

**Answers #2-#3 to Esther "Pop" Quiz #0100:  
"Several Bidding Conundrums and  
A Centennial-Quiz Tribute to Ron Klinger and His  
'Suit Quality Test ('SQT') Score'"**

**Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen<sup>1</sup>**

To return to the "Esther Bridge Lessons," CLICK:

<https://esther-bridge.com/index.html>

To return to the "Esther Bridge 'Pop' Quizzes", CLICK:

<https://esther-bridge.com/quiz.html>

**Ron Klinger** (1941- ) is an Australian contract bridge player who has written more than **70** bridge books including his 1990 book, Guide to Better Card Play, which won the "American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA) Bridge Book of the Year Award." His book, Right Through the Pack Again, won the 2010 "International Bridge Press Association Book of the Year Award." He was Editor of Australian Bridge for 13 years (1972-1985). For many years he has written, and still currently writes, a weekly bridge column for both the Sydney Morning Herald and The Sun-Herald.

Klinger also originated the Ron Klinger "**Suit Quality Test ('SQT') Score**".<sup>2</sup> The "**SQT Score**" is computed by adding together (1) the number of cards held in the Suit and (2) the number of Honors (including the Ten if you hold a higher Honor) held in the Suit. Suit contracts set at a level of "**SQT Score**" - 6 are generally relatively safe.

The "**SQT Score**" recognizes the fact that card counts and distributions are more important than HCPs when setting Suit contracts. This view was popularized by Larry Cohen's 1992 ABTA award-winning book, To Bid or Not to Bid: The LAW of Total Tricks. And Cohen's compatriot Marty Bergen, in Bergen's ABTA 1996 award-

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<sup>1</sup> As noted in an article in the Winter/Spring, 2024 article in The American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA) Journal, [https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/ABTA\\_1\\_24.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/ABTA_1_24.pdf), Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen in fact is a hypothetical, and not a real person! So this article was really, really written by Bruce Thompson.

<sup>2</sup> See Ron Klinger's web posting at:

<https://csbnews.org/en/the-suit-quality-test-by-ron-klinger/>

winning book, Points Schmoints!, also teaches the all-important philosophy underlying the "Law of Total Tricks". The "Law of Total Tricks" says:

**When you are bidding a Suit contract, assuming both you and Partner are bidding rationally, you will *almost always* (about 85% of the time in Esther's estimation) make a Suit contract if your contract is set at, or lower than, the number of Trump cards you hold minus 6!**

In one of her lessons, "(1) Does the 'Law of Total Tricks' ('LOTT') Really Work, and (2) Is the 'LOTT' Magic?", Esther summaries related *empirical bridge research* exploring how well the "Law of Total Tricks" actually functions:

[https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/LOTT\\_bad.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/LOTT_bad.pdf)

**Board #6** Knoxville BBO

499er Game 10/23/24

DLR: **EAST**

VUL: **E/W**

NORTH (7)

**S:** K T 9 7 4 3

**H:** 7 3

**D:** A 3

**C:** T 8 3

SOUTH (3)

**S:** J 8

**H:** A Q T

**D:** T 4

**C:** A J 9 7 5 2

**Bidding**

EAST

1**D**

3**D**

SOUTH

2**C**

PASS

WEST

PASS

PASS

NORTH

2**S**

3**S** ???

1. Are NORTH's bids appropriate? (a) Is NORTH's 1<sup>st</sup> bid of 2**S** appropriate? (b) Is NORTH's 2<sup>nd</sup> bid of 3**S** appropriate?

**Esther says:**

**Answer to Question #1**

- (a) Holding only **7** HCPs and **1** Ace makes a **2S** bid quite aggressive. SOUTH is likely to take the Spade bid as "lead directing", but that would be more appropriate if NORTH instead held the Spade Ace or Spade K,Q. However, the Ron Klinger "**Suit Quality Test ('SQT') Score**" for NORTH's Spades is (1) **2** Honors (including the Spade Ten) plus (2) 6 Spades equals  $2 + 6 = 8$ , which may support a Spade bid up to the  $8 - 6 = 2$  level. The **2S** Overcall also has the beneficial feature that it eats up some of the Opponents' bidding space. And N/S are not Vulnerable, while E/W are Vulnerable.
- (b) This **3S 2<sup>nd</sup>** bid seems improvident given (1) NORTH's holdings and SOUTH's refusal to "support" Spades and (2) the fact that E/W are bidding in a lowly Minor.

**Board #7** Knoxville BBO

499er Game 10/11/24

DLR: **SOUTH**

VUL: **BOTH**

NORTH (**3**)

**S:** J 8 7  
**H:** T 9 6 4 3 2  
**D:** 5 2  
**C:** Q 7

SOUTH (**10**)

**S:** A Q 9 6 3  
**H:** K  
**D:** J 8 3  
**C:** 9 5 4 3

**Bidding**

<i>SOUTH</i>	<i>WEST</i>	<i>NORTH</i>	<i>EAST</i>
PASS	<b>1C</b>	PASS	<b>1H</b>
<b>1S</b>	PASS	PASS	<b>2D</b>
PASS	PASS	<b>2S ???</b>	

- 2. (a) Was SOUTH's initial PASS appropriate? (b) Was SOUTH's **2<sup>nd</sup>** bid of **1S** appropriate?
- 3. Was NORTH's **3<sup>rd</sup>** bid of **2S** in "support" of SOUTH's opening bid of Spades appropriate?

**Esther says:**

**Answer to Question #2**

- (a) SOUTH holds **10** HCPs. SOUTH's Spades have a Ron Klinger "Suit Quality Test ('SQT') Score" of (1) **5** Spade cards plus (2) **2** Honors equals  $5 + 2 = 7$  which will support a bid no higher than the  $7 - 6 = 1$  level. But the **3** HCPs deriving from SOUTH's singleton Heart King has *limited* value except that it may provide a subsequent ruffing opportunity. SOUTH does not meet the requirements of Marty Bergin's "Rule of **20**" for opening because SOUTH holds (1) **10** HCPs plus (2)  $5 + 4 = 9$  cards in his "longest" two Suits =  $10 + 9 = 19 < 20$ . So SOUTH's initial PASS seems appropriate.
- (b) Because SOUTH PASSEd at his first turn within the auction NORTH will have an accurate understanding of what SOUTH holds. And SOUTH's 2<sup>nd</sup> bid of **1S** is deservedly "lead directing."

**Answer to Question #3**

NORTH holds **3** HCPs and **3** Spades including the Spade Jack. This **2S** bid by NORTH at his **3<sup>rd</sup>** turn within the auction seems *improvident* especially since N/S are Vulnerable. Perhaps NORTH was hoping that EAST would return to bidding Hearts notwithstanding the fact that WEST did not "support" EAST's initial **1H** bid.

**Board #5** Knoxville BBO

499er Game 10/23/24

DLR: **NORTH**

VUL: **N/S**

NORTH (15)

**S:** A K Q T

**H:** K J 9 8

**D:** 9 3 2

**C:** Q 9

SOUTH (8)

**S:** J 8 5 3 2

**H:** A Q 5

**D:** J 7 4

**C:** 3 2

**Bidding**

NORTH

**1NT**

???

EAST

PASS

SOUTH

**2H**

WEST

**PASS**

4. After SOUTH's Jacoby transfer NORTH knows that N/S hold at least  $5 + 4 = 9$  Spades including at least **4** of the top 5 Spade Honors. What should NORTH bid in response to SOUTH's Jacoby transfer to Spades: **2S**, **3S**, or **4S**?

To see Esther's **suggested answer**, CLICK:  
[https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0100\\_a3.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0100_a3.pdf)