

## Article 27 Competitive Bidding 1

*These articles are based on a series of booklets "Bidding Lessons" by Andrew Robson*

### 1. To Bid or Not ?

More and more auctions in bridge are competitive as partnerships have better understandings of distributional values and compete with fewer points.

Competitive bidding judgement is probably the most important skill that discriminates winning and losing and you will do well when you judge when and how to enter the competitive auction, how to cope with opponent's interventions, whether to bid on, pass or double.

Good examples are given below. What would you bid as South after the following bidding sequence with the hands below ?

Vulnerability: None

S	W	N	E
1♥	1♠	3♥ (1)	3♠
?			

(1) Typically 10-11hcps with 4 hearts or 8+ with 5 hearts and shortage

(a)

♠ Q10  
♥ AJ974  
♦ KJ42  
♣ QJ

(b)

♠ A3  
♥ A9642  
♦ K974  
♣ K8

(a) **Pass.** Honours not worth a lot. Q10 may as well be 32. In fact it is worse in that the opponents are bidding on distribution elsewhere and missing these hcps in their trump suit.

(b) **4♥.** You should have a good chance of making this and you have good defence against 4♠. You have little chance of making 5♥, so you would double 4♠ if opponents bid that. You don't need much from partner to put that contract back

What would you then bid as South with this hand in the same bidding sequence and why would you make that bid?

Vulnerability: None

S	W	N	E
1♥	1♠	3♥ (1)	3♠
?			

c)

♠ 2

♥ AJ1042

♦ KJ742

♣ A7

*This will be answered in the next article in a few days illustrating the other hands in the deal*

## 2. When to overcall or Not?

Andrew strongly advocates the Suit Quality Test (SQOT) as the basic guide as to whether you should overcall opponents opening bid. It is not just points and distribution but also the quality of the suit you wish to bid.

This means that your suit is known to be good and your partner can support easily with support or lead the suit in defence. Equally without much support he doesn't need to worry about competing if you are doubled.

**SQOT** – Add the length of your suit to the number of honours in the suit and that gives an indication of the level that you can overcall e.g. A, K, Q, J and 0 each count 1 point as honours.

♠ A10852    SQOT = 7, You can overcall 1♠

♥ KJ1052    SQOT = 8, You can bid up to 2♥

Bid 1♥ over 1♣ or 1♦ and 2♥ over 1♠

The strength of the suit is more important than your hcps as the objective is to be disruptive, have good suit strength and provide partner with a good lead in defence, Nevertheless you should probably have 9+hcps

## Example

Dealer: South

Vul: Both

		N		
		♠ J103		
		♥ QJ10986		
		♦ 5		
		♣ A72		
W	♠ 74		♠ KQ952	E
	♥ A742		♥ K5	
	♦ A7		♦ 932	
	♣ Q10863		♣ 954	

♠ A86  
♥ 3  
♦ KQJ10864  
♣ KJ  
S

S	W	N	E
1♦	p (1)	1♥	1♠ (2)
3♦	p	3♥	p
3♠ (3)	p	3NT (4)	All Pass

- 1) Not good enough to bid 2♣ (SQOT only 7 in spite of 10hcps)
- 2) Not great but provides partner with a good lead (SQOT = 7)
- 3) Inviting partner to bid 3NT with a ♠ stop. S could "guess" 3NT with his stop but better if he has help in that suit. W
- 4) I have a half-stop. 3NT plays better to this hand since the lead is coming to it. With no stop he would have to bid 4♦, since partner denied ♥ twice

Lead: 5♠

This is now an easy contract from N. as he has 2 spade stops. He lets the S run to his ♠J and plays diamonds immediately and continues till the ♦ are out while holding the ♠A stop, making 10 tricks through 2♠, 6♦ and 2♣ tricks