

BRIDGE


Number One Hundred and Thirty-Eight

June 2014

Bernard Magee's Acol Bidding Quiz


You are West in the auctions below, playing 'Standard Acol' with a weak no-trump (12-14 points) and 4-card majors.

1. Dealer West. Love All.
 ♠ KQJ98764
 ♥ 32
 ♦ 82
 ♣ 4




West North East South
 ?

2. Dealer East. Love All.
 ♠ A98
 ♥ Q987643
 ♦ AK
 ♣ 3



West North East South
 ? 3♣ Pass


3. Dealer South. Love All.
 ♠ A6
 ♥ 73
 ♦ K1032
 ♣ A9873



West North East South
 Pass 2♣ Pass Pass 1♣
 ?


Answers on page 6

4. Dealer East. Love All.
 ♠ 10942
 ♥ A2
 ♦ QJ3
 ♣ 9765




West North East South
 1♣ Pass 1♥ Pass
 ? 3♣ Pass

5. Dealer West. N/S Game.
 ♠ A5
 ♥ KQ932
 ♦ K932
 ♣ J7



West North East South
 1♥ ? 1♣ 2♣ 2♣


6. Dealer West. Love All.
 ♠ AK765
 ♥ 42
 ♦ AQ42
 ♣ 43



West North East South
 1♣ ? 1NT 2♥ Pass


Answers on page 9

7. Dealer North. E/W Game.
 ♠ A762
 ♥ A542
 ♦ 42
 ♣ KQ3




West North East South
 ? 1♣ 2♣ 2♣

8. Dealer East. Love All.
 ♠ 65
 ♥ AK876
 ♦ QJ87
 ♣ 43



West North East South
 1♥ ? 1♣ 1♦ 2♣ 2♦


9. Dealer South. E/W Game.
 ♠ K43
 ♥ AK7
 ♦ A8765
 ♣ Q2



West North East South
 Dbl ? 2♥ 2♣ Pass 1NT


Answers on page 11

10. Dealer East. Love All.
 ♠ 43
 ♥ 2
 ♦ KQ98765
 ♣ 632




West North East South
 ? 1♥ Pass

11. Dealer West. N/S Game.
 ♠ A32
 ♥ KQ42
 ♦ A8
 ♣ Q987



West North East South
 1♥ ? Pass 2♥ Pass

12. Dealer East. Game All.
 ♠ 76
 ♥ 43
 ♦ AK83
 ♣ K9853



West North East South
 ? 1♥ Dbl

Answers on page 13



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Order Form
on page 7

Bernard Magee's Tips for Better Bridge

65 invaluable tips in 160 pages

Bidding Tips

- 1 Always consider bidding spades if you can
- 2 Bid more aggressively when non-vulnerable
- 3 Always double when the opponents steal your deal
- 4 A takeout double shows shortage in the suit doubled
- 5 'Borrow' a king to keep the auction open
- 6 After a penalty double, don't let the opponents escape
- 7 Halve the value of a singleton honour when opening
- 8 Only add length-points for a suit that might be useful
- 9 Isolated honours are bad except in partner's suit
- 10 Use the jump shift sparingly
- 11 Consider passing and letting partner decide
- 12 You need two top honours for a second-seat pre-empt
- 13 Put the brakes on if you have a misfit
- 14 Strong and long minors work well in no-trumps
- 15 One stop in the opponents' suit can be enough for no-trumps
- 16 Keep your two-level responses up to strength
- 17 Use your normal methods in response to a 1NT overcall
- 18 Don't overcall just because you have opening points
- 19 Overcalls can be quite weak, so be prudent when responding
- 20 Weak overcalls must be based on strong suits
- 21 6NT requires 33 points not 4 aces and 4 kings
- 22 Raise immediately, if weak with four-card support
- 23 In a competitive auction, show support immediately
- 24 Bid to the level of your fit quickly with weak hands
- 25 With strength and support, use the opponents' bid suit

Declarer Play Tips

- 26 When your contract depends on a finesse, think 'endplay'
- 27 Consider what a defender might be thinking about
- 28 Always take your time at trick one
- 29 Establish extra tricks before cashing your winners
- 30 Use your opponents' bidding to your advantage
- 31 Avoid the 'baddie' gaining the lead
- 32 Use the Rule of Seven when holding up in no-trumps

- 33 A low lead usually promises length and an honour
- 34 When declaring 1NT, try to be patient
- 35 Duck an early round when you are short of entries
- 36 Lead up to your two-honour holding
- 37 Do not always assume a suit will break well
- 38 Drop a high card to put off the defence
- 39 Play your highest card to tempt a defender to cover
- 40 Draw trumps first unless you have a good reason not to
- 41 Do not waste your trumps
- 42 Consider leaving a lone defensive trump winner out

Defence Tips

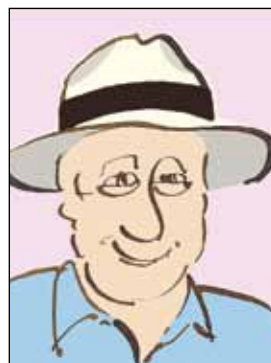
- 43 Keep four-card suits intact whenever possible
- 44 Give count on declarer's leads
- 45 Keep the right cards rather than signal
- 46 Take your time when dummy is put down
- 47 High cards are for killing other high cards
- 48 Do not waste intermediate cards
- 49 Pick two key suits to concentrate on during the play
- 50 If in doubt, cover an honour with an honour
- 51 If a lead is from two honours, it is best not to cover
- 52 Keep your honour to kill dummy's honour
- 53 Try to show partner your solid honour sequences
- 54 Lead the normal card when leading partner's suit
- 55 Never underlead an ace at trick one in a suit contract
- 56 Be wary of leading from four cards to only one honour
- 57 Lead a higher card from a suit without an honour
- 58 Lead through 'beatable' strength and up to weakness
- 59 Cash your winners before trying for a trump promotion
- 60 Be patient when defending 1NT
- 61 Trump leads can be safe throughout the play

General Tips

- 62 Do not put important cards at either end of your hand
- 63 Avoid being declarer when you are dummy
- 64 Before you lead, ask for a review of the auction
- 65 Enjoy the Game!

£14 including postage and packing from Mr Bridge,
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CLEARANCE



I am back safe and sound after being away from the office for four weeks. What a lot to catch up with, especially as I promised a Spring sale on my return. This is now well and truly overdue, so this is how I propose to handle it. On the back of your carrier (address) sheet, I have provided a list of the in-house merchandise I want to clear, but I only have limited quantities, mostly of shop soiled or second hand products, usually taken in part exchange. If it's books, you can send in postage stamps. But if it is software, you can phone to check what is available before sending your payment. This will avoid the expense of me having to write back with a double-whammy negative: having to pay the postage to return your payments as well as disappointing you.

SERENITY

Dealing with computers and helping people with software has made me patient to the point of serenity and it has rubbed off on all the team here. If you have a problem with your QPlus or Mr Bridge software, please do not hesitate to ask for help. We will see that your programs are reinstalled and you are able to go back to enjoying them.

TRADE IN

If you are tired with your old software, send it in part-exchange for a new piece. You can then practise declarer play or improve your defence. Go for it.

TUNISIA ALL IN

From this coming November, our policy is to have bed, board, beverages and bridge combined in an all inclusive package. I had thought this would be inappropriate for bridge players as they wouldn't want to drink too much and spoil their game, but it seems that every hotel in Tunisia is going all in and really, it is by far the most cost effective option. See page 11 for our November and March dates and prices.

POSTAGE SAVINGS

Following last month's rise in postal charges, Clive Goff's discounted stamp service is worth a try. Value supplied in two stamps, combined to make up the 53p 2nd class rate, 2nd class to you at 44p. 1st class 62p, still only 50p to you. Available in lots of 100. ☎ 0208 422 4906.

CLUB INSURANCE

Members need to be sure their club is covered by insurance for small losses of cash and their club equipment as well as public liability. Just over £63 for a twelve month period for a club of up to 100 members. There are over five hundred clubs in my scheme enjoying peace of mind. There is a new contact at managing brokers, Moore Stephens. Ring Tom Harvey ☎ 0207 515 5270. It is the unexpected that you need to have covered. ▶

VERY MODERN

Readers may have noticed the new advertisement for Genesis Choice, which has appeared in our recent issues. Genesis Choice are currently advertising their travel insurance in BRIDGE for the season and as part of a special promotion they will be giving Policy holders a very special type of traceable luggage tag in appreciation of their business. To re-coin a phrase, 'The Acumen Luggage Tracker Tag does what it says on the label'.

With a unique bar code on the label, you can add your contact details online. Without the security risk of putting ones name and address on a suitcase, an owner can be quickly and easily identified and contacted wherever their bag is found. The tag is not limited to air travel, but can be used by all and any travel services worldwide.

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If you want to know more about this label go to www.acumenluggagetracker.co.uk

If you have ever lost your luggage, you will be only too aware of the agony, time and stress caused in searching for and retrieving the lost item. Using this 21st century technology nobody should ever lose their luggage again, as one swipe of the bar code by a baggage attendant at any airport worldwide will solve the problem.

STILL SPACES



Bernard Magee will be again travelling on lovely m.v. Aegean Odyssey, flying to Istanbul on 30 July from whence the ship sails across the Aegean, around Athens and into the Adriatic, visiting Dubrovnik before sailing on to Venice.

BACK COVER AD

The fifth in the series of these filmed events, in which Bernard Magee deals with specific subjects of real interest to improving bridge players, is set for next January. The price includes 6 lectures, 6 sessions of supervised play and 3 nights full board. For only £399 per person, you will share an experience that you will never forget.

QPLUS HANDS

As promised, all the strange, weird and wonderful hands that I have drawn to readers attention in the course of the last 3 years are listed in the adjacent column. I do think you should try some of these and let me know how you get on with them. This is one of the beauties of QPlus. You can type in the number and the same bridge hand will come up on your screen as on mine becoming something we can talk about.

TRAVEL TIP

When you go on holiday, try to resolve any problems while you are with the airline or hotel at the time. It may sound obvious, but all too often, the first we hear is when it is too late to do anything about it.

£50 OFF

I am still committed to the promotion of Just Duplicate Bridge Events. The Clifton Park Hotel, Lytham St. Annes, has been added to our list of venues, see page 47. The price includes two night's full board and a traditional Sunday roast. It is further reduced by £50 per person to ensure success (now £149). All early bookers will have their invoices adjusted.

PIX 'N' MIX



All three series of six DVDs are listed on page 10 with thumbnail descriptions of their content. Playing time is an average of 90 minutes. The wonderful thing about a tutorial DVD is that viewers have a permanent record which they can re-visit over and over again. Individual DVDs, £25 each. Boxed sets of six, £100. Pick and mix. Six for only £105 including postage.

DIANA HOLLAND



The last of our Rubber Bridge Events is at The Olde Barn from 29-31 August. This will be hosted by Diana Holland. If you haven't been to one yet, this is your chance.

All good wishes,

Mr Bridge

Interesting QPlus Hands

2424-13	7792-13
1600-01	8771-13
5387-06	1370-20
7212-15	8584-06
8724-04	7370-08
8827-05	9355-10
8288-01	9162-04
0219-08	0680-11
8924-13	0680-10
1151-03	6722-82
0001-11	4139-07
3430-07	9474-11
4953-06	4139-03
9885-04	6625-09
0007-02	4576-08
3212-13	0500-02
9423-02	2406-13
9028-13	4048-02
2406-14	2828-09
5390-11	9460-16
2829-11	5290-05
5290-100	5290-54
5290-169	2941-02
1978-13	4616-06
6529-11	6656-01
302-09	5464-09
4607-06	4275-03
8719-19	5613-07
0265-11	611-01
6598-05	1762-10
611-12	5464-09
2769-11	5929-05
5060-07	9680-05
9680-06	3515-04
0721-08	0878-04
2471-14	2471-15
4205-04	5276-09
8605-01	8605-09
0393-02	0097-11
0393-03	6172-11
8949-07	8495-03
4810-09	3390-04
9101-14	5031-01
3059-01	6755-13
0841-01	0244-10
6756-10	4498-01
4498-11	9142-08
3033-11	7354-05
8462-07	9910-14
8495-04	8901-04
2263-04	6001-13
2683-13	8677-12
6071-05	6071-10



Answers to Bernard Magee's Bidding Quizzes 1-3 on the Cover

1. Dealer West. Love All.

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



West	North	East	South
?			

4♠. You have a beautiful pre-emptive hand: you expect to make seven tricks if you play in spades, but do not expect to make one trick against any other contract (someone will have at most a singleton spade). If you play weak twos, you will know that you can open a weak hand with six cards at the 2-level. At the three-level, you open a weak hand with a seven-card suit, so naturally, you open an eight-card suit at the four-level.

The reason for this extra level is because of your potential for seven tricks as well as your lack of potential elsewhere. Either you will make, in which case you get the game bonus, or, as here, you will go down, but with only two tricks from your partner it will not be a surprise to find your opponents able to make game. It is not easy for them to bid over 4♠ and not even easy to double. -50 will look very good instead of -450 for 4♥ making with an overtrick.

2. Dealer East. Love All.

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



West	North	East	South
?		3♣	Pass

Pass. In question 1, you had the perfect example of a pre-emptive hand and here is another: hands that make a lot of tricks in their own suit, but very few in any other

contract. For this reason, without a fit for your partner, you need about 16 points to go forward.

It is quite possible that 3♥ might be a slightly better contract than 3♣, but you cannot play in 3♥ because any change of suit is forcing for one round. If you bid 3♥, your partner will bid 4♣ and you will end up in 4♣-1 instead of 3♣ making.

Your partner pre-empts to disrupt your opponents, but sometimes it does disrupt you – these are things you just have to put up with – taking the rough with the smooth.

3. Dealer South. Love All.

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



West	North	East	South
Pass	2♠	Pass	1♠
?			Pass

2NT*. When the auction dies out at the 2-level and your opponents have a fit, then you should try very hard to compete for the deal. If they have a fit, then you usually have a fit and it tends to be right

to bid on to the 3-level: either you go off (-50 or -100) and get a better score than them making (-110) or you might even make your contract. It is understanding that going off will give you a good score, that should persuade you to bid more.

But how do you find your fit?

A take-out double is the usual option, but this will not work if you are short in an unbid major, because your partner is likely to bid it (here he would reply 3♥). There is one other option which you might not have thought of: 2NT. When a bid cannot possibly be natural, you hope that your partner will try to work out what you mean. There is no way you can have a genuine 2NT overcall when you passed on the first round, so you hope your partner will understand that you want him to bid a minor – it is similar to an unusual 2NT overcall, but in the pass-out seat it is just for take-out, not necessarily showing 5-5.

Here, your partner should bid 3♦. Both 2♠ and 3♦ are likely to make: a swing of 220 points from +110 to -110.

You might respond that, surely this is not part of natural Acol?

You would be right in part, but when a bid cannot be natural, then you hope that partner will find a bid in response. However, I cannot promise that your partner would respond! ■

Elstead Hotel

Bournemouth BH1 3QP



10-12 Oct	Just Duplicate	Jo Walch	£199
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Full Board – No Single Supplement

Booking Form on page 8.



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Postcode

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Special requirements (these cannot be guaranteed, but we will do our best to oblige).

Please give the name(s) of all those covered by this booking.

Please send a non-returnable deposit of £50 per person per place by cheque, payable to Mr Bridge. An invoice for the balance will be sent with your booking confirmation. On receipt of your final payment, 28 days before the event, a programme and full details will be sent together with a map. Cancellations are not refundable. Should you require insurance, you should contact your own insurance broker.

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(CVV is the last 3 numbers on the signature strip)

Mr Bridge, Ryden Grange, Knaphill, Surrey GU21 2TH.

01483 489961

e-mail: jessica@mrbridge.co.uk

website: www.holidaybridge.com

*on tutorial weekends only. **6 sessions on rubber/Chicago events.
Please note: Just Bridge events contain no seminars and do not award prizes.

BRIDGE EVENTS with Bernard Magee



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JANUARY 2015

23-25 Blunsdon House
£245 Competitive Bidding



JUNE

6-8 Olde Barn Hotel
£245 Distributional Hands



20-22 Olde Barn Hotel
£245 Finding Slams



Elstead Hotel
Bournemouth BH1 3QP



Holiday Inn
Newport, S Wales NP18 2YG

30-1 Holiday Inn
£245 Finding Slams

FEBRUARY 2015

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£245 Better Leads and Switches

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£245 Better Finesssing

24-26 Queensferry Hotel
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26-28 Holiday Inn
£245 Doubles

OCTOBER

3-5 Chatsworth Hotel
£245 Game Tries

10-12 Olde Barn Hotel
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NOVEMBER

7-9 Chatsworth Hotel
£245 Hand Evaluation

14-16 Blunsdon House
£245 Further into the Auction



The Olde Barn Hotel
Marston, Lincs NG32 2HT

**Full Board. No Single Supplement.
See Adjacent Booking Form.**

Answers to Bernard Magee's Bidding Quizzes 4-6 on the Cover

4. Dealer East. Love All.

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

West	North	East	South
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
?			

3NT. A new suit at the three-level is unconditionally forcing: your partner should have about 19 total points for his bid, underwriting a game contract (East has 18 HCP and a strong five-card suit).

Trusting your partner, you should show an important aspect of your hand if you can. You do have a fit in clubs, but more important is your stop in the fourth suit. Your side has bid three suits so, with your holding in diamonds, you can suggest a no-trump contract: your 3NT bid ends the auction.

You can see why your partner needs to be so strong, since you are allowed to bid 3NT with such a weak hand. East does not disappoint: you hope to make four clubs and four more top tricks, with the ninth trick coming from diamonds or hearts.

5. Dealer West. N/S Game.

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

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

Pass. Your partner's 2♣ response shows a good hand: 10+ points, so it seems to be your hand, but be careful. Your partner knows the same as you – he has seen you open the bidding so will also know that it is your hand. You need to make a bid only if you have something important to say. Here, you have little to say: you have a minimum hand with just a little distribution.

Your partner will be in a good position to compete for the deal if he feels the need to: either making a take-out double, or bidding 3♣ as here.

A take-out double from you is OK but, with a minimum hand, you do better to leave things to your partner.

6. Dealer West. Love All.

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

West	North	East	South
1♠	1NT	2♥	Pass
?			

Pass. What does your partner's 2♥ bid mean?

Usually, two-level responses are strong, but no-trump bids change all auctions. If your partner opens 1NT, two-level responses are weak and the same is true if there is a 1NT overcall. With strong hands, you can double your opponents' no-trump overcall for penalties.

So your partner's 2♥ bid is an attempt to compete for the contract: it shows a long suit and a relatively weak hand, 5-8 points. Generally, you should pass unless you have a lot of strength or a lot of distribution. ■

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Answers to Bernard Magee's Bidding Quizzes 7-9 on the Cover

7. Dealer North. E/W Game.

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

West	North	East	South
	1♠	2♣	2♣
?			

3NT. I hope you noticed the vulnerability: your side is vulnerable. This means that your partner should have a decent hand for his 2♣ overcall: about the equivalent of an opening hand with a six-card suit.

Listening to the auction and noting your 13 points suggests that someone is a little short of strength: if it turns out to be your partner, then he will have a strong six-card suit, which means your ♣K-Q will be like gold dust.

You have a stop in spades and expect to have eight running tricks – these tricks are much more valuable in no-trumps than in clubs. Surely your partner will supply an extra trick given his vulnerable overcall, so bidding 3NT has to be a good gamble. Your partner is minimum so he would pass a 2NT response.

Your diamonds are weak, but you expect a spade lead and some outside strength in your partner's hand.

8. Dealer East. Love All.

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

West	North	East	South
	1♠	1♣	1♦
1♥		2♣	2♦
?			

Double. Everybody has managed to show their suit at the one-level, your partner has continued the process by rebidding 2♣ and South has followed in his wake. Should you continue the pattern?

To rebid your suit in an auction like this, you would need a six-card suit.

However, do you expect 2♦ to make?

With all the suits bid and partner having rebid 2♣, there is no possible need for a take-out double; your double would be for penalties and you should use it now. Do not worry about North running to spades, because it is unlikely they have a fit there either.

On a good day, you might take 2♦ doubled three off for 500 points.

9. Dealer South. E/W Game.

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

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Dbl	2♥	2♠	Pass
?			

Pass. Another question that relies on you identifying your partner's bid. You have made a penalty double of 1NT showing 16+ points: it is important to remember that your partner knows this too. Your partner will add his strength to your strength and bid to the appropriate level (or perhaps even double 2♥ for penalties). If your partner chooses the two-level, he does not expect a game to make, he is merely competing for the partscore. East can see that the points are relatively evenly divided between the two sides, so it makes sense for him to bid 2♠ to compete for the partscore. With a minimum hand, you should pass: with 19+ you could try for game. ■

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Answers to Bernard Magee's Bidding Quizzes 10-12 on the Cover

10. Dealer East. Love All.

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



West	North	East	South
?		1♥	Pass

1NT. An interesting hand, which was prompted by a similar example from a recent bridge weekend. You have a choice between two calls: Pass or 1NT. Yes, that is right, there is no sensible diamond bid available because you are playing in a partnership. 2♦ and 3♦ show strong hands and 4♦, even if you do not play Splinters, is much too high. Passing is perfectly reasonable and will work fine as long as the opponents bid again, but, with a singleton heart, it is quite possible to imagine them being happy to leave 1♥. I prefer to bid 1NT and then follow with a diamond bid. When you bid this way, you show a hand with a long minor but without the strength to bid at the two-level. Here the auction will be: 1♥-1NT-2♣-2♦. Your partner should really pass 2♦, but even if he bids 2NT, you can then rebid 3♦ and now he will surely pass.

11. Dealer West. N/S Game.

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



West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

Pass. You open the bidding with a plan: you expect to rebid in no-trumps to show your balanced 15 points, but, when your partner responds 2♥, the situation has changed.

He has shown his strength, so you take control. 2♥ shows 6-9 points, which means you can be sure that game is not on and should therefore pass.

Remember that after the first limit bid in an auction, the partner usually takes control.

12. Dealer East. Game All.

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



West	North	East	South
?		1♥	Dbl

Redouble. This answer is often overlooked by many players because it does not occur to them to use the dark blue card in the bidding box. When your opponents double your partner's opening suit bid, your set of responses changes.

With support, you tend to stretch a little, supporting your partner to half a level higher (or even a whole level if the vulnerability is in your favour) than without the double.

Without support, you can respond naturally, but with 9 or more points, you should give your partner the message that your side has the majority of points by redoubling. This allows your side to pursue a penalty from your opponents – any double after a strong redouble is for penalties. ■

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Guy of Gisburne's Assignation

The Sheriff of Nottingham sat back in his chair with a look of great satisfaction. Five tops above average already and three rounds still to be played. Anyone who could achieve such a score opposite that miserable under-performer, Guy of Gisburne, must surely be the finest player in the land.

The castle servants valued their employment and usually made no attempt to score well against him. That much was true. Still, had he not scored just as highly against members of the court? With a less imbecilic partner, his score would have been close to 80% on this occasion.

Two malodorous serfs took their places at the table, not daring to look up at their illustrious opponents.

'You do not greet his Lordship?' demanded Gisburne.

'Er... yes, it's an honour to play against you, my Lord,' said Percy Halfpiece.

'Please forgive our appearance, my Lord,' said Fred Graines. 'The price of soap and fresh clothing is beyond our means in these troubled times. Only yesterday my wife was telling me...'

'Be silent!' commanded the Sheriff. What interest did he have in such scum? If they couldn't manage their finances properly, it was hardly a concern of his.

This was the first board of the round:

Dealer North. Love All.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Percy Halfpiece</i>	<i>Guy of Gisburne</i>	<i>Fred Graines</i>	<i>The Sheriff</i>
	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	7♠	All Pass	

West led the ♣J and Gisburne looked nervously across the table before displaying the dummy. 'I've taken a slight risk in the bidding, my Lord,' he said. 'My diamonds are not exactly...'

'You appear to be confused,' intervened the Sheriff. 'It is sheep that are meant to bleat pathetically. The sole purpose of the dummy is to lay down his cards, preferably as quickly as possible.'

The Sheriff was relieved to see such powerful trumps hit the table. Yes,

with reasonable breaks, thirteen tricks would be easy. 'Ace,' he said. 'And the ace of spades.'

When West showed out on this trick, Gisburne was somewhat alarmed. Was it his fault if trumps broke 5-0? Surely his Lordship wouldn't blame him for that?

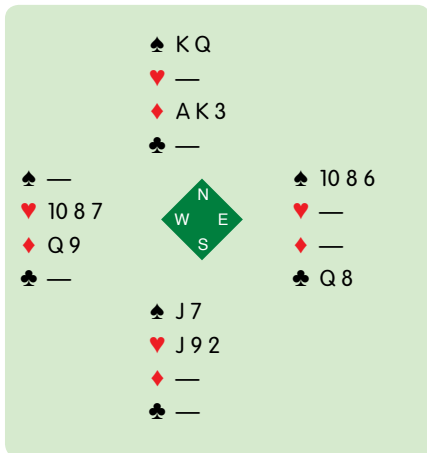
The Sheriff paused to assess the implications of the bad trump break. If the three side-suit AK combinations could be cashed without an adverse ruff, he would have to score six more trump tricks on a cross-ruff. He would need to ruff the third round of hearts with the ♠2. If East's shape was something like 5-3-2-3, it seemed it could be done.

The Sheriff cashed dummy's remaining club honour. He then crossed to the ♥K and played the ♥A, discarding dummy's last club. On this trick, East followed with the ♥Q. The Sheriff winced. It could hardly be more obvious that East had begun with only two hearts. The plan of ruffing a heart with the ♠2 would have to be abandoned. What else could he try?

The Sheriff led a low diamond from his hand. 'Play the jack,' he commanded.

When East followed impotently with a low diamond, the Sheriff returned to his hand with a trump to the nine and repeated the diamond finesse, East following suit.

These cards remained: ▶



‘Diamond ace,’ said the Sheriff.

The defence was at an end. If East ruffed one of the top diamonds, declarer would overruff and draw the remaining trumps. Dummy would then be high. If, instead, East declined to ruff either diamond, declarer would discard two hearts and score his three trump honours with a high cross-ruff.

The Sheriff displayed his cards. ‘The rest are mine,’ he said.

‘Yes, indeed, my Lord,’ said a relieved Fred Graines. His five-card trump holding had been burning like hot coals in his hand. Just imagine the consequences if they had caused the downfall of the Sheriff’s grand slam! His wife would be lucky to see him again.

‘But the serf still has three trumps, my Lord,’ said Gisburne.

‘Yes, also sufficient grey matter to realise that he will have no defence when I play dummy’s top diamonds,’ retorted the Sheriff.

Gisburne blinked. ‘Quite so, my Lord. You played it well.’

The last round of the evening saw the arrival of the Bishop of Leicester at the Sheriff’s table. A larger than life character, with his midriff swathed in purple, he was a respected player of the cards.

‘Is Your Worship enjoying his session with us?’ enquired the Sheriff.

‘Well enough,’ replied the Bishop. ‘Four tops over would win any game back in Leicester. I hear that the serfs toss in their cards against you and

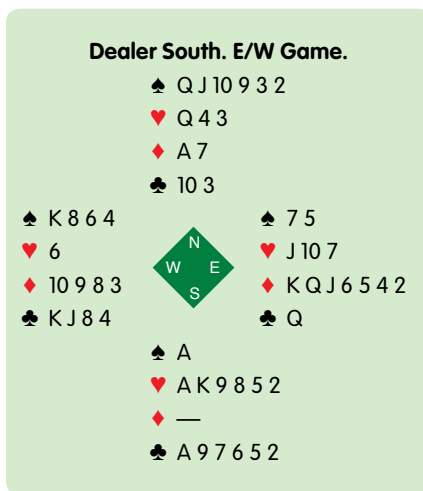
we’re likely to come second.’

Gisburne leaned forward. ‘Name the man who tells such lies and before nightfall he’ll be suspended by his thumbs in the castle dungeon!’ he declared.

The Bishop chuckled to himself. ‘Very well,’ he replied. ‘It was Lady Berenice de Gautoy.’

‘Er... well, it was surely remarked in jest,’ stuttered Gisburne. ‘My Lord Sheriff’s cardplay is the finest in the land. It is well known.’

The players drew their cards for this board:



West	North	East	South
<i>Guy of Gisburne</i>	<i>Father Locke</i>	<i>The Sheriff</i>	<i>Bishop of Leicester</i>
Pass	1♠	2♦	1♥
3♦	4♥	Pass	3♣
All Pass			6♥

Gisburne led the ♦10 and down went the dummy. The Bishop paused to

plan the contract. If trumps were 2-2 and clubs 3-2, he could simply draw trumps and establish the club suit with a ruff. Still, there might be a better line. Perhaps he could give up a spade trick and discard all his club losers on the spades. ‘Win with the ace,’ he instructed his partner.

The Bishop discarded the ♠A on this trick and then ran the ♠Q, discarding a club. Gisburne won with the ♠K and had no constructive return. The Bishop ruffed the diamond continuation, drew trumps with the ace, king and queen and then discarded his remaining club losers on dummy’s spade winners.

‘Lead a club!’ cried the Sheriff. ‘Then he has no chance.’

‘But, my Lord, he bid clubs,’ Gisburne replied. ‘I took your diamond bid as asking for a lead.’

The Bishop turned towards Gisburne. ‘It should go down, anyway,’ he said. ‘You must let my ♠Q win.’

Gisburne’s mouth fell open. ‘But you continue with the ♠J,’ he replied.

‘Let that win too,’ said the Bishop.

‘Surely you continue with the ♠10,’ persisted Gisburne.

‘Would my Lord Sheriff not then discard his singleton club?’ retorted the Bishop. ‘If I run the ♠10, then you will give him a club ruff.’

The Sheriff glared blackly across the table. ‘I have rarely seen such an obvious defensive hold-up!’ he exclaimed. ‘What think you, Lord Bishop? Should I have my partner suspended alongside Lady Berenice de Gautoy tonight? What a handsome couple they would make!’





Revokes: What Happens? Is it Fair?

‘You reneged!’ ‘No, I didn’t!’ ‘Yes, you did!’ ‘I am afraid you did, partner.’ ‘Well, I didn’t mean to.’ ‘That’s two tricks to us!’ ‘No, it isn’t, it’s one trick.’ ‘Well, anyway, it made no difference, it isn’t fair.’

Does any of this sound familiar? In my fifty-plus years of playing bridge, I have heard these sort of things many times and many such arguments have been made. So let us consider what should really happen.

Let us look at the basics. First, ‘renege’ is a very old term. The modern term is ‘revoke’; it changed in about 1940 but the old term is still occasionally used. Second, never argue with your opponents in a duplicate: just call the director and let him sort it out. It can be more difficult in rubber bridge, or in a match played privately: then the players will have to sort it out.

Following suit is the most basic rule in the game and players who fail to follow suit spoil the hand for other players. As a result, it was decided that there would be some sort of automatic penalties for players who revoke to persuade them to take more care. However, it was also realised that they should never gain, so if they have gained any tricks because of the revoke, these should be given back and the Laws allow for that. So, if a player revokes and it is established, then there is a combination of penalty and redress that can lead to none, one, two or more tricks being transferred.

If a revoke is discovered in time it can be corrected and in time means before it is established: but when is it established? Normally, it is established when the revoker or his partner plays to the next trick; though the revoking side claiming, conceding or agreeing to a claim will also establish it.

If the revoke is not established, then

it must be corrected by changing it for a legal card. If the revoker was a defender, then the revoke card becomes a major penalty card and the penalties for that apply. Any cards played after the revoke by the other side may be changed and, if they are changed, subsequent cards played by the revoking side may also be changed, again defender’s changed cards becoming major penalty cards.

If the revoke is established, the revoke card remains played and the hand is played out. At the end of the hand, the director decides on the automatic penalty tricks. Tricks won before the revoke are safe and are never transferred. If the revoker won the revoke trick and his side won another, then two tricks are transferred. Note, it has to be the actual revoker: for example, if declarer revokes and the trick is won by dummy, then this is not a two trick revoke. If the revoker does not win the revoke trick, then only one trick is transferred, assuming he or his partner win either the revoke trick or a later trick. Also, only one trick is transferred if the revoker wins the revoke trick but that is the last trick his side wins. Finally, if the revoking side win neither the revoke trick nor any subsequent tricks, no tricks are transferred. So the automatic revoke tricks might be none, one or two.

In some cases, the revoke makes no difference and any automatic tricks are to penalise the revoker. In other cases, the revoke made a difference of one or even two tricks and the automatic tricks give those tricks back. So the automatic tricks sometimes penalise and sometimes give redress for tricks lost.

What happens if a revoke costs more tricks, for example, when declarer is able to run a long suit in dummy that would not run without the revoke, costing the other side, maybe, four

tricks? Then the director adjusts the score to give the four tricks back. Note, he does not add any penalty tricks: he adjusts it for redress only. When your opponents revoke, you may or may not gain, but you can never lose.

Some players think it is ridiculous that you could lose your ace of trumps when defending a grand slam if you or your partner revoke. But it is a penalty and you can never lose it if you and your partner always follow suit. Perhaps safest is to lead your ace of trumps before your partner can revoke! Remember that tricks won before any revoke are safe and will never be transferred.

‘Dummy can’t revoke.’ This is a well-known but totally incorrect saying. If dummy fails to follow suit when able, then he has revoked. However, automatic revoke tricks are not transferred, but redress may be given.

‘There is no such thing as a revoke at trick twelve.’ Again, this is an incorrect saying, since if someone does not follow suit at trick twelve then he has revoked. But the rules dealing with it are different: after a trick twelve revoke, the last two tricks are replayed without the revoke, though an adjustment will be given if a defender has gained from seeing his partner’s revoke card.

Finally, let me return to the argument that it is not fair. Sadly, in the modern era, players often think that they should not suffer even when they do something wrong. But bridge is a much better game if the rules are followed and the rule about following suit is so important that the law makers feel some sort of real penalty is a good idea. It also means that life is much easier for directors: rarely do they worry about redress for revokes because the automatic penalties usually cover redress as well as penalise. ■