

# What would you bid? Answers to June Competition

## ***The Panel***

Many of the panel are back. Jeremy Dhondy and Derek Oram have returned. We also have a new panel member, Victor Silverstone, who formed one of Scotland's top partnerships with Willie Coyle, plus international appearances with England's Chris Dixon. Welcome to the panel Victor, we await your thoughts with interest.

Thanks to those who have taken part, including the competitors, that small band of enthusiasts which is actually growing. We welcome the following brave new competitors who are not afraid to reveal their views on bidding: Tim Sharrock, Stewart Pye, and Harry Moore.

### **Hand 1**

Hand 1: Dealer West NS Vul Pairs

West: ♠KT973♥-♦AT97653♣4

W	N	E	S
?	Do you open? What do you bid?		

### **Keith Bennett: Pass**

Pass - really at matter of style, although I opened xxxxxx, -, xx, AKXXX last time, that had the merit of getting spades into the game. Since I'm not opening 1S on this (1D is closer), I'll hope to get my 2 suiter in on the next round of bidding.

### **Jeremy Dhondy: 1D.**

1D. The problem with passing is that I'll probably be unable to get both suits in. Because of the disparity in length a two suited overcall is not a great idea. The problem with opening is the lack of high cards but if I defend later on at least I have an Ace and a King.

### **Alan Kay: 1D**

Yes 1D. Although short of points this hand has a lot of playing strength and if I passed initially it would be difficult to show my distribution. The danger is that we will get too high if it is a misfit but I think it is worth taking that chance.

### **Peter Lee: Pass**

No I do not open. Partner has a right to expect a smidgeon of high cards when I open. What I would bid later would depend on the auction.

### **Derek Oram: 1D**

Yes. 1D, OK by rule of 19, don't like passing then trying to show a 7-5 2suits.

### **Victor Silverstone: 1D**

1D – There is a large army of players who prefer to pass then come in later. I never signed up and have been opening at the 1 level on hands like this for more years than I care to admit. It seems to work for me but continues to produce a variety of question marks from partners and opponents.

### **Alan Shillitoe: Pass**

Pass. I'm not afraid though because I have a spade suit. I will attempt to show my weak two-suited nature later, and then emphasize diamonds further if needs be. If forced to open, mark me down for 1D.

**Moderator:** Not quite an endorsement for “never pass”, but as usual most bid.

## Hand 2

Hand 2: Dealer West NS Vul Pairs  
West ♠63♥QT♦KQ986543♣6  
W N E S  
? Do you open? What do you bid?

**Keith Bennett: 4D**

4D - Down the middle (imho of course)

**Jeremy Dhondy: 4D**

4D It could go for 800 but with an eight card suit it is time to put some pressure on and 3D is for wimps and grannies.

**Alan Kay: 4D**

Yes 4D. It seems that I have a pre-emptive hand in diamonds and I think the appropriate level is the 4 level. I do not like passing and then coming in later after the opponents have a chance to bid comfortably at a low level.

**Peter Lee: 4D**

Yes I bid 4D. Seems a fairly central example of the bid.

**Derek Oram: 3D**

3D, if first or second in hand I don't want to bypass 3NT opposite an unlimited partner. In 3rd pos I would open 4D or probably 5D.

**Victor Silverstone: 3D**

3D – Yes I could be very weak in this position but I don't have to be. If I knew it was their hand I would start with 4 Diamonds and could easily be talked into this especially if lefty was counting on his fingers.

**Alan Shillitoe: 4D**

4D. Will be happy to let them play in 4 Major unless partner raises with a fit. 5D At IMPs where -800 isn't a disaster.

**Moderator:** Fairly standard opening, amazingly at the table 1D was sufficient to keep the rabble at bay, and we played in a quiet 3D.

## Hand 3

Hand 3 Dealer South NS Vul Pairs  
North: ♠6♥J76♦AQT76♣AKQJ  
S W N E  
1H P 2D P  
2NT<sup>1</sup> P 3C<sup>2</sup> P  
3D<sup>3</sup> P 3H<sup>4</sup> P  
3S<sup>5</sup> P ? What do you bid now?  
<sup>1</sup> Bal 15-18 <sup>2</sup> 3C Enquiry <sup>3</sup> 15-16  
<sup>4</sup> 3 card heart support <sup>5</sup> 4 card spade suit

**Keith Bennett: 6NT**

6NT - since this looks right on values I'll bid it, 6 of any of 3 suits may have more play, but in pairs the money is in NT. In teams I would bid 6C to give partner the choice of slams (I don't mind the 4-3fit, ruffing out diamonds etc). I could investigate more, but I don't want partner thinking I am investigating a grand when I later bid 6NT.

**Jeremy Dhondy: 4C**

4C. What a system! I don't seem to have any idea whether partner has 5 hearts or not. If we have found a 5-3 fit isn't he allowed to show a spade card and a suitable hand? What I do know is that I am going to slam but it is more difficult than it might be to get to the right strain. For him to have to bid 3D with a minimum and more with a maximum is the wrong way round. You ought to reserve more room for when you are more likely to have a slam.

**Alan Kay: 6NT**

6NT. We have had a fairly long auction so far but do not seem to have found a fit so far unless it is in diamonds but at this form of scoring I will bid what is likely to be the correct contract rather than investigate further which may help the defence.

**Peter Lee: 4C**

4C. This cannot be wrong though how it will be read I am not sure. Clearly the auction so far has been based on a well-defined system but I am not sure quite what

further bids mean. Partner is presumably 4-4 in the majors as he would have bid 2S with 4-5, so we are unlikely to want to play in hearts. Probably we will play in 6NT (and a direct 6NT now is not unreasonable) but 6 of any suit but spades is possible, and if I can describe my shape I hope to be able to bid a 5NT pick-a-slam later.

#### **Derek Oram: 6NT**

6NT. With a shrug of the shoulders, but with the room in a large pairs field. Expect partner to be 4423 but all the space at the 3 level has been used up that I could find a diamond or show a heart fit. Maybe 4NT is the limit but the 10D swings it to go to slam. Even an outside possibility of perfect cards for 7H with a fair wind but can't confidently pinpoint all the exact cards so won't bother.

#### **Victor Silverstone: 4C**

4C – Can't say I am thrilled with our methods. I have managed to find out that partner has 4-4 in majors and 15-16 points. What I really wanted to know was how he felt about diamonds (no idea) or clubs (unlikely but still possible that he has 4 – eg AKxx AKQx x xxxx – assuming he would open 1 Heart) We could belong in 6 clubs even on a 4-3 if partner has the club 10 – and if he doesn't have that card there will be hands where the 9 of clubs may do. We could even belong in 7 clubs with the perfecto produced above. Is anything known about partner's style – does he belong to the obscure school which avoids re bidding NT with xx in an unbid suit – if so he has at least 3 clubs and only 2 diamonds, and would raise to 3D with 15-16 points in a 4-4-3-2. I can't assume that he would bid that way since it is very much a minority treatment. 3NT over 3 spades would be a mild slam suggestion which a partner terrified wrongly about his club holding would be sure to reject so have to make a try with 4 clubs

Prefer 3 clubs natural or if an enquiry first about diamond support not points.

#### **Alan Shillitoe: 3NT**

3NT. Yuck. A natural 3C would have enabled us to get the distribution sorted (most important) instead it seems that now that 4C would be a cue for spades and 4NT would be RKCB and not quantitative. Any slam would seem to have to be punted so I take a safer (probable) average minus.

**Moderator:** Interesting comments by the panel who don't seem to like what is becoming part of a Bedfordshire local standard system, marketed by "Checkback Monica and her disciples – "the Checkback Charlies?". I don't understand it either, but for Jeremy's benefit partner need only have 4 hearts and 4 spades. 3 Clubs natural or 3D forcing might well be a better start over the 2NT rebid.. Jeremy's comments about reversing the meaning of the 3D bid is well made. At the table 6NT made, but note there could have been two aces missing. I have given 6NT top marks, just, because it is a practical bid and will often work, and must be the right action to take whenever you are unclear about what is the "correct" bid. Technically 4C may be better as it strives for diamond preference.

#### **Hand 4**

Hand 4 Dealer North LA Pairs

East: ♠T98♥-♦AKT97♣AK964

N E S W

P 1D P 2C

P ? (a) What do you bid now?

(b) What would you bid playing teams?

#### **Keith Bennett: (a) 3H (b) 3H**

(a) and (b) 3H - splinter since 2H would have been forcing - leaves 3NT in the picture. If 3H isn't forcing I will grossly underbid with 3C at pairs and bid 4C at teams.

#### **Jeremy Dhondy: (a) 4H (b) 4H**

(a) 4H (b) 4H. This gives us the best

chance of bidding a slam, possibly even a grand although there is the slight risk that we may have 3 spade losers. The opposition appear to be trappist monks. I would do the same at pairs and teams. This is not the right hand to look for 3NT.

**Alan Kay: (a) 4H (b) 4H**

4H. Since 3h would be a splinter showing a singleton heart I think that 4h shows a void. The opponents have a lot of major suit cards and have not bid which suggests that partner has a strong hand so it is tempting to hide this feature from the opponents to get a favourable lead but I think that I will let partner know that heart values are not as useful as in other suits. This could be wrong if 3nt is the correct contract especially at pairs but I think that 6c or 7c is so likely that I will ignore this possibility.

**Peter Lee: (a) 3H (b) 3H**

(a) 3H splinter (b) same. 4H void showing is also possible.

**Derek Oram: (a) 3H (b) 3H**

(a) and (b) 3H agreeing clubs and showing short hearts. Points straightaway to the identification of a spade control in the subsequent bidding if in the slam zone. Partner can still bid 3NT if he wants which I will pass.

**Victor Silverstone: (a) 4H (b) 4H**

(a) (b) (c) and (d) 4 Hearts – at last an easy one. Tell partner – void heart (3 hearts would be singleton) and club fit. This is a situation where it is MANDATORY for partner to show a first or second round spade control. The interesting question is what 4NT from partner should mean at pairs. – I suggest something like QJX AQX QX Qxxxx but have never seen, heard or discussed this. Over 4 S I will bid 4NT and partner when replying will know to ignore the heart ace. Over 5 Clubs I will pass and hope he has only 2 spades but will expect the worse.

**Alan Shillitoe: (a) 4H (b) 4H**

(a) 4H. Void. Can be Exclusion Keycard if agreed as such. Looks most descriptive choice. (b) Same action at teams.

**Moderator: The 4H void men out vote the splinter brigade.**

Panel	Hand 1	Marks	Hand 2	Marks	Hand 3	Marks	Hand 4	Marks	Score
Alan Kay	1D	10	4D	10	6NT	10	4H	10	40
Jeremy Dhondy	1D	10	4D	10	4C	9	4H	10	39
Keith Bennett	Pass	8	4D	10	6NT	10	4H	10	38
Victor Silverstone	1D	10	3D	8	4C	9	4H	10	37
Derek Oram	1D	10	3D	8	6NT	10	3H	7	35
Peter Lee	Pass	8	4D	10	4C	9	3H	7	34
Alan Shillitoe	Pass	8	4D	10	3NT	5	4H	10	33

## Competitors Comments

### Hand 1

**Dominic Connolly: Pass.** Some might open 1D which is the only other valid bid but I don't regard this as an opening hand. Bidding a higher number of diamonds loses the spades which is too risky in this seat..

**David Woulds: Pass.** No, yet another one of these Russian Roulette hands.

**Terry Pearce: 2S.** 2S, showing spades and another at least 5-5

**Tim Sharrock: 1D.** (Rule of 19, so it's legal, and, if they do get to a high-level H contract, I can bid S and partner will give me a preference for our sacrifice).

**Stewart Pye 1D.** The hand despite short on points is a very good shape and complies with Rule of 19. With seven diamonds and five spades if you open a spade you will have difficulty convincing your partner you have seven diamonds, against that is the risk of possibly missing a spade fit. You are at favourable vulnerability and I would therefore open with One Diamond and see how the auction develops.

**Harry Moore: Pass.** Its too easy to pre-empt my partner here. He might have spades. I can always get involved later, somehow. I might get the chance to bid Diamonds a couple of times later and my hand will then sound stronger than it is!

## **Hand 2**

**Dominic Connolly: 4D.** When I'm lucky enough to be dealt eight cards in one suit I try to open at the 4 level. The risk of bypassing 3NT is one I am happy to accept.

**David Woulds: 4D.** Yes, 4D, routine pre-empt, the only question is how high.

**Terry Pearce: 4D.** 4D showing seven tricks with diamonds as trumps.

**Tim Sharrock: 4D.** (on our system, partner will know that I have no outside Ace and have at least five losers, so will be able, during the auction, to assess whether to Pass, Raise, Double or Sacrifice. I don't want the responsibility of having to decide what to do after partner has passed and they have reached 3NT or 4H or 4S).

**Stewart Pye 5D.** With eight diamonds I do not think passing is an option with partner holding nothing you will be unlucky to lose more than six tricks and three off doubled would be a good save. I think it is a choice of four or five diamonds and if partner is unable to contribute anything then a slam looks likely by the opponents. I am inclined to create the maximum disruption and bid Five Diamonds.

**Harry Moore: 4D.** If you really want to pre-empt, this is the type of hand, and do it properly!

## **Hand 3**

**Dominic Connolly: 5H.** 5H. With good trumps this hand should play well in the Moysian. With poor trumps and values in spades, probably not so good. 5H should get the message across.

**David Woulds: 6NT.** Risky as we could be off 2 aces or AK in a major, but the system seems to have left us with no exploratory move as 4C and 4NT bids would surely imply spade agreement and 3NT is an underbid. 6NT is the percentage bid as there are more hands partner could hold to produce 12 tricks, than when there are 2 losers.

**Terry Pearce: 4NT.** 4NT RKCB with hearts as trumps, 1<sup>st</sup> suit bid.

**Tim Sharrock: 6NT.** 6NT (partner can not have no Aces; even if he has two Aces, 7NT is only a remote possibility, but 6NT is likely to depend on finding only one missing honour; so there's no point in Gerber or Blackwood).

**Stewart Pye 4C.** It looks like partner has a 4423 hand, however a slam is not out of the question. Although partner may only have two diamonds if he has the King there are chances. The defence hold seven or eight points clearly this could be two Aces in which case you will make eleven tricks in no trumps. Asking for Aces at this stage is unlikely to help I therefore favour showing my shape by bidding Four Clubs.

**Harry Moore: 4NT.** (Key-card Blackwood). All that bidding is too clever for me! I would check that my partner has two key cards, and if he does I would bid 6NT on the point count alone! 6H might be better but this is pairs.

**Moderator:** Tim isn't completely right about the number of Aces opposite. Zero is possible methinks. Well done however on your final score.

## **Hand 4**

**Dominic Connolly: (a) 3H (b) 3H.** You are only ever playing this hand in clubs, unless pard made up the club bid, tell him the good news, fabulous trump support and

heart control. 2H would be 100% forcing and natural so make life easy and play 3H as a splinter in clubs.

**David Woulds: (a) 3H (b) 3H.**

(a) 3H, (b) 3H, splinter agreeing clubs. Should be unanimous this one. If partner continues with 3NT, at pairs I would pass, but at teams I would bid on with 4C.

**Terry Pearce: (a) 4H (b) 4H**

4H showing first round control.

**Tim Sharrock: (a) 4H (b) 4H.**

[What is "LA Pairs"? Please set problem that can be understood by tyros as well as by experts.]

(Moderator: LA "Love All"). 4H (Very difficult. With partner's 2C bid, this hand has suddenly improved from 16 pts to 19 pts. There's no way in my system to find out about partner's specific Aces (except by cue-bidding). Any level of D or C would be non-forcing, and the only change of suit that's sensible is a splinter. We *could* lose three tricks in Spades, but it's now up to partner to settle for game or to investigate slam. It would be nice to hear a 4S bid!)

Playing in teams, 5C is perhaps the safer bid.

**Stewart Pye (a) 4H (b) 4H.** You have at least a nine card club fit and partner may also be short in the majors. I do not think no trumps are likely with a heart lead. A slam is a possibility and I therefore will jump bid in hearts, which should be a control bid or splinter-agreeing clubs as trumps. Two hearts would be natural and forcing therefore Three Hearts would not be natural. It would still give partner the opportunity to bid no trumps with the double stops in both majors In teams game or slam in clubs would be the aim and a jump to five clubs giving opposition no extra information could be considered, however if partner has losers in hearts he is unlikely to go on. I think that a bid of Four hearts is probably a better bid as even if no trumps is possible the scoring in teams make a minor suit game with the hand a safer option. If partner has the Ace of spades and the diamonds can be established for discards a slam is a distinct prospect.

**Harry Moore: (a) 3H (b) 3H.** 3H. With my partner, this is a cue-bid showing good club support and first round control of hearts. 4H would be a splinter.

Competitors	Hand 1	Marks	Hand 2	Marks	Hand 3	Marks	Hand 4	Marks	Total
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Stewart Pye	1D	10	5D	7	4C	8	4H	10	37
David Woulds	Pass	8	4D	10	6NT	10	3H	7	35
Terry Pearce	2S	5	4D	10	4NT	7	4H	10	32
Harry Moore	Pass	8	4D	10	4NT	7	3H	7	32
Dominic Connolly	Pass	8	4D	10	5H	5	3H	7	30