

SHBC Teams Championship 2026

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Our annual Teams Championship was held on Saturday 10 October. This year, the turnout was lower than hoped for, but it was nevertheless a very successful day, with lots of interesting deals and an excellent lunch provided by Jo Goodacre.

A couple of the "Useful Bidding Agreements" discussed in a series of presentations earlier this year were relevant to reaching the correct contract on the two deals I've selected for discussion. Firstly, you hold the hand below. As dealer, partner opens 1D. What will you do?

♠ 8
♥ AK7
♦ K987
♣ K8732

Secondly, partner deals and opens 1H, then jumps to 3D over your 1S response. This is your hand:

♠ AJ75
♥ J
♦ 9865
♣ AKT9

What now?

With the first problem hand you might respond 2C, but that hides your diamond fit. Moreover, while you have a hand that is strong enough to force to game, your suits are "empty" and neither 11-trick game is appealing – playing in 3NT might be a much better prospect if partner has a suitable holding in spades.

Finding out about that is not a problem if you have agreed to play inverted minor raises (see [this Lessons page](#)). You can respond 2D promising 4+ support and 10+ hcp, then hope that partner can bid 2S to show a stopper. As you can see from the full deal below, that's exactly what partner will do:

29 N/AII		♠ AKQ ♥ 852 ♦ AJ432 ♣ T5	♠ JT42 ♥ J963 ♦ Q5 ♣ Q94																		
♠ 97653 ♥ QT4 ♦ T6 ♣ AJ6																					
14 7 6 13	♠ 8 ♥ AK7 ♦ K987 ♣ K8732																				
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NT	4	4																			
♠	1	1																			
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As South, you can now happily jump to 3NT. With diamonds 2-2, this proves to be an easy contract, but most of the field did not reach it. Note that if you respond 2C instead, partner has no real choice but to rebid 2D. Do you really want to try a potentially very fragile 5D now? No one did.

On the second hand, after partner's jump rebid you have a good fit in diamonds, with 7 losers including two aces and a king, while partner should be promising 5 or fewer losers. Losing count arithmetic suggests $24 - (7+5) = 12$ tricks possible, so you ought to be looking for a diamond slam. The issue is to check for keycards without going past 5D if partner has just two.

If you have agreed to play "minorwood" (see [this Lessons page](#)) then again that isn't a problem. You ask with 4D, partner replies 4S showing 0 or 3 (obviously 3) and with no keycards missing, you can bid 6D even without asking about the diamond queen.

In fact partner turns out to have $\spadesuit Q$ as well and 13 tricks are makeable via the spade finesse, but you don't want to play in a grand slam on a finesse – reaching 6D is more than good enough.

17 N/-		$\spadesuit$ Q4 $\heartsuit$ AK962 $\diamondsuit$ AKQ4 $\clubsuit$ 87	$\spadesuit$ K98 $\heartsuit$ Q84 $\diamondsuit$ 72 $\clubsuit$ QJ643
$\spadesuit$ T632 $\heartsuit$ T753 $\diamondsuit$ JT3 $\clubsuit$ 52			
18 1 8 13		$\spadesuit$ AJ75 $\heartsuit$ J $\diamondsuit$ 9865 $\clubsuit$ AKT9	

	N	S
NT	6	6
$\spadesuit$	5	5
$\heartsuit$	5	5
$\diamondsuit$	7	7
$\clubsuit$	5	5

Opt res:
NS 7D; 1440

	N	S
NT		
$\spadesuit$		
$\heartsuit$		
$\diamondsuit$		
$\clubsuit$		

These deals illustrate the value of good bidding methods/agreements to get to the best contract. To quote John Montgomery, author of *The Revision Club System*: "You can't win the hand in the play if you have already lost it in the bidding, and you can win a hand in the bidding in such a way that the play becomes trivial."



Some of the bridge columns published on our club website will now appear on the [bridge page](#) of our regional online newspaper, *The Southern Wire*. In addition, *The Southern Wire* will publish columns that will not appear elsewhere.

