

Steel City Bridge

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EDITED BY CRAIG BIDDLE

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SECTIONAL TROUBLES

BY CRAIG BIDDLE

Hello all,

As the chairman for the Fall Sectional, I was unhappy to have to cancel it. But we were unable to come to a satisfactory agreement on price for the space at Masonic Hall, and my conversations with the ACBL left me concerned that we would be unable to run a sanctioned tournament. The ACBL position was that our permission to run a sanctioned tournament was contingent on the Pittsburgh area COVID test results the week before the scheduled date.

That, of course, was unsatisfactory for us, as we would have had to scramble to hold any sort of bridge event there if the COVID test numbers were unsatisfactory.

On another note, Ernie Retetagos has agreed to join our staff with his usual words of wisdom. He will be writing on topics that appeal to him, and I'm sure will also be happy to answer your questions.

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For those of you who want a fix of kibitzing high-level bridge, the USBF team trials are underway. You can kibitz (delayed) or simply review the hands by using this link. <https://kibitz.realbridge.online/>

You will be asked to enter your name – most people use their real names there when you

log in. You can see the day's events highlighted in yellow on the list of events, or review past events simply by scrolling down the list. It's a great way to follow the top players.

Finally, note that the district playoffs for Grand National Pairs are coming up the weekend of October 2nd and 3rd. They are, as usual, flighted.

IMPROVING CARD PLAY: OPENING LEADS AGAINST NOTRUMP **BY CRAIG BIDDLE**

We have all been taught to lead 4th from our longest and strongest. This was perhaps the first "convention" in bridge, dating back to the days when whist was played for high stakes in London clubs. When you are in third seat, you can use the "rule of 11" to learn how many cards higher than partner's lead are in the other three hands. Why does this work? Well, if partner leads a deuce, showing exactly 4 cards, he has 3 higher. But there are 12 card in the suit higher than the deuce. $12-3$ is 9, and $9+2$ is 11. Hence the Rule of 11.

As you see, the purpose of this convention is to help partner to figure out the hand. This is a concept that is not emphasized early enough in teaching bridge. But I guarantee you, if you spend more energy telling partner what's going on your results will improve.

Once you decide which suit to lead, you need to consider what you have at the top of the suit. If you have a strong holding (like AKJ or KQ10) you want to lead an honor. Against notrump, "expert standard" honor leads are to lead the King if you have it AND you just want partner to signal whether they have a helping honor. Generally, the king is led from AKJ, or AK or KQ alone. Partner will signal encouraging if they have the Queen or, if the ace is in dummy, they will signal whether or not they have the Jack. If you lead a king from a suit like this, partner discourages, and you hold the trick, you are going to shift at trick 2.

If you have other strong honor holdings, the lead of the Ace or Queen tells partner you have a good enough suit that you want them to unblock their highest card if they have a face card. If they don't, they should signal count.

If you have AQJ10 with or without smaller cards you lead the Ace when you have a likely side entry, allowing partner to unblock the King and you will run the whole suit. If you don't think you have a side entry, you lead the Queen – partner will overtake with the King and return one for you to run the whole suit. Of course partner has to think – from Kxxxx they should just play an encouraging spot. You will think they have an even number, but

when your jack holds also you will probably figure it out and continue with the Ace and then the 10 so PARTNER can cash their 5th heart.

You will also ask for an unblock from AKJ10, or from a long suit to the AQJ or AKJ, or from four or more headed by the KQ10. And, finally, you will lead the Q from QJ10 or QJ9 pretty much any time you have them. Here, partner will not unblock the King if he can see the 10 in dummy unless he has only Kx in the suit.

Finally, from AJ10, KJ10, A109, and K109, you will lead the top of your interior sequence. Consider these layouts:

Dummy	Qxx	Qxx	xx	xx
Defense	AJ10xx Kxx	A109xx KJx	AJ10xx Kxx	A109xx KJx
Declarer	xx	xx	Qxx	Qxx

In all these holdings, you will run the suit on the go no matter what declarer does.

MAKING SENSE OF THE BIDDING

BY CRAIG BIDDLE

Last month I explained why we want to emphasize major suits and notrump in the bidding. This month, I'm going to explain how you can help partner decide how high to bid when his last bid tells you that your side has at least an 8-card fit. Yes, once again we have a situation where we are giving partner information. I can't emphasize enough how important it is to tell partner what is going on as often as is convenient.

Suppose partner opens 1♠ and you hold one of the following hands:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. ♠J98 ♥Q103 ♦K94 ♣9743 | 6. ♠J987 ♥J103 ♦K4 ♣9743 |
| 2. ♠J98 ♥Q103 ♦A94 ♣Q974 | 7. ♠J987 ♥J103 ♦K4 ♣A743 |
| 3. ♠K98 ♥Q103 ♦A94 ♣Q974 | 8. ♠K987 ♥A103 ♦K4 ♣9743 |
| 4. ♠K98 ♥A103 ♦A94 ♣Q974 | 9. ♠A987 ♥Q103 ♦K4 ♣K743 |
| 5. ♠K98 ♥A103 ♦A94 ♣KQ94 | 10. ♠AK87 ♥Q103 ♦K4 ♣K743 |

Hands 1, 2, 6, and 7 are minimum and maximum single raises. Hands 3 and 8 are typical invitational jump raises, showing 10-11 support points.

Hands 4, 5, 9, and 10 are clearly worth forcing to game. Should you just bid 4♠ with them? NO!!!!!! By doing so, you are destroying 3 levels of bidding, when partner can have anything from 11 to 21 points. How can that be right? Partner could close his eyes and guess. But if you leave room with a lower-level forcing sequence, you leave room to investigate if either of you has extra values.

How should you raise? You should raise differently. Why? Because it matters little whether you have an 8-card or a bigger fit up to and including the game level. But at the slam level, it's a big factor. Why? There are many reasons, but the easiest reason to understand, and the most common reason why slams go down, is that 8-card fits often have unexpected trump losers and 9-card fits seldom have them since we can all check for the AKQ of trumps now.

With hands 4 and 5, you should bid 2♣. Even if you are not playing 2/1 GF, you should treat 1♠-2♣, 2 any-2♠ as forcing to game. This costs only when you have an invitational hand with a 6+ card suit of your own and 3-card support, and those hands are rare and also are good hands to bash to game with. And as compensation for that inconvenience, you buy a whole level of bidding space to explore with.

With hands 9 and 10, we use a specialty bid, a jump to 2NT directly over partner's major suit opening, as a conventional forcing raise. Unlike other conventional bids, this one orders partner to tell us about their hand. Opener's simplest set of rebids is:

- 3 of a new suit shows a void or singleton there
- 4 of a lower-ranking new suit shows a good 5-card suit (Larry Cohen recommends at least the A or K of the suit, I recommend 2 of the top 3 honors. Larry knows more about bridge than I do.)
- 4 of the major shows no singleton or void, and a minimum (11-14 points).
- 3NT shows 15-17 and no singleton or void.
- 3 of the major shows 18+ with no singleton or void.

Note that with no singleton or void, opener makes the highest of the 3 allowed bids with the worst hand and the lowest of the 3 allowed bids with the best hand.

Finally, let's talk about 1 of a major, 4 of a major. This shows a lot of playing strength without much more than a minimum single raise in terms of high cards. Something like 5-card support with a void or a singleton.

Do you see the connection between the previous two paragraphs? In both cases, when you have two hand types worth bidding game you bid game immediately with the weaker and go slowly with the stronger.

Now let's talk about 1 of a minor, 1 of a major when opener has 4-card support for responder's suit. Here opener raises to the 2-level with 11-14 points, the 3-level with 15-17 points, and bids above the 3-level with more than 17 HCP. We don't have need for a preemptive raise here, and raising to game after 1♣-1♠, 4♠ with ♠A987 ♥Q103 ♦K4 ♣K743 when partner could have 6 points is crazy. So we use new suits above 3 of responder's major to show more than 17 points, 4-card support, and a singleton or void in the suit you bid. A rebid of 4 of opener's minor shows a 6-4 hand with more than 17 HCP. And the jump to game shows no void or singleton with 18+HCP (nearly always 18-19; we always seem to find an excuse to open 2NT with hands like ♠AK87 ♥J10 ♦K4 ♣AKQ73).

A WILD DEAL BY CRAIG BIDDLE

Thanks to Richard Pavlicek's site for this deal. It's a very difficult puzzle, with multiple hurdles. I will give the solution on the last page.

South to make 4♠X after the ♣K lead.

Auction

West North East South

1♣ 4♥ 4♠

Dbl All Pass

(hand on next page)

♠ A876

♥ A3

♦ 765

♣ A876

♠ K5

♥ 2

♦ KQJ1098

♣ KQJ10

♠ 32

♥ KQJ10987654

♦

♣ 9

♠ QJ1094

♥

♦ A432

♣ 5432

YOU BID WHAT???

COMMENTARY, SCORING, AND ABUSE BY RICHARD FINBERG

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Today's hand from a BBO game features a ♦ void and an 8-card club suit headed by the AKQ. Another hand with the same void and a virtually identical ♣ suit recently showed up at Gus Costanzo's Glenshaw club game. We will bid the BBO hand today, and the Glenshaw hand next month.

First, I will briefly explain Exclusion Blackwood (or "Exclusion"), since some panelists refer to it. Exclusion is an extension of Blackwood, or RKC Blackwood if you play that. The Exclusion bid simultaneously shows the bidder's void suit and asks for Aces (or key cards) *except responder is required to ignore the Ace of the exclusion suit.*

For those who want to know more about Exclusion, I explain how to start an Exclusion auction and how to respond in my Additional Comments at the end. But don't read those Comments now. You already know everything you need to know to dive into today's problem.

Matchpoints. Both sides Vul.

The auction: W N E S
 --- --- P 1♣
 P 3NT* P ? *3NT is 13-15 HCP, balanced.

You hold: ♠ K76
 ♡ K6
 ♦ ---
 ♣ AKQ87652

What do you rebid as South, and how do you plan to continue?



Five panelists simply bid what they think they can make, 6♣:

Ernie Retetagos: 6♣, which should have good play opposite any hand that includes a major suit Ace. I can't think of any other possible bid.

RF: What a dull bridge column that would make: 6♣, 6♣, 6♣, 6♣, 6♣, 6♣, 6♣, 6♣, 6♣, 6♣, 6♣, 6♣ ... etc.

Connie Hoechstetter: 6♣.

RF: Elegantly said and to the point.

Bill Holt: 6♣. Protects my Kings from the opening lead. Partner needs one major suit Ace and one major suit Queen for this to be a favorite. Worst dummy would be 3=3=5=2, but that still assures no ♣ club loser. To assure 7♣, partner would need AQ and A in the

majors, or both major Aces and a ♦ pitch. Bob Hamman famously said “Don’t play me for the perfect hand, I won’t hold it”.

RF: I endorse Bill’s analysis but must speak up to avoid an onslaught of emails from self-appointed bridge historians: I heard Barry Crane said that. It makes sense. It is hard for a notoriously aggressive bidder to have the perfect hand. But I will compromise. Maybe they both said it. Doesn’t everybody?

Bob Zimmermann: 6♣. I’m going to shoot it out. Among the many dangers are: (1) the lead coming through one of my major suit kings; (2) the opponents running diamonds; (3) both of the above on a major suit lead and a ♦ shift; and (4) missing a grand slam. But I am bidding blind. 4♣ should be natural. If this were the ’50s, 5♣ might be ‘Super Gerber,’ but does partner think so? I don’t know what 5♦ means. So, let LHO guess what to lead. Maybe he’ll cash an Ace [or try to] and solve my problems for me.

RF: “The ‘50s”? “Super Gerber”? *Robert! Are you try to scare readers away?* Welcome to the 21st Century, Bob. All kidding aside, let’s have lunch so we can reminisce about Autobridge and pickup slips.

Richard Katz: I bid 6♣ directly. Though 4♦ sounds correct, but opposite ♠QJx ♥QJx ♦AKxxx ♣Jx *trouble brews.* ☹ If I had bid 4♦ and partner responded a major suit Ace, I would bid 6♣, easy-peasy. But even with the worst North hand (above), I may get lucky in 6♣ with a ♦ or ♣ lead or a major lead and continuation. 😊 Seven is never in my picture. [**RF:** Frowny face and self-satisfied Smirky face added.]

RF: Bob and Richard touch upon an important point that should be amplified: a “blind” leap to 6♣ has the distinct advantage of blinding the defenders too. This is particularly true of voids. If you reveal the ♦ void, LHO will never lead a ♦, but will look for fast tricks in the majors. In Richard’s example, a ♦ lead allows two ♥ discards to claim 12 tricks. Other times, a ♦ lead may allow you to ruff out the ♦ Ace.



RF: The most popular bid was 4♣. Six of the 4♣ bidders intended it as natural and forcing. A seventh 4♣ bidder used it as Gerber. For now, we throw the Gerber bidder into the “4NT is Blackwood” pit and hope they can work it all out before we get there.

The natural 4♣ bidders are a thoughtful group:

Jan Assini: 4♣. So, I would love to be playing Exclusion Blackwood, but assuming I do not have that agreement, I would bid 4♣.

Frank Cymerman: 4♣. If I were playing Exclusion Blackwood, I would bid 5♦ [Exclusion Blackwood] with a ♦ void and asking for Aces, excluding the ♦ A. Otherwise, 4♣ is forcing and showing slam interest and hoping to get the right cue bids.

Herb Sachs: 4♣. If partner cue bids 4♥ or 4♠, I bid 6♣. If, as I expect, he bids 4♦, I will sign off in 5♣. If partner bids over 5♣, I will bid 6♣ over 5♥ or 5♠, or 5NT over 5♦, hoping partner knows I have no major suit Aces.

Gus Costanzo: 4♣. Partner’s jump to 3NT tends to deny any 4-card major. My rebid will be 4♣, intended as a slam try in clubs. It is not Gerber. If partner bids 4NT (last chance), I pass. Any control bids, I cooperate.

CB: Tends to? Jumping 3 levels to avoid finding a 4-4 major suit fit isn’t bridge, it’s bingo.

Asim Ulke: I bid 4♣. 7♣ or 6NT or 7NT are possible contracts.

RF: Yes, they are. But how do we choose among them?

Wait, wait, don’t tell me! **Gail Carns** has all the right answers. Gail also bids 4♣, but his unique continuation after the 4♣ bid is what stands out from the pack. We will show you his Gail’s expert bidding later, after we let the others struggle a little bit longer.



Two panelists chose 4♦ as a cue bid, implying ♣ are trump:

Jane Marshall: 4♦. Cue bid. If partner cues 4♥ or 4♠, I bid 6♣. If partner bids 4NT, I pass.

Trudy Cohn: I will bid 4♦, and if my partner can bid a major suit Ace, I will bid 6♣. If he can't show an Ace, I will bid 5♣.

RF: If North has no major suit Ace, ♦ must be well stopped. Both 4NT and 5♣ should have reasonable contracts, so 4NT may be the better matchpoint spot.



Several panelists wanted to bid 5♦ as Exclusion, but only two did so:

Reanette Frobouck: 5♦. I would bid 5♦, which should be Exclusion Blackwood for ♣. If I am off both major suit aces, I can retreat to 5NT. This is regressive. [**RF:** Translation: The bidding stops there.]

Craig Biddle: 5♦. This is another reason why I hate using one of a minor-2NT as invitational. In addition to the fact that there is little room to investigate stoppers after an invitational 2NT, here I have no sensible slam move over 3NT. I'm going to bid the hyper-aggressive 5♦ (Exclusion RKC); at least if partner shows 2 key cards, I will know what to do, and if he shows none, I will know what to do. If he shows 1 key card, I am going to bid 6♣ and pay off to ♠AQx ♥Qxx ♦AJxxx ♣xx when 6NT is cold.

RF: In general, I am a fan of Exclusion, but here it gains very little but gives up a lot. With ♣ as trump, the 5♦ Exclusion bid gets the auction too high too quickly. Only two contracts are possible without using guesswork: 5NT and 6♣. Whether North shows 1 or 2 major suit Aces, 6♣ is a good spot (it is laydown with both major Aces, but still reasonable with only 1 major suit Ace, since North should have the Queen of other major and other values). But, even if North has both major Aces, you cannot risk bidding above 6♣, since North may have no Queens in a hand such as:

♠AT8 ♥A98 ♦QJTx ♣Jx. With that hand, 6♣ is laydown, 6NT is down 1 off the top, and 7♣ is unlikely. So, it is simply not safe to explore for slams above 6♣.

At the same time, the 5♦ Exclusion bid hurts our chances for making 6♣. It deters a friendly ♦ lead which could give us immediate pitches or set up pitches by ruffing the ♦A. In contrast, blasters who bid 6♣ directly over 3NT will get a ♦ lead often.

Here, regular Blackwood works almost as well as Exclusion, but can win it all by finding all three Aces for a laydown 7NT (this is not likely, and in addition, the 3NT bid suggests soft values, slow stoppers and little slam interest). Blackwood also works fine over a 2 Ace response (just bid 6♣). With only 1 Ace, you can safely signoff in 5NT, or if you are feeling lucky, go with the odds that North's sole Ace is in a major (6 open spots in the majors vs. 4 or 5 (possibly 3) in ♦). But while Exclusion can avoid the need to guess when North has one Ace, regular Blackwood does not reveal the ♦ void (to the contrary, Blackwood implies you have no void).



[Sigh.] I can no longer dodge the question: how do you ask for Aces after 1♣ - 3NT?

Steve Nolan: 4♣. This should be Gerber because 3NT has a defined point range, meaning 4NT is quantitative. Gerber therefore stays as the ace-asking bid (there should always be one). Sign off at the indicated level in ♣ next round.

Paul Caplan: 4NT, Blackwood. If partner has 3 Aces, I bid 7NT, if 2 Aces, I bid the safer 6♣, if 1 Ace, I sign off in 5NT [I assume through a relay of some kind, so as not to ask for Kings], and if partner has no Aces, pass 5♣.

RF: Welcome to My World, Steve.

Stanley Ruskin: 4NT. These are always impossible. Partner could have 1, 2, or 3 Aces. If you play 4♣ is Gerber, you bid 4♣. If you don't play that (which I don't), you can bid

4NT which should be Blackwood, and not quantitative, in this type of auction. [R.F.: Well, if partner so agrees.] Or you could bid 5♦ which is Exclusion Blackwood. We will always be in at least 6♣. Blackwood could get you to 7NT if North has 3 Aces. Exclusion 5♦ cannot find the ♦A for 7NT. I think I bid 4NT Blackwood.

RF: As Stanley says, the partnership agreement controls. A poor agreement you remember is better than a perfect agreement you forget.

There are multiple ways to resolve the Gerber-Blackwood issues, and none of them is “wrong.” For example, many experienced players use 4♦ (the suit above the agreed or implied trump suit) as the Ace asking bid. This is known as Kickback or Redwood (if ♦ were trump, the Ace asking bid is 4♥). Under that scheme, 4♣ shows a ♣ suit (forcing), and 4NT is quantitative.

But you need not learn a new convention. I suggest a simple method *for casual partnerships and newer players* in the Additional Notes.



RF: There are still two more panelists to hear from, but since their bids are not dependent upon precision bidding tools, we will now reveal Gail’s expert plan:

Gail Carns: 4♣. I would like to bid 5♦, Blackwood excluding ♦, but since most people don't play that, 4♣ [natural] should force a cue bid. If partner cue bids 4♦, I will assume they have the ♦ Ace and then bid Blackwood [presumably, 4NT]. In sum, I will try to force partner to cue bid, then continue with the knowledge that they do or don't have the ♦A.

RF: I was at first skeptical of Gail’s approach. Now I realize it is innovative, logical, pragmatic, devious and courteous, all rolled into one! Not knowing if North plays Exclusion, Gail tricks him into cue bidding an Ace that Gail does not even want. Then, Gail asks for Aces, followed by solving a first-grade arithmetic problem. When done, Gail knows everything he (or we) need to know – even whether to bid 7NT. Gail gets the coveted “Best Answer Yet” award.

It is always good to have a former college level math teacher on your panel. Unfortunately, he gets only a 97%. I had to dock Gail 3% for not mentioning the added benefits from concealing the ♦ void.

Don't go away. The last two panelists approach to this hand is ... well ... entertaining.



The above auctions are for ordinary mortals. Two of our intrepid panelists went where angels fear to tread:

Bernie Fudor: 6NT. The best bid would be Exclusion Blackwood. Unfortunately, I don't play that, so for better or worse (probably), I bid 6NT.

Webb Hawthorn: 6NT is probably best at MPs. 6♣ is undoubtedly ironclad. 7♣ and 7NT are also possible, but I don't have the tools in a standard approach to find out.

RF: 6NT makes blasting to 6♣ look like child's play. Please do not try this at home. Bidding 6NT is too much matchpoint piggery for my taste. North-South have a combined 28-30 HCP and can easily be missing two Aces or the ♦AK. With Craig Biddle's luck, 6NT will probably be a claimer, while Craig languishes with the pack in a cautious 6♣ contract.

Scoring and Comments

Craig ran this problem through Bridgewinners.com. The primary results are similar, except Bridgewinners attracted many more Exclusion Blackwood bidders. They also liked 6♣ and 4♣, which were the most popular bids by the SCB panel. Most Bridgewinners only vote and do not comment, so we really do not know their reasoning behind their bids. But their bids are generally similar.

Here is a summary of the SCB and Bridgewinner votes.

BW			SCB			
Bid	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	Score	Comment
4♣	17	(37%)	7	(35%)	90	except 97% for Gail Carns
4♦	3	(7%)	2	(10%)	90	equivalent to the 4♣ bidders
4♥	2	(4%)	0	(0%)	0	
4NT	0	(0%)	2	(10%)	40	might be passed, might not help
5♦	14	(30%)	2	(10%)	50	limited utility and helps defense
6♣	9	(20%)	5	(25%)	90	best chance of making
6NT	0	(0%)	2	(10%)	20	only because it might get lucky
Pass	1	(2%)	0	(0%)	0	misread the problem?
Total	46	100%	20	100%		

Thank you to everyone for many meritorious and thoughtful answers, But not everyone can win. You will never get a bad score just because no one else made the same bid, but if your answer makes no unique contribution and is also unpopular too, what can I do? I do want to encourage good ideas over sheer popularity – which is why Gail Carnes has been honored.

Here is my reasoning for the scoring:

4♣ and 4♦ are roughly equivalent (starting cue bid auctions) and leave the bidders in a reasonable position to land in a sensible contract, and their popularity reflects the quality of the answer.

I give 6♣ the same 90 percent score because, although unscientific, it is a reasonable gamble, is preferred by several players, and by giving away no extra information, has the best chance of making compared to other 6♣ bidders. That is also likely where most auctions will end, no matter how they bid it.

The Blackwood bidders make an uncommon choice and have to guess what to do on a one Ace response. There is also at least some risk of being left in 4NT. The 4♣ Gerber bid is scored the same as the 4NT Blackwood bidders.

5♦ was my original favorite, and I am glad Exclusion is in my toolbox, but after a lot of analysis, it seems to have very limited utility on this hand. When it leads to the 6♣ likely final contract, it has less chance of making than blasters in the same contract.

I admire the uninhibited courage of the 6NT bidders, but risky gambling actions risk a bad score both at the table and in the bidding forum, especially when an admittedly good alternative, 6♣, is readily available.

The SCB scoring was made with the collective judgment of a hand-picked panel consisting of three persons, two of whom were absent. Please send all complaints to Spam.

Additional Comments

I. Initiating and Responding to Exclusion Blackwood:

The ACBL Official Encyclopedia of Bridge (7th Ed.) gives two examples of when Exclusion applies:

- (1) If you jump to one level higher than a splinter jump.
So, if you play 1♠ - 4♣ is a splinter bid, the auction 1♠ - 5♣ would be Exclusion for ♣.
- (2) After a Texas transfer after 1NT or 2NT, a new suit is Exclusion. So 1NT-4♥; 4♠-5♣ is Exclusion (♠ are trump and the ♣A is not counted when you respond).

By agreement, partnerships could apply Exclusion in other situations.

How you respond to Exclusion is a matter of agreement. E.g., partnerships who use RKC Blackwood (0314 or 1430) might choose the same RKC response for Exclusion RKC. Others might use simplified responses, such as 0, 1, 2, 3. [CB – yes, this is best]

II. A simple Way for Casual Partnerships or Newer Players to ask for Aces over quantitative NT bids (which may include 3NT).

At the risk of jeopardizing my membership in the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Better Bridge Bidders Society, I make the following suggestion for casual partnerships or newer players only:

Over any fixed range NT bid by you partner (which may include 3NT) when you had opened 1 ♣ or 1 ♦ :

- (1) 4 ♣ is Gerber; and
- (2) 4NT is quantitative (it invites slam and may be passed).
- (3) Do not worry about cue bidding after the 3NT bid.

There are three advantages to this simple method:

- It is easy to remember because it is what you usually do in NT auctions.
- It keeps the auction low and allows you to sign off in 4NT or 5 of your minor. And,
- It is simple and will usually work as well as a cue bidding auction.

Craig's Comments:

I bid 5 ♦ here to make sure that EB got discussed. I don't recommend this convention; the number of EB disasters by world class pairs is huge. It's a nice toy, but it has to be used with discretion. As for the rules for identifying EB that Richard gives, #1 is crazy. If you open 1 ♠ and partner responds 5 ♣, he either has clubs or his house is on fire and he's in a hurry to get home. Before deploying EB you need to be sure that partner knows what trumps are. (My 5 ♦ bid satisfies this rule, there is no hand that I would open with 1 ♣ and unilaterally commit to playing game in diamonds.)

But the real point of this problem, to me, is that it underscores the folly of playing 1♣-3NT as a minimum balanced game force.

1. Partner never worries about holding 3 small in a side suit when deciding whether to respond 3NT.
2. You can't bid Gerber here because 4♣ needs to be natural and forcing.
3. You can't bid Blackwood here because you will have 18 or 19 balanced often enough that you want to have a natural, slam invitational 4NT available because partner typically has 13-15 for this bid and you want to be in slam opposite 15 and game opposite 13.
4. You can't cue-bid your diamond void here (sorry, Jane and Trudy) because sometimes you get dealt ♠xx ♥Ax ♦AKxx ♣AK10xx and decide you'd rather make six of a minor than make 3NT with an overtrick or two.

So you have no ace ask and no 4♦ cue-bid available without giving up on one or the other of these hand types. Life is much easier when your 2NT response is GF and you have to find another bid with your 10-11 balanced.

After reading all the comments, I think Herb and Gail combined have hinted at the right answer. Rebid 4♣; if partner cues 4♦ he will have the ♦A since he would not cue-bid with ♠QJx ♥QJx ♦KQJx ♣Jxx. So you can bid Blackwood and find 7NT if partner has all the aces, or stop in 5NT (via a 5♠ bid which requires partner to bid 5NT) if partner bids 5♦ to show 1 ace. If partner cue-bids 4♥ you can bid 5♥, basically forcing partner to bid 5♠ if he has that ace too. If he doesn't have it he will either bid 5NT or 6♣ and you will play 6♣. And if he bids 4♠ you will just bid 6♣ because you will know that you are off both red aces. (And if he bids 4NT he has the hand I cited above, and you will pass in the best matchpoint spot.

BTW Richard, after my EB bid, if partner shows 2 aces I am bidding 7♣. This makes if partner is 2=3=5=3, or if he has the ♠Q, or the ♥Q not in AQ doubleton, or the ♦A. Nor am I dead if he has none of those cards; I will often have a ruffing finesse against the ♦A. And he might have AJ10 in one of the majors when I will have a finesse or a guess or a squeeze.

STREAKS AND BIG GAMES

CHRIS WANG

5 in a row:

William Holt	Allegheny CC Wed
John Doyal	Lebo Fri

2 in a row:

Constance Hoechstetter	Allegheny CC Wed
Cecilia Powell	Greensburg Wed
James Gump	O'Hara Tues
James Gump	Lebo Fri
Kenneth Eichler	Greensburg Fri
Leroy Hackenberg II	Greensburg Fri
Patricia Cunkelman	Greensburg Fri

Big games:

John Killmeyer & George Retos Jr	75.00	Lebo Fri
Kenneth Bergman & William Holt	70.24	Allegheny CC Wed
Kenneth Eichler & Leroy Hackenberg II	71.98	Greensburg Fri

PITTSBURGH BRIDGE **LORRAINE HANNA**

Face to Face Play

KEEP PITTSBURGH BRIDGE ALIVE... Please come out and support the games that are opened. For a current list go to our website.

<http://www.pittsburghbridge.org/clubresults.htm>

ACBL SYC

BBO offers Support You Club games. A portion of these entry fees comes back to our local clubs.

Rust belt

Here's a link for more information

<https://rust-belt-bridge-group.aweb.page/p/bd8459a2-f8b5-44ee-a77b-e690da84e623>

<https://pittsburghbridge.org/BBOClubInvite.htm>

Vichill League Evening Swiss Game

All levels of players are invited to play in this fun Team game played on Wednesday evenings starting on 10/13 and ending on 1/19. You will be separated into groups according to masterpoints. Teams can consist of 4-6 players. There will be a total of 9 sessions. Deadline to register is 10/7 For more information contact Stan Dub

stan.dub@gmail.com

Tournament Cancellations

The Pittsburgh Bridge Association is sorry to report we are cancelling our October Sectional. The expectation of a low turnout cannot justify the expense to our Unit along with the stringent restrictions on tournaments by the ACBL.

The Lancaster Regional scheduled for 10/25-10/29 has been cancelled.

Buffalo Regional in October cancelled

2021 District 5 NAP finals have been moved online on 10/2 & 10/3. Here's the flyer for info

<http://www.pittsburghbridge.org/21NAPFlyer.pdf>

A WILD DEAL- SOLUTION

Win the lead in dummy.

Lead the ♥A and RUFF IT HIGH

Lead the ♠Q-K-A-low.

Draw the rest of the trumps with dummy's 8.

Lead the ♥2 and discard a diamond.

Allow East to win two more hearts, as you pitch two more diamonds from hand and two clubs from dummy. The position is now:

♠ 76
♥
♦ 765
♣ 8

♠
♥
♦ KQJ
♣ QJ10

♠
♥ 1098765
♦
♣

♠ 109
♥
♦ A
♣ 543

East leads a heart. You ruff in hand. What does West do?

If he pitches a club, you pitch a club from dummy, ruff a club, diamond to the ace, ruff a club, and your last club is good.

If he pitches a diamond, you pitch a club from dummy, cash the ♦ A, ruff a club, ruff a diamond, ruff a club and the ♦ 7 is good. (and good for a case of beer from partner in some circles).

NEWS

PHYLLIS GEINZER

Phyllis reports no illnesses or deaths. No news is good news!