

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

August 2004

Editors: Ian McCance & Bill Jacobs

MULTI CHOICES

RHO opens 2♦ (weak 2 in a major, or strong and balanced). What is your bidding plan on each of the following hands - assumeimps and no one vulnerable:

1. ♠ J5 ♥ AKQJ1064 ♦ KJ ♣ AQ
2. ♠ J94 ♥ 7 ♦ A3 ♣ KQ109642
3. ♠ A1092 ♥ QJ6 ♦ Q1062 ♠ A6
4. ♠ 75 ♥ KQ842 ♦ AK ♣ KQJ6
5. ♠ AJ96 ♥ 852 ♦ AQJ ♣ KQ4
6. ♠ AJ94 ♥ 96 ♦ K84 ♣ J1042

LHO opens 2♦, partner passes, RHO bids 2♥, "pass or correct". What is your bidding plan with:

7. ♠ 87 ♥ KQ94 ♦ AK105 ♣ AJ4
8. ♠ 108 ♥ AKJ976 ♦ KJ8 ♣ K5

Recommendations (*not* solutions) later.

MORE FUN WITH MULTIS

Dealer: N ♠ J92
 Vul: All ♥ A3
 ♦ Q652
 ♣ 10732

♠ 106
 ♥ J765
 ♦ J9873
 ♣ A9

West	North	East	South
	Pass	2♦ ¹	D'ble
Pass ²	Pass	2♥	3NT
Pass	Pass	D'ble	Pass
Pass	Pass		

- 1 Multi
- 2 Shows some diamonds

You lead the heart five, to the ace, nine and four. Declarer leads a club to the four, king and your ace. What now?

TEST YOUR DECLARER PLAY

Problem 1:

Dealer: S ♠ Q43
 Vul: All ♥ AQ94
 ♦ 43
 ♣ J732

♠ J85
 ♥ KJ762
 ♦ AK
 ♣ AQ4

West	North	East	South
			1♥
1♠	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the spade king, East following with the 7. Plan the play.

Problem 2:

Dealer: W ♠ J865
 Vul: All ♥ KQ52
 ♦ J4
 ♣ K74

♠ KQ10973
 ♥ 93
 ♦ AKQ
 ♣ Q5

West	North	East	South
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All pass	

After West's natural weak two opening, you reach 4♠, and West leads the diamond 10. Plan the play.

Answers on page 7.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

Quotes from A. Nonymous:

The difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits.

We had a partnership misunderstanding. My partner assumed I knew what I was doing.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: W ♠ AK73
 Vul: All ♥ 8
 ♦ Q873
 ♣ AJ107

♠ 4
 ♥ A10652
 ♦ AK43
 ♣ K63

West	North	East	South
1♥	D'ble	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

You lead ♦K and partner plays ♦5, declarer ♦9. What is your next card?

Problem 2:

Dealer: W ♠ AK73
 Vul: All ♥ 8
 ♦ Q873
 ♣ AJ107

♠ 4
 ♥ A10652
 ♦ AK43
 ♣ K63

West	North	East	South
1♥	D'ble	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	All pass	

You lead ♦K and partner plays ♦5, declarer ♦9. What is your next card?

Solutions on page 6.

THE MULTI DE-MULTIFIED
Bill Jacobs

Your opponents in a teams match are unknown to you. The 2♦ opening is marked on their system card as "Multi" (weak two in one of the majors or a strong 2NT opening). Do you think to yourself: "oh no, we're toast"? Well, if they introduced themselves as Jeff and Eric (Meckwell), or maybe Norberto (Bocchi) and Giorgio (Duboin), then you're probably right. But otherwise, and assuming you play simple weak twos, the correct thought process is: "I hope there are a lot of weak two's in this set".

The multi-2♦ opening is an abysmal convention. I know this for a fact, having played it for the last 10 years. When our partnership opens 2♦, we are suddenly at a big disadvantage compared to our counterparts at the other table who are playing simple weak twos. We rate to loseimps on this board.

So why do I persist? For two reasons. First, when our partnership opens 2♥ or 2♠ (and possibly 2NT) then I know we are at a big *advantage* to our simple weak-two playing counterparts at the other table. It doesn't really matter what these openings show (various two-suited meanings are popular – for example, 2♥ to show hearts and a minor): they are simply unavailable to our opponents. The Multi 2♦ is a way of packing more weapons into our arsenal, by assigning three meanings to 2♦, so we are able to add three other opening bids at the two-level.

The other reason I like the Multi is that few people know how to defend against them!

This article is designed to change that, and equip you to deal better with the Multi 2♦.

The defensive method I am going to describe here is very simple, not much harder to learn than Stayman; as a practical matter, simplicity is important when defending ambiguous openings. I also happen to believe that it is the *best* method, but many will disagree. Other more complex approaches are certainly available.

2nd Seat actions

Your RHO opens 2♦, multi. Let's start with a summary of your methods in direct seat:

- Pass Less than opening values
- Double Opening values, not suited to another choice
- 2♥ Natural, 10-16
- 2♠ Natural, 10-16
- 2NT Natural, 16-19
- 3♣ Natural, 10-14
- 3♦ Natural, 10-14
- 3♥ Natural, based on playing strength
- 3♠ Natural, based on playing strength
- 3NT Natural, based on playing strength
- 4♣ Natural, based on playing strength
- ... and so on.

So you were expecting a revolutionary theory in this article? Sorry to disappoint. Still, let's delve down a bit further.

Your RHO opens 2♦, multi. First vital recommendation: *don't lie in the bushes*. If you have opening bid values, take a bid now, and limit their pre-emptive options.

2♥ and 2♠ overcalls are natural and limited. Your partnership should assume that opener has a weak two in the other major, and therefore use a bid of the other major as a cue bid. Once in a millennium or so, you will overcall in opener's major, and get into strife – don't worry about it (and remember that opener's partner may go wrong here as well).

2NT is also natural, around 16-19 HCP, and don't be scared of making this bid off-shape, and even if one of the majors is unstopped – how is LHO, on lead to NT, to know what suit his partner has? Your system over 2NT should be the same as if you opened 2NT, ignoring the weak two.

3NT is natural as well, and once again, can create havoc. Cathy Chua reported that she held this hand against Andrew Mill:

♠ J5 ♥ AKQJ1064 ♦ KJ ♣ AQ

Andrew on her right opened 2♦ and she jumped to 3NT! Can you blame Andrew's partner for leading a heart, his shorter and weaker suit? This cost the defence 10 tricks - they were in a position to run both spades and diamonds.

3♣ and 3♦ overcalls are natural and limited, around 10-14 HCP. These are dangerous overcalls for your side, as they can leave advancer guessing about major suit stoppers, and with no convenient cue-bid available.

Higher bids are as natural as can be, and based on playing strength rather than points. They can be quite effective. Recently, my partner opened 2♦, RHO jumped to 4♣ on:

♠ J94 ♥ 7 ♦ A3 ♣ KQ109642

and holding 5-3 in the majors, I tried 4♥ (pass or correct). LHO bid 5♣, passed around to me. In this standard Law of Total Tricks position (I put this in just for Ian), I needed to push on if the weak two was with

my 5-card suit, but defend otherwise. It was instead a LOTG (Law of Total Guess) situation. And it could have been worse. Had I happened to hold eight solid hearts, there was almost *no way I could play a heart contract!*

The Double

Now for the double: double 2♦ with just about any opening hand that doesn't fall into the above categories. Once you have doubled, you have a big edge in the auction. There are three basic hand types for the double:

Sound Weak NT:

♠ A1092 ♥ QJ6 ♦ Q1062 ♠ A6

After doubling with a weak NT, you will leave all further moves to partner. This gets you into the auction with maximum safety – an option unavailable to your counterpart who hears a 2♥ or 2♠ opening.

One suiter, too strong to overcall:

♠ 75 ♥ KQ842 ♦ AK ♣ KQJ6

After doubling, expect to follow up with a heart bid, to show extra values (with a minimum overcall, you would have just bid 2♥ directly).

Strong and balanced, wanting to discover opener's suit:

♠ AJ96 ♥ 852 ♦ AQJ ♣ KQ4

A direct 2NT is dangerous and anti-positional – you may be off the heart suit, and even if hearts are not led, there may be time for the defence to switch. Instead, start with a double, planning to follow up with 2NT should RHO reveal a spade suit, or a takeout double of 2♥ otherwise (see below).

Later Doubles

Either party can make a takeout double of bids that are either natural, or "pass-or-correct". This operates the same whether or not 2♦ has been doubled. The rule is: "doubles of natural or pass-or-correct bids are takeout of the suit bid".

Once a takeout double of one suit is made, then subsequent doubles of another suit become penalties.

A useful corollary: if you pass over 2♦, then on the next round of the auction double their natural 2 of a major, then that is also takeout, but strictly limited by the failure to make the first double. This allows you to distinguish between light and solid takeout doubles, a huge bonus.

4th Seat Actions

These are even simpler. Make a takeout double of natural or pass-or-correct bids, or bid natural suits or notrumps. Remember that after (2♦) – Pass – (2♠), responder is usually showing interest in hearts, and you can make use of this data in bidding and play.

One scenario can be awkward. Suppose you hold:

♠ 87 ♥ KQ94 ♦ AK105 ♣ AJ4

LHO opens 2♦, RHO bids 2♥. If you pass, the odds favour LHO bidding 2♠, which you can then double for takeout. But once in a while, 2♥ will get passed out, and you may be left taking 50s or 100s with a game available. But bidding 2NT here is dangerous with spades unstopped, and the weak-two opening on lead.

Passing in this situation is a risk you have to take. You are protected to some degree in that partner may be able to re-enter the auction, having first denied opening values with his initial pass.

Cue-bidding

When an opponent makes a “pass or correct” bid, the direct cue bid should be natural. For example, after (2♦) – D’ble – (2♥ pass or correct), bid 3♥ with a decent 5 or 6 card suit. After all, there’s a chance that the auction will be up at 4♠ by the time it gets back to you (just as it would have been had natural weak two’s been employed). This applies equally if partner had passed over 2♦, although 3♥ now would show a solid overcall, for example:

♠ 108 ♥ AKJ976 ♦ KJ8 ♣ K5

Of course, once their suit is clearly established, cue bids are, well, cue bids.

Playing for Penalties

If the opponents are in trouble, the chances are you will nail them. Suppose your hands are:

West	East
♠ K6	♠ AJ95
♥ KQ104	♥ 96
♦ A93	♦ K84
♣ Q73	♣ J1042

This setup is cunningly chosen so that you want to play for penalties, irrespective of the weak two suit, and whether it is held by North or South. I will leave it to you to work out how to penalise in the four scenarios of North or South opening 2♦ with a heart weak two or a spade weak two. In each case, the objective can and should be achieved.

For contrast, consider the bidding if North or South open a natural weak two: 2♥ or 2♠. You will find that it is much more difficult to catch them.

2♦ as a final contract

This is rare, but will cause you no pain. After (2♦) – Pass – (Pass) - ?, presumably the opponents have no strong option bundled into the opening bid and responder has some diamonds and shortage in a major. You are protected by partner’s weakness-showing pass, and should have no qualms about passing it out. With strength, bid as though RHO has opened a weak 2♦.

After (2♦) – D’ble – (Pass), with the Pass showing a desire to play 2♦, then it is worth looking at your diamonds, and taking a bid if they are short.

Two Suiters

Abandon two-suited conventions such as Michaels or Leaping Michaels. Without knowing their suit early in the auction, such methods won’t work out. Go back to mama-papa bridge: bid your first suit, then if the opportunity arises, your second suit.

I grudgingly admit that this is one area where the multi shows a small advantage.

Conclusions

The deceptively simple methods I have described provide you with good tools for turning the multi back on its users. In particular, they allow you to:

1. preempt responder out of discovering opener's suit,
2. distinguish between light and solid takeout doubles,
3. penalise the opponents more frequently.

Well, has this article convinced you that the Multi 2♦ opening is a toothless rather than sabre-toothed tiger? If so, then in fairness, a few extra observations should be made. In real life, it's not always as easy as I have made it sound. Unanchored weak opening bids can lead to unusual auctions and guessing games for both sides – see the next column for a recent example of this. There are two reasons why the guessing can be tougher for the defending partnership.

First, the odds are that it is the opponents of the opening bidders who are likely to need to reach a contract. If you cannot penalise, you are forced to find a contract having been ambiguously pre-empted. This can be difficult – for example, you may have lost the ability to cue-bid, which restricts your options. Moreover, if the multi has no strong option, they can fool around fairly safely with semi-psychoic bids, making it even tougher for you.

Second, proponents of the multi get more practice in the use of the convention than you do in defending it. To counter this aspect, try playing it yourself at home, or on the Internet. More simply, use a hand generator to deal weak two's and see what would happen. In time, the convention will truly be de-mystified.



Funniest line ever? Bobby Nail, holding
 ♠ 2 ♥ 3 ♦ 4 ♣ AKQJ1098765
 operated by passing in second seat. It was passed out. Partner said: "What did you have Bobby? I just had three bare aces." (Admittedly, this one might be urban legend.)

MORE FUN WITH MULTIS – SOLUTION Bill Jacobs

This was board 26 of the final night of the Rothfield teams:

Dealer: N ♠ J92
 Vul: All ♥ A3
 ♦ Q652
 ♣ 10732

♠ 106	♠ AKQ843
♥ J765	♥ 109
♦ J9873	♦ 104
♣ A9	♣ 854

♠ 75
 ♥ KQ842
 ♦ AK
 ♣ KQJ6

West	North	East	South
Robbins	Pass	Newlands 2♦	D'ble
Pass	Pass	2♥	3NT
Pass	Pass	D'ble	Pass
Pass	Pass		

South's double meets with my good housekeeping seal of approval. Doug Newlands' psychoic removal to 2♥ was a bold and imaginative move (if West had then raised to 4♥, resulting in down 500 or 800 in 4♠, I might have described 2♥ quite differently!).

This put South outside his comfort zone which is what tends to happen with the Multi. He impatiently jumped to 3NT – passing 2♥ would have been much wiser.

Now Newlands cleverly doubled to get his partner on track. West, Arthur Robbins, reasonably led a heart, but got a second chance when on lead at trick two with the club ace.

Did you sniff out the surreal auction and switch to a spade, generating 800 out of nowhere? At the table, Robbins made no mistake, generating an enormous swing to the Geelong-based team.

Which just goes to prove ...



POSITION, POSITION, POSITION
Bill Jacobs

The following deal was from the first night of the VBA GNOT heat. The perpetrators of this auction must remain anonymous (you can discover the names upon the payment of a modest fee).

Dealer: W ♠ AKQ92
 Vul: N/S ♥ 3
 ♦ KJ109862
 ♣ -

♠ 54	♠ 86
♥ KQ9854	♥ 1076
♦ -	♦ Q543
♣ 108653	♣ KQJ9

♠ J1073
 ♥ AJ2
 ♦ A7
 ♣ A742

West	North	East	South
2♥	D'ble	Pass	4♠
Pass	6♠	Pass	Pass
D'ble	Pass	Pass	6NT
Pass	Pass	D'ble	All pass

The auction was comprehensible through to 6♠, which was surely a good shot by North.

Then it entered the Twilight Zone. West, who possibly had one too many Pimms before the game, doubled for a diamond lead, overlooking the tiny drawback that he or she was on lead himself or herself.

South however was suitably frightened about the ruff, so looked for safe harbour in 6NT. This went round to East who sadistically doubled, giving North-South one last opportunity to bid the cold grand slam from the safe side. But no-one thought to bid further, and West made no mistake on lead, avoiding the fatal spade, and defeating the contract by two tricks for -500 for North-South, when 1460 (and then 1860 or 2210 or 2470) had been available.

West's double must surely be one of the most successful manoeuvres of all time – a psychic, phantom Lightner double targeted at the positionally challenged.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

THE SETTING TRICK - SOLUTIONS
Ian McCance

Problem 1:

Dealer: W ♠ AK73
 Vul: All ♥ 8
 ♦ Q873
 ♣ AJ107

♠ 4	♠ 1082
♥ A10652	♥ J74
♦ AK43	♦ 1065
♣ K63	♣ Q985

♠ QJ965
 ♥ KQ93
 ♦ J9
 ♣ 42

Diamonds don't look very promising, a better source of tricks is the heart suit. You can beat this curious contract by playing partner for ♣Q and ♥J. Switch to ♣3. If partner wins ♣Q he/she can now switch to a low heart for your 5th trick. If ♣A is played you have 5 tricks another way.

The switch to a low club looks bizarre, but nobody said defence is easy.

Problem 2

Dealer: W ♠ AK73
 Vul: All ♥ 8
 ♦ Q873
 ♣ AJ107

♠ 4	♠ 1082
♥ A10652	♥ J74
♦ AK43	♦ 1065
♣ K63	♣ Q985

♠ QJ965
 ♥ KQ93
 ♦ J9
 ♣ 42

Partner hasn't raised, so there is a good chance that declarer has four hearts, and is quite likely 2-2 in the minors. Unless partner has ♣Q you are history, so ♣3.

Indeed both editors noticed that the hands are the same for Problems 1 and 2! Even the solution is the same, although the reasons for it are different. The first is more subtle¹, a positional requirement, East has to be got on lead. In the second, it's simply Setting Trick.

¹ "Subtle" is an understatement. This problem was too tough for me. Well done if you got it right ... BJ

FALSECARDING Bill Jacobs

The art of falsecarding as declarer is one that is largely ignored. And yet it is one of the safest activities known to man, as partner's role is reduced to playing dummy's cards. Many years ago, I kibitzed Tim Seres through a session of matchpoints. He played his fair share of contracts, and he virtually never played the lowest card out of his hand when following suit or leading a spot card to a trick. His plan was clearly to make signalling life as difficult for his opponents as possible.

Deliberate falsecarding is a science as well as an art. There is only one basic rule, and that is:

Issue your own signals as declarer using the signalling methods of the defenders.

That means that if your opponents are using standard signalling methods, then you play a high card to encourage the suit led, and a low card to discourage. The theory is that if you play a high card (thus concealing a low spot card), then a defender's card will seem "high" to his partner, thus making a continuation more likely. Similarly, if you play a low card, then you promote the "lowness" of the defender's card.

You must reverse your falsecards if the defenders play upside-down signals – low to encourage the lead, high to discourage.

Let's see how this rule-of-thumb applies to the following problem:

Dealer: S ♠ Q43
 Vul: All ♥ AQ94
 ♦ 43
 ♣ J732

 ♠ J85
 ♥ KJ762
 ♦ AK
 ♣ AQ4

West	North	East	South
			1♥
1♠	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the spade king, East following with the 7.

Well, most likely that 7 is from a doubleton and you can suffer a spade ruff, which will probably sink the contract. You want to suggest to the opening leader that RHO has three spades, thus encouraging him to switch to a minor before the spade queen gets set up. To do this, you issue a discouraging signal for spades, depending on the opponent's methods.

First assume your opponents use standard signals: you discourage spades with the 5. From LHO's perspective, his partner's 7 could have been from J87 – so he might now consider switching.

But if the opponents use upside-down signals (so the 7 is from 97 or 107 in all likelihood), you should follow to the first spade with the eight, concealing the five. Now opening leader must consider the possibility that his partner started with J75, 1075 or 975. If you instead follow with the 5, then opening leader can be fairly sure that his partner started with a doubleton spade.

It would be an error in either scenario to follow with the jack! A capable LHO will not play you for a singleton spade, because that makes a set unlikely, and moreover, his partner might have bid 3♠ holding four card support. So LHO will see through your ruse and bang down the spade ace, thinking "if declarer is encouraging me to switch, then I'll continue".

Suppose opposite the same dummy and same bidding, your hand had been:

♠ 85 ♥ KJ7652 ♦ KQ5 ♣ A4

In this scenario, you want to encourage a spade continuation, so if the opponents are playing standard, you encourage with the 8 (making the 7 look like top of a doubleton); or if the opponents are playing reverse, you play 5.

There's quite a lot to this falsecarding game! And you have to do your thinking (and question-asking) before following suit from your hand.

This second problem, from the 2004 Daily Bridge Calendar, is much less obvious, and proves the rule that "every rule has its exceptions" (apologies for the paradox):

Dealer: W ♠ J865
 Vul: All ♥ KQ52
 ♦ J4
 ♣ K74

♠ KQ10973
 ♥ 93
 ♦ AKQ
 ♣ Q5

West	North	East	South
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All pass	

After West's natural weak two opening, you reach 4♠, and West leads the diamond 10.

No doubt you see the danger to 4♠ - RHO wins the spade ace, leads a heart to his partner's ace and gets a ruff in return.

The counter play is bold and difficult to spot: lead a heart yourself! LHO will grab his ace, thinking you have led a singleton heart, and look to clubs. But be careful, you have to lead the right spot card. If the defenders play standard signals, then you must lead the nine – whatever RHO's singleton, his partner will think it is a doubleton with the three. But if the defenders play upside-down, you must lead the three, and hope that RHO's play is consistent with 9x doubleton.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

RECENT RESULTS

Rothfield Teams

- 1 (Seniors) C. Snashall, G. Kilvington, V. Muntz, J. Stretton
- 2 D. Newlands, G. Ridgway, A. Robbins, D. Happell
- 3 I. McCance, R. Van Riel, B. Thompson, F. Beale, D. Smart

GNOT heat

- 1 B. Barsed, J. Stark, R. Lel, A. Czapnik
- 2 H. Lyngsjo, B. Howe, T. Chira, D. Hohor
- 3 G. Kilvington, D. Smith, I. McCance, R. Van Riel, F. Beale, C. Snashall
- 4 A. Halmos, F. Halmos, L. Meyer, P. Moritz
- 5 E. Lin, F. Chan, D. Jacobs, L. Szabo

June Duplicate Champions

Mon afternoon: Donald Gradie, Madeiline Zafir
Mon evening: Wing Law, Lou Lustig
Tue evening: Lilli and Ray Allgood
Thu afternoon: Donald Gradie, Madeiline Zafir
Thu evening: Jim Dunstan, Gerald Pearce, Nafty Van der Hoek
Sat afternoon: John Bennett, Maurice Brumer

ANC STOP PRESS

A most successful Melbourne ANC has just concluded. Convenor Jeanette Collins has earned our gratitude for organizing this most complex event on the ABF calendar, and in very difficult circumstances, where a change of venue was forced on us at the last moment. She was ably joined on the organizing committee by Ray Anderson, Diana Jacobs, Diana Smart, Jenny Thompson and Dave Thompson.

Congratulations are also due to the on-the-floor staff, led by Martin Willcox, Eric Ramshaw, Laurie Kelso and Sean Mullamphy.

Bridgewise, Victorians met with considerable success. Chronologically:

Womens Butler Pairs Championship:
 Meredith Woods and Margaret Bourke: **1st**

Senior Pairs Championship:
 Jim Branton and Charlie Schwabegger: **1st**
 (That's back-to-back for Jim and Charlie!)

ANC Open Teams Championship:
 Victoria (Robert Fruewirth, Bill Jacobs, Cathy Chua, Simon Hinge, Chris Hughes, Adam Sarten): **2nd**

ANC Senior Teams Championship:
 Victoria (Bob Gallus, David Smith, Grant Kilvington, Charlie Snashall, Victor Muntz, John Stretton, George Gaspar (npc)): **1st**

Well done to all these players, particularly the Seniors team who overcame much adversity to win against tough opponents, and also all our other Victorian state representatives. More next month!