

Improvers' Bidding Challenge 19 – April 2020

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We have input from a panel of 9 bridge teachers for our latest challenge. Challenge 20 details appear elsewhere in this magazine and will also be posted on the SBU website – if you are a Bronze category player, please have a go and submit an entry. Let's see what our panel of teachers has to say:

Problem 1 Pairs EW Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ Q76543	-	-	-	Pass
♥ T96	Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
♦ J	1♠	Dbl*	3♥	Pass
♣ A96	?			

**Takeout with both minors*

Apologies for the misprint in the online version of SB News where no suit was quoted for South's 3-level rebid. The vast majority of the panel decided to simply bid game:

McGowan (similarly several others): 4♥: It is possible to construct hands where slam makes but a cue bid might overexcite partner when it doesn't - if 4H isn't making, I'll have a discussion with partner about hand evaluation.

Steve, however, decided that a cue was justified:

Male: 4♣: A mild cue - I am limited by my original pass so I might as well tell partner about my good controls in their suit and my 3-card trump support.

Problem 1	Votes	Marks
4♥	8	10
4♣	1	9
5♣	0	6
Pass	0	1

At the table, partner held ♠A9, ♥AK8542, ♦AK86, ♣4 and 6 Hearts was comfortable with the trumps splitting favourably 2-2.

Problem 2 Pairs All Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ KT4	1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
♥ 4	?			
♦ AK65				
♣ QT752				

Once again, the panel demonstrated a clear majority – to support partner with a 3-card suit:

Male (similarly several others): 2♠: This seems the most pragmatic call - I don't want to repeat my anemic Club suit, am not strong enough to reverse into Diamonds and I have ruffing values for partner - not ideal but the best of a bad lot.

Jim & Joyce preferred to rebid their suit:

Tudor (similarly **Benson**): 2♣: Raising a Major with three card support should be a last resort in my view and as 2D would be a reverse, the Club suit, while not great, is rebiddable – if that's a word!

Problem 2	Votes	Marks
2♠	7	10
3♠	0	7
2♣	2	6
2♥	0	3
2♦	0	2

Partner's hand was ♠AJ652, ♥QJ53, ♦4, ♣KJ3 so, even with a 4-1 trump split, the Spade game made fairly comfortably.

Problem 3 Pairs EW Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ AT2	-	-	-	Pass
♥ QT72	1N	Pass	2♥**	Pass
♦ AK32	2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
♣ J2	?			

**Transfer to Spades

Clearly the Spade game was on but should one look for more and, if so, how? The majority decided to investigate further:

Pigott (similarly **Hamilton, Male & Tudor**): 3♠: Partner may have slam interest or simply be showing a black two-suiter - I must establish the trump suit and, as the 3C bid is game-forcing, I can proceed slowly.

Derek & Liz opted to show where their values lay:

Sanders (similarly **McGowan**): 3♦: The experts' bid which is an advance cue bid for one of partner's suits - you can clarify this on the next round by bidding spades.

Mike took into account the scoring method:

Gallacher: 3N: Partner is showing a second suit and is game-forcing so it is a toss-up between 4S and 3N but, as I have a balanced hand and as it's pairs, I'll opt for the 9-trick game.

Joyce & Peter thought that game was sufficient:

Benson (similarly **Edmond**): 4♠: You have maximum points and 3-card support for partner's known 5-card suit.

Problem 3	Votes	Marks
3♠	4	10
3♦	2	9
4♠	2	5
3N	1	4
4♥	0	1

Partner held ♠KQ8753, ♥A, ♦9, ♣AKT86 so, with QC onside, grand slams were available in NT, Spades & Clubs!

Problem 4 Pairs NS Vul

	N	E	S	W
♠ AK7	-	Pass	1♦	Pass
♥ A8	?			
♦ QJT82				
♣ K86				

A common problem – how should we proceed with good support for partner's suit but without knowing whether game was sufficient or else to push on for slam? The majority decided to "invent" a Club suit:

Hamilton (similarly many others): 2♣: If partner bids 2D or 3C next we bid 3NT. But if partner reverses we can bid Diamonds to get to a slam.

Joyce opted to roll out Blackwood:

Benson: 4N: You can ask partner for Aces - if they show only 1, you can sign off in 5D but if partner shows 2, you have a good chance of making 6!

Mike chose a high-level raise but, is there a risk that partner might take it as merely invitational?:

Gallacher: 4♦: With 17HCP and excellent support for partner's suit, there is the possibility of a slam - as 5D is pre-emptive, I will try a forcing 4 and trust my partner to see my interest in slam.

Derek decided to wheel out the Jacoby convention:

Sanders: 2N: A Jacoby raise showing 16+HCP and a slam try with diamond support.

Problem 4	Votes	Marks
2♣	6	10
4N	1	9
4♦	1	8
2N	1	7
3N	0	6
1♠	0	5
2♠	0	5
5♦	0	4
3♦	0	2
2♦	0	1

Partner's holding was ♠QT4, ♥KQT5, ♦AK754, ♣3 so 6 Diamonds was not a problem.

Congratulations to the following top scorers in the various categories, particularly Rob on his maximum score and Will with a highly creditable 39:

2*	Will Iles	Stewartry	39
Master	Fiona McElhinney	Dunfermline	38
	David Edelman	Maccabi	33
District Master	Rob Myers	New Melville	40
	Robin Crouch	Buchanan	32
Local Master	Rosemary Jamieson	Carlton	35
	Alan Paterson	Johnstone	35
	Cornelius Meehan	Buchanan	33
	Robin MacPherson	New Melville	32
Club Master	Linton Horsfall	Carlton	36
	Donald Bain	Comiston	33
	Alistair Smillie	Moray	30
Novice	Susan Allen	Hawick	31
	Helen Adamson	Kirkcaldy	30