



Master Solvers Panel

By John Swanson
Lancaster, Calif.

The problems this month are taken from the first two sets (out of eight total) of the open trials finals to determine the U.S. team for the World Mind Games later this summer. This event, held every four years from 1960 to 2004 under the auspices of the World Bridge Federation, was previously called the Bridge Olympiad. Evidently the International Olympic Committee believes they have exclusive rights to all words beginning with "Oly," for they requested the WBF to cease and desist using "Olympiad." Rumor has it that the capital city of Washington will also be changing its name from "Olympia" to "Mind Games."

In the trials Nickell (Katz, Rodwell, Meckstroth, Hamman, Zia) faced Diamond (Platnick, Greco, Hampson, Moss, Gitelman). These two teams were favored, and both had proved worthy by crushing their opponents in the semi-finals. But the auctions didn't all go as smoothly in the finals. Perhaps our panel: Steve & Kitty Cooper, Jan Janitschke, Ivar Stakgold, Rick Roeder, Jim Tritt, and Mike Lawrence can offer some suggestions.

Problem 1.

Both sides vulnerable, IMPs
You are South holding:

♠83 ♥AKQ107 ♦AQ2 ♣A73

South	West	North	East
			Pass
?			

If you bid 1♥ and partner responds 1NT, forcing one round, what do you rebid?

J.S.: Our panel was unanimous in favor of a 1♥ opening bid, disdaining 2NT because of the weak spade holding. The downside of 1♥ is that you have to find a rebid over partner's expected 1NT response. The dif-

ficulty can be seen from the variety of rebid choices, at least one quite obscure:

Janitschke: 2♠. Looks funny, but will probably turn out nicely since partner can bid a long minor, and it might inhibit a spade lead if we wind up in 3NT.

J.S.: A 2♠ rebid deserves some kind of comment, but I don't know what to say. Maybe "Looks funny" is best.

Stakgold: 3♦. I agree with opening 1♥ (not 2NT). Over the 1NT response, I am strong enough to bid 3NT, but that may be the wrong contract. Partner has at most three spades (only in KS does one fail to respond 1♠ to 1♥ with a four-card holding.) [Flannery bidders also - J.S.] Holding a doubleton heart, no interest in a diamond slam, and no stopper in spades, partner will bid 3♥ over my 3♦, which I will raise to 4♥, probably our best contract. If partner bids 3NT, I will pass; partner may also move toward a diamond slam with a hand like: ♠Axx ♥Jx ♦K10xxx ♣xxx.

Coopers: 1♥, what else? We then bid 3♣. While we have the values to bid 3NT, that could be a silly spot if partner has nothing in spades.

Lawrence: 1♥, and would rebid 3NT. This is a little odd since 2NT is my system bid for 18-19 balanced. My 3NT implies a longer heart suit. At least this way I get North to declare, which looks like a good thing. A 2NT opening bid is not best, since you do not care for a spade lead.

Roeder: 1♥. If you need a board, opening 2NT is okay (and in matchpoints might even be preferable), but this hand is tilted to suit play. In standard, I would be forced to rebid 3NT. However, I have been advocating an artificial game forcing 2NT for many years, and have published an article on suggested follow-ups.

Tritt: 1♥ and rebid 3♣. If 2NT is forcing, please change my answer to 2NT. I would treat this hand as a game force. After the

2NT rebid, I play all responses as transfers, with 3♣ as a "transfer" (i.e. - slam try) in clubs and 3NT is to play. I can't rebid 3NT, as that would show a strong six-card heart suit with notrump shape. If I can't bid a forcing 2NT, I would choose 3♣ instead of 3♦, to optimize chances of reaching a minor suit game or slam. Partner can bid 3♦ over 3♣, or can make a slam move with a club suit. Bidding 3♦ could result in missing a club slam.

J.S.: All the rebids have significant faults: 2NT, although it shows a good 17-19 balanced, is not generally used as forcing (and still doesn't clarify the spade weakness); 3NT shows a long heart suit, not far from the mark here, but partner might elect to correct to 4♥ when there are only nine winners; finally, 3♣ (a weaker holding than diamonds) and 3♦ (which makes it almost impossible to find a club contract) both invite a raise which you probably don't want. My favored suggestion to alleviate the problems is to treat the 2NT raise as a game force as proposed by Roeder and Tritt. Another quite reasonable idea is to use puppet Stayman. The responding hand can look for a 5-3 major suit fit if it holds a weak doubleton (would have worked nicely on this deal). Lacking either of these crutches, I would bid as Brad Moss did for the Diamond team and open 2NT. How did the 2NT opening fare? Lost 13 IMPs after partner raised to 3NT and five spades were cashed. After a 1♥ opening, West will warn you about the spade problem by overcalling. Partner will raise hearts, and you make game easily.

Problem 2.

East/West vulnerable, IMPs
You are South holding:

♠KJ4 ♥A8765 ♦AQ7 ♣QJ

South	West	North	East
	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦*	Dbl	Pass	Pass
?			

*Artificial game force

J.S.: This situation did not present a problem for our panel:

Coopers: Redouble. We play that partner's pass is a mild offer; redouble accepts that invitation with gusto. Even if this is a 3-3 fit we have enough in high cards that making with overtricks is a likely result.

J.S.: A few months ago I pontificated about redoubles being used primarily for rescue. This is an exception. If partner had redoubled or now, after his pass, you redouble, it means that you plan to win at least eight tricks in diamonds; that the lead directing double was a serious mistake. It is not easy to set forth simple rules which cover all situations. For example, in a quite similar auction: 1NT (by partner) - Pass - 2♦ (transfer by you) - Double (lead directing) - Pass - Pass - Redouble is used in most partnerships to require partner to accept the transfer.

Stakgold: Redouble. If this is passed out, I will play in a three-three fit which I expect to make, with possible overtricks despite the bad diamond split. If partner removes my bid to 2♥ or 3♣, I will settle for 3NT (possible hand for partner: ♠Qxx ♥Kx ♦10xx ♣AKxxx).

Tritt: Redouble. It is hard to envision 2♦ not making opposite a one club opener and 1NT rebid, especially if partner lacks three-card heart support. With good hearts and poor diamonds, partner could have bid 2♥. His pass gives the option of playing 2♥ redoubled, and that seems to offer a good opportunity for a pick-up where slam appears unlikely.

Lawrence: Redouble. Partner does not have four spades or three hearts, so he should have at least three diamonds. Making 2♦ redoubled is worth a few IMPs, and the chances of overtricks are excellent.

Janitschke: Redouble. Partner should not have three hearts or four spades, hence

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9:00 a.m. Stratified Pairs
Stratified 0-300 Pairs
1:15 p.m. Stratified Pairs
Stratified 0-300 Pairs
Bracketed Mon-Tue KO Teams Round 1 of 3
7:00 p.m. Stratified Pairs
Stratified 0-300 Pairs
Stratified Swiss Teams
Bracketed Mon-Tue KO Teams Round 2 of 3

Tuesday, September 11
9:00 a.m. Stratified Pairs
Stratified 0-300 Pairs
Stratified Swiss Teams
Bracketed Mon-Tue KO Teams Final Round
1:15 p.m. Stratified Pairs
Stratified 0-300 Pairs
Bracketed Tue-Wed KO Teams Round 1 of 3
7:00 p.m. Stratified Pairs
Stratified 0-300 Pairs
Stratified Swiss Teams
Bracketed Tue-Wed KO Teams Round 2 of 3

Wednesday, September 12
9:00 a.m. Stratified Pairs
Stratified 0-300 Pairs
Stratified Swiss Teams
Bracketed Tue-Wed KO Teams Final Round
1:15 p.m. Stratified Pairs
Stratified 0-300 Pairs
Bracketed Wed-Thu KO Teams Round 1 of 3
7:00 p.m. Stratified Pairs
Stratified 0-300 Pairs
Stratified Swiss Teams
Bracketed Wed-Thu KO Teams Round 2 of 3

Thursday, September 13
9:00 a.m. Stratified Pairs
Stratified 0-300 Pairs
Stratified Swiss Teams
Bracketed Wed-Thu KO Teams Final Round
1:15 p.m. Stratified Pairs
Stratified 0-300 Pairs
Compact KO Teams (Rounds 1 & 2)
7:00 p.m. Stratified Pairs
Stratified 0-300 Pairs
Compact KO Teams (Rounds 3 & Final)
Stratified Board-A-Match Teams

Friday, September 14
10:00 a.m. & 1:30 p.m. Stratified Fast Pairs
(finish by 4:15 p.m.) (This is a 2-session event, but single session entries may be sold at the Director's discretion.)
10:00 a.m. & TBD Stratified Swiss Teams (2-sessions)
Swiss Teams will finish by 5:15 p.m.

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