



Cambs & Hunts Bridge



Newsletter Number 27

30 December 2000

Editors: **Chris Jagger**, 2 Wycliffe Road, Cambridge CB1 3JD, Tel: 01223-526586 and
Jonathan Mestel, 180 Queen's Gate, London SW7 2BZ, Tel: 01223-329671.

E-mail: ajm8@cam.ac.uk or christopher.jagger@deloitte.co.uk

Web page: <http://www.gismo99.freemove.co.uk/bridge/CHCBA>

The next newsletter is scheduled to appear on **30th April**. Please try to get copy to us no later than **15th April**. All contributions welcome!



The County welcomes Rod Oakford, an erstwhile Gold Cup finalist, to its ranks.

Do you keep your past Newsletters for posterity, or has one issue, perhaps containing a vital article on the conventional meaning of a 7NT opener which you desperately want to consult, been mislaid? Well, if so, your worries are over. Past newsletters, and sundry articles therefrom, are now available on the County Web page, whose URL is given above. Any data to be included on the site should be sent to David Allen on david@gismo99.freemove.co.uk



In this issue Peter Burrows invites you once more to spot the link between three hands. Chris Jagger discusses count signals and low level reverses. There is a report on the Cambridge club's triumph in the NICKO and the usual round-up of News and Events.



Choose your contract!

Some people regard it as a personal failing when their intricate bidding system fails to get them to the right contract. Others, regarding the whole process as somewhat random, are content to reach a plausible contract most of the time.

It's so much easier to find a way of reaching the top spot when you can see all the hands. Or is it? What contract would you like to be in as N/S on the hand on the right? And if you got there, would you be proud of it!?

Best contract	♠ A84	for N/S?									
	♥ A1042										
	♦ J10										
	♣ AQ85										
♠ KQJ10		♠ 976									
♥ 865	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <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		♥ KQJ93
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♦ K64		♦ 93									
♣ 942		♣ J103									
	♠ 532										
	♥ 7										
	♦ AQ8752										
	♣ K76										



Low level reverses *by* Chris Jagger

A low level reverse is one such as (uncontested) $1\clubsuit-1\heartsuit-2\diamond$. The $2\diamond$ bid shows extra values, as it forces partner to the three level if he wishes to put back to clubs. However, as partner has only responded at the one level it clearly cannot be game forcing (though should be forcing). In contrast, $1\diamond-2\clubsuit-2\heartsuit$ should be game forcing, as if partner has enough to bid at the two level it is unlikely that you will not want to go to game.

There are four low level reverse auctions, the other three being $1\clubsuit-1\spadesuit-2\diamond$, $1\clubsuit-1\spadesuit-2\heartsuit$, and $1\diamond-1\spadesuit-2\heartsuit$. The problem in these auctions is to distinguish when you wish to go to game or not. Playing standard methods, if it starts $1\clubsuit-1\spadesuit-2\diamond$, then $2\spadesuit$, 2NT, and $3\clubsuit$ would be taken as non-forcing, thus showing a weak hand, with every other bid as game-forcing. If you want to agree clubs with a strong hand you cannot simply bid $3\clubsuit$, you must either jump to $4\clubsuit$, or go via fourth suit forcing, potentially creating a much more murky auction.

To get round this problem, you may have heard people mention 'Lowest of fourth suit and 2NT is bad'. What this means in the sequence $1\clubsuit-1\spadesuit-2\diamond$ is that ALL weak hands bid $2\heartsuit$, with partner responding in the weakest thing he is prepared to play in, usually $2\spadesuit$. The $2\heartsuit$ bidder will then pass $2\spadesuit$, or bid 2NT, $3\clubsuit$ or $3\diamond$, showing a weak hand wanting to play there in each case. Thus, if instead you have a stronger hand with clubs, you can bid $3\clubsuit$ immediately, knowing that partner will not pass you.

If, however, the auction had started $1\clubsuit-1\spadesuit-2\heartsuit$ then now 2NT would be the bid for all the weak hands, as 2NT would now be lower than 4th suit. The rest would work approximately as before.

Usually the discussion on these sequences stops at this point, leaving several awkward unagreed sequences. In the rest of this article we aim to cover these sequences, and suggest a modification. One of the key weaknesses of the system as discussed so far is that the opener does little to describe his hand, leaving responder guessing often where he should play the hand. We shall address that point too.

The key is to have some extra weak bids, and to realise that there are only a certain number of different hands that the reverser can have. Thus, when it starts $1\clubsuit-1\spadesuit-2\diamond$, $2\spadesuit$ and 2NT are weak and natural, with $2\heartsuit$ being weak with a minor, or fourth suit forcing. Three level bids are natural and game forcing (for example, $3\heartsuit$ would show 5-5 majors, as it is hardly worth showing a four card heart suit). After $1\clubsuit-1\spadesuit-2\diamond-2\heartsuit$ opener bids naturally, with $2\spadesuit$ showing three card support. (With two spades opener will usually have an alternative bid, with six clubs or a hand suitable for a NT bid.) This enables you to play in $2\spadesuit$ or $3\clubsuit$, depending on the better fit, avoiding playing a level higher unnecessarily. (For example, xxx x AQJx AKQxx opposite Kxxxx Jx 10xx J10x would bid $1\clubsuit-1\spadesuit-2\diamond-2\heartsuit-2\spadesuit-P$, whereas if $2\heartsuit$ is bid on all hands, responder would now convert the top spot of $2\spadesuit$ into $3\clubsuit$, an altogether shakier contract.) There is plenty of room for showing stronger hands with good spade suits, so it is little loss not to be able to bid $2\spadesuit$ on stronger hands.

The other three reverse sequences work on broadly similar principles. $1\clubsuit-1\spadesuit-2\heartsuit$ and $1\diamond-1\spadesuit-2\heartsuit$ are pretty much as before, with 2NT being all the weak hands. $1\clubsuit-1\heartsuit-2\diamond$ has $2\heartsuit$ and 2NT as weak, and $2\spadesuit$ as weak with a minor or fourth suit forcing.

Detective story - Part II: THANK YOU PARTNER! *by* Peter Burrows

This is a story from a couple of years back which makes an interesting parallel with the article which featured as number one in this series. It took place in the regular Friday Butler at a London club quite close to Olympia, and, once again features a set of three deals which, taken together, constitute an event which is totally unique in my experience. Indeed, I should not be surprised to learn that it has never happened to anyone before, and I am prepared to wager quite heavily that it will be an extremely long time before it happens to me again. The solution to the mystery is on page 10.

The action started on the first deal that we played:

Dealer S	♠ AKQ9763	E/W Vul						
	♥ -							
	♦ A5							
	♣ 9642							
♠ 54		♠ 108						
♥ 10765432	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td> </td><td>N</td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td><td>E</td></tr> </table>		N		W	S	E	♥ AKQ98
	N							
W	S	E						
♦ 92		♦ Q106						
♣ 53		♣ A108						
	♠ J2							
	♥ J							
	♦ KJ8743							
	♣ KQJ7							

The auction started quietly enough:

South	West	North	East
1♦	P(a)	1♠	2♥
P	4♥(b)	4♠	5♥
P(c)	P	X(d)	P
P	P		

(a) I am aware that some readers will have assumed that my pass was a misprint! As it

was my first action of the evening, perhaps they will be charitable, and assume that I had not yet warmed up!

(b) 3♥ might be better. But I couldn't face the possibility of partner's caustic comments if we missed a vulnerable game on the very first board! Some players I know would have used Blackwood!

(c) Nothing to add, obviously.

(d) Personally I think that North's double was correct, but the analysis below may persuade you that it ain't necessarily so.

The first thing that the hand illustrates very neatly is the proposition that you can not expect to do the correct thing over aggressive pre-empting every time. As it was, N/S took a small loss by settling for 800 as against the 980 that they could have made in 6♠. But suppose that South had held ♣A1087, giving East ♣KQJ instead of her actual holding. In that case, I do not suppose that the auction would necessarily have been any different, but 6♥ would still have gone for only 800, with N/S cold for a grand. (Admittedly North would have some uneasy moments after a club lead, but as the cards lie, either plausible line of play would prove successful.) And, interestingly, the LTT (*the Law of Total Tricks (ed.)*) does not seem to be of any real help to North here. Suppose (s)he assumes, tentatively, a 7-2 fit in spades, and that E/W have a 5-5 fit in hearts. In that case, there should be 19 tricks available (not allowing for any "adjustments" to the crude count, since I do not profess to understand them; indeed, most of my partners claim that I don't even understand the basic Law anyway!). So, according to the Law, if N/S can make seven, E/W should be going for 1400 in 5♥, while if they can make only six, the penalty should be 1100. In either

case, double looks like the best option, given that the numbers are at best imprecise. The problem on the actual hand, of course, is that while N/S have the postulated 7-2 fit, the E/W heart fit is actually 7-5, supposedly making 21 total tricks available. If North had known that, he might have been inclined to bid on on the actual deal. But suppose that we alter the cards in the club suit in the way that I suggested previously, making the full deal as follows:

		♠ AKQ9763	
		♥ –	
		♦ A5	
		♣ 9642	
♠ 54			♠ 108
♥ 10765432	W N		♥ AKQ98
♦ 92	W S E		♦ Q106
♣ 53	S		♣ KQJ
		♠ J2	
		♥ J	
		♦ KJ8743	
		♣ A1087	

Now there are still 21 tricks available, and N/S have 13 of them. Certainly E/W can only take eight tricks against competent defence, and from that point of view the Law seems to be working out satisfactorily. But the fact nevertheless remains that North has an impossible problem. If the cards are as originally dealt, (s)he clearly does better on the balance of probabilities to double; if they are as I have reconstructed them, then (s)he will take a quite substantial loss if (s)he fails to bid the grand. I am not sure whether it is appropriate to draw any firm conclusions other than the fact that this is an infinitely fascinating game!

[And there's much room for differences of opinion! I think it's clear for North to bid

5♠ – opponents aren't lunatics and have bid 5♥ unfavourable, and our 4♠ was a reluctant underbid. Having said which, E/W have clearly overbid. Note that the second version of this hand is a '5 or 7 hand' – it's unlikely that exactly 12 tricks will be made. (JM)]

Anyway, as it happened, the datum for the board was +855 to N-S, and so we gained a couple of IMPs for conceding 800.

A couple of rounds later, having inadvertently swapped positions so that I was now East, we hit the following:

Dealer N	♠ KJ6	E/W Vul
	♥ –	
	♦ K97542	
	♣ Q854	
♠ Q1053		♠ A74
♥ AK86532	W N	♥ QJ104
♦ 10	W S E	♦ 83
♣ 2	S	♣ AK103
	♠ 982	
	♥ 97	
	♦ AQJ6	
	♣ J976	

The auction proceeded:

North	East	South	West
P	1♥(a)	P	1♠(b)
P	2♣	P	4♥

(a) I could not open a weak NT because (i) I don't play it, (ii) even if I did, I would not do so with a losing doubleton and a good alternative, (iii) even if I did I would not dream of doing so vulnerable at IMPs, and (iv) if I had, it would have spoiled the story! Some readers will no doubt quarrel with the first three reasons, but the fourth is conclusive, and anyway, it's my article, so I shall bid in it as I please!

(b) We did not have any fancy manoeuvres available to handle this position. In my opinion, even if we had, West's treatment is as good as anything. If the 1♠ bid does not provoke East into action over 4♥, then there is unlikely to be a slam.

There was nothing to the play of the hand. South led ♠9, which I neglected to cover, winning with the Ace in order to discard dummy's diamond on the second round of clubs. Thereafter, wriggle as I might, I was unable to avoid the loss of two spades, though it must be conceded that I certainly had an abundance of squeeze cards! This time the datum score was 280 to E-W, and so we gained 9 IMPs for making 650. I can only assume that some E/W pairs failed to bid the game and that some let N-S off for 300 in 5♦ doubled by failing to find their club ruff. Or perhaps, having taken the ruff, West failed to cover either or both of the high spades when they were led from dummy, allowing North to lose just one trick in the suit.

[Note that if North eliminates the side suits and leads the ♠9 to the 10 and J, then East must duck to avoid being endplayed. (ed)]

And finally there was:

Dealer N	♠ 10	Love All
	♥ KJ52	
	♦ AK8752	
	♣ J10	
♠ Q765432		♠ AJ9
♥ 86		♥ AQ743
♦ Q9		♦ J3
♣ 54		♣ K96
	♠ K8	
	♥ 109	
	♦ 1064	
	♣ AQ8732	

A lively auction ensued:

North	East	South	West
1♦	1♥	2♣	X(a)
2NT(b)	3♠(c)	3NT(d)	4♠(e)
5♦(f)	X(g)	P(h)	5♠(i)
P(j)	P(k)	P(l)	

(a) Our style in competitive situations is to limit the hand via a double unless quite strong. This could be regarded as an extreme example! But the bid does have the advantage of showing spades and implying heart tolerance, which is what West has, more or less.

(b) North is a well-known and much-loved joker.

(c) Perhaps slightly aggressive. But if I don't bid spades now the suit will surely get lost.

(d) Trusting soul! And rightly so, for North would have made all 13 tricks without raising a sweat if I had led a major suit without starting with an Ace!

(e) Values in reserve! Alternatively a well-judged sacrifice!

(f) Possibly inconsistent with his previous bidding, which would seem to call for a confident 4NT after his partner's raise! But at least it is a making contract...

(g) ... as is established beyond peradventure by the fact that I doubled it!

(h) No redouble because the 550 she is about to score beats the 500 she can get from 5♠X. But if she is not going to double 5♠ anyway, it is not so clear that it is wrong to redouble 5♦. My conclusion? No balls!

[I'd have said all the more reason not to redouble if you can't double 5♠! (JM)]

(i) Prudent!

(j) By now totally unsure as to who can make what. But what a coup it would have been to bid and make 5NT (doubled possibly!). My conclusion? No flair!

(k) At last, an easy bid!

The Nicko 1999-2000

The National Inter Club Knockout began back in the depths of recent history, with the first winners being the Cambridge Club, as reported in the second ever issue of this newsletter. The local press generously described it as the International Club Knockout! In its tenth year, and having been through about ten different names, it is back to being called the Nicko, and the Cambridge Club have won again, with a completely different squad from that of the previous success.

It always seems like a strange competition, with something close to a thousand rounds (officially only nine), with the unusual feature that the standard of the opposition seems to be totally independent of the round you are in, and usually we get through what feels like hundreds of rounds only to be beaten by some team we really shouldn't have lost to. The first round they send us to Nottingham, the second to the wilds of Norfolk, and by then we begin to wonder if it really is a regional draw, and whether home draws are only for the opposition!

This year all went smoothly and, on making the quarter finals, found ourselves AT HOME, against some team of no-hopers – Hackett, Hackett, Hackett, Mould and Cornelius. They started off negotiations by trying our tactics – offering nothing but one invalid date – which fortunately we could make.

The plan with these teams of five, where one is sponsoring the rest, is that the sponsor plays his sixteen boards, enough to secure his green points should they win, and then goes home (metaphorically in this case, as they came in one car from Manchester). Bitter experience tells me that usually they are leading after the sixteen boards, and this match was no

exception. (Actually, against us everybody always leads until we get some food inside us!)

The critical board was just round the corner:

Dealer N	♠ 862	Game All
	♥ AKQ107	
	♦ 972	
	♣ Q9	
♠ AK10975		♠ –
♥ –		♥ J9863
♦ 4		♦ KJ10853
♣ KJ7542		♣ 108
	♠ QJ43	
	♥ 542	
	♦ AQ6	
	♣ A63	

	North	East	South	West
P	3♦	P	3♠	
P	4♦	P	4♠	
P	P	X	all pass	

4♠ went 3 down for 1100, a result duplicated exactly in the other room, but played by SOUTH! A casual enquiry established that teammates had bid the board the wrong way round, and we sat in dejection at the fouling of the board. Alan Mould came in and joked ‘25 IMPs to you, unless you’ll accept that the board was fouled’. A closer examination revealed that it had not been – the auction having been:

	North	East	South	West
1♥	P	1♠	2♣	
2♠	P	4♥	P	
P	X	4♠	X	

[“Not a curious hand,” said Oscar the Owl. “Neither side can make 4♠!” (JM)]

With 22 IMPs this board, there was no recovery from this, and we eased into the semifinals, to meet a team clearly well past it – Rowlands, Lee, Lunn and O’Neil, from Surrey. This proved to be a surprisingly decisive encounter. My only particular memory of the match being slipping a contract through against Bob Rowlands – Bob never stops grumbling, even during the play, and when at trick seven he realised what had happened it turned into almost a thunderstorm. ‘It wouldn’t be the same without Bob grumbling’ I commented, getting a smile even from Bob, before he returned the compliment with interest! The final was on paper an easier encounter, and after the first board it felt even more secure:

♠ AJ		♠ 64
♥ AK85	W N E	♥ QJ109
♦ AQ64	S	♦ 3
♣ AK8		♣ QJ10653

Uncontested we had the economical auction: 2♣-2♦; 2♥-2♠; 2NT-3♣; 3♦-3♠; 4♣-4NT; 5♥-7♥.

The 2♥ bid was either natural, or 25+ balanced, and 2♠ asked which. Then 3♣ was five card Stayman, with the 3♠ bid showing

hearts and denying spades. 4♣ showed a concentration of values, and the 5♥ response showed 2 or 5 of the key ‘aces’, without the ♥ queen. The next bid was easy. The surprise was that opponents bid 2♣-2♦; 3NT-P.

We were always comfortably up, but then in the second last set they bid two very thin games which happened to be making, and the last set there were a couple of tricky auctions for our teammates. The more interesting was KJ3 4 AK9853 K64 opposite AQ104 AQJ 64 AJ103. Opponents counted their points and bid 6NT – Ed and John had a more sophisticated but less successful auction starting

1♦-1♠; 2♠-3♣; 4♦

It’s hard to argue too much with this bidding – 3♣ showed either a fifth spade or a very strong hand (how else could John bid this hand?). Meanwhile, thinking partner was likely to have a fifth spade, and reckoning the diamond source of tricks would be very useful, Ed reasonably jumped to 4♦. Thereafter they quickly progressed to 7♠ – actually a quite respectable contract, but not a making one on this occasion. [*Not Very respectable. (JM)*]

When the dust had settled we were 6 IMPs up. And the only thing that remained was to avoid going out of the first round of the Nicko the following year!



Solution to Peter Burrows’ detective problem

The answer is that West was able three times to table 7-card support for partner’s bid suit! Because we inadvertently changed seats it was actually I who tabled the first dummy, and admittedly the third example is slightly un-real as I had in effect supported partner’s suit. But had my partner sat West throughout, as she normally does, she would have put down 7 trumps for me on three boards out of 24! I’m starting to understand why she complains that I always hog “her hands”.

