



### An interesting hand

Bert Oskam gave me this hand from a recent Taieri championship pairs night.

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

Most pairs played in spades with West as declarer. Three declarers made 11 tricks, five made 10 tricks, and four only made 9 tricks. It's not easy to see the best line, and the defence also has a chance to go wrong. Many Norths led a club which, of course, allows dummy's queen to win. How do you think the play should go after that if both sides then play optimally? See page 8 for my answer.

### Contributed humour

Two retired professors were sitting on the porch watching the sunset. "Have you read Marx?" asked one. Said the other "Yes, I think it's the wicker chairs".

### A salutary experience

My Otago teams partner and I play a complex version of Precision that I have to spend swotting up for an hour or two every time we play. It is a thing of rare beauty; and many of the conventions indeed rarely arise. But last week we had a hand that seemed to make everything worthwhile.

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

Our bidding (with me, West, first to speak) went as follows

1♣ (16+ HCP)	2♣ (5 clubs, 8+ HCP)
3♣ (Any club honours?)	3♦ (No A♣, K♣ or Q♣)
4♦ (Any diamonds?)	4NT (I've got the K♦)
6♣	

The play was easy and, as South held three clubs to the Queen, the Queen of clubs did not drop in two rounds; so I made exactly 12 tricks. Jubilantly we returned to our team mates expecting to receive awed plaudits. The reality was somewhat different. Their opponents had bid to 7♣ which should have been one off. But my team-mate sitting North had led a club enabling declarer to pick up the queen. Sometimes science doesn't pay!

### Michaels Cue Bids: Quiz

If you want to start playing Michaels Cue Bids (p.3) try this quiz.

1. Your right hand opponent opens 1♦. What do you bid with

(a) ♠ 8; ♥ Q T 9 8 3; ♦ 4 3; ♣ A J 6 3 2

(b) ♠ J T 6 3 2; ♥ A Q T 9 3; ♦ 4 3; ♣ 2

(c) ♠ 8 7 6 5 4; ♥ A K 9 8 3; ♦ 3; ♣ A 3 2

2. Your right hand opponent opens 1♠. What do you bid with

(a) ♠ 8; ♥ Q T 9 8 3; ♦ 4 3; ♣ A J 6 3 2

(b) ♠ 8; ♥ A Q T 9 3; ♦ 4 3; ♣ A J 6 3 2

(c) ♠ 8; ♥ A K 9 8 3; ♦ A 3; ♣ A Q 6 3 2

3. Your left hand opponent opens 1♦, your partner bids 2♦, and your right hand opponent passes.

What do you bid with

(a) ♠ 8 6 5; ♥ Q T; ♦ A 4 2; ♣ K Q J T 9

(b) ♠ Q T 9 8; ♥ 6; ♦ A T 6 5; ♣ A K 3 2

4. Your left hand opponent opens 1♥, your partner bids 2♥, and your right hand opponent passes.

What do you bid with

(a) ♠ 8 6; ♥ Q T 9; ♦ A 4 2; ♣ K Q J T 9

(b) ♠ Q; ♥ 6; ♦ A K T 6 5; ♣ A K Q 3 2

Answers on page 8.

### Michaels Cue Bids

If your right-hand opponent opens one of a suit and you bid two of the same suit (e.g. 1♦ - 2♦) what are you telling your partner (assuming the opponent's bid was natural)? In the gospel according to Goren your bid is showing a very strong hand indeed - too strong for a takeout double. But you will hold a powerful hand like this very infrequently and therefore most experts reserve such a *direct cue bid* for other purposes. Most commonly they play *Michaels cue bids*. The direct cue bid shows a hand of strength 6-10 HCP (or, rarely, 16+ HCP) and two five card suits that must include any unbid majors. So

1♣ - 2♣ hearts and spades

1♦ - 2♦ hearts and spades

1♥ - 2♥ spades and a minor

1♠ - 2♠ hearts and a minor

In the first two cases partner knows exactly what you have and will normally bid their better major. In the last two cases partner will bid the major suit you are known to hold if they hold three or more cards in it. If they want to inquire which is your minor suit they can bid 2NT and then you will bid it. As I mentioned above the cue-bidder may occasionally have a 16+ HCP hand. To show this they must take further action once partner has shown preference.

### A gift for Gordon

"I really don't know what to bring back for Gordon" thought Frieda anxiously. She was in a Sydney market and her plane was leaving for Dunedin later that day. She and Gordon had parted under rather ambiguous circumstances and she was unsure how personal a present to buy. Her eye fell on a stall calling itself "Paddy's Gifts for Gentlemen". The gifts were pre-wrapped and their contents advertised by phrases such as "To make Dad happy" and "For a keen sportsman". There was a small package entitled "For men - a personal gift". That sounded ideal and Frieda handed over her \$20 and hurried off to the airport.

Safely on the plane she recalled with pleasure a hand she had played while she was away; Gordon would be sure to be impressed. Her right-hand opponent had opened 1♣ alerted as showing 16+ HCP. Having a magnificent club suit herself she leapt to 5♣, all passed, her left-hand opponent led the Ace of spades, and Frieda regarded her dummy.

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

At trick two the opponents switched to a trump. It didn't take long before she formed her plan, a simple one it must be admitted (and she would

modestly do so when relating the hand to Gordon). She won the second trick, ruffed a spade, came to her hand with the Ace of diamonds, and ruffed another spade with dummy's last trump. The opponents had both followed to the third spade so all was well. She ruffed a heart back to her hand, drew trumps, and led her fourth spade. Although her right-hand opponent captured this, Frieda's fifth spade was now good and she claimed the rest. Her reverie was cut short by the landing of the plane and she readied herself for seeing Gordon who was meeting her. She told herself that it was essential she appeared warm, yet dignified; pleased to see him but not too effusive; friendly but not embarrassingly eager; assured but not arrogant; enigmatic but not aloof (*Get on with it - Ed.*). Certainly, after their last parting, she would need to judge her manner rather exactly.

Gordon greeted her at the gate and she retrieved her little package from her handbag.

"It's just a little thing for you, Gordon" she said in a tone that was intended to be rather quiet but actually came out low and sultry. Gordon's thanks were profuse and Frieda eagerly watched as he unwrapped it. As the wrapping paper fell away and the gift came into view, Frieda saw in horror that she had just presented Gordon with a packet of Viagra.