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The editor invites you to ride with him on this matchpoint roller coaster.
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The Ten Commandments of Partnership Bridge

— a guide for a successful, serious, partnership —

1. If we play it, we play it. If we have agreed to play something, we make the system bid even if we don't like it (we can change it later). This includes discipline with point-count ranges.
2. If it's not in the notes, we don't play it. No "testing the waters" at the table — we make an inferior bid that won't be misunderstood rather than a clever bid we haven't discussed (we can improve the system away from the table). If we have discussed something but did not put it in the notes, we don't play it.
3. Where it's possible to elicit partner's input in an auction, we do so.
4. No discussion of errors at the table, in front of other people, or behind partner's back (except to a coach). Bad results should (and will) be discussed away from the table later, when we can think more clearly. However, it is OK to say "sorry" at or away from the table if we wish.
5. Postmortems of all tournament hands are required. It is understood that we are talking about the bridge and not about "fault" or "charges," etc.
6. Both partners are expected to put in maximum effort at the table, to know the notes, to have eaten, to be well rested, etc.
7. Personal style and judgment are not partnership issues.
8. We have practice sessions once or twice per week, on a regular basis, including postmortems on bad results or system problems.
9. We employ honesty in team comparisons. If we have had a bad match or result, we say so to teammates, but without blaming partner (ever). It is OK to say "my fault" or "sorry, we had a bad set" but not OK to roll eyes or otherwise indicate that we are not happy with partner.
10. If we have something to say to partner, we say it honestly, respectfully and lovingly, or not at all.

The Sound Opening Bid

by Pamela Granovetter

Just as the light-opening-bid style has a set of understandings that go with it (such as plenty of non-forcing and invitational sequences, various inferences made from partner's opening pass, etc.), so, too, does the sound opening bid have a set of necessary accoutrements. Having lost too many points over the years when accommodating partners played this style with me without enough discussion, I have finally decided to define the standard sound opening bid itself (which is *not* Roth-Stone) and the follow-up bidding.

I. The Sound Opening Bid

One easy way to imagine what a sound opening bid looks like is to pretend responder has a nice-looking 10- or 11-count. Opposite this, your sound opening bid will usually produce a decent play for game.

To be more precise, the *minimum* sound opening bid is a hand with 11+-13- that:

- (1) is unbalanced with concentrated honors in the long suit(s);
- (2) is balanced with at least 2-1/4 honor tricks and strong spot cards, again with honors in the longer suit(s);
- (3) includes defensive tricks.

II. Looking to Double Them

The importance of the defensive tricks is crucial, because responder knows he can double them to protect his side's partscore at matchpoints, or to bring in points atimps or rubber bridge. If we fail to double them after the sound opening one- or two-bid (more about the two-bids later) despite

the fact that we have promised defense, we have missed the point. Perhaps you can't teach an old dog new tricks — some partners have played light opening bids all their lives and are loathe to double contracts that, when bid after the light-opening-bid style, may be cold (we might even be talking overtricks!). However, playing this style, we must double them for two- and three-trick sets, else we lose the big payoff, one that more than compensates for the occasional debacle of being "blown out of the auction" after the initial sound pass.

Here's an example from recent international play:

West dealer
None vul

You, East, hold:

♠ J 9 4 3 2
♥ A 10 8 7 4
♦ 6
♣ Q 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	2 ♣	4 ♥	4 ♠
pass	pass	?	

East trusted North's 2♣ bid more than West's sound 1♥ bid, and passed out 4♠, believing that this was a sure plus whereas the opponents might be on for 5♣. This was a disastrous choice when the whole hand was:

West dealer	North	South dealer	North (you)
None vul	♠ 8	All vul	♠ J x
	♥ K		♥ K J 10 x
	♦ J 10 8 7 4		♦ Q 10 x x
	♣ A J 10 9 4 3		♣ Q 10 x
West		West	East
♠ A 7	East	♠ x x	♠ Q 9 x x
♥ Q J 6 3 2	♠ J 9 4 3 2	♥ A Q 9	♥ x x x
♦ A Q 2	♥ A 10 8 7 4	♦ A K J x	♦ x x x x
♣ 8 6 5	♦ 6	♣ K x x x	♣ x x
	♣ Q 2		
	South		South
	♠ K Q 10 6 5		♠ A K 10 x x
	♥ 9 5		♥ x x x
	♦ K 9 5 3		♦ x
	♣ K 7		♣ A J x x

North-South's 4♠ contract drifted down four, +200 for East-West when the rest of the field scored +420 in 4♥. It's true that if they run to 5♣, you get only down three instead of 4♠'s down four, but that's still +500 for your side and a 2-imp gain atimps or top score at matchpoints.

Another way to miss the boat is to let them off the hook after partner has opened the bidding and they step into the auction. When our side opens the bidding and they double or overcall, the first thing responder should consider is: "They just stepped into hot water and there might be a big number for us!" Suppose, for example, that you hold something like:

♠ J x ♥ K J 10 x ♦ Q 10 x x ♣ Q 10 x.

Partner opens 1♠ and RHO doubles. This is not the time to bid 1NT! Just bide your time and say pass! Fourth hand must bid at the two-level, and, with a good hand, the doubler might innocently raise (playing his partner for some of your stuffings). The whole hand might be similar to:

South	West	North	East
1 ♠	double	pass	2 ♦
pass	3 ♦	double	(all pass)

East ended up going for -1100. Had you bid 1NT, you would have no doubt scored some overtricks, for a nice +150 for yourself. Which do you prefer? By the way, if West passes 2♦, you will double that as well; the 3♦ bid was just icing on the cake.

III. Bidding Games

After partner's sound opening bid, you don't need to use up your bidding space for delicate non-forcing probing bids or dainty game invitations. With a good 11-count, or even some 10-counts, you already know you have a good shot at game, and you take it. Therefore, jump raises and preferences, and 2NT "as a new suit" bids (e.g., 1♥-1♠; 2♣-2NT), are forcing, and you can bid your games without giving the opponents the extra useful information that fourth-suit-forcing or other slow bids gratuitously provide, and you can explore for the best game contract (or slams) by using forcing low-level bids.

I had a disaster in the World Championships in Verona last week when I couldn't make a 2-over-1 after my partner's possibly light opening bid with:

North dealer
North-South vul

♠ Q 2
♥ A 9 5
♦ 10 3
♣ K Q 6 5 3 2

West	North	East	South
—	1 ♠	pass	?

Playing sound opening bids, I respond 2♣, happy to force to game with these cards. As it was, I could bid 1NT semi-forc-

ing (partner will pass only with a 5-3-3-2 minimum), or 3♣ invitational. I didn't like 3♣ because of the poor spot cards and the queen-doubleton of spades (we might belong in spades), so I settled for a semi-forcing 1NT. The bidding continued:

West	North	East	South
—	1 ♠	pass	1NT
double	pass	2 ♥	?

Now what? I felt like I was stuck between a rock and a hard place. A 3♣ bid now would show a weak hand, and 2♠ certainly didn't do justice to this hand. So I made the "value bid" of 2NT, which was passed out. The full deal was:

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q 2
♥ A 9 5
♦ 10 3
♣ K Q 6 5 3 2

I'm sure my partner wasn't pleased to watch me go down a trick in 2NT, with 5♣ cold, but this is the price you pay for light-opening bids. Playing sound openings the bidding goes:

West	North	East	South
—	1 ♠	pass	2 ♣
double	3 ♣	pass	3 ♥ (stopper)
(any)	3 ♠	pass	5 ♣
(any)			

I like plus 600 rather than -100 (or +100 if you defended 4♦, or +150 if you stopped in a club partscore). By the way, I do consider North's 1♠ opening bid to be "sound" but that was incidental, since partner wasn't playing sound opening bids.

IV. "Good Playing Hand" Preempts

If your partner is going to force to game after your opening one-level bid with any excuse, the sound opening bidder must limit his hand by passing, or, with a long suit, by opening a sound two- or three-bid. I no longer open at the three-level with horrible preempts (except white vs. red opposite a passed partner). I play "Trent Weak Two Bids" and my three-level opening bids show good playing hands with less defense than two-bids (the two-bids show good playing hands with at least 1-1/4 defensive tricks). I have already written extensively about Trent Weak Two-Bids, so I'll demonstrate the effectiveness of this bidding style by using a three-level opening-bid example.

Playing matchpoints, you are white vs. red and your partner opens 3♦ in first seat. Second hand bids 3♥, and you hold:

♠ A K J 7 2 ♥ 5 4 ♦ A 4 ♣ K J 8 7

What are your thoughts about this hand? A 3♠ bid, by the way, would be forcing.

If you've been following my train of thought here, you have no problem taking out the "double" card. Your partner has shown a decent hand; from where will they be taking tricks? Admittedly the double is not without risk, but my point is that you should take advantage of the "good playing hand" style! The whole hand was:

♠ 8 4 ♥ J 9 2 ♦ K Q J 10 9 7 ♣ 6 5	♠ Q 3 ♥ K Q 8 7 6 3 ♦ 8 6 3 ♣ A 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td></tr> </table>	W	N	E				S			♠ A K J 7 2 ♥ 5 4 ♦ A 4 ♣ K J 8 7
W	N	E										
S												
♠ 10 9 6 5 ♥ A 10 ♦ 5 2 ♣ Q 10 9 3 2												

Of course, this one is much more difficult at imps. I do admit that "double" in this case is, to put it mildly, an imaginative call, but your partner put pressure on them with the three-level rather than two-level opening bid, and you should take advantage of it!

suspect, but equal-vul preempts are better, and red-vs-white preempts become "picture bids," showing seven-card suits and game-going hands. This is quite useful in that you shut them out of the bidding and give your partner a description of your hand at the same time, with just one bid.

For example, suppose you hold:

East dealer
East-West vul

♠ 5 3
♥ 10 7 5 3
♦ 9 7 4
♣ A K 9 2

West	North	East	South
—	—	pass	1 ♦
3 ♠	pass	?	

By the way, the idea of "good playing hand preempts" applies with overcalls as well as opening bids. Preempting with yarboroughs rarely works these days; nobody is afraid to bid over them any more, and you usually end up giving them a fielder's choice in the bidding or road map in the play. A more useful treatment is to use the preempts to show good playing hands in accordance with the vulnerability. So white vs. red preemptive overcalls are still a bit

Partner has shown a very strong playing hand with a seven-card spade suit, so naturally you raise to game, right? Then:

West	North	East	South
—	—	pass	1 ♦
3 ♠	pass	4 ♠	5 ♦
pass	pass	?	

No problem, I assume; you double for a huge result when the whole hand was:

East dealer	North		
E-W vul	♠ Q J 2		
	♥ K J 8 6 4		
	♦ 3 2		
	♣ 7 5 3		
West		East	
♠ A K 10 9 8 7 4		♠ 5 3	
♥ A Q 9		♥ 10 7 5 3	
♦ J		♦ 9 7 4	
♣ 6 4		♣ A K 9 2	
	South		
	♠ 6		
	♥ 2		
	♦ A K Q 10 8 6 5		
	♣ Q J 10 8		

West	North	East	South
—	—	pass	1 ♦
3 ♠	pass	4 ♠	5 ♦
pass	pass	double	(all pass)

You score up a nice +500 when 4♠ may go down (you can make 4♠ after two rounds of diamonds, double dummy). At the table, East passed at every opportunity and scored up +50 against 4♦ (to add insult to injury, East-West didn't get their club ruff, but even +100 would be a poor result).

V. Third/Fourth Seat Protection Bids

Finally, if it goes pass-pass to you, or pass-pass-pass to you, you should suspect that your sound-opening bid partner is the one holding the goods. Therefore, you must open light in third/fourth seat to protect the partscore (in fact, you might even have a game!). My rules are:

1. No semi-psyching with one-bids. You won't get away with it when partner passed a maximum hand and goes jumping around or doubling them. To open the bidding opposite a passed hand, you should hold at least an ace, a king, and a queen.

2. One-notrump rebids show 11-14. You should not leave partner to play a 4-2 fit because your rebid shows a full opening bid. With, for example, ♠ x x ♥ A J x x x ♦ A x x ♣ Q x x, open 1♥ and rebid 1NT over partner's 1♠ response.

3. Use 4-card majors for one-bid hands. With, for example, ♠ x x x ♥ A J x x ♦ A x x ♣ Q x x, open 1♥ and pass 1♠. If you open 1♣ with this hand, you won't know what to do after partner's 1♥ response (a raise shows a full opening bid). You might actually miss a game when partner has: ♠ x x ♥ K Q x x x ♦ K Q x x x ♣ x, whereas if you open 1♥, partner raises to game.

4. Play 5-card weak two-bids, to handle hands where you have no rebid over partner's response. For example, with ♠ A K x x x ♥ x ♦ Q 10 x x ♣ x x x, open 2♠ in third or fourth seat; if you open 1♠ and partner responds 2♥, you will have trouble limiting your hand (if you rebid 2♠, partner will think you have a full opening bid). After a weak two-bid, 2NT by the passed hand is not forcing and shows 11-12 HCP with honor-doubleton in your suit (in other words, looking for 3NT), a new suit is non-forcing, and 3♦ (artificial) shows the game try in your suit (because partner would have already opened 2♦ or 3♦ with a long diamond suit, so you don't need it as a natural bid).

Notice that there is no casino point counting here; it's just too dangerous to pass out a hand opposite a sound-opening bidder!



The World Mixed Pairs by Matthew Granovetter

Part I - Learning the System

My preparation for the World Mixed Pairs Championships in Verona, Italy, was to practice with my wife on BBO, to get her in shape for her date with Bob Hamman. It turned out, however, that she was coaching me. And a good coach she was, as you will see. My partner, Karen McCallum, had no time to practice but did send me an old convention card we played several years ago and 15 pages of notes, outlining her aggressive Standard American system that she plays with her other partners. Trying to act like the senior partner, I suggested to her a compromise between her system and my sound openings system. "Let's play Blackwood and Stayman," I suggested. "That's fine with me," she answered, "if you don't care if I don't know what's going on." With that, I submitted to her system.

On the airplane I read the 15 pages. Basically, the system was this: Five-card majors, light openings, 14+-17 notrumps, and McCallum Weak Two-Bids. The last item is the secret weapon that helped us win the event. The opening two-bid in diamonds, hearts or spades, not vulnerable, shows a five-card suit and 4-to-10 points. If you have 11 points, you open one of a suit. If you have 0-3 points, well . . . you are allowed to open two as well!

"What do we do with a six-card suit?" I asked Karen as we sat down for the first round.

"We open three, one or two," she said, "depending on the shape, the vulnerability and your mood. . . ."

One of the basics of the McCallum Two-

Bids is that with a singleton in the suit opened, responder must remove to another suit — from the fat into the fire — before the doubling starts or, just as bad, before they pass it out. This avoids a 5-1 fit and if you pray hard, you may locate a better fit. I had a book of King David's Psalms with me at the table, a necessary ingredient when playing this method, I believe.

How do you win a Mixed Pairs? You play well and you play methods that produce occasional tops and you somehow enlist your opponents to work for you. There were three qualifying sessions and three final sessions. I'll show you the most interesting hands, but keep in mind something that I told the Italian journalist who was kibitzing the final session: This is not bridge — this is matchpoints!

Early in the set I faced this problem. I was West and held, vul vs. not:

♠ 8 ♥ A K 10 9 3 ♦ Q 10 9 ♣ K Q 8 3

South	West	North	East
pass	1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♠
4 ♠	?		

Notice we are at unfavorable vulnerability and they quickly bid to 4♠. My partner's cuebid has shown a limit raise or better in hearts. I was not sure if my pass would be forcing, inviting a bid from her. Perhaps, since we open light, my pass is not forcing. So I pictured a limit raise, say the ♦A-J and the ♣A, and figured we had a reasonable chance of making 11 tricks. I bid 5♥ planning to discuss the situation later with her. Everyone passed and the full hand was:

South dealer	North	
E-W vul	♠ A Q 10 6 5	
	♥ 7 6 2	
	♦ A 3 2	
	♣ 6 2	
West (MG)		East (KM)
♠ 8		♠ 4 3
♥ A K 10 9 3		♥ Q 8 5
♦ Q 10 9		♦ K J 8
♣ K Q 8 3		♣ A J 10 5 4
	South	
	♠ K J 9 7 2	
	♥ J 4	
	♦ 7 6 5 4	
	♣ 9 7	

South	West	North	East
pass	1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♠
4 ♠	5 ♥	(all pass)	

I scored 650 for average plus.

Since Pamela was playing with Bob Hamman, I had the opportunity to compare scores with her, and it turned out that their system of four-card major openings did not fare as well. After 1♥-1♠, East bid 2♣ and then South jumped to 4♠. West bid 5♣ and East could not be sure whether partner held five hearts, so they rested in the inferior matchpoint spot, for +600.

I asked Karen at the end of the hand if my pass of 4♠ would have been forcing, and she said yes, that any time we make a game try and they outbid us, a pass is forcing. So we now had that agreement under our belts.

A few boards later I had my first taste of one of her two-bids, though it was a vulnerable one. I picked up:

♠ Q J 10 9 7 ♥ A K ♦ A K J 5 ♣ A J

I was in third seat, all vul, and saw my partner open 2♦. We were playing with bidding screens and you can imagine my surprise when the tray appeared on my side of the screen with the 2♦ card. That was interesting!

We were playing six-card suit weak two-bids vulnerable, albeit not the sound playing hand (Trent) style. Still, I checked the backs of the cards to make sure. I had no idea if we had methods over vulnerable two-bids that would allow us to locate a spade control (though Blackwood would locate the ♠A), so I simply leapt to 6♦. I knew this would scare her on the other side of the bidding screen, since she was obviously looking at a poor trump holding. She seemed calm after the ♠A hit the table on opening lead and right she was:

East dealer	North	
All vul	♠ K 6 5 4 2	
	♥ 9 8 7 6 4	
	♦ 7	
	♣ 9 2	
West (MG)		East (KM)
♠ Q J 10 9 7		♠ —
♥ A K		♥ Q J 5 3
♦ A K J 5		♦ Q 10 8 4 3 2
♣ A J		♣ Q 10 7
	South	
	♠ A 8 3	
	♥ 10 2	
	♦ 9 6	
	♣ K 8 6 5 4 3	

She ruffed the ♠A and soon claimed 13 tricks. Seven was cold, but 6♦ was still a good score. Most pairs began with two passes to West, who opened 2♣. It then boiled down to West's rebid. Those Wests that rebid 2NT failed to reach slam when East bid Stayman followed by 3NT. Those Wests, like Hamman, who rebid 2♠, saw partner bid 3♦ next and reached slam.

My partner said afterwards that to reach seven, we would have to be able to diagnose the ♥J, since without it, seven would not be a good contract. I did not ask my partner if we could have diagnosed the ♥J in our system, since I was confident that we could not. If any readers have any ideas, please email me.

The first authentic McCallum weak two emerged on board 11. But she was heavy for her bid and that was not good!

South dealer	North		
None vul	♠ K J 9 7		
	♥ 3		
	♦ A 10 7 4		
	♣ 10 9 4 3		
West (MG)		East (KM)	
♠ 10 8 3 2		♠ 6	
♥ A 8 4 2		♥ K Q 10 7 5	
♦ Q 6		♦ K 9 8	
♣ A J 6		♣ K 8 7 5	
	South		
	♠ A Q 5 4		
	♥ J 9 6		
	♦ J 5 3 2		
	♣ Q 2		

South	West	North	East
pass	pass	pass	2 ♥
pass	3 ♥	(all pass)	

You see, she had 11 HCP for her fourth-seat opener and the system states 4-10. I was instructed afterwards that the invitational response by a passed hand was 2NT, whereupon she could show a singleton if she held a maximum. This would have worked perfectly, since she would have had to go past 3♥ to show the singleton and we would have been in game without my having to evaluate the nice fit. Later I was told that the way to show singletons over 2NT is to condense the first step. It works like this:

Opener	Responder
2 ♥	2 NT
3 ♣ =	no singleton or club singleton
3 ♦ =	diamond singleton
3 ♥ =	spade singleton

Over 3♣, responder may ask with 3♦, and opener bids 3♥ with no singleton, 3♠ with a singleton club.

I still say it was a bit lucky to make 4♥. South led a diamond and North put up the ace. If North puts in the 10, I think 4♥ can be defeated. Of course, I agree with the 2♥ opening in fourth chair, holding the singleton spade. In fact, the system is designed for first, second and third seat, not fourth seat, openings. I was learning the system and I vowed to do better!

On board 13, I was looking at:
♠ J 8 7 6 4 2 ♥ 7 6 5 2 ♦ J 9 ♣ 2

All vul, my LHO, Bobby Wolff, opened 2NT. My partner passed and Judy (the widow of Norman Kay), his wife, jumped to 4♦, transfer to hearts. It went 4♥ on my left and two passes back to me. Would you consider bidding 4♠? What if you were not vulnerable? What about those four small hearts facing partner's singleton?

Yes, I chickened out and passed. But I think I would have bid not vulnerable. We were laydown for game:

Bobby Wolff



North dealer	North (Wolff)		
All vul	♠ A 5 3		
	♥ A Q		
	♦ 10 3 2		
	♣ A K Q 5 4		
West (MG)		East (KM)	
♠ J 8 7 6 4 2		♠ K Q 9	
♥ 7 6 5 2		♥ 9	
♦ J 9		♦ A K Q 8 7 5	
♣ 2		♣ J 8 3	
	South		
	♠ 10		
	♥ K J 10 8 4 3		
	♦ 6 4		
	♣ 10 9 7 6		

Wolff made 11 tricks in hearts, but what a nice contract 4♠ would have been (4♠

doubled!). Later we reviewed our system over their 2NT openings. Yes, really. My partner likes to play double of 2NT as a one-suited hand and an overcall showing a two-suiter with that suit and a higher. Perhaps the system would not have helped here, but it is interesting.

By the way, this was Pamela's favorite hand of the event. She was East and, without any unusual methods, she simply overcalled 3♦ when North opened 2NT. South doubled to say "she took away my bid (transfer to hearts)" but North converted the double to penalty! South led her singleton spade to North's ace, Pamela dropping the queen. Playing declarer for K-Q doubleton, North switched to a trump. The end.

On the next board against the Wolff's, the McCallum two-bid struck.

East dealer	North		
None vul	♠ A 10 8 6		
	♥ A K Q		
	♦ Q 8 2		
	♣ A 9 7		
West (MG)		East (KM)	
♠ K Q 9 4 3		♠ 7	
♥ —		♥ J 8 7 6 4	
♦ A 7 6 3		♦ J 10 5 4	
♣ Q J 8 3		♣ K 6 4	
	South		
	♠ J 5 2		
	♥ 10 9 5 3 2		
	♦ K 9		
	♣ 10 5 2		

Maybe I was meant to double on the way out, but I was too excited. (Next time I will double!) Unfortunately, Karen led a spade instead of the ♦J and I played low so as not to help him establish more spade tricks. Wolff emerged with seven tricks, down two, and a 72% score for us.

At my wife's table, they played 2NT and she led the ♦J, defeating that contract two tricks as well. Hamman pointed out that it was a good thing she was sitting East, and not him, since he would have led a low diamond. Pamela agreed it was a good thing.

The McCallum two-bid struck again on board 18, but I wasn't sure at first if it struck them or us. . . .

West	North	East	South
—	—	2 ♥	pass
2 ♠*	3 NT	(all pass)	

*not forcing, showing 0-18 HCP and possibly short hearts, usually five spades but could be four with a singleton heart (yes, this is the full explanation)

South dealer	North (MG)		
E-W vul	♠ A 4		
	♥ A K 7		
	♦ J 10 9 4 3		
	♣ K 5 3		
West		East	
♠ 7 6		♠ K 9 8 2	
♥ Q 10		♥ 8 6 5 4	
♦ A 7 5		♦ 6	
♣ Q J 8 6 4 2		♣ A 10 9 7	
	South (KM)		
	♠ Q J 10 5 3		
	♥ J 9 3 2		
	♦ K Q 8 2		
	♣ —		

South	West	North	East
2 ♠	(all pass)		

Opening lead: ♥Q

The best spot is 5♦. As North, I passed 2♠, since I assumed an average of about 7 points for the 2♠ bid. Karen told me later I should have bid 2NT, but I don't see why

without an 8-card spade fit to protect us. She received a friendly ♥Q lead and scored 200, making three overtricks after driving out the ♠K and then the ♦A when East continued hearts. We scored 89%, since many pairs played in 3NT down two after a club lead from East, or 4♠, down two, by South with a club lead from West. The auction at many tables was:

South	West	North	East
pass	pass	1 NT	pass
2 ♣	double	2 ♦	pass
3 ♠	pass	3 NT	(all pass)

Some bid 3♥ with the South hand, Smolen, and still landed in 3NT. Bob Hamman had a good suggestion: When Stayman is doubled, play 2♦ as natural. Now diamonds come into the picture and the 5♦ game can be reached easily. This sounds a lot better than using 2♦ to show or deny a club stopper, don't you think? The same idea can be applied after a 2NT opening and the double of Stayman at the three level.

You don't win a pair event without a few friendly opening leads but this one was the friendliest of my bridge career. Consider your choice of leads with this West hand:

♠ J 9 7 6 3 ♥ 8 7 ♦ K J 7 5 ♣ K 8

South	West	North	East
3 ♥	pass	4 ♥	(all pass)

We were playing against a strong Turkish player, who saw clearly that a diamond was the best percentage lead, to set up tricks. But he also considered the possibility that declarer would hold a singleton diamond

and his partner the ace. So he decided to start with the ♦K in order to hold the lead if his partner held the ace, and give himself a chance to shift to clubs, in case the defenders could take ♣K, ♣A and a club ruff. It was a deep and careful analysis. Have you been convinced, too?

Well, it wasn't quite the winning lead:

South dealer North
 None vul ♠ A K 2
 ♥ A Q 9
 ♦ Q 10 9 6 3
 ♣ A 10

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

South
 ♠ 4
 ♥ K J 10 6 3 2
 ♦ 8 4 2
 ♣ 7 5 3

South	West	North	East
3 ♥	pass	4 ♥	(all pass)

Opening lead: ♦K

I had no difficulty scoring 12 tricks after that, for a 99% score.

We finished session one with a 62.62% score and eleventh position.

Session Two

The first board of the second qualifier showed the system in action in another way. Suppose you are East with these cards, no one vul:

♠ J 10 8 2 ♥ K 7 ♦ K 8 7 3 ♣ K 8 3

West	North	East	South
—	pass	pass	3 ♣
3 ♦	4 ♣	?	

What is your call?

You might bid 4♦ or perhaps 5♦. You might bring spades into the picture by making a responsive double. You hope partner will bid a four-card major, and if he bids 4♥, you bid 5♦. My partner did none of these things. She simply bid 4♠!

♠ J 10 8 2 ♥ K 7 ♦ K 8 7 3 ♣ K 8 3

West	North	East	South
—	pass	pass	3 ♣
3 ♦	4 ♣	4 ♠!	

In "the system," her pass on the first round had denied 4-10 points and a five-card spade suit (and certainly a six-card spade suit), so she was confident that her 4♠ bid on the second round promised only four of them. On an unlucky day, she might have caught me with two or three spades, and I might have passed, since I was not yet fully aware of all the system nuances. But today she found me with:

♠ K 9 6 5 ♥ A 8 ♦ A J 10 6 5 4 ♣ 7

So I passed with a smile (behind the screen) and she scored up 420 and 77%.

On the next round I had this opening-lead problem:

♠ A ♥ A J 8 5 2 ♦ Q J 5 2 ♣ 10 7 3

South	West	North	East
1 ♥	pass	1 ♠	pass
1 NT	pass	3 NT	(all pass)

What would you lead as West?

A diamond seemed normal, but the coach (Pamela) has me leading the queen from these holdings, even though I don't have a spot card under the jack. The coach was right. . . .



The coach, having a good time.

South dealer	North		
E-W vul	♠ K 10 8 7 4		
	♥ 4 3		
	♦ A 3		
	♣ A Q J 2		
West		East	
♠ A		♠ Q 9 6 5 2	
♥ A J 8 5 2		♥ 10	
♦ Q J 5 2		♦ 9 8 7 6	
♣ 10 7 3		♣ 8 6 4	
	South		
	♠ J 3		
	♥ K Q 9 7 6		
	♦ K 10 4		
	♣ K 9 5		

South	West	North	East
1 ♥	pass	1 ♠	pass
1 NT	pass	3 NT	(all pass)

Opening lead: ♦Q

A low diamond would not have been a success. On the ♦Q, declarer won in dummy (my partner playing low to discourage, denying the 10) and led a heart to the king. In cases like this, I find it best to duck the first round, which is what I did. Next came the ♠J. After winning the ace, I shifted safely to a club.

Declarer tried another heart and saw East show out. I won the 6 with the 8 and played another club. He won in hand to try a spade next, but saw me show out. Declarer now took two more club tricks and the ♦K for down one.



Gabriel Chagas

Two rounds later we faced an old friend, Gabriel Chagas, of Brazil. His partner had me puzzled on a hand. Watch over my shoulder and see what I mean.

All vul I pick up:
 ♠ K Q 10 ♥ K J 8 7 4 2 ♦ — ♣ J 9 6 3

One club on my right, and I overcall 1♥. My usual style would be to make a weak jump overcall with this hand to create more headaches for the opponents, but my partner would expect a lot less, so I bid one, not two. Chagas raises to 2♣ on my left and my partner cuebids 3♣. Next hand passes. I now know partner is short in clubs from the club bids on my right and left and I have an easy game acceptance. I bid 4♥ and it goes all pass. Chagas leads the ♣8 and this is what I see:

East dealer North
 All vul ♠ 9 8 6 3
 ♥ Q 6 3
 ♦ K Q 9 2
 ♣ A 10

South
 ♠ K Q 10
 ♥ K J 8 7 4 2
 ♦ —
 ♣ J 9 6 3

West	North	East	South
—	—	1 ♣	1 ♥
2 ♣	3 ♣	pass	4 ♥
(all pass)			

Opening lead: ♣8

With most of my partner's strength in diamonds, this won't be as easy as I thought. I'm off three obvious tricks, the ♠A, ♥A and a club trick. Plus I must get rid of my club losers and possibly prevent the opponents from obtaining a spade ruff. It looks like Chagas has raised with four clubs to the 8 and that his partner started with K-Q-x, so I can ruff out the suit with one ruff. I play the ♣10 from dummy and East wins the queen. After a little thought, East shifts to the ♦5. This is not good. I was hoping she held the ♦A and I could ruff out that card for a spade pitch. I ruff the diamond and lead a club to the ace followed by a spade to the 2, king and ace. Chagas quickly returns a club. I ruff in dummy and the king drops, so my jack is now high.

This is the position:

North
 ♠ 9 8 6
 ♥ Q 6
 ♦ K Q 9
 ♣ —

South
 ♠ Q 10
 ♥ K J 8 7 4
 ♦ —
 ♣ J

I now need to lose only the ♥A. Taking stock, Chagas has shown up with the ♠A and presumably the ♦A, which leaves East with the ♣K-Q, ♥A, and two jacks. She has opened some balanced 11 count with 1♣ on a three-card suit. So she cannot hold four diamonds. This leaves Chagas with an original holding of six diamonds and four clubs, and either three spades and a heart void or two spades and a singleton heart. I need the latter, because I can't pick up four trump to the A-10-9 on my right. I guess I must take

the spade finesse, and I do it. The 10 holds. Now I'm OK. But when I lead a trump, I'm surprised when Chagas flies with the ace! How many aces does he hold?! He returns a club. I ruff with dummy's queen, ruff a diamond and draw trump. The full hand is:

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

That shift to the ♦5 really had me crazy for a while. Luckily my misplacing the aces did not affect the result. I see what she was doing now. She was playing her partner for 10-x-x of diamonds, hoping to score two diamond tricks later.

On the second board against Chagas I make a really dumb play. I open 1NT, 14+17, and my partner makes a great pass with 8 points.* Chagas leads a low club:

North
 ♠ J 8 6 5
 ♥ A 10 8 4
 ♦ J 8
 ♣ Q 9 7

South
 ♠ K 7 4
 ♥ J 7 6 2
 ♦ A 10
 ♣ A K 8 2

I play the ♣7 from dummy and it holds as East follows low. How would you continue?

*Pamela also passed playing with Hamman — definitely a good matchpoint strategy.

I think the right technical and psychological play is to overtake with the 8 and lead a heart to the 10. If this loses and East finds a diamond shift, I hope that West started with a doubleton honor in hearts. But East might return a club, not knowing how weak her partner's clubs are. This would give me time to set up an extra trick in hearts if there are two heart losers.

Stupidly, I revealed the hand by cashing all the clubs, East discarding a spade and a diamond. Then I (even more stupidly) led a heart to the 8, playing West for honor-9-third. East won the queen and shifted to a diamond. I played the 10 and when Chagas won the queen, I dropped the jack from dummy, trying to look like a guy with A-10-9 of diamonds. No dice. Chagas returned the king of diamonds and now when I led a second round of hearts and the 9 came up, I inserted the 10 from dummy. East won the king and I never saw my ♥A. This was the full deal:

South dealer	North		East
None vul	♠ J 8 6 5		♠ 3 2
	♥ A 10 8 4		♥ K Q 3
	♦ J 8		♦ 9 6 5 4 3 2
	♣ Q 9 7		♣ 5 4
West		South	
♠ A Q 10 9		♠ K 7 4	
♥ 9 5		♥ J 7 6 2	
♦ K Q 7		♦ A 10	
♣ J 10 6 3		♣ A K 8 2	

machine situated in the playing area, to have a free cup of Lavazza coffee and wake up. I'd like to mention here that all the men sat North or West while the women all sat East or South. The screens were set up in such a way that a man and woman were on each side of the screens. This led to a rather social climate, and sometimes put the men off guard (a good excuse for mistakes by the men, anyway). Of course, this did not bother *me* in the least. (Are you reading this, Pamela?)

We now had a series of lucky results (lucky because the opponents misbid and misplayed), but then ran into Sabine Auken, partnering George Jacobs.

So I took five tricks for down two! We scored 21%. I went quickly to the espresso

I held this hand, at unfavorable, fourth chair:

♠ A K 9 ♥ 8 3 ♦ K J 10 7 5 ♣ A Q 8

Sabine opened 1♥ in third seat. I doubled and George jumped to 2NT, a limit raise. Sabine rebid 3♥ and I had nowhere to go, so that ended the auction. What would you lead?

I stuck with the robot lead of the ♠A and after that we were not going to defeat this:

North dealer	North		
E-W vul	♠ 8 6 5		
	♥ K J 10 4		
	♦ 9 4		
	♣ K J 5 2		
West		East	
♠ A K 9		♠ J 4 3	
♥ 8 3		♥ A 7 2	
♦ K J 10 7 5		♦ 8 6 2	
♣ A Q 8		♣ 10 9 6 3	
	South		
	♠ Q 10 7 2		
	♥ Q 9 6 5		
	♦ A Q 3		
	♣ 7 4		

West	North	East	South
—	pass	pass	1 ♥
double	2 NT	pass	3 ♥
(all pass)			

Opening lead: ♠A

If I shift to a trump, I think my partner would return a spade, wouldn't you? So I shifted to a diamond at trick two. That wasn't such a great play. Declarer lost two spades, one heart and one club trick for +140 and an 87% result for them. (Another interesting sidelight was that the event was scored automatically on Bridgmate ma-

chines at the table. The North player keyed in the result and the East player hit OK. Then the current matchpoint percentage appeared on the screen. These machines were great and wireless! The only problem with them was that if you scored poorly, you saw your poor matchpoint result instantly and it could depress you for the next board!)

Speaking of which, on the next board, I really hit bottom. . . . I held the West cards:

East dealer	North
All vul	♠ J 7 2
	♥ 10 9 5
	♦ J 9 6
	♣ A Q 7 6

West (MG)
♠ Q 10
♥ 7 4 3
♦ A 10 8 4
♣ J 8 4 2



West	North	East	South
—	—	pass	2 ♣
pass	2 ♦	pass	2 NT
pass	3 NT	(all pass)	

I led the ♦4. Declarer played the jack from dummy, my partner the 3 and South the 2. Next came the ♠J to the 3, 6 and my queen. What would you play next?

This was the whole hand:



My partner, hard at work.

East dealer North
 All vul ♠ J 7 2
 ♥ 10 9 5
 ♦ J 9 6
 ♣ A Q 7 6

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

South
 ♠ A K 9 8 6
 ♥ A K
 ♦ K Q 2
 ♣ K 10 5

On the next board I violated system by not opening 2♥ in second seat, no one vul, with:
 ♠ J 7 5 ♥ Q 8 6 3 2 ♦ K 9 3 ♣ 5 3

Our opponents had a confusing Italian sequence to 5♣, making six, cold for 11 tricks in notrump as well, and the Italian lingo began flying back and forth under the screen. It was just as well I had not opened, since, though we held a combined nine-card heart fit, we had only five tricks and even 3♥ doubled would be a near bottom. We had instead a 96% score by doing nothing and not getting in their way.

I cleverly returned the ♦8 to preserve a diamond in partner's hand. Sabine won, cashed all the majors, and squeezed me in the minors to make the rest. I assume you cashed the ♦A to hold the contract to five, right?

On the second board of the round, we defeated an "impossible to beat" game for a 97% score. Keep your eye on the ♠7 in my hand:

West dealer North
 N-S vul ♠ 10 6
 ♥ J 9
 ♦ A 10 8 7
 ♣ A K J 8 3

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

South
 ♠ A K J 9 5 4
 ♥ 8 5 2
 ♦ 6 2
 ♣ 7 4

This was not my best lead — a diamond is better. Then if declarer plays hearts we can play trumps and defeat her.

After the heart lead, I had to shift to a diamond to knock out the ♦A before the clubs set up, to hold her to four, but I was afraid of the club suit, so I continued hearts. Now my partner had to shift to diamonds but she led back the ♠8 instead. Declarer can now draw trump and make an overtrick. But destiny moved in.

West	North	East	Sam
pass	1 ♣	1 ♥	1 ♠
2 ♥	3 ♣	pass	3 ♠
pass	4 ♠	(all pass)	

Declarer won the ♠A, ruffed a heart, and cashed two top clubs. Next came the ♣J. When East played the queen, declarer was sure I was overruffing, so she ruffed with the ♠9. I followed.

Opening lead: ♥A

Next declarer tried a diamond to the ace and a high club to throw her diamond. (I know, I know, she forgot to pull trump. But

she thought I held the trumps behind her from my partner's ♠8 shift.)

West dealer	North		East
N-S vul	♠ 10 6		♠ Q 8
	♥ J 9		♥ K Q 10 7 6
	♦ A 10 8 7		♦ K 9 3
	♣ A K J 8 3		♣ Q 10 5
West		South	
♠ 7 3 2		♠ A K J 9 5 4	
♥ A 4 3		♥ 8 5 2	
♦ Q J 5 4		♦ 6 2	
♣ 9 6 2		♣ 7 4	

On the fourth round of clubs, my partner produced the ♠Q. Declarer overruffed with the king and cashed the jack. If you have been following this, you will note that my ♠7 is high. We won that plus a diamond trick to set the contract. After this hand, we knew destiny was on our side. Wouldn't you agree?

We scored only 55% at the end of the day, and we found ourselves in 23rd place.

Session Three

The third qualifying session began at 10:30 in the morning. I had lost my convention card by now, but my partner still had hers. So we were 50% on that issue. Unfortunately, having lost the card, I did not get a chance to review it at breakfast. I have a good memory, however, and trusted my recollection of the 15-page notes I had read on the airplane two days earlier. The session started with a 2NT opening bid by Karen, which I alerted as possibly the minors and possibly natural, since though it was in those notes as the minors, we had not dis-

cussed the bid, so I wasn't sure if she knew that I knew it was what we were playing. This made for an interesting letter by me to my screenmate and she smiled when I wrote her the explanation: "Natural or minors, not sure since we are playing for the first time in several years and we have not discussed it, though I did see it in a set of old notes I read on my plane ride to Verona." Luckily I had the perfect two-way response to a bid that could be either 20-22 balanced or less than 12 with the minors:

♠ Q 8 7 3 ♥ A K 10 6 ♦ 7 2 ♣ J 8 4.

As you can see, if it was strong, my 3♣ bid would be Stayman, and if it was the minors, I would play the longer minor. What good luck!

When it went all pass, we players on my side of the screen knew it was the minors.

Dummy
 ♠ A 5 4
 ♥ —
 ♦ A J 10 9 8
 ♣ Q 10 7 6 5

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

My LHO led a low heart to East's queen. I discarded two spades from dummy and led a diamond to the ace and a diamond to RHO's king. He led a spade to the ace in dummy and I ruffed a diamond low, the queen falling on my left. Now I led the ♣8 to the 10, which held. Another club saw East show out. But LHO inexplicably won the ♣K and cashed the ace from A-9 doubleton, giving me an overtrick and a 75% score. She must have been confused by

looking at the hand backwards, with the length in dummy or she was simply in a spell of some sort, perhaps wondering how two players could not know what system they were playing and yet survive the bidding. (She did not know about our date with destiny.)

On the next round, my partner made a good bid. She held:

♠ Q 8 4 ♥ A 10 5 ♦ Q 8 7 ♣ A J 9 3.

Vul vs. not, your partner opens 1♠ in first chair and RHO passes. What is your plan with this hand?

Before I tell you what happened in the bidding, try it as a play problem. . . .

South dealer North
N-S vul ♠ Q 8 4
♥ A 10 5
♦ Q 8 7
♣ A J 9 3

South (you)
♠ A J 10 6 2
♥ K 8 4 3
♦ 10 2
♣ K Q

You reach 4♠ with no bidding by the opposition. West leads a diamond to East's jack. East continues with a low diamond to his partner's king and then West plays a diamond to East's ace. You ruff. How do you continue?

South dealer	North		East
N-S vul	♠ Q 8 4		♠ K 7 5
	♥ A 10 5		♥ Q J 9 6
	♦ Q 8 7		♦ A J 6 4
	♣ A J 9 3		♣ 10 8
West		South	
♠ 9 3		♠ A J 10 6 2	
♥ 7 2		♥ K 8 4 3	
♦ K 9 5 3		♦ 10 2	
♣ 7 6 5 4 2		♣ K Q	

My partner's lead-inhibiting diamond bid got West off to a trump lead. I was able to draw trump and discard two diamonds on the clubs, losing two heart tricks for +650.

At most tables (including my wife's) after a 2♣ response, West led a diamond. After three rounds of diamonds, most declarers (including Hamman) ruffed and led trumps from their hand, not willing to risk their contract by leading a heart to dummy. That ♥A appears to be needed later as an entry for two discards on the clubs. Declarer does not know that the ♣10 is falling, nor that the spade finesse is working. To play any other way would be to hope the ♠K is onside and that the ♣10 falls doubleton, hardly likely.

South	West	North	East
1 ♠	pass	2 ♦	pass
2 ♥	pass	3 ♠	pass
4 ♠	(all pass)		

Opening lead: ♠9

My partner played this next one nicely:

South dealer	North		
All vul	♠ K 10 9 4		
	♥ K 7		
	♦ J 8 5		
	♣ A Q 6 3		
West		East	
♠ Q 6 3 2		♠ J	
♥ J 5 4 3 2		♥ Q 9 8	
♦ A Q 4		♦ K 10 9 7 6 3	
♣ 8		♣ 10 5 4	
	South (KM)		
	♠ A 8 7 5		
	♥ A 10 6		
	♦ 2		
	♣ K J 9 7 2		

South	West	North	East
1 ♣	1 ♥	double	2 ♥
2 ♠	pass	4 ♠	(all pass)

Opening lead: ♣8

She won in hand, cashed the ♠A, saw the jack fall, and then led the ♦2 to set up a dummy reversal. West went up with

the queen and East did not overtake. West switched to hearts. Declarer won the king, ruffed a diamond, and led a spade to the 9, playing restricted choice. When East showed out, she led a heart to hand and took another spade finesse, drew trumps and claimed the rest in clubs. Making 12 tricks was worth an 82% score.

On the next hand I opened 2♥ in second seat, no one vul, with:

♠ K 10 ♥ 10 9 7 5 3 ♦ A 9 7 5 ♣ 10 7
(I was a maven by now and had no fear.)

When partner responded 3♦, which is natural and invitational, I raised to 4♦, but we rested there. West led a trump. Partner held:

♠ A 9 3 ♥ 8 ♦ K Q J 10 2 ♣ K 9 8 2

Remember, she had to remove 2♥ with her singleton. Even though the ♣A was onside, she could make only 10 tricks, for +130, a 43% board.

Then came an interesting slam, though we played game and overtricks were key:

North dealer	North		
E-W vul	♠ K J 6 4		
	♥ K 9 6 5		
	♦ —		
	♣ A 8 5 3 2		
	♥ 2		
	South		
	♠ A 3 2		
	♥ A Q J 7		
	♦ A Q 8 4		
	♣ 10 6		

South	West	North	East
1 NT	pass	2 ♣	pass
2 ♥	pass	4 ♦	pass
4 NT	pass	5 NT	pass
6 ♥	(all pass)		

Suppose the bidding went as shown. How would you play it after the ♥2 trump lead to the 5, 8 and jack?

I think you must set up dummy, so duck a club (to East if you can) at trick two, win the trump return in dummy, play ♣A and ruff a club, ruff a diamond and ruff another club if necessary. Then take the spade finesse and draw the last trump. You score three spade tricks, six heart tricks, one diamond and two clubs. This was the whole hand:

North dealer North
 E-W vul ♠ K J 6 4
 ♥ K 9 6 5
 ♦ —
 ♣ A 8 5 3 2

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

South
 ♠ A 3 2
 ♥ A Q J 7
 ♦ A Q 8 4
 ♣ 10 6

At my table, my partner bid only 4♥ over 2♥, so we played game and I received a friendly diamond lead. I then ruffed two diamonds in dummy and ended with 12 tricks that way for above average.

The next board was a beautiful “squeeze without the count.”

East dealer North
 All vul ♠ K Q 8 6
 ♥ Q 10 7 6 3
 ♦ Q 4
 ♣ A K

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

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

You must cash your tricks — that’s all — but in the right order. Win in dummy, cash the other club, lead a heart to hand and cash a second heart to make sure they break. Then cash the ♣Q, discarding a diamond from dummy. Now run the last three hearts, coming down to five cards:

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	pass	1 ♦
pass	1 ♥	pass	1 NT
pass	3 NT	(all pass)	

Opening lead: ♣5

How do you play this one as South?

On the ♥7, East must let go of a diamond. So you lead a diamond and make 12 tricks. My partner did not do this, but we scored 63% for making 660, beating the pairs in 4♥ making five.

On board 12, I was able to bring home a game that eluded others. . . .

East dealer	North		
N-S vul	♠ Q 9 6 5		
	♥ 3		
	♦ 8 7 2		
	♣ Q J 9 8 2		
West		East	
♠ J 8 3		♠ A 7 4	
♥ 10 9 7		♥ 8 4 2	
♦ A 10 6 4		♦ Q 3	
♣ 5 4 3		♣ A K 10 7 6	
	South		
	♠ K 10 2		
	♥ A K Q J 6 5		
	♦ K J 9 5		
	♣ —		

West	North	East	South
—	—	1 ♣	double
pass	1 ♠	pass	3 ♥
pass	3 NT	pass	4 ♥
(all pass)			

Opening lead: ♣3

Maybe I should have allowed partner to declare 3NT, but with a void I decided to play it in hearts rather than notrump. On the club lead I played the jack from dummy, ruffing the king. Then I drew three rounds of trump and led the ♠K, playing West for jack-third or fourth, as there was nothing else to play him for. East did well to hold up until the third round, but then was a bit endplayed. I had pitched the ♦2 on one of my trump leads, and perhaps this induced East to shift to the ♦Q. West won my king with the ace and thought her partner held the jack, so she returned a low diamond. This gave me an overtrick. The 8 won in dummy and I pitched the ♦9 on dummy's high spade.

If East leads the ♣A after winning the ♠A on the third round of spades, I can ruff and lead the ♦K to make the contract, playing East for the doubleton queen or doubleton 10. Since East did not open 1NT, West is more or less marked with the ♦A, because East has already shown the ♠A and ♣A-K. So the ♦K play is the right play as well as the winning one. Anyway, we scored 93% for making five, while making four would have been worth 81%.

The winning team in the Rosenblum Cup was (L to R after the trophy): Kyle Larsen, Rose Meltzer, Geir Helgemo, Roger Bates, Tor Helness and Alan Sontag (missing from photo). We'll report on this event in the next issue.



On board 16, I did not follow system and neither did my partner. We scored poorly as a result.

West dealer	North (MG)		
E-W vul	♠ A 8		
	♥ A 8 5 4		
	♦ A 6		
	♣ K 6 5 4 2		
West		East	
♠ K Q 10		♠ 6 5 3 2	
♥ K 10		♥ 9 7	
♦ K Q 10 4 2		♦ J 8 7	
♣ K 10 8		♣ A J 9 3	
	South (KM)		
	♠ J 9 7 4		
	♥ Q J 6 3 2		
	♦ 9 5 3		
	♣ 7		

West	North	East	South
1 NT	(all pass)		

Our system over 1NT was this: Double to show the red suits or black suits, 2♣ to show clubs and hearts or diamonds and spades, 2♦ to show the majors, and 2NT to show the minors. This means I would have to bid 2♣ if I bid, to show clubs and

hearts or diamonds and spades. I didn't see how this would be a good thing unless my partner held hearts with me — otherwise we would get to 3♣ or somewhere else more terrible if she were 2-2 in hearts and clubs. They were vulnerable and I had a good lead (I thought), so I passed.

Meanwhile, in the South seat, my partner could have bid 2♦ in the balancing position to show the majors on her 4-point hand. She could assume that I held a good hand, since the opponents had stopped in 1NT (and we did not have a penalty double available). But she did something she rarely does — she passed and later said how she regretted it.

I led a club, but it was not the success I had hoped for. Declarer drove out the ♦A, and I shifted desperately to hearts, so declarer made nine tricks and we scored 23%. If either of us had bid, we would make a heart partscore, probably 170, for 82%.

The last round of this session was against our friends Bill and Rozanne Pollack. I held:

♠ Q 10 5 2 ♥ K Q J 6 4 2 ♦ 8 7 ♣ 6

I opened 3♥ in first chair, no one vul (my choice was one or three, since 2♥ would usually show only five hearts), and partner raised to 4♥. My RHO doubled this and when I passed, Rozanne, on my left, thought very briefly and passed as well.

She led the ♣Q and this is what I saw:



Rozanne and Billy Pollack

Dummy
 ♠ J 8
 ♥ A 7
 ♦ A K J 5 3
 ♣ 10 8 5 2

♣ Q

MG
 ♠ Q 10 5 2
 ♥ K Q J 6 4 2
 ♦ 8 7
 ♣ 6

The ♣Q held, and West shifted to a trump. This prevents me from ruffing a spade. I won in dummy and led the ♠8, hoping East would rise with the king, but

he played low. I played the 10, which won. I led another spade to the jack and king, and Bill (East) returned a trump. I won and drew the last trump from West as East threw a club. It was clear to me that East had started with four spades to the ace-king and two hearts. I led a diamond to the king and ruffed a club, West playing the 9. East still had the ♣A-K, so he started with ♠A-K-x-x and ♣A-K-x-x-x, two hearts and two diamonds. Where was the ♦Q? I continued with trumps, leading the jack and the last trump. West threw the ♣J and then a spade. East threw the ♣K and on the last trump the ♠9. This was the position when I led a diamond up:

Dummy
 ♠ —
 ♥ —
 ♦ A K J
 ♣

MG
 ♠ Q 5
 ♥ —
 ♦ 8
 ♣ —

West was down to three diamonds (from an original holding of four). East was down to one diamond (from an original holding of two) and the ♠A and ♣A. The odds favored the finesse by two to one, since West had started life with four diamonds and East two. But East had shown strength and made a takeout double of 4♥, with a doubleton diamond. Had he done that with two small diamonds?

On the other hand, West with four small diamonds can see that the queen might be dropping and might not find the shift to trumps at trick two. Looking at four dia-

monds to the queen, she might be more inclined to feel safe about the trump shift. I went with the odds in the end and finessed the jack. This was the whole hand:

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

Plus 590 was worth 92%.

We ended the session with 62.77%, which put us in fifth place overall, a 60.15% average. This earned a small but handy carry-over to the finals. See you in the next issue.

Bridge Yesterday

How I got fired

by Paul Zweifel

Once, long ago, I used to play bridge for pay, and I helped a lot of unworthy partners become Life Masters. But one day, one of these partners became so disgusted with my defense that he fired me forthwith, announcing that he was going to find a partner who "knew how to play bridge." Here was my hand:

♠ K Q J 10 9 7 6 ♥ Q 9 2 ♦ — ♣ K 3 2

Playing against an expert pair with both sides vulnerable, I opened three spades. It went pass, pass, five diamonds, raised to six. I led the king of spades to see in dummy:

North	♠ A 8 5 4
	♥ K 10 3
	♦ 10 6 5
	♣ 9 6 4

West	♠ K Q J 10 9 7 6
	♥ Q 9 2
	♦ —
	♣ K 3 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
3 ♠	pass	pass	5 ♦
pass	6 ♦	(all pass)	

Opening lead: ♠K

The spade was ducked, East and South both following. What do you play now?

Evidently declarer ducked the spade lead partially for fear that it would be ruffed, but also to rectify the count for a possible squeeze. What does declarer hold? Obvi-

ously, seven solid diamonds and, you may as well assume, the aces of hearts and clubs, or the hand is unmakeable. Also, the hand can't be made if declarer has two low clubs along with the ace. So assume his hand is:

South

♠ 3

♥ A x x

♦ A K Q J 9 8 2

♣ A 5

If you thoughtlessly play a second spade, declarer will ruff, cash the ♣A and then draw trumps, ending in dummy. He then discards his losing club on the ♠A, ruffs a club and arrives at the following end position:

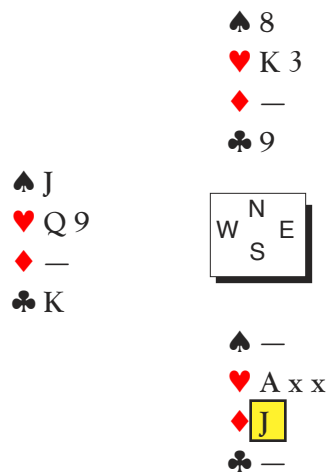
♠ 8
♥ K 10 3
♦ —
♣ 9

♠ J
♥ Q 9 2
♦ —
♣ K

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ —
♥ A x x
♦ QJ
♣ —

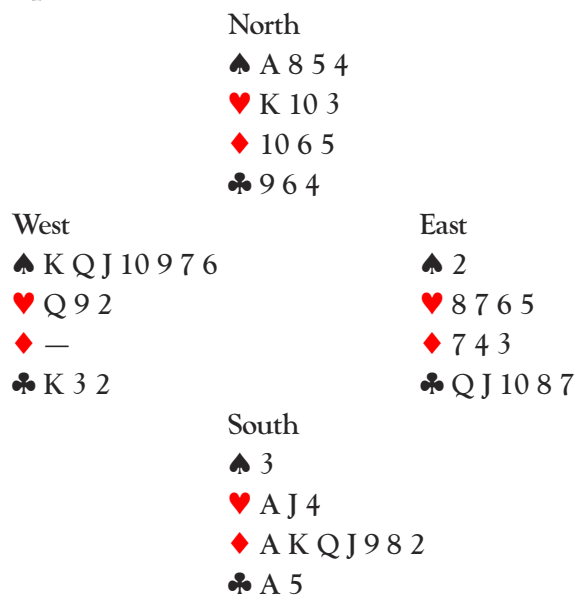
When declarer plays the ♦Q, you are forced to discard a heart; a spade discard obviously sets up dummy's ♠8 as the twelfth trick, while discarding the ♣K not so obviously leads to an easy double squeeze: You have to hold the spade and partner has to hold a high club, so neither of you can hold hearts.



On the last trump, the ♦J, you're forced to discard another heart, and now a heart to the king picks up your queen, and unless partner holds the ♥J and ♥9, you are dead!

So your correct play at trick two is obvious: Play a heart (the queen is best). This ruins the double squeeze, and unless declarer holds the ♥J, the slam will go down. (In other words, partner only needs the ♥J, not the J-9, so you've doubled your chances of defeating the slam.)

It turned out that declarer held the ♥A-J-x, so my play of the queen made it easy for her, but being an expert she would have made the hand anyway on the squeeze.



But my partner couldn't understand the squeeze. He steadfastly maintained that I had thrown the hand away with the heart shift, and fired me forthwith! I never played for pay again; if I was going to be inhibited from making the great play just to keep a customer, it wasn't worth it.

Some comments:

1. The reconstruction of declarer's hand was pretty easy. It doesn't really take an expert to do it, but it's something that the defender has to think to do. Having said that, perhaps that's one of the differences between an expert and a merely competent player: The expert stops to think.
2. The heart play at trick two would have actually lost the hand if declarer's heart holding had been precisely A-J stiff. But that's against the odds, by better than 15-to-1. So play the odds.
3. To break up a double squeeze, always attack the "B" suit, the suit with threats against both defenders. This removes a vital entry.
4. Don't play for pay, it ruins the fun! If you need the money, get a legitimate job. If you're intelligent enough to be a bridge expert, you're intelligent enough to be a CEO, or whatever.



The Wizards of Aus by Ron Klinger

The Unlucky Experts (and the Lucky Ones)

Imagine that a pair bids to game with no opposition bidding, the trumps break evenly but the contract goes eight down. How could that be?

Take a look at this hand from the Rosenblum Cup, in Verona, round 6.

Board 20	North		East
West dealer	♠ 6 5 4		♠ A 7
Both vul	♥ —		♥ K 7 6 3 2
	♦ K Q 10 6 5 3 2		♦ A 9 8 7 4
	♣ Q 10 8		♣ 9
West		South	
♠ Q 2		♠ K J 10 9 8 3	
♥ J 10 9 8 5		♥ A Q 4	
♦ J		♦ —	
♣ K J 6 3 2		♣ A 7 5 4	

At one table the bidding was uneventful:

West	North	East	South
pass	3 ♦	pass	3 ♠
pass	4 ♠	(all pass)	

Opening lead: ♣3

Declarer, Warren Lazer of Australia, played the ♣Q and continued with the ♦Q, ace, ruff. A heart was ruffed in dummy, followed by the ♦Q, discarding a club. West ruffed and a spade to the ace and

a spade back would now be best for the defense. Instead, West gave East a club ruff and East played another diamond.

Lazer ruffed with the ♠K, ruffed the ♥Q in dummy and led a spade. With the trumps now 1-1, he had his game for +620.

At the other table:

Matthew		Valerie	
Mullamphy		Cummings	
West	North	East	South
pass	3 ♦	pass	3 ♠
pass	4 ♥	(all pass)	

North found the expert bid of 4♥, showing spade support and heart shortage. The trouble is that an expert bid is no longer an expert bid if partner does not read it. Thus, North was left to play in the 3-0 fit.

Cummings (East) led the ♣9, ducked to the king. Mullamphy (West) shifted to the ♠2 to the ace and Cummings returned the ♠7. Declarer took the "marked" finesse and West's ♠Q scored. A club was ruffed by East, who shifted to a trump, ducked to West. After another club ruff, East played the ♦A. South ruffed with the ♥Q. The ♥A was South's only other trick for -800 and 16 imps away.

For the Mullamphy team that did not quite make up for the previous board where East-West had a lucky outcome:

Board 19	North	
South dealer	♠ 10	
E-W vul	♥ K 5 4 3	
	♦ 10 9 6 5	
	♣ 9 6 4 3	
West		East
♠ A 5		♠ Q J 9 7 3
♥ J 6		♥ A Q 10 9 7
♦ Q 7 2		♦ A
♣ K Q J 8 7 5		♣ A 2
	South	
	♠ K 8 6 4 2	
	♥ 8 2	
	♦ K J 8 4 3	
	♣ 10	

Results: World Championships

Open Pairs

Zhong Fu and Jie Zhao of China

Imp Pairs

Tezcan Sen and Okay Gur of Turkey

Women's Pairs

Irina Levitina and Kerri Sanborn of New York

Mixed Pairs

Karen McCallum, of New Hampshire, and Matthew Granovetter, of Cincinnati

Senior Pairs

Nico Klaver and Roal Ramer of the Netherlands

Rosenblum Teams

Rose Meltzer, Kyle Larsen, Alan Sontag, and Roger Bates, of the USA, teamed with Geir Helgemo and Tor Helness of Norway.

McConnell Women's Teams

Carlyn Steiner, Marinesa Letizia, Janice Seamon-Molson, and Tobi Sokolow, of the USA, teamed with Tatiana Ponomareva and Victoria Gromova of Russia.

Seniors Teams

Victor Markowicz of the USA, four players from Poland, and one from Israel, Shalom Zeligman

For complete information about the tournament, with lots of wonderful photos, go on the Internet to Swan Games:

<http://www.swangames.com/main/index.html>

At one table Cummings-Mullamphy bid and made game. At the other table:

South	West	North	East
pass	1 ♣	pass	1 ♠
pass	2 ♣	pass	3 ♥ (1)
pass	3 ♠	pass	4 ♣
pass	4 ♦	pass	4 ♥
pass	4 NT	pass	5 ♦ (2)
pass	5 ♠	pass	5 NT
pass	7 ♣	(all pass)	

- (1) 5+-5+ majors, game-force
- (2) 0 or 3 key cards for spades

Opening lead: ♣4

Declarer drew trumps and ran the ♥J. With both major-suit finesses working, declarer was able to pitch the diamond losers after setting up the fifth heart, and the grand slam came home for +17 imps. I am unsure about the meaning of some of the East-West bids and I daresay East-West were not sure of them either.

Bulding a Better Mousetrap

by Matthew Granovetter

Switching Trump Suits in Keycard Blackwood Auctions

You can ask for keycards in one trump suit, but play in another trump suit — assuming you have previously bid that suit, or if the suit is higher than your agreed trump suit. You set one suit as trumps just to find out about the king or queen of that suit, even though you have no intention of playing in that suit.

Here are two examples from the World Open Pairs Championships in Verona last month.

Cohen ♠ A 9 8 3 2 ♥ A K J 8 2 ♦ 7 ♣ Q 5 1 ♠ 2 ♥ 3 ♠ 4 NT (0-3)	Berkowitz ♠ 6 ♥ Q 7 3 ♦ A K Q J 10 9 2 ♣ A K 2 ♦ 3 ♥ 4 ♠ (Keycard for hearts) 7 NT
--	--

Here Berkowitz raised 2♥ to 3♥ with no intention of ever playing a heart contract. He did it only to set up keycard blackwood with hearts as trump, so he could locate the ♥K. Cohen then cuebid 3♠ and Berkowitz's 4♠ bid was keycard blackwood for hearts — they play one bid above the trump suit as the keycard ask, regardless of previously bid suits. When Cohen showed 0 or 3 keycards with his 4NT response, Berkowitz bid 7NT.

In this case the 3♥ raise worked charmingly well, since Cohen had both heart

honors. But if his hand was something like ♠ A K x x x ♥ A x x x ♦ x ♣ Q x x, seven notrump would still be laydown but the response of two keycards would leave responder in doubt. Perhaps by jumping to 4♦ to set diamonds as trump, Berkowitz would be able to subsequently learn about all the right cards, but my guess is he wouldn't have enough room, which is why the raise to 3♥, though imperfect, is a practical way to get the information he was hoping for.

The other hand from the Pairs was this:

Opener ♠ 8 2 ♥ A 6 3 2 ♦ A Q J 10 ♣ K 9 2 1 ♦ 1 NT 2 ♥	Responder ♠ A K Q J 9 6 5 ♥ J ♦ K 7 6 5 ♣ A 1 ♠ 2 ♦ (gf checkback) ?
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Here responder wants to know about aces and then more if opener has two aces. Using the suggested approach, responder bids 3♦, setting diamonds as trump even though he has no intention of playing in diamonds. On this deal, opener will show two keycards and the ♦Q in reply to KCB, and responder can bid 7NT. If opener denies the ♦Q, perhaps responder can ask for kings, learn about the ♣K and ask further for the ♣Q. That's a more complicated matter. But by setting diamonds as trumps, responder made it easier to learn what he needed to know.

How Sweet It Isn't

by Pamela Granovetter

Try these two bidding problems from the last round of the Women's Pairs Final in Verona. You are playing a "very-light opening bid" style. Depending on your answers, you will be first, second or third in the event.

1. East dealer
East-West vulnerable

You, West, hold:

♠ 6 2
♥ 10 8 3
♦ Q 8
♣ 8 6 5 4 3 2

West	North	East	South
—	—	1 ♠	pass
pass	double	pass	pass
?			

2. West dealer
None vul

You, East, hold:

♠ J 10 5
♥ Q J 10
♦ J 8 4 2
♣ A 9 7

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	1 ♦	1 NT	4 ♥
pass	pass	?	



Gold Medalists in the Women's Pairs:
Kerri Sanborn and Irina Levitina



Silver Medalists
Yan Huang and Yan Hong Wang

Solutions

1. Did you pass? If so, you won the women's pairs and a(nother) gold medal! If not, you're down to a silver medal.... The whole hand was:

East dealer	North		
E-W vul	♠ 4		
	♥ A Q 9 6 5		
	♦ A J 6		
	♣ K Q 10 9		
West (Sabine)		East (Janice)	
♠ 6 2		♠ K Q 10 7 5 3	
♥ 10 8 3		♥ J 4	
♦ Q 8		♦ 9 7 4	
♣ 8 6 5 4 3 2		♣ A 7	
	South		
	♠ A J 9 8		
	♥ K 7 2		
	♦ K 10 5 3 2		
	♣ J		

West	North	East	South
—	—	1 ♠	pass
pass	double	pass	pass
2 ♣	double	(all pass)	

Janice Seamon-Molson and Sabine Auken were leading the field going into the last round. Janice had already won a gold medal for the Women's Teams event.

On this board, they had a chance to clinch first place. Most of the field opened 2♠ with the East hand, but Janice found a one-bid, and East-West were slated for an 71% score (other North-South's were collecting 800 against 2♠ doubled, or scoring 920 or 980 in slam). However, Sabine Auken chose to "rescue" with 2♣, and this went down 1100 for a 3% score. Bye-bye first place.

Notice that in clubs, North can lead trump to prevent a heart ruff. But in spades, South cannot lead trumps, to prevent a diamond ruff, without sacrificing a trump trick.

2. Did you double? If not, you're down to a bronze medal (better than nothing). Janice, aware of the extremely light-opening-bid style of Auken, passed out 4♥ despite holding two sure defensive tricks.

West dealer	North		
None vul	♠ A 6 4 2		
	♥ —		
	♦ A Q 10 7 5 3		
	♣ J 10 8		
West (Sabine)		East (Janice)	
♠ Q 9 8 7		♠ J 10 5	
♥ K 6		♥ Q J 10	
♦ K 9 6		♦ J 8 4 2	
♣ K 5 3 2		♣ A 9 7	
	South		
	♠ K 3		
	♥ A 9 8 7 5 4 3 2		
	♦ —		
	♣ Q 6 4		

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	1 ♦	1 NT	4 ♥
(all pass)			

Collecting 50 was worth 62% but doubling for +100 would have been worth almost 100%! Was there any solace? Yes. The bronze medal evened out Janice's trophy case. She now has a nicely symmetrical collection of two gold medals, two silver medals, and two bronze.

By the way, the winners of the event, Kerri Sanborn and Irina Levitina were the only pair doubled in 4♥. They scored zero on the board but hung on to win.