

## Oxfordshire Bridge Association

### MCOL match versus Worcestershire CBA 11 February 2024

I am wondering if I am alone in a couple of my habits. The first is to be very quick to blame partner for a bad result, but be absolutely resolute in the defence of my own poor decisions. My partner is long-suffering indeed (or perhaps simply turns the sound off?). The second is to look at a table of cross-imps and know for sure that they tell the whole story when it comes to my positive hands, but require further investigation if my results are negative. Everyone knows that having a lucky slam bid against you does for your x-imps...

For me there are some themes emerging from recent hands which may merit further discussion within your partnerships. The first is whether you should try to play in four of a major or three no-trumps, and there is a section on this below written by Alan. Another theme is when to open light or to bid light, and whether the approach is beneficial longer term. And finally whether to sacrifice or not. On such decisions it would appear matches are won or lost.

There has also this time around been some analysis of the way to play hands. Play is harder to describe than bidding, so you might want to go on the real bridge link to watch the hands being played. The link below may or may not work!

<https://play.realbridge.online/dt.html?p=240211129838&q=QKMCOLoxonWorcplayer>

The results of the match against Worcestershire were:

Dawes	-85	5-15
Porter	+122	17-3
Markham	-52	6-14

So well done to the B Team, back to studying for the A and C Teams.

Pos	Pair	Team Name	Players	X-Imps	Boards	Average	NGS %
1	6:1	Div C Worc	Chris & Joyce Taylor	+38.28	32	+1.20	57.75
2	3:1	Div B Oxon	Lawrence Wang & Yining Yang	+35.27	32	+1.10	57.14
3	6:2	Div C Worc	Sue Evans & Dennis Loynes	+33.54	32	+1.05	56.79
4	3:3	Div B Oxon	Christopher Whitehouse & Mary-Ann Sheehy	+22.63	32	+0.71	54.58
5	2:4	Div A Worc	Ross Garratt & Richard Jephcott	+21.07	32	+0.66	54.27
6	2:3	Div A Worc	Keith Collins & Clive Finney	+18.80	32	+0.59	53.81
7	1:4	Div A Oxon	Robert Procter & Abbey Smith	+15.37	32	+0.48	53.11
8	5:1	Div C Oxon	Peter Litchfield & Malcolm Currie	+13.89	32	+0.43	52.81
9	3:4	Div B Oxon	Nigel Wilkes & Gillian Lonsdale	+11.55	32	+0.36	52.34
10	2:1	Div A Worc	Stewart Fishburne & Mike Willoughby	+0.45	32	+0.01	50.09
11	4:4	Div B Worc	David Motley & Paul Slater	-0.01	32	-0.00	50.00
12	2:2	Div A Worc	Nick Forward & Steve Allerston	-0.02	32	-0.00	50.00
13	4:3	Div B Worc	Martin Gill & Eddy Blackburn	-0.17	32	-0.01	49.97
14	5:2	Div C Oxon	Lorna Swadling & Liza Furnival	-3.92	32	-0.12	49.21
15	3:2	Div B Oxon	Graham Orsmond & Jackie Fairclough	-4.37	32	-0.14	49.12
16	1:2	Div A Oxon	Tom Rainforth & Jon Green	-7.43	32	-0.23	48.50
17	5:4	Div C Oxon	Sandra Nicholson & Krys Kazmierczak	-8.92	32	-0.28	48.19
18	6:4	Div C Worc	David Thomas & Jimmy Ledger	-11.44	32	-0.36	47.68
19	1:1	Div A Oxon	Alan Wilson & Nick Smith	-16.80	32	-0.52	46.60
20	4:1	Div B Worc	Geoffrey Herbert & Maureen Ledger	-19.45	32	-0.61	46.06
21	5:3	Div C Oxon	Martin Illingworth & Amr El-Kashef	-21.25	32	-0.66	45.70
22	1:3	Div A Oxon	Matthew Covill & Chris Wilson	-31.44	32	-0.98	43.63
23	6:3	Div C Worc	Mike Vetch & John Dowbiggin	-40.18	32	-1.26	41.86
24	4:2	Div B Worc	Mark Askwith & Jane Morton	-45.45	32	-1.42	40.80

## Board 2

The bidding at my table:

<div> <div> <div>×</div> <div>DDS</div> <div>6</div> </div> <div> <div>♠ Q6</div> <div>♥ K9</div> <div>♦ 865</div> <div>♣ AQ9865</div> </div> </div>		<div> <div>N Matthew Covill</div> <div>Other table</div> <div>3♠ = W</div> </div>	
<div> <div>Bd 2, Dir E</div> <div>4♠ -1 W</div> <div>W Richard Jephcott</div> </div>		<div> <div>Ross Garratt E</div> <div>♠ 94</div> <div>♥ AQJ753</div> <div>♦ K73</div> <div>♣ J3</div> </div>	
<div> <div>♠ AK10852</div> <div>♥ 6</div> <div>♦ A1042</div> <div>♣ 102</div> </div>		<div> <div>W N E S</div> <div>1♥ P 1♥ P</div> <div>3♠ P 4♠ P</div> <div>P P</div> </div>	
<div> <div> <div>0</div> <div>0</div> </div> <div> <div>&lt;</div> <div>&gt;</div> <div>↺</div> </div> <div>Chris Wilson S</div> </div>		<div> <div>♠ J73</div> <div>♥ 10842</div> <div>♦ QJ9</div> <div>♣ K74</div> </div>	

and at Jon and Tom's table:

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
1♠	P	2♥	P
3♦	P	3♥	P
3♠	P	4♠	P
P	P		

Jon writes:

We overbid slightly to 4S (interesting that 4H may be better if East's hearts are a little stronger). North found (as did Matthew) the challenging lead of H9. Although alert to this possibility, I won AH and ran QH pitching a club. NS tried to cash two clubs but I ruffed and played three rounds of trumps. South now needs to play a diamond to break up the red suit squeeze but with DQJ this will give up a trick (I need to play DT if D9 exit). South was therefore squeezed for the tenth trick.

If AH is played at trick 1 the only winning line is to play QH at trick 2, discarding a club, so well done Jon!

### Board 3

<div> <div> <div>✕</div> <div>pos</div> <div>🗑</div> </div> <div>♠ J76543</div> </div> <div> <div>Bd 3, Dir S</div> <div>6♥ = W</div> </div> <div> <div>W Jon Green</div> <div>♠ 8</div> <div>♥ AQ8732</div> <div>♦ A9643</div> <div>♣ 9</div> <div> <div>0</div> <div>0</div> </div> <div> <div>&lt;</div> <div>&gt;</div> <div>↺</div> </div> <div>Mike Willoughby</div> </div>		<div> <div>N Stewart Fishburne</div> <div>♥ K</div> <div>♦ 7</div> <div>♣ K10852</div> </div> <div> <div>Other table</div> <div>4♠ X-2 S</div> </div> <div> <div>Tom Rainforth</div> <div>♠ A2</div> <div>♥ J106</div> <div>♦ KQ52</div> <div>♣ AJ76</div> </div>	
<div> <div>♠ KQ109</div> <div>♥ 954</div> <div>♦ J108</div> <div>♣ Q43</div> </div> <div> <div>W</div> <div>N</div> <div>E</div> <div>S</div> </div>		<div> <div>1♥</div> <div>2♥*</div> <div>2♠*</div> <div>4♠</div> </div> <div> <div>5♦</div> <div>P</div> <div>6♦</div> <div>P</div> </div> <div> <div>6♥</div> <div>P</div> <div>P</div> <div>P</div> </div>	

Jon again - 5D was a little aggressive over 4S but it diagnosed the double fit and made bidding slam easy. Should South save at favourable vulnerability given it looks like both sides have a double fit (reds and blacks)? Not so clear when we have been forced to guess over the pressure 4S bid.

Also of interest in the above board is "other table 4Sx - 2" - someone didn't like their hand as much as Jon did! It is a five loser hand and more offensive than defensive....

## Board 5

✕

pas

Bd 5, Dir N

4♥+1 E

W Jon Green

♠ A1062

♥ K104

♦ 642

♣ K92

0

0

<

>

Mike Willoughby S

♠ Q3

♥ Q83

♦ K10975

♣ A43

♠ 98754

♥ 6

♦ J83

♣ QJ75

N Stewart Fishburne

Other table

4♥ = E

Tom Rainforth E

♠ KJ

♥ AJ9752

♦ AQ

♣ 1086

W	N	E	S
	P	1♥	P
1♠	P	2♥	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
P	P		

Tom found a pretty safety play in 4H (there are no doubt variations of this given all the tenaces depending on the defence). After CQ covered (ducking is an option) to the CA and a club back to the Jack and third club, Tom played HA and a heart to the nine. This picked up trumps for no loser but had it lost, South would have been endplayed to give the tenth trick.

This is clearly a superior line than that taken by other declarers, but the drop of e.g. QS meant that it went unrewarded.

As an aside there was a difference of opinion on whether the East hand should rebid 2H or 3H. If, like Tom above, you bid 2H it is imperative that West invites to game with 3H. The majority of players rebid 3H, no doubt thinking that the 1S response had improved the hand.

### Boards 1, 8, 20 and 22 – 3NT or 4M? (Alan writes)

People most often think about playing 3N despite an 8-card major-suit fit when playing pairs. But if the problem with 3N isn't simply an inadequately guarded suit then this can be just as important a judgment issue atimps. Indeed, 4M only has to score 1 more trick than 3N to be preferred at pairs. But it has to score two more tricks to be a better spot at teams. Anyway, we seemed to make unconventional choices on quite a few hands against Worcestershire, starting on the very first board:

#### Board 1

<div> <div> <div>✕</div> <div>pas</div> <div>6</div> </div> <div>♠ K872</div> </div> <div> <div>Bd 1, Dlr N</div> <div>♥ AKQ942</div> <div>♦ 9</div> <div>♣ 87</div> </div> <div> <div>W Steve Allerston</div> <div>♠ J105</div> <div>♥ J1073</div> <div>♦ AK2</div> <div>♣ 1096</div> </div>		<div>N Alan Wilson</div> <div>Other table</div> <div>3NT= S</div> <div>Nick Forward E</div>																								
<div> <div> <div>0</div> <div>0</div> </div> <div> <div>&lt;</div> <div>&gt;</div> <div>↺</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>♠ AQ6</div> <div>♥ —</div> <div>♦ J765</div> <div>♣ AQ5432</div> </div> <div> <div>Nick Smith S</div> </div>		<div>♠ 943</div> <div>♥ 865</div> <div>♦ Q10843</div> <div>♣ KJ</div>																								
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> <td>P</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>P</td> <td>3♦*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>P</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>4♦*</td> <td>P</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S		1♥	P	2♣	P	2♠	P	3♦*	P	3♥	P	3♠	P	4♦*	P	4♠	P	P	P	
W	N	E	S																							
	1♥	P	2♣																							
P	2♠	P	3♦*																							
P	3♥	P	3♠																							
P	4♦*	P	4♠																							
P	P	P																								

It isn't obvious to me where you want to play this one. Swap the EW hands, for instance, and the popular 3N by S will lose the first five tricks. We ended up in the 4-3 spade fit, played by N, which felt slightly uncomfortable to play but ended up being easy enough. (Supporting partner's second suit via 4SF normally shows a GF hand with 4-card support – hence N's cue-bid in response. But Nick judged it right here with strong 3-card support.)

On board 1 the contracts were:

3NT by S	10
4S by N	1
4H by N	1

All contracts made.

### Board 8

Bd 8, Dlr W 3NT= N		N Alan Wilson Other table 3♠ = N																				
W Steve Allerston ♠ Q9 ♥ K1092 ♦ 1064 ♣ 8652	♠ AKJ76 ♥ J6 ♦ QJ5 ♣ AJ9	Nick Forward E ♠ 83 ♥ AQ83 ♦ 9872 ♣ KQ3																				
Nick Smith S ♠ 10542 ♥ 754 ♦ AK3 ♣ 1074	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>1♠*</td> <td>P</td> <td>1♦*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>1♠*</td> <td>P</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>P</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		W	N	E	S	P	1♠*	P	1♦*	P	1♠*	P	2♠	P	2NT	P	3NT	P	P	P	
W	N	E	S																			
P	1♠*	P	1♦*																			
P	1♠*	P	2♠																			
P	2NT	P	3NT																			
P	P	P																				

On hand 8, Nick chose 3N despite knowing of a 9-card spade fit, not just an 8-card one. (By the time we got to 2N, N had shown a fairly minimum (semi-)balanced strong club with 5S.)

Here, 3N risks losing the first 5 tricks in hearts. But if hearts are 4-4 or our opponents don't lead them then 3N is a better spot than 4S in theory, though both will make in practice since the defence to avoid E being end-played in clubs when defending 4S is pretty tough to find.

### Board 20

Bd 20, Dlr W 3NT-1 E		N Keith Collins Other table 4♠ = W																
W Nick Smith ♠ AQJ1074 ♥ AK5 ♦ 3 ♣ 1064	♠ K965 ♥ 84 ♦ K972 ♣ A82	Alan Wilson E ♠ 83 ♥ J763 ♦ AJ1064 ♣ K7																
Clive Finney S ♠ 2 ♥ Q1092 ♦ Q85 ♣ QJ953	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>P</td> <td>1NT*</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2NT*</td> <td>P</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		W	N	E	S	1♠	P	1NT*	P	2NT*	P	3NT	P	P	P		
W	N	E	S															
1♠	P	1NT*	P															
2NT*	P	3NT	P															
P	P																	

On hand 20 it looks like we were in the wrong spot – both games can be beaten, but 3N is easier to take off.

Auction 1S – 1N(F); 2N (max non-strong C with 6S) – 3N. Looking at it again, my 3N looks like a bit of a guess here, and 4S might well be better if partner has nothing in clubs. Of course, if SK and CA had both been in the other hand then 3N would probably have been easier than 4S.... Or if CA is with S and SK with N but clubs are 4-4...

Matthew comments: there is an interesting difference in style/hand evaluation on this hand between Oxfordshire and Worcestershire. Excluding Alan's table all eleven tables played in

spades. Nine tables made ten tricks and two tables made eleven tricks. But the key difference was the West evaluation of his/her rebid, whether opposite 1NT or 2D. Six tables rebid 2S (W2:O4) and five tables rebid 3S (W4:O1). The Oxfordshire pair which rebid 3S was Lawrence and Yining who have already limited the hand with the 1S opening.

Anyway Oxfordshire lost 68 imps on the board, and it wasn't a play issue.

### Board 22

<div> <div> <div>✕</div> <div>pass</div> <div>🗑️</div> </div> <div>♠ 986</div> </div>		<div> <div>N Keith Collins</div> <div>Other table</div> <div>4♠ = W</div> </div>																					
<div> <div>Bd 22, Dir E</div> <div>3NT = E</div> </div>		<div> <div>♥ Q642</div> <div>♦ KJ4</div> <div>♣ J72</div> </div>																					
<div> <div>W Nick Smith</div> <div>♠ AK1075</div> <div>♥ A10</div> <div>♦ 953</div> <div>♣ Q65</div> </div>		<div> <div>Alan Wilson E</div> <div>♠ QJ2</div> <div>♥ K95</div> <div>♦ Q862</div> <div>♣ K108</div> </div>																					
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<div> <div>Clive Finney S</div> </div>		<div> <table> <tr> <th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td>P</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td><td>P</td><td>1NT*</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr> <td>2♠*</td><td>P</td><td>3♠</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td><td>P</td><td>P</td><td>P</td></tr> </table> </div>		W	N	E	S			P	P	1♠	P	1NT*	P	2♠*	P	3♠	P	3NT	P	P	P
W	N	E	S																				
		P	P																				
1♠	P	1NT*	P																				
2♠*	P	3♠	P																				
3NT	P	P	P																				

On board 22 it looks like we got one pretty clearly right. Alan won the lead of H3 with HK, crossed to SA and immediately played a C to 10 to ensure 9 tricks when CJ was onside. 4S makes on an unfortunate H2 lead from N, but otherwise has very little play.

Actually, looking at all these hands again suggests to me that there is an awful lot of luck in which choice turns out to be better as the cards lie!

Matthew: Chris opened 1S third in hand so I could bid 2C showing a maximum pass with three spades. Chris rebid 2S, I tried 3S being absolutely maximum and Chris bid 4S. One off. "Why didn't you bid 3NT?" I asked after the event. "Why didn't you bid 2NT?" asked Chris. Well, we both had the chance to get this one right.

## Board 24

Bd 24, Dir W 4♠ = W		N Robert Procter Other table 3♠ = W	
W Steve Allerston ♠ AJ8642 ♥ A8 ♦ AK93 ♣ Q	♠ K103 ♥ J1065 ♦ Q1087 ♣ K8	Nick Forward E ♠ 9 ♥ KQ942 ♦ 5 ♣ J97653	
Abbey Smith S ♠ Q75 ♥ 73 ♦ J642 ♣ A1042		W N E S 1♠ P 1NT P 4♠ P P P	

Rob writes: I was on lead and with nothing to go on I decided on the attacking lead of the king of clubs and was relieved when this went small, small, queen. Now seeing dummy it looked right to lead a trump even though that could be giving a trick away. When this went to queen and ace I was relieved again. Now surely it was only necessary to avoid doing anything stupid. Declarer played a second round of spades, won by my ten and I cashed the king drawing partner's third trump. Without much thought I played what looked safe - a small club to partner's ten and declarer's ruff. Then the trouble started. When declarer plays his trumps and then plays hearts the defence cannot escape the double squeeze. I have to keep hearts and Abbey has to keep a winning club so both of us come down to doubleton diamonds and declarer's last three diamonds are all winners.

Should I have foreseen this situation? Declarer must have the ace of hearts and the ace and king of diamonds to justify the 4S bid, so I can see he has nine tricks and that I cannot guard the diamonds as I have to keep four hearts. A diamond instead of the second club takes out his entry to hand, but it has to be the queen or ten so that partner can take responsibility for guarding the diamonds further down the line.

Identifying when to think more deeply is key to bridge and I failed to spot it this time. Some people are able to do it every time but that requires greater stamina than I possess!

## Board 25

Bd 25, Dlr N 4♥ = W		N Alan Wilson Other table 4♥ -1 W																	
W Richard Jephcott ♠ 108 ♥ K108542 ♦ AK5 ♣ 32	♠ QJ97 ♥ Q6 ♦ J8642 ♣ 107	E Ross Garratt ♠ AK652 ♥ A3 ♦ 73 ♣ K654																	
0 0 < > ↺	♠ 43 ♥ J97 ♦ Q109 ♣ AQJ98	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♥</td> <td>P</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♥</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	P		1♠	2♣	2♥	P	2NT	P	4♥	P	P	P	
W	N	E	S																
P		1♠	2♣																
2♥	P	2NT	P																
4♥	P	P	P																
Nick Smith S																			

We have saved the most technical until last. Six tables played in 4H. Oxfordshire were on the losing side of the board. Playing 4H and going one off were Jon, Jackie and Krys. At all three tables the lead was 10C which was allowed to hold, and followed by 7C which was overtaken by South, and a low club continuation. What to do as declarer?

Jon and Krys ruffed with the 10H and Jackie tried 8H. These were over-ruffed with QH. Jon and Krys now have to go off automatically. Jackie can still make the contract but chose to play for North to have started with three trumps rather than taking a heart finesse.

Playing 4H making we have two Worcestershire declarers and Liza. Two declarers were not challenged because of a) a spade lead and b) a club lead and a diamond switch. However Richard Jephcott above made the contract by discarding 5D on the club continuation – a clever play.

The various plays have resulted in significant analysis, mainly by Tom. If I receive it in digestible format, I shall add to this document on the OBA website. Otherwise, the outcome was that it is best to discard 5D, next best 8H and finally 10H.

### And finally

A final comment – board 32 had eight pairs playing in 6S going off one and four pairs playing in 7S going off two. The four pairs in 7S were from Oxfordshire. Quite lucky really that 6S was not making!

Anyway, good luck next month in the matches against Warwickshire CBA. We hope that the B Team will triumph in the Markham league on that occasion!

Matthew Covill