**Week 52**

A theme which crops up repeatedly is what shapes are suitable to open 1nt?

Is it ok to hold a 5 card major or indeed a singleton? The traditional approach is that both of the aforementioned shapes are unsuitable. The counter argument is the rebid plan and the character of the hand.

I witnessed at first hand a leading pair bid the following hands to 3nt.

KJTxxx

Ax

Txx

Ax

Ax

KJxxx

KQ

Qxxx

The bidding went 1s 2h 2s 3nt pass

This contract failed on a diamond lead with four spades cold so what went wrong?

The problem was south was unsure whether partner held 5 or 6 spades. One of the advantages of opening 1nt with any 5 3 3 2 shape is that the above sequence shows a 6 card spade suit and now it is straightforward to bid the spade game.

I also witnessed another good pair bid the following hands to the wrong contract

KJx

Kxxxx

KJx

Jx

Qxx

Qx

AQxxx

AQx

A simple 3  no trumps oh no the bidding proceeded 1 heart 2 diamonds 3  diamonds 3 spades 4 diamonds 4 hearts.

I know I am not going to convince some of you but if I can't do it then listen to Andrew Robson on this point he has always recommended opening 1nt with a 5 3 3 2 shape whether the suit is a major or a minor and thus the two major rebid shows 6 or more cards. It makes good sense since it gets across the essential character of the hand better than opening 1 major.

Holding a singleton is a rebid issue say you pick up any of the following hands

Q

Kxxx

AQx

Jxxxx

If you open 1c and the bidding continues 1s from partner you must rebid 2c horrible so much better is to open 1nt or indeed pass with such a poor 12 count.

 Also

 Kx

Axxx

Qxxxx

Ax

 Again rebidding your diamond suit is most unattractive so opening 1nt is again by far the best choice.

**Week 51**

We do not seem to feature very many part score bidding problems so I thought I would give three from recent events.

First you hold

QJTxx

Jxx

Xx

Xxx

And you hear the bidding go (1h) dbl pass you bid 1s and it continues pass 1nt pass

The 1nt rebid following the initial double shows 18 - 20 so do you pass or correct to 2s?

Partner holds

Xx

AQxx

AQxx

AQJ

And with the spades dead Int goes down while 2s is straightforward so with a weak hand and a reasonable suit play in that suit.

Then you hold

ATxxx

X

Xxx

Kxxx

The bidding goes 1d from partner 1s overcall you decide to pass although 1nt or 2d are alternatives 1nt on your left and partner bids 2d and rho bids 2h?

You have a decent hand here with two good cards 3 card support for partner and a useful singleton so 3D is conservative so what to do bid 2s or else jump to 4d?

Partner holds

X

Axxx

AQJxxx

Qx

So 5d is an excellent contract and lay down and yet most either played in a part score or sold out to heart contracts the other way.

The following hand caused difficulty when it cropped up

QJxx

Kx

AK

AQxxx

**You open one club and the bidding continues one spade pass two diamonds to you? A very good hand yes but where are you going the indicators are dangerous here you do not have hearts or especially good clubs and both opponents are bidding so partner is very weak. If you venture a double or any bid  you are in serious trouble losing a substantial penalty or conceding a doubled contract. Pass is the winner and quite clear.**

**Week 50**

My apologies if I feature rather too many slam hands in this column but they generally make interesting reading (next week we will feature part scores!)

KQTxx

Txxx

A

KJx

You hear two no trumps from partner and must plan the bidding .Do you start with a transfer or stayman and does it make any difference which version you play straightforward or five card puppet ?

It is clearly a slam going hand which may play best in one of your suits so you could bid three hearts transfer and then what? Is a bid of four hearts thereafter correct is it only a four card suit and is it forcing? Should you bid five hearts following the spade transfer? Deep waters I think.

I have always played four hearts as five five in the majors and non forcing i.e. weak and a jump to five hearts as invitational with five hearts.

Therefore we go via three clubs with this hand and playing simple stayman there is no difficulty since we can bid three spades over three diamonds to show five. The problem is if we play any of the variants of five card or five card puppet we need a method to allow opener to show three card spades having denied a major since when opener rebids three diamonds they merely deny a five card major and we now probe for a four card fit.

This was another trap which partner and I failed to solve since the other hand was

AJx

QJ

KQJ

AQxxx

So we had two heart losers but the defence had to cash them.

Then

AKxxxxx

Jxx

Q

Xx

Qxx

KQ

AKJxx

Axx

 A fine slam contract I hear you say and I bet that almost every man or woman and their dog will reach six spades which we did so a good effort. Virtue had to be its own reward since hearts were 7 -1 so it failed with a ruff although 6 no trumps is cold because the diamonds are so good. Any suggestions as to reaching that contract please send to me on a postcard.