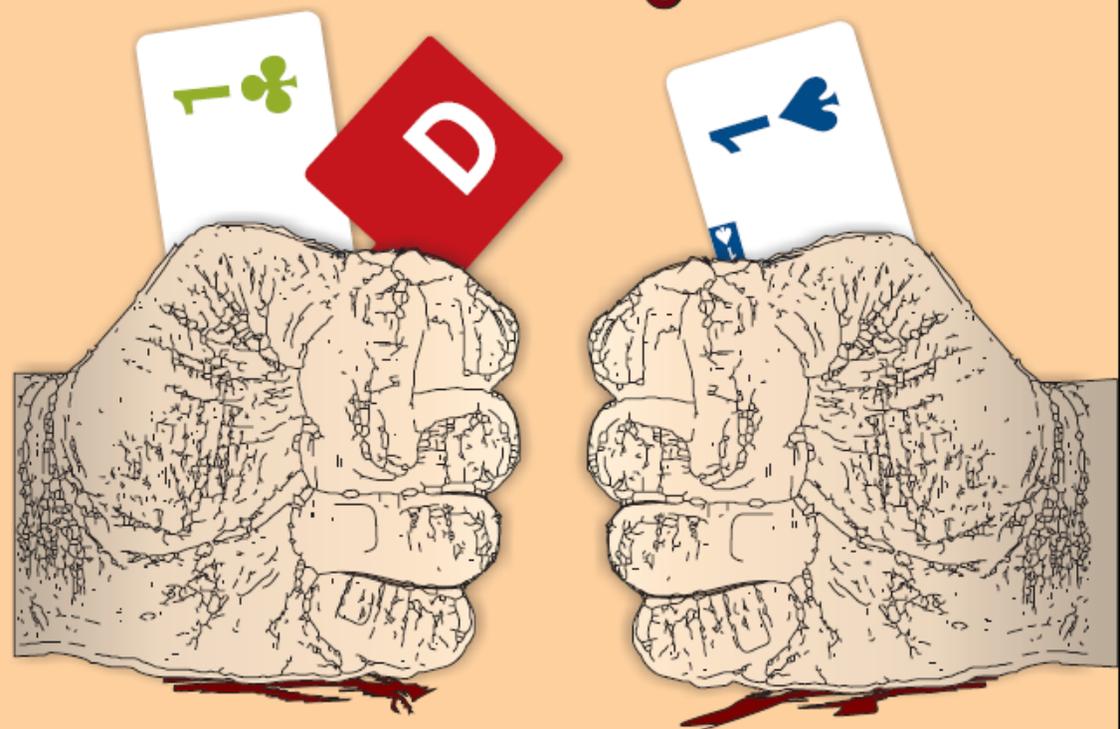


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Marek Wójcicki

**Professional Competitive
Bidding**



Battle of the Titans

**Krzysztof Martens
Marek Wójcicki**

**PROFESSIONAL
COMPETITIVE BIDDING
BATTLE OF THE TITANS**

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FROM THE AUTHORS

There has been a long standing trend in modern bridge for ever increasing aggressiveness and action in the bidding. These days not many auctions are left uncontested with the active participation of only one pair. Given this, bidding agreements in contested auctions and defensive bidding have become much more important. Most players have only loosely defined or general agreements. Most of us have experienced first-hand how costly it can be without specific agreements or how costly the resulting misunderstandings can be.

All of us can remember a time when a big IMP score was lost after one team bid and made a game at both tables, when a doubled partscore was made, or when someone went down for a big number because of a misunderstanding or from a bad decision when both pairs were fighting for the contract.

In this book we present selected deals from some of the most important championships as examples of modern contested auctions. We show the consequences of being active in the bidding for both pairs. Using examples, we have tried to show how to handle these situations, how not to handle them and why.

We present agreements that world class pairs use in particular bidding sequences. In some situations there is a systemic approach.

This book gives you an overview of how to treat most of these situations. This should help you and your partner to agree on a chosen style for contested auctions. Since there are numerous kinds of possible situations, it isn't as easy to categorize bidding treatments as it is in uncontested sequences. Trying to create a complete set of agreements to handle every situation is practically impossible. It is important to build an understanding within the partnership that is harmonious and that makes it possible for both partners to analyze situations and come up with a choice of bids that are along the same lines.

BEING ACTIVE AT THE TABLE

In recent years there has been a tremendous increase in being active in the bidding. In contemporary bridge “maximum aggression” is the approach that underlies the bidding of the opening side and the defending side.

There are bidding systems, for example, where agreements differ depending on the vulnerability in order to allow for maximum aggression. These systems are directed not only to improving bidding precision in the partnership that opens the bidding but also to obstruct the opponents’ bidding as much as possible. This, however, is a topic for another book – it was mentioned in the book *The Martens System*. Here, we will mainly look at problems created by aggressive bidding by the defending side, although some points will come up that deal with various other bidding positions.

There are advantages and disadvantages of being active in the bidding. On the plus side, it can make life more difficult for the opponents to exchange information, a profitable sacrifice can be found, or the best lead can be indicated. On the downside, excessive action in the bidding can be costly. The cost of going for a number can be very expensive. Active bidding can also make the opponent’s declarer play easier by revealing information about the distribution or strength of the defenders’ hands.

Despite the drawbacks, year by year there is an increase in aggressiveness in the bidding and auctions are rarely left uncontested. Presumably, the results justify this style of bidding. From what we have observed, being active in the bidding simply pays off.

Why? In modern bidding, penalty doubles are used much less frequently. Doubles and redoubles have been assigned more important meanings – conventional treatments that have absolutely nothing to do with penalizing the opponents. This has made it practically impossible to punish overly aggressive bidding.

The most obvious convention that frequently allows the defending

side to get away with stepping into a live auction is the support double and support redouble.

A redouble by opener after a double by the advancer should show the ability and desire to double the opponents. This should be the answer to opponents who crazily step into an auction, suggesting a misfit and inviting partner to cooperate in doubling for penalties.

One concept which works well is a negative double which guarantees at least two cards in the opponent's suit. This is a particularly useful option when we open 1NT and the next opponent makes a natural overcall at the two level. A negative double without shortness in the overcalled suit means that opener can more frequently pass the double out for penalties, which shouldn't be contrary to the aims of the side that opened the bidding.

We now present deals which illustrate the style of contested auctions among world class pairs from the most important championships. This paints a picture of the current trends in bidding. We will also try to present solutions of how to handle certain situations. This can be the basis for a further fine tuning of an approach and systemic agreements or at least lead to a discussion on partnership bidding style.

Beijing 2008

Bridge Olympiad, the semi-finals

You can see in the deal below just how far one can go with the idea of a “light” overcall. In second seat! Note how consistent the bidding style is in the partnership. The partner of the overcaller counts the points around the table and reacts adequately.

♠ 9			
NS vulnerable ♥ A54			
Dealer North ♦ QJ10854			
♣ AQ4			
♠ AK104	N	E	♠ 875
♥ 1086	W	S	♥ J32
♦ K76			♦ 3
♣ 1086			♣ KJ9752
♠ QJ632			
♥ KQ97			
♦ A92			
♣ 3			

W	N	E	S
Versace	Helness	Lauria	Helgemo
pass	1♦	2♣	2♠
pass	3♦	pass	3♥
pass	3NT	pass...	

This degree of being active at the table, East’s 2♣ overcall, is seldom seen among top pairs. This style requires an enormous ability to judge a situation and assign the points around the table based on the opponents’ bidding. Note that Versace didn’t even raise to 3♣, let alone double 3NT for a spade lead.

Deceptively clouding the location of honor cards can bring many benefits and make declarer play much more difficult.

Brian Senior: It can indeed, but is the style described on their cc (the answer is, I believe, no), or do they perhaps alert when an overcall occurs? Surely any pair who play in such a non-standard manner must work hard to give adequate disclosure.

Beijing 2008

Bridge Olympiad, the semi-finals.

Here you can see the negative consequences of being too active in the bidding.

<p>Love all Dealer South</p> <p>♠ 4 ♥ J10652 ♦ 8752 ♣ K62</p>	<p>♠ KQJ752 ♥ Q4 ♦ AK6 ♣ 84</p> <table border="1" style="margin: 0 auto; padding: 5px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 10963 ♥ A98 ♦ Q109 ♣ J75</p>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ A8 ♥ K73 ♦ J43 ♣ AQ1093</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

W Duboin	N Helness	E Sementa	S Helgemo
pass 3♥	1♠ 4♠	dbl. pass...	pass 2♥ ¹⁾

¹⁾Helgemo's transfer of 2♥, showing a better raise, is standard these days

We recommend the opposite agreement – a two-way transfer – with a sub-minimum raise or a game forcing raise:

1)

W	N	E	S
1♥	dbl.	?	

- 2♦ = heart fit, 5-8 or 13+ PC

- 2♥ = heart fit, (8)9-10 PC

2)

W	N	E	S
1♠	dbl.	?	

- 2♥ = spade fit, 5-8 or 13+ PC

- 2♠ = spade fit, (8)9-10 PC.

Brian Senior: One benefit of this agreement would be that a jump to 2NT could now be specifically a limit raise to 3M, rather than a constructive raise to „at least 3M”, as in basic methods.

W	N	E	S
Aa		Molberg	
2♦	2♠	3♣	pass
4♣	4♠	pass...	3♠

At the other table the Norwegian’s 2♦ bid, even as a “bad Multi,” takes guts. Needless to say, at both tables the opening lead was a heart. This time being active turned out to be calamitous, since it produced a bad opening lead. It’s true, that Aa tried to redeem himself by bidding 4♣, but even so, can you blame partner for leading a heart?

This begs the question – what do we want to achieve? It’s an important point for deciding to intervene in the auction with a marginal hand. The opening lead factor should also be taken into consideration.

Beijing 2008

Bridge Olympiad, the semi-finals.

On this board you can see how the pair with the majority of the points is susceptible to intervention in the auction, even delayed intervention.

	♠ 932		
EW vulnerable	♥ K4		
Dealer West	♦ AJ97643		
	♣ 9		
♠ 10		N	♠ KQ865
♥ Q875		W	♥ A32
♦ 105		E	♦ K8
♣ AQ8753		S	♣ KJ6
	♠ AJ74		
	♥ J1096		
	♦ Q2		
	♣ 1042		

W	N	E	S
Duboin	Helness	Sementa	Helgemo
pass	pass	1♠	pass
1NT	3♦	dbl.	pass
4♦	pass	4♥	pass...

At this table there was delayed intervention. Apparently, Helness' hand was too good for an opening 3♦ bid at favorable vulnerability.

Brian Senior: Personally, I would prefer to open 3♦ and to hell with it, even if I am stronger than I might be.

The Italians faced a difficult problem of choosing the best game. Sementa's double showed a good hand. Each bid seems to be correct, but the game was doomed.

W	N	E	S
Ja.Hackett	Gromoller	Ju.Hackett	Kirmse
pass	3♦	dbl.	pass
4♦	pass	4♠	pass
5♣	pass...		

W	N	E	S
Aa		Molberg	
pass	3♦	3♠	pass
4♣	pass	5♣	pass...

W	N	E	S
Sandqvist			Malinowski
pass	3♦	3♠	pass...

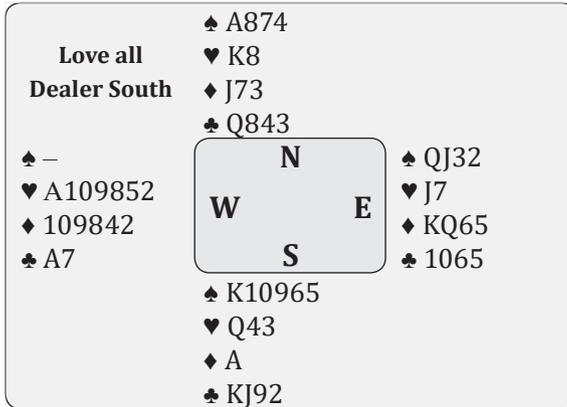
At the other three tables there was an opening 3♦ bid. The further auctions were different. Molberg decided on 3♠. Then again, the auctions went down different paths – Aa bid clubs which led to game in that suit, and Sandqvist, somewhat masochistically, passed. Hackett doubled for take out, which led to a contract of 5♣, while also allowing for the possibility of playing game in hearts.

5♣ can be made by running the ♠10 and then taking a ruffing finesse.

Estoril 2005

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

When using a conventional overcall that shows, for example, a two-suiter, you can't simply have an agreement that "we're playing Michaels." It's essential to know also "what next?" especially in contested auctions. How high are we forced to bid? Are there any forcing pass positions? And many other further points to agree on.



W	N	E	S
Nystrom		Bertheau	
			2♠ ¹⁾
4♦ ²⁾	4♠	5♦	pass
pass	dbl.	pass...	

¹⁾10-13 PC, 5+♠

²⁾Leaping Michaels – hearts and diamonds

W	N	E	S
Duboin	Lindkvist	Bocchi	Fredin
			1♠
2NT ¹⁾	3♥ ²⁾	4♦	4♠
5♦	pass...		

¹⁾Ghestem two-suiter – hearts and diamonds

²⁾constructive spade raise

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Ekeblad	Meckstroth	Rubin
2♥	dbl.	pass	2♣
3♦	4♠	pas...	2♠ ¹⁾

¹⁾11-15 PC, 5+♠ and 4+♣

W	N	E	S
Hampson	Nickell	Greco	Freeman
2♠ ¹⁾	3♦ ²⁾	pas	1♠
pass...			3♠

¹⁾two-suiter in the reds

²⁾constructive spade raise

Each of the four West players appreciated their distributional hand and came into the auction. After 2♣ opening, Nystrom decided to bid 4♦, showing diamonds and hearts.

It is understandable that a pair can have this style of bidding, but how to handle the situation when the hand is two tricks stronger? This increases the strength range of a convention that shows a two-suiter. It increases the frequency of being able to use it, but clouds the precision in bidding. As a result it is extremely difficult to know what is forcing, when a forcing pass situation is set up and how to make decisions in the slam zone.

Let's look at the Leaping Michaels convention used by the Swedes. It has been gaining in popularity, however, it is very narrowly defined – the first bid is made at the four level in a suit held, just below game level. Using this convention, it is absolutely critical to agree what is forcing. Does it promise honor card strength or only offensive tricks? Is it forcing or non-forcing? Is a forcing pass set up or not?

Brian Senior: Leaping Michaels has the benefit of showing both suits but is very committal. Say that we play a style where the 4♣/♦ overcall promises a decent amount of high-card strength. It is easy to agree something like, „With 5-5-2-1 hands a minimum is something like AQJxx twice, or perhaps only AQxxx twice“. But actually, unless we are wedded to the idea of showing both suits at all costs, should it not depend on which major has been opened against us?

Over a 2♠ opening, we may as well stretch to bid 4♣/♦ to show the shape,

because the alternative is 3♥, which is also pretty committal and dangerous and leaves little space for exploration, but over a 2♥ opening we have the option of a simple 2♠ overcall, over which there is a fair amount of space to explore. We can, for example, make an invitational raise, something which is unavailable facing a 3♥ overcall of 2♠.

So I would suggest that:

♠ AQxxx ♥ xx ♦ x ♣ AQxxx

is a 2♠ overcall of a 2♥ opening, but

♠ xx ♥ AQxxx ♦ x ♣ AQxxx

might as well be a 4♣ overcall of a 2♠ opening.

Estoril 2005

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

This deal illustrates the differences in aggressive styles for world class pairs, both in opening the bidding and suggesting a defense.

NS vulnerable Dealer East	♠ AK102	♠ J973									
	♥ Q976		♥ 853								
	♦ 108	♦ KQ976									
	♣ 1065	♣ A									
♠ 8	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ AJ10	♠ Q654										
♦ J532	♥ K42										
♣ K9732	♦ A4										
	♣ QJ84										

W	N	E	S
Versace	Lindkvist	Lauria	Fredin
		1♦	dbl.
3♣	3♦	4♣	pass
4♥	pass	5♦	pass...

W	N	E	S
Nystrom	Bocchi	Bertheau	Duboin
		pass	1♣
pass	1♦ ¹⁾	pass	1♥
pass	1♠	pass	1NT
pass...			

¹⁾hearts

W	N	E	S
Gitelman	Hamman	Moss	Soloway
		pass	1♠
pass	2♠	pass	pass
dbl.	3♠	pass...	

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Greco	Meckstroth	Hampson
3♣ ¹⁾	dbl.	1♦	dbl.
5♦	pass...	4♦	pass

¹⁾both minors, at least 5-4

Lauria and Meckstroth decided on a sub-minimum opening. Lauria then wanted to show his desire for a club lead against a potential major suit game and the auction ended in their side overbidding.

Meckstroth preempted, but Rodwell took the jump as invitational.

Brian Senior: And isn't remarkable that this pair, of all pairs, should have such a misunderstanding?

As you can see, chaos and random actions permeated the bidding. Is chaos something that is fundamentally bad? It's a certain kind of style in contested auctions. It can lead to success as long as the partnership that uses this kind of style can understand what's going on in the bidding better than the opponents can.

Note, that with the same cards which two other tables bid to a hopeless game, Nystrom and Bertheau never even entered the auction.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

We have a saying in Polish among social bridge players, “After 1NT, there’s not enough for the 3 level.” Is it true? It seems that with distributional hands there’s nothing to be afraid of. What’s needed though, is a way to find the best suit to play in.

Both vulnerable Dealer West	♠ KQ4	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ AJ75
			N									
W		E										
	S											
♠ 832	♥ KQ2		♥ J65									
♥ 743	♦ QJ9		♦ AK652									
♦ 873	♣ K1087		♣ A									
♣ J953												
	♠ 1096											
	♥ A1096											
	♦ 104											
	♣ Q642											

W	N	E	S
Eber	Rosenberg	Bosenberg	Zia
pass	1NT	pass...	

W	N	E	S
Weinstein	Cope	Garner	Holman
pass 2♣	1NT pass	dbl. 2♦	pass pass...

W	N	E	S
Brogeland	Drijver	Saelensminde	Brink
	1NT	pass...	

W	N	E	S
de Wijs	Helness	Muller	Helgemo
pass 2♣ pass	1NT pass 2♥	dbl. 2♦ pass...	pass dbl.

Here we see that with a strong hand – 17 PC and not bad distribution – only two out of four players came in after the strong notrump.

In our experience we have found that after an opening NT of 15-17 PC the two-suited double works out well, showing a 5+ card minor and a 4-card major. This is a hand shape that has a lot of potential and that will often let you win the partscore battle.

How should partner bid on?

W	N	E	S
1NT	dbl.	pass	?

- 2♣/♦/♥ = looking for partner's suit – “pass or correct”
- 2♠ = natural, to play

Brian Senior: And even if someone is wedded to their penalty doubles, the two-suited double has to be a good idea when made by a passed hand.

Bali 2013

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

There is a growing trend to shave points off the opening 1NT bid, and more and more pairs are using a 1NT opening range of 14-16. This in turn has led to more pairs going back to basics – penalty doubles of 1NT. Sometimes this brings amazing results.

NS vulnerable Dealer North	♠ A952		
	♥ AJ83		
	♦ QJ		
	♣ A86		
♠ J64		N	♠ KQ10
♥ 4		W	♥ KQ106
♦ K7652		E	♦ A1043
♣ K953		S	♣ Q2
	♠ 873		
	♥ 9752		
	♦ 98		
	♣ J1074		

W	N	E	S
Duboin	Narkiewicz	Sementa	Buras
pass	1NT	dbl.	pass
pass	rdbl.	pass	2♣
pass	pass	dbl.	pass
dbl.	2♥	pass	pass
	pass		

Sementa’s double was penalty and the Polish pair, even though they found a suit to play in that was 4-4, had to pay a handsome price. 2♥ doubled ended up down three, -800.

W	N	E	S
	Bocchi		Madala
	1NT	pass...	

Here EW played a slightly unusual version of the two-suited double and there was no way to double NS. Down four and +400 for EW.

Brian Senior: So are you recommending the two-suited double against 15-17 but penalty doubles if the 1NT range starts at 14 or lower?

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

Knowing the opponents' bidding style can frequently pay off. Look at this example...

Love all	♠ 102		
Dealer West	♥ AQ5		
	♦ Q96		
	♣ QJ972		
♠ AJ7643		N	♠ 98
♥ 8		W	♥ J109742
♦ AKJ2		E	♦ 73
♣ A5		S	♣ K104
	♠ KQ5		
	♥ K63		
	♦ 10854		
	♣ 853		

W	N	E	S
Helgemo	Drijver	Helness	Brink
1♠	dbl.	pas	1NT
2♦	pass	2♥	dbl.
pass	3♣	pass...	

W	N	E	S
de Wijs	Saelensminde	Muller	Brogeland
1♣	pass	1♦	pass
2♠	pass...		

Drijver's take out double is another example of being active in the bidding at any price. As usual in these situations, there was no double to crown his work.

Note, that there is a fair amount of inconsistency in the Dutch's pair's game. If Drijver is allowed to make such extravagant doubles, then Brink should tread lightly in the auction and not go for maximum activeness as they did on this deal. This is a pair which displays a particular fondness for chaos.

This example shows that each captain (or trainer) should have extensive knowledge of the opponents' game and adequately practice bidding tactics with their players.

Sao Paulo 2009

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

The modern style for third seat openers looks more like the start of defensive bidding and often serves the same purpose.

NS vulnerable Dealer West	♠ Q753	N	♠ KJ98
	♥ KQ10		♥ J8764
	♦ Q854	E	♦ 2
	♣ 73		♣ 964
♠ 42	W		
♥ 9532	S		
♦ J3			
♣ KQ1085			
	♠ A106		
	♥ A		
	♦ AK10975		
	♣ AJ2		

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Drijver	Meckstroth	Brink
pass	pass	1♠	dbl.
1NT ¹⁾	dbl.	2♣	dbl.
pass	2♦	pass	4♣
pass	4♥	pass	4NT
pass	5♦	pass	6♦
pass...			

¹⁾clubs

W	N	E	S
Bakkeren	Nickell	Bertens	Katz
pass	pass	pass	2♣
dbl.	pass	2♠	3♦
pass	4♦	pass	5♣
pass	5♥	pass	6♦
pass...			

Should sub-minimum hands in third seat be frequently opened?

As usual, everything depends on the context, in other words, depending on the vulnerability and what the goal is – to indicate a lead or mess up the opponents.

The common opinion is that many top pairs have perfected their bidding systems for auctions without interference from the opponents. Defensive bidding, on the other hand, seems not to have captured the attention of as many players, which is why the state of the art leaves much to be desired. What's more, the available tools are obviously limited.

How should the 1♠ opening with Meckstroth's hand be judged?

- 1.Vulnerability** – favorable, reducing the potential cost of the bid.
- 2.Indicating a suit for an attacking opening lead** – makes sense. There is not even a shred of support for any of the remaining suits.
- 3.Obstructing the bidding** – an obvious advantage, although the Dutch pair perfectly handled the situation.
- 4.The potential danger?** Spades could easily have been the opponents' suit.

Note, that Bertens took an unusual action a round later by bidding spades, which was his shorter suit rather than the longer heart suit, in order to show his desire for a lead.

Sao Paulo 2009

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

Fourth hand bidding after responder's bid is like stepping into a vicegrip, also known as the sandwich position. There is always an additional element of risk, since opener's strength hasn't yet been defined.

Love all	♠ Q96		
Dealer West	♥ J9843		
	♦ K93		
	♣ Q4		
♠ AKJ82		N	♠ 1043
♥ A5		W	♥ Q7
♦ 87		E	♦ A10642
♣ 10932		S	♣ J87
	♠ 75		
	♥ K1062		
	♦ QJ5		
	♣ AK65		

W	N	E	S
Duboin	Karaivanov	Sementa	Trendafilov
1♠	pass	2♠	dbl.
pass	3♥	pass...	

W	N	E	S
Aronov		Stefanov	
1♠	pass	2♠	pass...

W	N	E	S
Wang	Rodwell	Zhuang	Meckstroth
1♠	pass	2♠	dbl.
pass	3♥	pass	pass
3♠	pass...		

W	N	E	S
Nickell	Dai	Katz	Yang
1♠	pass	1NT	dbl.
2♣	2♥	2♠	3♥
pass...			

In poker what is important is the position relative to the other players. The last position to pay into the pot can most easily control the deal. There is a similarity here to bridge. Players don't like to take a questionable action when the opponents have not yet defined the strength of the combined hands.

Why? As in this hand, if the final contract is 4♠, the double only helps make declarer play easier and provides no benefit to the defenders.

On the other hand, not intervening can cause the loss of a partscore, or even a lost game.

Three out of four players sitting South decided to intervene with a double and that decision turned out to be the right one.

Sao Paulo 2009

Bermuda Bowl, the final.

Before making a take out double without extra shape the principle of “the lower the better” should be applied.

	♠ 10965		
NS vulnerable	♥ 5		
Dealer East	♦ A53		
	♣ KQJ94		
♠ 83		N	♠ QJ7
♥ J96432		W	♥ KQ10
♦ Q9		E	♦ K10762
♣ A87		S	♣ 103
	♠ AK42		
	♥ A87		
	♦ J84		
	♣ 652		

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Sementa	Meckstroth	Duboin
		1♦	dbl.
rdbl. ¹⁾	1♥	dbl.	pass
2♥	dbl.	pass	2♠
3♥	4♠	pass...	

¹⁾hearts

Now or never! Is what Duboin cried when he doubled the opening 1♦. This led to a lucky game in spades played from the South hand, which in practice made, thanks to the favorable layout in diamonds.

Brian Senior: So do we agree with the double on 12 HCP and 4-3-3-3 shape? I agree with the double, as it is surely safer to come in now than later.

Lille 2012

Bridge Olympiad, the Round of 16.

In doubtful situations, try not to put partner to a guess whenever possible.

<p>EW vulnerable Dealer East</p> <p>♠ KJ108 ♥ K974 ♦ A ♣ 10543</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ 542 ♥ J3 ♦ J1072 ♣ QJ62</p> <p>♠ Q3 ♥ Q852 ♦ Q43 ♣ AK98</p> <p>♠ A976 ♥ A106 ♦ K9865 ♣ 7</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

W	N	E	S
Amoils	Helness	Wolpert	Helgemo
rdbl.	1♦	1♣	dbl.
4♦	pass	1♥	3♦
		5♣	pass...

This deal belongs to several chapters of this book:

- a) Being active
- b) Forcing errors (2nd part)
- c) Hand evaluation
- d) Agreements

The Norwegian pair's activeness forced an error from the Canadians. The agreements that Amoils – Wolpert had were not the best. Did the 4♦ cue agree hearts, which is what many players would understand? Was the bid really necessary in this sequence? In our opinion, a run-of-the-mill 4♥ bid would have been enough.

Brian Senior: I agree that 4♥ was enough on a hand which could not even be sure that game would be successful. It is normal for a cuebid to agree the last-bid suit, I think, so for me 4♦ agreed hearts, at least until proven otherwise.

Sao Paulo 2009

Bermuda Bowl, the final.

Different pairs have different degrees of being active with their opening bid. This is a potential source of swings. After a high-level opening bid the bidding will develop differently than after a pass and intervention one round later.

<p>EW vulnerable Dealer West</p> <p>♠ 10 ♥ A83 ♦ K1098654 ♣ 104</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ AJ ♥ QJ54 ♦ 2 ♣ KQJ873</p> <p>♠ K96543 ♥ K76 ♦ AJ ♣ A6</p> <p>♠ Q872 ♥ 1092 ♦ Q73 ♣ 952</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

W	N	E	S
	Katz		Nickell
pass	1♣	1♠	pass
2♦	2♥	dbl.	3♣
4♦	pass...		

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Sementa	Meckstroth	Duboin
3♦	dbl.	3NT	pass
pass	4♣	4♠	pass...

W	N	E	S
Liu	McCallum	W.Wang	Baker
pass	1♣	1♠	pass
2♦	dbl.	rdbl.	3♣
3♦	4♣	4♦	pass
5♦	pass...		

W	N	E	S
Deas	Sun	Palmer	H.Wang
pass	2♣	2♣	pass
3♦	pass...		

Being active, as already mentioned, applies not only to defensive bidding, but also to opening bids, especially preemptive bids at different levels. Let's look at the deal above.

At unfavorable vulnerability only Rodwell decided on an opening 3♦ bid. At the other three tables the West hand passed in first seat.

As a result of Sementa's decision to bid 4♣ and Meckstroth being hyperactive, the Americans landed in a bad game. At the other tables the slower tempo of bidding led to contracts in diamonds at various levels.

Brian Senior: Meckwell are much more colour-blind when it comes to pre-empting than are many top pairs, who have very different styles according to particularly their own side's vulnerability.

Dublin 2012

European Team Championships, Ireland-France.

This deal is the rather extreme example of a swing caused by a very weak opening preempt.

		♠ A104										
NS vulnerable		♥ 82										
Dealer West		♦ KQ76										
		♣ AQ32										
♠ 98		<table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ KQJ72
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ KJ976			♥ A43									
♦ 843			♦ J10									
♣ 1095			♣ 876									
		♠ 653										
		♥ Q105										
		♦ A952										
		♣ KJ4										

W	N	E	S
Fitzgibbon	Rombaut	Mesbur	Lorenzini
pass	1NT	pass	3NT
pass...			

W	N	E	S
Quantin	Hanlon	Bompis	McGann
2♦	dbl.	3♥	3NT
pass...			

Not even the favorable vulnerability would tempt many players to open Multi in first seat. When I was the coach for the French open team I strongly recommended the French players to become more active in the bidding. Here, I was pleasantly surprised by Jean-Christopher Quantin.

The pay off was fantastic. A heart lead was called for and three no trump ended up down one. After Fitzgibbon passed, the bidding was shorter at the other table. Is it any wonder that Mesbur chose to lead the king of spades?

Brian Senior: The top French players used to be some of the most solid of pre-empters and it is quite striking how not only the new younger generation but also some of the more established players, such as Jean-Christophe, have loosened up their style considerably in recent years.

Dublin 2012

European Team Championships, Ireland-France.

Here's the next example of an extremely weak preempt. It's true that in keeping with the latest bidding trends, the North hand is more suited to an opening 3♠ bid than a 2♦ Multi bid, yet not that long ago everyone would have passed this hand without a moment's thought.

	♠ 1096543	
Love all	♥ –	
Dealer North	♦ 1062	
	♣ Q654	
♠ 87	N	♠ KJ
♥ AJ5	W	♥ KQ9842
♦ A98543	E	♦ Q7
♣ 1095	S	♣ A102
	♠ AQ2	
	♥ 10763	
	♦ KJ	
	♣ J873	

W	N	E	S
Fitzgibbon	Rombaut	Mesbur	Lorenzini
dbl.	2♦ pass	2♥ 4♥	3♠ pass...
W	N	E	S
Quantin	Hanlon	Bompis	McGann
2♦ 4♥	pass pass pass...	1♥ 2♥	pass pass

Another nice surprise. This time Rombaut attacked. With no one vulnerable the French pair put a lot of pressure on the opponents. On a no-brainer hand they tried to force an error. This time nothing came out of it. Note, that with even more aggressive bidding they might have scored up a spade game (without a club lead). At the other table the defenders were not in the auction at all.

Bali 2013

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

Just one more perfect illustration of the effect of being active with the opening bid. On this deal it was thanks to the use of the Martens system, which allows for more aggressive actions when non-vulnerable.

NS vulnerable Dealer West	♠ AKQ10		
	♥ A		
	♦ KQ754		
	♣ A83		
♠ J		N	♠ 83
♥ Q8632		W	♥ J10975
♦ J832		E	♦ 106
♣ 1095		S	♣ 7642
	♠ 976542		
	♥ K4		
	♦ A9		
	♣ KQJ		

W	N	E	S
Jassem	Sementa	Mazurkiewicz	Duboin
2♥ ¹⁾	dbl.	4♥	4♠
pass	5♥	pass	5NT
pass	6♠	pass...	

¹⁾hearts and a minor, weak, non-vulnerable can be 5-4

At the other table with the opponents silent, the Poles got to the lay down 7♠.

The extremely aggressive opening, which was made here by a rather conservative player, worked out. Favorable vulnerability ought to induce pairs to use destructive openings. The rewards can be spectacular.

Bali 2013

Bermuda Bowl, Poland - Chinese Taipei.

Another example of the Martens system in action.

NS vulnerable Dealer West	♠ AQ10 ♥ K52 ♦ 53 ♣ KJ1086	♠ 874 ♥ 743 ♦ 862 ♣ AQ54	
♠ KJ652 ♥ 986 ♦ QJ97 ♣ 7	N W E S		
	♠ 93 ♥ AQJ10 ♦ AK104 ♣ 932		
W	N	E	S
Jaasem	Ho	Mazurkiewicz	Shen
2♠ ¹⁾	pass	4♠	pass...

¹⁾spades and a minor, weak, non-vulnerable can be 5-4

Down 5, +250 for NS. At the other table with the EW pair silent, the Poles played 3NT and scored up +660.

Brian Senior: 4♠ was a big bid on a small hand with only three low spades facing a known five-card suit, and offered the opposition a possible +1100 (or even 1400 if declarer goes wrong) had South been able to find a take-out double. As they say in business, „You have to speculate to accumulate“.

In short, the bridge of tomorrow will for sure be an active game. Whoever wants to be somebody will have to adopt this style. The adage that bridge is a bidder’s game is becoming even more important.

To sum up, a style should be developed that allows for maximum activeness in the bidding. On the other hand, we can now see how necessary it is to have tools in one’s bidding system that can deal with the aggressiveness of the opponents, minimize losses, and provide a method for making corrections.

HYPERACTIVITY

Trying to keep up with the current trend of being super active in the bidding can often lead to what could be called hyperactivity. It calls to mind a comparison with the syndrome of ADHD in children. A fairly high level of activity in children is surely normal, but it can occur at such a pathological level as to even pose a threat.

Hyperactivity in bridge is being active in the bidding taken to extremes. It's true that in practice it can sometimes be successful, whenever the opponents take someone's crazy bidding too seriously. More often, though, it leads to an absolute disaster.

*Estoril 2005**Bermuda Bowl, the final.*

The first impression of a hyperactive action can be that it was innocuous... it can, however, lead to a blow up if partner overreacts to an extreme action. For this reason, potential overbidding should always be looked at from all sides, with careful consideration of the pros and cons.

EW vulnerable Dealer North	♠ Q10963 ♥ AQJ9 ♦ 3 ♣ 1062		
♠ – ♥ K8653 ♦ Q9865 ♣ A87	N W E S	♠ AK82 ♥ 1072 ♦ J107 ♣ KJ3	
	♠ J754 ♥ 4 ♦ AK42 ♣ Q954		

W	N	E	S
Versace	Rodwell	Lauria	Meckstroth
	pass	1♣	1♦
dbl. ¹⁾	1♠	2♥	3♠
4♥	dbl.	pass...	

¹⁾hearts

Lauria's 2♥ bid could possibly win a prize for "Sabotage of the Year." Admittedly, he had the exact opposite of a hand for such an action, only three hearts, a strong spade holding and 4333 shape. It looks like he couldn't find the pass card in his bidding box. This was championship style hyperactivity.

Versace, thus provoked, couldn't help himself from making faces and then he lost his cool. The Americans got off track in the defense and dropped a trick, but they were still able to score +500 for down two.

*Estoril 2005**Bermuda Bowl, the final.*

Sometimes hyperactivity can work out well in the end, if partner puts down the right cards – something not seen in the previous deal.

<p>EW vulnerable Dealer North</p> <p>♠ KJ ♥ 1084 ♦ AQ97 ♣ J543</p>	<p>♠ –</p> <p>♥ QJ95 ♦ K543 ♣ AQ762</p> <table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ A97532 ♥ K762 ♦ 10 ♣ 109</p>	N	W	E	S	<p>♠ Q10864 ♥ A3 ♦ J862 ♣ K8</p>
N						
W						
E						
S						

W	N Rodwell	E	S Meckstroth
1NT	1♦	1♠	pass
pass	dbl.	pass	2♥

W Freeman	N Bocchi	E Nickell	S Duboin
1NT	1♣	1♠	pass
	pass...		

Taking another bid with Rodwell's hand is an unusually extreme action. Understandably, the hand was limited to 15PC and so there was no danger that partner would go overboard. This problem was given to many good players and each one passed.

The typical race to go down ended well this time. Meckstroth had the ideal hand and quickly took nine tricks.

Brian Senior: It is true that partner should not go overboard given that North is limited to 15 HCP, but double is still hugely dangerous. South may simply have nowhere to go given that he rates to hold five or six spades such that N/S may have no fit.

*Estoril 2005**Bermuda Bowl, the final.*

Making an overcall – even with 12PC – can be hyperactivity.

	♠ A10983		
NS vulnerable	♥ 10953		
Dealer North	♦ AK7		
	♣ 10		
♠ J54		N	♠ Q762
♥ A6		W	♥ K
♦ Q93			♦ 542
♣ Q8542		S	♣ AK973
	♠ K		
	♥ QJ8732		
	♦ J1086		
	♣ J6		

W	N	E	S
	Hamman		Soloway
	1♠	2♣	dbl.
5♠	dbl.	pass...	

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Lauria	Meckstroth	Versace
	1♠	pass	1NT
pass	2♥	pass	4♥
pass...			

2♣ overcall – even at favorable vulnerability – is a classic example of hyperactivity. Having a four-card spade holding increases the chances that the hands are a misfit. The singleton king is also rather more of a defensive than an offensive value – it increases the chances of going down a lot against a partscore.

It worked out well – an 8 IMP pick up rather than a 5 IMP loss. Why? Soloway led the king of spades and didn't read Hamman's carding correctly. The result was down only two, for -300.

Estoril 2005

Bermuda Bowl, the final.

What's the difference between hyperactivity and aggressiveness? In the real world, it is whether one looks at the bidder as a hero or a goat. And that – as with everything in life – depends only on the cards you're dealt...

♠ A10 NS vulnerable Dealer South ♠ QJ9865432 ♥ 7 ♦ 84 ♣ 9	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ K7 ♥ AKJ4 ♦ AJ10 ♣ 10873
N					
W E					
S					
	♠ – ♥ 9632 ♦ 9632 ♣ AKQ54				

W	N Hamman	E	S Soloway
			pass
4♠	pass	pass	dbl
pass	pass	rdbl.	4NT
pass	5♦	dbl.	pass

W Rodwell	N Lauria	E Meckstroth	S Versace
			pass
4♠	pass...		

W Gaviard	N Auken	E d'Ovidio	S von Arnim
			pass
4♠	pass	pass	dbl
pass	pass	rdbl.	pass...

W	N	E	S
Hackett	Cronier	Nehmert	Willard
4♠	pass...		pass

After the opening 4♠ bid, reopening the bidding at unfavorable vulnerability with such a weak, although shapely, hand is very aggressive. Even as a passed hand, when presumably partner won't count on that much and won't go wild in the bidding.

Can this be judged as hyperactivity?

It will often be successful – after all a makeable contract at the five level needs only a good fit in one red suit and not that much, for example shortness, in the second.

When the layout is unlucky, though, there's no playable spot at the five level, and even more so, no hope for passing out the double for penalty. Soloway chickened out after the opponent's redouble. He figured that partner wouldn't expect him to have a hand as bad as the one he had. It cost him -800.

Von Arnim bravely sat for the redouble and had to pay -1080.

Beijing 2008

Bridge Olympiad, the final.

Such factors as a weak suit, length in the opponents' suit, or unfavorable vulnerability should not be ignored when making a decision. These things increase the probability of a loss for being active in the bidding. The feeling of success sometimes only lasts until the moment scores are compared with what happened at the other table...

<p>EW vulnerable Dealer East</p> <p>♠ 62 ♥ KJ10965 ♦ 76 ♣ 752</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ A9 ♥ AQ82 ♦ AJ9432 ♣ 3</p> <p>♠ KJ754 ♥ 743 ♦ 5 ♣ KQJ8</p> <p>♠ Q1083 ♥ – ♦ KQ108 ♣ A10964</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

W	N	E	S
Malinowski		Sandqvist	
pass	2♦ ²⁾	pass	2♣ ¹⁾
pass	dbl.	pass...	pass

¹⁾10-13 PC, 5+♣, unbalanced

²⁾relay

After natural 2♣ opening, with partner being a passed hand and at unfavorable vulnerability, bidding spades with the East hand is extremely dangerous. Being active at any price cost only -800, while the opponents could have made a slam in diamonds for -920. The first reaction was, nothing bad should have happened...

But...

W	N	E	S
Duboin	Ju. Hackett	Sementa	Ja. Hackett
		pass	1♣
pass	1♦	1♠	2♦
pass	2♠	pass	2NT
pass	3♦	pass	4♥
pass	4NT	pass	5NT
pass	7♦	pass...	

It's not easy to stay out of the grand slam in diamonds. A trump was led and it went down one.

Lille 2012

Bridge Olympiad, the semi-finals.

Above all else, common sense...

<p>NS vulnerable Dealer East</p> <p>♠ 952 ♥ AQ102 ♦ J86 ♣ KQJ</p>	<p>♠ J73 ♥ KJ864 ♦ A103 ♣ 87</p> <table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ Q86 ♥ 93 ♦ Q542 ♣ A965</p>	N	W E	S	<p>♠ AK104 ♥ 75 ♦ K97 ♣ 10432</p>
N					
W E					
S					

W	N	E	S
	Garvey		Carroll
		pass	pass
1♣	1♥	dbl. ¹⁾	1NT
pass	pass	dbl.	pass...

¹⁾spades

This is a classic example of hyperactivity. If you can overcall with 7 plus points, you can't bid 1NT with 7-9. Common sense dictates, especially at unfavorable vulnerability, where it can be very costly, as it was here.

Lille 2012**Bridge Olympiad, the quarter-finals.**

Sometimes tactical considerations can cause hyperactivity. Actions at the table can be a result of the state of the match, a desire to set the atmosphere at the table or other factors.

<p>NS vulnerable</p> <p>Dealer West</p> <p>♠ J63 ♥ KJ1083 ♦ A65 ♣ 107</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ K1087 ♥ A9742 ♦ 108 ♣ A3</p> <p>♠ Q2 ♥ – ♦ K974 ♣ KJ98654</p> <p>♠ A954 ♥ Q65 ♦ QJ32 ♣ Q2</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

W	N	E	S
Buras	Bocchi	Narkiewicz	Madala
pass	1♥	5♣	dbl.
pass...			

East's jump to 5♣, despite the favorable vulnerability and partner being a passed hand, has many things going against it, like the broken suit and the fact that the hand has a lot of losers. Of course, there are arguments in favor of the bid, like the certainty that the opponents have an 8+ card heart fit and putting their backs against the wall could provoke them into making a bad decision. Is this hyperactivity? The arguments against this bid could be offset by tactical considerations, for example, the state of the match. 5♣ went down for -300 and at the other table after a jump only to 4♣ the Polish pair played 4♥ down three.

HYPERACTIVITY

Let's look at what other players chose to do in this position:

Hanlon (Ireland) - 5♣

Sementa (Italy), Van Prooijen (Holland), Helness (Monaco), Upmark (Sweden) - 4♣

Meckstroth, who provided many examples used in this book of unusually aggressive actions, was the only player to settle for a modest 3♣! Perhaps he thought that the heart void looked ominous.

HAND EVALUATION

The ability to correctly evaluate hands is the key to winning bridge. It can be learned – it requires a lot of work and discussion within a partnership. What is interesting is that it is not as important that the hand evaluation of both partners be identical as it is that they be similar. It is enough to know what partner's style is and then, of course, to take that into consideration when making decisions.

Hand evaluation is, of course, subjective. It is a process that comes from one's inner self while taking into account external factors. It is a reflection of one's character – a complicated and constantly changing part of one's soul. It is certainly a product of one's temperament and factors like courage and the degree of internal optimism.

Hand evaluation comes not only from one's bridge experiences – both recent and long ago – but also from reality and from one's perception of data from the immediate environment. Table presence is very important for making good decisions at the table.

Beijing 2008

Bridge Olympiad, the final.

As was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, what is important is knowing partner's style, temperament and degree of aggressiveness. The behavior of the other half of the partnership must be in symmetry. Here, something went wrong for a pair that is surely one of the most experienced pairs in the world.

<p>NS vulnerable Dealer South</p> <p>♠ AJ107 ♥ 105 ♦ 104 ♣ AK875</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ – ♥ AKJ843 ♦ J872 ♣ QJ10</p> <p>♠ KQ96 ♥ 976 ♦ K53 ♣ 963</p> <p>♠ 85432 ♥ Q2 ♦ AQ96 ♣ 42</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

W	N	E	S
Versace	Gold	Lauria	Townsend
			pass
1♣	1♥	dbl.	pass
3♠	dbl.	4♠	dbl.
pass...			

W	N	E	S
Malinowski	Sementa	Sandqvist	Duboin
			pass
2♣	2♥	dbl.	pass
2♠	pass	pass	dbl.
pass	3♣	pass	4♥
pass...			

Gold gave enough value to his hand to take another action even after the auction was as high as 3♠!

The Italians showed bad hand evaluation. The action taken here at unfavorable vulnerability was senseless. It shows a lack of harmony in the partnership. The style of both partners should complement each other. If the Italian's style allows for a 3♠ bid with Versace's hand, then Lauria's 4♠ bid is out of line. It is something that doesn't happen often with this partnership.

Bad hand evaluation cost -800.

At the other table Sementa decided not to take another bid after 2♠. Then, it was Duboin who demonstrated how to be active. Thanks to his hand evaluation the Italians got to an excellent game. His action was a compensation for his partner's reserve.

Estoril 2005

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

Another example of overly aggressive bidding that was not fielded well by partner. This was also done by a partnership that has been playing together for a long time and that was regarded as one of the best in the world.

<p>NS vulnerable Dealer East</p> <p>♠ AK3 ♥ 943 ♦ J54 ♣ 8642</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	<p>♠ 4 ♥ AK86 ♦ A3 ♣ KQJ973</p> <p>♠ 107 ♥ QJ1075 ♦ K10982 ♣ 10</p> <p>♠ QJ98652 ♥ 2 ♦ Q76 ♣ A5</p>
N					
W E					
S					

W	N	E	S
Venkat'ran		Choksi	
3♥	dbl.	2♥	2♠
pass	6♣	pass	4♠
dbl.	pass...	pass	pass

W	N	E	S
Versace	Gupta	Lauria	Tewari
pass	4♠	pass	3♠
		pass...	

The Italian North/South pair was under pressure. The opponents took up a lot of bidding space and they had to make decisions in uncertain conditions. The 2♠ overcall is clear cut (3♠ would have been constructive). The jump to 4♠ after double is doubtful, since it provoked partner to bid on. Looking at this hand that is something we would not have hoped for.

It would have been better to risk a 3♠ bid, counting on partner to keep the bidding open with a decent hand. At the other table East didn't open the bidding, which simplified the situation.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the final.

The next deal highlights how important it is to know and properly evaluate partner's level of aggressiveness...

Love all	♠ K86		
Dealer South	♥ 543		
	♦ KQ965		
	♣ 74		
♠ QJ743		N	♠ –
♥ 97		W	♥ AQJ2
♦ A32			♦ J1074
♣ QJ8		E	♣ K10952
		S	
	♠ A10952		
	♥ K1086		
	♦ 8		
	♣ A53		

W	N	E	S
Helgemo	Garner	Helness	Weinstein
pass	2♠	dbl.	1♠
2NT	pass	3♣	pass...

W	N	E	S
Zia	Tundal	Rosenberg	Groetheim
pass	2♠	dbl.	1♠
			pass...

The hand evaluation here, and perhaps the particular situation, depends on the bidding style of the partnership. If a double can be made in this sequence with only shape, then West can't pass – he doesn't have enough tricks.

The Norwegian pair has this style of doubling. As a result, Helgemo didn't pass and it turned out that he was right.

Zia counted on his partner having solid values for his bid, and the opponents chalked up +470.

Estoril 2005

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

On this hand both EW pairs demonstrated how not to bid. It is clear that there was either a lack of knowledge of partner's style from not having played long enough together or a lack of discussion about borderline actions.

♠ KQJ98					
♥ KQ7					
♦ K9					
♣ 1054					
♠ 1072	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ A63
N					
W E					
S					
♥ AJ2		♥ 1098654			
♦ AQ1074		♦ –			
♣ 87		♣ J962			
♠ 54					
♥ 3					
♦ J86532					
♣ AKQ3					

W	N	E	S
Madala	Greco	Lambardi	Hampson
	1NT	2♦	3♣ ¹⁾
pass	3♦	pass	3NT
pass...			

¹⁾transfer to diamonds, invitational or better

W	N	E	S
Gitelman	Mooney	Moss	Monsegur
	1♠	pass	1NT
pass	2♣	2♥	2♠
3♣	pass	4♥	dbl.
pass...			

The consequences of stepping into the bidding with any hand, regardless of the vulnerability, will be a result of the consistency within the partnership. If Lambardi can bid with such a weak hand after a 1NT opening, then in no way can Madala double 3NT.

Moss made a delayed entry into the auction and then accepted Gitelman's invitation.

The combined hand evaluation was also bad here. Did Gitelman make a mistake by inviting, or did Moss by accepting? It depends on partnership style.

Brian Senior: How much weaker could Moss have been to come in, even with a delayed action, vulnerable and with the opposition in a non-fit auction?

Philadelphia 2010

Rosenblum Trophy, the final.

This deal shows how hand evaluation is a product of temperament.

<p>Love all Dealer West</p> <p>♠ 10 ♥ A10742 ♦ K8 ♣ KJ873</p>	<p>♠ K64 ♥ 8 ♦ AQ43 ♣ A9642</p> <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>♠ AJ973 ♥ K95 ♦ 7652 ♣ Q</p>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ Q852 ♥ QJ63 ♦ J109 ♣ 105</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

W	N	E	S
Zia	Greco	Hamman	Hampson
1♥	dbl.	3♥	3♠
4♣	pass	4♥	dbl.
pass...			

W	N	E	S
Moss	Rodwell	Gitelman	Meckstroth
1♥	dbl.	3♦ ¹⁾	4♠
pass...			

¹⁾mixed raise

Hampson and Meckstroth were in similar situations and they evaluated the value of their hands differently.

Zia took a questionable action. A sacrifice at the 5-level after a supposed 4♣ bid is very doubtful (in love all). Showing the club suit was his intention, but undoubtedly, 3♠ would have been the final contract. Hampson's timely double ended in the contract going off three for +500.

Meckstroth bid and made a game. Jeff often displays optimistic hand evaluation. The result was +420 and a 2 IMP loss.

Brian Senior: I like Meckstroth's 4♣ bid. He can see partner's heart shortage so, even with the ♥K likely to be wastepaper, if North has four spades

the game will almost always have play. Hampson, by contrast, is taking the mildly cautious option in an auction where he might have stretched to bid, meaning that partner will be slightly less inclined to make a borderline raise to game and a good game could therefore be missed.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

And one more hand where temperament – or perhaps respect for the opponents – had a clear influence on hand evaluation. Preempt or invite game? There were two different answers to that question.

Both vulnerable Dealer East		♠ QJ5	
		♥ 102	
♠ K102 ♥ KJ9876 ♦ – ♣ KJ87		♦ K109764	
		♣ Q4	
		N	
		W	E
		S	
		♠ 987	
		♥ A54	
		♦ J32	
		♣ A932	
		♠ A643	
		♥ Q3	
		♦ AQ85	
		♣ 1065	

W	N	E	S
Holman	Bocchi	Cope	Duboin
		pass	1♣
1♥	1♠ ¹⁾	2♥	pass
3♥	pass...		

1)transfer to no trump

W	N	E	S
Versace	Gower	Lauria	Apteker
		pass	1♦
1♥	2♥	dbl.	3♦
dbl.	pass	4♥	pass...

Holman showed bad hand evaluation. He had a choice of a whole range of invitational bids and he chose the bland, preemptive bid of 3♥.

Brian Senior: While I agree that 3H was a bit of a nothing bid, in Holman's defence, looking at two aces Cope was close to making a 2♦ cuebid rather than raising to 2♥, and the partnership style for that action might have coloured Holman's thinking.

The Italians were bidding in a situation that was a bit unclear as to where the balance of points were around the table. In any case, they handled the situation superbly. The uncompromising use of the double should be pointed out. Versace was not afraid to double 3♦ with a void, as invitational to game.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

As with the previous hand, hand evaluation can vary greatly depending on one's character.

	♠ J1074										
EW vulnerable	♥ AJ										
Dealer South	♦ 1098652										
	♣ 2										
♠ A6	<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ KQ93
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K10984		♥ 532									
♦ A		♦ QJ74									
♣ Q10654		♣ 83									
	♠ 852										
	♥ Q76										
	♦ K3										
	♣ AKJ97										

W	N	E	S
Apteker	Katz	Gower	Jacobs
Bakkeren	Helness	Bertens	Helgemo

1♥	dbl.	2♥	1♣
3♥	pass...		dbl.

W	N	E	S
Weinstein	Cope	Garner	Holman

1♥	dbl.	2♦ ¹⁾	1♣
4♥	pass...		pass

¹⁾normal good raise to 2♥

W	N	E	S
Brogeland	Drijver	Saelensminde	Brink

1♥	dbl.	2♥	1♣
3♣	3♦	pass	dbl.
3♥	pass...		pass

In identical situations, both Apteker and Bakkeren decided on a preempti-

ve 3♥. Brogeland invited game, Weinstein jumped straight to game.

Brian Senior: Not all identical situations - Weinstein was the only West facing a good raise to 2H, everyone else was facing the weaker direct raise. And, given my comment on the previous deal about Holman/Cope's auction, which of Weinstein and Garner overbid in partnership style? My vote would go to both - East's club holding will be so important to West that he surely should make a 3C game try, but at the same time I don't like the strong rheart raise with no heart honour and no ace in an eight-count.

In this deal there was a whole gamut of bids that resulted from individual hand evaluation – preempt, invite, or jump straight to game. This happens rarely.

There is a conventional treatment I can recommend with a clear conscience.

After a 1♥/♠ opening and a double by the opponents many pairs use a transfer structure:

W	N	E	S
1♥	dbl.	?	

- 1♠ = both minors, 7-9 PC
- 1NT = transfer to ♣
- 2♣ = transfer to ♦
- 2♦ = weak (5-7PC) raise to 2♥ or game forcing with a fit
- 2♥ = good (8-10 PC) raise

It is also a good idea to agree on the bids that show specific types of hands: invitational with a fit, which is usually shown with a 2NT bid; or a mixed raised, usually the same as without the intervening double.

It doesn't hurt to play the same way after an overcall and a double by the opponent.

W	N	E	S
1♣	1♥	dbl.	?

Brian Senior: In both cases, the meaning of a 1♠ bid needs discussion. Facing the opening bid, is responder willing to give up a natural spade bid? Maybe, though the opening side could still have an eight- or even nine-card fit with doubler holding only three cards. More to the point, facing an overcall the meaning of RHO's double needs to be known - if playing short club, for example, I play with some partners that double here denies four spades, improving our ability to compete in the minors. Now South would surely want to be able to bid 1♠ in a natural sense.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

Showing a fit should be a priority in contested auctions, especially when we have hearts and they have spades. In the deal below the hands were balanced and there was no blood shed, but on deals that are more dynamic, the gains and losses from not respecting this rule can be substantial.

<p>NS vulnerable Dealer West</p> <p>♠ K10 ♥ A10875 ♦ QJ8 ♣ Q82</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ AJ973 ♥ 96 ♦ 1073 ♣ AK7</p> <p>♠ Q8 ♥ QJ4 ♦ A964 ♣ J1065</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										
<p>♠ 6542 ♥ K32 ♦ K52 ♣ 943</p>											

W	N	E	S
Apteker	Katz	Gower	Jacobs
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
pass	pass	3♥	3♠
pass...			

W	N	E	S
Weinstein	Cope	Garner	Holman
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
pass...			

W	N	E	S
Brogeland Bakkeren	Drijver Helness	Saelensminde Bertens	Brink Helgemo
1♥	1♠	dbl.	2♠
pass	pass	3♥	pass...

The bidding on this deal relied more on bidding treatments than hand evaluation. A negative double should deny having a fit. When you hide a

fit, then you are ill-placed after preemptive bidding, especially when you have hearts and the opponents have spades. Showing a balanced hand raise with a fit via a negative double is a bidding treatment from a bygone era, when the side with the balance of power blissfully bid on with the expectation that weak opponents would display decorum and allow us to show our values at a comfortably low level.

Showing a fit in a contested auction should always be a priority and partnerships should have a range of tools that differentiate between a raise, an invitational raise, a mixed raise, etc. In the sequence after a $1\spadesuit$ overcall of a $1\heartsuit$ opening bid a transfer structure can be used (described earlier for after take out doubles).

Jacobs showed terrible hand evaluation. The 4333 shape and two kings, one of which was a bad king, should have discouraged him from bidding on.

Brian Senior: The Law, and it's 'Eight never, nine ever', advice should not be followed blindly.

Sao Paulo 2009

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

Here, you can see that one should always search through the possibilities of finding a better bid... In the deal below both North and South could have made partner's life easier.

		♠ 532												
NS vulnerable		♥ K532												
Dealer South		♦ A106												
		♣ Q97												
♠ AJ10874		<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K96		
	N													
W		E												
	S													
♥ 964			♥ J107											
♦ 8			♦ J7542											
♣ J104			♣ 52											
		♠ Q												
		♥ AQ8												
		♦ KQ93												
		♣ AK863												

W	N	E	S
Wang	Lindqvist	Zhuang	Brogeland
			1♣
2♠	dbl.	3♠	dbl.
pass	4♣	pass	5♣
pass...			

W	N	E	S
Groetheim	Dai	Tundal	Yang
			1♣ ¹⁾
2♥ ²⁾	dbl.	3♠	dbl.
pass	4♥	pass...	

¹⁾Precision - 16+PC, any shape

²⁾6+♠

Brogeland's hand evaluation leaves much to be desired on this deal. Partner made a negative double at the two level and didn't propose a contract of 3NT. Nine points outside of spades was enough for a club slam. His

hand should have at least made a slam try of 4♠ rather than the lukewarm bid of 5♣.

The joint assessment of the situation made by the Chinese was also nothing to be proud of.

When presented with this problem, many players in the North position chose a bid other than 4♣ or 4♥, like an interesting bid of 4♠. There is sure to be spade shortness in partner's hand. In this situation the 4♠ means: "Everything I promised I have outside the spade suit and I don't have any other obvious bid."

Brian Senior: I suspect that Lindqvist thought he had already overbid a little by doubling opposite what might have been a flat 12-count, so thought that anything more than 4♣ would show more than he actually held. Brogeland would still have doubled 3♠ with a low club instead of the ace or king so 4♣ gave him the option of stopping below game. Brogeland should, however, have bid 4♠ over 4♣, precisely because he was so much better than he might have been.

Sao Paulo 2009

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

It is quite a feat to restrain one's temperament. Known for fierce, uncompromising bidding, Meckstroth can slow down the bidding in situations when his partner sometimes likes to stretch the bidding. This is the art of partnership harmony!

NS vulnerable Dealer East	♠ K7		
	♥ AQ98		
	♦ 752		
	♣ A865		
♠ AJ108532		N	♠ Q4
♥ K3		W	♥ 654
♦ KD3		E	♦ 9864
♣ 7		S	♣ QJ92
	♠ 96		
	♥ J1072		
	♦ AJ10		
	♣ K1043		

W	N	E	S
Versace	Karakolev	Lauria	Danailov
		pass	pass
1♠	dbl.	pass	3♥
3♠	4♥	pass...	

W	N	E	S
Karaivanov		Trendafilov	
Katz	Dai	Nickell	Yang
		pass	pass
4♠	pass...		

W	N	E	S
Wang	Rodwell	Zhuang	Meckstroth
		pass	pass
1♠	dbl.	pass	2♥
2♠	pass	pass	dbl.
pass	3♥	pass...	

The opening 4♠ bid ended the auction. At the other two tables there was different hand evaluation.

After the take out double, Danailov made an invitational 3♥ bid and his partner went on to game counting on the ace of ♠ and possibly the king of hearts to be well-placed.

At the other table, Meckstroth reacted to the take out double with a pessimistic 2♥. This shows that with a passed-hand partner Rodwell tends to make light take out doubles.

Brian Senior: Which is interesting because some players would decide not to double on a borderline hand precisely because partner was a passed hand.

Veldhoven 2011

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

And one more deal where temperament had an impact on hand evaluation...

	♠ AJ2		
EW vulnerable	♥ K		
Dealer North	♦ QJ65		
	♣ AJ876		
♠ K10985		N	♠ Q3
♥ 9763		W	♥ AQJ102
♦ 8			♦ A1097
♣ K105		S	♣ Q3
	♠ 764		
	♥ 854		
	♦ K432		
	♣ 942		

W	N	E	S
Versace	Drijver	Lauria	Brink
	1♣	1♥	pass
3♦ ¹⁾	pass	3♥	pass...

¹⁾mixed raise

W	N	E	S
De Wijs	Bocchi	Muller	Madala
	1♣	1♥	pass
3♣ ¹⁾	pass	4♥	pass...

¹⁾mixed raise

Muller had no doubt.

Another example of the problem of inviting without room to maneuver. Versace's systemic 3♦ bid didn't give Lauria the chance to make a conditional acceptance of the invitational bid. Muller had that possibility – he could have bid 3♦ to say "I'd like to, but I'm not sure." In fact, he did the opposite of Lauria, and just jumped straight to the game.

Brian Senior: Clearly, the point about 3♣ being a better way to show the Mixed raise than is 3♦ because it leaves room for a game try is a good one, but was Lauria perhaps a little unlucky and Muller lucky? Give West two red kings instead of two black kings, and there are four top losers.

♠ K1098 ♥ Kxxx ♦ Qx ♣ 10xx – it is another Mixed Raise which leaves game virtually no play – the singleton diamond is huge from East's perspective. So bidding game may be the percentage action, but ,huge mistake' seems a bit harsh.

Sao Paulo 2009

Bermuda Bowl, the final.

As was already mentioned, character has a great deal of impact on hand evaluation – mainly the temperament of the player. Let’s look at a drastic example of this.

EW vulnerable Dealer North	♠ AJ2		
	♥ K		
	♦ QJ65		
	♣ AJ876		
♠ K10985		N	♠ Q3
♥ 9763		W	♥ AQJ102
♦ 8			♦ A1097
♣ K105		S	♣ Q3
	♠ 764		
	♥ 854		
	♦ K432		
	♣ 942		

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Sementa	Meckstroth	Duboin
pass	1♠	2♦	pass
3♦	pass...		

W	N	E	S
	Katz		Nickell
pass	1♠	2♦	dbl.
3♦	dbl.	pass	4♣
pass	4♦	pass	5♣
pass	6♣	pass...	

The hand evaluation of the Italian and American pairs was diametrically opposite. The first allowed the opponents to play 3♦ (down one), the second drove to slam which required finesses in both black suits.

Nickell didn’t play the hand as a double dummy problem and so had to go down one.

JUDGING THE SITUATION

There are many different elements involved in evaluating the bidding in contested auctions.

A lot has already been written – or maybe everything has been written – about table presence.

Usually, good judgments of bidding situations are made by players who have had experience playing card games other than bridge. The ability to concentrate, a feel for the tempo and the music of the auction, and the emotions displayed by the opponents are very helpful in making bidding decisions. This is a necessary talent in order to be an outstanding player in the game of bridge.

Imagination is also important. If the style of the other players is known, it can sometimes help in making the right decision by supplying a fairly accurate picture of the hands around the table. Imagination can also come up with unusual bids or plays that prevent the opponents from figuring out how to play a hand.

Specific bidding agreements are also helpful, but their role shouldn't be overestimated. There are usually bidding positions that are uncommon enough that it would be hard to expect that a partnership would have discussed and defined every one. In long-term partnerships there is something that can be called parallel reasoning, which provides more finesse and confidence to the bidding.

Estoril 2005

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

Self-confidence is not always a good indicator. Sometimes it's right to believe that the opponents' actions are rational...

<p>NS vulnerable Dealer South</p> <p>♠ AQ863 ♥ Q52 ♦ 8 ♣ K732</p>	<p>♠ J97 ♥ A108764 ♦ AQ2 ♣ 5</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	<p>♠ K105 ♥ KJ93 ♦ 10 ♣ AJ1094</p>
N						
W E						
S						
	<p>♠ 42 ♥ – ♦ KJ976543 ♣ Q86</p>					

W Madala	N Greco	E Lambardi	S Hampson
pass 5♠ rdbl.	5♦ pass pass...	dbl. pass	3♦ pass dbl.

W Gitelman	N Mooney	E Moss	S Monsegur
1♠	2♥	pass...	pass

Madala did not think enough about how the bidding went. Hampson's double unequivocally showed a side void and a desire to ruff. Redoubling in this situation made absolutely no sense. A heart ruff and a diamond entry for a second ruff was a scenario that was easy to imagine. Turning -300 into -600 should never have happened.

At the other table South passed. There's no double that this was a very conservative approach to opening preempts – after all 8-card suits don't come up that often.

This led to a diametrically different course of events. Monsegur decided that after 2♥ he still didn't have a reason to mention the diamond suit... perhaps 3♦ by a passed hand would have shown a heart fit or at least heart tolerance?

In turn, Moss felt that 2♥ could go down a lot and waited for a reopening double. In fourth seat Gitelman didn't have a hand for a reopening double because of the heart fragment and the bidding died out.

Estoril 2005

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

Judging the situation is usually something subjective, largely related to a player's temperament and character, and his partner should take that into consideration. As was already mentioned, pairs that have been playing together a long time can benefit from knowing the behavior and style of partner's game.

Love all	♠ J63										
Dealer South	♥ 843										
	♦ Q10932										
	♣ 75										
♠ K8754	<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ AQ
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 102		♥ A9									
♦ 876		♦ KJ54									
♣ K93		♣ QJ642									
	♠ 1092										
	♥ KQJ765										
	♦ A										
	♣ A108										

W	N	E	S
Sylvan		Sundelin	
			1♥
pass	2♥	2NT	3♥
5♠	pass	pass	dbl.
4♣	pass	5♣	pass...

The auction was a fierce battle and the players took every opportunity to step into the bidding. Sylvan felt that he had to show a club fit and cooperate with partner. This kind of style is reasonable and supportable. However, partner needs to adapt to this style. Sundelin's judgement of the situation was faulty and at complete odds with partner's intentions. This is surprising given that Sylvan-Sundelin have played together for many years, representing Sweden.

JUDGING THE SITUATION

W	N	E	S
Versace	Bertheau	Lauria	Nystrom
			1♥
1♠	pass	2♥	3♥
pass	4♥	dbl.	pass...

At this table Nystrom decided to fight for the contract and Berthau punished him for that. Lauria had no problem in assessing the situation and deciding what to do.

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Moss	Meckstroth	Gitelman
			1♥
pass	1NT	2♣	2♥
3♣	3♥	pass	4♥
pass...			

Here, it was Moss who was punished for being active. It didn't dawn on Meckstroth that it was time to double. Admittedly though, he had a slightly more difficult situation to deal with than Lauria had.

W	N	E	S
Hampson	Hamman	Greco	Gitelman
			1♥
pass	1NT	2♣	3♥
3♠	pass	4♦	pass
5♣	pass...		

At this table Hampson fought and Greco took him seriously.

This is a funny example of a hand in which the chaos which was created at four different tables didn't serve those pairs who were trying to push up the opponents. Their partners weren't able to figure out what was going on through the chaos and being active led to a loss.

Brian Senior: Given his failure to overcall 1♠ Hampson's 3♠ must be a fit-non-jump - spades and clubs. So was 4♦ a non-committal bid accepting a game try but leaving West to pick between 5♣ and 4♠?

Estoril 2005

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

Creating chaos can be particularly painful, when the hand belongs to the pair that is trying to stir things up. Often this is difficult to assess, especially when the decision to make a move falls on the first or second seat.

♠ 9			
Both vulnerable		♥ K1072	
Dealer South		♦ J1062	
		♣ J1053	
♠ Q1054	N	♠ AK732	
♥ QJ9643	W	E	♥ 85
♦ 54	S		♦ K73
♣ 9			♣ AK4
		♠ J86	
		♥ A	
		♦ AQ98	
		♣ Q8762	

W	N	E	S
Nystrom	Bocchi	Bertheau	Duboin
2♥	pass	4♥	1♣
pass	dbl.	pass...	pass

Again Bertheau took his partner seriously. One reason Nystrom paid a high price for his action was because he had four spades, something which could be practically ruled out after the 2♥ overcall. The result was that it made it impossible for the Swedes to play the laydown spade game.

Norberto judged the situation well and punished the opponents for their doubtful bidding.

W	N	E	S
Gitelman	Nickell	Moss	Freeman
pass	1♥	1♠	1♦
3♠	pass	4♠	pass
			pass...

Gitelman held himself back from entering the bidding and this led to a 4♠

contract from the right side. Moss played the hand to success.

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Ekeblad	Meckstroth	Rubin
1♥	2♦	dbl.	1♦
pass	5♣	dbl.	3♣ pass...

Ekeblad took the push at every level of the bidding and this led to an excellent sacrifice of the spade game for -200.

Estoril 2005

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

Even the best can have problems dealing with the chaos that is created from active opponents, especially when their actions are hard to read. As boxing double olympic champion Jerzy Kulej once said, "There is no one immune to attack, but there are some strikes that miss their mark." A completely different picture of a hand can be created other than what exists in reality.

<p>NS vulnerable</p> <p>Dealer South</p> <p>♠ AJ6</p> <p>♥ 63</p> <p>♦ Q654</p> <p>♣ AK65</p>	<p>♠ Q108</p> <p>♥ 54</p> <p>♦ J107</p> <p>♣ QJ732</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ 75</p> <p>♥ KQJ10</p> <p>♦ K932</p> <p>♣ 1094</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
<p>♠ K9432</p> <p>♥ A9872</p> <p>♦ A8</p> <p>♣ 8</p>												

W	N	E	S
Hampson	Hamman	Greco	Soloway
pass	pass	dbl.	1♠
3NT	pass...	.	pass

After a peaceful and short auction a standard contract was reached. Hamman decided on a club lead, Soloway ducked hearts twice and nine tricks were in the bag.

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Moss	Meckstroth	Gitelman
			1♠
1NT	2♠	dbl.	3♠
pass	pass	4♥	dbl.
4♠	pass	4NT	pass
pass	dbl.	5♦	dbl.
pass...			

Meckwell had a tough time judging the situation. Credit has to be given to Gitelman and Moss for having in fact forced this error. Gitelman's 3♠ was a potential investment (-500 for 3♠ doubled down two), it pushed the bidding up higher, clouded the picture of the deal, and finally led to a plus score +500 when 5♦ went off three.

Brian Senior: What was Meckstroth doing bidding 4♥ rather than doubling again?

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

Bidding has a life of its own... in one sense it can even be interpreted as a melody. Having a feel for the action is something similar to having an ear for music. And we all know how that is. Some have it, some don't...

<p>EW vulnerable Dealer East</p> <p>♠ A75 ♥ K743 ♦ A84 ♣ Q85</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ K6 ♥ Q6 ♦ Q653 ♣ KJ432</p> <p>♠ J9 ♥ AJ10985 ♦ J2 ♣ A76</p> <p>♠ Q108432 ♥ 2 ♦ K1097 ♣ 109</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

W	N	E	S
Apteker	Rosenberg	Gower	Zia
		1♥	2♠
2NT	3♠	pass	pass
4♥	pass	pass	4♠
pass...			

Who's attacking and who's defending? Was W's pass forcing? Clearly EW didn't know. The 'melody' of the bidding suggested they were attacking. Yet, not everyone has a good ear... or maybe they suspected that it was one of Zia's famous tricks.

Brian Senior: Presumably, with no room for an invitational cuebid, 2NT only promised invitational values or better. So East's pass over 3♠ showed a minimum and West's 4♥ suggested a full game raise but no slam interest. But that still leaves West with quite a wide range so a forcing pass would be useful. N/S were willing to stop in 3♠. Just because South is Zia doesn't mean we should change our agreements, and it would be normal to assume that 4♠ was a save, particularly considering that 3♠ was a weak spade raise, not invitational, such that forcing passes would apply.

W	N	E	S
Weinstein	Cope	Garner	Holman
		1♥	2♠
2NT	3♣	4♥	4♠
pass	pass	dbl.	pass...

Garner didn't have a problem and doubled, taking +300. The same is with fans of classical music.

W	N	E	S
Brogeland	De Wijs	Saelensminde	Muller
		2♥	pass
2NT	pass	3NT	pass...

The constructive 2♥ opening (10-13 PC, 6+ card suit) paradoxically made it impossible for the Dutch pair to enter the auction. The excellent game was bid by the Norwegians and resulted in complete success, +630.

W	N	E	S
Bakkeren	Tundal	Bertens	Groetheim
		1♥	2♠
3♣	dbl.	4♥	pass...

At the other table Tundal and Groetheim wonderfully and effectively judged the defensive potential of their hands and allowed the opponents to play 4♥, but they went astray in the defense and let the contract through for -620.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

Not everything can be bid or can be inferred from the bidding. Sometimes the result depends on where a key card is located and not even the most scientific approach can change much.

	♠ AKJ73	
Love all	♥ 105	
Dealer West	♦ K852	
	♣ 53	
♠ Q		♠ 109
♥ AQ9742		♥ K63
♦ AQ103		♦ J764
♣ 76		♣ AQ84
	♠ 86542	
	♥ J8	
	♦ 9	
	♣ KJ1092	

W	N	E	S
Apteker	Rosenberg	Gower	Zia
1♥	1♠	2♠	4♣
4♦	pass	4♥	4♠
pass	pass	5♥	pass...

W	N	E	S
Weinstein	Cope	Garner	Holman
1♥	1♠	2♥	4♣
4♦	pass	4♥	4♠
pass	pass	5♦	pass
pass	dbl.	pass	pass
5♥	dbl.	pass...	

There was a complete exchange of information. The success of the decisions taken rested not only with the values held but on the position of key cards in the opponents' hands.

Brian Senior: Of course, from E/W's point of view, the missing minor-suit kings were exactly where the auction said they would be.

W	N	E	S
Brogeland	De Wijs	Saelensminde	Muller
1♥	1♠	dbl.	4♣
4NT	pass	5♣	pass
5♦	pass	5♥	pass...

Here, the double from Saelensminde, which is not in keeping with the current trends in bidding theory to immediately show a fit, provoked Brogeland to bid 4NT, which he probably did in order to show his 6♥-4♦ shape.

Brian Senior: Note also that Muller's 4♣ rather than the 4♣ fit-jump seen at the previous tables, made life harder for Brogeland, who was forced to commit to a level higher than he might have wished.

I suggested earlier that Leaping Michaels bids should be made on weaker hands when holding hearts and a minor against a 2♠ opening than when holding spades and a minor against a 2♥ opening. Likewise, I suggest that fit-jumps are more attractive when our major is hearts than when it is spades.

1♠ - 2♥ - Dbl. - 4♣ leaves the opposition with the option of bidding at the same level, 4♣, as does 1♠ - 2♥ - Dbl. - 4♥, so we may as well make the descriptive raise. 1♥ - 1♠ - Dbl. - 4♣ leaves the opposition able to bid at a lower level than does 1♥ - 1♠ - Dbl. - 4♣, so the latter bid puts on more pressure and that may more than compensate for the fact that it gives less information to partner.

W	N	E	S
Bakkeren	Tundal	Bertens	Groetheim
1♥	1♠	2♣	3♣
3♦	pass	4♥	4♣
dbl.	pass...		

A very fine-line decision. Both contracts were down one.

There were two extreme actions here. Bakkeren doubled 4♣, and Cope 5♥. At the other tables the auctions ended more quietly. These were not high stakes decisions, there were a few IMPs to gain. An accurate assessment of the situation and successfully using that assessment builds self-confidence and has an impact on further events within the partnership as well as with the opponents.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the final.

Sometimes a more tempered auction makes for a more logical decision about whether or not to bid on, as opposed to a fast rising wave of bidding music...

<p>EW vulnerable Dealer North</p> <p>♠ K82 ♥ 1096 ♦ K752 ♣ J103</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	<p>♠ J93 ♥ AJ32 ♦ 943 ♣ KQ2</p> <p>♠ A107654 ♥ 74 ♦ AJ86 ♣ 4</p> <p>♠ Q ♥ KQ85 ♦ Q10 ♣ A98765</p>
N					
W E					
S					

W	N	E	S
Helgemo	Katz	Helness	Jacobs
	pass	pass	1♣
pass	1♥	1♠	2♥
2♠	3♣	3♦	4♣
4♠	pass...		

W	N	E	S
Zia	Saelensminde	Rosenberg	Brogeland
	pass	2♠	3♣
3♠	dbl.	pass	4♥
pass...			

Helness definitely directed the bidding better. This allowed his partner to better judge the situation, who despite his 4333 shape and unfavorable vulnerability took the sacrifice. The deciding factor was the honor holdings.

Helness didn't guess anything right on this hand – he lost a spade, a diamond and three tricks on the side. Nevertheless, Norway picked up 6 IMPs.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the final.

Don't provoke the inevitable... It's a difficult trick and requires very good hand evaluation. We have all encountered this kind of situation many times. We bid the obvious 4♥, and the opponents, as expected, bid 4♠, which from our hand looks like it is making. What now?

Love all	♠ AQ9873				
Dealer West	♥ K82				
	♦ 93				
	♣ 93				
♠ J62	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ K
N					
W E					
S					
♥ A1096		♥ J753			
♦ K854		♦ A10762			
♣ 72		♣ AK5			
	♠ 1054				
	♥ Q4				
	♦ QJ				
	♣ QJ10864				

W	N	E	S
Helgemo	Rosenberg	Helness	Zia
pass	2♠	dbl.	3♦
3♥	pass...		

W	N	E	S
Weinstein	Saelensminde	Garner	Brogeland
pass	2♠	dbl.	3♠
4♥	pass...		

Zia allowed the opponents to bid hearts at the three level. You have to give him credit, that in these kinds of situations his great talent shines. From his hand, it seemed they were making a game on sub-minimum values.

Yet, left to themselves and not pushing them up, they might not bid the game, since he had some honor strength. Neither of the Norwegians committed an error, and 11 tricks in hearts were available.

Brogeland didn't judge the real situation and bid routinely, putting pressure on Weinstein to bid the game.

Sao Paulo 2009

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

He who doesn't risk, doesn't gain... On distributional hands to leave bidding room for the opponents often lets them show their intentions. The result is that they find the right solution on a deal.

<p>♠ AQ97543 Both vulnerable ♥ KQJ3 Dealer South ♦ J ♣ 7</p>	<p>N W E S</p>	<p>♠ KJ6 ♥ A976 ♦ KQ8 ♣ QJ4</p>
<p>♠ 1082 ♥ 842 ♦ 10 ♣ AK10853</p>	<p>♠ – ♥ 105 ♦ A9765432 ♣ 962</p>	

W	N	E	S
Brogeland	Fu	Lindqvist	Zhao
pass	3♠	pass	3♦
pass	pass	dbl.	4♦
			pass...

W	N	E	S
Wang	Tundal	Zhuang	Groetheim
pass	4♠	dbl.	3♦
5♣	dbl.	pass...	pass

Lindqvist and Brogeland perfectly read the situation. The reward was +800. Fu bid passively and gave Lindqvist a chance to show the nature of his hand.

The Chinese were in a more difficult position. Tundal's energetic jump to 4♠ created a different bidding scenario. Should Zhuang have given up taking action in the bidding?

Should Wang have passed?

We recommend having the agreement that a double of a preemptive bid of 4♠ or higher should be more penalty than take out. This strategy results from the trend of more and more aggressive opening preempts.

Sao Paulo 2009

Bermuda Bowl, the final.

Cuebidding the opponents' suit is often overused. The more often it happens in a particular sequence, the greater the chance of a misunderstanding, especially in less commonly encountered sequences.

EW vulnerable Dealer West	♠ J3	♠ 875									
	♥ AQ10642		♥ 3								
	♦ K5	♦ J732									
	♣ KJ7	♣ Q10982									
♠ Q62	<table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ KJ85											
♦ AQ96											
♣ 63											
	♠ AK1094										
	♥ 97										
	♦ 1084										
	♣ A54										

W	N	E	S
Duboin	Hamman	Sementa	Zia
1♦	1♥	2♦	2♠
pass	3♦	pass	4♦
pass	4♥	pass	5♣
pass	5♠	pass...	

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Lauria	Meckstroth	Versace
1♦	1♥	pass	1♠
pass	2♦	pass	3♦
pass	3NT	pass...	

Hamman and Zia got completely lost in the bidding, misinterpreting the diamond cue bids. The punishment was down two and -100.

The Italians also didn't draw the best conclusions from twice cue bidding the opponent's suit. The best game is 4♥, but 3NT managed to make thanks to the 4-4 diamond split.

LAYING TRAPS

In literature and art there is often the glorification of the myth of the hunter. Certainly, this has a connection with prehistoric times and the fight for survival. In those days meat was necessary to survive, especially for tribes living in extremely difficult conditions, as it was obviously a lifesaver during an arctic blizzard. Yet, it was impossible to get meat without fighting the most dangerous predators, without hunting, marching, and laying ambushes.

In bridge one can feel the same thrill when hunting for the opponents.

Aimed at stepping into the auction at every opportunity and preempting at any cost without any restraint, today's aggressive bidding style creates many opportunities to double the opponents. If they interrupt the auction, making it impossible to use the precise bidding methods of an uncontested auction and taking up bidding space, then they should be made to pay the price. There aren't many pairs – even professional ones – who know how to double, hunt down and punish the opponents. This is without a doubt the essence of the direct battle in bridge... starting with scores from +300 to +1700. These are by no means small rewards.

Why is there no way to apply the hammer? Cracking down on the opponents would greatly disturb modern bidding agreements like: doubles at any level that are negative, takeout or informational, fit showing doubles and redoubles and doubles and redoubles used as transfers and so on.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the the semi-finals.

Here's an example where none of the high class players at any of four tables were able to punish the opponents for sticking their oar in. The auctions ended with lackluster partscores and amnesty for the opponents. Maybe this is because of the modern tactic of rickety overcalls or preempts? None of the East players thought of converting partner's double. After all, with no one vulnerable, especially the opponents not vulnerable...

Love all	♠ A104		
Dealer East	♥ A9764		
	♦ QJ105		
	♣ 6		
♠ KJ853	N	♠ Q7	
♥ QJ1053	W	♥ 2	
♦ 9	E	♦ AK8762	
♣ 62	S	♣ AJ73	
	♠ 962		
	♥ K8		
	♦ 43		
	♣ KQ10984		

W	N	E	S
Eber	Rosenberg	Bosenberg	Zia
		1♦	2♣
dbl.	pass	2♦(?)	pass
2♥	pass	3♦	pass...

At this table, Michael Rosenberg also didn't take advantage of the chance of doubling, even though he had four tricks in his hand. However, playing with Zia, maybe that's how it should have been?

W	N	E	S
Weinstein	Cope	Garner	Holman
		1♦	3♣
dbl.	pass	3NT(?)	pass...

Here, it seems that Garner could have tried for a plus score instead of lan-

ding in an uncertain 3NT. The plus score from converting the double can look like a smaller plus, but it is definitely more of a sure thing.

W	N	E	S
Brogeland	Drijver	Saelensminde	Brink
		1♦	2♣
dbl.	pass	2♦	pass...

2♦ seems like a slight underbid, since the hand has a lot of potential.

W	N	E	S
De Wijs	Helness	Muller	Helgemo
		1♦	2♣
dbl.	pass	2♦	pass
2♥	pass...		

Here, Muller also decided to bid 2♦, but then de Wijs showed 5+♥ and 4♠, with the final result that the Dutch pair made a heart partscore.

Brian Senior: How would De Wijs have bid with, say:

♠ KJx ♥ QJ10xxx ♦ xx ♣ xx ?

Many would play that double followed by 2♥ showed only long hearts not worth an immediate forcing 2♥ bid, and would not also promise spades.

At the other table Bates sitting East didn't pass his partner's opening bid,

W	N	E	S
Sontag	Nystrom	Bates	Bertheau
1♠	pass	1NT	dbl.
2♣	dbl.	pass	2♦
pass	3NT	pass...	

and EW found clubs. NS then bid the values contract of 3NT. It seems that North was a bit too hasty, bidding 3NT with the doubleton ace of clubs – a scientific 3♣ would have given South a chance to play the contract from the hand with the queen of clubs. After a club lead the contract went down two. As an aside, Bates' bidding also belongs to the chapter on Being Active and should be a warning for proponents of the theory of the side with the balance of points...

Brian Senior: Note that Sontag-Bates were playing strong club so Bates firstly knew that his opponents probably had game values and secondly that Sontag could not raise to 2/3NT, greatly improving the odds in favour of responding on nothing.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the final.

	♠ K104													
Both vulnerable	♥ 86													
Dealer West	♦ AQJ													
	♣ 109876													
♠ AJ5	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N			W			E		S			♠ 986
	N													
W			E											
	S													
♥ A4		♥ Q10932												
♦ K9862		♦ 1053												
♣ 543		♣ AJ												
	♠ Q732													
	♥ KJ75													
	♦ 74													
	♣ KQ2													

W	N	E	S
Zia	Helness	Rosenberg	Helgemo
1♦	pass	1♥	pass
1NT	pass	pass	dbl.
pass...			

Down four, +1100 for Norway.

At the other table Saelensmind didn't pass 1NT but bid 2♥, and NS were never in the auction. Down three, no double.

The nature of hunting is such, that it doesn't always work. The young pair from Holland who were the world champions from the 2011 Bermuda Bowl, Brink – Drijver, play a very dynamic game. Here is an example of their style.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

	♠ QJ73		
NS vulnerable	♥ A2		
Dealer East	♦ 74		
	♣ AJ975		
♠ K986		N	♠ A42
♥ J75		W	♥ Q1093
♦ AQ		E	♦ J852
♣ Q432		S	♣ K8
	♠ 105		
	♥ K864		
	♦ K10963		
	♣ 106		

W	N	E	S
Helgemo	Drijver	Helness	Brink
		pass	pass
1♣	pass	1♥	pass
pass	1♠	1NT	pass
pass	dbl.	pass...	

Here, the hunt was unsuccessful – the contract made with an overtrick. In the other semi-final, the hunters were the pair sitting the other direction.

W	N	E	S
Holman	Garner	Cope	Weinstein
		pass	pass
1♣	pass	1♥	pass
pass	1NT	dbl.	2♦
pass	pass	dbl.	pass...

The opposite direction down one...

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

	♠ J10952							
EW vulnerable	♥ 3							
Dealer North	♦ KQJ97							
	♣ K10							
♠ KQ943	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> </tr> </table>	N		W	E		S	♠ A8
N								
W	E							
	S							
♥ 42		♥ AQ976						
♦ 1052		♦ 86						
♣ J65		♣ A942						
	♠ 7							
	♥ KJ1085							
	♦ A43							
	♣ Q873							

This time Drijver's reopening double drew a lot of blood.

W	N	E	S
Helgemo	Drijver	Helness	Brink
pass	1♠	2♥	pass
	dbl.	pass...	

He was the king of the hunt and scored +800, down three, for the Netherlands.

At the other table Saelensminde chose a reopening that was less dynamic. Maybe if the much younger Brogeland had been sitting North, he would have gone for the double?

W	N	E	S
De Wijs	Saelensminde	Muller	Brogeland
pass	1♠	2♥	pass
	2♠	pass...	

Down one, +50 for the Netherlands.

Brian Senior: I don't say that I necessarily agree with the decision, but one can at least understand not reopening with a double having opened a 10-count with no aces as partner may leave in the double on an inadequate trump holding and

concede -670, but surely if North cannot bring himself to double he should just pass out 2♥ rather than rebid that spade suit? When South really has a penalty hand, as here, at least that collects +300.

One is thus tempted to specify the most typical positions for systemic methods to check if the opponents have stuck their necks out and apply the hammer whenever possible.

A few situations are illustrated below.

INTERVENTION AFTER AN OPENING 1NT

Here is an example of how to handle the situation and take the appropriate plus score when the opponents are in a misfit.

Beijing 2008

Bridge Olympiad, the semi-finals.

NS vulnerable Dealer East	♠ KQ985	♠ J1076									
	♥ AK43		♥ 985								
	♦ 98	♦ J32									
	♣ 62	♣ KQJ									
♠ A3	<table border="0"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q72											
♦ AQ5											
♣ A10754											
	♠ 42										
	♥ J106										
	♦ K10764										
	♣ 983										

W	N	E	S
Duboin	Helness	Sementa	Helgemo
		pass	pass
1NT	2♣ ¹⁾	dbl.	rdbl. ²⁾
pass	2♠	pass	pass
dbl.	pass...		

¹⁾majors

²⁾take your pick

The Italian pair demonstrated how to make the opponents pay when their activeness runs into a misfit. The double of 2♣ showed strength with at least a semi-balanced hand and asked for cooperation in penalizing the opponents. The pass of 2♠ was, of course, forcing. In the Italian style a double would show 2-3 cards in that suit, so doubling with East hand would usually oblige West not to pass with doubleton.

W	N	E	S
Aa		Mollberg	
		pass	pass
1NT	2♣ ¹⁾	2NT	pass
3NT	pass...		

The deal brought a 9 IMP gain for the Italians when 2♠ doubled went down three +800 and 3NT was made, offsetting the score by 400.

This deal illustrates the style that can bring benefits after an opening 1NT and an artificial overcall (2♣ Landy – the majors, 2♦ Multi – one major). Double promises honor strength and a reasonably balanced hand and opens the door for trying to penalize the opponents. Further doubles should also be proposed penalty doubles (top Italian pairs penalize opponents in different way).

OPENING 1NT BIDS THAT ARE WEAK OR „MINI”

This is another situation in which the defenders can often gain a plus score and it's worthwhile to have system agreements to that end. Here are some examples.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

NS vulnerable Dealer North	♠ 764 ♥ A432 ♦ A107 ♣ 987	N W E S	♠ K1053 ♥ K105 ♦ J9 ♣ AQ104
♠ J82 ♥ 986 ♦ Q8432 ♣ 32	♠ AQ9 ♥ QJ7 ♦ K65 ♣ KJ65		

W	N	E	S
Zia	Gower	Rosenberg	Apoteker
2♦	pass dbl.	1NT pass...	dbl.

¹⁾12-14 PC

Down three, +500 for South Africa.

At the other table East opened 1♣ and EW wiggled out of trouble.

W	N	E	S
Holman	Garner	Cope	Weinstein
pass pass	pass 2♣ 2NT	1♣ pass pass...	1NT 2♦

Just made, +120 for the USA.

At one table of the other semi-final there was also a 1♣ opening.

W	N	E	S
Helgemo	Drijver	Helness	Brink
	pass	1♣	pass
pass	dbl.	pass	pass
1♦	dbl.	pas	1NT(?)
pass...			

South rightly passed the first double and the Norwegians were in trouble. One level lower than Rosenberg–Zia, but as it turned out... Fortunately for them, NS called off the hunt. It's hard to guess why Brink pulled the second double. 9 tricks, +150 for Holland.

At the other table after a weak 1NT, South decided not to double either after the opening bid or later and EW went undoubled.

W	N	E	S
De Wijs	Saelensminde	Muller	Brogelans
	pass	1NT	pass
2♣	pass	2♠	pass...

TAKE OUT DOUBLES, ESPECIALLY AFTER A PREVIOUS PASS

These days a clear trend has emerged for light takeout doubles and a relaxing of shape requirements. When such a double runs into a deal where partner has a weak hand with no suit, the minus score is often substantial.

It should also be kept in mind that the actions of the doubler's partner should be appropriate to the situation. This is especially important when the doubler has previously passed – a clear sign to proceed with caution.

Have a look at this board.

Estoril 2005

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

	♠ K43	
EW vulnerable	♥ Q63	
Dealer South	♦ A9873	
	♣ 95	
♠ A109		♠ 875
♥ 72		♥ KJ109
♦ J6542		♦ KQ
♣ A82		♣ KQ106
	♠ QJ62	
	♥ A854	
	♦ 10	
	♣ J743	

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Ekeblad	Meckstroth	Rubin
			pass
pass	pass	1♦ ¹⁾	dbl.
1♠	1NT(?)	dbl.	rdbl.
pass	2♦	pass	pass
dbl.	rdbl.	pass	2♥
pass	pass	dbl.	rdbl.
pass	2♠	pass	pass
dbl.	pass...		

¹⁾nebulous

Ekeblad gambled with an ill-advised 1NT (partner was a passed hand) and had to pay handsomely – 2♠ doubled was down three.

W Hampson	N Nickell	E Greco	S Freeman
pass	pass	1♦ ¹⁾	pass
1NT	pass	pass	2♣
2♦	pass...		

¹⁾nebulous

Hampson – Greco were in a similar situation to Meckstroth – Rodwell. For EW it should have been obvious that 2♣ as a takeout for the majors was with a 4-4 shape since Freeman passed both in first seat and after the 1♦ opening. They decided not to go hunting, but quietly played in a partscore. It would have been enough to double 2♣, if that would have meant a maximum 1NT bid.

Lille 2012

Bridge Olympiad, the final.

<p>♠ A8 ♥ A875 ♦ Q843 ♣ J53</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	<p>♠ Q63 ♥ 1094 ♦ J106 ♣ 9864</p> <p>♠ KJ10972 ♥ KJ ♦ K2 ♣ A102</p>
N					
W E					
S					
<p>♠ 54 ♥ Q632 ♦ A975 ♣ KQ7</p>					

W	N Nystrom	E	S Upmark
pass	pass	1♠	pass
rdbl.	pass	pass	dbl.
dbl.	pass...		2♦

Down four, -800.

South decided to step into the auction. He didn't choose the right moment.

W Bertheau	N Narkiewicz	E Cullin	S Buras
pass	1♦	1♠	1♣ ¹⁾
1NT	pass	3NT	pass
			pass...

¹⁾Polish Club

10 tricks, +430.

This deal is an especially good illustration of the theory that with marginal hands it's better to open than to come into the auction later, when the opponents have already exchanged some information.

*Lille 2012**Bridge Olympiad, the semi-finals.*

Both vulnerable	♠ 98		
Dealer South	♥ A9865		
	♦ 976		
	♣ 542		
♠ AK107	N	E	♠ 32
♥ K432	W		♥ QJ107
♦ K			♦ 8432
♣ K1076	S		♣ AJ3
	♠ QJ654		
	♥ –		
	♦ AQJ105		
	♣ Q98		

W	N	E	S
	Garvey		Carroll

			1♠
pass	pass	dbl.	2♦
dbl.	pass...		

W	N	E	S
Bertheau	Narkiewicz	Cullin	Buras

			1♠
1NT	pass	2♣	2♦
2♥	pass	4♥	pass...

Polish East-West pair was known for their love of hunting – as was seen on the previous deal – especially at favorable vulnerability. This time it ended with 2♦ doubled, down one for +200.

At the other table, McGann chose the somewhat extravagant 1NT instead of a trapping pass. This is also a part of today's trend in contested auctions – to choose a bid that quickly shows the strength and nature of the hand – 16 PC and good spades. After this overcall the Irish had no problem reaching the 11-trick game in hearts.

UNWISE LEAD-DIRECTING DOUBLES AT LOW LEVELS

This is another area where it's good to have agreements that make it possible to redouble for penalties when a bid gets doubled.

Here is a deal from a playoff match in the Polish Premier League, where a well-known international player clearly went overboard and was severely punished for it.

Polish Team Championships 2012/13, the quarter-finals.

		♠ KJ103										
Both vulnerable		♥ AQ										
Dealer North		♦ 654										
		♣ 9743										
♠ 9654		<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A872
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ K98742			♥ J10									
♦ 2			♦ AKQJ10									
♣ J8			♣ A2									
		♠ Q										
		♥ 653										
		♦ 9873										
		♣ KQ1065										

W	N	E	S
Pazur	Kalita	Wójcicki	Nowosadzki
	pass	1♣ ¹⁾	pass
1♦ ²⁾	pass	1NT	pass
2♦	pass	2♥	pass
2♠ ³⁾	dbl.	rdbl.	pass...

¹⁾strong

²⁾0-8 PC, any shape

³⁾invitational with 4 hearts and unbalanced shape, or 5+ hearts, always without 4 spades. West decided that game in spades would not be better than game in hearts, even if partner had 4 spades.

The redouble was a suggestion to play with four good spades or five spades.

Just made, +840 for EW. At the other table 4♠ down three.

A frequent example is the double of a Stayman bid. Let's look at a spectacular example from the 1979 Bermuda Bowl.

Rio de Janeiro 1979

Bermuda Bowl, robin round Italy - Chinese Taipei

	♠ K65		
NS vulnerable	♥ AQ6		
Dealer North	♦ Q43		
	♣ AQ102		
♠ 982		N	♠ QJ743
♥ K2		W	♥ J1083
♦ K9		E	♦ J862
♣ KJ9863		S	♣ -
	♠ A10		
	♥ 9754		
	♦ A1075		
	♣ 754		

W	N	E	S
Chen	Belladonna	Tai	Pittala
	1NT	pass	2♣
dbl.	rdbl.	pass...	

After the lead of the jack of clubs, Pittala made his contract, giving up on the heart finesse. It was a tie when West played 2♣ doubled at the other table, down four for -700 (this was before the progressive scale was introduced for non-vulnerable undertricks).

The same bidding and play occurred in the Australia–Caribbean match.

LAYING TRAPS

Furthermore, even in very standard sequences it's often worthwhile not to give up the ability to penalize. One of these situations has been worked out well in theory, analyzed and often comes up in play – when the first defender comes in with a jump at the two level and the entire bridge world now plays negative doubles. Here's another example at an important championship event where a top world pair had a chance to demonstrate how to collect a big number.

Estoril 2005

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

	♠ 752		
NS vulnerable	♥ Q10532		
Dealer North	♦ 432		
	♣ 76		
♠ KJ8		N	♠ Q104
♥ 86		W	♥ AJ97
♦ KJ5		E	♦ A10876
♣ QJ953		S	♣ 2
	♠ A963		
	♥ K4		
	♦ Q9		
	♣ AK1084		

W	N	E	S
Sylvan	Dagher	Sundelin	El Kourdy
	pass	1♦	2♣
dbl.	pass	2♥	pass
3NT	pass...		

W	N	E	S
Sadek	Bertheau	Cullin	Buras
	pass	1♦	2♣
pass	pass	dbl.	pass...

Egyptians have it in their blood to hunt. Sadek took immediate advantage of the opportunity and after 2♣ made a trapping pass, while the cold-blooded Swedes surprisingly didn't sniff the "fresh meat" that was there for the taking. The reward for the hunters was 9 IMPs for 2♣ doubled down three compared to 3NT just made.

WE DOUBLE

Year after year the activeness and aggression in contested auctions has been increasing. In business, in order to profit you first have to invest. In bridge it is becoming similar. Players often go on the attack in the bidding, sticking their necks out and risking going for -500 or even -800 in order to end up with a plus score of +100.

We have already written about this in other parts of the book, that special conventional doubles and redoubles make it more difficult to punish opponents who have no shame.

There aren't many pairs in the world – even professional ones – who go hunting for the opponents. The increase in aggressiveness in the bidding sooner or later will encourage players to adopt agreements to make it easier to successfully apply the hammer when the opponents go overboard.

*Beijing 2008**Bridge Olympiad, the semi-finals.*

If one makes an off-shape takeout double then the sooner the better. Lead directing doubles? Only responsibly!

Love all Dealer West	♠ 984 ♥ KQ95 ♦ J32 ♣ AK8	♠ AQ10765 ♥ J76 ♦ 85 ♣ Q7												
♠ KJ2 ♥ A842 ♦ AKQ107 ♣ J	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N			W		E			S			
	N													
W		E												
	S													
	♠ 3 ♥ 103 ♦ 964 ♣ 10965432													

W	N	E	S
	Sandqvist		Malinowski
1♦	dbl.	1♠	pass
2♥	pass	3♣	pass
3♠	pass	4♣	pass...

Sandqvist decided to double 1♦ with 4333 shape. If you decide to enter the bidding with this kind of hand, then it's better to do it right away rather than later. If you find partner with a completely flat hand there's still a chance that you can stay at a relatively low level.

In spite of N's takeout double the spade slam is an excellent contract. A positive reaction from East was missing here. What was he supposed to bid after 3♣?

Of course, one operational bid could be 3NT as "What do you think of a spade slam?"

Why wouldn't it be a choice of contracts? With a good holding in clubs the hand should bid 2NT instead of 3♣ – in today's systems 2NT is forcing, as is fourth suit forcing, one of the basic tools that makes it possible to show

intentions and play a NT game from the right hand. The 3♣ fourth suit bid is a suggestion for partner to bid no trump. In this sequence 2♠ should also be forcing, because it greatly simplifies the auction. +480 was scored up without a problem.

What can we recommend to refine sequences after a reverse?

1)

W	N	E	S
1♥	pass	1♠	pass
2♥	pass	?	

- 2♠ = natural, forcing for one round
- 2NT = forcing, desire to have a NT contract played from this hand
- 3♣ = game forcing, no desire to play NT from this hand
- 3♦ = non-forcing
- 3♥/♠ = natural, slammish
- 3NT = to play
- 4♣ = Splinter in hearts

Brian Senior: A lot of pairs will play 2NT as Lebensohl here. Compared to that common method, the suggestion above appears to gain by getting NT played the right way up - an important consideration. Hands with four-card heart support must now force to game, where Lebensohl permits a get-out in 3♥, but that looks a small price to pay, while responder will have to go to the four level to agree diamonds, opener's first suit, in a forcing manner.

1a) suit-length transfer bids

W	N	E	S
1♦	pass	1♠	pass
2♥	pass	2NT	pass
?			

- 3♣ = 6♦ and 4♥
- 3♦ = 6♦ and 5♥
- 3♥ = 3♠4♥5♦
- 3♠ = 4♥, 5♦ and 3♣

Why are transfers needed in this sequence? They make it easy to agree trumps and set up a forcing auction at the three level.

Brian Senior: Not come across that idea before, but it makes a lot of sense.

WE DOUBLE

For example:

W	N	E	S
1♦	pass	1♠	pass
2♥	pass	2NT	pass
3♣	pass	3♦ ¹⁾	pass
?			

¹⁾3♦ – agrees diamonds, slammish

- 3♥ = short clubs, nice hand

- 3♠ = short spades, nice hand (the rule is: *what can be bid in a natural way, it is – other bid – alternate shortness*)

- 3NT = minimum, either shortness, but no void.

Does an opponent's takeout double change the situation? In some ways, yes. It can make chances for slam doubtful, but this doesn't mean that good tools to find the best contract aren't needed. Slam is not necessarily precluded, a good proof of which can be seen in the deal shown.

*Beijing 2008**Bridge Olympiad, the final.*

As sometimes happens in life, for trying to get into the game sometimes you have to pay...

	♠ KQ1043										
EW vulnerable	♥ A92										
Dealer North	♦ A										
	♣ KJ98										
♠ 8	<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ AJ
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ KQJ6		♥ 10874									
♦ 10983		♦ K62									
♣ Q762		♣ A1043									
	♠ 97652										
	♥ 53										
	♦ QJ754										
	♣ 5										

W	N	E	S
Versace	Sandqvist	Lauria	Malinowski
	1♠	dbl.	4♠
dbl.	pass...		

W	N	E	S
Versace	Sandqvist	Lauria	Malinowski
	1♠	dbl.	4♠
pass...			

Lauria and Gold made a takeout double of the 1♠ opening. In the West seats Versace and Townsend evaluated the situation differently. The Englishman passed, despite having a rather interesting hand with spade shortness. Alfredo's double with the meaning "I have some points" makes sense, since it makes it possible to bring partner into the picture, if his hand is unusual. This is a way to show intentions. It cost 5 IMPs, since at both tables the contract was made.

Regardless of the result on this deal, the cooperative strategy that Versace showed gives an advantage. With his hand strength and spade shortness, it's hard to imagine that partner would find enough strength for another double.

*Beijing 2008**Bridge Olympiad, the final.*

Lead directing doubles is a separate subject, maybe even worthy of a separate chapter or even a whole book. The next question is how should the other side react when a double has been made?

		♠ J8543	
Both vulnerable		♥ Q65	
Dealer South		♦	
		♣ AKJ104	
♠ 10962		N	♠ KQ7
♥ A3		W	♥ KJ7
♦ AKQ93		E	♦ J854
♣ 82		S	♣ 976
		♠ A	
		♥ 109642	
		♦ 10762	
		♣ Q53	

W	N	E	S
Versace	Gold	Lauria	Townsend
1♦	1♠	2NT	pass
3NT	pass...		pass
W	N	E	S
Malinowski	Sementa	Sandqvist	Duboin
1♦	1♠	2NT	pass
3NT	dbl.	pass	pass
rdbl.	pass...		

Sementa's double meant "Don't lead a spade." Down two for +1000 was the well-deserved reward. Malinowski's redouble should show worry about one of the suits. This is a useful agreement, but it seems that he and his partner weren't on the same wavelength.

With this approach to redoubles Sandqvist had a chance to work out that the problem was the club suit. Note that 4♦ is not at all easy to set. After a club lead a spade ruff has to be set up. Gold, who didn't risk doubling, scored only +200. We'll never know how Lauria and Versace would have handled a double...

Dublin 2012**European Team Championships, Italy - Russia.**

Sometimes a double is made by sheer force of momentum. If the doubled contract goes off only one, it often requires perfect defense. With just a small slip...

	♠ K765		
Love all	♥ A7		
Dealer West	♦ AK9		
	♣ 7543		
♠ ADW		N	♠ 108
♥ K82		W	♥ QJ953
♦ Q832		E	♦ J74
♣ J86		S	♣ AQ9
	♠ 9432		
	♥ 1064		
	♦ 1065		
	♣ K102		

W	N	E	S
Versace	Gold	Lauria	Townsend
1♦	pass	1♥	pass
1NT	pass...		

Gromov was cautious and the deal was nothing special. Seven tricks and "Next board, please."

W	N	E	S
Khiuppenen	Sementa	Kholomeev	Duboin
1♦	1NT	dbl.	pass
pass	rdbl.	pass	2♣
pass	pass	dbl	rdbl.
pas	2♠	pass	pass
dbl.	pass...		

At the other table Sementa in the North seat did not go so quietly. He choose to intervene with an overcall of 1NT. Then, he had to make a save. You have to admit, that the Italian pair did it perfectly. They had a bit of luck - there was a playable suit their way - but luck often goes to the victors.

The Russians rightly went hunting for a better result. After all, in this kind of auction it's usually a scramble in any contract.

Good defense would have led to down one, but the defense slipped and the Italians scored up +470.

*Sao Paulo 2009**Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.*

There are different ways to double. A lot depends on a pair's approach and style of play.

	♠ Q853		
EW vulnerable	♥ 97		
Dealer South	♦ J8		
	♣ 108643		
♠ 10			♠ AK76
♥ K42			♥ QJ108
♦ 10942			♦ Q765
♣ QJ975			♣ A
	♠ J942		
	♥ A653		
	♦ AK3		
	♣ K2		

W	N	E	S
Versace	Stefanov	Lauria	Aronov
pass	2♣	dbl.	1NT pass...
W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Fu	Meckstroth	Zhao
pass 2♣	pass pass	dbl. 2♥	1NT pass pass...
W	N	E	S
Dai	Hamman	Yang	Zia
pass pass pass	pass rdbl. pass	dbl. pass dbl.	1NT pass 2♣ pass...

Lauria's double of Stayman showed points – this is a common practice when playing against a weak 1NT opening – and the Bulgarian pair lost -300.

In the other semi-final, the Chinese had to work hard to get Hamman and Zia in the same contract. The final result was the same.

Rodwell didn't pass out 1NT doubled. This was apparently due to their very aggressive style, and the Americans stopped in a 2♥ contract. Against a strong NT, Meckstroth's double showed one minor, both majors, or a good hand. 2♣ was a relay and 2♥ showed both majors. There was no way for them to collect a penalty.

*Lille 2012**Bridge Olympiad, the semi-finals.*

To double or not to double, that is the question. The answer is often found in common sense.

	♠ 4										
EW vulnerable	♥ Q10976										
Dealer North	♦ AQ1098										
	♣ K2										
♠ 95	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ AKJ10732
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ J542		♥ A8									
♦ K2		♦ 5									
♣ 109875		♣ Q43									
	♠ D86										
	♥ K3										
	♦ J7643										
	♣ AJ6										

W	N	E	S
Multon	Nystrom	Zimmermann	Upmark
	1♥	dbl.	rdbl.
2♣	2♦	3♠	4♦
4♠	pass...		

This time in answer to the question “Should we double?” Upmark answered „no”, even though he had plenty of reasons to say yes, looking at his own hand. He took the opponents’ auction seriously. After all they were vulnerable.

W	N	E	S
Ahlesved	Helness	Petersson	Helgemo
	1♥	4♠	pass
pass	5♦	pass	6♦
pass...			

The same bidding was at the one of tables of the second semi-final:

W	N	E	S
Żak	Hanlon	Zaremba	McGann
	1♥	4♠	pass
pass	5♦	pas	6♦
pass...			

Helgemo and McGann acted similarly facing the same question. Encouraged by the vulnerability, Helness and Hanlon defended at the five level, but their partners treated it as going on the attack. In this way the well-known rule of business held true, that first you have to invest (risk going for -800) in order to profit (+50).

The question is, how to differentiate North's bid of 5♦ as an offensive or defensive bid, as in this deal. If North had a strong hand he could reopen with a double, with a distributional hand that didn't want to risk getting passed out for penalty, a bid of 4NT could be made.

Brian Senior: So 4NT could be used as an extension of the Good/Bad 2NT two levels higher. The alternative meaning of 4NT, which I guess would be expected with no discussion, would be a two-suiter with unequal suit lengths. Now, 5♣ or 5♦ from North would be equal length with the hearts, 4NT would be a shorter second suit, maybe 7-5, or 6-5 with the minor significantly weaker than the hearts?

At the fourth table:

W	N	E	S
Carroll	Narkiewicz	Garvey	Buras
	1♥	4♠	dbl.
pass...			

Buras showed common sense and gave an affirmative answer to the question "to double or not to double?" The reward was ample, +800.

*Veldhoven 2011**Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.*

In the chapter on Being Active – or too active – there were examples when it was difficult to cast blame. Sometimes, however, it isn't so hard...

Love all	♠ 4		
Dealer North	♥ 986		
	♦ AK10764		
	♣ 643		
♠ 9763		N	♠ KQ1085
♥ Q543		W	♥ J7
♦ QJ2		E	♦ 983
♣ Q7		S	♣ KJ10
	♠ AJ2		
	♥ AK102		
	♦ 5		
	♣ A9852		

W	N	E	S
Versace	Miao	Lauria	Hou
	pass	pass	1♣ ¹⁾
pass	2♦ ²⁾	2♠	pass
3♠	pass	pass	dbl.
pass...			

¹⁾Precision, 16+ PC, any distribution

²⁾natural, positive

Hou had the impression that Santa Claus was passing out additional presents. Versace's hyperactivity was penalized. Down three and -8 IMPs.

At the other table Bocchi wisely stopped at a contract of 2♦.

THE ROLE OF DOUBLES

In the previous chapter there were several examples of how doubling looks nowadays. There are often problems with doubling for penalty. “Double has more than one name” is the sign of the times. A double is rarely used to penalize the opponents, but in a contested auction it is usually a tool to show intentions, extra strength, etc. Let’s look at a few examples of these uses of a double.

Veldhoven 2011

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

This deal illustrates how it can be easier to get to a slam after a weak opening than after a strong opening...

<p>EW vulnerable Dealer East</p> <p>♠ A ♥ AQ92 ♦ AK2 ♣ Q7543</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ KJ7543 ♥ J8 ♦ 1086 ♣ 86</p> <p>♠ 6 ♥ 10765 ♦ Q975 ♣ AK109</p> <p>♠ Q10982 ♥ K43 ♦ K43 ♣ J2</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

W	N	E	S
Verhees	Sementa	v.Prooijen	Duboin
1♣ ¹⁾	1♠	pass	pass
dbl.	4♠	dbl.	pass
4NT	pass	5♣	pass...

¹⁾strong

When Verhees doubled 3♣ he showed a hand that was interested in buying the contract. Van Prooijen's later double of 4♠ looks like a mistaken attempt to share the responsibility with partner. From East's point of view the hand looks perfect for offense, and at some point he should clearly show enthusiasm for taking the contract. Here a bid of 4NT should definitely play that role, showing an ability to play in any suit.

W	N	E	S
Versace	Drijver	Lauria	Brink
1♣ ¹⁾	2♠	pass	pass
dbl.	pass	dbl.	4♠
6♣	pass...	5♣	pass

¹⁾natural or semi-natural

The Italian's opening was natural. The double of 4♠ showed a strong hand and encouraged partner to bid. With an excellent fit, short spades and controls he had no doubt deciding what to do. Once he heard about the good club fit in partner's hand, Versace had a hand with enough to bid the slam.

TWO-WAY DOUBLES

In certain auctions, one of the bidders, having shown the nature of his hand, can transfer the decision to his partner about whether or not to bid on by doubling. With respect to the bidding up to this point, the double conveys the information of having good values for offense but also with sure defensive values. This is called a two-way double.

Reading the nature of the double is a result of the logic of the bidding thus far and precludes the meaning of a penalty double that "I've got it set in my own hand."

The partner of the doubler passes with values useful on defense and bids on with offensive values for playing one's own contract. The perfect example of unrevealed offensive values could be a fit for partner's suit that hadn't yet been shown.

This kind of double has an advantage over making unilateral decisions about bidding on, it gives partner a chance to convert for penalties when he judges that there is no chance to make a contract. It's true that it often leaves one facing a dilemma that after the fact can be commented on like this... "If I had passed they would have scored up +790, and as it was they got +800..."

You only have to remember that if you're playing with a partner who characteristically bids on and you have the opponents set in your own hand and don't see any chance of making your own contract, then you can't double! Partner can pull your double and then there is a change of roles - the hunter turns into the hunted.

Lille 2012

Bridge Olympiad, the quarter-finals.

	♠ QJ9	
EW vulnerable	♥ J874	
Dealer South	♦ A107	
	♣ K54	
♠ 62		♠ AK108753
♥ AQ5		♥ K932
♦ J96		♦ -
♣ QJ1097		♣ 83
	♠ 4	
	♥ 106	
	♦ KQ85432	
	♣ A62	

W	N Bocchi	E	S Madala
			1♦
pass	1♥	1♠	2♦
pass	3NT	dbl.(!)	rdbl.
pass	4♦	pass	pass
dbl.	pass	4♠	pass...

East double didn't mean "Partner, I've got them. I can set them in my own hand." He promised a hand that could set the contract with partner's help, could take a profitable sacrifice or bid a makeable contract.

Madala's redouble showed doubt about the makeability of 3NT. After Bocchi pulled to 4♦, West doubled, which could be interpreted as "Do something intelligent, partner!" In other words, I have some values, look at your own hand and decide. With his 7-4 shape, East didn't have any problem judging which was better.

4♠ was made with no trouble.

At the other table, Sementa was in the same position and he passed 3NT:

W	N	E	S
Duboin	Narkiewicz	Sementa	Buras
			1♦
pass	1♥	1♠	2♦
pass	3NT	pass...	

3NT made after a spade lead.

Lille 2012**Bridge Olympiad, the semi-finals.**

Here's another deal on the subject of doubles, where partner is asked to cooperate in the decision when the opponents have you backed up against a wall.

	♠ J108		
EW vulnerable	♥ J972		
Dealer East	♦ J9		
	♣ 10872		
♠ 42		N	♠ K7
♥ A43		W	♥ KQ1065
♦ Q103		E	♦ 8754
♣ KQ965		S	♣ A3
	♠ AQ9653		
	♥ 8		
	♦ AK62		
	♣ J4		

W	N	E	S
McGann		Hanlon	
		1♥	1♠
4♥	pass	pass	dbl.
pass	4♠	pass	pass
dbl.	pass...		

Here Hanlon – McGann behaved like poker players – the 4♥ bid put the Polish pair to a guess, and you have to admit that it was unlucky that they had to pay a high price for that. South didn't pass, holding a hand that was perfect for offense. His double showed a hand that was good for buying the contract, but also with defensive tricks. North who didn't have even a whiff of a defensive value and with a fit for partner pulled to 4♠. McGann doubled, showing that 4♥ wasn't bid preemptively, but the contract made anyway.

Polish Patton Team Championships 2002.

With a fit, bid on! With defense, pass...

NS vulnerable Dealer East	♠ AQ109654											
	♥ AJ32											
	♦ KQ											
	♣ –											
♠ J32		<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ –
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ K976			♥ 54									
♦ 2			♦ AJ109865									
♣ KJ873			♣ AQ106									
	♠ K87											
	♥ Q108											
	♦ 743											
	♣ 9542											

W	N Kwiecień	E	S Wójcicki
		1♦	pass
1♥	4♠	5♦	pass
pass	dbl.	pass	5♠
dbl.	pass...		

For a gambling 4♠ bid, the North hand was a bit too good to let the deal go quietly. The double was not for penalty, but suggested a hand that had a chance to make the contract at the five level if partner had a fit.

After a heart lead the contract made with an overtrick.

Polish Team Championships 2003.

Partner, please help...

	♠ A3											
Both vulnerable	♥ AKJ654											
Dealer East	♦ –											
	♣ K8654											
♠ K1076		<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q2
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ 93			♥ 2									
♦ A932			♦ QJ10654									
♣ A107			♣ QJ93									
	♠ J9854											
	♥ Q1087											
	♦ K87											
	♣ 2											

W	N	E	S
Olański	Poetyło	Starkowski	Wójcicki
		pass	pass
1♦	1♥	5♦	pass
pass	dbl.	pass	5♥
pass...			

This deal is another classic example of the two-way double. After East's jump to 5♦ and two passes, North was in a tough spot. From his hand it would take very little from partner to make a contract at the five level. However, bidding either 5♥ or 6♣ would be a shot in the dark – choosing the wrong suit or bidding on when there was no makeable contract. The double with the meaning of a two-way double ideally solved the problem. From South's hand there was no doubt that the deal belonged to them.

AGREEMENTS

Looking at reports from championships, kibitzing in person or on BBO it is easy to notice that the top pairs in the world have many specific agreements for various bidding positions, even uncommon ones. Some of the agreements are very interesting and can be the start of further discussion for adopting one's own solutions.

This is also a perfect illustration of how much work the top professional pairs put into analyzing their system, identifying difficult bidding sequences and looking for solutions that make these sequences easier to manage.

In this chapter we show several of these inventions. In some sequences we can recommend a solution or an alternative to the sequences used in the examples.

Philadelphia 2010

Rosenblum Cup, the semi-finals.

Professional pairs spend a lot of time building a bidding structure to cover the more or less common defensive or contested bidding situations. Some of the ideas they come up with are quite shocking, but they manage to provide the perfect result.

	♠ 10743		
EW vulnerable	♥ A53		
Dealer South	♦ 93		
	♣ K874		
♠ Q		N	♠ K82
♥ J9642		W E	♥ 107
♦ A76		S	♦ QJ10542
♣ J932			♣ AQ
	♠ AJ965		
	♥ KQ8		
	♦ K8		
	♣ 1065		

W	N	E	S
Hampson		Greco	
pass	pass	2NT ¹⁾	1NT ¹⁾
3♦ ³⁾	pass	3NT	pass
			pas...

¹⁾12-14PC

²⁾10-14 PC, any suit 6+ cards or longer!!!

³⁾invitational with a good club fit

3NT - conclusion.

We see here a rarely encountered agreement used by Hampson – Greco, the 2NT bid as a constructive one-suited hand. 3♣ would have shown the majors with a club fragment (Brozel).

Note that an agreement as to further bidding after the 2NT convention could be 3♦, as invitational with a good club fit, just as the bidding luckily played out in the deal above. This is indeed a systemic gem.

Their agreement could be modified, giving up on the Brozel convention at the three level, by changing the meaning of 3♣ and 3♦ as constructive to invitational two-suiters – 3♣ for the minors and 3♦ for the majors.

Estoril 2005

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

There is a lot of uncharted territory in systemic bidding when left-hand opponent enters the auction after the opening bid. Many agreements can be built here that would definitely be helpful, the limitation is rather the ability to remember them.

NS vulnerable	♠ A1083		
	♥ A8732		
Dealer West	♦ 102		
	♣ 64		
♠ Q972		N	♠ 6
♥ KQ10		W	♥ J65
♦ AJ7		E	♦ K985
♣ 873		S	♣ AKJ95
	♠ KJ54		
	♥ 94		
	♦ Q643		
	♣ Q102		

W	N	E	S
Hampson	Hamman	Greco	Soloway
1♦ ¹⁾	1♥	2♠!!!	pass
2NT	pass	3NT	pass...

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Moss	Meckstroth	Gitelman
1♦ ¹⁾	pass	1♥	pass
1♠	pass	2NT	pass
3NT	pass...		

¹⁾nebulous

Greco – Hampson had an interesting agreement here with a special meaning for the 2♠ bid, most likely at least an invitational hand with both minors. It made the auction much easier. The opener guaranteed good stoppers in the majors by bidding 2NT and East raised to game.

Meckwell's bidding leaves much to be desired. Getting to the standard contract from the wrong hand is not a good idea. The 1♥ bid was probably

the least of all evils, and after the 1♠ rebid Meckstroth couldn't come up with anything better than a bid of 2NT (they open at favorable vulnerability practically all 11 PC hands).

What happened in reality was that Hampson went down one and Meckstroth made his contract, but that was thanks to the defense.

W	N	E	S
1♣ ¹⁾	1♥	?	

¹⁾could be a doubleton; the following can also be used after a nebulous 1♦ opening

- double = 4-5♠
- 1♠ = transfer to notrump or club suit
- 1NT = natural
- 2♣ = diamonds, 6-8 PC or 12+PC
- 2♦ = diamonds, 9-11 PC
- 2♥ = 6+♠, 5-8 PC or 12+PC
- 2♠ = 6+♠, 5-8 PC or 12+PC
- 2NT = natural
- 3♣ = invitational, 6+♠
- 3♦ = preemptive
- 3♥ = invitational, 6+♠

This scheme can be modified to make 1NT a transfer to clubs. A bid of 2♠ can also be used to show 5+4+ in the minors with at least invitational strength.

After a 1♠ overcall it isn't possible to use an analogical version because of the necessity of having a double show four hearts.

Verona 2006

World pairs championship, the final.

In risky situations it's good to have an agreed way to cut your losses.

	♠ KQ32				
EW vulnerable	♥ K92				
Dealer North	♦ K105				
	♣ Q84				
♠ 754 ♥ J ♦ 87432 ♣ 10762	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ AJ8 ♥ 6543 ♦ AQJ9 ♣ A9
N					
W E					
S					
	♠ 1096 ♥ AQ1087 ♦ 6 ♣ KJ53				

W	N	E	S
Berkowitz	Martel	Cohen	Stansby
	1NT ¹⁾	dbl.	pass
2♣	pass	2♥	dbl.
rdbl.	pass	2♠	dbl.
pass...			

¹⁾weak – 12-14 PC

There's no doubt that EW found themselves in serious danger. In this type of situation it's good to have agreements that allow you to find the best suit to play in.

A popular treatment in this sequence is that bidding diamonds, hearts or spades is natural and promises a 5-card suit and a bid of 2♣ asks partner to bid his own suit.

Some pairs use 2♣ as a Stayman bid and that seems to have been the case on the actual deal.

Brian Senior: Why would West use Stayman with 3-1 in the majors? East and West seem to have been on different wavelengths. Maybe West could not bid 2♦ because it would have been a transfer??? But why could East never bid diamonds? Their auction doesn't add up.

There is no solution that exists for always finding the right suit to play in, if there is one.

There's a clever agreement that can be used here. In risky situations after a 1NT opening, a penalty double and a pass by the responder, a run out to 2♦/♥/♠ is natural. The 2♣ bid, however, has a double meaning – either I have clubs or I have two other suits besides clubs. Of course, there's a risk of going down for a lot when the opponents pass out the contract of 2♣ and there's a combined fit of only four or five trumps, but that is very unlikely.

If the 2♣ bid gets doubled, then pulling to a new suit shows that suit and a higher suit when the lower ranking suit is the same length or longer than the higher ranking suit and redoubling shows a two-suiter with a longer higher ranking suit.

Similarly, a save can be found after a 1NT overcall, with additional room for redouble to show a two-suiter with clubs and a bid of 2♣ is natural or a two-suiter without clubs.

Alternatively, using a redouble by responder for something other than penalty eliminates one of the advantages of the weak notrump – the ability to take the opponents for a large number, for example:

W	N	E	S
1NT	dbl.	pass	2♦
?			

If the pass is enigmatic there can be problems with doubling NS. On the other hand, a redouble showing strength by East sets up a forcing pass situation and makes it possible for either hand to double for penalty.

Verona 2006

World pairs championship, the final.

It's also a good idea to have agreements in situations that come up when the opponents are using rare conventions. This is especially important in a pairs game when there is no time to make an agreement for every situation before the game.

	♠ K872		
EW vulnerable	♥ K76		
Dealer South	♦ Q5		
	♣ J875		
♠ 75	N	♠ A43	
♥ AJ4	W	♥ Q1053	
♦ A943	E	♦ J7	
♣ AQ102	S	♣ 9643	
	♠ QJ109		
	♥ 982		
	♦ K10862		
	♣ K		

W	N Rodwell	E	S Simpson
			pass
1♣	pass	1♦ ¹⁾	dbl.
1♥	dbl.	rdbl.	2♠
pass	pass	dbl.	pass
3♣	pass...		

¹⁾transfer to hearts, unlimited

Here's an example of a funny situation, with plenty of agreements that are used in typical modern bidding situations, including contested auctions, the American pair was acting with what looked like a lack of confidence.

– 1♦ was a transfer showing hearts and Simpson's double should have been takeout – as in the sequence 1♣ - pass - 1♥ - double, but maybe it was simply a lead-directing double? Or, as below, it just showed diamonds with over-calling strength?

– 1♥ showed a three-card heart fit.

– double by Rodwell shows that he wasn't sure if partner had spades.

- redouble by East showed points (1♣ was forcing and so a 1♦ response could have been with 0 PC),
- double by East was just trying to compete (the opening showed strength of 14+PC).

Experience shows that it's better to use this agreement:

W	N	E	S
1♣	pass	1♥ ¹⁾	?

¹⁾4+♠

- double = 5+♥, at least overcall strength
- 1♠ = a normal take out double of spades;
- 2♠ = Michaels, at least 5-5 in hearts and a minor

After a transfer bid of hearts (a response of 1♦) there should be an analogical system.

However, after a transfer that denies a four-card major the situation is somewhat different.

W	N	E	S
1♣	pass	1♠ ¹⁾	?

¹⁾no four-card major

You can't eliminate the ability to bid with a hand that has a normal takeout double of at least 13PC with fits in both majors and at least one four-card major. This is especially needed in natural systems without a negative response, where the 1♠ transfer bid can be made with 0 PC. Holding the spade suit, we often have enough in hand to simply bid 2♠. As a result:

- double = take out
- 2♠ = both majors (5-5 or better, i.e. a Michaels hand)
- 2♥,♠ = natural.

Philadelphia 2010

Rosenblum Cup, the final.

After a strong 1♣ opening there are many known defensive conventions. Those who love to have consistent patterns can adopt a series of bids from a slightly modified defense to a strong 1NT opening.

	♠ A104		
EW vulnerable	♥ Q107652		
Dealer West	♦ AJ5		
	♣ 2		
♠ KQJ95		N	♠ 7
♥ AKJ98		W	♥ 43
♦ 62		E	♦ Q983
♣ K		S	♣ 1076543
	♠ 8632		
	♥ –		
	♦ K1074		
	♣ AQJ98		

W	N	E	S
Hampson	Hamman	Greco	Zia
1♣	2♥	pass	pass
2♣	pass...		

After strong 1♣ opening, 2♥ was preemptive... It was attempt to make some trouble for opener, more than after a mere 1♥ overcall... Operation succeeded?

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Moss	Meckstroth	Gitelman
1♣	2♦	pass	pass
3♦	pass	4♦	pass
4♥	pass...		

Here, in turn, was an interesting agreement by Gitelman – Moss.

After a strong club, the jump to 2♦ showed one major suit. At the two level they use some of the agreements that are popular after a 1NT opening – 2♥/♠ is that suit and a minor suit. 2♣ is natural. With both majors they bid double, with the minors – 1NT.

The entire structure of the popular defense to an opening 1NT can be adopted:

1♣ (strong) - ?

- 2♣ = both majors
- 2♦ = one major
- 2♥ = 5♥ and 4+ minor
- 2♠ = 5♠ and 4+ minor

This is a completely reasonable suggestion for a defense to a strong club at the two level. Of course, the degree of aggressiveness should be suitable for the vulnerability. This defense can be complemented with one more bid of 1NT for both minors.

The most popular defense to a strong club is probably that based on an alternative two-suited convention: Color/Odds/Rank (in French CMR (colour, melange, range) – double = reds or blacks, 1♦ = sharps or rounds, 1NT = majors or minors. An overcall of 1♥ or 1♠ is natural.

Brian Senior: Not that it matters much, but CRO is the almost universal order for those playing this kind of defence in the UK. Some also take a little more space away on the two-suiters by playing: dbl. = hearts, 1♦ = spades, 1♥ = COLOUR, 1♠ = RANGE, 1NT = ODDS. Of course, that means that less space is taken away on the major one-suiters, when also a one-level cuebid is available to the opposition.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the sem-finals.

A penalty pass after a redouble... Do they exist? Maybe sometimes do? Sometimes they don't?

	♠ AQJ32	
NS vulnerable	♥ K85	
Dealer South	♦ –	
	♣ Q9532	
♠ K854		♠ 9
♥ A64		♥ Q107
♦ 5		♦ AJ10976
♣ AKJ106		♣ 874
	♠ 1076	
	♥ J932	
	♦ KQ8432	
	♣ –	

W	N	E	S
Helgemo	Drijver	Helness	Brink
			2♦ ¹⁾
dbl.	rdbl.	2♥	pass
pass	dbl.	pass...	

¹⁾weak two in diamonds

Drijver bid mercilessly, but that is the style of this pair. His very risky redouble tested what kind of agreements the other world class pair had in this situation. It turned out that Helness couldn't have passed the redouble for penalty (it would not have meant he wanted to play 2♦ redoubled), and he finally landed in the expensive contract of 2♥ doubled.

Note, that on this deal AJ10976 in trumps was enough to barely set the contract down one, after an expected ace of clubs lead!

This problem should be worked out: When is a pass after a redouble penalty? You can agree that it is always penalty. Some pairs make the meaning of the pass dependent on the position. A pass directly in front of the bidder doesn't mean anything, a pass of a redouble directly over the bidder is penalty. This makes a lot of sense.

This is an example:

W	N	E	S
1/2♥	dbl.	rdbl.	PASS

Here, PASS says, "I don't have a suit to bid", but...

W	N	E	S
1/2♥	pass	pass	dbl.
rdbl.	PASS		

Here PASS means "I want to play this contract redoubled."

In a very complicated position, for example:

W	N	E	S
1♣	pass	1♥	pass
2♥	dbl.	rdbl.	PASS

using logic – this PASS is definitely penalty, since the North hand can be so narrowly defined that South can not force partner to make a choice of suits to play in.

W	N	E	S
De Wijs	Saelensminde	Muller	Gitelman
			pass
1♣	1♥	pass	1♠
2♣	pass	2♦	pass
2NT	pass	3♣	pass...

¹⁾16+PC

At the other table, South passed, and after a strong club opening by de Wijs, Saelensminde came in with 1♥ (spades or minors). This shows a wide variation in the concepts mentioned earlier of defensive agreements after a strong club.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the final.

Forcing or non-forcing? Even the best pairs who have been playing together for years can have misunderstandings in this area. Prepared tests on areas of partnership understanding might be a good idea.

<p>♠ AQJ97</p> <p>Both vulnerable ♥ KQ53</p> <p>Dealer South ♦ 432</p> <p>♣ 10</p> <p>♠ 53</p> <p>♥ 62</p> <p>♦ AKJ865</p> <p>♣ K63</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ K2</p> <p>♥ A10984</p> <p>♦ 10</p> <p>♣ AQ852</p> <p>♠ 10864</p> <p>♥ J7</p> <p>♦ Q97</p> <p>♣ J974</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

W	N	E	S
Helgemo	Garner	Helness	Weinstein
1♦	1♠	2♥	pass
pass	pass	3♣	2♠
			pass...

W	N	E	S
Zia	Tundal	Rosenberg	Groetheim
1♦	1♠	2♥	pass
3♦	pass	4♣	2♠
4♥	pass...		pass

The question of what is forcing in a contested auction will relate to hundreds of sequences because of the fundamental nature of bidding. Bidding misunderstandings are usually non-recoverable and you should have both general and specific agreements.

Helness's 2♥ bid was forcing and the balancing 3♣ bid Helgemo treated as competitive. Is this the right approach?

A typical model of how to treat these situations should look something like this:

W	N	E	S
1♦	1♠	2♥	2♣
pass	pass	?	

- 2NT, 3♣/♦/♥ = non-forcing
- double and then any bid = forcing
- 3♠ = shortness,

Brian Senior: I agree, so Helgemo was right to treat 3♣ as merely competitive. But what about Rosenberg's 4♣? Partner has freely bid 3♦ and there is no space remaining. It is very cumbersome to play that a cuebid is the only force here, so I would say that 4♣ was forcing, with a weaker hand having to just pass 3♦ - would you agree?

The same rules should apply when only the fourth seat is bidding, as in this sequence:

W	N	E	S
1♦	pass	1♠	2♥
pass	pass	?	

- 2♠, 2NT, 3♣/♦ = non-forcing
- double and then any bid = forcing
- 3♥ = shortness.

With the bidding approach that double precludes shortness, the opener has clear signs about when it is right to convert for penalty.

Sao Paulo 2009

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

As we have seen, sometimes even the best are lacking proper agreements. Sometimes they can also forget their system...

	♠ AKJ1087													
EW vulnerable	♥ A1074													
Dealer West	♦ 32													
	♣ 9													
♠ 532	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>		N			W			E		S			♠ Q64
	N													
W			E											
	S													
♥ KQ9653			♥ J8											
♦ K			♦ AQ1065											
♣ A62			♣ KQ4											
	♠ 9													
	♥ 2													
	♦ J9874													
	♣ J108753													

W	N	E	S
Versace	Stefanov	Lauria	Aronov
4♦	pass	1NT	2NT ¹⁾
5♥	dbl.	4♠	pass
		pass...	

¹⁾minors

The Italians play in this sequence double transfers (4♣ = ♥, 4♦ = ♠). Versace simply forgot. Apparently, it can happen even to the best. The optimal solution to this sequence should look like this:

W	N	E	S
1NT	2NT	?	

¹⁾minors

- 3♣ = 4+♥ and 4+♠
- 3♦ = 5+♥, at least invitational
- 3♥ = 5+♠, at least invitational
- 4♣ = 5+♥ and 5+♠
- 4♦ = transfer to hearts
- 4♥ = transfer to spades

– dbl. = points, with reasonably balanced shape and inviting partner to cooperate in doubling for penalty.

In the other semi-final the bidding was bloody on this deal:

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Fu	Meckstroth	Zhao
		1NT	2♥
4♦	pass	4♥	pass
pass	dbl.	pass	5♣
dbl.	5♠	dbl.	pass...

Zhao made a 2♥ bid which had a double meaning, either spades or both minors. What happened later, it's best to forget.

W	N	E	S
Dai	Hamman	Yang	Zia
		1NT	3♣
4♦	pass	4♥	pass
pass	dbl.	pass...	

Zia, in contrast to Zhao, was not afraid of his own bidding. It seems that his choice of a natural and preemptive 3♣ was a fairer evaluation of the South hand than showing both minors. Besides which, at favorable vulnerability, partner surely wouldn't count on defensive tricks...

AGREEMENTS

Sao Paulo 2009

Bermuda Bowl, the final.

The simplest solutions are not always the best, especially when logic indicates they should be abandoned.

	♠ K9843														
EW vulnerable	♥ 2														
Dealer North	♦ 83														
	♣ A9862														
♠ A10		<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N			W		E			S			♠ QJ75
	N														
W		E													
	S														
♥ AQ843			♥ J9												
♦ AJ			♦ Q7642												
♣ KJ53			♣ 107												
	♠ 62														
	♥ K10765														
	♦ K1095														
	♣ Q4														

W	N	E	S
Duboin	Hamman	Sementa	Zia
	pass	pass	1♥
dbl.	1♠	pass	pass
1NT	pass	3NT	pass...

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Lauria	Meckstroth	Versace
	pass	pass	1♥
dbl.	pass!	1♠	pass
1NT	pass	3NT	pass...

Look at the difference in approach that two great players had towards the North hand. I definitely sympathize most with Lauria's bidding rather than Hamman's. Experience has shown that bidding spades in the sequence:

1♥ - double - ?

causes more harm than good. Spades in the opponents' hands that are 4-4, 4-3 or even 3-3 often end up being played as their trump suit, and they sho-

uldn't be discouraged from that.

The 1♠ bid should be used to counteract the opponents' potential spade fit. Showing both minor suits (4+4+) with a strength of 7-9PC could be paramount to bidding at the three level, when opener has a hand like:

♠ 75 ♥ A10843 ♦ KQJ3 ♣ K3

or even at the five level with:

♠ – ♥ A10843 ♦ KQJ32 ♣ K32.

Sao Paulo 2009

Bermuda Bowl, the final.

After opening one of a suit, a jump to three of a major by an opponent is a fairly common position. What to do in this situation? There isn't much bidding space left below game level... What are the optimal ways to handle this?

NS vulnerable Dealer East	♠ A7	♠ 10543									
	♥ KQJ		♥ 642								
	♦ K3	♦ A1085									
	♣ KQJ753	♣ 94									
♠ KQJ862	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>			N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 108	♠ 9										
♦ 9762	♥ A9753										
♣ 6	♦ QJ4										
	♣ A1082										

W	N	E	S
Zia	Semeta	Hamman	Duboin
		pass	1♥
3♠	4♠	5♦	pass
5♠	pass	pass	dbl.
pass	6NT	pass...	

W	N	E	S
Versace	Rodwell	Lauria	Meckstroth
	pass	pass	1♥
2♠	4♠	5♦	5♥
5♠	6NT	pass...	

The NS pairs on this deal had to manage after a jump in spades. With the West hand, Zia chose a jump to the three level, which is a perfect example of preemptive styles these days. Versace, despite having good minor-suit holdings, bid rather passively.

Semeta agreed hearts with a 4♠ cue bid. The key question is what would you bid if you weren't strong enough to risk playing at the five level?

The best solution in this sequence looks something like this:

W	N	E	S
1♥	3♠	?	

- 4♣ = spade shortness (should be a singleton) and slam aspirations
- 4♦ = slam try with a heart fit and no spade shortness
- 4♠ = spade void with a heart fit and slam aspirations

What should you then do with clubs or diamonds? Double 3♠, maybe partner will bid 3NT? So, the double simply means forcing to game without a heart fit or the ability to bid 3NT solo.

Similar solution can be applied when the opening is 1♠ and overcall is 3♥.

After 2♠, Rodwell asked for aces (4♠) and partner showed two (5♥). Both East players – Lauria and Hamman – showed diamond values and a spade fit. As a result Sementa and Rodwell decided to bid 6NT to protect the king of diamonds.

Take note of the fact that at both tables a bid of 5♦ was made – showing the ace – key to the decision of sacrificing at favorable vulnerability over a slam, whenever West happens to have a singleton in this suit.

Lille 2012

Bridge Olympiad, the final.

Artificial overcalls made by the defenders can leave us in a difficult situation, but taking advantage of the information shown by the overcall and having the right agreements can often lead to a spot that is not worse than one that would have been found in an uncontested auction.

Love all	♠ K864		
Dealer North	♥ Q1064		
	♦ 9874		
	♣ 2		
♠ J10		N W E S	♠ A5
♥ 2			♥ 875
♦ KQJ105			♦ A32
♣ A9874			♣ KQ1065
	♠ Q9732		
	♥ AKJ93		
	♦ 6		
	♣ J3		

W	N	E	S
	Nystrom		Upmark
	pass	1♣	2♦ ¹⁾
3♦	4♠	pass	pass
5♣	pass...		

¹⁾both majors

W	N	E	S
Bertheau	Narkiewicz	Cullin	Buras
	pass	1♣	2♦ ¹⁾
3♥	4♥	4♠	pass
5♣	pass		

¹⁾both majors

In contested auctions there are situations where we are more susceptible to preemption than a lot of others. Included in these, of course, are sequences in which the opponents show at least 5+5+ in the majors. You can expect a jump by the second opponent, sometimes even to the four le-

vel. As a result there is a priority placed on bids that unilaterally show as much information about our hand as possible.

The Swedish pair's agreement seems to be useful, that a jump to the three level in a major suit shows a decent hand with the minors and shortness in the jump suit. As to other bids the method of *unusual vs. unusual* can be applied. According to this a 2♥ bid shows clubs, a 2♠ bid shows diamonds and 3♣/♦ are natural and non-forcing. Double should be used to show a balanced hand that is willing to cooperate with penalty doubling.

West bid naturally and didn't give his partner a chance.

Bertheau found the perfect bid of 3♥, although the further actions taken by this pair showed bad evaluation. Cullin should have bid slam.

We see also the difference at the choice made by North players. Nystrom bid 4♠, limiting East's options, while 4♥ of Narkiewicz left the space for the 4♠ cue bid. 4♠ seems to be better also from the lead directing point of view.

Lille 2012

Bridge Olympiad, the final.

After an overcall at the one level natural agreements have a lot of holes. You can come up with various gadgets or you can create a whole new, comprehensive concept based on transfers.

		♠ Q9432									
Both vulnerable		♥ Q5									
Dealer South		♦ 42									
		♣ KQ62									
♠ KJ7 ♥ J102 ♦ K97 ♣ A975	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 1085 ♥ AK964 ♦ AQ105 ♣ 8
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♠ A6									
		♥ 873									
		♦ J863									
		♣ J1043									

W	N	E	S
Bertheau	Narkiewicz	Cullin	Buras
1♣	1♠	2♠	pass
4♥	pass...		dbl.

¹⁾game forcing, 5+♥

This is a rarely encountered agreement, but a very good one. It makes it possible to play a potential heart game from the right hand. They most likely use a 2♥ bid to take the place of a cue bid of the opponent's suit.

At the other table the Poles' bidding was standard Polish style:

W	N	E	S
	Ahlesved		Peterson
1♣	1♠	dbl.	pass
1NT	pass	2♥	pass
3♥	pass	3♠	pass
3NT	pass...		

East doubled, did not bid 2♥, as East-West used negative free bids – 2♥ would be not forcing.

In this sequence it would be best to use transfers. How would they work here?

Here's a suggestion:

W	N	E	S
1♣	1♠	dbl.	pass
1NT	pass	?	

- 2♣ = transfer to ♦
- 2♦ = transfer to ♥
- 2♥ = all invitational hands that can't bid NT
- 2♠ = transfer to ♣
- 2NT = invitational with a spade stopper
- 3♣/♦ = 5♥ and 5♠/♦, game forcing
- 3♠ = 1444, game forcing.

Transfer bids of 2♣,2♦,2♠ are weak (to 9 PC) or game forcing (12+PC). With invitational strength go through 2♥.

W	N	E	S
1♣	1♠	dbl.	pass
1NT	pass	2♥	pass
2♠	pass	?	

- 2NT = invitational without a spade stopper
- 3♣ = invitational 4♥ and 5+♣
- 3♦ = invitational 4♥ and 5+♦

The agreements above assume a non-forcing (to 11 PC) 2♥ bid in the sequence

1♣ – 1♠ – ? .

Brian Senior: A big assumption - why not discuss transfer methods for East immediately over the 1♠ overcall, which will be useful to the big majority who do not play 2♥ as NF? GF hands are generally worse off after starting with a double rather than a natural bid whenever LHO can raise spades.

Lille 2012

Bridge Olympiad, the final.

With today's aggressive bidding style you should have possibilities to bid even with weak hands, especially with a major suit. Passing will also lead to having to play guessing games and at high levels under greater risk.

<p>♠ Q2</p> <p>Both vulnerable</p> <p>Dealer West</p> <p>♠ K754</p> <p>♥ AJ73</p> <p>♦ 6</p> <p>♣ AJ106</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♥ Q109865</p> <p>♦ K1095</p> <p>♣ Q</p> <p>♠ AJ986</p> <p>♥ 2</p> <p>♦ 73</p> <p>♣ 95432</p> <p>♠ 103</p> <p>♥ K4</p> <p>♦ AQJ842</p> <p>♣ K87</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

W	N	E	S
Bertheau	Narkiewicz	Cullin	Buras
1♣	2♥	2♠	2NT
4♠	pass...		

¹⁾non-forcing

In this sequence a non-forcing 2♠ bid comes in handy. Why? In the fight of spades over hearts, information about a five-card spade suit is often very important to the opener, for example:

W	N	E	S
1♣	2♥	2♠	4♥
?			

Now, it's easier to make a decision to bid 4♠ or not.

W	N	E	S
	Ahlesved		Petersson
1♣ ¹⁾	1♥	dbl.	rdbl.
2♠	pass	pass	3♦
3♠	pass...		

¹⁾Polish Club

The 2♠ bid here was definitely a mistake. From a tactical point of view it would have been better to show one's intentions with an immediate 3♠. The best proof of this is the fact that West decided to go on himself to the three level one round later.

In Polish Club 3♠ should show about 15 PC, 4♠ and a club suit (11-14 PC hands are opened 2♣ Precision; also 3♥ in third round would solve the problem.

Veldhoven 2011

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

When making agreements for uncommon bidding situations it's a good idea to go one step further and define principles for continuations, or at least outline the principles.

NS vulnerable Dealer West	♠ K103		
	♥ 753		
	♦ 97		
	♣ AQ1053		
♠ A72		N	♠ Q954
♥ J42		W	♥ 96
♦ AKJ84		E	♦ Q10652
♣ J2		S	♣ 84
	♠ J86		
	♥ AKQ108		
	♦ 3		
	♣ K976		

W	N	E	S
De Wijs	Jorgensen	Muller	Einarsson
1NT ¹⁾	pass	2♣	dbl.
2♠ ²⁾	3NT	pass...	

¹⁾weak

²⁾2♠ = no four-card major and no club stopper

The double of 2♣ showed points, which is a standard treatment nowadays against a weak notrump. Then, there was a mistake, the kind that is typical for pairs who have basic agreements against a weak notrump but never discuss the details. Mistake! How to continue the agreements?

We recommend in these kind of situations a double with a balanced hand and transfers starting from 2NT.

W	N	E	S
1NT	pass	2♣	dbl.
2♥ ¹⁾	?		

¹⁾natural, 4-5♥

– dbl. = points, relatively balanced

- 2♠ = natural, non-forcing
- 2NT = transfer to clubs, at least invitational
- 3♣ = transfer to diamonds, at least invitational
- 3♦ = 4144 or something close to that
- 3♥ = transfer to spades, at least invitational
- 3♠ = asking for a heart stopper

Brian:

And in the auction of Muller - De Wijs, where 2♠ DENIED spades? With E/W not having shown any specific suit, would we play:

3♦ = Transfer to hearts, INV+

3♠ = Minor two-suiter GF?

Veldhoven 2011

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

Earlier we said that with spades you shouldn't try to compete with a takeout double. Now, we'll show you what you can do with clubs – they can be used to set a no trump contract rather than trying to bid them and getting too high.

<p>Love all Dealer West</p> <p>♠ 10 ♥ 7643 ♦ K1093 ♣ J873</p>	<p>♠ KJ6 ♥ Q98 ♦ Q76 ♣ A1092</p> <table style="border: 1px solid black; margin: 0 auto; padding: 5px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 98753 ♥ AJ105 ♦ J85 ♣ 4</p>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ AQ42 ♥ K2 ♦ A42 ♣ KQ65</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

W	N	E	S
Versace	Miao	Lauria	Hou
pass	1♦	1NT	2♣ ¹⁾
pass	2♠	pass...	

¹⁾both majors

This is becoming a more and more popular agreement, born out of practical experience.

The club suit is not useful for competing over a 1NT contract. It only lets the opponents correct to a contract of 2♥/♠. Clubs are good for setting 1NT contract, and thus we can fight for the contract with major suit shape of 4+4+.

The type of opening hand can slightly change further bidding.

W	N	E	S
pass	1♦	1NT	2♣
pass	?		

– 2♦ = “I prefer to play diamonds.”

W	N	E	S
pass	1♣	1NT	2♣
pass	?		

– 2♦ = “Bid your better/longer major.”

Veldhoven 2011

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

1NT showing a 5-card minor and a 4-card major (at some places called *Raptor*). This used to be quite popular in Poland. How to deal with this convention?

	♠ A752		
NS vulnerable	♥ J104		
Dealer South	♦ K108543		
	♣ –		
♠ KQ43		N	♠ J
♥ 73		W	♥ Q986
♦ 2		E	♦ QJ76
♣ AKJ962		S	♣ Q875
	♠ 10986		
	♥ AK52		
	♦ A9		
	♣ 1043		

W	N	E	S
Wooldridge	van Prooijen	Hurd	Verhees
1♣	1NT ¹⁾	2♣	pass
5♣	pass	pass	3♣
pass...			dbl.

¹⁾1NT = 5+♦ and a 4-card major

This kind of 1NT overcall – known in the West as *Raptor* – used to be a very trendy convention in Poland some years ago. It turns out, though, that a takeout double in which we can have 13,14,15, 16, 17, 18, 19, or 20+ PC and a balanced hand is unacceptable, so majority came back to natural 1NT overcall.

W	N	E	S
Brink	Grue	Drijver	J.Lall
1NT ²⁾	2♣ ³⁾	3♣	1♦ ¹⁾
pass	3♦	pass	pass
4♣	pass...		

¹⁾nebulous

²⁾1NT = 5+♣ and a 4-card major

³⁾2♣ = transfer to diamonds

In this example a transfer from the responder works out well. Everything depends on the context.

As was mentioned in the introduction, professional world class pairs put a great deal of importance on contested auctions when developing their bidding systems. It is in this area where the biggest system gaps are and where the biggest swing results are created.

In this chapter we showed examples of specific agreements, sometimes in use by only a small number of players. These examples illustrate how much work is needed in almost every sequence and how professional bridge differs from competitive – but still amateur – bridge.

PARTNERSHIP HARMONY

Agreements are not everything. A good bridge partnership should also have harmony and consistency in bidding styles.

This is associated with hand evaluation. It doesn't mean that both partners have to think identically, but they have to be aware of their partner's approach to hand evaluation. When making decisions, a player must know and take into consideration partner's tendencies towards being active, taking risks, to converting takeout doubles to penalty, to balancing doubles, to doubling for penalty, etc.

How does this work in practice? Very differently. Sometimes impressively, sometimes badly. Even with pairs at the very top of world class bridge who have been playing together for a long time. Let's look at some examples.

Estoril 2005

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

The bidding on this deal was completely out of sync at both tables. We showed examples of this in the discussion on being active. This is a very good illustration of the problem we mentioned in that section of the book.

<p>Both vulnerable</p> <p>Dealer North</p> <p>♠ 1072</p> <p>♥ AJ2</p> <p>♦ AQ1074</p> <p>♣ 87</p>	<p>♠ KQJ98</p> <p>♥ KQ7</p> <p>♦ K9</p> <p>♣ 1054</p> <table style="border: 1px solid black; margin: 10px auto; padding: 5px;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">S</td> </tr> </table> <p>♠ 54</p> <p>♥ 3</p> <p>♦ J86532</p> <p>♣ AKQ3</p>	N	E	W	S	<p>♠ A63</p> <p>♥ 1098654</p> <p>♦ –</p> <p>♣ J962</p>
N	E					
W	S					

W	N	E	S
Madala	Greco	Lambardi	Hampson
	1NT	2♦ ¹⁾	3♣ ²⁾
pass	3♦	pass	3NT
5♣	pass	pass	dbl.
dbl.	pass...		

¹⁾one major

²⁾transfer to diamonds, at least invitational

W	N	E	S
Gitelman	Mooney	Moss	Monsegur
	1♠	pass	1NT
pass	2♣	2♥	2♠
3♣	pass	4♥	dbl.
pass...			

Understandably, everything depends on bridge style. Every overcall can bring a positive result. However, the actions taken by both partners have to be consistent. Bridge is after all a partnership game. If Lambardi can make these kinds of overcalls, then Madala should have been more careful. Doubling 3NT only because we want to double our result or the opponents' result makes no sense. These days Madala seems to play a much more solid game, recalling that in 2005 he was not even 18 years old.

At the other table, the 2♥ with Moss's hand may be consistent with the style of that pair, but then later accepting the game invitation goes beyond the bounds of optimism. With this kind of style, it would seem that partner would not be able to keep partnership harmony in any way except by passing.

Verona 2006

Rosenblum Cup, the final.

Here, we have two top world class pairs in action – one understandably, the other down four...

	♠ 92										
EW vulnerable	♥ 3										
Dealer North	♦ K1053										
	♣ AQJ653										
♠ K83	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A65
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q1098		♥ K654									
♦ AJ986		♦ Q4									
♣ K		♣ 10874									
	♠ QJ1074										
	♥ AJ72										
	♦ 72										
	♣ 92										

W	N	E	S
Nystrom	Sontag	Bertheau	Bates
	2♣	pass	2♠
dbl.	pass	4♥	pass...

At unfavorable vulnerability should we intervene in this sequence sitting with Nystrom’s hand, knowing that we will have to play at the three level? Better not to, but if partner’s style is to take this kind of action, then in Bertheau’s shoes he should have been more cautious.

Note, that if the king of clubs had been the king of diamonds the fate of the contract would have been completely different. Then, taking action after 2♠ would have been sensible.

There’s nothing worse for partnership success than when the players take actions that are not in harmony.

Going down four (-400) resulted from unfortunate declarer play.

W	N	E	S
Helgemo	Lindkvist	Helness	Fredin
	1♣	pass	1♠
dbl.	2♣	2♥	pass
pass	2♠	pass...	

Look at how completely different Helness's hand evaluation was. He didn't even try to invite game, despite having 9 working points. This shows how well this pair works together.

Brian Senior: But Bertheau was facing a double of 2♠, Helness a double of 1♠. Helness could show some values with a free bid of 2♥ when he had the option of passing, while Bertheau had to bid at least 3♥ even with nothing, and his 9 HCP looked to be working overtime. As you rightly remark, had Nystrom held the ♦K instead of the ♣K, which would have given him a sounder double, things might have been very different.

Verona 2006

World pairs championships, the final.

Playing matchpoints lends more caution. Making a game at any cost is not the goal of the partnership, as it is in IMPs. The fight for a plus score in the partscore zone has just as much importance. At the same time you can take more risks in doubling.

<p>Love all Dealer West</p> <p>♠ Q32 ♥ Q982 ♦ J8 ♣ A852</p>	<p>♠ AKJ865 ♥ A63 ♦ 3 ♣ Q63</p> <table border="1" style="margin: 0 auto; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 10 ♥ J10754 ♦ KQ5 ♣ J1074</p>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ 974 ♥ K ♦ A1097642 ♣ K9</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

W	N	E	S
Levin	Cohen	Weinstein	Berkowitz
pass	1♠	3♦	pass
pass	dbl.	pass	3♥
pass...			

Cohen made an aggressive bid by making a reopening double, although we sympathize, and Berkowitz took that into consideration by bidding only 3♥. In a pairs tournament, however, he should have considered pass as a logical alternative. Going down two in 3♥ was not a good result, while +300 would have been delicious.

Verona 2006**World pairs championships, the final.**

One element of partnership bridge is evaluating the strength of partner's penalty double. Avoidance of doubling is not good either for the doubler or or partner. Remember the saying, "If the opponents don't make a doubled contract from time to time, it means that you're not doubling enough."

Love all		♠ A5	
Dealer East		♥ QJ62	
		♦ AQJ3	
		♣ 1075	
♠ 732		N W E S	♠ 1064
♥ 974			♥ K853
♦ K97652			♦ 8
♣ 8			♣ AKQ64
		♠ KQJ98	
		♥ A10	
		♦ 104	
		♣ J932	

W	N	E	S
de St.Marie	Prescott	Bompis	Burgess
		1♣	1♠
pass	1NT	pass	pass
2♦	dbl.	pass	2♠
pass...			

Pulling a direct penalty double with an average hand doesn't make sense. If there was doubt as to whether the double was penalty or not, then it is just a bad reflection on the partnership.

Brian Senior: I suspect that double merely showed a near-maximum for the quite wide-ranging 1NT response - a common agreement but not one which makes collecting a penalty very easy. Double should surely be at least suggestive of taking a penalty.

Philadelphia 2010

Rosenblum Cup, the semi-finals.

A mini-max – the result achieved on a deal that is the optimal result given the optimal actions by both sides – is a rare occurrence in the chaos of modern day contested auctions. Yet, sometimes it’s possible to get there...

		♠ AQ984												
Both vulnerable		♥ J65												
Dealer South		♦ Q10												
		♣ J107												
♠ K1073		<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J		
	N													
W		E												
	S													
♥ 98			♥ 32											
♦ K73			♦ AJ952											
♣ AK43			♣ Q9862											
		♠ 652												
		♥ AKQ1074												
		♦ 864												
		♣ 5												

W	N	E	S
Hampson		Greco	
			2♥ ¹⁾
dbl.	pass	3♦	pass
pass	3♥	4♣	pass...

¹⁾10-13 PC, 5+♥, unbalanced

The classic mini-max, which North did not make it difficult to get to. Maybe he was counting on the opponents finding spades?

W	N	E	S
Helgemo	Gitelman	Helness	Moss
			2♥
dbl.	3♥	dbl.	pass...

Clear lack of partnership understanding. If Helness’s double was right given partnership style, then Helgemo can’t pass it.

W	N	E	S
Ginossar	Hamman	Pachtman	Zia
			2♥
dbl.	rdbl.	2NT	3♥
pass	4♥	pass...	

Another classic example of lack of partnership understanding. Maybe Zia should have passed instead of bidding 3♥? In any case, it would seem that a double of 2NT should have some penalty oriented intentions or should show extra values. In this sequence, a 3♥ is not absolutely required, especially since there are other bids available besides double, like clever bids of 3♣ or 3♦ to invite game.

Maybe it was the case of tactic bids by Hamman. He could expect that opponents can make at least 4 in a minor, while 4♥ should not be more than one down - redouble followed by a game suggested that he bids to make it!

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Rosenberg	Meckstroth	Willenken
			2♥
dbl.	3♥	dbl.	pass
4♣	pass...		

Here, for a change, was perfect partnership understanding. Meckstroth doubled with shape and Rodwell pulled to 4♣.

Note the responsive double which precludes having four spades – standard practice for a long time.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

Is double a takeout for three suits or can it possibly be a four-card major with a 5+-card minor? An established partnership will have discussed the range of possible hands or at least take into consideration partner's tendencies in this area and the doubler's partner should bid accordingly.

Love all	♠ 954		
Dealer North	♥ KQJ104		
	♦ 74		
	♣ Q74		
♠ A1086		N W E S	♠ Q73
♥ 85			♥ 972
♦ 86			♦ AJ103
♣ AK1098			♣ 653
	♠ KJ2		
	♥ A63		
	♦ KQ952		
	♣ J2		

W	N	E	S
Versace	Cope	Lauria	Holman
	2♥	pass	3♥
dbl.	pass	4♦	dbl.
pass...			

The Italians were in a difficult situation. In this auction 3NT would have been to play.

It would seem that if this shape (4♠5♣) is possible for the double, then Lauria should have bid 3♣ rather than bid 4♦ – the highest suit. It cost -800 or -13 IMPs.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

In the heat of the battle, partnership misunderstandings can happen and even to the best...

L Ove all D ealer West	♠ 10											
	♥ K97											
	♦ AQ108											
	♣ 97432											
♠ AK3		<table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8642
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ Q2			♥ 10854									
♦ KJ9542			♦ 76									
♣ K10			♣ AQ8									
	♠ QJ975											
	♥ AJ63											
	♦ 3											
	♣ J65											

W	N	E	S
Versace	Cope	Lauria	Holman
1♦	pass	1♥	1♠
2NT	pass	3NT	pass
pass	dbl.	4♦	pass
pass	dbl.	pass...	

If Versace's hand can bid 2NT, then Lauria should have passed. This failure cost -500 for down three and -10 IMPs.

Shanghai 2007

Bermuda Bowl, the final.

When it gets to the final of the Venice Cup and the Bermuda Bowl it's hard to find an auction that was not repeated at any of the other four tables. But sometimes it happens. Thanks to which books can be written, like this one.

<p>EW vulnerable Dealer West</p> <p>♠ 6 ♥ 109 ♦ 986 ♣ KQ96543</p>	<p>♠ QJ5432 ♥ AK6 ♦ J4 ♣ J8</p> <table border="1" style="margin: 10px auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 8 ♥ QJ432 ♦ K1072 ♣ 1072</p>	N	W E	S	<p>♠ AK1097 ♥ 875 ♦ AQ53 ♣ A</p>
N					
W E					
S					

W	N	E	S
Brogeland	Garner	Saelensminde	Weinstein
pass	1♠	pass	1NT
pass	2♠	dbl.	pass
3♣	pass...		

The double was undoubtedly penalty, but it's hard to blame Brogeland for pulling.

W	N	E	S
Zia	Helness	Rosenberg	Helgemo
pass	1♠	1NT	2♥
3NT	dbl.	4♦	dbl.
5♣	pass...		

After looking at this bidding, it can be said that it's hard to find a better illustration of the theory that chaos and randomness rule contested auctions.

Rosenberg's style of intervening is not really to our liking. Zia, on the other hand, bid with his usual style and the result was down two for -200. Fortunately for them, undoubled.

W	N	E	S
Nehmert	Stansby	Hackett	Rosenberg
pass	1♠	pass	1NT
pass	2♠	dbl.	pass
3♣	pass	3NT	dbl.
4♣	pass...		

A similar action as at Brogeland's table, but Hackett didn't hold her horses.

W	N	E	S
Meyers	Auken	Levin	von Arnim
3♣	3♠	dbl.	pass...

This was perfect, as in volleyball, when the ball is well set up and the strike is delivered. Success.

Beijing 2008

Bridge Olympiad, the semi-finals.

Sometimes finding a fit doesn't cause great excitement or lead to over-bidding. These kinds of examples should be shown nowadays with respect.

NS vulnerable	♠ Q6		
Dealer North	♥ KJ982		
	♦ KJ103		
	♣ QJ		
♠ AKJ98		N	♠ 10743
♥ A43		W	♥ 1076
♦ Q7		E	♦ 654
♣ K84		S	♣ A95
	♠ 52		
	♥ Q5		
	♦ A982		
	♣ 107632		

W	N	E	S
Groetheim	Sementa	Tundal	Duboin
	1♥	pass	1NT
dbl.	2♦	2♠	3♦
3♥	pass	3♠	pass...

That's an interesting style of Tundal's. He freely stepped into the bidding with his 2♠ bid. It looks like he must do this often, because his partner trod very lightly. This is an excellent example of respecting partner's style and temperament.

In this sequence:

W	N	E	S
	1♥	pass	1NT
?			

Groetheim chose to double. In the other semi-final Malinowski and Kirmse decided to bid 2♠ in this position, and thanks to that they played lower when the bidding died out there. A double certainly looks better from a theoretical point of view, but it has one flaw – it allows the opponents to bid a minor suit. The less flexible 2♠ bid, as it happens, is preemptive.

*Sao Paulo 2009**Bermuda Bowl, the final.*

If there is to be camouflage, then stick with it to the end...

	♠ A3		
NS vulnerable	♥ A1076		
Dealer East	♦ AJ76		
	♣ 873		
♠ KJ74		N	♠ Q1095
♥ 2		W	♥ Q4
♦ Q2		E	♦ K10954
♣ KQ10942		S	♣ A5
	♠ 862		
	♥ KJ9853		
	♦ 83		
	♣ J6		

W	N	E	S
Rodwell	Lauria	Meckstroth	Versace
		1♦	1♥
dbl.	3♦	3♣	pass
4♣	dbl.	pass...	

A typical example of inconsistency in bidding style. The Italians allow for very weak overcalls, of which South's hand is a perfect example. With this kind of approach to the game, Lauria's final double is senseless.

It's only an attempt to convert +50 into +100, and it gives away the location of honor cards.

If the goal of using weak overcalls is to give misleading information about the placement of honors and to make declarer play more difficult, then doubling destroys all the benefits of this strategy.

Veldhoven 2011

Bermuda Bowl, the quarter-finals.

Another deal where at four tables of a serious event a different contract was played each time...

♠ AQ873 ♥ 3 ♦ Q9832 ♣ J9	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J10 ♥ K102 ♦ K10 ♣ KQ10852
	N										
W		E									
	S										
Both vulnerable Dealer South	♠ K6 ♥ QJ976 ♦ A754 ♣ 63										
	♠ 9542 ♥ A854 ♦ J6 ♣ A74										

W	N	E	S
Versace	v.Prooijen	Lauria	Verhees
pass	2♦ ¹⁾	3♣	pass
4♠	pass	pass	4♥
pass...			dbl.

¹⁾11-15 PC, 4+♦ and 5+♥

A merciless game by the Dutch pair. Down one and +3 IMPs for the Italians. Why?

W	N	E	S
De Wijs	Sementa	Muller	Duboin
1♠	pass	1NT	pass
2♦	pass	2♥	pass
2♠	pass	2NT	pass
3♣	pass	3NT	pass...

At the other table it was 3NT down three for -300. The Dutch pair play a strong club. However, if such a weak hand as the one West had can be

opened at the one level, then East can't bid a game. It would have been a different story if he had had the same strength and a spade fit. Then, a stretched, distributional opening doesn't necessarily lead to an overbid contract.

W	N	E	S
Weinstein	Hurd	Levin	Wooldridge
pass	1♥	2♣	pass
3♠	pass...		3♣

Common sense prevailed, but it ended in down one.

W	N	E	S
Grue	Fleisher	J.Lall	Kamil
pass	1♥	2♣	pass
3♠	pass	4♣	3♣
			pass...

Lall corrected 3♠ to 4♣ and as it turned out, he was right. After bad defense the reward was +130 and 6 IMPs.

Veldhoven 2011

Bermuda Bowl, the semi-finals.

When taking a battle to the limit, you can push some principles to the extremes, relative to the balance of the points around the table, but then it has to go hand in hand with an appropriate reaction from partner...

NS vulnerable Dealer South	♠ A7	N	♠ J9853
	♥ KQJ6		♥ 1054
	♦ K876	W	♦ A5
	♣ KJ5		E
♠ K6		S	
♥ A9832			
♦ J3			
♣ A1063			
	♠ Q1042		
	♥ 7		
	♦ Q10942		
	♣ 972		

W	N	E	S
Grue	Fleisher	J.Lall	Kamil
1♥	1NT	2♥	pass pass...

Kamil acted with restraint. After all, in the U.S, there is a high value placed on being responsible for your word.

W	N	E	S
Weinstein	Hurd	Levin	Wooldridge
1♥	1NT	2♥	pass dbl.
pass	2NT	pass	3♦
pass...			

You can see that this NS pair is young – South couldn't help himself from taking action. Hurd showed a lot of self-discipline.

Brian Senior: Not too young, or North might have passed the double with such chunky hearts.

W	N	E	S
Versace	v.Prooijen	Lauria	Verhees
1♥	1NT	2♥	pass
pass	2NT	pass	dbl.
pass	3NT	pass...	3♦

The flurry of optimism from having an excellent diamond fit finished with down one.

W	N	E	S
De Wijs	Sementa	Muller	Duboin
1♥	1NT	2♥	pass
pass	3NT	pass...	dbl.

A clear lack of partnership harmony by the Italians. If Duboin's action is correct, then Sementa's 3NT was overly optimistic. We have seen examples in this book of this player showing absolutely the opposite level of passivity. Maybe the lack of rhythm in their partnership was one of the reasons that Duboin – Sementa stopped playing together?

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