

Bridge at the Village Lesson Hand—December 3, 2018

Brian Potter, Club Manager and Club Director

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This week—on board twelve—North–South have slam in hearts, spades, or (i)notrump(!). The notrump slam, dependent upon a singleton ♣A opposite an entryless West hand, is unbiddable. Yet, bidding 6♥ or 6♠ should be possible.

Board: 12 Dealer: W Vul.: NS ♠64 ♥5 ♦5 ♣QJT976543	♠J9 ♥QT873 ♦QT93 ♣82 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;"> N W E S </div> ♠AKQT5 ♥AKJ4 ♦AJ6 ♣K	♠8732 ♥962 ♦K8742 ♣A	<div style="text-align: center;">Possible Auction</div> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♣ (1)</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♣ (2)</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6♣ (3)</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♥ (4)</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">Lead: ♣A</p>	West	North	East	South	4♣ (1)	Pass	5♣ (2)	Pass	6♣ (3)	Pass	6♥ (4)	All Pass
West	North	East	South												
4♣ (1)	Pass	5♣ (2)	Pass												
6♣ (3)	Pass	6♥ (4)	All Pass												

N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ N 6 6 6 5 S 6 6 6 5 E 3 W 3	5 3 HCP 7 25
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Bidding Notes—Board 12

- (1) With favorable vulnerability and—other than the two-loser, nine-card club suit—a worthless hand, West’s only question in first seat is whether to preempt 4♣ or 5♣. Our West chooses the traditional preempt able to win enough tricks in hand so that the opponents cannot score better than their game by doubling and defeating the opening bid. Some West players will begin with a five level opening preempt.
- (2) With a sure trick in the ♣A and possible useful diamond values, East extends West’s preempt. An unlikely successful contract will now earn a game bonus. Life for North–South has just become even more difficult.
- (3) South knows that there is only one fast loser, the ♣A. Most pairs would play a double here as either either penalty or optional. 5NT will mean either “two places to play, probably diamonds and a major” or “pick a slam” for most pairs. South has no interest in defense. Since there is no good way to stop at the five level, South commits to slam with 6♣. In partnerships where 5NT means “pick a slam,” 6♣ means “pick a slam but focus your attention on major suits.”
- (4) Pleased to hold a five-card major suit with two honors, North picks a slam.

Opening Lead Notes—Board 12

- » East’s opening lead choice is obvious. With a pointed suit void and a trump, West will signal suit preference (a high club for a spade or a low club for a diamond) at trick one. If the ♣A holds and West has the void with a trump, the slam will go down.

Play Notes—Board 12

- » As soon as North gets in, there are five spades, five hearts, three diamonds, and a diamond ruff for fourteen top tricks. East did well to cash the ♣A at trick one.

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Thoughts on Board 12

- » OK, Our North–South partnership did a great job bidding to their cold heart slam over the adverse preemption. What about East–West? They defended well and went –1430. Could they have done better?
- » How will East–West do in 7♣†? With the ♣K stiff, they win nine clubs and lose the rest to go down four doubled for –800. Even with the ♣K offside and guarded, down five doubled is only –1100, better than the –1430 for 6♥ bid and made by the opponents.

With rubber bridge scoring, you'd go quietly rather than "saving 330 points" with the "good sacrifice." Your opponents would still be vulnerable against non and still be favorites to win the rubber. A sacrifice would just give them 1100 points to go with their next game and any other winnings along the way.

Duplicate scoring is entirely different! There is *no next hand* and *no rubber to win*. You should think about the hand as though it were the *last hand of an incomplete rubber*. Now, when North–South bid their slam, East–West must think long and hard about the choice between a sacrifice and an attempt to defeat the adverse slam.

- » If West holds a void and a trump for ruffing, a *Lightner double* by West (of South's 6♣ cue bid) will alert East to search for the killing lead rather than passively leading a small club.
- » Absent a *Lightner double*, East should seriously consider the save in 7♣.