠AKJ973
♥4
♦Q6
♣AT63

♠4
♥KJT3
♦83
♣KQJ954

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	4♣	Pass	5♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Redbl
End			

Contract: 5♣XX Lead: ♠6

When East follows to the opening lead he must have doubled on the red tops. You will be unlucky to go off here but – West discards when you ruff a spade and East discards when you play a trump to dummy. Can you see a chance against bad defence?

4 None Vul Dealer North

♠KQT7
♥8742
♦753
♣Q8

♠A932
♥T93
♦AJ
♣KJ42

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	2NT	Pass
3♦	3♠	End	

Contract: 3♠ Lead: ♥A

West, a weak player, cashes 3 rounds of hearts, felling his partner's Jx and, in response to his partner's signal, switches to a diamond to the Queen. How do you play?

Famous Bridge Names

Eddie Kantar

1932-2022



Eddie Kantar was one of the best-known and best-loved American authors and teachers of bridge, and one of the best bridge authors of all time.

He first learned bridge as a youngster in Minneapolis, aged 11. By the age of 17, he was teaching the game to his friends. He was so enthusiastic about bridge that he often took his bridge books to school with him, hiding them behind his textbooks.

At the University of Minnesota, where he studied foreign languages, he taught bridge to earn spending money. When he played he sought out tough games to hone his skills.

During a stint in the U.S. Army in Germany, Kantar taught in German. “Even though the people spoke only German, by the end of the class they were begging me to teach in English.”

This kind of self-deprecation has made Kantar popular with readers around the world. Never afraid to laugh at himself, Kantar personalizes all his writing, transforming the dullest of lessons into lively, interesting reading.

Somewhere between the first bridge book he read and the first one he wrote (in 1965), Kantar developed his literary signature – the ability to inject humour into just about everything he writes or talks about.

His first article in *The Bridge World* appeared in 1954, his first *Bridge Bulletin* column a few years later. Many of his books are regarded as classics, and six of them won the American Bridge Teachers’ Association (ABTA) award for Best Book of the Year.

He gained stature as a player by winning the Bermuda Bowl in 1977 and 1979. Kantar was a Grand Master in World Bridge Federation rankings and an ACBL Grand Life Master. His North American titles include wins in the Spingold Knockout Teams (3), the Reisinger B-A-M Teams (4), the Vanderbilt Knockout Teams (2) and the Grand National Teams (2).

He was second in the 1975 Bermuda Bowl, the championship which erupted in controversy when two members of the winning Italian team were caught giving foot signals.

He was a brilliant writer and teacher. You can see his acceptance speech when elevated to the ACBL Hall of Fame: [ACBL Hall of Fame – Eddie Kantar – YouTube](#)

He advised bridge teachers: “You have to be humorous, you have to make them laugh. If you don’t make them laugh, you’ve lost them.” If you want to understand what he had in mind look at his contribution to this recording:

[#4 Eddie Kantar Teaches Bridge: Dramatic Story Telling – Bing video](#)

According to Matthew Granovetter, “Eddie may genuinely be the nicest guy in bridge.”

He wrote more than 30 books, all eminently readable. In a survey of bridge writers and players, *Complete Defensive Bridge Play* was among the top 10 of all-time favourite bridge books. If you are fortunate enough to find one be sure to read and enjoy.

Thinking it Through

An attempt to create a step-by-step walk through a real deal. Try to answer each question before reading on.

You are playing in a World Championship. At Game All you pick up this hand as dealer.

♠ KQ32
♥ J2
♦ T973
♣ K83

No problem so far. LHO also passes, partner opens 1♠. Annoyingly, RHO overcalls 2♠, Michaels, showing hearts and a minor. What would you call?

Your agreements are that spade raises might be a little stretched, and 3♥ is a cue showing a good limit raise. In the spirit of the event you opt for 4♠, hoping that gives opponents more of a problem than it does partner.

West leads the ♥K and you cannot see partner's reaction to this dummy because you are playing with screens.

	♠ KQ32										
	♥ J2										
	♦ T973										
	♣ K83										
Lead: ♥K	<table border="1"><tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	N		E	W			S			
N		E									
W											
S											
	♠ AJ874										
	♥ AT9										
	♦ AQ8										
	♣ T7										

Over to you, partner.

What does the opening lead tell you?

Not much that you did not already know! Looks as if West's minor is more likely to be clubs, but you cannot be sure of that.

How many Winners do you have, and where will you look for extra tricks?

You have 5 trump winners and two red Aces. On this lead you can establish a second heart winner. The ♣A had better be onside, and you need to develop a second diamond trick.

What about losers?

You have to lose one heart, one club (you hope) so you cannot afford to lose two diamonds.

Can you arrange an elimination?

Establish the second heart for a club discard from dummy. Then draw trump and lead a club towards the King. If it wins exit with a club to East who can lead a diamond through, but West will be endplayed when she wins. If West takes the ♣A and exits with a club you can run the ♦T and smile at her.

Any flaws in the Master Plan? West might have six hearts. But East signalled an odd number on the opening lead and is unlikely to be trying to fool her partner.

Should you return a heart at trick 2?

You can afford to play one trump just in case. Bad news: West shows out, discarding a heart. You win the King in dummy.

What now?

So much for the elimination – you needed to retain a trump in each hand for that to work. Any alternative?

You must fall back on the double diamond finesse, hoping that West does not have both King and Jack.

Start by establishing your second heart trick. Now you have only 2 entries to dummy and must use them both to finesse diamonds. So if West switches to ♣A and another win the ♣K and run the ♦T.

The full hand:

	♠ KQ32	All Vul
	♥ J2	Dealer N
	♦ T973	
	♣ K83	
♠ -		♠ T965
♥ KQ864	W N E	♥ 753
♦ K64	S	♦ J52
♣ AQJ65		♣ 942
	♠ AJ874	
	♥ AT9	
	♦ AQ8	
	♣ T7	

You might make your contract by drawing all the trump ending in dummy and then making a good guess in diamonds – but the double finesse is surely better than a guess.

Scottish Bridge Players Fantasy Football League

The second season is now over. The top prize of £100 was won by Jim Mason; Fiona McQuaker was again the runner up, winning £20.

The top half of the table was:

1. Arthur Foxache (Jim Mason)	2,585
2. Bruntsfield Athletic (Fiona McQuaker)	2,484
3. Simeone (Iain Sime)	2,341
4. MEGAHEARTS (Mike Young)	2,297
5. C'mon You Lions (Marina Evans)	2,248
6. Real Mad Riddance (Alisdair McLeod)	2,211
7. Arsenal (Willie Nelson)	2,191
8. Mitzi del Bra XI (Alex Wilkinson)	2,158

This year we also had a £30 prize for the winner of a Cup competition run over the final four weeks. So, the players who were out of the running for the league will still had something to play for. The result in the final was Simeone 66-40 Real Mad Riddance.

Only about 25,000 of the 9.2 million players worldwide beat Jim's score. With Fiona also in the top 1.5% of all teams, that was a great effort by our top two. Even our bottom team finished just outside the top 60%. So, the standard of our league is quite high. That isn't surprising, since many of the skills needed in bridge can be applied to budget management and player selection.

If you would like to join us for the 2022/23 season, please email iain.sime63@gmail.com

The new season starts on 5 August. Entries will be accepted until the end of August, but you will need to join the online game before scoring any points.

Visit <https://fantasy.premierleague.com> to do that. (Look under the "Help" button for the rules and FAQs.)

It is FREE to play and be included in our League and Cup, but we do ask for £10 entry if you want to be a prize winner.

Play Challenge Solutions

Jim Patrick

1 None Vul Dealer South

	♠AJ83	
	♥764	
	♦Q73	
	♣T86	
♠7		♠KT9654
♥JT532		♥Q8
♦J65		♦K94
♣A732		♣95
	♠Q2	
	♥AK9	
	♦AT82	
	♣KQJ4	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	-	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	3NT
End			

Contract: 3NT Lead: ♥3

You duck East's ♥Q at trick 1, win the heart return and play on clubs. West wins the Ace on the second round and clears hearts, East discards two spades on the third heart and third club.

You have 7 tricks and can easily develop an 8th in spades. An endplay is needed for the 9th. To have a chance you need East to have the ♦K.

Cash the last club, throwing a diamond, then run the ♠Q. If West covers, win, cash the ♠J then throw East in with a spade. He is endplayed in diamonds.

If East wins the ♠K he cannot play a diamond so must return a big spade. Take the ♠J and exit with a spade to endplay East.

2 NS Vul Dealer East

	♠Q863	
	♥J6	
	♦T753	
	♣Q95	
♠AK5		♠7
♥K8742		♥T9
♦J98		♦AQ642
♣84		♣T7632
	♠JT942	
	♥AQ53	
	♦K	
	♣AKJ	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♠	Pass	End

Contract: 3♠ Lead: ♣8

Declarer won the lead in dummy to take the heart finesse unsuccessfully. Another club was played. Now realising the threat of the ruff declarer was left with two losing lines:

1. ♥A and ruff a heart. Now West would win the first round of trumps and put East in with a diamond to get a club ruff.
2. ♥A and ♥Q to discard dummy's club. Now East gets a ruff.

If you win the first club high in hand and play the ♦K to cut communication the defence will prevail only when West has ♠Axx or ♠Kxx. Then East can be put in with a trump while West still has a small trump for ruffing

3 None Vul Dealer North

	♠AKJ973	
	♥4	
	♦Q6	
	♣AT63	
♠6		♠QT852
♥Q862		♥A975
♦J9752		♦AKT4
♣872		♣-
	♠4	
	♥KJT3	
	♦83	
	♣KQJ954	

4 None Vul Dealer North

	♠KQT7	
	♥8742	
	♦753	
	♣Q8	
♠J864		♠5
♥AKQ6		♥J5
♦964		♦KQT82
♣73		♣AT965
	♠A932	
	♥T93	
	♦AJ	
	♣KJ42	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	4♣	Pass	5♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Redbl
End			

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	2NT	Pass
3♦	3♠	End	

Contract: 5♣XX Lead: ♠6

East doubled in the hope of putting 5♣ one off and paid the penalty.

West led a spade in case it was a Lightner Double. Dummy looked very good now. Declarer won and ruffed a spade high. Had spades been 4-2 there would have been an easy 12 tricks. A trump was played to the 10 and the unkind break there meant no easy 11 tricks.

Declarer drew trump ending in dummy and discarded a diamond on the high spade. When he led a heart East's defence was no better than his bidding. He rose with the Ace to play ♦AK. Declarer ruffed and took a ruffing finesse against West's ♥Q.

If East does not go up with the ♥A you have two heart losers even if you rise with the ♥K.

Contract: 3♠ Lead: ♥A

West, a weak player, cashes 3 rounds of hearts, felling his partner's ♥Jx and, in response to his partner's signal, switches to a diamond to the Queen. How do you play?

East is probably 5-5 in the minors, leaving him with a singleton trump. Play ♠A and a spade to the Ten before discarding your losing diamond on the winning ♥8. Ruff a diamond and play a club to the Queen. What can East do?

If he ducks – ruff a diamond and you have two trumps to come.

If he wins and plays a diamond – ruff, cash a club and two trumps.

If he wins and plays a club – win and play your other club winner. If West ruffs, you overruff and ruff a diamond. If not, your two trumps in dummy make 9 tricks.

March 2022 Bidding Challenge

Patrick Shields

Many thanks to the 17 panellists who put their grey cells to work on this. Some of these problems are there to get the experts to think (and expose their thinking) but a few – you can tell by the primarily binary answers – are there to gauge where successful bidding style has moved to these days, that all may learn from that. All the problems were from real-life – all but one from the English Trials for the Senior Team for the coming European Championship.

Problem 1 Teams None Vul

♠64 ♥T4 ♦AT872 ♣A763	S	W	N	E
			1♥	P
	1NT	P	2♠	P
	?			

The big question on this hand was around the handling of a reverse where responder has already denied the second suit. Where three suits have been bid, most tournament players these days will use 2NT (or sometimes the fourth suit if lower) as a first step on all weak (less than GF) hands and this means all other bids are forcing. Whether that approach makes sense in this context is not clear. The question is acknowledged by some

MARSHALL:Is 2NT a negative over the reverse or is it not? Let's assume not.

MATHESON: 2NT: ... No blackout here.

But there are slightly more who say it does apply, for example ...

SIME : ... Nowadays, Ingberman/Blackout is common; 2NT includes minimums wanting to play in three of a suit, 2NT then 3NT shows doubt about strain.

McGINLEY: ...2NT would be Blackout, and confuses the issue ...

VALENTINE: ...2NT is, of course, unavailable as it should be some sort of weak hand.

Meanwhile the majority ignore the uncertainty. Should a 2NT bid as Blackout apply? To answer that we might want to start by asking ourselves why partner bothered to reverse when spades is so rarely a viable option? That was addressed by a few panellists:

MURDOCH: The reverse is not likely to be 4522 (raise NT with this).

FREIMANIS : ...would really like to find out whether partner has got six hearts.

WHYTE: Partner has made a bid forcing to at least 3♥ and in my opinion game-forcing. He has at least three cards in the spade suit but knows I do not have four. It is his cheapest forcing bid, and he could well have a six-card heart suit.

McGOWAN: Partner knows I do not have four spades, so is making a game try in hearts.

So we pick up a strong sense of partner offering hearts, and perhaps saying not to worry too much about spades. But if partner is 45(31) shape or even 45(40) we might belong in a minor suit on this deal, particularly if the minor suit fit is diamonds.

Let's hear first from those focussing most strongly on hearts...

PATERSON: 3♥: The ♥T and two bullets mean hearts may be better than no-trumps. Almost worth 4♥, but 3♥ leaves partner involved.

McGOWAN: 4♥: Picking a cue-bid would not be particularly helpful, so at teams I shall punt the nonvulnerable game.

WILKINSON: 5♥: Asking about the trumps for slam.

They were all for hearts but with different levels of enthusiasm. Some others went for hearts after ruling out the alternatives, because of the uncertainty about what the alternatives show, but the plurality went for 2NT. There was no clarity as to their intentions, the only one confident in a meaning being alone in that.

SIME: 2NT: If we don't play Blackout, 2NT natural and forcing is fine.

It is not clear why it would be forcing, which is why we have people bidding 3N, such as

ASH: 3NT: Without special agreements I would expect 2♠ to only be forcing to 2NT, so I will jump to game with a bit extra.

DRAGIC: 3NT: ... as all bids below game are natural and non forcing.

We examine next the question of bidding a minor, and there were votes for both, with the club bidders acknowledging that they were telling a small lie but with good reason as it opens up a FSF bid to partner.

FREIMANIS: 3♣: ... if partner bids 3♦, I should be able to show my doubleton by bidding 3♥. The issue with 3♦ is whether a 3♥ rebid would promise extra length or not.

The diamond bidders similarly have the idea in mind to find out more before settling on one denomination.

GORDON: 3♦: FTG. Partner can now further describe his hand. This avoids 3NT when pard has no club stop. If pard bids 4♦ I will bid 4♥.

WHYTE: 3♦: I see no alternative, 2NT is a misdescription, 3NT is criminally wasteful, and 3♥ is premature.

VALENTINE: 3♦: Don't see any other alternative. Need to give partner the opportunity to show additional major length to find the best strain.

There was one bid which did not come up – which is 3♠. I think we would all expect three cards in spades, and very short hearts – but what does that imply? Both minors?

What can we learn from all this? Firstly that many do not treat this reverse the same way as other reverses and partnerships do need to sort that out. There is a case for treating this sequence as game forcing, as that takes a lot of pressure off the continuations, allowing us to line up with SIME to bid 2NT and then listen to what partner says next.

The expectation of six hearts was strong amongst the players at the event, with the most common choice being a 4♥ bid. Partner held ♠KQJ9 ♥AKQ732 ♦K ♣J5 which meant that the heart slam depended only on not losing a trump trick. Only one pair of five bid the slam.

This hand produced the greatest number of offerings from the panellists; the plurality gets the top mark, and we all get homework to do.

Problem 1	Votes	Marks
2NT	4	10
4♥	2	9
3♦	3	7
3♣	2	7
5♥	1	5
3NT	2	5
3♥	3	3
others	0	0

Problem 2 Teams N/S Vul

♠6	S	W	N	E
♥A76	-	P	1♠	2♣
♦KQ764	2♦	P	2♥	P
♣8765	?			

The question this hand was intended to answer was whether or not the change of suit by opener in this context was forcing or not. With silent opponents, it is common practice to treat a new suit opposite a response at the two level as forcing as jumping cramps the auction, makes bidding difficult, and is to be avoided.

What did we find? Half the panel chose to pass and half the panel chose to raise hearts, and the seventeenth vote went for a cue of their suit. Some argued that we can caused the difficulty ourselves ...

MURDOCH: ...I think I prefer doubling 2♣ to responding 2♦.

DRAGIC: I don't like 2♦ bid.

SIME: I would have avoided this predicament by doubling 2♣.

The issue is whether double promises four hearts and/or the 2♦ bid denies four hearts. But having reached this point – and showing the diamonds while we had the chance could be important - how do the arguments on forcing and non-forcing stack up? In the non-forcing camp we have:

GORDON and **ASH** are clear that partner would make a clearly forcing bid with 16+ hcp, and **DRAGIC** expects a jump to 3♥ from partner if they had a good hand.

FREIMANIS: PASS: partner is unlikely to have the right cards to make a game contract work and the three level could very well be too high.

VALENTINE: PASS: Not hugely comfortable but I think the factors indicate it here.

PATERSON: PASS: Presumably 2♦ is not forcing to game after intervention but in any case this is the best percentage call.

While in the other camp we have some reluctant bidders

MURDOCH: 3♥: Natural invite but a trump short.

MARSHALL: 3♥: ... sometimes one has to bid what one has, not what partner would like us to have.

SMITH: 3♥: Only because all other options are worse.

WHYTE: 3♥: The clue here is by bidding 2♦ you have denied four cards in hearts.

Only one bidder stood out from the rest, and if partner does have extras this might avoid confusion about the heart length.

ROSS: 3♣: a bit of a stretch.

It is a clear overbid, but that doesn't mean it will always work badly.

What can we deduce from this? Firstly that bidding what is in front of our nose can generate difficulties and uncertainties, so we need to think ahead a little. The idea that a bid of 2♦ (ie lack of a takeout double) denies four hearts is very appealing and means the 3♥ raise will not be mis-interpreted – so that's worth discussing with partner.

At the event, partner held

♠QJT42 ♥KJ984 ♦A9 ♣J

and did want to hear that raise.

Problem 2	Votes	Marks
3♥	8	10
3♣	1	8
PASS	8	8
others	0	0

Problem 3 Teams All Vul

♠Q ♥A82 ♦KJ98543 ♣K6	S	W	N	E
		P	P	P
	?			

Being fourth in hand offers different opportunities on a hand like this as obstructive pre-empts no longer make any sense. Our weak 2♦ and 3♦ openers now become constructive openers with long diamonds – so it is this the sort of hand for one of them?

There were a number who felt it was too dangerous to open this hand, when the opponents are likely to hold more spades than we do.

ASH: PASS: Granny's rule says that in 4th position you add your points to the number of spades and only open if it comes to 15 or more.

McGINLEY: PASS: Who has the spades? Also, don't like 3♦ as suit quality not good enough, and now 3NT bid by partner probably wrongsides it.

McGOWAN: PASS: ... I would probably open with a less gappy suit.

WILKINSON: Pass: the oppo will find it difficult to come in over this pre-empt.

But the rest split between three levels of diamond openers. For the lowest level, here's a useful point

WHYTE: 1♦: The three passed hands have 26 points between them, so we are highly likely to be the pair with the majority of points.

SIME: 1♦: I need a better suit to pre-empt in 4th seat.

There was only one in the middle camp

MARSHALL: 2♦: Surely the world plays 2♦ here, if natural, as of intermediate jump overall strength? 1♦ might be a better description but is much more likely to be overcalled with advantage.

And four in the high camp, although I am not sure the diamond suit really matches their description ...

DRAGIC: 3♦: Shows sound opener and good suit with hopes of 3NT. 1♦ gives them too much room.

PATERSON: 3♦: fourth in hand, three of a minor traditionally shows a good suit with opening values and poor majors. Without this call available I would be inclined to pass, fearing the opponents would outbid us in the majors.

The panellist did split here, with the majority opening the bidding, and the largest group choosing the one-level. Partner today has a 4333 hand with four decent spades and a maximum pass with a filler in diamonds, so you have an easy time in 3NT. If you pass, you wave 12 imps goodbye. The only failure at the event was when this hand opened 1♦ and then rejected partner's game try; opening at a higher level describes more of the hand and puts the decision in the hands of the other player and that decision is much easier to make.

Problem 3	Votes	Marks
1♦	7	10
3♦	4	9
2♦	1	8
PASS	5	3
others	0	0

Problem 4 Teams E/W Vul

♠KQ97542 ♥- ♦6 ♣AQJ93	S	W	N	E
	-	-	-	1♥
	?			

This hand is to some people a two-suiter, and to others a one-suiter. The fact that we have the boss suit means we have confidence we can bid easily again later, something which might not be so if they had opened 1♠ and we had a 0715 shape.

We have three choices available, bidding spades at one of two levels, and making a heart cue bid to show spades and a minor. For the fast arrival brigade, a bid which is likely to end the auction, but keep the opponents silent, we hear -

PATERSON: 4♠ : using Michaels with two extra spades might result in partner insisting on my minor.

McGINLEY: 4♠: Don't want to make it cheap for LHO to bid; too many spades to show a two-suiter.

For the simple overcall brigade, which gives the next hand all the space they might need to describe their hand, everyone was just waiting for things to happen, intending to bid game later.

GORDON: 1♠: Might be more bidding?

ROSS: 1♠ : pretty sure this won't end the auction

But others had more constructive thoughts

MATHESON: 1♠: might score a goal with 4♣ but prefer to be constructive.

The case for a Michaels Cue-bid and then 4♣ on the next round is also constructive, that partner might be able to better judge when to continue – but of course which void you have will not be clear.

VALENTINE: 2♥: I can start with other calls, but I want to get across the general picture of my hand. It could be very important for partner to know that I have a big two suiter for the purposes of finding the correct strain, level, sacrifice or slam.

McGOWAN: 2♥: Too much potential for an immediate 4♠.

SIME: 2♥: This will allow us to play in clubs if partner has spade shortage.

The key choice is about taking away space from the opponents (and from partner) or giving yourself more chance to describe the hand and possible make a better high level judgement. Although that gain might be realised, it will be rare that partner can diagnose which high cards matter and which don't, so my sympathies lie with the bashers.

Problem 4	Votes	Marks
2♥	8	10
1♠	6	6
4♠	3	6
2♠	0	1
others	0	0

Problem 5 Teams N/S Vul

♠J8 ♥86432 ♦AKJ63 ♣9	S	W	N	E
			P	1♣*
	?			

*1♣ can be as few as 2 in a weak NT hand

This hand raises two questions in our mind – the first is the meaning of 2N when the opening is a prepared club, and the other is how bad does a major suit need to be to be ignored. The panellists produced an enormous consensus on this hand, with almost all of them choosing a simple 1♦ overcall. The expectation is that we will be outbid, and the most important thing in that context is to help the defence get off to the right start.

On the question of the meaning of 2NT the only opinions expressed were that it still shows the red suits ...

GORDON: If hearts were JTxxx, I would bid 2NT.

SIME: Yes, 2NT shows 5/5 in the red suits. And a craving to spend 1400 for an old shoe. Wrong hearts, wrong position, wrong vulnerability.

But it is as well to check this with partner as disasters have arisen at the five-level when one partner was for the red suits and one was minors. On the question of which suit to overcall, only one person suggested hearts with “What’s the problem?” while the others were quite dismissive of the suit, particularly opposite a passed partner. One panellist did suggest the possibility of bidding 1♥ “if looking for a swing”.

SMITH: 1♦: That is not a 5-card heart suit! They have the balance of values, so tell partner where our defence is.

MATHESON / McGINLEY: 1♦: treating hearts as four-carder.

The only other outlier was this

ASH: 2♦: A bit unconventional and I would not argue with 1♦.

The position on the day was that the opponents had all the values and could make 3NT except that you had five diamonds to cash (partner had Q42). If you overcall diamonds, they steer instead towards 5♣ which makes on a finesse. If you overcall hearts, you have a surprise in store for them – but only if you are on lead!

Problem 5	Votes	Marks
1♦	14	10
2♦	1	7
1♥	1	5
PASS	1	5
2NT	0	5
other	0	0

Problem 6 Teams E/W Vul

♠A83	S	W	N	E
♥AQJT6	-	P	P	1♣*
♦AQT73	?			
♣-				

*1♣ can be as few as 2 in a weak NT hand

This hand is a powerful hand and there are three paths we can go down in order to describe it – doubling and then bidding hearts, bidding hearts and then bidding again, and the third path is showing a two-suiter immediately. The panellists are evenly divided between the three options, with the simple 1♥ overcall getting one vote less than the other two options.

The case made for the double was primarily around the fact that partner will always expect less of the alternatives, rather than the question of bringing spades into the options available.

MURDOCH: DBL: 1♥ overcall has some merit but doesn’t quite convey the quality of the hand. If partner passes out I have some defence.

DRAGIC: DBL: I don’t think I can get across the strength of the hand by overcalling 1♥. Even if it gets passed out we might end up scoring well.

In the past double was always the choice with such a strong hand, but the popular wisdom these days is that showing your suit first and your strength later can work better – think about what happens after 1♣-X-4♣-P-P to you, which can lead to

SIME: If I had doubled 1♣, I risk having a lead problem ... over Three (or more) Clubs doubled.

Just as for the double, there were a number of 1♥ bidders who thought “what else?” and possibly everyone’s style here is just too engrained.

McGOWAN: 1♥: I do not play 2NT as showing the red suits over a short club, and even if I did I prefer to start with 1♥ planning to double next time. A two-suited overcall might miss a 5-3 spade fit. If opponents bid spades I can introduce diamonds next time.

ASH: 1♥: I intend to rebid diamonds at the next turn, even if that is at the three level. On these types of hands we always want to show our suits as quickly as possible and it is unlikely that I will not get a second chance to bid.

And then there is the third way, although (as Liz indicates above) one needs to be sure of agreements here, and varying degrees of uncertainty are acknowledged

VALENTINE: This is a problem which depends on your agreements. In my regular partnership, 2NT is the reds here.

FREIMANIS: ... probably the red suits in most partnerships ...

WHYTE: showing the two lower suits. Doesn't everyone play that?

If the 2NT bid does show the red suits, is this a suitable hand for it? The two catches are the extra strength and the suitability for spades. But the 2NT bidders are thinking about that

FREIMANIS (and SIME): 2NT: ... I aim to make another bid, likely 3♣ as I cannot have more than three spades here anyway.

MATHESON: 2NT: partner has passed at favourable, so less chance of missing a spade contract.

These arguments make the 2NT bid more comfortable that it would be if the suits were different. The biggest downside of 2NT remains the uncertainty as to whether partner thinks the two lowest suits are the minors or the reds.

At the table, partner held

♠J752 ♥842 ♦K986 ♣63

and the diamond game rolls home (as the heart king is onside); it is up to South to push on far enough.

Problem 6	Votes	Marks
2NT	6	10
1♥	5	8
DBL	6	6
1♦	0	2
other	0	0

Problem 7 Teams All Vul

♠AKQ3 ♥A7 ♦Q82 ♣8432	S	W	N	E
			1♥	P
	1♠	P	2♣	P
	2♦*	X	3♣	P
	?			

*4th suit forcing to game

The question here is do we know enough to choose the final denomination at this point. Partner has shown 55+ in the rounded suits, and presumably not three spades. The options seem to be clubs, hearts or no-trumps. There was a clear majority of panellists (ten out of seventeen) who simply raise to 4♣. Some see no problem and all but one (who is worried by the thought of three top losers) see the possibility of a slam coming ...

GORDON: 4♣: What's the problem?

ASH: 4♣: Agrees partner's five card suit and shows an interest in higher things. What is there not to like?

WILKINSON: 4♣: I prefer to support partner when it's an alternative.... perhaps should have bid this the round before..

SMITH: 4♣: As you've already forced to game this is stronger than 5♣, and gives you the chance to see if partner can hold the diamond suit.

Some look into the hand a bit more deeply before choosing to raise clubs ...

DRAGIC: 4♣: If 3NT makes because we have 9 tricks on top and they cannot cash out then 4♥ or 5♣ will also make. Partner will know to bid 4♥ as choice of contract. Sounds as if a cheap 3♦ bid could give us more space but partner will bid 3♥ on almost all hands and then I will have a bigger problem.

The dissenters fall into two camps – with them all bidding a red suit at the three level next. For the smaller camp

McGOWAN: 3♥: Keeping all options open, I hope. If partner is 1-5-2-5, a diamond lead against 5♣ looks dangerous. In any case, if I bid 4♣ she may expect rather better support. Maybe she can bid 3NT now with ♦Hx....

SIME: 3♥: Let's avoid 5♣ losing two diamonds and a trump trick.

The concerns are fair but partner will expect three card support and slam ambitions for this bid. This alternative sounds a more open choice.

PATERSON: 3♦: The clubs are too poor to commit to them yet.

MATHESON: 3♦: a variety of possible contracts still exists.

MURDOCH: 3♦: If opener bids 3NT (probably Ax/Kx of diamonds) I will play there. If the bid is 3♣ (probably 2-5-1-5) I will bid 4♣. If the shape is 1-5-2-5 and cannot bid 3NT, we will hear 3♥, so I wouldn't be confident of making any game with two losing diamonds.

At the table partner held

♠8 ♥QJT32 ♦J7 ♣AK765

which means that 4♥ is the best game (and it makes) while 3NT depends on the clubs breaking 2-2, and 5♣ depends on that and the heart finesse.

Problem 7	Votes	Marks
4♣	10	10
3♦	5	9
3♥	2	6
5♣	0	5
3NT	0	5
4♥	0	3
other	0	0

Problem 8 Teams All Vul

♠K87	S	W	N	E
♥KQT2				1NT*
♦QJ765	P	2NT	P	3NT
♣4	P	P	P	

* 15-17

This lead problem is very much a binary choice – which suit will you go for, with the secondary question of which diamond you lead if you choose that suit. The auction suggests that dummy has no interest in the majors and is likely therefore to have 7+ cards in the minors. Computer simulations have suggested that the five-card suit is what beats 3N more than anything else. Which do we choose?

There was a small but clear majority here, with 10 out of 17 panellist choosing a heart over a diamond. A number make the point that we must lead whichever top heart will give us the required attitude signal, and for most that is the ♥Q. Both top hearts are treated equally in what follows.

Why do the majority choose the shorter suit? A key point might be what we expect of partner – but this was used to further the argument for both sides!

ASH: ♥: Partner will not have much so to gamble on him having a top diamond looks too risky.

FREIMANIS: ♦6: partner is poor in values, so this lead has a shot at hitting partner with ♦T, recognising that there are three suitable high cards in diamonds but only two in hearts.

PATERSON: ♥: Not a diamond looking for partner's value to be ♦A or ♦K because my hand will crumble if declarer can run 5 clubs, and declarer might have a second stop anyway. But if partner has ♥J with length and some values in clubs, we are better placed.

WHYTE: ♦6: Oppos have 25-26 points at most. My partner has 3-4 pts, so an Ace or a King to help me beat this contract. If the ♥A, that only gives me four tricks. If a diamond honour, then I may beat the contract if my ♠K is an entry.

So what drives the majority to lead hearts?

SIME: ♥: I choose the major on this auction, but it would be close if I had the diamond ten.

McGINLEY: ♥: Danger of any other lead is that you may be discarding blindly on the run of the clubs.

McGOWAN: ♥: I normally lead my five-card suit but the diamonds are so poor and I can be fairly sure that dummy does not have strong Majors.

Those who argue for leading the diamond have more to say.

DRAGIC: ♦6: In this sequence I don't have to lead actively.

FREIMANIS: ♦6: I have a feeling that a heart lead bears a greater risk of giving up a trick.

MARSHALL: ♦6: Other imaginative leads such as ♥K, usually reveal the ♥J smiling at you in dummy. I might be giving a trick away, and it might be critical.

SMITH: ♦Q: There is a school of thought that would always go for the major in a sequence like this. The success of the diamond lead will depend on the location of ♦T, and the success of the heart lead on the location of ♥J. The extra length in the diamond suit with several major suit possible entries, swings me in favour of the diamond.

VALENTINE: ♦6: I know that common wisdom here is to lead a major against an auction where the opponents have not looked for a major fit. However, my major cards are potentially well placed. I can also get too active when partner rates to have between 3-5 HCP. Therefore, I will try and establish my long suit and hope that my major suits serve as entries to my established suit in time.

Of course one hand does not tell us what to do on other occasions but here the heart lead worked and the diamond lead failed, In the ALT competition where this hand appeared, half the field led diamonds and half led hearts (and they led a heart to defeat my partner). I reckon the diamond leaders have the better arguments, but they have lost the vote.

Problem 8	Votes	Marks
top ♥	10	10
low ♦	6	9
♦Q	1	6

Many thanks to the panel again for all the contributions. The thoughts they have provided have changed my views on a number of hands. Maybe it has changed yours too?

Well done to Tim McKay with a massive 79/80 followed by Iain Sime on 76.

Panel Answers

May 2022

Problem		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Top Scoring Choice		2NT	3♥	1♦	2♥	1♦	2NT	4♣	♥Q	Total
1	Tim McKay	2NT	3♥	3♦	2♥	1♦	2NT	4♣	♥Q	79
2	Iain Sime	2NT	3♥	1♦	2♥	1♦	2NT	3♥	♥Q	76
3=	Gints Freimanis	3♣	Pass	1♦	2♥	1♦	2NT	4♣	♦6	74
	John Murdoch	4♥	3♥	1♦	2♥	1♦	Dbl	3♦	♥K	74
5	John Matheson	4♥	3♥	3♦	1♠	1♦	2NT	3♦	♦6	72
6	Harry Smith	2NT	3♥	1♦	1♠	1♦	1♥	4♣	♦Q	70
7=	Miro Dragic	3NT	Pass	3♦	2♥	1♦	Dbl	4♣	♦6	67
	Irving Gordon	3♦	Pass	1♦	1♠	1♦	Dbl	4♣	♥Q	67
	Ronan Valentine	3♦	Pass	Pass	2♥	1♦	2NT	4♣	♦6	67
10	Bill Whyte	3♦	3♥	1♦	1♠	1♥	2NT	3♦	♦6	66
11	Bill Ross	2NT	3♣	1♦	1♠	Pass	Dbl	4♣	♥K	65
12	Finlay Marshall	3♥	3♥	2♦	1♠	1♦	1♥	4♣	♦6	64
13	Jack Paterson	3♥	Pass	3♦	4♠	1♦	Dbl	3♦	♥Q	63
14	Tony Wilkinson	5♥	Pass	Pass	2♥	1♦	Dbl	4♣	♥K	62
15	Liz McGowan	3♥	3♥	Pass	2♥	1♦	1♥	3♥	♥Q	60
16	Mike McGinley	3♣	Pass	Pass	4♠	1♦	Dbl	3♦	♥Q	59
17	Mike Ash	3NT	Pass	Pass	4♠	2♦	1♥	4♣	♥Q	57

Competitors Top Scores

Congratulations to

Bob Clow (GBC) on another winning score of 75.

Other good scores:

Douglas Mitchell (Buchanan) 73

Alex Sutherland (New Melville) 72

Ted Black (Buchanan) 71

Danny Hamilton (Buchanan) 71

Bob Brown (GBC) 70

Maurice Franceschi (Carlton) 69

Tom Fiskén (Direct Member) 68

Alan Paterson (Johnstone) 68

David Olive (Inverness Caledonian) 67

Anne Perkins (New Melville) 67

Russell Frame (GBC) 66

Gordon Milne (Peebles) 65

Ritchie Thompson (Dunbar) 65

July 2022 Bidding Problems

You are always **South**. Unless stated otherwise you are playing an Acol-style system with a weak 1NT, 3 Weak Twos and Roman Keycard Blackwood.

If in doubt, bids are forcing, doubles are takeout, and suits are natural with 4+cards.

Please send your answers no later than July 25th to: liz.mcgowan@blueyonder.co.uk

Problem 1 Teams All Vul

♠T96 ♥T86432 ♦- ♣AK98	S	W	N	E
	P	P	1♠*	2♥
	?			

1♠* = 5-card M

Problem 5 Teams All Vul

♠QT8 ♥KJ85 ♦A4 ♣AT86	S	W	N	E
	-	P	P	1♦
	Dbl	1♥	P	2♦
	P	P	Dbl	P
	?			

Problem 2 Teams N/S Vul

♠5 ♥AQ5 ♦KT864 ♣AQ85	S	W	N	E
	-	P	1♠	P
	2♦	P	3♠	P
	?			

Problem 6 Teams E/W Vul

♠T5 ♥J952 ♦T7652 ♣64	S	W	N	E
	P	P	1♣	P
	P	Dbl	1♠	P
	2♣	P	2♥	P
?				

Problem 3 Teams All Vul

♠KT5 ♥6 ♦KJ4 ♣AKQ965	S	W	N	E
	-	-	1♦	4♥
	?			

Problem 7 Pairs None Vul

♠A97 ♥AKQ743 ♦AQ ♣54	S	W	N	E
	-	P	P	P
	1♥	P	1♠	P
	?			

Problem 4 Teams E/W Vul

♠QJT9732 ♥7 ♦A3 ♣AK8	S	W	N	E
	1♠	P	2♦	P
	?			

Problem 8 Teams E/W Vul

♠K9653 ♥5 ♦5 ♣AJ9742	S	W	N	E
	-	1♣	P	1♠
	P	2♦	P	3NT
	P	P	P	

What do you lead?