

Bridge at the Village Lesson Hand—November 26, 2018

Brian Potter, Club Manager and Club Director

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On board sixteen this week East–West have twelve winners in clubs—also, in notrump with West declaring. Consider whether on not East–West *should* have bid this slam. Why so or why not?

Board: 16 Dealer: W Vul: EW	♠K96 ♥5432 ♦KQ107 ♣97	♠A432 ♥K7 ♦J95 ♣K1082	Possible Auction <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♣ (1)</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠ (2)</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2NT (3)</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣ (4)</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♠ (5)</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT (6)</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Lead: ♦K, ♦Q, or ♦7	West	North	East	South	1♣ (1)	Pass	1♠ (2)	Pass	2NT (3)	Pass	3♣ (4)	Pass	3♠ (5)	Pass	3NT (6)	All Pass												
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Bidding Notes—Board 16

- (1) West plans a 2NT rebid that will show 18 or 19 HCP in a balanced hand.
- (2) In some partnerships, East’s initial response might be 1NT. The shown 1♠ response will dominate all other choices combined.
- (3) West keeps the original plan showing a balanced hand with 18 or 19 HCP and—after East’s 1♠ response—usually *fewer than four spades*.
- (4) Checkback Stayman—East adds 18 + 11 = 29 HCP, almost enough for slam, and decides to gently check out prospects for 6♣. The 3♣ rebid asks West to show (1) three-card spade support with a 3♠ rebid, (2) four heart cards with a 3♥ rebid, or (3) neither with a 3♦ rebid. East hopes for the 3♦ response which will mean that West holds four or five clubs *and a ruffing value in spades*.
- (5) West shows the three-card support for East’s spades as requested.
- (6) Disappointed in the prospects for 6♣, East subsides into 3NT.

Opening Lead Notes—Board 16

- » A top honor lead against notrump bidding (especially, powerful notrump bidding) should normally be from a suit headed by three touching top cards. This hand shows some of the reasons for that recommendation.
- » Finding South with some help in diamonds is really North’s only hope.
- » As the cards lie, a heart lead which gives nothing away turns out best for the defense. How could North know?

Play Notes—Board 16

- » Looking only at their own cards, East–West would expect lose (on a bad day) as much as a spade, possibly a heart, a diamond or two, and perhaps a club.
- » Usually, three notrump should make, often with an overtrick or two.

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- » Today, everything works. There are two spade winners with no spade loser; four heart winners, with no loser, and four clubs with no loser. On a diamond lead, there will be two diamond winners and one diamond loser.
- » Normal declarer play after a normal diamond lead yields three overtricks in 3NT.

Thoughts on Board 16

- » Do you see how West wins two diamond tricks when North's opening lead is a diamond?
First, apply the rule of eleven when North leads the $\spadesuit 7$. How many diamonds bigger than the seven does South hold?
Second, If North leads one of the top diamond honors (promising the other), how can West be certain of two diamond winners?
Third, how should West play the diamonds if North leads the $\spadesuit 10$? How many diamonds will West win, then?
- » Now, do you see why most books about opening leads suggest holding three touching to cards to lead the top card of a suit (or one of its equals) against notump? How might this recommendation change if your partner has bid a suit where you hold two touching high cards?
- » What do you think about East–West stopping in game on this hand? How high should they have bid? What slam try bid(s) could East have made in place of the 3NT rebid? Discuss the possibilities with your partner. Consider their virtues and flaws. How should your partnership explore slam opportunities with similar holdings?
- » 3NT in West making six should be a near average result. Sometimes, East might declare and come up a trick short. Rarely, some pair will bid and make one of the slams. A few East–West pairs will leave a trick or two on the table surrendering a very good North–South result.