

CSTC Application Quiz – Urgent!

By Neil Kimelman

How would like to play in a world bridge championships??!! Our team is now hiring. We recently came 2nd of 10 teams during the Canadian Senior Team Championships Trials. We (Bob Todd, captain, Doug Fisher, myself, Ray Hornby, Paul Thurston, Lino D’Souza) now compete against three other teams in Penticton in June, for the right to represent Canada in October at the 2024 World Seniors Championships (D’Orsi Trophy), being held in Buenos Aires, Argentina?!

Unfortunately Lino and Paul are unable to go so we are looking for two local players to get back up to three pairs, a necessity playing in top flight events.

Here is a five problem quiz from the round robin stage of the team trials, to identify suitable replacements for our team. Here we go:

Problems

Problem 1: E-W vul, dealer North. As West you are in 4♥. Here is the auction. Plan your play:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♥	3♣	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Contract: 4♥		♠		
Lead: ♣Q		♥		
Vul: E-W		♦		
		♣		
♠	AK65	N		♠
♥	AK1054	W E		♥
♦	K86	S		♦
♣	10			♣
		♠		
		♥		
		♦		
		♣		
Lead: ♣Q				

Problem 2: E-W vulnerable, dealer East. You hold as North ♠QJ874 ♥AKQJ97 ♦5 ♣6. Here is the bidding so far:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♣
Pass	?		

What do you bid?

Problem 3: Dealer N, E-W vulnerable. You hold as South ♠Q97 ♥AK95 ♦62 ♣K862. The opponents get to 5♦ on the following auction:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT ¹
2NT ²	Pass	3♦	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

1. 12-14

2. Both minors.

You lead the ♥A. This is dummy:

Contract: 5♦		♠		
Lead: ♥A		♥		
Vul: E-W		♦		
		♣		
♠	63	N W E S		♠
♥	3			♥
♦	AKQJ3			♦
♣	AQJ106			♣
Lead: ♥A		♠	Q97	
		♥	AK95	
		♦	62	
		♣	K852	

a) Do you agree with the lead?

b) What do you lead to trick 2?

Problem 4: N-S vul, dealer South. ♠KJ95 ♥A10874 ♦7 ♣72

West North East South

Pass

1♦ Pass 1♥ Pass

1NT Pass ?

Problem 5: N-S vul, dealer East. As North you hold ♠KQ95 ♥42 ♦942 ♣K1093

West North East South

Pass 1♠

2♠¹ ?

1. Michaels.

What do you bid?

Solutions

Solution 1: You are in danger of losing 4 tricks, 1 spade, 1 heart, and 2 diamonds. You are home if hearts are 2-2, or the ♠Q falls doubleton, or you get lucky in diamonds. Plus dummy has no entries after the lead knocks out the club ace.

But wait, what about the bidding. North pre-empted white versus red, and South did not sacrifice in 5♣ or even bid 4♣! The answer, I concluded was they had good defence, and that could only mean ♥QJ98 or ♥QJx. Backing my analysis, I led the 2 from dummy at trick two and when South played the nine, I finessed the 10! We won 13 IMPs on that board, to win the match 26-13. The full deal:

Contract: 4♥		♠ 97			
Lead: ♣Q		♥ 8			
Vul: E-W		♦ A1042			
		♣ QJ9754			
♠	AK65	N		♠	J83
♥	AK1054	W E		♥	7632
♦	K86	S		♦	Q973
♣	10			♣	A3
Lead: ♣Q		♠ Q1042			
		♥ QJ9			
		♦ J5			
		♣ K862			

This hand is also a good example of the two edged sword of bidding by one side helping declarer in the play. At the other table Paul Thurston chose not to bid clubs, and declarer reasonably went down one when he played trumps from the top.

Oh, one more interesting tidbit on this deal: At many tables declarer early on played the ♦6, ♦2, ♦Q. Would you unblock the Jack? If you don't you are not alone as several very good Souths missed this basic expert play.

Solution 2: E-W vulnerable, dealer East. You hold as North ♠QJ874 ♥AKQJ97 ♦5 ♣6. Here is the bidding so far:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♣
Pass	?		

What do you bid?

3♦ shows around 15-18 with six plus diamonds. You showed a two suiter, likely 5-6 or 5-7, with enough points for game. Partner's 5♣ says I have the ♣A, and have a very good hand for you. Are you interested in slam? You should say yes! Partner cannot know you have solid trumps. They must have prime cards/holdings in all of the other three suits, with exactly two hearts. At the table the actual South signed off in 5♥, losing 13 IMPs, missing an excellent slam. Partner held ♠A ♥53 ♦AQ109843 ♣AK7.

Solution 3: Dealer N, E-W vulnerable. You hold as South ♠Q97 ♥AK95 ♦62 ♣K862. The opponents get to 5♦ on the following auction:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT ¹
2NT ²	Pass	3♦	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

1. 12-14

2. Both minors.

You lead the ♥A. This is dummy:

Contract: 5♦		♠	KJ84		
Lead: ♥A		♥	Q6		
Vul: E-W		♦	9854		
		♣	973		
♠	63	N W E S		♠	A1052
♥	3			♥	J108742
♦	AKQJ3			♦	107
♣	AQJ106			♣	4
Lead: ♥A		♠	Q97		
		♥	AK95		
		♦	62		
		♣	K852		

a) **Do you agree with the lead?** No. It could be right if West had two hearts and one spade, and declarer had the AK of spades. But on balance, you want to try and ensure you get at least one club trick. East is probably short in clubs, and will be looking to ruff clubs with their trumps. You want to try and thwart this plan.

b) **What do you lead to trick 2?** It's not too late! Switch to a trump. Declarer is still unable to make the contract. At the table, South played another high heart, letting 5♦ make for a big swing.

Solution 4: N-S vul, dealer South. ♠KJ95 ♥A108754 ♦7 ♣72

West North East South

Pass

1♦ Pass 1♥ Pass

1NT Pass ?

This hand is at least invitational. For those of you who only see 8 HCPs, look again. 6-4 distribution is powerful. There are a number of methods to evaluate what you should do, but one I favour is to put some cards in partner's hand to determine how high to bid. Give partner ♠Qxx ♥xx ♦AKxx ♣Axxx and game is odds on. At this vulnerability 3♥ is the best call in my opinion. Vulnerable, I would not fault 3♥ or 4♥. Partner's actual hand was ♠AQ3x ♥QJ2 ♦10984 ♣AJ10, and will accept any invitation.

Solution 5: N-S vul, dealer East. As North you hold ♠KQ95 ♥42 ♦942 ♣K1093

West North East South

Pass 1♠

2♠¹ ?

1. Michaels.

What do you bid?

This is a hand where you need to pay attention to the vulnerability. West could have a very good hand, and even an average hand could easily make game if E-W have a fit. Don't give the opponents a chance to find out. Bid 4♠. No one at the table will know how strong you are, and it will be difficult for the opponents to decide what to do. An expert strategy is to take away the bidding space, and force their opponents to make decisions with incomplete information. The full deal:

Contract: 5♦		♠	KJ84		
Lead: ♥A		♥	Q6		
Vul: E-W		♦	9854		
		♣	973		
♠	63	N W E S		♠	A1052
♥	3			♥	J108742
♦	AKQJ3			♦	107
♣	AQJ106			♣	4
		♠	Q97		
		♥	AK95		
		♦	62		
		♣	K852		

After my 4♠ it went all pass and we were plus 420. At the other table, the bidding went:

West North East South

Pass 1♠

2♥ 2♠ 3♥ Pass

4♥ All Pass

+620 and +420 was worth 15 IMPs.

How did you do? If you got 5 out 5 let me know!

Oh, I just got word, Lino and Paul are available. They were just kidding. As was I. I mean, after all, it is April Fool's Day.