

1 From the Championship Pairs

This month's Wednesday Championship Pairs produced a number of slam hands offering some subtle bidding challenges. Board 20 was one such:

Board 20
West dealer
Both vul

♠ 6	♠ AJ9754	♠ 3
♥ T65	♥ 4	♥ AKJ87
♦ J974	♦ AK	♦ Q652
♣ QT873	♣ AK96	♣ J52

♠ KQT86
♥ Q932
♦ T83
♣ 4

North doesn't have quite enough to open with a game-forcing $2\clubsuit$ so will begin with $1\spadesuit$. East may insert a cheeky $2\heartsuit$ overcall but South has the classic hand for an Acol raise to $4\spadesuit$. This generally shows lots of trumps and some good distribution (here, a singleton club) but not much high card strength. Now the spotlight shines on North. She knows her partner doesn't have much in the way of points but, as her hand is full of playing strength, she shouldn't pass – what should she do?

If you play ordinary Blackwood (4NT, asking for the number

of Aces), you will not receive the key information that partner has \spadesuit K and you are in the dark about whether to bid the slam. Here Roman key card Blackwood is much better. 4NT asks for keycards (Aces and the trump King) and South will bid 5 \diamond .

When you look at both the North and South hands you see immediately that $6\spadesuit$ is cold since South's club singleton allows both of North's losing clubs to be discarded. A more interesting point is how sure North can be that bidding $6\spadesuit$ is a good bid. She knows there will be a certain heart loser and the main issue is whether there will be two club losers. However, South is known to have good distribution and any doubleton/singleton is most likely to be in clubs. So the odds are pretty good that $6\spadesuit$ will make.

I mentioned Roman key card Blackwood just now. If you only play normal Blackwood it is worth switching to this more useful convention. After trumps are agreed, 4NT asks for key cards and the responses are:

Response	Meaning
5♣	0 or 3 key cards
5♦	1 or 4 key cards
5♥	2 key cards, no trump Queen
5♠	2 key cards and the trump Queen

Some people worry that they will not be able to work out whether $5\clubsuit$ shows 3 key cards or shows 0 key cards. I can only say in reassurance that in over 20 years of playing this conven-

tion I have been confused only once (and on that single occasion I naturally blame my partner!). If you routinely play the 4♣ Gerber convention you can adapt this easily enough to Roman Gerber.

Finally, Board 8 offered an easy play problem if you had managed to bid 7♣. How do you play on the lead of ♣10?

Board 20	♠ A9863
West dealer	♥ AT642
Both vul	♦ 8
	♣ Q8
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N S </div>
	♠ K
	♥ K3
	♦ A74
	♣ AKJ6432

You have 7 club tricks, 1 diamond, 2 hearts and 2 spades. The extra trick will come from ruffing a diamond. So don't play a second round of trumps before you have organized your diamond ruff! Just watch out for one thing: since one opponent might have 4 trumps to the ten you must win the first trick with dummy's ♣Q not ♣8. Do you see why?

2 Club news and comments

Tournaments We have 2 tournaments coming up soon. The first one is the Taieri 8B Graded Pairs Tournament on 26th July. We are looking for lots of support from club members to compete. Beat the rush and put your name on the list. For general members - your help in bringing along a grocery item for the raffle would be greatly appreciated. The second tournament is the Cancer Society Charity Tournament on 18th August. Keep this date free.

Tournament catering Keep an ear out for anyone that may be keen to take on the catering aspect of Tournaments. We have received formal notification that Janet Rutherford will organise the catering for the next 2 tournaments so it would be a good time if someone is interested to shadow her should they wish.

Possible new start time It has been suggested that next year Wednesday night bridge will start at 7.15 pm so that there is no confusion in start times. There has also been discussion that allowing substitutes for 3 night matches will be considered. These two items will be discussed at the AGM. Should you have any other ideas for improvements please take them to a committee member.

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