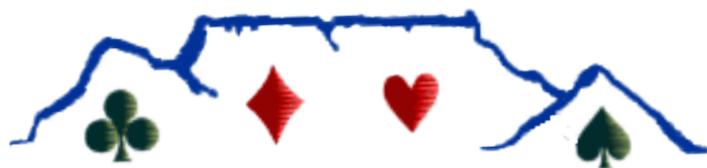


# WESTERN CAPE BRIDGE UNION NEWSLETTER



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## Message from the Editor

Dear Bridge Players

The summer months, once more, bring us sunny skies and warmer weather, as well as a return of our regular overseas visitors who spend a few months with us – at the bridge table as well as at other activities and social gatherings. We welcome them back to our shores and look forward to being in their company again.

In this edition, I would like to pay tribute to the volunteers who run several of our bridge clubs – whether affiliated or unaffiliated; whether in the Cape Town Metropole or further afield throughout the Western Cape.

As club playing members, we walk into our bridge clubs, sit down and play bridge for approximately three and a half hours, with tea and sandwiches and cakes in between, and we also have an opportunity to socialise with one another. At the end of the session, we get our results within minutes with personal printouts, as well as hand records. The results from affiliated clubs are also uploaded to the WCBU website. If technology is not available at a bridge club, then this must all be done manually. A wonderful morning / afternoon / evening's entertainment for very modest table money.

But how does this all happen?

- Tables need to be set up with tablecloths (often different colours for different sections) and table numbers put out.
- Pre-dealt boards for the sessions need to be organised in advance – and there is always someone who has to collect the suitcases of boards and also return them as promptly as possible.
- While there are regular tournament directors at the larger clubs, replacements need to be found when they are away on holiday or if they are ill.
- Table money needs to be collected and calculated for each session, as well as subscriptions that are due annually.
- Someone needs to buy cakes or bread for sandwiches and the ingredients for the fillings.
- Some of the clubs offer three, four or five week tournaments, either for pairs sessions or for teams; calendars for these are arranged and posted on the website towards the end of each year for the following year.

- Entries have to be taken and the seating and movement for these tournaments have to be worked out in advance.
- Someone needs to check bidding boxes and also arrange for cleaning of tablecloths from time to time.
- Some of the clubs give out prizes and these also need to be organized by someone.
- After each session, someone needs to pack away everything for storage for the next session.
- Discussions / arrangements need to be made with the owner of the property for its use for the bridge clubs – and this arrangement needs to be updated on occasion.
- And those are just the main aspects, as there are always other issues that may need to be managed from time to time, either by a club chairperson or a club committee, which will meet on a regular basis to discuss pertinent issues and to make decisions.

The above happens smoothly, behind the scenes, because of the unpaid volunteers that love the game and give selflessly of their time to ensure that the bridge clubs run smoothly for the benefit and enjoyment of the many bridge players who also love the game. And these volunteers are not many – just a small group of people who are nearly always on duty to give a hand whenever needed. A very sincere appreciation to all of them!

There are, as usual, a number of contributors to this newsletter to whom we are most grateful. Tim Cope completes his very instructive series on pre-emptive bidding; while Kathryn Herz & Eckhard Böhlke continue their interesting series on matchpoint pairs strategy. Neil Hayward gives us some more information on bridge laws; and Glen Holman gives us a different perspective on high card point evaluation. There is also an article on the “abc’s” of using SABF online for those who are not yet familiar with it. And, as usual, there is news of other events at clubs or regionally.

Finally, a sincere “thank you” to Warwick Wealth for their sponsorship.

Happy reading!

*Shirley Kaminer*

Count both your losing and your winning tricks. If the total does not come to 13, count your cards.

## **President's Message**

Wow! That is powerful stuff, Shirley, eloquently and expertly put! It makes one think... doesn't it? It is easy to forget what the few achieve for so many and I know, as players, we are extremely grateful... aren't we?

I heard about a man who just had a most extraordinary day. I snuck a look at his diary for the 19<sup>th</sup> and this is what I read. A scribbled heading – “**Something's Gotta Give (a.k.a. The Cairo Incident)**”.

*Up at 4am. Land OR Tambo 8.30am. Hire automatic 8-seater. Find coffee, check emails. Greet five strangers arriving from Cyprus via Doha. Drive and check in at hotel. Ensure safely tucked in for siesta – a long flight and don't mess with tradition. Finalise next day's golf sponsorship and conference facilities for meetings on offshore investment in property as a means to obtain permanent EU citizenship.*

*1pm - drive to meet executives at a gold mine to advise on use of specialist defensive counter measures after two multi-million gold bullion heists, conducted with military offensive precision, at two nearby mines in the last three months.*

*Return to hotel for meetings with clients to examine Cyprus government-backed citizenship by investment and permanent residency programmes. Dine with overseas delegates. Write polite but punchy emails to chase location of WCBU's NPO registration certificate and draft Bridge Centre lease; ask CCT – most respectfully, of course – to pass water or vacate the porcelain throne.*

What a day the man was having – a day full of stark contrast, yet directly related subjects. On the one hand, helping to secure South Africa's critical mineral resources; on the other hand, setting out options for individuals and families to put in place their plan B; and on the other hand, attending to urgent bridge matters.

The observant among you will have counted three hands and, as bridge-players, we all know the fourth is dummy. LOL. The thing is... time is a constant, whilst energy levels are not so inclined. I suspect something's going to have to give, probably **sooner** rather than later.

But hey, it's almost Christmas – a time to be spent with family and friends. Let us help fill your stocking by offering you this simple challenge. Your mission, should you choose to accept it – **be the first person to locate the WCBU's original NPO registration certificate**. It is with the Department of Social Development in Pretoria or Cape Town or in transit between the two. Our confirmed registration number is 235-718. Present the certificate (or firm proof of its whereabouts) to any Committee member and claim your R1,000 reward. That's it. Go for it! I bet you can't find it!!

Why do we need it? We are still waiting to receive a draft copy of the new lease for the Bridge Centre, but the City of Cape Town have told us that they will need to see the original NPO certificate when they are ready to sign the lease which could be early in January.

And why the “Cairo Incident”? Returning to the man's story –

*Climb into bed at about 9.30pm for an early night. Snoring already but awoken by cell phone. Better answer it, could be a Sip-riot in need (it's late). “Hi Steve, Bob here. I urgently need to speak to George but he's not answering his phone. Do you know if his number has changed?” “Ok, Bob, leave it with me and I'll get back to you.” What to do...? Light bulb moment. Look up George's bridge partner's phone number on [www.sabfonline.co.za](http://www.sabfonline.co.za). Dial and Jenny answers immediately. Call her again in three minutes (apparently her phone won't let her look up numbers while on a call). “Sorry, Steve. Can't find his number but think it ends in 4567.” (Turns out George had not updated his details on SABF Online.) “I can check when I'm back home this coming week-end.” “Where are you?”, the man asks. “Cairo!” Jenny replies. [Ed: most names changed to protect the innocent.]*

Diarise WCBU AGM on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 at 10am at the Bridge Centre in Green Point. Club chairpersons – please make sure your club attends and is properly represented in order to elect a new committee.

See you at the Festival – a few places are still available in the Pairs, but please hurry and enter online by this Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> December.

Best wishes

*Steve Bunker*

## Pre-empting at the 2 level

*by Tim Cope*

We have left the most common pre-empt of the weak 2 bids until last. It is most common as you only need a 6-card suit to pre-empt, which is more common than a 7-card suit and so on. Whilst there are many variations of what your 2 bids can be used for (such as Multis, 2 suiters and the like), we are going to stick to the traditional methods of the weak 2 where 2D, 2H and 2S are all natural and weak - but we will throw in a twist just for a bit of fun!

As we have said, bridge is a warzone – and the more often we can find **suitable** hands to make a pre-emptive bid on, the more difficult we are making life for the opposition. So, whilst 6-card suits are more common than 7-card suits, 5-card suits are more common than 6-card suits.

So, the radical piece of advice here is that if we are first or second in hand and not vulnerable, I would recommend that you consider opening a weak 2 on a 5-card suit, so long as that suit is of sufficient quality – never something like Q10xxx but AKxxx is fine. It will be virtually impossible for the opponents to penalize you early in the auction (as all early doubles are take-out). The bid has possibly made life tough for your opponents and may be a good lead director for partner should the opposition buy the hand.

Note that this opening only applies to the opening of 2H or 2S (not 2D which should always be a 6-card suit) and only when non vul. Note also that, if you do play these methods, you have to alert your opposition to the fact that it might be a 5-card suit.

If we do play these methods, then if we want to enquire constructively about partner's hand, we need to be able to find out if they have a 5- or 6-card suit on some occasions. So, the main relay we will use is the 2NT bid if we are constructively looking to move forward.

Responses to 2NT relay after 2♥/♠ opening:

- 3♣= weak hand; 5-card suit
- 3♦= good hand; 6-card suit
- 3♠ = good suit; poor points
- 3M = weak hand; 6-card suit
- 3N = good hand; 5-card suit
- 4 any = 6/5 shape

That is how we would start bidding most constructive hands.

But we do have other options available:

- a) Pass (sometimes in fear and trembling)
- b) Bid 3 of the major – continuing the pre-empt
- c) Bid 4 of the major – this can be done for two reasons – either to pre-empt (using the Law as our guideline with respect to the vulnerability) or because we think we can make it and we do not feel it necessary to go via 2NT
- d) Bid a new suit at the 3 level, which is invitational but not forcing. The opener should only move forward with a fit or partial fit in responder's suit, otherwise we can pass

The range of the weak 2 opening is up to you – I would recommend 5-10 if not vul and 6-10 if vulnerable.

As to suit quality, certainly if opening a 5-card suit we should have two of the top three honours or three of the top five. When opening a 6-card suit, I am not as strict, but it is more about the intermediate cards than the top honours – for instance, at a stretch, I would not be averse to opening Q1098xx, but would never open Qxxxxx. Probably each partnership should discuss what their minimum suit requirements are.

### The 2D opening

If you have reached this far, well done! The last of the pre-empts is 2D – always a 6-card suit, but unfortunately with a whole new set of parameters. It works well and, from an opponent's viewpoint, is quite a tough one to deal with.

The reason we need different parameters in terms of the constructive auctions is that we may often need to look at various game contracts which are less frequent when a major weak 2 is opened. 4 of a major, along with 3NT or 5D may all be possibilities.

So, if as a responder you have a constructive hand with a 5-card major, you can bid it over 2D and it is forcing for one round. The 2D opener will respond:

- Raises with 3+ card support
- Splinters = 3+ card support + max by jumping in the singleton
- Bids 2N = no support; max
- Repeats suit with minimum (no support)
- Bids new suit = natural (4+ cards, max, no support)

Just looking at that last response, I have no problem with opening 2D with another 4-card suit – even a major. If partner has a constructive hand, we can often get the chance to show this second suit, so it will not get lost; and if they do not have a constructive hand, then we have the security blanket that, even though we may have missed a side fit, we have the security of playing in a decent 6 card suit.

If, as responder, you have a constructive hand but no 5-card major to bid, you can use the 2NT bid as an enquiry. The responses to 2NT are:

- 2N = relay → the 2♦ bidder then bids:
- 3♣ = Max hand; not 4M
  - 3♦ = Minimum with 6♦
  - 3♥ = Maximum with 4♥
  - 3♠ = Maximum with 4♠

After 2♦-2NT, 3♣-3♦ asks; then Opener can bid:

- 3♥ = unspecified shortage → 3♠ asks:
  - 3NT = ♥, 4♣ = ♣, 4♦ = ♦
- 3♠ = no shortage
- 3N = 4♣ (then 4♣ = RKCB in clubs)

Sounds a bit complicated but worthwhile, as it does get the 4-card major across if held by the opener, and you can find out about shortages (probably the most complicated bit that you can leave out initially until you are comfortable with the rest).

One small area that a partnership needs to discuss is what to do after interference over a weak 2 opening. I could probably go into another 10 pages of possible auctions but, for the time being, let us keep it simple. The rule is that if partner opens a weak 2 and the opposition bid (this can be a suit or a double), then bidding one below the suit that partner has opened is a game try in partner's suit. Doubles are for penalty, and other suit bids are natural NF.

So, 2H → (Dbl) → 3D would be a game try in hearts (whereas 3H would be pre-emptive).  
And 2S → (3C) → 3H would be a game try in spades as opposed to 3S which is just competitive.

Next time we will be back to discuss how to defend against those blasted pre-empts!

Some questions below, with answers towards the end of this bulletin:

1. What would you open on the following hands – not vulnerable?
  - a) S K10xxx H Qxx D Kxx C xx
  - b) S Qxxx H xx D AQxxxx C x
  - c) S x H AQJ10xx D J109x C xx
  
2. How would you respond on the following hands?
  - a) Partner opens 2H – S KJxx H x D AKxx C KJxx
  - b) Partner opens 2D – S AKxxx H xxx D Kx C AJx
  - c) Partner opens 2H and the next hand bids 2S - S xxx H K10x D AKQxx C Qx



***Tim is available for lessons – individuals, groups or online.  
He can be contacted on 084-4474944.***

## **National Events in Cape Town**

The national events are under the auspices of the SABF but it is the local provincial union, the Western Cape Bridge Union, that is responsible for a great deal of the organization and the practicalities of these events. The committees of the SABF and the WCBU consist of volunteers who put in a great deal of time and effort to ensure that these events run smoothly and that they are enjoyable experiences for all participants. A big “thank you” to all who are involved!

### **Inter-Club Tournament: 31 October – 3 November 2019**

The national inter-club tournament took place over four days at the Bridge Centre, Green Point, with many bridge players participating from across South Africa. The format was a round robin teams event and the top two winning spots went to Johannesburg clubs – The Links (S Lang, R Bernstein, C Child, G Sandler) and Hillbrow (J Grant, L Chemaly, N Bateman, M Modlin) respectively. Third place went to the team representing Keurboom Monday (D Minwalla, N Minwalla, P Mestern, J Gruft). Further details can be found on the website.



The World Cup Rugby Final in Japan took place in the midst of the tournament, but WCBU organized that the match would be available to be viewed at the Bridge Centre and the organizers arranged for a slight re-scheduling of the bridge matches to accommodate this event – a very exciting and well worth interlude for all the bridge players.

Congratulations to the winners of the Inter-Club and all who participated – and, of course, to the Bokke!

### **National Congress: 9 – 16 March 2020**

The SABF National Congress will be taking place in Cape Town from 9 – 16 March 2020 at the Italian Club in Milnerton. This is the premier national event on the SABF calendar. There are both teams and pairs events and we hope that a large proportion of the bridge playing community will participate.

It's not the handling of difficult hands that makes the winning player, for there are not enough of them. It's the ability to avoid messing up the easy ones that really matters.

## Do you know how to count your points?

*by Glen Holman*

This seems so be a silly question to be asking since, for most of us, the first thing we learn when we are taught the game is:

A=4

K=3

Q=2

J=1

In fact, many people just stop there. If we venture into Goren's Bridge Complete which popularised the above point count system developed by Milton Work, they extended this to playing points in two ways. The first was to make an adjustment for length. For a long suit add 1 point for the fifth card and 2 points for each additional card. With no long suit a point is DEDUCTED for any 4333 distribution. Alternatively, the second was to make an adjustment for shortages where you added 1 point for a doubleton, 2 points for a singleton and 3 points for a void. However, when a significant fit is found then 1 point is added for a doubleton, 3 points for a singleton and 5 points for a void. We still DEDUCT 1 point for any 4333 distribution. Usually the playing point values for long suits and short suits come out quite closely. Those who know me as an aggressive bidder will not be surprised to find out that when the two approaches do differ, I use the larger. For many of us, this was the new stopping place. Those of you who are losing trick count aficionados, will make a further implicit adjustment for touching honours.

The advent of modern computers and their ability to generate millions of hands has put a spanner into the works. A study championed by Marty Bergen came up with an amended point count system.

A=4.5

K=3

Q=1.5

J=0.75

T=0.25

Notice that the total for each suit is unchanged since

$4+3+2+1=10$  and  $4.5+3+1.5+.75+.25=10$

Thus, we are still dealing with a total of 40 HCP's in a deck.

Some observations here. Most of us know from experience that holding 4 jacks is not the equivalent of an ace and similarly neither are 2 queens worth an ace. The fact that 10's now also count for a bit is also taken into account. One other observation that we all know that is not

included here is that combined honours are worth more than scattered honours. So, a holding of QJTx is much better than Qx, Jxx and Txx.

The adjustments for long and short suits remain the same. It is certainly possible to use this fractional deck, but for those of you not enamoured with using fractions at the table, the following ad hoc adjustment comes pretty close: if you have a combined total of 4 or more aces and 10's, add one point to your HCP total. If the total of your 10's and aces is 1 or less, then deduct one point.

We now have four ways of counting our points - two using the old point count adjusted for distribution; and two using the new point count adjusted for distribution.

Please don't tell anyone that I take the maximum of the four.

## **Summary of monthly rules from the SABF**

***by Heidi Atkinson and James Grant***

### **June Rule**

Count your cards face down when you receive the board. You and you alone are responsible for ensuring you have exactly 13 cards in your hand. If you discover that this is not the case once play begins, it is likely to result in a penalty if the hand cannot be completed.

### **July Rule**

Opening Lead and Bidding Cards: After three passes, the bidding is ended and the opening lead should be made face down. The main reasons for this are:

- 1) It avoids leads out of turn, as this card may be returned to hand unseen without penalty if the lead should have been made from the other side of the table.
- 2) It allows the partner to ask questions about the bidding should he so wish, without influencing the lead.
- 3) Declarer or dummy should now point out any missing alerts or misinformation.

The latter reason is why the bidding cards should remain exposed on the table until the card led is displayed.

### **August Rule**

Please do not touch your bidding box cards until you are sure of your bid. Removing a bid then replacing it in the bidding box, or hovering over both the 'pass' and 'contract' sections, makes you guilty of giving unauthorized information to your partner as it shows either uncertainty as to whether you have a bid or uncertainty as to which is the correct bid or call.

This unintended information may influence the outcome of the contract and, if contested by the opponents, may result in an adjusted score.

*Ed: A selection of these rules will be contained in future newsletters. Of course, we all know what the rules are - but sometimes we need a reminder!*

## Inter-School Bridge Tournament

The annual Inter-School Tournament took place on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at the Bowls section of the Western Province Cricket Club.

Seven schools / colleges participated - Rustenburg Girls Junior, Wynberg Girls High School, Sunlands Primary School, Grove Primary School, False Bay College, Trafalgar High School, Bridgetown High School.

Eight tables of young bridge players competed for the honour of winning for their school.



The 1<sup>st</sup> prize went to Rustenburg Girls Junior – Catherine Hayward playing with last year's winner from Wynberg Girls High, Ashleigh Mingo.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> prize went to Sunlands Primary School – David Kannemeyer playing with Aneeq Arnold.



Kitty Cruise was the organiser of this event, assisted by some members of the Western Cape Bridge Union, including Steve Bunker, WCBU President, who also handed out the prizes.

The 1<sup>st</sup> prize of R6000 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize of R4000 was donated by our sponsor, Fred Alger. His generosity in sponsoring the prize money is greatly appreciated.

## Donation of bridge tables by Impala Bridge Club



At the above event, Impala Bridge Club very kindly donated two bridge tables to False Bay College to assist them with teaching bridge to their students.

The bridge playing students, with Acting Principal of False Bay College, Karen Hendricks, receive the bridge tables from the Chairman of Impala Bridge Club, Andrew Cruise.

## Tournament Director, please!

### On a Point of Law: Hesitations and Logical Alternatives

*by Neil Hayward*

Let's say an auction goes (all vulnerable):

1H – (2S) – 3H – (3S)  
P – (P) – 4H – All Pass

The presentation of the auction does not tell you the whole story. Opener hesitated after the 3S bid, before passing. Responder then raised to 4H. The defenders should reserve their rights as soon as the auction is over. This is not to be seen as being petty or over-competitive. It is correct procedure. You place on record the fact that there was a hesitation.

Here are some points to note:

- Although the stop card has been banished to bridge museums, Responder must still pause for a notional 10 seconds over the jump to 2S (as was the case when we still used the stop card). This is so that you avoid unauthorised information from being passed to Partner.
- It is a pity that Opener did not decide on an action before the 3S bid, rather than after the bid. Then there would not be any issue. Responder's action over an in-tempo pass by Opener would not be contentious. It might be bad bridge, but Responder would have a “free” choice of action. Unfortunately, hesitations do two things: they cause your opponents to feel unhappy, and they compromise Partner.
- Responder is not barred from bidding after the hesitation (as some think), but the 4H bid might be cancelled by the tournament director (TD) at the end of the hand, and 3S might be the adjusted contract. This would happen if 4H works out well for the declaring side. On the other hand, if it turns out that both 4H and 3S cannot be made, the spade bidders will (presumably) not call the director at the end of the hand.
- The crux of the matter is this: unless the 4H bid is clear-cut, it could be argued that the push to 4H was influenced by the hesitation. If a pass over the 3S bid is an action that many might choose, then a pass is considered a logical alternative. Had Opener produced an in-tempo pass, it is just a pass. However, Opener's slow pass suggests something extra, and Responder's 4H bid might be deemed to be based on unauthorised information.

Let's look at some other imaginary hand; the other side of the same coin. Opener has a 6-5 shape in the majors, and Responder hesitates before passing. If Opener bids (as we said, a hesitation does not bar you from bidding), and this action is considered an obvious choice, despite Responder's hesitation, the bid would be allowed to stand.

In the end, a good test is this: imagine you present the hand to a number of players of equivalent standard and ask them what they would do at the critical moment (without telling them that there was a hesitation). If many would consider passing, rather than bidding, it suggests that the contract should be adjusted. On the other hand, if virtually everybody says they would bid without considering a pass, an adjusted contract would seem to be inappropriate.

Whether to adjust or not is, of course, a decision the tournament director must make.

## **Festival of Bridge: 14 – 16 December**

A reminder that the Festival of Bridge will be held at the Bridge Centre in Green Point, Cape Town from Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> to Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December.

There will be a two session Teams event on the first day, followed by a three session Pairs event on the following days – two sessions on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> and the third session on the morning of Monday 16<sup>th</sup>, followed by a prize-giving lunch. There are numerous prizes for all levels of bridge players.

The cost is R800 per team and R600 per pair. There are still a few spaces left if you have not yet entered. Booking can be done by 6 December on the Western Cape Bridge website – [www.wcbridge.co.za](http://www.wcbridge.co.za) - where further details are available. For queries, please contact Hilary Nick ([hills@iafrica.com](mailto:hills@iafrica.com)) or Jocelyn Ashberg ([ashberg@iafrica.com](mailto:ashberg@iafrica.com)).

A doctor concerned about the physical condition of one of his bridge-playing patients, during a regular check-up visit asked, —“Do you get much exercise?” —“Only when I sit East-West”, was the reply.

## **The Buccaneer League cont.**

In the September edition of the WCBU newsletter, there was a comprehensive write-up of the Buccaneer League. The initial sub-heading was the one below . . .

### **Background**

*The League was formed in the early 70's as a breakaway group of non-affiliated clubs that wished to enjoy some inter-club competition. The exact history of the people that formed this League is not recorded, although Andre Truter and his now deceased wife, Pat, ran the League very successfully for many years.*

In response to this, I received an email from Peter Lawson, who was one of the two persons instrumental in establishing the League:

*The Buccaneer League was created by Rob Dallas-Orr and myself, I was the original chairperson and Rob the secretary. I was then a member of Fish Hoek, Rob of Impala, and we organised a teams-of-four match between the two clubs. After the success of this, we organised a 3-way match including Tygerberg, and then the league was created. I drew up the original set of rules and was responsible for its name, which derived from the fact that initially only non-affiliated clubs contributed teams. In those days matches were played at home and away, including Somerset West, and it became necessary to regulate the standard of refreshments to avoid competition in that area!*

*Unfortunately when I gave up bridge (for about 20 years) I passed on relevant memorabilia to the then WPBU chairman who lived in Bowwood road. Presumably he just kept them and they were lost upon his death.*

Thank you, Peter, for filling in the gaps. We now have a precise record about the formation of the League.

## Courtesy at the Bridge Table

I am sure that most of us have witnessed bad manners at the bridge table, often between partners, but also unacceptable comments to the opposition. As a result, TD's are often called to rule on behaviour rather than infringement of the rules of bridge.

Neil Hayward has offered two acronyms that they emphasise in Scotland:

**B**e kind to opponents, your partner, the TD  
**R**eport unacceptable behaviour  
**I**ntroduce yourself to your opponents  
**D**o your bit to help  
**G**ive something back to the game  
**E**njoy your bridge; encourage others to enjoy it, too

All players are urged to help stamp out unacceptable behaviour:

**B**ullying  
**R**udeness  
**I**mpatience  
**D**illy-dallying  
**G**ratuitous remarks  
**E**mootional outbursts



## Forthcoming Events

Saturday 14 – Monday 16 December 2019	Festival of Bridge – Red point event (Bridge Centre)
Saturday 1 February 2020 (morning)	WCBU AGM (Bridge Centre)
Sunday 16 February & Sunday 1 March 2020	Western Cape Pairs – Red point event (Bridge Centre)
Monday 9 – Monday 16 March 2020	SABF National Congress - Red Point event (Italian Club, Milnerton, CT)

## Strategy at Matchpointed Pairs Tournaments

### Part 3: Competitive Bidding – Decisions at Part-Score Level

*by Kathryn Herz & Eckhard Böhlke*

In this section of our series of articles we will offer a deeper insight into an important area where matchpoints strategy varies from other types of scoring methods: competitive bidding at the part-score level. Here more matchpoints are at stake than at any other part of the game. Both pairs have in the area of 16 to 24 points in the combined hands, i.e. not enough to bid game (assuming no great extras in terms of distributional values). The opponents are not much weaker or stronger than our side, which usually results in competitive bidding. Various contracts and scores are possible for both parties. The 3-level often turns out as the battlefield where crucial decisions are made fighting for the optimal part-score.

What should be our objective? Up to which level should we compete? Whilst we will provide some clear guidelines, applying these will always involve a good degree of judgement in terms of hand evaluation and partnership understanding, thus there is no guarantee of success and no risk of perfection! Just like holding 25 points in your combined hands won't guarantee making game, you will find that neither the "law of total tricks" nor the concept of "strength levels" outlined below will always work to your advantage. However, more often than not these guidelines will lead you towards achieving more successful results.

#### Fit or Misfit & "Law of Total Tricks"

- When no one party holds sufficient strength for game, often both parties are involved in the bidding. In a **misfit situation**, i.e. if no party has at least one 8-card fit, it is mostly better to **let the opponents play the hand**. However, when both parties have a good fit, each of them can make a **part-score** at the 2- or 3-level **well worth competing for**.
- Experience proves that at the part-score level the sum of the number of tricks each party can make in their best fit is equal to the total number of trumps held by both parties in both their trump suits ("**Law of Total Tricks**"). E.g., N/S holding an 8-card fit in ♥ and E/W a 9-card fit in ♠, add up to a total of 17 tricks that can be made in ♥ and ♠ contracts. How these 17 tricks divide between the two parties depends on various factors such as the strength of both parties and for which party any given finesses are working. Thus, it is possible (albeit less likely) that N/S holding 22 HCP can make only 2♥ whereas E/W are making 3♠ with only 18 HCP.
- At the part-score level, the number of total tricks seldom deviates from expectation by more than one trick. However, a higher number than suggested by the "law" is to be expected
  - When there are double-fits (e.g. N/S having ♥ and ♦ fits, E/W ♠ and ♣ fits)
  - When one party holds a singleton in the opponents' suit
  - When small honours (Q, J, 10) are held in own suits, not in the opponents' suitsFewer tricks can be expected, however,
  - With 4-3-3-3 distributions
  - When small honours are held in the opponents' suits.
- According to the "Law" it is therefore advisable to bid to the 3-level when holding 9 trumps (preferably with an immediate pre-empt, unless holding ♠, thus standing a chance to buy the contract at the 2-level) except at unfavourable vulnerability or when devaluating factors apply.

#### We distinguish three levels of strength at the part-score level

It may seem difficult to gauge the strength level of our combined hands accurately, but it is important to try to make that estimate. Because without knowing our strength level situation, we cannot make an informed decision defining our objective in the bidding process.

- **Strength Level 1:** Holding only about **16-18 HCP**, the part-score usually belongs to the opponents. Your **objective** is **to minimise your minus**, i.e. ideally to score not worse than minus 100. To achieve this objective, we should usually bid “2 over 2”, whilst only bidding “3 over 2” when holding nine trumps and/or when not vulnerable. If, against expectations, we get to play the hand, playing in the “safest” denomination is mandatory.
- **Strength Level 2:** If the high card points are evenly distributed (c. **19-21 HCP**) and the distribution is not too exotic, this usually means that both sides can make about 8 tricks in their best fit. Your **objective is to chalk up one of the pluses** on the travelling score-sheet. One way to do this is to make the opponents play at the 3-level if they insist on playing the hand. If we play the hand, however, a safe contract has top priority. To achieve a better score in a higher-ranking denomination, the contract has to be made in the first place! A minor suit contract may thus be a preferable alternative to playing in a major or NT. With 9 trumps, you should even bid “3 over 3” unless vulnerability or a flat distribution tip the balance against this.
- **Strength Level 3:** If our hands add up to about **22-24 HCP** our side has the balance of power (assuming no wild distribution). At most tables, the party holding the balance of power will play in a part-score contract, usually achieving a plus score. To reach a good (i.e. above average) score, we need to play in the highest-valued denomination. Thus, it may be necessary to opt for a risky NT or major suit contract even when a “safe” minor suit contract is available. For example, playing in a major 5-2 fit rather than a 4-4 minor would often be preferable as the extra strength usually allows the contract to be made.
  - **Holding the balance of power, your aim is a relatively high plus score of at least +110**
  - In a competitive auction, you will outbid the opponents at the 3-level if your side has 9 (or more) trumps. However, if the distribution and/or the position of the high cards make outbidding the opponents unattractive, you will double them (**matchpoints double**), in particular when they are vulnerable, as this may result in the “magic” +200 score. Under no circumstance may the opponents play un-doubled. If once in a while the doubled contract makes, this won’t lose your side too many matchpoints as you would have received a lousy score anyway.

### **Matchpoints Double**

Let’s have a look at different scenarios of borderline part-score doubles at matchpoints vs. teams scoring. In a situation non-vulnerable vs. vulnerable opponents we bid 3♥ and the opponents still bid 3♠. At teams, the opponents at the other table are allowed to play in 3♥; the same is likely to happen at matchpoints at most of the other tables. Assuming 3♥ makes, whilst 3♠ is more likely to go one down than to make, should we double or not?

1.a. **Teams scoring** without doubling the opponents’ 3♠ at our table:

- Our table: 3♠ resulting in +100 or -140 from our point of view
- Other table: 3♥ resulting in -140 from the point of view of our team
- Consequently, we lose -40 or -280 points, amounting to a loss of 1 or 5 IMPs.

1.b. **Teams scoring** having doubled the opponents’ 3♠ at our table:

- Our table: 3♠ resulting in +200 or -730 from our point of view
- Other table: 3♥ resulting in -140 from the point of view of our team
- Consequently, we gain +60 or lose -870 points, i.e. a gain of 2 IMPs or a loss of 13 IMPs.

At teams, by doubling the opponents we risk 8 IMPs for a potential gain of only 3 IMPs. Therefore, at teams we only double for penalty if the opponents SURELY go down at least 2 tricks, i.e. if the double is a CERTAIN success.

2.a. Matchpoints scoring without doubling the opponents' 3♠ at our table:

- Our table: 3♠ resulting in +100 or -140 from our point of view
- We expect most tables to play 3♥ from our side for +140
- Inevitably, we will score terribly, as both +100 and -140 will lose against +140 normally scored with our hands.

2.b. Matchpoints scoring having doubled the opponents' 3♠ at our table:

- Our table: 3♠ resulting in +200 or -730 from our point of view
- We expect most tables to play 3♥ from our side for +140
- -730 is even worse than -140 without the double, HOWEVER, if the opponents go down we score a top with +200 (as opposed to a bad +100 un-doubled).

At matchpoints, we risk very little by doubling for penalty, as we are certain to score badly without the double. However, we stand a chance to win a top if the opponents go down. Therefore: **at matchpoints, when holding the balance of power at the part-score level, the opponents must not play un-doubled, even though such matchpoints doubles may be borderline.**

### Points to Remember Regarding Competitive Part-Score Bidding:

- At matchpoints, **measured aggression is the cornerstone of part-score bidding** – here it really pays!
- When bidding at the part-score level, try to **determine your level of strength**. Estimate on EVERY hand what the rest of the field will be doing. Depending on your level of strength, define your objective in terms of score and tricks:
  - Strength level 1: 16-18 HCP: your objective is to minimise your minus.
  - Strength level 2: 19-21 HCP: your objective is to chalk up a plus.
  - Strength level 3: 22-24 HCP: your objective is a relatively high plus score of at least +110.
- **Matchpoints doubles:** under no circumstance may the opponents play un-doubled competing at the 3-level, if our side holds the balance of power (strength level 3 with about 22-24 HCP). If once in a while a doubled contract makes, this won't lose your side too many matchpoints as you would have had a lousy score anyway.
- However, these "rules" are not written in tablets of stone. They should serve as guidelines to be judiciously applied bearing in mind adjustment factors such as double fits, offensive/ defensive values etc. For instance, when there are 18 or more total trumps it may even be right to neglect the golden rule to "never compete part-scores to the 4-level"

### Quizzes: Matchpoints Strategy at Part-Score Level

Let's look at some hands demonstrating how these basic principles of bidding strategy at matchpoints can be applied. After you have completed the quizzes, look at the answers and explanations towards the end of this newsletter.

- Deal 1: dealer South, none vul.: what should opener South rebid after 1♠-(p)-2♠-(3♥), ? with ♠J10962 ♥-♦KJ32♣KQJ7?
- Deal 2: dealer West: what should South bid in the following balancing situation holding ♠J9852 ♥K1073 ♦AJ4♣8 if a. we are vulnerable or b. we are not vulnerable?

W	N	E	S
1♣	p	p	X
2♣	2♥	p	p
3♣	p	p	?

- Deal 3: dealer South, all vul.: what should North bid in the following balancing situation holding ♠K75♥K43♦J107♣J1054?

S	W	N	E
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
3♦*	p	3♥	3♠
p	p	?	

\*long suit game try

- Deal 4: dealer North, NS vul.: what do you bid as North in the following situation holding ♠J4♥KQJ4♦AK3♣KJ73?

N	E	S	W
1♣	X	p	1♠
X	2♠	2NT <sup>1</sup>	p
3♣ <sup>2</sup>	p	3♥ <sup>3</sup>	3♠
?			

<sup>1</sup>Puppet to 3♣ (Lebensohl)  
<sup>2</sup>As requested  
<sup>3</sup>Four ♥ cards with 4 to 5 points

- Deals 5 to 7: you have heard the following bidding by the opponents:

W	N	E	S
1♥	p	2♥	p
p	?		

What is your potential balancing action with the following hands?

Deal 5: ♠108743♥J4♦95♣AK95; a. both vulnerable: ???; b. none vulnerable: ???

Deal 6: ♠A92♥Q86♦K1074♣Q103; a. both vulnerable: ???; b. none vulnerable: ???

Deal 7: ♠105♥96♦KJ53♣KJ953; a. both vulnerable: ???; b. none vulnerable: ???

- Deals 8 to 10: you have heard the following bidding:

N	E	S	W
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♥
p	p	?	

What is your bid in the balancing position with the following hands?

Deal 8: ♠J543♥J103♦KJ10♣532; a. both vulnerable: ???; b. none vulnerable: ???

Deal 9: ♠A53♥J103♦Q974♣K53; a. both vulnerable: ???; b. none vulnerable: ???

Deal 10: ♠A543♥QJ3♦J1053♣53; a. both vulnerable: ???; b. none vulnerable: ???



## Bridge4Hospice Fundraiser

Bridge4Hospice, a group of bridge players who fundraise for Helderberg Hospice in Somerset West, is conducting a **Silent Auction** of the following two items:

- **Lot No. 1**

Set of four **Sterling Silver Bridge Pencils** - in original box.  
These propelling pencils are each engraved "Sterling Silver " and "Made in England".  
The four pencils together weigh 31gms and each measures 93mm in length.



- **Lot No. 2**

A similar set of four bridge motif propelling pencils with lead included and engraved "Made in England".  
These four pencils together weigh 29gms and each measures 91mm in length.



If you wish to place a bid on either or both of these items, please email your name and mobile phone number, together with the amount in Rand that you are bidding, to [Bridge4hospice@gmail.com](mailto:Bridge4hospice@gmail.com).

Entries close on Monday 16 December 2019 and the highest bidder(s) will be notified by telephone on Wednesday 18 December 2019. The pencils will be couriered to the lucky bidder(s) on Thursday 19 December 2019.

### A Matter of Priority

"But I might be *dying!*" says the man.

"Sorry, a doctor will see you when one is available."

Then an ambulance races up with its siren blaring, and a woman is carried in on a stretcher. A paramedic explains, "She was in a terrible accident and has just stopped breathing."

"I'm sorry," says the nurse, "she'll have to wait in line."

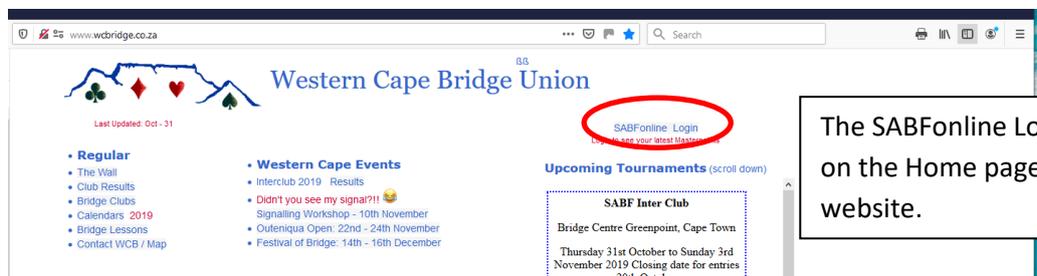
Next a guy walks in without assistance, whispers something to the nurse and is taken immediately to the examination room, surrounded by doctors.

"What's *this?*" says the first man. "How come he goes right in?"

"Oh," explains the nurse, "he's a bridge player and his partner just passed him in a cue-bid."

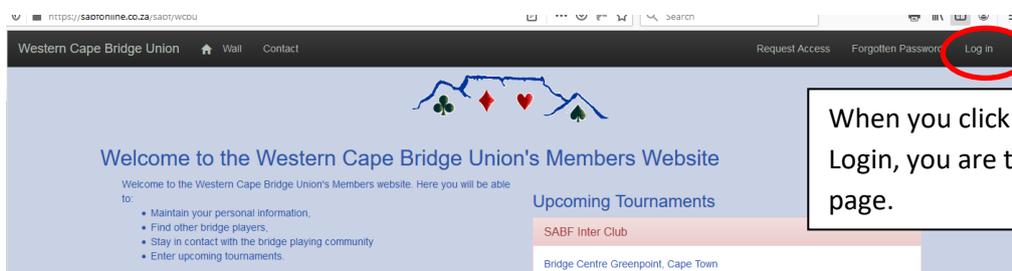
## Using SABF Online

SABF Online is a wonderful resource for bridge players, but it has come to our attention that it is not used to its optimum by a number of bridge players. Just a few pointers for those who are unsure . . .



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Western Cape Bridge Union. The URL is [www.wcbridge.co.za](http://www.wcbridge.co.za). The page features a navigation menu with 'Regular' and 'Western Cape Events' sections. A red circle highlights the 'SABFOnline Login' link in the top right corner.

The SABFOnline Login can be found on the Home page of the WCBU website.



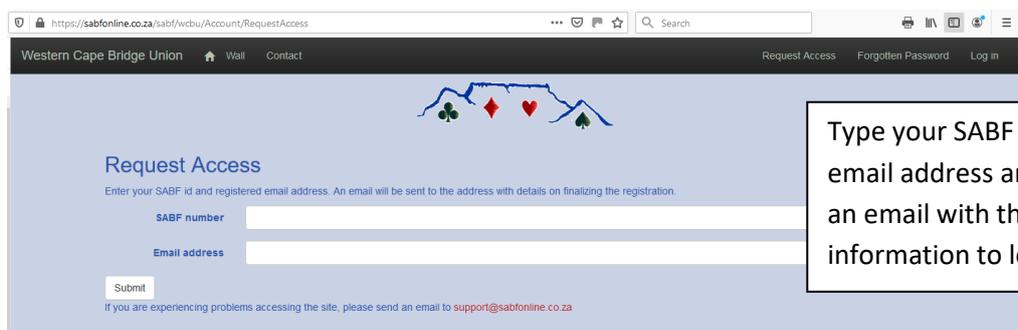
The screenshot shows the members website of the Western Cape Bridge Union. The URL is <https://sabonline.co.za/sab/wcbu>. The page has a dark navigation bar with 'Request Access', 'Forgotten Password', and 'Log in' links. The 'Log in' link is circled in red.

When you click on the SABFOnline Login, you are taken to the Log In page.



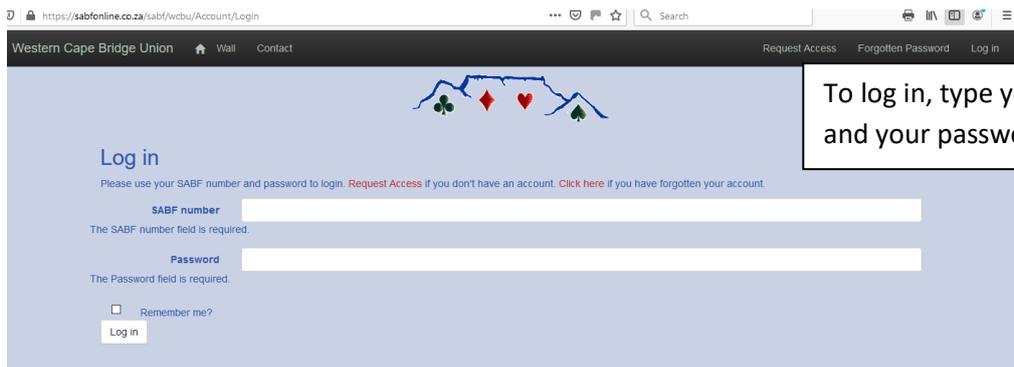
The screenshot shows the 'Log in' page of SABF Online. The URL is <https://sabonline.co.za/sab/wcbu/Account/RequestAccess>. The page prompts the user to enter their SABF number and password. A red circle highlights the 'Request Access' link, which is used if the user does not have an account.

If you have not previously logged in, you will be asked to click on Request Access.

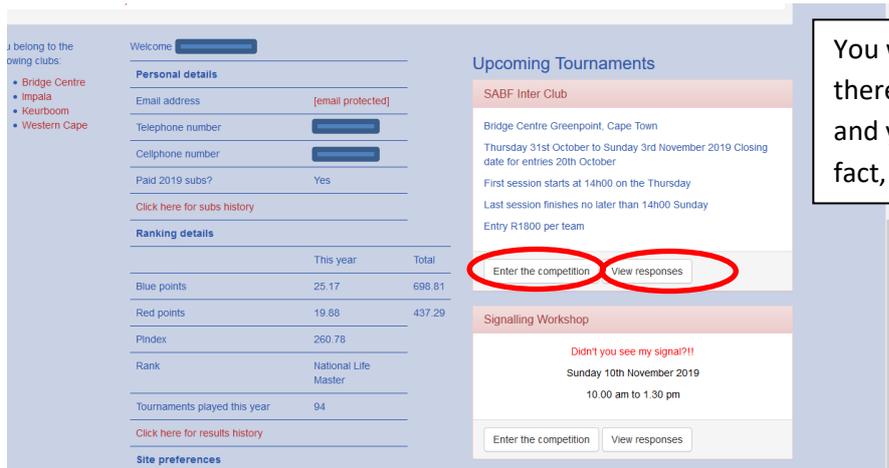


The screenshot shows the 'Request Access' page of SABF Online. The URL is <https://sabonline.co.za/sab/wcbu/Account/RequestAccess>. The page asks the user to enter their SABF ID and registered email address. A red circle highlights the 'Submit' button.

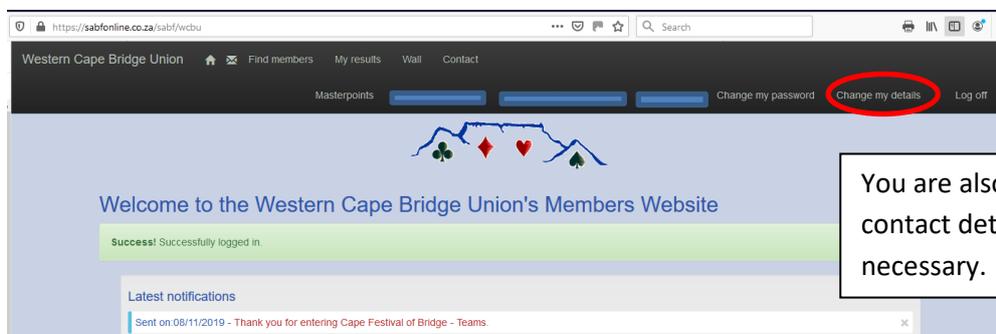
Type your SABF number and your email address and you will receive an email with the necessary information to log in.



To log in, type your SABF number and your password.



You will find your personal details there. You can enter a competition and you can check if your entry is, in fact, registered there.



You are also able to change your contact details yourself, if necessary.

More detailed information about using sabfonline can be found in the guides – the link to this resource is in the top right corner of the SABF website.

## Impala Open

The Impala Open took place on Sunday 20 October 2019 at the WPCC bowling club premises. This event is a Red Point teams tournament that the Impala Bridge Club hosts every year and is open for all bridge players.

The format at the Impala Open has been in place for a few years now and is a unique hybrid of IMPs and board-a-match (BAM) or point-a-

board. In addition to the IMP swing on a particular board, the board is also won, lost or tied (more like match points than IMPs). This gives teams something more to play for if it turns out that the boards in a particular match are not likely to yield big IMP swings. Phil King, a long standing member of Impala, has been instrumental in adopting this format, and he was also responsible for organising the rest of the event, including a delicious lunch and morning and afternoon teas.

The A graded winning team was the Cruise team – Andrew Cruise, Tim Cope, Adele McGibbon and Marilyn Bradley; while the B graded winning team was the Zimet team, 6th place overall in a very strong field – Erica Zimet, Anthony Abbott, Machel Shapiro and Jill Rabie. Congratulations to all!



### SABF Subscriptions for 2020

An SABF subscription entitles a member to play at any affiliated Bridge Club in South Africa and earn Masterpoints.

Please pay by EFT, using your **SURNAME** and **SABF#** as reference. The amount is R200 which is the same as the last two years.

The subscription of R100 for the Bridge Centre may be added to this payment.

WCBU

Bank ABSA

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## Answers to Kathryn's & Eckhard's quizzes on matchpoints strategy at part-score level

Deal 1: dealer South, none vul.: what should opener South rebid after 1♠-(p)-2♠-(3♥), ? with ♠J10962♥-♦KJ32♣KQJ7?

A typical responder North hand such as ♠Q754♥J76♦AQ8♣853 would position us at strength level 2. Therefore: our objective is to score plus. Due to the void in the opponents' suit we should bid 3♠ expecting to make (6 loser hand), despite the minimum hand and possibly holding only eight trumps. However, it is possible we are in fact only at strength level 1, partner holding something like ♠K75♥7642♦A85♣1085. Our goal in this case: minimise the minus score! Again, it is right to bid 3♠, this time as a save against 3♥.

Deal 2: dealer West: what to bid after (1♣)-p-(p)-X, (2♣)-2♥-(p)-p, (3♣)-p-(p)-? holding ♠J9852♥K1073♦AJ4♣8 if a. we are vulnerable or b. we are not vulnerable?

A typical hand for partner to hold such as ♠K106♥QJ64♦K75♣954 would place us at strength level 1, wanting to minimise our minus score. Usually, you would be content to have pushed the strong opener to the 3-level. However, the opponents will surely score at least 110 in 3♣, whilst you have good distribution and would be unlucky to make fewer than 8 tricks in a ♥ contract.

Consequently, bid 3♥ if not vulnerable, since -100 (3♥ doubled -1) is a better score than -110 (3♣ by the opponents just made). However, pass if you are vulnerable since you would surely be doubled, leading to -200 and a certain bottom.

Deal 3: dealer South, all vul.: what to bid as North after 1♥-(1♠)-2♥-(2♠), 3♦\*-(p)-3♥-(3♠), p-(p)-? with ♠K75♥K43♦J107♣J1054? (\*long suit game try)

A typical opener hand such as ♠8♥AQJ75♦KQ642♣Q8 puts us in the area of strength level 3, where we need to maximise our plus score. Left to our own devices, we would most probably have scored +140 in 3♥. This contract rates to be a popular one being played at many other tables. Thus, we cannot afford to score only +100 when 3♠ goes one down. We MUST double and hope for +200 and a distribution like this:

♠K75♥K43♦J107♣J105		
♠AJ932♥1092♦98♣A7	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <span>N</span> <span>W</span> <span>O</span> <span>S</span> </div>	♠Q1064♥86♦A53♣K96
♠8♥AQJ75♦KQ642♣Q8		

S	W	N	E
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
3♦*	p	3♥	3♠
p	p	X(!)	

**A typical matchpoints double! When we have the balance of power and the opponents are trying to steal the hand, doubling is mandatory.** A penalty of 200 or 300 on a part-score hand will always result in a top. Once in a while 3♠ doubled will make, which is inevitable when you make very close doubles. However, if you consistently adhere to the outlined strategy you can afford the occasional loss as this is well compensated for by a greater number of gains.

Expert tip: "If the opponents do not occasionally make doubled part-score contracts, you are not doubling often enough."

Deal 4: dealer North, NS vul.: what do you bid as opener North after 1♣-(X)-p-(1♠), X-(2♠)-2NT<sup>1</sup>-(p), 3♣<sup>2</sup>-(p)-3♥<sup>3</sup>-(3♠), ? holding ♠J4♥KQJ4♦AK3♣KJ73?

<sup>1</sup>Puppet to 3♣ (Lebensohl); <sup>2</sup>As requested; <sup>3</sup>Four ♥ cards with 4 to 5 points

Our side has the balance of power with about 22 to 23 points (strength level 3). Our objective is a relatively high plus score of at least +110. Most probably we would even score +140 in 3♥. The distribution around the table seems to be relatively balanced. The opponents are obviously out

stealing. Thus, we have to protect our good plus score and double the opponents hoping for down two. A typical **matchpoints double**.

♠J4♥KQJ4♦AK3♣KJ73		N W O S		♠AQ75♥A5♦J1042♣Q85
♠K863♥1087♦Q965♣62				
♠1092♥9632♦87♣A109				

N	E	S	W
1♣	X	p	1♠
X	2♠	2NT <sup>1</sup>	p
3♣ <sup>2</sup>	p	3♥ <sup>3</sup>	3♠
X (!)			

We played the board in a Cape Town club tournament. We made 6 tricks (1♥, 2♦, 2♣ and a ♦ ruff) and scored +300 for a top. Common plus scores for NS were: +120 (1NT+1), +130 (10 tricks in ♣), +140 (9 tricks in ♥), +170 (10 tricks in ♥ finding ♣queen). Therefore, not doubling 3♠ would have given us a near zero (only scoring +100 for two un-doubled undertricks).

Deals 5 to 7: Dealer W: you have heard the following bidding: (1♥)-p-(2♥)-p, (p)-?

What is your potential balancing action with the following three North hands?

Deal 5: ♠108743♥J4♦95♣AK95

- a. Both vul.: bid 2♠; even vulnerable at strength level 1 you do not let the opponents play in a fit at the 2-level if you can still compete at the 2-level ("2 over 2").
- b. None vul.: bid 2♠; not vulnerable, 2♠ is clear-cut.

Deal 6: ♠A92♥Q86♦K1074♣Q103

- a. Both vul.: pass; both flat distribution and vulnerability make pass a favourite, whilst it is even unclear whether there is a fit to find for us at all.
- b. None vul.: double; being not vulnerable, we can risk a re-opening double, trying to chase the opponents up one level (or to play the hand ourselves, hopefully in an 8-card fit).

Deal 7: ♠105♥96♦KJ53♣KJ953

- a. Both vul.: pass; the vulnerability indicates a pass, as we would have to play at the 3-level whilst uncertain whether we find an 8-card fit
- b. None vul.: bid 2NT; being not vulnerable, we risk a re-opening 2NT for the minors, intending to up the ante for the opponents or to play ourselves, hopefully in an 8-card minor fit.

Deals 8 to 10: Dealer North: you have heard the following bidding: 1♠-(2♥)-2♠-(3♥), p-(p)-?

What is your bid in the balancing position with the following three South hands?

Deal 8: ♠J543♥J103♦KJ10♣532

- a. Both vul.: pass; the vulnerability makes this a no-brainer, holding a flat minimum hand and not wanting to risk going down doubled for -200.
- b. None vul.: bid 3♠; a borderline decision, despite the flat minimum hand, we are not vulnerable holding 4-card support (i.e. 9 trumps). We expect to obtain a good result even going down one trick doubled, as this outscore the opponents making +140.

Deal 9: ♠A53♥J103♦Q974♣K53

- a. Both vul.: double; a typical matchpoints double: we hold the balance of power, the opponents are vulnerable and the hand rates to be relatively balanced.
- b. None vul.: double, again a typical matchpoints double, even though the opponents are not vulnerable, since we cannot be certain to make 3♠ ourselves.

Deal 10: ♠A543♥QJ3♦J1053♣53

- a. Both vul.: double; a marginal matchpoints double, the opponents being vulnerable and the hands appearing to be rather balanced; we are betting on +200!
- b. None vul.: bid 3♠; we stand a good chance of making 3♠ with our 9-card fit, whilst a matchpoints double would not be sufficiently profitable as the opponents are non-vul.

## Answers to Tim's Quizzes:

1. What would you open on the following hands – not vulnerable?

- a) S K10xxx H Qxx D Kxx C xx
- b) S Qxxx H xx D AQxxxx C x
- c) S x H AQJ10xx D J109x C xx

### Answers

- a) Pass – yes, we can open a weak 2 on a 5-card suit and it is in the right point range but, when we open on a 5-card suit, it promises suit quality.
- b) 2D – as we have said, nothing wrong in opening 2D with a side 4-card major – the idea of pre-empting is to strike the first blow and make life tough for the opposition. If partner has a good hand, our system of responses will mean that the 4-card spade suit is not lost.
- c) 3H – a trick hand in a way. When we pre-empt, we want to pre-empt as high as possible and here the solidity of the heart suit and the nice side 4-card suit with strong intermediates (so a lesser overall loser count) makes this worth a 3H opening – give yourself a gold star if you got this one right.

2. How would you respond on the following hands?

- a) Partner opens 2H – S KJxx H x D AKxx C KJxx
- b) Partner opens 2D – S AKxxx H xxx D Kx C AJx
- c) Partner opens 2H and the next hand bids 2S - S xxx H K10x D AKQxx C Qx

### Answers

- a) Pass – yes, you have a fair hand but the hand is a misfit. Give partner a hand with H AKxxxx and not a lot else – you would be happy to make 2H – so do not overbid on misfits.
- b) 2S – a change of suit is forcing for one round and we have a fair hand – not good enough to force to game perhaps, but worth introducing the spade suit in case partner has 3 card support; else we can bale out in 3D.
- c) 3D – one under the major partner has opened, which is a game try in that suit. If we bid 4H, that would be a leap of faith, and if we bid 3H that would just be competitive.

