

ONE NIGHT STAND

Part 2

The one night if great hands continues.

BOARD 12 DLR W NS VUL

	♠ J 10	
	♥ K 10 8 7	
	♦ 10 7	
	♣ Q 10 9 4 2	
♠ A K 7 6 5 4		♠ Q 8
♥ A 2		♥ Q 9 6 4
♦ Q 5		♦ A K J 4 3 2
♣ A J 7		♣ 6
	♠ 9 3 2	
	♥ J 5 3	
	♦ 9 8 6	
	♣ K 8 5 3	

West opened 1S, East bid 2D, West 3S and East raised to game. Wally led the seven of hearts, declarer put up the queen, which held, and then ran off all the spades then all the diamonds and jokingly asked if he could claim for a total of fifteen tricks which he had: six spades, six diamonds, two hearts and one club. Wally replied that he'd given one trick away on the lead, so that made it fourteen, and that declarer threw one trick away by not ruffing a club in dummy, therefore he did not deserve to make more than Seven anyway!

Guru: Slam bidding is NOT an easy thing a lot of the time. And the silly thing about all this is that there were THREE declarers who seemed to be totally incapable of simply cashing all their tricks. Can you see how they could possibly not make all the tricks? Obviously they blocked the suits somehow, but the standard play is to unblock short honours first and then run the suit from the top. So, queen of spades, then ace, king etc, and queen of diamonds, ace, king etc. There does seem to be a problem with the new learners, who always have to first play their highest card irrespective of where it is. But back to the bidding. A jump rebid in any suit shows a good suit and is not forcing, but highly invitational as a rule. However, opposite a two level response, it SHOULD be forcing to game and show a very good 6+ card suit, but not necessarily more than a 14 count. The West hand is too good for that, though it wasn't good enough for a 2S opener. I know many people will open the West hand 2S and if they do then East can just about bid Seven, but 2S is not correct because the hand does not have 8+ PLAYING TRICKS, which is what the strong Two openings should be based on. With a six card suit headed by the AK only, West can count on four spade tricks plus the two aces, so the playing strength is not there. After a 1S opener and a 2D response, the bidding has to go quite subtly to get to the slam, but I doubt that the GRAND slam is justifiable unless East knows that West has the queen of diamonds and another diamond. They can't know that of course, except with a fancy 'relay' system which even most of the experts can't be bothered with these days. I think they prefer to enjoy themselves instead!

Using natural methods, it is sometimes necessary to introduce a short or even non existent suit in order to get a message across, or elicit some more information. Over East's 2D bid, West should bid 3C. This is a 'Reverse' because West has introduced a new suit at the Three level, and shows a very good hand, though East may expect five spades and four or five clubs. East can now rebid the diamond suit without fear of being dropped in it short of game (WEST'S 3C is forcing to game), and if West now bids FOUR diamonds to show the belated diamond support, East will ask for aces and more than likely end up in 6D. Considering that Seven Spades is on, as is Seven No Trumps, the 6D slam would pale into insignificance you'd think, but the pair that did bid to 6D got 18/20 match points anyway. As a general rule, don't bid ANY grand slams unless you can count thirteen tricks. And you can see that slam bidding is pretty well non existent in your grade, so even bidding a SMALL slam in ANY denomination usually scores you heaps of match points.

BOARD 13 DLR N ALL VUL

♠ A Q 9 4	
♥ 9 4	
♦ 7 6 5	
♣ A 9 6 2	
♠ K J 7	♠ 10 8 6 5 2
♥ K Q 7 6 3	♥ J 5 2
♦ 10 2	♦ A K Q
♣ Q 5 2	♣ K 7
♠ 3	
♥ A 10 8	
♦ J 9 8 4 3	
♣ J 10 8 4	

East opened 1S and West bid 2H. East rebid 2S and West raised to 3S. East now bid 4H and all passed. The inevitable four tricks were lost, though we COULD have taken five, strangely enough, on a HEART lead: I win the ace and return my spade, obviously a singleton, to Wally's queen, ace, and a ruff, with the ace of clubs still to come.

Guru: I notice that Wally led the FIVE of diamonds. Unless you specifically lead the lowest of three small, which can be confusing, I would recommend that you either lead the TOP ('top of nothing') or the MIDDLE one (known as 'MUD' or 'Middle-Up-Down') which is also less confusing. Personally, I think leading from three small is an absolutely last choice lead and will do it only when I have no alternative that I can possibly think of. This is also one case where a normally BAD lead is a standout on the bidding. North leads the spade ace knowing South has only one, then gives South a ruff and then a SECOND one when South returns a club to North's ace. So you see Wally didn't need to lead a heart for two down after all!

EW clearly are not good bidders. To rebid spades just because you have five is quite gross on that suit, and that is probably why they got too high. East should simply raise West to THREE HEARTS because West's 2H response over a 1S opening GUARANTEES a five card or longer heart suit. Yes, it does, the way most people play their Acol, because with only four hearts they will, if necessary, introduce a short club or diamond suit at the Two level with sufficient points. A 4-4 heart fit won't be lost because OPENER will now REBID HEARTS if they have four of them along with their five card spade suit. So, on this hand, East should raise West to 3H, and West, with nothing in reserve, should pass. NOW the ace of spades lead WOULD be a bad one and 3H would make. Amazing the different results that can be obtained with different bidding sequences if the opponents can learn to read the signs!

Of course West's spades LOOK great opposite a spade opener, and I must admit that I would be tempted to go to game, but, at Match Points, if in doubt whether to go on to game or not, UNDERBID. This is in direct contrast to what you should be doing at TEAMS play: I would always bid game on the West hand at teams because the bonuses for making game are well worth it at that type of scoring.

BOARD 14 DLR E NIL VUL

♠ J 8 7 4 3	
♦ K Q 10 4	
♦ J 10	
♣ 7 3	
♠ Q 9 5	♠ A K
♥ J 5 3	♥ A 8
♦ Q 5 3 2	♦ K 9 7 6 4
♣ 10 9 4	♣ K 8 5 2
♠ 10 6 2	
♥ 9 7 6 2	
♦ A 8	
♣ A Q J 6	

East opened 1D and I doubled. West passed and Wally bid 1S. East bid 2NT and West bid 3D. East now bid 5D! They clearly had no idea what they were doing. East's declarer play was as good as her bidding, and the contract went three down despite the fact that I, too, was sufficiently confused as to make the awful lead of the ace of clubs and give declarer a trick with the king.

Guru: The bidding was certainly quite strange. YOUR Double was one that most in your grade would not find, but it is important to compete when opponents open the bidding, as long as you have a suitable shape. If you have at least 4-3 in the majors, a takeout double with even as few as ten points can be quite effective. All the double should say is: do you want to compete if you have something in either major?

West should have bid 2D after your Double. TRUSCOTT is a very useful tool in competitive bidding when opponents double for takeout: you bid one level higher than you would normally whenever you have a FIT in the opened suit. Thus, a bid of 2D would show a hand that you would have passed 1D on (I would still raise to 2D even if South had passed, but it's near enough to a Pass); a bid of 3D would show a normal raise to TWO (i.e. about 6-9 HCP); and a bid of TWO NO TRUMPS replaces the normal raise to 3D (10-12 HCP). As long as you don't forget of course!

If West does raise to 2D over South's double, North has a perfect 'Responsive Double', which asks South to bid their four card major if they have one, and with a takeout double, they SHOULD have one or both unless they are VERY strong. In the event, East would probably put paid to it by bidding 3D and that would seem to be about the par spot.

South in fact needs to find a heart lead to prevent a heart going on dummy's queen of spades (or a heart SWITCH after the ace of clubs lead). In hearts or spades, NS lose three spades, one heart and one diamond, so even pushing on to 3H or 3S is profitable for them, but with both North and South being weaker than they might be, taking their chances against 3D is probably the best option.

Incidentally, if West passes after East opens 1D and South doubles, North's best bid on that hand is a CUE BID in diamonds: 2D. What this says is the same thing as the 'Responsive Double' of a 2D raise: *I have enough to compete to 2H or 2S, whichever major you care to bid*. In other words, a normal raise to Two!

As for East's 2NT bid, they clearly have learnt only half their bidding system. Their rebid is, indeed, 2NT if partner has responded, but with OPPONENTS bidding, it is sheer lunacy to rebid 2NT opposite a partner who may have a Yarborough. 1NT, or preferably 2C, would have been sufficient.

East certainly went at the bidding like a bull at a gate. Even when West tried to slam on the brakes and bid 3D, East persisted and jumped to 5D. Must say the end result was entirely justified!

BOARD 15 DLR S NS VUL

♠ K Q 10	
♥ J 9 7 3	
♦ Q J	
♣ K 9 5 2	
♠ 9 7 6 4	♠ A 8 2
♥ A K 4	♥ 10 2
♦ K 10 9 6 4	♦ A 5 3 2
♣ 10	♣ A Q 7 6
♠ J 5 3	
♥ Q 8 6 5	
♦ 8 7	
♣ J 8 4 3	

After two passes, Wally opened 1NT. East bid 2C which West alerted. I wasn't interested and didn't want the opponents to gain anything from any possible explanation, so didn't ask. West bid 2D and that was the end. Wally led the king of spades, declarer won the ace and laid down the ace of diamonds, followed by a diamond to the king which dropped Wally's jack. End result: making five for 150 to them, not a good score for them.

Guru: Those EW pairs who passed out 1NT because neither of them had enough to bid in fact did very well by defending 1NT and picking up at least +200. That's the problem with a Weak No Trump, especially at THIS vulnerability. North's hand is so awful, he should think about either not opening it at all or opening 1C, because opposite a PASSED partner, North can drop any response the passed partner makes, unlike if they open 1C first or second in hand, when they must have a rebid available.

EAST should think about DOUBLING 1NT. After all, they are only one point short of a Double anyway. If playing extended Landy, which they presumably were, where 2C is a takeout showing both minors, 2C is reasonable enough, but West's 2D bid is surely quite pathetic. With such great support they should bid at least 3D, or better still, 2NT, which East should raise to 3NT, and that is stone cold of course when declarer plays diamonds CORRECTLY, and not the way YOUR declarer did: since North has a 1NT opener, they must have at least two diamonds. In case they have three to ONE honour and South has the other honour singleton, declarer should play the KING first, and if South drops the queen or jack, assume that they do not have any more and finesse against North.

This is a good example of the theory of 'restricted choice' though in many other such cases, declarer may not even have the extra, and quite significant, information of a No Trump opening. Essentially, if a hand produces the queen or jack on the first lead, the chances are that it is SINGLETON rather than QJ doubleton, on the reasoning that if they did have both they would have a CHOICE of which one to play, but with only one they have NO choice. Hence, play them to have only one. That is 'restricted choice'.

In 3NT declarer should play the diamonds the same way, though it gets quite interesting if West opens the bidding, as indeed I would. A TEN count, with 5431 distribution, is good enough to open the bidding, especially with THOSE 'controls' (aces and kings). The bidding and play may then take an interesting turn, with North DOUBLING, East REDOUBLING, South bidding 1H, and East then CUE BIDDING in hearts to look for a heart stop in the West hand. West would end up in 3NT but NOW would play for NORTH to have shortage in diamonds because of the Takeout Double. After the ACE of diamonds drops North's queen (or jack) declarer would then FINESSE the nine and lose a trick to North's doubleton QJ! But even so, there would be nine tricks and +400 for them when declarer takes the finesse of the queen of clubs, this finesse being ALSO marked, thanks to North's takeout double!

Remind me to tell you about CUE bids some time. I expect you people don't play them, huh? In this type of situation you can see why they're necessary. How else could East OR West bid No Trumps, with East having a spade stop and West a heart stop, and neither having both.

BOARD 16 DLR W EW VUL

♠ K 9 3	
♥ A 3	
♦ K Q 9 5 2	
♣ 10 3 2	
♠ 8 6 5	♠ A Q J 7 4
♥ Q 10 5 2	♥ K J 9 7
♦ 10 7	♦ J 3
♣ 9 7 6 4	♣ Q 5
♠ 10 2	
♥ 8 6 4	
♦ A 8 6 4	
♣ A K J 8	

Wally opened 1NT and East bid 2S. I bid 2NT, a bid which Wally and I hadn't discussed, and he bid 3D. East bid 3S which was finally too much for me so I doubled. I led ace of clubs, followed by king of clubs when Wally first played the two then the three. It was safe enough to continue with the king because on the play of Wally's TWO, it was clear that he had three clubs and I could not set up a trick for declarer's queen, which dropped on the second round. A LOW club to Wally's ten now forced declarer to ruff, and he continued with a heart to the ten, Wally winning. King of diamonds, queen of diamonds from Wally and now he exited with a heart, won in dummy. A spade to the jack followed, but declarer still had to lose a spade because he could not get to dummy for a second finesse. Down two and +500, giving us a top board. East had bid very adventurously and very terribly. He should have, if he wanted to compete, bid THREE HEARTS to at least give West an alternative, but to bid to the three level Vulnerable on THAT hand, especially opposite a passing partner and a show of strength from both opponents, was quite suicidal.

Guru: Yes, there are plenty of suicidal people round the bridge tables, not only in your grade. Unfortunately they often remain unpunished because the opponents are not experienced enough at catching them. Unless you have any particular way of dealing with interference, this hand should probably have yielded +200 for you, which would STILL have been a top board. To repeat what I said before, the reason for a weak 1NT opener is just that: to catch opponents when they overcall and your side has the balance of power and good defence. Doubling on your hand would have been marginal because of your trump shortage, but against that, your controls and point count are very good, and good enough to go for the jugular. What you have to watch is that you know what you're doing when opponents do overcall. Many people play Double for TAKEOUT, some of EVERY bid up to 2S, some of only 2C and 2D, some up to 2H. Some play 2NT as natural and competitive WITHOUT a spade stop, others play 2NT as FORCING. And many just haven't a clue what to do. It can all be far too difficult, so why not at this stage just play a double of any overcall higher than 2D over partner's 1NT for PENALTIES, but without necessarily strong trumps. Don't forget that opponents can come in on all sorts of hands, and that at least you know that partner has at least two cards in opponents' suit. That is why the rules are different when partner has opened a SUIT: you don't know how many in opponents' suit partner has, so you have to have CERTAIN trump tricks to double them or to pass partner's Takeout Double!

So, if an opponent overcalls your partner's 1NT, with at least 10 HCP, good controls and a balanced hand, DOUBLE for penalties. What if it DOES make some of the time? To quote the late Terence Reese, one of the world's all time greats : "If every time you double for penalties your opponents go down, then you're not doubling often enough". I must add that he WAS talking about a Match Point game. At teams it is a disaster if you double a part score that makes, because that generally means GAME for your opponents, and a big bonus.

East's bidding was pretty gross, as indeed would all the other bidding seem to have been. Looks like many people chose to open 1D on the North hand. Opening 1NT with a balanced hand including a five card MINOR is much more useful and sensible most of the time. AND, with an opening bid opposite an opening bid, NS should be in GAME, and that means 3NT not 5D because 5D requires more like 28 points whereas 3NT is playable with 25 HCP and two balanced hands opposite each other.

(hands repeated for convenience)

BOARD 16 DLR W EW VUL

	♠ K 9 3	
	♥ A 3	
	♦ K Q 9 5 2	
	♣ 10 3 2	
♠ 8 6 5		♠ A Q J 7 4
♥ Q 10 5 2		♥ K J 9 7
♦ 10 7		♦ J 3
♣ 9 7 6 4		♣ Q 5
	♠ 10 2	
	♥ 8 6 4	
	♦ A 8 6 4	
	♣ A K J 8	

Even with the bare spade stop 3NT makes with careful play, and makes Five if East leads a spade, but let's look at how the bidding would go when you reach a much higher grade of play. North would open 1NT and East would bid something which shows BOTH MAJORS. YOU play extended Landy, don't you? So, East would bid 2D, for the MAJORS. South (your hand) would Double, not for takeout but because the 2D bid is ARTIFICIAL, to show diamonds and presumably a reasonable hand as well. West would bid 2H, quite happily despite their two count. After Pass, Pass, South would double, for TAKEOUT. North would bid 3D and that should be the end of any EW bidding.

Note that doubling Two Hearts would have been very marginal, and declarer may well make 2H, which is why all sensible players play some sort of TWO SUITED takeout system over the 1NT opener, giving extra safety to overcalls.

After North's 3D bid, South still knows that they have enough values for 3NT but they must also have the stops to play in No Trumps. South therefore bids Three Hearts, a cue bid which is asking North to bid 3NT with a heart stop.

Such situations can become extremely complex, with some situations calling for a certain stop, others for a partial stop like Qx or Jxx, and others in fact showing a stop (when opponents have bid two suits), but let's not worry about that for now. All I suggest is that you CUE BID opponents suit when you want partner to bid No Trumps if they can.

There are other situations where cue bids have quite different meanings, but we're talking here about No Trump situations which are not that difficult to recognise. Over South's cue bid (it was sometimes known as a 'directional asking bid', interesting how terminology changes over time) North is happy to bid 3NT.

Now for the play in 3NT.

On a heart lead, declarer wins and tests diamonds, ensuring that there are entries to both hands, then the ace of clubs, a diamond to hand to lead another LOW club, breathing a sigh of relief when the queen shows up from East (you see why a LOW club not the TEN!) and now declarer has five diamond and four club tricks.

Reaching your games even after opponents compete or interfere is something that will come with a LOT of practice and experience.

BOARD 17 DLR N NIL VUL

♠ Q 8 5	
♥ 8 3	
♦ 8 7 4 2	
♣ 10 9 5 3	
♠ A J 9 4 3	♠ 10 7 6
♥ J 9 7 5	♥ K Q 6
♦ J 9 6	♦ A
♣ K	♣ A J 8 7 6 2
♠ K 2	
♥ A 10 4 2	
♦ K Q 10 5 3	
♣ Q 4	

After a pass from Wally, East opened 1C. I overcalled 1D and West bid 1S. Pass from Wally, 2C from East. I doubled since I could see it doing little harm. Clearly, because we play TAKEOUT Doubles anywhere up to 2S, it would tell Wally that I had a good enough hand for him to compete to 2D, or, if he had four or more hearts, to 2H. He of course had great diamond support, but West had a better hand than she might have had, and REDOUBLED. Wally bid 2D and East 2S. Everyone passed and Wally made the somewhat unusual lead of the THREE of hearts. Must talk to him about leads sometime. Anyway, I was certain it was a singleton and won the ace and returned another. Wally did not ruff, nor could he, and declarer was in dummy. She should have run the ten of spades and would have made Four, maybe even Five, but she somehow lost her way and ended up making just Three.

Guru: It's not all that easy to get to game in spades, but the way the bidding went at your table, they should have got there. West's REDOUBLE was the significant bid, and East should now have bid THREE spades to show her extra strength and three card spade support. West, with a ten count including the king in partner's suit, would bid game.

Yes, you SHOULD talk to Wally about his leads. The THREE is a ridiculous card to lead and after that the declarer play should have been quite easy. It is quite correct to run the ten of spades and then finesse again, but maybe declarer was also put off by the lead and expected YOU to have a doubleton ace of hearts, and tried to stop a heart ruff. Do you remember?

All I remembered was that declarer had drawn trumps and then realised that she had a DIAMOND loser that she could have either ruffed, or parked on the ace of clubs, but had blocked the club suit without entries.

Guru: Actually, perhaps we should look at the hands again and see where it might be easy for an inexperienced declarer to go wrong. Let's say you win your ace of hearts and play another and declarer wins in dummy and leads the ten of spades. You cover since your king will come up next time anyway, and declarer wins and leads another spade. Wally wins and shoots back HIS last spade. Now there are no spades in dummy. Declarer leads a heart to dummy and realises they should have unblocked the king of clubs first. Now a club to the king and a diamond to the ace to discard one diamond on the ace of clubs, but goodness, the queen falls and there IS another discard. No, declarer must have played ace then another trump when you did NOT cover, did you? That is the only way she could have lost FOUR tricks. It's beyond me, but these things do happen with new players. Wouldn't surprise me to see some people making only Two. Actually a diamond lead might mess up declarer's play quite a bit if they don't think and draw trumps and find the hearts don't break and they have blocked the clubs.

Yes, there's more to it than meets the eye, which is why Wally should learn not only to lead the TOP of a doubleton, but also to only lead from a doubleton when it is a good idea. And after all, you did bid diamonds didn't you? He should also learn to 'lead partner's suit'!