

Improvers Bidding Competition – October 2016

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We have input from a panel of 10 bridge teachers for our fifth improvers' bidding competition. The next batch of questions appears 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.

These hands all came from the SBU Summer Congress at Peebles Hydro Hotel where those in the Bronze section competed against their peers but played the same boards as those in the main event. Why not give it a try in July? Let's see what the panel of teachers has to say:

Problem 1 Teams Game all

	N	E	S	W
♠ 4	P	P	1♠	P
♥ QT753	?			
♦ J92				
♣ AJT3				

This turned out to be a bit of a non-problem with a unanimous panel. I guess a better question might have been what to do after a 2NT re-bid from partner who held ♠AKQ53, ♥K84, ♦AT3, ♣97 with 4♥ & 3NT both making 10 tricks:

Lees (most others similarly): 1NT: What else - I'm not good enough to bid at the 2-level but too good to pass – the “bucket bid” solves the problem.

Most merely hoped that another bid from partner would improve the part score but someone had more constructive thoughts:

McGowan: 1NT: Over 1♠ this is often the only bid that does not overstate our strength, when we have no fit - as a passed hand, 2H would not be forcing but I would prefer to have at least ♠xx before risking the 2-level. Partner may bid a second suit over 1NT & if that suit is not ♦, I shall raise.

Problem 1	Votes	Marks
1NT	10	10
2♥	0	7
Pass	0	1

Problem 2 Teams EW Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ KJ874	-	P	P	P
♥ A	1♠	P	2♣	P
♦ K75	?			
♣ AQ75				

This question generated 5 different answers from the panel and yet another 5 from improvers:

Pigott (similarly **Campbell, Hamilton, Sanders & Tudor**): 4♣: Strong with 4+♣, 5+♠ & slam interest - 3♣ is invitational so 4♣ is forcing but real problem is the meaning of subsequent bids (shortage, values or cue bids) - missing 3NT is less important at teams than at pairs.

Lees (similarly **Bailey**): 3♦: I would bid a forcing 2♦ with my usual partner but, without this agreement, I need to make a game-forcing jump shift as partner has passed and might well have strained to respond at the 2-level - the next bid will determine which game.

McGowan: 3♥: Splinter - I don't normally splinter with a singleton A but partner could have Qx, xxxx, Ax, KJxxx when we want to

be in slam or x, KJxx, Qxxx, KJxx when 3NT looks best.

Peter decided to go straight for the likely game:

Edmond: 5♣: S has passed so, as slam is unlikely, show 5-4 shape & game values - considered 4♥ splinter agreeing ♣ but not good with bare A.

Steve reckons that a forward-going but non-forcing bid is sufficient:

Male: 3♣: This must be constructive as partner has passed - with a poor hand I could have passed too!

Problem 2	Votes	Marks
4♣	5	10
3♦	2	8
2♦	0	7
3♥	1	6
5♣	1	5
4♥	0	5
4♠	0	5
2NT	0	4
3♣	1	2
3♠	0	2
6♣	0	1

At the table, partner produced ♠QT, ♥K632, ♦Q84, ♣KJT2 so 10 tricks were comfortably available in NT and 11 in ♠ or ♣.

Problem 3 Pairs Game all

	N	E	S	W
♠ A532	-	P	1♥	P
♥ J53	?			
♦ AKJ42				
♣ 5				

A large majority of the panelists opted for

the 2-level, 5-card minor but four decided to show the 4-card major suit first:

Tudor (similarly **Bailey & Lees**): 1♠: Concealing ♦ suit could be beneficial - firstly, a ♠ fit might be found and you are better placed to explore slam but, more likely, this may deter a damaging ♠ lead in 4♥.

Peter felt more strongly that there wasn't even a choice:

Edmond: 1♠: For my disciples, 2♦ would deny 4-card ♠ suit

Those electing to show their minor first all felt the same:

McGowan (similarly **Campbell, Hamilton, Male, Pigott & Sanders**): 2♦: It is usually best to bid the major in case it gets lost but when you have enough to force to game you can afford to show your distribution accurately - over 2♥ you will bid 2♠, natural and game-forcing, before revealing your ♥ support but, if partner makes a stronger rebid, I'll investigate slam.

Problem 3	Votes	Marks
2♦	6	10
1♠	4	9
3♦	0	7
3♥	0	2
2♥	0	1

In reality, partner had ♠KQT8, ♥AKT874, ♦87, ♣8 but, due to a bad trump split, there were only 11 tricks in ♠ but 12 in ♥.

Problem 4 Pairs Game all

	N	E	S	W
♠ 7	-	-	1♣	P
♥ AQT6532	1♥	P	1♠	P
♦ K93	?			
♣ 64				

This time, the panel were unanimous in re-bidding their 7-card suit but were completely divided on whether this should be at the 2-level, 3-level or game. Firstly, let's look at the game-goers:

Campbell (Hamilton, Lees & Tudor similarly): 4♥: Just worth a raise to game - as my hand may be worthless except in ♥, a 4th suit forcing bid of 2♦ doesn't really describe it.

The next group decided that inviting game was sufficient:

Sanders (similarly **Edmond, Male & McGowan**): 3♥: This is invitational so partner can pass with a weak and misfitting hand.

Finally, two of the panel opted for a minimum re-bid:

Bailey (Pigott similarly): 2♥: I'm going to be conservative for now as it's pairs but will bid game if partner makes any further move - think of this as a transfer bid, transferring the blame, that is!

Problem 4	Votes	Marks
4♥	4	10
3♥	4	8
2♥	2	3
2D	0	2
3NT	0	1

As it turned out, partner held ♠KQT9, ♥4, ♦AT, ♣KQ8732 and probably felt he wasn't worth any further action, whatever level you chose. However, with ♥Kx onside, ten tricks were available.

Many entrants scored extremely well in this Challenge, the best performers for each category being as follows:

Master	Les McConachy	St Andrews	36
District	Jacqueline Dick	New Melville	36
	David Hamilton	New Melville	32
Local	Robert Hickling	Bon Accord	31
	Mary Irvine	Marmion	27
Club	Rosemary Hartill	New Melville	33
	Russell McNicol	Aberdeen	29
Novice	Jim Hunter	Aberdeen	37
	Pauline Briody	Buchanan	29