



Master Solvers Panel



By John Swanson
Lancaster, California

Thanks to panel members: Wafik Abdou, David Berkowitz, Ed Davis, Andrew Gumperz, Roger Lee, Jo Anna Stansby, Jim Tritt, and David Weiss. The problems are taken from the semi-finals of the Reisinger Board-a-Match Team Championship at the recent Nationals. Two of our panelists were in the semis: Berkowitz and Lee. The BBO vugraph results have provided results at up to six tables and Roger contributed his own results for a couple of the problems, so we will know how bids fared at various tables.

Problem 1.

North-South vulnerable B-A-M scoring
You are South holding:

♠K9872 ♥10984 ♦1032 ♣2

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
?			

Berkowitz: Pass. Looking for greener pastures usually just gets the water hotter for me.

J.S.: The bird (2NT) you have in hand compared to a major suit contract waiting in the bush makes it attractive to jump out of the frying pan to look for a pot of gold at the end of the auction.

Abdou: Pass, and pray for a plus or a smaller minus than the other table. Using a 2♥ response to a minor, showing five or

more spades and four or more hearts in a weak hand, would have been my preference to find the best fit, not necessarily the best level. The danger in using Wolff to sign off in spades is pard may have a singleton honor, if playing transfers and bid 3♦ to bring hearts in pard may bid 3NT with two-three in the majors.

J.S.: I suspect that after an initial 2♥ response from partner, showing five-four in the majors, that North would be happy to bid 4♥, at least until he became aware of the pitiful high card strength held by South. Our remaining panel members and all the Reisinger players (for the tables I have results) elected to try for a suit fit after the 2NT rebid, but each player seems to use a slightly different method.

Weiss: 3♦. This is a transfer, showing four hearts. I hope partner will bid three of a major, which I will pass. Either of those will probably win the board. He could foil me by choosing 3NT, in which case I expect to lose the board. In fact, I may have already lost the board by responding 1♣, if partner has long clubs, fewer than four hearts, and short spades. But as North might have almost anything for 1♣, I consider the underweight 1♠ response to be normal. I don't envision 2NT as being a reasonable contract, so passing seems like conceding the board, particularly if my counterparts are playing a forcing club system.

J.S.: I learned this convention ten years ago as "Wolff Transfer," named by Joe Kivel. I wonder if Bobby Wolff knows of it.

Tritt: 3♦. Transfer to hearts, promising

four (or more) hearts. If partner has equal or better spades, partner should decline the transfer and bid 3♠, knowing that I have at least five spades. Thus if partner has three spades with two or three hearts, he can safely bid 3♠. Similarly, if partner is two-two in the majors, partner should bid 3♠, knowing that we have at least as many spades as hearts. Worst case, we could be in a 4-3 heart fit rather than a 5-2 (or even 5-1) spade fit. I cannot transfer to 3♥, then bid 3♠, as that would be forcing.

J.S.: Allowing partner to bid 3♠ on a doubleton seems a doubtful adjunct to the Wolff Transfer.

Lee: 3♦, transfer to hearts (in my preferred style). Partner will bid 3♥ with four or 3♠ with three, both of which I am happy to pass. If partner bids 3NT without either, there is no guarantee that 3NT will be worse than 3♠ in the 5-2 (or, occasionally, 5-1).

J.S.: 3NT is, however, almost certain to be worse than 2NT. I am dubious that it is best to require partner to hold four hearts to accept the transfer. For example, if you had five hearts on this deal rather than four, you wouldn't be able to stop at 3♥.

Stansby: 3♣. This is puppet to 3♦, either to play 3♦ or to follow with three of a major not forcing (here I will rebid 3♥), or 3NT choice of games, or certain slam tries. The rest of the method: 3♦/3♥ = GF transfer to hearts/spades and 3♠ = slam try in opener's minor.

J.S.: That method seems to be a combination of Wolff Signoff & Wolff Transfer.

Gumperz: 3♣, Wolff Signoff. 3♣ normally shows a weak hand with a five-card major (or longer). Opener will bid 3♠ with three-card support and 3♦ otherwise. If partner bids 3♠, we have arrived; if he bids 3♦, I will convert to 3♥ which opener will pass. I am not thrilled by this sequence, which may get us to a 4-3 heart fit (or a 5-2 spade fit if partner has a doubleton in both majors), but I have little alternative. If we have an eight-card major fit we will find it by bidding on.

J.S.: In the original version of Wolff Signoff I don't believe partner was allowed any options over 3♣ rather than 3♦.

Davis: 3♦. I think our chances at a plus score are best if we have a four-four heart fit or a five-three spade fit so I go searching with 3♦. If playing Wolff Signoff, this will get partner to bid 3♥ with four; else he can bid 3♠ with three or bid 3NT with neither. If playing transfers then I should be able to bid 3♦ to show four hearts and partner should bid 3♥ or 4♥ with four else bid 3♠ or 4♠ with three spades or bid 3NT. Using either method, I'll pass whatever partner bids.

J.S.: This use of 3♦ is generally called "checkback" and is incorporated into Wolff Signoff by many partnerships (although I don't believe it was part of the original convention).

Gumperz (continued): The cause of this uncomfortable sequence was that 2NT rebid. 2NT cramped the auction and forced us to risk bidding into a bad contract at a dangerously high level. In my regular partnerships, I now employ transfer responses to 1♣. We would bid the hand: 1♣ - 1♥; 1NT - 2♦; 2♥ - 2♠;

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Monday: Unit 351 Mentor/Novice pairs play free .1:00

Tues.- Sat 0-200 pairs 10:00 & 3:00

Tues. morning 0-20 MP play free 10:00

Tues. - Fri.: **FREE BRIDGE LECTURES** 2:00

Swiss Teams

Tues. - Sat. (single session) **ALL AGES**3:00

Sat. Stratified Swiss 2 sessions10:00 & 3:00

Sunday Swiss Teams

A/X/Y 0-3000/3000-5000/5000+.....10:00 & TBA

Bracketed 0-3000.(no player over 3000 MP..10:00 & TBA

Free lunch during Sunday Swiss Team break

OPEN PAIRS

Mon Charity Pairs **ALL AGES** 1:00 & 7:30 single sessions

Tues.-Sat. (0-1500 / 3000 / +) 10:00 & 3:00 (2 sessions)

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Mon. - Thurs. Yucca 4 session / 4 day KO 7:30

Tues. - Wed. Saguaro 4 session / 2 day KO : 10:00 & 3:00

Wed. - Thurs. Cholla 4 session / 2 day KO : 10:00 & 3:00

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Fri. - Sat. Cacti 4 session / 2 day KO : 10:00 & 3:00

Top Bracket may be Handicapped

FAST PAIRS (ALL AGES)

Tues. - Fri. Single Sessions 7:30

GOLD RUSH PAIRS

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SIDE GAME SERIES

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