



Open Hands

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Editor: Kevin Davies

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Open Challenge Hand 1 (Bid and Play)

North (D)	NS Vul, Dealer: North
♠ QJ2 ♥ A3 ♦ A84 ♣ KJ962	
South	
♠ AK3 ♥ KJ9872 ♦ 5 ♣ AQT	

Standard Bidding			
West	North (D)	East	South
	1NT	3♦	3♥
PASS	3NT	PASS	6♥
ALL PASS			

Assuming you can reach the 6♥ contract, West leads ♦9

How do you plan to make your slam contract?

Open Challenge Hand 2 (Bid and Play)

North	Nil Vul, Dealer: South
♠ T752 ♥ K6 ♦ Q873 ♣ 542	
South (D)	
♠ AJ ♥ AQ74 ♦ AK ♣ QJT97	

Standard or 2/1 Bidding			
West	North	East	South (D)
			2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West leads the ♠4,

Can you see your way to 9 tricks on this deal?

Open Challenge Hand 3 (Bid and Play)

North	EW Vul, Dealer: South			
♠ JT964 ♥ 864 ♦ K64 ♣ 76				
South (D)				
♠ AKQ ♥ AQ ♦ A954 ♣ A852				

Standard Bidding			
West	North	East	South (D)
			2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♣	All Pass	

West leads a trump ♠8,

Can you see your way to 10 tricks on this deal?

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Editor Comments:

This revised Newsletter format (email & PDFs triggered from the email) is designed to ease the big PDF files that used to be delivered. It also allows more focused content.

Kevin

♦ LM – Defence in Detail 8



Liam Milne

The ‘surrounding play’ is an expert defensive technique used to nullify a lone minor honour in either declarer or dummy’s hand. A typical example looks like this:

	♠ Q 6 3	
♠ K J 9 4		♠ A 8 7
	♠ 10 5 2	

With West on lead, the only card to take all the tricks is the jack. In effect, West leads the jack as if they held South’s ten themselves (and thus an interior sequence). The jack and nine ‘surround’ the ten and remove its ability to take a trick.

Playing in the final of a national teams trial, as East you face the following defensive test:

West Deals				♠ Q
N-S Vul				♥ Q J 10 8
				♦ A Q 10 9 7 6
				♣ 10 8
				♠ K 5 4 3
				♥ A 7 5 4 3
				♦ —
				♣ J 9 6 2
West	North	East	South	
Pass	1♦	1♥	1♠	
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT	
Pass	Pass	Pass		

1. 4+ spades (double would deny spades)

3 NT by South

Partner leads the ♥ 9. How do you plan the defence?

Declarer is marked with the ♥ K and the diamond suit is quite scary. Our void in that suit means that declarer will know how to play that suit very soon. If we duck trick one, declarer may quickly take one heart, six diamonds and two more tricks to make their contract.

It seems clear to take the ♥ A immediately and attempt to take four more tricks in short order before declarer can run the diamonds. Should we try spades or clubs?

In spades, to take four tricks we would need partner to hold ♠ AJ9x or better. Whenever declarer has five or more spades we have no chance, and when declarer has four spades they need to be headed by at most the ♠ 10.

In clubs, ♣ AKxx or AQxx may be enough from partner. We don’t know much about the shape of the hand but declarer having less than four clubs seems not too unlikely.

Let’s decide that clubs is the better chance. Which club should you switch to – small or jack? With the short ten of clubs visible in the dummy, leading low won’t work as declarer can simply duck and make use of dummy’s spot card. The only card to give your side a chance is the ♣ J, ‘surrounding’ dummy’s ♣ 10.

The full hand:

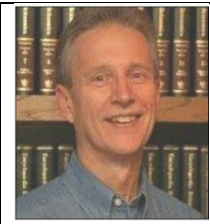
West Deals	♠ Q		
N-S Vul	♥ Q J 10 8		
	♦ A Q 10 9 7 6		
	♣ 10 8		
♠ 10 9 7 6		♠ K 5 4 3	
♥ 9		♥ A 7 5 4 3	
♦ J 5 4 2		♦ —	
♣ A K 5 3		♣ J 9 6 2	
		♠ A J 8 2	
		♥ K 6 2	
		♦ K 8 3	
		♣ Q 7 4	

The ♣ J switch rapidly brings in five tricks for the defence. Any other card leads to one or more overtricks.

The winning play would be much easier to find if East held ♣ J 10 x x. Leading the jack works just as well when the doubleton ten is in the dummy, but you need to have seen it before!

Point to remember: once you decide what suit to play, consider the effect of each card that you could lead. The presence of two middle cards with a gap between them can often profitably be treated as a sequence if the suit lies favourably.

♦ BM – Playing the Odds



Brent Manley

This Challenge hand was adapted from a Brent Manley article “[Playing the Odds](#)”. Sourced from the ACBL Bridge feed website

North (D)		Standard Bidding			
		West	North (D)	East	South
♠ QJ2			1NT	3♦	3♥
♥ A3		PASS	3NT	PASS	6♥
♦ A84		ALL PASS			
♣ KJ962		Bidding Notes			
South		1NT	15-17 Bal		
♠ AK3		3♦	Preempt		
♥ KJ9872		3♥	5+H, Forcing		
♦ 5		3NT	2H, D Stopper		
♣ AQT		6♥	To Play (Do have 17hcp)		

The Bidding:

You are playing in a Teams event sitting South with a good unbalanced 17 hcp. Partner opens 1NT (15-17), but East interposes with a 3♦ Preempt. You bid 3♥ (forcing with 5+♥), but partner bids 3NT. You settle for a practical 6♥ contract.

West leads the ♦9, and you sight dummy, you have reached a fair contract of 6♥. A bit of duplication, but useful clubs. The initial diamond lead suggests that the suit is likely split 7-2 (West would have led low with three, and East may bid 4♦ with 8). How will you get to 12 tricks on this deal?

Preliminary Analysis

Winners 3♠+5/6♥+1♦+5♣ = 12

Losers No Tops, May be ♥Q likely in

West hand

Your Solution

Both South players in a team game have reached 6♥ and received the opening lead of the ♦9.

You, the first declarer were a good, if somewhat unimaginative, player.

T1 West leads the ♦9, you win the ♦A in dummy, East encourages and you follow.

T2 You then cashed the ♥A (Happy East followed ♥4) and West ♥5

T3 You then led ♥3 from dummy. When East threw a diamond, you had to concede two trump tricks to West, finishing down one.

Your partners came back to score up
 6♥/S ♦9 lead Your Result -100
 6♥/S ♦9 lead There Result -1430 -16 Imp Loss

The other expert declarer was both more experienced and a student of the odds.

T1 West leads the ♦9, he also won the ♦A in dummy.

T2 He crossed to hand with a spade to the A♠

T3 Then led the ♥J, running it when West followed with a low card.

T4 He then played a low trump to dummy's ♥A,

T4 The declarer came back to hand with the ♣A

T5 He then cashed the ♥K, claiming 12 tricks after conceding a trump to West's queen.

What are the odds, given the diamonds look like breaking 7-2 and there is no defensive ruff?

Your method would succeed when:

- Trumps are 3-2 (about 58%)
- Plus+ when East has a singleton ♥T or ♥Q which drops, (28%) x 2/5 cases =12%
- Total about a **70% chance**.


The second declarer makes his contract when

- Trumps are 3-2 58%
- Plus+ when West has four trumps including the Q♥ 22%
- Total about an **83% chance**.

The full deal:

		North (D)		
		♠ QJ2		
West	♥ A3	East		
♠ T975	♦ A84	♠ 864		
♥ QT65	♣ KJ962	♥ 4		
♦ 92		♦ KQJT763		
♣ 743	South	♣ 85		
	♠ AK3			
	♥ KJ9872			
	♦ 5			
	♣ AQT			
6♥/S Lead ♦9			Vul NS Dir: North	

♦ MH – Misplay these hands with me

 <p>Mark Horton</p>	Adapted from a hand on the ACBL bridge feed website " Misplay these hands with me ", by Author Mark Horton
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Towards the end of the evening, I pick up a promising collection as South (non-vulnerable):
 ♠AJ, ♥AQ74, ♦AK, ♣QJT97

North	Standard or 2/1 Bidding			
♠ T752	West	North	East	South (D)
♥ K6				2NT
♦ Q873	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
♣ 542	Pass	3NT	All Pass	
South (D)	Bidding Notes			
♠ AJ	2NT	Bal 20-22		
♥ AQ74	3♣	Stayman		
♦ AK	3♥	4♥		
♣ QJT97	3NT	to play		

The Bidding

Although I have always considered 5422 shape to be an unbalanced distribution, I do not wish to get involved in a complicated auction with my present partner. So I open 2NT (Strong Bal 20-22). When he bids 3♣, asking me if I have a four-card major, I dutifully respond 3♥. Evidently that is not what partner is looking for, as he continues with 3NT. He has promised a major, so I can place him with four spades.

When West starts the defence with a lead of the ♠4, my partner puts down some useful cards.

Preliminary Analysis

Winners: 1♠+3♥+3♦ = 7 (2 short)

Losers: 2♣, 1♠

Strategy for Making 9 tricks

- There are six tricks in the red suits
- After the opening lead, I can force a second spade trick for 8
- So, I will need to develop the clubs.

My Solution

- | | |
|----|--|
| T1 | West leads ♠4. ♠2 from dummy and East plays the ♠Q which we win with the ♠A |
| T2 | I crossed to dummy with a heart. ♥4, ♥2, ♥K, ♥3. This may cost a trick with the blockage in diamonds, but I want to play the first club from dummy towards my hidden hand. |
| T3 | When I do so, ♣2, East produces the ♣K, ♣7, ♣3 |
| T4 | East then continues with the spade attack ♠6, ♠J, with West winning ♠K, ♠5 |

- | | |
|------|--|
| T5 | West continues with the spades ♠9, I win with dummy's ♠T as East discards a small diamond ♦2, and I drop a heart ♥7. |
| T6 | When I play another club ♣4, ♣8, ♣Q, it is West who turns up with the ♣A |
| T7-8 | Then West cashes two high spades ♠84 |

I have the rest of the tricks, but I am trick short. **One down!**

The full deal:

	North	
	♠ T752	
West	♥ K6	East
♠ K9842	♦ Q873	♠ Q6
♥ 982	♣ 542	♥ JT53
♦ J9		♦ T6543
♣ A63	South (D)	♣ K8
	♠ AJ	
3NT/S	♥ AQ74	Vul Nil
Lead ♠4	♦ AK	Dir: S
	♣ QJT97	

Post-mortem

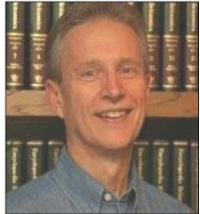
East did very well to go up with the ♣K, early, protecting his partner's club entry. But I had a stronger line available, however. Suppose I simply duck the opening lead? I win the next spade and play on clubs. West can win and clear the spades, but he has no second club entry.

Later I spotted another possibility. Suppose I win the opening lead ♠A, and simply return the suit ♠J? West wins ♠K and persists with spades ♠9, but I duck the third round and win the fourth ♠T. East, under pressure holding the red suits, will have to part with a diamond and a club. Now I unblock the diamonds ♦AK, cash three rounds of hearts ♥KAQ and exit with a club. East can win ♣K and cash a high heart ♥J, but then must lead into dummy's diamond tenace ♦Q8.

Or

West can win ♣A (crashing partner's ♣K) and cash a high spade ♠2 but then must give me two club ♣QJ tricks.

◆ BM – The Right Touch

	This Challenge hand was adapted from a Brent Manley article " The Right Touch ". Sourced from the ACBL Bridge feed website
Brent Manley	

North	Standard Bidding			
♠ JT964	West	North	East	South (D)
♥ 864	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♣
♦ K64	Pass	3♥	Pass	2NT
♣ 76	Pass	3NT	Pass	3♣
	Pass	4♣	Pass	4♣
South (D)	All Pass			
♠ AKQ	Bidding Notes			
♥ AQ	2♣	Game Force Hand		
♦ A954	2♦	Waiting bid		
♣ A852	2NT	Bal 23-24		
	3♥	Transfer to ♠		
	3♣	3♣ as requested		
	3NT	Your choice of Games		
	4♣	Cue strong ♠ fit		
	4♣	Sign off		

The Bidding:

You opened a game force 2♣ bid, partner 2♦ bid was waiting, and you showed your 23 HCP with a 2NT bid. Partner now in charge, bids 3♥ transferring to Spades and then bidding 3NT showing 5♣ & giving you a choice of game. Your Spades are good, so you cued 4♣ suggesting a slam, but partner just signed off in 4♣. West started the defence by leading a trump ♠8.

Preliminary analysis

Winners: 5♠+1♥+2♦+1♣= 9 tricks 1 short!
 Losers: No tops, but 1♦, 1♣ & maybe 2♥
 Considering the strength of your hand, game is normal with the North-South cards. Your main problem is the weak dummy. How will you get to 10 tricks after West led a trump?
 Strategies for 10 tricks?

- If ♥K is onside, the 10th trick! But only 1 entry to the North hand ♦K
- You could duck a diamond, and the 4th Diamond may come high!

If you could ruff in the short trump hand, then an extra trump trick is your 10th!

Your Solution

T1 West led the ♠8 which you won per force in hand with the ♠Q.

- T2 You then led a ♦4 crossed over to the ♦K to take the heart finesse.
- T3 You led the ♥4 to the ♥Q, but West won with the ♥K.
- T4 West then exited with a second low trump to your ♠K.
- T5 You now cashed your ♣A.
- T6 You exited another club ♣2, but East won the trick ♣T.
- T7 East then exited with his last trump to your ♠A.
- T9 You now switched options and ducked a diamond hoping the diamonds would break 3-3, letting West's ♦8 hold.
- T10 West continued with the ♣K. which you ruffed in dummy ♠T.
- T11 You then cashed the ♦A, but when the diamonds proved to be 4-2, You were down one in your 4♣ contract.

You offered a weak apology to your partner and then muttered, "**Nothing was right in the red suits**". Your Partner, North was not impressed. "**You had nine top tricks**," he said. "A dummy reversal would have given you a 10th. All you had to do was cash the ♥A at trick two and play the ♥Q at trick three. West will win and leads a second trump to your ♠K. Then you cross to dummy with a low diamond to the ♦K and ruff dummy's remaining heart with the ♠A. You would have a choice of suits to play next, but I would try the ♣A and another club. After a defender wins this trick, he cannot prevent you from entering dummy with a high ruff of a club to draw the last trump. You would have 10 tricks – five trumps in dummy, one heart, a heart ruff in hand and the three minor-suit tops." The full deal:

	North	
	♠ JT964	
West	♥ 864	East
♠ 85	♦ K64	♠ 732
♥ KJ973	♣ 76	♥ T52
♦ J8		♦ QT73
♣ KJ93	South (D)	♣ QT4
	♠ AKQ	
4♠/S	♥ AQ	Vul EW
Lead ♠8	♦ A954	Dir: South
	♣ A852	

NSBC Australia Day Weekend Swiss Pairs

Tradition vs. current trends

by RAKESH KUMAR



Rakesh Kumar describes himself as an enthusiast who makes enough errors to have plenty of material for bridge columns.

This IMPs event, played on RealBridge on Sunday 30 January, had a strong field of entrants. After 6 rounds of 8 boards, the very convincing winners were Peter Gill – Jane Dawson, who were the leaders from round 4 onwards and never lost a match all day. Not too far behind were Neil Ewart – Chris Quail, then barely half a VP separated third and fourth, who were respectively Tony Burke – Phil Gue and Nick Chilov – Lynleigh Evans.

Of the many interesting deals that turned up during the day, here are a couple for you to puzzle over as problems. Firstly, you hold:

♠ KJT864
♥ A
♦ A
♣ AJT98

With neither side vulnerable, you open 1S as dealer and LHO overcalls 2♦. Partner raises to 2♠, RHO passes and of course you bid 4♠. However, LHO now bids 5♦ and partner doubles. What will you do?

Secondly, you are vulnerable, the opponents are not and RHO as dealer opens 1♦. You pass, LHO bids 1♠ and partner overcalls 2♣. RHO raises to 2♠, you bid 3♣ and LHO jumps to 4♠, which is passed out. Partner leads ♣ K and you see the dummy below. Partner now switches to ♥ 4, declarer plays low from the dummy, takes your jack with the ace and plays a spade to the king. How will you defend?

(dummy)
♠ KT62
♥ KT5
♦ KQ953
♣ 9

(you)
♠ A854
♥ J87
♦ 86
♣ AJ42

And thirdly, you hold:

♠ K43
♥
♦ AKQ84
♣ JT974

Once again, neither side is vulnerable. RHO passes as dealer, you open 1♦ and LHO jumps to 4♥. When this comes back to you, what will you do?

IMP Swiss Pairs is of course all about bidding to and making thin games. In a pre-game conversation with a couple of friends, I heard one say that many of the games that people routinely bid to nowadays would have been considered desperate overbids in times past. That's probably true. Here is an example of desperation rewarded in the first match of the day:

Board 7

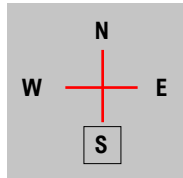
Dealer S | Vul All

♠ T2
♥ 974
♦ AK72
♣ 9875

♠ A9853
♥ AQ65
♦ J3
♣ 42

♠ QJ4
♥ KT8
♦ QT965
♣ A6

♠ K76
♥ J32
♦ 84
♣ KQJT3



	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	-	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-	-
E	-	4	4	4	4
W	-	4	4	4	4

Across the 30 tables, 17 East-West pairs bid to 4♠ on very slender values, but they will have every incentive to do it again next time because everything lay perfectly: ♠K was on side and a doubleton ♠10 was squashed off side, so with hearts 3-3, declarer lost just 2 diamonds and a club. East-West thus collected 6 IMPs against the datum.

One board later, the deal featured in the first problem turned up. The 5♦ bid by East was another example of desperation in action:

Board 8

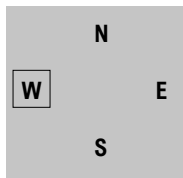
Dealer W | Vul None

♠ KJT864
♥ A
♦ A
♣ AJT98

♠ 97
♥ J982
♦ 74
♣ K6432

♠ A2
♥ KQT3
♦ KT96532
♣

♠ Q53
♥ 7654
♦ QJ8
♣ Q75



	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	-	-	5	3
S	4	-	-	5	3
E	-	3	2	-	-
W	-	3	2	-	-

Did you bid 5 ♠? As you can see from the full deal, you should – and there is a fair argument in favour of doing so, if you apply the losing trick count. You have 4 losers, a typical hand for a 2 ♠ raise has 9 losers, so $(24 - (4+9)) = 11$ tricks quite possible. In fact 13 pairs made 12 tricks in spades and another 10 made 11 tricks. These included 5 who took the push to 5 ♠. However, the 7 East-West pairs who were allowed to play in 5 ♦ X gained a few IMPs against the datum, because it was a cheap sacrifice.

These days, transfer responses to 1 ♣ are all the rage. I'm old fashioned and still don't play them. Here is a deal on which only adherents to current trends went down in 4 ♠:

Board 10

Dealer E | Vul All

<p>♠ QJT4 ♥ AKQ3 ♦ A7 ♣ Q97</p>		<p>♠ 952 ♥ T82 ♦ Q6542 ♣ AK</p>
<p>♠ K6 ♥ J9765 ♦ KT9 ♣ 843</p>	<p>♠ A873 ♥ 4 ♦ J83 ♣ JT652</p>	

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	1	1	-	-
S	-	1	1	-	-
E	4	-	-	3	1
W	3	-	-	3	-

When West plays the contract, North cashes ♣AK and receives a ruff after South wins ♠K. However, when East plays the contract, the lead is likely to be a heart, or perhaps a diamond. In both cases declarer quickly cashes hearts to discard diamond losers, then takes the spade finesse – which loses, but it's all over.

Here's the deal related to the second problem, now in its correct orientation:

Board 12

Dealer W | Vul N-S

<p>♠ KT62 ♥ KT5 ♦ KQ953 ♣ 9</p>		<p>♠ A854 ♥ J87 ♦ 86 ♣ AJ42</p>
<p>♠ 7 ♥ 6432 ♦ AT ♣ KQT865</p>	<p>♠ QJ93 ♥ AQ9 ♦ J742 ♣ 73</p>	

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	-	1	-	2
S	3	-	1	-	2
E	-	3	-	3	-
W	-	3	-	3	-

The auction featured the overbidding that is normal for IMP Pairs. Did you take your ♠A on the first or second round of trumps? Not a good idea – you have to duck twice so that declarer is in danger of losing trump control and is forced to play on diamonds, making you ruff but conceding one down. A number of those sitting North did not find this defence, because 8 declarers made 10 tricks in spades and 6 of them were in game. Thirteen were held to 9 or fewer tricks.

The board related to the third problem featured crime without punishment:

Board 40

Dealer W | Vul None

<p>♠ A96</p> <p>♥ 86</p> <p>♦ J53</p> <p>♣ K8652</p>		<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S			<p>♠ K43</p> <p>♥</p> <p>♦ AKQ84</p> <p>♣ JT974</p>
	N												
W		E											
	S												
				<p>♠ 85</p> <p>♥ AKQT74</p> <p>♦ T62</p> <p>♣ AQ</p>									
				<p>♠ QJT72</p> <p>♥ J9532</p> <p>♦ 97</p> <p>♣ 3</p>									

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	3	-	3	-
S	1	3	-	3	-
E	-	-	1	-	-
W	-	-	1	-	-

Traditional teaching is that it's not a good idea to make a re-opening double with a void in the opponent's suit. Thus at the 3 tables where North was put in this situation, there was a a 5♣ rebid on two occasions and a 4NT rebid on the third, in each case converted to 5♦ by South. This contract has to go 2 off when declarer is repeatedly forced in hearts. However, a re-opening double would have been by far the best option. Maybe it isn't always right to be old fashioned ... 🚩