

# WHEN PARTNER OPENS GO

ALL the deals come from the Lederer Memorial Trophy, contested in November at the Young Chelsea Club. Sponsored by Bernard Teltscher, this is one of the few events in Britain where you can still watch world class players at the table. (My thanks go to Simon Cochemé for information on bidding sequences from the first day's play.)

The first deal is seemingly straightforward and I was surprised how many pairs went adrift. Our auction comes from the match between Wales and Ireland.

1. Game all. Dealer East.

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

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| West<br>Dafydd Jones | East<br>Gary Jones |
| 1♣                   | 2♥                 |
| 3♣                   | 3♠                 |
| 4NT                  | 5♠                 |
| 5♦                   | 5♥                 |
| 6NT                  |                    |

The first point to note is that it would be poor tactics to make a jump shift on the West cards. You find out more about partner's hand when you respond at the one level. The time to make a jump shift is when you hold 16-19 points and intend to bid only game subsequently, leaving it to partner to make any advance towards a slam. With 21 points you will bid to a slam anyway.

Dafydd Jones's 4NT was Roman Key-card Blackwood for spades, the response showing one or four of the five key cards. (The Welsh pair use 1430 responses where the 5♣ and 5♦ bids are switched round.) 5♦ asked about the queen of spades. Without that card, East would have signed off in 5♠. With it, he cue bid his cheapest king - here the ♥K. Dafydd Jones now bid the final contract of 6NT.

Why did he choose to play in 6NT, rather than one of the majors? Because if East held the ♦A rather than the ace of spades, both 6♥ and 6♠ might suffer an adverse ruff when the non-trump major suit broke 4-1.

## 1♦-2♦-3♦-4♦-5♦ - what next?

FUNNY how the bidding goes, sometimes. The following sequence, recorded by Pauline Shaw, playing at Tenterden Duplicate Bridge Club in Kent, caused some hilarity:

|      |       |      |       |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| 4♦   | 1♦    | 2♦   | 3♦    |
| Pass | 5♦    | 5♥   | Pass  |

Says Pauline: 'East's 2♦ was a Michaels cue bid showing 5-5 or better in the majors. West's 4♦ was asking East to pick whichever major he preferred. My partner and I were East-West with the above bidding and 5♥ one off was not a good result as 5♦ by North-South also went off.'

## Beat today's experts

The Irish also bid 6NT for a flat board. At the other six tables three pairs stopped in game and two more went one down in 6♥ when South led his singleton spade and received a ruff.

Awards: 6NT - 10, 6♠/6♥ - 6, games - 4.

It's time for our first look at the All Stars team that won the Lederer for a magnificent fifth year in succession. Zia/Robson, Sheehan/Simpson was the line-up and this slam deal arose in the match against London.

2. Love all. Dealer West.

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

|                 |                   |                 |               |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| West<br>Sheehan | North<br>Townsend | East<br>Simpson | South<br>Gold |
| 1♣              | 1♠                | 2♦              | Pass          |
| 3♣              | Pass              | 4NT             | Pass          |
| 5♦              | Pass              | 6♣              | Pass          |
| Pass            | Pass              |                 |               |

You can take a more scientific route on the East cards (3♠, to be followed by 4♣ over 3NT) but what will it tell you? You are not particularly interested in a major-suit cue bid from West and I am very happy with Colin Simpson's decision to bid Roman Key-card Blackwood. When he heard of one key card he bid the cold slam in clubs, which was easily made. This was the auction at the other table:

|              |              |                   |                 |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| West<br>Burn | North<br>Zia | East<br>Callaghan | South<br>Robson |
| 2♣           | 2♠           | 3♣                | Pass            |
| 3NT          | Pass         | 4♣                | Pass            |
| 4NT          | Pass         | Pass              | Pass            |

David Burn's 2♣ was Precision-style, showing 11-15 points and at least five clubs. He had no red suit control to show over 4♣ and I don't see that he could have done more on his cards. Callaghan's decision not to bid 6♣ appears to be a very cautious view.

The Londoners' auction does not, however, win the wooden spoon for the worst auction on the board. No, I have to award that in an Irish direction. Hanlon opened 2♣ on the West cards and, over North's 2♠ overall, McGann responded 3♦. This was non-forcing in Hanlon's book and the auction rested there. The resultant +170 made only a small dent in the Welsh +920, when Dafydd and Gary Jones bid 1♣ (2♠) 3♦ (4♠) Pass 6♣.

Awards: 6NT(W)/6♦/6♣ - 10, Games - 5, part scores 1.

On now to the match between the President's team and London.

3. Game all. Dealer East.

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

|                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| West<br>Friday | East<br>Teltscher |
| 3♣             | 2♥                |
| 6NT            | 3NT               |

When Bernard Teltscher opened with an Acol 2♥ and rebid 3NT, Friday liked the look of a no trump slam. If his partner held six solid hearts and two aces there would be a reasonable play for 12 tricks. If instead he held all four aces, then one loser could be afforded in the heart suit. A slam was no certainty, but when you reach a certain maturity you forget the doubts and worries of middle age and bid like a youngster again.

How good is 6NT? Even if you consider only the chances in the heart suit it is more than a 60% shot. You succeed when hearts are 3-3, also when North has a singleton or doubleton king of hearts (you will finesse the queen on the first round), and when the ♥10 drops singleton or doubleton on either side.

Fortune did not favour the brave at the table. North held K-10-x-x in the heart suit and the Australians picked up 13imps for their (middle-aged) auction, West bidding only 3NT when he heard of an Acol two in hearts opposite.

Awards: 6NT - 10, 6♥ - 9, games - 6, 6♣ - 4, grands - 1.

On the next deal the Australians face London. A long journey just to play in the Lederer, are you thinking? Apart from Peter Gill, an ex-partner of Ron Klingner, the other three Aussies come from Clapham!

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

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

# SLOWLY IF VERY STRONG



By David Bird

## 4. Love all. Dealer West.



What should you respond on those East cards when your partner opens 3♥? If you choose 3NT you are relying on two things – the diamonds will come in and partner will give you a quick trick. On this deal only one of your two wishes will come true. The three pairs who bid to 3NT all went down. The five pairs who bid to the heart game all succeeded. Indeed, it seems obvious to respond 4♥, hoping for six heart tricks and four winners, or five heart tricks and all five side suit winners.

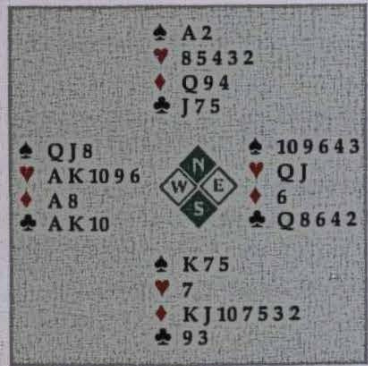
The England Juniors pair let themselves down by bidding 3♥ – 3NT. Brian Callaghan opened a Multi on the West cards. After 2♦ – 2NT (relay) – 3♣ (showing hearts) it was much more reasonable for David Burn to choose 3NT. There was less chance that the heart suit would be adequate for 4♥ and more chance that the diamonds would come in (because, with one heart fewer, West was more likely to hold two or three diamonds). A ninth trick was also more likely since a weak two is expected to contain what Reese used to call a 'glint of steel'.

Andrew Robson also opened a Multi but he showed excellent judgement in removing Zia's 3NT to 4♥. (2♦ – 2NT – 3♣ – 3NT – 4♦ – 4♥, where 4♦ was a transfer.) Zia subsequently took a slightly inferior line in the heart game, thinking that there were only six trumps in dummy. 'I trust your bidding more than my eyesight!' he informed his partner afterwards.

Awards: 4♥ – 10, 3NT – 5, part scores – 4.

The President's team faced Australia on the next deal.

## 5. Love all. Dealer South.



| West    | North | East  | South     |
|---------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Breskal | Gill  | Edwin | Casselton |
| Dbf     | 4♦    | 4♣    | 3♦        |
| 5♣      | Pass  | Pass  | Pass      |

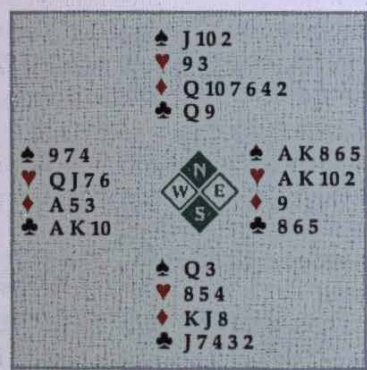
The first decision is West's. What should he bid over the pre-empt? Seven out of eight Wests made the sensible choice of a take-out double. (The eighth bid 3NT, passed out). The second decision is East's. He wants to play in 4♣ but should he make a free bid of 4♣ on such a weak hand, risking that partner then goes too high? The alternative is to pass and hope that partner re-opens with a further double.

Edwin bid 4♣, as most players would have done, and I certainly don't blame Breskal for bidding one more spade. Some players I know would jump to 6♣ on the West hand, claiming afterwards that it was 'the obvious bid'. Unfortunately, even the five level was too high on this occasion. South led his singleton heart and later received a heart ruff.

Looking back at the hand records I see that two West players in the Lederer did bid 6♣ after this start. Perhaps East should not have volunteered the apparently obvious 4♣ bid. What do you think?

Awards: 4♣/4♥/3NT – 10, 5♠/5♥/5NT/5♣/4NT – 7, 6♥ – 4, 6♣ – 1.

Our last hand features some spectacular magic from the maestros, Robson and Zia.



| West   | North | East | South    |
|--------|-------|------|----------|
| Robson | Coyle | Zia  | Matheson |
| 1♣     | 2♦    | 2♣   | 3♦       |
| 4♣     | Pass  | 5♥   | Pass     |
| 6♥     | Pass  | Pass | Pass     |

Playing a strong 1NT and five-card majors Andrew Robson had to open 1♣. I was commenting (with Richard Fleet) on Vugraph at the time and we could see that a slam was possible in hearts but not in spades. It is one of those deals where the 4-4 fit is better because you need the discard that the 5-3 fit will provide.

If North had passed the bidding would have started 1♣ – 1♠ – 1NT and it is unlikely that Robson and Zia would have proceeded beyond game. Over the weak jump overcall Zia showed his five-card suit rather than begin with a negative dou-

ble. South contested with 3♦ and Robson could now place his partner with a diamond shortage. Despite his 3-4-3-3 shape he knew that his 14 points were rowing hard in the right direction. He jumped to 4♣ and now Zia could sniff a slam. How easy it would be to leap to the doomed 6♣. No, Zia bid 5♥. When Robson raised to 6♥, there was loud applause from the Vugraph audience. The All Stars pair had brilliantly overcome the disadvantage of having to open 1♣ on the West hand.

I thought at first that Zia's 5♥ had been a cue bid and that Robson's 6♥ had been a cost nothing bid, in case Zia held four hearts. No, I was assured by their team mate, Robert Sheehan, that 5♥ was natural and that they had known exactly what was going on. Well bid, indeed!

Awards: 6♥ – 10, 4♣/4♥ – 7, 5♥ – 6, 6♠/5♠ – 4, 6♥ – 3.

I seem to have chosen the successful auctions, rather than those that went adrift at other tables. Our experts therefore emerge with the great score of 57 out of 60. The slam bidding was not particularly good at the Lederer and I should perhaps have featured some of the poorer auctions. ("Reader: "Beat the Experts? A fat chance we had!") Next time the experts won't score so highly, I promise you. Meanwhile, let's see if we can extract some worthwhile tips.

## TIPS TO REMEMBER

- ★ Jump shifts work best on hands in the 16-19 point range. You suggest a slam with your first bid and then sit back, leaving it to partner to decide whether to bid a slam. When you are stronger than this, you intend to bid a slam anyway. Make a minimum response and find out more about partner's hand.
- ★ When partner opens three of a major and you have a powerful hand with only one card in his suit, it is usually right to raise the major rather than bid 3NT.
- ★ When you have points to spare, consider bidding 6NT rather than six of a suit. You may avoid an adverse ruff. You can also sometimes find the tricks elsewhere when the main suit breaks badly.
- ★ On auctions after an enemy pre-empt, think very carefully before moving from a game towards a slam. Suppose you double a 3♥ pre-empt and the auction continues: 3♥ – Dbf – 4♥ – 4♣. Even if you are very good for your double, remember that partner may have little more than a five-card or six-card spade suit.