



South African Mixed Trials

Bulletin: Number 9

THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE SA MIXED TRIALS

After the first day of play and 4 short board matches have been completed, four pairs have slightly edged ahead of the remaining eight. Glen Holman and Michele Alexander are in the lead with Larry Chemaly and Sharon Lang close behind, then Duncan Keet and Carol Stanton with Phil King and Merle Bracher in 4th spot. These pairs all have scores in the 50+ VP range and the husband and wife pairing of Terry and Jan East with 45.33VPs are at the top of the chasing group. However, we all know how one bad board can seriously alter the situation so all is not lost for those further down the field at the moment. Good Luck to all players for the second day of Qualifying Matches.

I was out at lunch last Friday with Carol Grunder (as I am currently on holiday in Cape Town), and she mentioned that the other Carol (Stanton - online name: carol2007) had done really well in the 2024 WBF Women's Online Spring Festival. She had finished 2nd overall with a strong score of 12.92 points. She came 3rd in the Individual (robot) Winner category, while Vanessa Armstrong came 2nd in the Individual (human) Winner category. Congratulations to both ladies - a fine achievement!

To see more details of this online BBO event, head over to the following news article:

<https://tinyurl.com/womensonlinefestival>

♥ Deirdre Ingersent

MIXED PAIRS QUALIFIERS – RESULTS BY ROUND

Players	Rank	TOTAL VPs	Round 1		Round 2		Round 3		Round 4	
			IMPS	VPs	IMPS	VPs	IMPS	VPs	IMPS	VPs
Glen Holman & Michele Alexander	1	58.11	6	12.01	26	16.73	39	18.66	2	10.71
Larry Chemaly & Sharon Lang	2	55.10	33	17.86	29	17.24	16	14.70	-16	5.30
Duncan Keet & Carol Stanton	3	52.07	28	17.08	-4	8.62	24	16.37	0	10.00
Phil King & Merle Bracher	4	51.14	10	13.18	-2	9.29	13	13.97	16	14.70
Terry East & Jan East	5	45.33	4	11.38	3	11.05	9	12.90	0	10.00
Andre Van Niekerk & Rose Duff	6	42.87	25	16.55	4	11.38	-16	5.30	-1	9.64
Brian Pincus & Maureen Narunsky	7	35.15	-4	8.62	-26	3.27	9	12.90	1	10.36
Lex Van Vught & Rita Gawron	8	32.86	-10	6.82	-29	2.76	-9	7.10	23	16.18
Jude Apteker & Zela Stern	9	32.43	-28	2.92	2	10.71	-9	7.10	5	11.70
Imtiaz Kaprey & Jill Rabie	10	27.13	-6	7.99	-2	9.29	-13	6.03	-23	3.82
Peter Ward & Merle Modlin	11	25.77	-33	2.14	2	10.71	-24	3.63	-2	9.29
Paul Reynolds & Erica Zimet	12	22.04	-25	3.45	-3	8.95	-39	1.34	-5	8.30

DAY 2 – MATCH SCHEDULE

Mon 06-May 10:00	5	1	CHEMALY, Larry	LANG, Sharon	STANTON, Carol	KEET, Duncan
		2	PINCUS, Brian	NARUNSKY, Maureen	RABIE, Jill	KAPREY, Imtiaz
		3	VAN VUGHT, Lex	GAWRON, Rita	ZIMET, Erica	REYNOLDS, Paul
		4	KING, Phil	BRACHER, Merle	ALEXANDER, Michele	HOLMAN, Glen
		5	VAN NIEKERK, Andre	DUFF, Rose	EAST, Jan	EAST, Terry
		6	APTEKER, Jude	STERN, Zela	MODLIN, Merle	WARD, Peter

Mon 06-May 11:30	6	1	CHEMALY, Larry	LANG, Sharon	RABIE, Jill	KAPREY, Imtiaz
		2	HOLMAN, Glen	ALEXANDER, Michele	EAST, Jan	EAST, Terry
		3	VAN NIEKERK, Andre	DUFF, Rose	STERN, Zela	APTEKER, Jude
		4	KEET, Duncan	STANTON, Carol	ZIMET, Erica	REYNOLDS, Paul
		5	KING, Phil	BRACHER, Merle	NARUNSKY, Maureen	PINCUS, Brian
		6	WARD, Peter	MODLIN, Merle	GAWRON, Rita	VAN VUGHT, Lex

Mon 06-May 14:30	7	1	CHEMALY, Larry	LANG, Sharon	EAST, Jan	EAST, Terry
		2	REYNOLDS, Paul	ZIMET, Erica	NARUNSKY, Maureen	PINCUS, Brian
		3	KING, Phil	BRACHER, Merle	MODLIN, Merle	WARD, Peter
		4	KAPREY, Imtiaz	RABIE, Jill	STERN, Zela	APTEKER, Jude
		5	KEET, Duncan	STANTON, Carol	ALEXANDER, Michele	HOLMAN, Glen
		6	VAN VUGHT, Lex	GAWRON, Rita	DUFF, Rose	VAN NIEKERK, Andre

Mon 06-May 16:00	8	1	CHEMALY, Larry	LANG, Sharon	NARUNSKY, Maureen	PINCUS, Brian
		2	APTEKER, Jude	STERN, Zela	ALEXANDER, Michele	HOLMAN, Glen
		3	KEET, Duncan	STANTON, Carol	GAWRON, Rita	VAN VUGHT, Lex
		4	EAST, Terry	EAST, Jan	MODLIN, Merle	WARD, Peter
		5	KAPREY, Imtiaz	RABIE, Jill	ZIMET, Erica	REYNOLDS, Paul
		6	VAN NIEKERK, Andre	DUFF, Rose	BRACHER, Merle	KING, Phil

Some of the players from JHB:



Lex van Vught



Rita Gawron



Jude Apteker

Declarer Play

10 <small>D</small>	N horace1 ♠ AJ95 ♥ KQ43 ♦ AJ108 ♣ K	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 10%;"></th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">W</th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">N</th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">E</th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> <td style="text-align: center; background-color: yellow;">1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3NT</td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		W	N	E	S				P	P		P	1♦	P	1NT		P	3NT	P	P		P			
	W	N	E	S																							
			P	P																							
	P	1♦	P	1NT																							
	P	3NT	P	P																							
	P																										
W InTime ♠ 832 ♥ A2 ♦ Q963 ♣ QJ106		E tarankaur ♠ Q104 ♥ 9865 ♦ K5 ♣ 9742																									
	S rixi181 ♠ K76 ♥ J107 ♦ 742 ♣ A853	3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0																									

This complex play hand came up in the 1st round of the Mixed Pairs Trials.

On the bidding shown West led the Q♣ and the King was won in dummy. Now declarer can count that he has 2 Spades, 3 Hearts, 1 Diamond and 2 Clubs. What is the best play for a 9th trick before opponents get 5 tricks? Obviously, declarer should knock out the A♥ first. All the declarers tried this and now 3 were rewarded with a misdefence by West who returned a heart. Now declarer must decide whether to play on Spades or Diamonds. The best play for 3 tricks in Spades is to play the Ace followed by the King. If neither the 10 nor queen appears, play low to the Jack. Chance of 3 tricks is 77% on this line as it only loses to ♣Q10xx in the East hand. Playing on diamonds, declarer would plan to take 2 diamond finesses. The chance of this working is 75%. Looks like playing on Spades has a slight edge but we can combine chances by playing off 2 top spades and if nothing happens, we can change tack and take 2 diamond finesses. I cannot give exact figures, but I suspect that this is the best line by a significant margin.

On the actual hand any line works so this was a flat board bar 1 pair who went down after receiving the correct defence of a club continuation after winning the A♥. Declarer went astray by failing to decide whether to play on Spades or Diamonds and pitched one of each on the next 2 rounds of clubs. Now the spade finesse spelt defeat.

The bidding on this hand was curious as at most tables the bidding went as shown. I wonder what 2NT means by the North hand. Playing standard, this should show 18-19 HCP balanced. I don't think the North hand is worth more than 2NT as if partner only has 6 HCP, game is unlikely. South would have no problem bidding 3NT after 2NT.

Defence

Most players find defence the hardest part to the game. The following hand illustrates how to think when defending:

D	4		
		N impalaphil	W N E S
		♠ KJ875	P 1♠ P 2♦
		♥ K62	P 2NT P 3NT
		♦ Q7	P P P
		♣ K63	
W	lexvan		E kimeden
♠ A10943			♠ 62
♥ J1073			♥ AQ54
♦ 8			♦ 943
♣ A95			♣ J1074
		S stacey31	
		♠ Q	
		♥ 98	
		♦ AKJ10652	
		♣ Q82	
			3NT N NS: 0 EW: 0

The bidding was similar at most tables and East lead a low heart to declarer's King. Declarer then played off 7 diamonds. From both sides of the table defenders should reason that if declarer has any outside aces, it will be impossible to beat the contract and they should therefore place the missing aces in partner's hand. This makes it quite easy. East must hold onto his remaining hearts and West must win any spade or Club play immediately and return hearts.

2 tables in the mixed pairs lost their way and allowed 3NT to make for a loss of 9.2imps. In both cases, East pitched a heart making defeat of 3NT impossible. The bottom line is count, Count, COUNT.

Opening Leads

	W	N	
			E
			S
			P P
1♣	P	1NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

Opening leads can be very difficult, but sometimes clear reasoning will lead you the correct answer. After the above auction, you, South, are on lead. What's your choice?

865
AQ2
A1084
J63

I contend that if you gave this hand to a panel of experts, there would be an almost unanimous vote for the A♥.

Let's work out the reasoning. On this bidding partner has a maximum of 3-4 high card points. Declarer has no major and therefore has at least 7 cards in the minors. Our best chance of beating this contract must be to hope that our values combine well. If partner has the K♥ we might take 4 or 5 heart tricks plus the ace of diamonds. If partner has the J♥ we might take 3 or 4 heart tricks, the A♦ and another trick with partner's remaining 2-3 points. 5 small hearts in partners hand may allow us to take 4 heart tricks plus the diamond ace. Leading a diamond (4th best) even if partner has the King, we will still need to take 2 heart tricks meaning that the K♥ must be in declarer's hand (unlikely as declarer has a weak hand) and in addition, partner will have to find a heart switch after winning the K♦. Not an easy defence. The advantage of leading the A♥ may be that a diamond switch may still be possible if a heart continuation looks unappetizing.

The full hand:

	N larryc777 ♠ 932 ♥ K864 ♦ J962 ♣ 52	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; background-color: red; color: white;">W</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; background-color: red; color: white;">S</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;">P P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♣</td> <td>P</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #e0f2f1;"> <td>3NT</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> </table>		W		S				P P	1♣	P	1NT	P	3NT	P	P	P	
	W		S																
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	W		E																
			P P																
1♣	P	1NT	P																
3NT	P	P	P																
W lexvan ♠ AKJ7 ♥ J97 ♦ K7 ♣ AK87																			
	S sharrie ♠ 865 ♥ AQ2 ♦ A1084 ♣ J63	3NT E NS: 0 EW: 0																	

Call me a result merchant, if you will, but I think the reasoning is clear. Trying a passive defence, hoping to scramble 5 tricks, is unlikely to work and what would be a passive lead?

In the mixed trials only one of the pairs found the winning defence and this was because North found himself on lead and led 4th highest heart.

Note again the 3NT bid by West (this was the choice at most tables that got to 3NT). I wonder what 2NT would have meant?

Dunx	carol2007	tarankaur	InTime	3NW-1	50	9.00
peter3202	merl66	JillyRabz	imtiazi1	2NW+1	-150	4.20
horace1	rix181	SweetieE	teeast	3NE=	-400	-2.80
judeap	sternz	stacey31	impalaphil	3NE=	-400	-2.80
bkpsc	moremo	lady macb	glensa	3NE+1	-430	-3.80
larryc777	sharrie	kimeden	lexvan	3NE+1	-430	-3.80

The Hold Up Play

10 D	N	W	N	E	S
	♠ A7532 ♥ 102 ♦ A953 ♣ 102			1♦ P	P
		2♦	P	2NT P	P
		3NT	P	P	P
W	♠ K84 ♥ K94 ♦ Q104 ♣ AJ54			E	
				♠ Q109 ♥ A87 ♦ KJ82 ♣ Q97	
	S				
	♠ J6 ♥ QJ653 ♦ 76 ♣ K863				
				3NT E	NS: 0 EW: 0

After the natural heart lead by South, declarer should realise that he has a lot of work to do and needs to let opponents in a few times. As East is not worried should North switch suits after winning the 10♥, it is clear that he should duck hoping to cut communication between the defenders. This play has the effect of neutralizing South's hearts and now declarer can go about setting up 9 tricks. It will require some guessing, but this is East's best chance.

larryc777	sharrie	tarankaur	InTime	3NE-2	200	9.00
glensa	lady macb	rix181	horace1	3NE-1	100	6.80
imtiaaz1	JillyRabz	stacey31	impalaphil	3NW-1	100	6.80
lexvan	kimeden	SweetieE	teeast	3NE=	-600	-7.00
judeap	sternz	moremo	bkpsc	3NW=	-600	-7.00
peter3202	merl66	carol2007	Dunx	3NW+2	-660	-8.60

Successful pairs steered the contract into the West hand by expediently bidding a direct 3NT over 1♦ (this seems a fairly obvious choice) and now North lead a spade. Once North's A♦ was knocked out, the spades were neutralized and declarer could easily come to 2 spades, 2 hearts, 3 diamonds and 2 clubs.

Pre-empt

♠ 9
 ♥ A5
 ♦ QJ97632
 ♣ K108

First to speak, not vul vs vul, what do you open?

Pre-empts often make things difficult for opponents but they can also make things difficult for partner. I have a strict rule that I will not pre-empt with 2 'sharp' cards (Aces and Kings) outside my suit. Some experts are reluctant to pre-empt when they have 1 sharp card outside their main suit in first or second position. Sharp cards are defensive values that will come back to bite if partner takes a phantom save against opponent's contract and perhaps more importantly it makes it very difficult for partner to judge the potential of the hand for our side. Occasionally these sharp cards mean you cannot make 3♦, but opponents cannot make anything either.

4 of 6 pairs chose to open 3♦. Justice was served when only those who opened 1♦ with the above hand managed to buy the contract in 5♦ and when opponents failed to find the successful defence were rewarded with plus 600. Those who pre-empted allowed opponents to play undoubled in 4 or 5 spades as they did not know that the pre-emptor had so much defence.

Time for the full hand:

	<div style="border: 1px solid white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; background-color: white; color: black; font-weight: bold; font-size: 24px;">2</div> D	N peter3202 ♠ J6432 ♥ KJ6 ♦ 4 ♣ Q952	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width: 10%;">W</th> <th style="width: 10%;">N</th> <th style="width: 10%;">E</th> <th style="width: 10%;">S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♥</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>5♦</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			1♦	1♠	2♥	4♣	5♦	P	P	P		
W	N	E	S																
		1♦	1♠																
2♥	4♣	5♦	P																
P	P																		
W glensa ♠ K5 ♥ 109832 ♦ K105 ♣ AJ4		E lady macb ♠ 9 ♥ A5 ♦ QJ97632 ♣ K108																	
		S merl66 ♠ AQ1087 ♥ Q74 ♦ A8 ♣ 763	5♦ E NS: 0 EW: 0																

lexvan	kimeden	JillyRabz	imtiazi1	3NW-1	50	7.60
InTime	tarankaur	moremo	bkpsc	5♠S-2	-200	0.80
horace1	rixi181	sternz	judeap	4♠S-2	-200	0.80
teeast	SweetieE	carol2007	Dunx	5♠S-2	-200	0.80
larryc777	sharrie	stacey31	impalaphil	5♦E=	-400	-5.00
peter3202	merl66	lady macb	glensa	5♦E=	-400	-5.00

All of the above articles were submitted by Bernard Donde.

Now for something more advanced.....

The screenshot shows a bridge hand interface with the following details:

- Table:** A red and white diamond-shaped table with the number 12 in the center.
- North (N):** Dunx, 7. Cards: ♠J, ♥AQJ10964, ♦Q5, ♣974.
- West (W):** InTime, 4+. Cards: ♠Q82, ♥5, ♦108764, ♣KQ86.
- East (E):** tarankaur, 4+. Cards: ♠K109765, ♥732, ♦J92, ♣3.
- South (S):** carol2007, 9+. Cards: ♠A43, ♥K8, ♦AK3, ♣AJ1052.
- Bidding:** West has bid 4♣. North has bid 3♥. East has bid Pass. South has bid 4♣.
- Buttons:** An 'Optional Keycard' button with an 'Explain' sub-button is visible on the right.

The following hand came up in the 2nd round of the trials today and I immediately recognised the opportunity to discuss a very useful convention that is not particularly well known by many of our bridge players.

Let's assume that our partner opens 3♥ and we hold the South hand. It is clear that if our partner holds a good variety of her hand, slam is a real possibility. Failing that, game will be the limit.

Without any fancy agreements I think most of us will count potential tricks between the two hands and come to about 11+ when partner produces a decent heart suit (7♥ 1♠ 2♦ 1♣). Now it is all good and well to go in search of a slam if partner produces a hand that can produce these tricks BUT we have all seen our partners open 3♥ on much less than the hand above, especially when not vulnerable e.g.

The card hand for North is as follows:

- ♠ J3
- ♥ QJ97542
- ♦ 102
- ♣ Q5

This time (hopefully non vulnerable) our partner produces the dreaded Dead Swan (this is the name for a 7222 hand and not a very flattering one at that) with very little playing strength and nothing much in the line of high cards.

So the question arises how a player deals with this problem where a Keycard ask (4NT for most of us) might not really reveal much regarding the quality of a pre-emptive opening by our partner, where slam will most likely depend on a better, rather than a really weak pre-empt.

This gives life to.....

Optional Keycard

Over opening bids of 3♦ 3♥ and 3♠, we could have an agreement that a bid of 4♣ is a low level keycard ask. 3♣ - 4♣ is excluded here as this would be a mere extension of the pre-empt. How many times have you wanted to bid a natural 4♣ when your partner has his own 7-card suit? Once in a blue moon sounds like the correct answer!

So let's agree that 4♣ is Keycard but not just normal keycard, OPTIONAL KEYCARD. Now what does this mean and how does this work?

4♣ = Partner please show me your keycards IF you think that you have a decent hand in the context of being a 3♥ pre-emptor. A good partnership understanding here will be useful as to which hands are decent vs not for our purposes. In our sample hand above I think we can all agree that the North hand is just about as good as a pre-empt gets, vulnerable or not vulnerable (In fact a few players were so enamoured with this hand that they opened 1♥).

Let's address the word IF in the paragraph above. Partner must show keycards only IF he deems his hand a good one. What on earth does he do if he opened on something very poor?

Well, the answer is he bids the next step up = 4♦. This is a mere warning to partner that he is opposite a hand that might not be anything to write home about and that might make a bulletin for all the wrong reasons.

So, we have 4♣ - 4♦ (be careful partner). What does the asker do next? Well if the asker depended on a better version of a pre-empt to explore slam he simply signs off so 4♣ - 4♦ - 4♥.

If the asker still wants to carry on to a potential slam and wants to find out about keycards he now reinstates the keycard ask by bidding the next suit up = 4♠. After this the pre-emptor simply responds in steps up the line:

4NT = 1/4

5♣ = 0/3 Etc.

If the pre-emptor deems his hand to be of the better variety, he simply shows keycards in normal steps but remember that 4♦ is not a keycard step. So in the hand above it would go:

3♥ - 4♣ (Optional Keycard) - 4♥ (I have a better hand so 1/4 Keycards) - 4♠ (Do you have the Q?) - 6♥ (I do).

In Conclusion

Some pairs have extended this brilliant principle of OPTIONAL KEYCARD to whenever they have a keycard auction at a lower level (such as Minorwood or Kickback). Partner's first duty is to let the asker know whether their hand is slam suitable in context. If not, they bid the first step. I believe that any serious player who has elected to play Minorwood, should consider adding this refinement, and their slam bidding will improve dramatically.

Submitted by Hennie Fick

Novices' (& Advancing player's) Corner

The Balancing Act

“To bid or not to bid, that is the question”, not quite Shakespeare but that is the query we find ourselves addressing in this bulletin.

In the first match of today my partner found himself in 1♥. The opponents defended for their lives and there were no defensive errors. Partner calmly wrapped up 7 tricks, to give us a lovely 4 imp gain on the hand. We so often forget that defence does not start and end in the card play it begins in the bidding. When your opponents are in a low-level contract there is always an option of ‘balancing’.

What is balancing? You are in the ‘balancing’ position when your pass will end the bidding and mark the beginning of the card play portion of bridge e.g 1♥-p-p-? If you pass the auction ends. If you bid the level goes higher and the contract or who is playing it may change. We generally only do this if the auction is going to end at a very low level.

Why do we balance? We balance to disturb our opponents out of a comfortable contract into one where they may be in a level too high. This shifts the fight. Instead of us having to fight for our lives to defend an easy simple 1 level contract they now have to fight for that extra trick. There may also be the added gain of us finding a fit and being able to play the contract.

Let's take a look at the hand from the Mixed Pairs Trials today.

Should you bid with South's hand?

The diagram shows a bridge hand with the following details:

- Contract:** 2♦ (indicated by a red and white card with the number 2 and a diamond symbol).
- North (N):** ♠J9875, ♥K982, ♦98, ♣K6
- West (W):** Dunx, 7. ♠32, ♥AQJ43, ♦AQ52, ♣AQ
- East (E):** carol2007, 9+. ♠Q4, ♥1076, ♦J64, ♣J9742
- South (S):** ♠AK106, ♥5, ♦K1073, ♣10853
- Bidding:** West bid 1♥, North passed, East passed, South passed.

Take out doubles generally promise (as Andrew Robson has coined SOS) **S**hortage in the opponent's suit, **O**pening hand, **S**upport for the other 3 suits. Here South does not have the **O**pening hand portion of the requirements for a double. However, she is a passed hand. Therefore, her partner will know that she has the other requirements but not the opening hand. She can support the other 3 suits perfectly and is likely to find a fit. If partner has 4 cards in ♠ they can play at the one level and if the opponents bid 2♥, they may find themselves a level too high. I think we can all see double by the South hand will easily be understood by her partner. But what if she wasn't a passed hand? Should she still balance? **YES**

When we balance, we are not just bidding off the strength in our own hand. We are also bidding off the implied strength of our partner. Very often when the bidding goes 1X - P - P - ? We are pretty certain that because East has nothing (else she would bid) the distribution of High Card Points is probably close to 20-20 between the 2 partnerships. There are many hands where our partner may have strength but just does not have the right hand to bid. For example:



Does North have a bid after 1♥? Absolutely not! They can't double (no support for the other 3 suits and no shortage in the opener's suit). They can't bid 1♠ as they don't have 5 cards in ♠. They can't bid 1NT because they don't have 15-18. They have to pass. If you as South do not bid you have lost the chance to play in 4♠. This is why the balancing seat has fewer restrictions than in the other seats. If you are in the balancing seat (you should also note this if you are the partner of the player in the balancing seat), double promises

9+ HCP and support for the other 3 suits.

It protects the partnership from situations like the hand that was played in trials. At the very least it pushes the opponents up and gives you the opportunity to find fits for your side.

The general structure for balancing is:

Dbl = 9+HCP and support for the other 3 suits.

1NT = 12-14 and a balanced hand.

Double then bidding a NT shows 15-17 and a balanced hand.

If you note the HCP for each of these bids it is always 3 points less than the normal bids. You are bidding off a presumed strength between the 2 of you because your opponents are letting the auction die.

Only 2 pairs failed to double in the Mixed Trials and they lost 4.6 imps. Pairs who got to 4♥, all chose to bid with the very poor East hand and this propelled the auction to 4♥, 3 down. 1 pair balanced when 1♥ was passed round to him and the balancing double led to the comfortable contract of 2♠, gaining 2.8 imps.

These results, I hope, will convince you to investigate balancing more thoroughly (check out Mike Lawrence's book "The complete book on balancing"):

Board	Result	We	They	We	They
2	1♥W=	80		4.6	
2	1♥W=	80		4.6	
2	4♥W-2		100		1
2	2♠N+1		140		2.6
2	4♥W-3		150		2.8
2	4♥W-3		150		2.8

Submitted by Carol Stanton

BRIDGE ETIQUETTE!

The first of a number of short articles intended as a refresher course for what should happen at a bridge table!

COURTESY must be the most important thing in everyone's mind when they first sit down at the table. Greet your opponents and state briefly your system - Standard American, 2 over 1, Precision for example. It is interesting that in our big Club in Johannesburg where most folk play 5 card majors and a strong NT, no announcement is made! A few pairs play 4 card majors and they state this and our Precision players always declare their system.

Now to what happens next -

1. The cards should not be taken out of the board until all players are present. When you have removed your cards, but before looking at them, count them to ensure you have 13. It is surprising how few players do this!
2. Avoid 'hovering' over the bidding box and do not touch any bidding card until you have decided on your bid. (This is a common beginner bridge player thing when they are not sure what to do!)
3. Bidding cards must remain on the table, with the bids clearly visible, until the opening lead has been faced.
4. When you are on opening lead, lay your chosen card FACE DOWN on the table. This prevents irregularities such as leading when it is not your turn to do so and allows questions about the auction and any alerts to be answered. All players, except dummy, may now request a review of the auction and an explanation of any alerted calls.
5. When play starts, do not detach a card from your hand until it is your turn to play. Do not pull up a card, push it back into your hand and then pull up another card. You should not re-arrange your hand when you are out of a suit. Any of these manoeuvres could provide information to the declarer or your partner. (Again a common error amongst beginner players who are not sure of which card to play)
6. North is responsible for the proper observance of all procedures at the table, such as ensuring the right opponents are present and the right boards are being played with the correct orientation. Only one board on the table at a time. North is responsible for the input of the contract and result into the bridgemate while East is responsible that the entry is correct. (Another problem which can occur at our small club where players are rather lax about checking the entry)

To be continued in our next Bulletin!

Submitted by Deirdre Ingersent