



Clarence Gardens Bridge Centre

Newsletter September 2026



The Saddest Hand

What's your reaction when, as dealer, you pick up the following hand:

♠AKQJ5

♥A9

♦K32

♣AKJ

25 points, and an excellent five card suit. Not everybody has a way of showing such a strong balanced hand, probably best to open 2♣, 2♦ of course from partner, then 3NT.

Sad to say, the limit of the hand is just eight tricks, the full deal being:

♠AKQJ5

♥A9

♦K32

♣AKJ

♠106

♥KJ865

♦AQJ1087

♣-

♠96432

♥102

♦-

♣Q98642

♠7

♥Q743

♦9654

♣10753

QUIZ NIGHT SATURDAY EVENING SEPTEMBER 12TH

AT THE CLARENCE GARDENS BOWLING CLUB

ENTRY FEE \$10 PER HEAD,

NOMINATIONS TO NOLA STONE

DONATIONS FOR USE AS PRIZES APPRECIATED

SEPTEMBER IS RED MASTERPOINT MONTH!
RED MASTERPOINTS FOR ALL SESSIONS.

Director!

Directing isn't just about determining the movement, doing the scoring, and ruling on revokes and leads out of turn. There are occasions when even the best of us have to reach for the Rulebook. Two recent instances:

South was declarer in 4♥ and East open led the ♣Ace out of turn. Declarer chose to accept the lead, so I asked North as dummy to put her hand down. She started doing this by showing her six card club suit, so West then put down his four card club suit as well.

These clubs all became penalty cards, declarer could choose which was played at trick one, also later when West had to find a discard. None of this helped, incidentally, declarer still went three down, vulnerable.

Next:

Declarer, playing in a spade contract, led a heart towards dummy, next player followed, and the person looking after dummy's cards played a trump. The trick was quitted; a card was called from dummy and then "Wait a Minute!".

The ruling: Dummy can't revoke so equity was restored, no penalty, play proceeded.

Inaugural Score of the Month Award

From now on the players with the best score each calendar month will receive a free game, the first recipients being Cecilia and Kent Makin who achieved a remarkable 78.01% on Monday 17th August.

They played in an open field, 11 tables, several Life Masters, and this was almost certainly the best score that I have ever seen in my 60 years of directing.

Their report stated that Cecilia played 6 hands scoring 67%, Kent 10 for 84%, North opponents 5 hands for 25% and South 6 for 18%.

Clarence Gardens GRADED Pairs Congress
10:00 am Sunday September 27th
A & B Sections,
Morning & Afternoon Tea Provided
Bring your own lunches
Entry Fee \$60 per pair

Can You Make 4♠?

♠10873

♥K63

♦AJ7

♣K102

♠AKQJ42

♥A84

♦92

♣87

Opening lead ♥10, won in hand. Draw trumps in two rounds, West discarding a heart .
Plan your play.

Responding to Partner's 2♣ Opening

A 2♣ opening should show a strong balanced hand (20+ or 23+ depending on your 2NT opening), or else an eight playing tricks or more hand with at least 19 points. Anything weaker, and most strong two suiters, are usually best served by a one of a suit opening. Further, having bid 2♣ opener should then be able to bid their suit, or, if balanced, show their point range. To this purpose several of the top players, who use the opening as an absolute game force, routinely respond 2♦ to give opener the maximum amount of bidding space possible.

My own 2♣ opening isn't a game force, however I also don't want responder to bid spurious suits, so instead do as follows.

First of all, I define a positive response as being any hand that has at least seven high card points, including at least one Ace or two Kings. If partner has such values, then we must finish in game or slam, we can't finish in a part score.

The responses:

- 2♦: A negative response, lacking the above values. After such a response a suit rebid by opener is forcing for one round. Note that a hand without an Ace or two Kings is treated as a negative response.
- 2♥: Positive values, says nothing about hearts, and is game forcing.
- 2♠, 3♣, 3♦, 3♥: Positive response, natural, at least five cards and at most one loser suit.

Further bidding after a positive response:

If opener finds a suit rebid then responder bids naturally, a simple game raise showing a minimum or near minimum values, so

2♣ 2♥

2♠ 3♠ is stronger than 4♠.

This is because you are in a game forcing auction. Responder can also temporise by bidding a fresh suit before raising.

If opener rebids 2NT then Jacoby Transfers apply, while 3♣ is Stayman (regular or Puppet).

Summary

The above provides a structured approach to the bidding of strong hands. The big hand will usually be in control, the auction will stay at a comfortable level and if a strong balanced opening, that hand will usually be declarer.

An example hand from last Friday

♠Q	♠AKJ93
♥AKQ	♥875
♦AKQJ762	♦1094
♣A8	♣73

2♣ 2♥(artificial positive)

3♦ 3♠

4NT(Ace ask) 5♦(one Ace)

5♥(King ask) 5NT(one King)

7NT

Opener knows that responder has an Ace or two Kings, with at least seven high card points, so knows that slam must be a near certainty. 4NT was an Ace ask, 5♦ showed one, 5♥ the next free suit asked for Kings, 5NT again one, opener can count thirteen tricks!

Another, also from last Friday

♠AJ	♠KQ94
♥AQJ982	♥K6
♦J6	♦AK954
♣AQ8	♣K4

2♣ 2♥(artificial positive)

3♥(natural) 4NT Keycard Blackwood setting hearts

5♣ (0 or 3 Aces) 5♦ Have you the trump Queen?

5♠(yes, no outside Kings) 7NT

Responder can count three spade tricks, at least six heart tricks, two diamonds and two clubs.

Stop Bidding 3NT When You Don't Have the Values!

The scoring software that we use is supplied with the details of the distribution and number of high card points for each hand.

One of the checks is that pairs playing in 3NT are expected to have at least 23 high card points. Sadly, and to the respective pairs' discredit this is too often not the case. Sometimes they don't even have the majority!

You can avoid these embarrassments by following these simple bidding rules

- Don't find a new suit call at the two level unless you have at least ten points.
- If as opener you don't like responder's one level call, and have a minimum opening, rebid 1NT whenever you can.
- Finally, if partner rebids a suit that you don't like then, unless you have additional values PASS – to do otherwise just makes it worse.

Ruling the Game – When You Have Been Misinformed

There will be occasions when an opponent makes a call, you ask their partner what it means, and subsequently you see that the description doesn't match the hand.

At the end of the hand you should initially determine whether you have been damaged. If not, move on, if perhaps otherwise, call the director.

The director will determine for himself whether damage has occurred. If this might be so he will then ask your opponents which is correct, the call or the description.

Note that when you ask the meaning of an opponent's call you are asking what it means in their system agreements, not what the person's actual hand is.

If the description differs from their conventional agreement, then your score may well be adjusted. If instead the player made an incorrect call, then you can't be helped.

Offenders please note: If partner has mis-described your call you should say nothing, nor can you take advantage of this knowledge. You must not tell your opponents of the error while partner is able to take advantage, so if your partnership is declaring you should tell the opponents before they lead, to minimise the damage caused.

If your partnership is defending then you need to wait until play is concluded.

Volunteers – Cup Cleaning

The cups are put through the industrial dishwasher at high temperature wash and rinse after each bridge session ...but some staining dies build up.

Every 2 months we give all the cups a special good scrub and wash to remove this staining. If you could help with this, please contact Graham or one of the committee to volunteer. The special scrub will take about an hour before the bridge session on a mutually agreed Friday or Monday.

Graham Stucley

Dummy Reversals

How do you play the following hand in the contract of three spades after a trump lead, East shows out at trick one?

♠QJ107

♥A54

♦J5

♣A1073

♠AK986

♥1062

♦8742

♣6

You have just two outside tricks, so need to make seven trump tricks. The problem is that with continued trump leads you can only get one ruff in dummy, so, after playing diamonds at every opportunity, you will probably get just the eight tricks.

Now let's play another three spades contract, again on a trump lead, East discarding at trick one.

♠AK986

♥1062

♦8742

♣6

♠QJ107

♥A54

♦J5

♣A1073

Again you have just the two outside tricks, so need seven trump tricks. The way to success is much easier this time, all you need to do is ruff three clubs in dummy, as follows: Win the lead in dummy hand, club Ace, ruff a club, spade to hand, ruff a club, heart to the Ace, ruff a club, contract!

It's the same hand.

Declarers are notorious for treating their hand as being the primary one, whether in a suit or no trumps contract, rather than considering a role reversal. The better players amongst us automatically look at which hand should be the primary, and which should be the secondary, and perhaps one day you will to.

In the interim, when confronted with a difficult contract, ask yourself, how would partner play it.

Recent Placegetters

FRIDAY AUGUST PAIRS

- 1 Peter Dieperink & Robyn Hargreaves
- 2 Cynthia Brinkman & Rosemary Moten
- 3 Genevieve Donnelly & Terry Healey

FRIDAY PINK AUGUST PAIRS

- 1 Irma Ryan & Angie Williams
- 2 Patricia Draper & Jenny Kernbach
- 3 Peter Fisher & Evelyne Fraser

MONDAY AUGUST PAIRS

- 1 Cecilia & Kent Makin
- 2 Genevieve Donnelly & Terry Healey
- 3 John Neuling & Trevor Parr

Can You Make 4♠ - The Answer

♠10873

♥K63

♦AJ7

♣K102

♠AKQJ42

♥A84

♦92

♣87

Opening lead ♥10, won in dummy. Three rounds of trumps, West discarding a heart and two clubs.

If East has both missing heart honours then you have an excellent chance of making your contract, even if the ♣Ace is offside.

- Diamond to dummy's Jack, losing,
- Heart returned, win in hand.
- Diamond Ace
- Ruff a diamond.
- Exit a heart.

If East wins, as is likely, then he is endplayed, either leading a club around to dummy's King or giving you a ruff and discard.