

**Mr Bridge**  
**AT THE**  
**OLDE**  
**BARN**



**2008**

**24-26 Oct (£199)**

Further into  
the Auction  
Ray Hutchinson

**7-9 Nov (£199)**

Improvers\*  
Take-out Doubles  
Ray Hutchinson

**28-30 Nov (£199)**

Signals & Discards  
Ray Hutchinson

**No Single  
Supplement**

Room upgrades and  
special B&B rates  
for Sunday nights  
are available.

\*Improvers' Weekends are aimed at the novice player and/or those picking up the game after a long break.

**PROGRAMME**

This is the format for all duplicate weekends and rarely varies.

**FRIDAY**

1500 **Mr Bridge**  
Welcome Desk open  
Afternoon Tea

1745 **to 1830**  
Welcome drinks  
reception

1830 **to 2000**  
DINNER

2015 **BRIDGE**  
**SESSION 1**  
DUPLICATE PAIRS

**SATURDAY**

0800 **to 0930**  
BREAKFAST

1000 **to 1230**  
SEMINAR &  
SUPERVISED PLAY  
of SET HANDS 1  
(tea & coffee at 1100)

1230 **to 1330**  
COLD BUFFET  
LUNCH

1400 **to 1645**  
**BRIDGE**  
**SESSION 2**  
TEAMS of FOUR

1815 **to 2000**  
DINNER

2015 **BRIDGE**  
**SESSION 3**  
DUPLICATE PAIRS

**SUNDAY**

0800 **to 0930**  
BREAKFAST

1000 **to 1230**  
SEMINAR &  
SUPERVISED PLAY  
of SET HANDS 2  
(tea & coffee at 1100)

1230 **to 1400**  
CARVERY LUNCH

1400 **to 1645**  
**BRIDGE**  
**SESSION 4**  
DUPLICATE PAIRS

**Mr Bridge**

**AT THE OLDE BARN**

Toll Bar Road, Marston, Lincolnshire, NG32 2HT

- ◆ Full-board Friday to Sunday
- ◆ All rooms with en-suite facilities
- ◆ No single supplement
- ◆ Venue non-smoking
- ◆ Use of swimming pool and fitness suite
- ◆ Bidding quiz & two seminars (on duplicate weekends only)

**BOOKING FORM**

Please book me for ..... places,

Single ..... Double ..... Twin .....

for the Olde Barn weekend(s) of .....

Mr/Mrs/Miss .....

Address.....

Postcode ..... ☎ .....

Special requirements (these cannot be guaranteed, but we will do our best to oblige)

Please give the name(s) of all those covered by this booking

Please send a non-returnable deposit of £50 per person per place by cheque, payable to Mr Bridge. An invoice will be sent with your booking confirmation. On receipt of your final payment, 28 days before the event, a programme and full details will be sent together with a map. Cancellations are not refundable. Should you require insurance, you should contact your own insurance broker.

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Expiry: ..... CVV..... Issue No.....  
(CVV is the last 3 numbers on the signature strip)

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website: www.holidaybridge.com



# Bridge H Cruises and

Looking for a holiday, short break or a cruise? Why not choose one from our extensive range?

## AUGUST 2008

7 - 14 Fjords & Fairytales



The Olde Barn, Marston

7 - 24 Grand Scandinavia

8 - 10 Harben House

14 - 24 Baltic Capitals

15 - 17 Staverton Park Gentle Duplicate

22 - 25 Staverton Park  
**Bank Holiday**  
(3 nights)



Latimer House, Chesham

## AUGUST cont

22 - 24 Theobalds Park  
or 25 Rubber / Chicago

24 - 4/9 Baltic Explorer

29 - 31 Staverton Park

## SEPTEMBER 2008

4 - 11 Riviera Cruise



MV Discovery

5 - 7 Wychwood Park

5 - 7 Theobalds Park

11 - 20 Italian Odyssey

12 - 14 Milton Hill House

12 - 14 Staverton Park

19 - 21 Latimer House

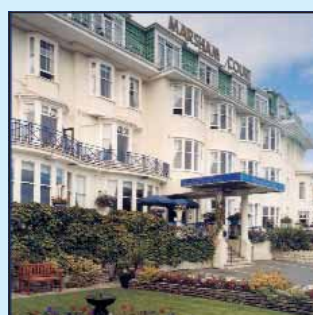
19 - 21 Milton Hill House

20 - 2/10 Adriatic and Aegean Treasures

## SEPTEMBER cont

26 - 28 Milton Hill House

26 - 28 Staverton Park



Marsham Court, Bournemouth

26 - 28 The Beach Hotel  
Rubber / Chicago

26 - 28 Theobalds Park  
Gentle Duplicate

## OCTOBER 2008

1 - 3 Marsham Court



Wychwood Park, Crewe

2 - 13 Black Sea  
Discovery I

## OCTOBER cont

3 - 5 Theobalds Park

10 - 12 Milton Hill House

10 - 12 Staverton Park  
Improvers

13 - 24 Black Sea  
Discovery II

17 - 19 Staverton Park  
Gentle Duplicate

17 - 19 The Beach Hotel

17 - 19 Theobalds Park



Staverton Park, Daventry

24 - 26 The Olde Barn

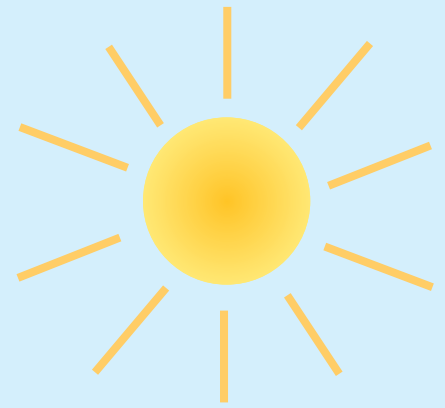
24 - 26 Barony Castle

24 - 26 Harben House  
Gentle Duplicate

24 - 26 Wychwood Park

24 - 4/11 Aegean Odyssey

# Holidays, Weekends



*Comprehensive list. Cruises are in blue, overseas holidays in green and UK breaks in black.*

## OCTOBER cont

26 – 28 Marsham Court



Port El Kantaoui, Tunisia

31 – 2/11 Milton Hill House Improvers

31 – 2/11 Staverton Park

31 – 2/11 Theobalds Park Gentle Duplicate



Milton Hill House, Oxon

## NOVEMBER 2008

4 – 16 North African Treasures

7 – 9 Barony Castle

## NOVEMBER cont

7 – 9 Harben House Gentle Duplicate

7 – 9 Milton Hill House

7 – 9 The Olde Barn Improvers

9 – 11 Marsham Court



Barony Castle, Nr Peebles

14 – 16 Staverton Park

14 – 16 Theobalds Park

16 – 7/12 Voyage to South America

21 – 23 Latimer House

21 – 23 Staverton Park Gentle Duplicate

28 – 30 Milton Hill House

28 – 30 Theobalds Park Gentle Duplicate

28 – 30 The Olde Barn

## DECEMBER 2008

3 – 21 Antarctica & the Falkland Islands

5 – 7 The Beach Hotel



Antarctica

16 – 2/1 Antarctica, Chile and Patagonia

26 – 16/1 Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctica



The Beach Hotel, Worthing



Theobalds Park, Cheshunt

## Christmas & New Year

Denham Grove,  
Uxbridge,  
Buckinghamshire

24-27 December  
Sandy Bell  
£395

27-29 December  
Signals & Discards  
Chris Barrable  
& Ann Pearson  
£199

29 Dec – 1 Jan 2009  
Chris Barrable  
& Ann Pearson  
£355



# Use the Rule of Fifteen

**H**ow do you decide whether to open the bidding in fourth seat? It's a funny question really. Why should it differ from any other position?

We are probably used to having some different rules about whether we open and what we open with marginal hands – perhaps the rule of 20 or the rule of 22. Whatever we do, we often open a bit lighter in third seat because partner has already passed and we might make an opponent's life just a bit more difficult.

If we are undisciplined in first seat, we may put the opponents off but partner may be the one with a good hand and not appreciate our marginal pre-empt. Likewise, we often hear that the time to be soundest is in second position when vulnerable. This is because the danger of a penalty is high and partner has not yet had a chance to call. So there are tactics according to position just as much as according to vulnerability.

In the last seat, some openings are no longer sensible. For example, opening a three-level pre-emptive bid to keep the opponents out is silly when passing is sure to keep them out. A three-level opening in fourth seat is constructive. Many who play weak twos in the majors, showing 5-9 points, change what they do in fourth seat. Perhaps they play strong twos or make their weak twos the strength of an opening bid. It is a good idea to know what you and your partner do in this position.

Anyway, let's get back to the main issue. What do you open with these hands after three passes?

#### Hand 1

♠ K Q 10 6 3  
♥ 9 4  
♦ K J 9 2  
♣ Q 4

#### Hand 2

♠ 9 4  
♥ Q 4  
♦ K Q 10 6 3  
♣ K J 9 2

Assuming you would open 1♠ on hand 1, why wouldn't you open 1♦ on hand 2? I would always open 1♠ with the first hand, but think carefully about the second and probably pass. The reason for this is that, with hand 1, we hold the highest ranked suit and opening will make it quite hard for the opponents to come in. Even if they do come in, we will be able to outbid them at the same level should they compete and we have a fit. On the second hand, if I open 1♦ I have given my left-hand opponent an easy entry into the auction if he has a five-card major. If he does come in and his partner has something of a fit, they will outbid us and may win the contract in two or three of a major. Judge this for yourself:

#### Hand 3

♠ K Q 10 4 2  
♥ J 7 5  
♦ K 9 4  
♣ 7 6

You deal and pass and, after two more passes, your right-hand opponent opens 1♦ in fourth seat. You would overcall 1♠ wouldn't you?

#### Hand 4

♠ K 9 4  
♥ J 7 5  
♦ K Q 10 4 2  
♣ 7 6

You deal and pass and, after two more passes, your right-hand opponent opens 1♠ in fourth seat. Would you overcall 2♦? You might, but it is unsound and dangerous to do so at least, in part, because you must proceed to the two level to do so. The risk of conceding a penalty is higher at this level.

How do you decide when to open? This is where the 'Rule of 15' comes in. It applies when you are in fourth seat after three passes. You add your number of high card points to your number of spades. If the answer is 15+, you open the bidding. If it is 14 or fewer, you pass.

Like most rules of this nature, it is intended only as a guideline to help when you have a marginal hand. Say you hold the following hand:

#### Hand 5

♠ 8 5  
♥ K Q 7  
♦ A J 8 3  
♣ Q 9 3 2

In the fourth seat, after three passes you might decide to pass it out because points plus spades adds up to 14. You may be on your own if you play at a club at which the common method is to play a weak no trump and nobody else has read this article. From time to time, the cards will fall in such a way that 1NT makes and you get a poor score. Rather more often, you will notice that many of the players sitting in your direction concede 100 or 200 because they go down – or they may concede 110 because their opponents have got together in spades. At least, if you do decide to open 1NT, you force your opponents to come in at the two level – but it is still worth giving a thought to whether you should pass. ■



# Put Partner with Eight Points if the Opponents Pre-Empt

Isn't it nice when you can decide upon game, knowing partner's assets to within one point? A natural auction starting 1NT-2NT does just that. You are likely to end up in game with 26 points and usually with 25 points. You are likely to stay in part-score with 24 points, the exception being a good 13 points opposite a good 11 points.

If opponents open at a low level first and then keep silent, there is still plenty of room for fine-tuning, for example:

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dbl	Pass	1♠ <sup>1</sup>
Pass	2♣ <sup>2</sup>	Pass	3♠ <sup>3</sup>
Pass	4♣ <sup>4</sup>	End	

<sup>1</sup>I have up to about eight points.

<sup>2</sup>Game may still be possible if you are at the top end.

<sup>3</sup>I do not hold a maximum but my hand is better than it might be, perhaps with six useful points.

<sup>4</sup>OK. That seems to make game a reasonable shot.

Now look at the problem you face if opponents open with a pre-emptive 3♥. There isn't much room now for scientific investigation, so we need a practical method that works as well as is possible in the circumstances. How do you know whether to compete? If you are too pushy, you could run into a horrible penalty double. At the other extreme, if fear dominates all your actions then you will regularly find yourself talked out of good contracts.

The maxim is this: *Put partner with eight points when the opponents pre-empt (at the three level)*. The other side of the equation is that partner should then ignore his first eight points. We can't have it for both partners to bid the same eight points.

In the following examples, assume that only East/West are vulnerable.

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

West	North	East	South
Dbl <sup>1</sup>	Pass	3♣ <sup>2</sup>	End <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The take-out double is risky. If East is broke, North can redouble and then double any rescue for penalties. Obeying the maxim, West gives East eight points and competes bravely.

<sup>2</sup>East indeed has eight points but is aware that West has already allowed for them. East will do well to make 3♣ bearing in mind that things will not all break kindly after South's pre-empt.

<sup>3</sup>Placing East with no more than eight points, West settles for a part score.

Let's change the deal slightly.

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

West	North	East	South
4♣ <sup>1</sup>	End		3♥

<sup>1</sup>Of course, West cannot be sure of making 4♣. However, if he bids only 3♣, East will pass and the partnership will miss an excellent game contract.

Here is a third variation on the layout:

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

West	North	East	South
3NT <sup>1</sup>	End		3♥

<sup>1</sup> Certainly, 3NT is dangerous! If North holds all the missing points, it will be carnage. Most of the finesses will be wrong and, even if they were right, declarer couldn't get to dummy to take them. Fortunately, East produces the hoped-for eight points (nine in fact) and 3NT is easy. If West had passed, the contract would have been 3♥ by South, no doubt going several down but giving East/West a poor score.

Can you see the logic of giving partner eight points? Suppose you have 16 points and the opening pre-emptor has eight. That makes 24. Divide the remaining points between North and East: hey presto, eight each. All you are doing is giving partner his fair share! ■



# Don't Overbid on Big Hands

The temptation to overbid big hands is human; tempering the urge to splurge, as it were, comes only with experience. Perhaps Oscar Wilde's quote 'I can resist anything except temptation' sums up the obstacles a bridge player has to overcome when confronted with a galaxy of goodies.

Suppose West picks up the kind of hand we like to have at rubber bridge:

<p>♠ K Q J ♥ Q 9 ♦ A K Q J 10 6 ♣ A K</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: 20px; margin: 0 auto;">N W S E</div>	
---	--	--

West	East
2♣	2♦
3♦	3♠
?	

You have 25 points but must remember that you have already shown a game-going hand. The very worst thing West can do is to continue with 4NT, asking for aces. This results in a minus score when the two hands are like this:

<p>♠ K Q J ♥ Q 9 ♦ A K Q J 10 6 ♣ A K</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: 20px; margin: 0 auto;">N W S E</div>	<p>♠ 10 9 8 6 4 ♥ J 7 3 ♦ 5 2 ♣ Q J 8</p>
---	--	---

East will respond 5♣ to show no aces and, whatever suit you play in, you will lose three tricks. So what should West bid over 3♠? 4♠ is fine. Remember, you have already promised a big hand.

What are the secrets that stop most top players from bidding too much on powerful hands? It's simple really. Having bid their values, they leave their partners to do the pushing. With nothing to add, partner goes quietly.

Of course, if partner has any special features, he can come to life later. Here is an example. You are West the dealer.

<p>♠ K Q J 9 8 5 ♥ A 6 ♦ A Q 4 ♣ A K</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: 20px; margin: 0 auto;">N W S E</div>	
--	--	--

Twenty-three points and a six-card suit – that's a great start and warrants an opening bid of 2♣. East responds 2♦ (negative) and, when you rebid 2♠, raises to 3♠. What do you bid now?

Although the spade fit is good news, it would be a mistake to jump to 4NT at this stage because even if partner shows one ace you still won't know whether a slam is good or bad. You should make a cue bid of 4♣. This keeps the bidding low and gives East the chance to show a feature.

In fact, East bids 4♦ over 4♣, after which West can bid 4NT with some confidence. These are the two hands:

<p>♠ K Q J 9 8 5 ♥ A 6 ♦ A Q 4 ♣ A K</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: 20px; margin: 0 auto;">N W S E</div>	<p>♠ A 10 6 3 ♥ 9 8 7 4 ♦ 3 ♣ J 9 6 5</p>
--	--	---

West	East
2♣	2♦
2♠	3♠
4♣	4♦
4NT	5♦
6♠	

You'll notice that East first agreed the trump suit and then leapt at the chance to show his singleton diamond (the deal comes from rubber bridge – at duplicate East might bid a 4♦ splinter over 2♠ to show both features at once).

My last offering features West with another fine hand.

<p>♠ A ♥ Q 7 5 4 ♦ Q 7 6 3 ♣ 9 7 4 3</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: 20px; margin: 0 auto;">N W S E</div>	<p>♠ K 7 3 2 ♥ A K J ♦ A K J ♣ Q J 10</p>
<p>♠ 5 ♥ 10 9 8 2 ♦ 10 9 8 ♣ A K 8 6 5</p>	<p>♠ Q J 10 9 8 6 4 ♥ 6 3 ♦ 5 4 2 ♣ 2</p>	

West opened with an impeccable 2NT (20-22 points). East responded 4♠. Even though West knew the 4♠ bid was a sign off, he couldn't resist the temptation of 'one small effort' and went on to 5♣. East passed in haste.

When South cashed a top club and switched to a heart, East was none too happy. With two black aces to lose, his thoughts centred on trying to combine his chances in the red suits. He could cash two top diamonds; if the queen did not fall, he could ruff a club and take the heart finesse.

On further reflection, East saw a better chance. Winning the heart in dummy, he ruffed a club, went back to dummy with a diamond and ruffed another club. Now he exited with a spade and was pleased to find North with the singleton ace. North had to lead into a red tenace or give a ruff and discard.

Well, East had saved the day. West no doubt heaved a sigh of relief. However, if South had switched to a trump at trick two, West's five-level foray would have met a different fate.

The moral is clear. Don't overbid big hands. Show your hand once and allow partner to do any pushing necessary. ■



# Don't Ruff in the Long Hand

Many a newcomer delights in ruffing defensive winners with long trumps. It is as though extra tricks appear by magic – but you have to be careful that those tricks are, indeed, ‘extra’. Take this hand for example:

<p>♠ 7 6 5 ♥ A 7 5 3 ♦ K Q 8 3 ♣ 8 6</p> <p>♠ Q 8 4 2 ♥ K Q 9 ♦ 7 5 ♣ Q 9 7 2</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	<p>♠ 3 ♥ J 10 8 6 2 ♦ 10 9 2 ♣ J 10 5 4</p> <p>♠ A K J 10 9 ♥ 4 ♦ A J 6 4 ♣ A K 3</p>
N	E					
W	S					

North	South
	1♠
2♠	3♦
4♠	6♣
End	

The contract was sound and, when West led the king of hearts, declarer gave a little thought. He won in dummy and played another heart, ruffing in hand, before he had formed a proper plan. He realised now that he needed to ruff a club in dummy and this passed off peacefully. Alas, when declarer took a trump finesse, this not only lost to the queen but a further heart forced him to trump yet again. Now West had an extra trump winner.

Declarer was unlucky that trumps broke 4-1, but that first heart ruff was unnecessary and was the cause of his downfall. Declarer was always going to make four trump tricks so the ruff gained nothing – he merely shortened his trumps to the same length as West. If declarer had just ruffed his losing club

earlier, he would have prevailed.

Even with a normal trump break, ruffing in the long trump hand can be disastrous:

<p>♠ 10 8 2 ♥ K 9 7 2 ♦ Q J 10 6 ♣ J 2</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	<p>♠ 7 6 4 ♥ 8 6 5 ♦ A 9 8 5 ♣ K 8 6</p> <p>♠ 5 3 ♥ Q 4 3 ♦ K 4 3 2 ♣ Q 10 9 7</p> <p>♠ A K Q J 9 ♥ A J 10 ♦ 7 ♣ A 5 4 3</p>
N	E					
W	S					

North	South
	1♠
1NT	3♣
4♠	End

Declarer won the diamond lead in dummy and thought he could make five trump tricks by ruffing two diamonds in hand. So he ruffed a diamond at trick two, returned to dummy with the king of clubs to ruff yet another diamond and now played his top trumps. Exhausted of trumps, he was effectively playing in no-trumps and declarer realised suddenly that he needed the clubs to break 3-3. When they failed to do so, he suffered a one-trick defeat, losing in all one heart, one diamond and two clubs. This plan was poor because he has the same number of trump tricks whether he ruffs diamonds or not. He should have realised that dummy's two entries were precious and made full use of them by taking two heart finesses. When the hearts behave as they should – about a 75% shot – declarer could make game with five spades, two hearts, one diamond and two clubs – and, what is more, he might have been able to

cope with a 4-1 trump break!

So is it *always* wrong to ruff in the long trump hand? As you might expect, the answer is ‘no,’ but the times when you need to do so are quite rare:

<p>♠ 7 6 ♥ K 9 5 3 ♦ 9 6 4 2 ♣ Q 10 7</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	<p>♠ J 10 9 ♥ A 7 6 4 ♦ A 8 7 ♣ K 8 5</p> <p>♠ 5 3 2 ♥ Q J 10 2 ♦ 10 5 ♣ J 9 4 3</p> <p>♠ A K Q 8 4 ♥ 8 ♦ K Q J 3 ♣ A 6 2</p>
N	E					
W	S					

North-South bid to 7♠. West makes the textbook lead of a trump. Even with all hands on show, it is hard to see where thirteen tricks might come from. One chance might be to draw two rounds of trumps and then hope that diamonds stand up for four rounds, enabling declarer to throw a club from dummy. Then a club ruff in dummy would suffice. This is a long shot.

In fact, chances are good. Win the lead in dummy, play the ace of hearts and ruff a heart *high*. Re-enter dummy with a trump – happy that all follow – and ruff another heart high. Play a diamond to the ace and ruff yet another heart with South's last trump. You can now reach dummy with the king of clubs and your losing club goes on dummy's jack of spades, pulling the last trump in the process. By ruffing in hand *three* times, you have made an extra trump trick. As ruffing is usually more effective when using dummy's trumps, the name for this clever ploy is a *Dummy Reversal*. Despite this, the advice to guard against ruffing in the long hand is sound. ■



# Length is Strength

Why do you sort your cards into suits even before counting your points? One reason is that you want to see your long suits – if you can make them trumps, they will win more tricks.

Let us start with the opening bid.

♠ A K 7 3  
♥ A 10 6 4 2  
♦ 6 2  
♣ Q 5

An Acol textbook of the 1950s said you should open 1♠ so that you can show both suits (it being unthinkable to open 1♥ and reverse into 2♣ with a minimum opening hand such as this).

Let us suppose you correctly open 1♥ and that the partnership has a 4-4 spade fit. You should not miss the fit.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
♠ J 8 6 5	♠ Q 8 6 5
♥ K	♥ K
♦ A 9 7 5 4	♦ A K 9 7 4
♣ 10 6 2	♣ 10 6 2

If responder's hand is A, he is not strong enough for a two-level response and he will bid 1♠. The spade fit comes to light immediately. Now give him the stronger hand B. In this case, his initial response will be 2♦, but he is strong enough to rebid 2♠ over 2♥ – so you find the spade fit on the second round.

Here is a little poser. You hold:

♠ A Q 5  
♥ Q 8 5 3 2  
♦ 7 6 2  
♣ 8 5

With the opposition silent, partner opens 1♦, you bid 1♥ and partner rebids 1♠. What is your second bid?

The correct answer is 2♦. To pass 1♠ or raise to 2♠, because your spades are stronger than your diamonds (and because spades is a major suit), is a misjudgement. Length is strength still applies, but now that partner has bid you consider partnership length rather than just your own length.

Partner has indicated at least five diamonds and at least four spades on this auction. In this case, it will be safer to play in the eight-card or longer diamond fit than in the seven-card spade fit. If partner is strong enough to bid again over your 2♦, his third round bid will reveal if he has extra length in his major, and you can re-assess the situation accordingly.

The conclusion is clear: you should, without exception, open the bidding with your longest suit. (There are special rules for when you hold two or three suits of equal length, but that is another topic).

<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
♠ 7 2	♠ K Q 6
♥ K Q J 9 6 5 2	♥ 7
♦ 6 4 3	♦ A Q J 5
♣ 8	♣ A 9 7 6 2

The maxim comes to the fore when you hold a weak hand with a long suit. C is worth an opening bid of 3♥ in any seat except fourth (when you would pass), and irrespective of the vulnerability. With a suit this long, you are willing to accept going down, possibly doubled, in an effort to make your suit trumps. You want to make life as hard as possible for the opponents. You do not open at the three- or four-level to show a hand with a lot of points!

The 'length is strength' maxim has important ramifications when you are responding to partner's pre-empt. Remember, as partner has bid, you consider partnership length rather than your own length

Suppose you hold hand D at Love All and you hear partner open 3♥. Your right hand opponent passes. What is your bid?

The correct response is, of course, 4♥. Once again, raising partner on a singleton reflects the fact that there is safety in numbers. Length in the trump suit – partner's seven plus your one – provides declarer with the ability to withstand attacks in a weak side suit without losing control.

Finally, it is worth considering that this maxim is just as pertinent when it comes to overcalling.

♠ A Q 9 5 3  
♥ 5 4  
♦ Q 10 7 6  
♣ 7 6

Why is this hand fine for a minimum overcall of 1♠, when it is not close to being an opening bid?

The answer, once again, lies in the fact that the overcall guarantees length – at least five cards. It would be rare for one of the opponents to be able to make a penalty double, (or to make a business pass of a negative take-out double). Most of the time, partner will have sufficient spade tolerance to stop that from happening.

Suppose the worst comes to the worst and you play in 1♠ doubled, which might not be a pleasant experience. If this costs 500, then, in all probability, the opponents will have a game on – and if it costs 800, then they may well have a slam. ■



# Having None, Partner?

**Q** In rubber bridge, which member of the partnership should collect the tricks? I thought that it was partner of the first to win a trick, but in the clubs that I play in, everybody has a different opinion.  
Barbara Riva-Palacio, by email.

**A** There is no rule about this. Clubs and circles may have their own rules, of course, but otherwise you can do what you want.



**Q** At what stage is it too late to claim honours?  
Guy Heslop, Croydon.

**A** You can claim honours until the final total of the rubber is agreed.



**Q** The first paragraph on the fifth page of the Introduction to Duplicate in BRIDGE 89, states that defenders may ask each other about a possible revoke. However, page 31 of the yellow book states that a defender must not ask partner and continues,

at some length, to describe the consequences of doing so.

The second paragraph on the fifth page of the supplement states that attention may be drawn to quitted cards before the next trick starts. This statement appears to be at odds with the final paragraph on page 27 of the yellow book, which states:

Players (including dummy) are not permitted to draw attention to any quitted card pointing the wrong way. However, in the case of declarer, his card is 'quitted' when he lets go of it and therefore, up to that point, dummy can point out that a card is the wrong way.

Please could you clarify these two points?  
Bob Anderson, Rochdale and John Traill, Helensburgh. Similar queries on the first point from David Burrows, Janny Snell, Haslemere, Anne Wright, Ron Wood, London W14, Herbert Potts, Stockport, Lore Lucas and others.

**A** I am pleased you have noticed both changes: most people only see one! From August 1st, defenders may ask each other, and players may draw attention to

quitted tricks in the wrong direction. It seemed sensible to put in the rules that will be true for many years in the Introduction, rather than rules that are only true for a few short weeks.

There are other changes in the Laws from that date. New Law books are available from the EBU and World Bridge Federation and the new *Yellow Book* will be ready for August.



**Q** My partner and I play that a 2NT response to 1NT is a transfer to diamonds. To show a flat 11-12, we go through 2♣ whether or not we have a four-card major. Should we announce 2♣ as non-promissory Stayman or should we alert it? When we just announce it as Stayman, opponents complain if dummy comes down with no four-card major.

A R Bond, Southport.

**A** It is always difficult when players have their own idea of the rules, and do not care that they are quite wrong. It is also unfortunate that players often expect everyone else to play the same way as they do. It may be the teaching of bridge,

which tends to suggest there is only one way to bid.

Non-promissory Stayman, which is a horrible term meaning Stayman that does not promise a four-card major, does not need an alert or anything special. It is older than promissory Stayman, since when Jack Marx first invented it, there was no guarantee of a major. Perhaps four in ten players who play Stayman play non-promissory Stayman.

There are various methods of dealing with this. One is to carry a piece of paper, such as this one, saying that playing non-promissory Stayman is legal, common, and requires no special alerts. Another is to alert the 2NT rebid: while it does not require an alert, it probably does not matter if you do alert it. I would not suggest you extend your announcement: when the EBU introduced them, it was clear that they were not meant to be detailed descriptions, so just keep saying 'Stayman'. The final possibility is to live with the complaints: they should not be complaining without calling the director; if they do, he will (hopefully) put them right.  
If your problems are just in one club, you could always post this letter on the club notice-board, if the committee does not mind. ▶

# DECLARER PLAY QUIZ



by David Huggett

(Answers on page 57)

You are South as declarer playing teams or rubber bridge. In each case, what is your play strategy?

1.

♠ A 7 3 2  
♥ 7 5 3  
♦ A Q 10 2  
♣ K 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 5 4  
♥ A K 8  
♦ 8 4 3  
♣ A 9 7 2

3.

♠ A 3  
♥ 5 4 3  
♦ A 9 6 2  
♣ K Q J 9

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K Q J 2  
♥ A 2  
♦ Q J 10 8  
♣ 10 3 2

2.

♠ 8 5 4  
♥ A Q 7 3  
♦ 8 7 3  
♣ A K 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A K 3  
♥ K 4  
♦ Q J 10 9 2  
♣ J 10 7

4.

♠ Q 10 3  
♥ K Q 8  
♦ A 3  
♣ J 10 9 6 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 4 2  
♥ A 9 7  
♦ Q J 10 9  
♣ K Q 4

You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♠6. East plays the ♠Q. How do you plan the play?

You open 1♦, North responds 2♣, you rebid 2NT and North raises to 3NT. West leads the ♠8. You play the ♠10 from dummy and East plays the ♠J. How do you plan the play?

**Q** The declarer, South, was in 4♥. My partner was on lead and played a diamond, which won. She led a second diamond, which declarer trumped. Declarer drew trumps and then played a heart, which my partner won. My partner led another diamond, expecting declarer to ruff. In the event, declarer threw a small spade so my partner won the trick. With the cards of that round still face up, my partner was about to play another card but it was clear the declarer thought she had won the last trick and was about to lead as well.

At this point, I said my partner was on lead as she won the trick. To my amazement, declarer took back her spade and substituted a trump saying 'I meant to trump that. The trick is still live because no other card has been played. Declarer can do no wrong. Your error was in speaking and not waiting until the next card had been played.'

The director that evening agreed with the declarer. Somehow, this did not seem right in view of declarer's error. What is your view?  
Lorraine Avery, Devon.

**A** Perhaps it is time that your director started reading rulings out of the book! Nobody can take back a played card because of a change of mind, or any other reason, unless there has been an infraction and the law permits it to be taken back. Once a card is played, that is it; it is played.

'Declarer can do no wrong' is pure invention:

declarer can and does do many wrong things!

♣♦♥♠

**Q** I try to come in against a weak 1NT followed by two passes when I have a 5-4-3-1 shape by bidding my five-card suit with 7+ points. Recently, I did just this. My five-card suit was headed by the jack with further 9 points outside. A few deals later, I held:

♠ 3  
♥ J 9 6 5 4  
♦ 7 5 4  
♣ A Q 9 2

My partner, who would double on 15 points, gave a slight hesitation over 1NT. If the slight hesitation meant points or spades, I fail to see how this helps me bid 2♥. All I know is partner would probably lead a spade and give declarer a cheap trick. I was told that I should not make this bid. I would think that taking advantage of a hesitation would be to pass.

Brian Nicholls, Tyne & Wear.

**A** Who told you that you should not make the bid? If it was an opponent, tell him (politely, please!) either to call the director or say nothing!

I do agree with him, not you. You are bidding on hands that are weaker than most players would. Partner's hesitation suggests some values, making your bid safer. I think you should refrain from these very light protective overcalls when partner has hesitated. ▶

**Q** I was surprised by your interpretation of 'centre' in Law 7a as the exact centre; if this were so, directors would need to carry a tape measure with them. Did the lawmakers not intend it to mean the central part of the table, as distinct from the edge or the floor? In this case, it would be fine to make room for dummy while leaving the board where everyone can see it. Ken Smith, Chesterfield.

**A** Directors should not act in a stupid fashion. Of course the centre of the table means just that, but no, directors do not need to carry a tape measure. They use their judgement as in many other situations.

With a normal-sized bridge table, there is plenty of room for the dummy while keeping the board in the centre. No doubt, common sense will prevail if players have disabilities or if a table too small for the purpose is in use.



**Q** South was playing in 4♠ and had just won a trick in dummy. Declarer then led a spade from his hand. Just as my partner covered the played card, I pointed out to declarer that he should have played from dummy. He said 'OK', picked up my partner's card and gave it to her. He then picked up his own card, put it in his hand and played a club from dummy. I told him he was wrong but was unsure whether I could do anything about it. What should have happened?

Gertrud Porter, Harrow.

**A** I wonder what happened to the director. Perhaps this was rubber bridge. In a club, the host will often take the position of a director in a duplicate game. Sometimes players have to make their own rulings, for which it helps to have a law book handy.

The next player may accept any lead out of turn, and does accept it if he plays a card. So declarer had no right to take your partner's card back: once played neither it nor his wrong card could be taken back.



**Q** Several years ago, I was diagnosed with minor epilepsy (absence seizures) for which I am now taking anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs). These AEDs do not cure epilepsy; they only control it. Some drugs work by making over-active brain cells less excitable, and others work by decreasing the brain cells' ability to transmit abnormal impulses to each other causing a seizure. Under the laws of bridge, must I declare my drug taking to a tournament director?

David Silber, Upton upon Severn.

**A** There is no such rule in the Law book. Certain organisations may have their own rules, for example, the World Bridge Federation takes its drug-taking rules from the Olympic Association.

It would not hurt to keep the director informed, but I know of no such rule in England. ▶



# DEFENCE QUIZ

by Julian Pottage

(Answers on page 53)

**Y**ou are West, playing teams or rubber bridge, in the defensive positions below. It is your turn to play.

1.           ♠ K Q 9 2  
              ♥ J 6  
              ♦ A J 10 8  
              ♣ 7 4 2

♠ 6  
♥ A Q 9 3  
♦ 9 6 5 4  
♣ Q 8 6 3

	N		
W		E	
	S		

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
End			1♠

You lead the ♣3. Partner plays the king and the ace wins. Declarer plays a spade to the king and then a spade back to the ace. What do you discard on this trick?

3.           ♠ 10 2  
              ♥ 6 4 2  
              ♦ K Q J 8  
              ♣ K J 10 6

♠ 7 6 5 4  
♥ 9 3  
♦ A 4 3 2  
♣ Q 9 8

	N		
W		E	
	S		

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	End	1♠

You lead the ♥9 and strike gold. Partner wins with the ♥Q, cashes the ace and continues with the king. South follows each time, playing the jack on the third round. What do you play on this trick?

2.           ♠ 8 2  
              ♥ 7 6 2  
              ♦ A Q 10 8 2  
              ♣ A K J

♠ J 9 7 6 3  
♥ A Q 9 3  
♦ 6  
♣ 10 9 6

	N		
W		E	
	S		

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	End	1NT

You lead the ♠6. Partner plays the ten and the king wins. Declarer leads the jack of diamonds, which wins the second trick, and continues with a low diamond. What do you discard on this trick?

4.           ♠ Q 2  
              ♥ 6 4 3 2  
              ♦ K J 8  
              ♣ K J 10 6

♠ 10 8 5 4  
♥ 9  
♦ Q 7 3 2  
♣ Q 9 4 2

	N		
W		E	
	S		

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	End	1♠

You lead the ♥9 and strike gold again. Partner wins with the ♥Q, cashes the ace and no doubt intends to continue with the king. As before, South has to keep following. What do you discard on the second and third rounds of hearts?

**Q** Playing duplicate at our friendly local club, I was North as dealer; the bidding went:

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2NT*
Pass	3♣	Dbl	4♣
Dbl	End		

\*alert

When asked, I explained 2NT as showing spade support, game values and possible interest in a slam. Both our opponents said ‘Oh, you mean Jacoby 2NT,’ indicating they knew the convention. The problem arose because my partner did not alert my 3♣, which meant ‘I have first-round control in clubs.’ In fact, she had ♣A-K-Q and did not understand my bid as she had overlooked the possibility of a void in my hand.

When East led a small club, my void and the non-alert of my bid became obvious, much to East’s annoyance. She enquired in a very aggressive tone why there had been no alert and stated she wanted to reserve her rights. She continued by making disapproving noises as I proceeded to make 4♣.

We called the director for a ruling. He took his time to arrive because he was playing. During this time, our opposition continued to debate our error making us feel most

uncomfortable. When the director arrived, he suggested we let the 4♣ make without the double. Our opposition were not happy with that and he eventually ruled that we went one off.

**Our opponent’s attitude upset me, but I am not in the least concerned on how the director ruled; there is more to life than winning at bridge.**

- 1 Should I have pointed out after the bidding, but before play started, that my partner had missed an alert?
- 2 Should we have called the director as soon as we all knew of the error (when dummy came down) before going on with the play?
- 3 It transpired that both doubles were for penalties. Under the new rules, should the opponents have alerted these?

Mike Torrance, Essex.

**A** Once you have become declarer or dummy, you are required to point out any missing alerts, or any other mistakes in explanation partner has made. In theory, you should call the director first – but that may be impractical when it is a playing director.

Once someone has drawn attention to an infraction, as your opponents’ bad-tempered remarks did, it is the duty of all four players to call the director.

Doubles above 3NT are not alertable. The double of an unalerted 3♣ is for take-out with no alert. If 3♣ is clearly artificial, then a double of 3♣ is penalties with no alert.

Whatever the ruling, which

sounds pretty dubious, your opponents have no right to be rude and aggressive. The EBU is of the view, with which I heartily concur, that the main thing that puts people off bridge is bad behaviour. This pair has no reason for such behaviour; after all, they are going to get a ruling. It sounds as though the director should have penalised your opponents for their attitude and approach.



**Q** A problem arose at our U3A Bridge meeting last Thursday. I believe the bidding and final contract was illegal and, although the director saw fit to allow the contract to proceed, I was certain that the opponents should have been penalised. I would appreciate your reaction.

The bidding, with North-South silent throughout, began as follows:

West	East
	1♥
2♥	4♣ <sup>1</sup>
5♠ <sup>2</sup>	

<sup>1</sup>Gerber

<sup>2</sup>no stop card

East then bid 5♣. We pointed out that this was incorrect, asked East to remove the bid and make it good. After a long pause East removed 5♣ and bid 6♥ (again with no stop).

At that point, I called the director. While waiting for the director to come, West said that it did not matter what East changed her bid to – the contract was going to be 6♥ anyway.

The director viewed the bidding and told East that she had to remove 6♥ and bid 6♣, whereupon West obligingly bid 6♥.

When West placed her cards on the table, she had

**8-x-x-x of hearts and two aces. The contract made but no other pairs had reached 6♥. In my opinion, they would never have got there with normal bidding.**

Bill Buck,  
Birmingham.

**A** When something goes wrong, you must call the director immediately. The main cause of the fuss was the failure to do this. When East made the insufficient bid of 5♣ and someone pointed it out, all four players had a duty to call the director and not to do anything else before he arrived. By trying to insist on your own ruling, you have caused trouble.

However, to be fair, the director seems to have messed up a very simple case, I suspect by not reading it from the law book. If you had called him at the right time, and if he had read it from the law book, this is what he would have said:

‘The insufficient bid of 5♣ may have been conventional. First, the player to the left of the insufficient bidder may accept the insufficient bid: if he does, it becomes legal and the bidding goes on from there. If it is not accepted, it is cancelled and must be replaced by a pass or a sufficient bid. Whatever it is replaced with, the partner of the insufficient bidder must pass for the remainder of the auction.’

No doubt, your side would not have accepted the insufficient bid and, when East realised West was silenced for the rest of the auction, he would have bid 6♥. So the final contract would have been 6♥. Thus, the director and players got to the right place by the wrong route.

No-one else was in 6♥ – that is life! ▶

David Stevenson answers all queries based on the facts supplied by the letter writer. Neither Mr Bridge nor David Stevenson has any way of knowing whether those facts are correct or complete.