

Bridge at the Village Lesson Hand—June 25, 2018

Brian Potter, Club Manager and Club Director

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On this week's lesson deal—board twelve—indicates that North–South can make a slam on 27 HCP—if South declares in diamonds. If North declares in a red suit, the defense may start with a spade ruff, club ace, and an attempted club ruff—not good for fulfilled slam aspirations. Bidding the makable 6♦ contract may be harder than playing it.

Board: 17
Dealer: N
Vul: None

♠1087
♥KQ7
♦AQ962
♣84

	N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	3	3	4	4	1
S	3	3	3	4	1
E					
W					

♠KQ63
♥A6543
♦1074
♣A

	N		E
W			
		S	

♠A4
♥J102
♦KJ853
♣K105

♠J952
♥98
♦
♣QJ97632

13
11 HCP 4
12

Possible Auction

	West	North	East	South
		1♥ ⁽¹⁾	3♣ ⁽²⁾	3NT ⁽³⁾
	All Pass			
	Lead: ♣8			

Bidding Notes—Board 17

(1) Partnerships who do not play *Flannery*, normally open 1♥ with this hand. After the 1♥ opening, North avoids a *reverse rebid* (showing more than fifteen points) by not bidding spades. Should South bid spades naturally, North (with sound values, the stiff ♣A, and good honors) happily raises spades. *Flannery* players will open 2♦ conventionally showing *exactly five* hearts with *exactly four* spades. Often, responder can place the contract directly over the 2♦ opening. Otherwise, responder may use conventional responses to determine opener's minor suit distribution (4–0, 3–1, or 2–2). When the minor suit shape may be critical for bidding game or slam, these sequences can lead to a smooth auction on hands that might otherwise present bidding challenges.

Choosing between *Flannery* and a *weak 2♦ opening* is nearly a coin toss. A *weak 2♦ opening* will be less frequent than *Flannery* (plus for *Flannery*). On the plus side for a weak 2♦ treatment: (1) *Flannery* increases memory burden, (2) on many *Flannery* hands (for starters, most hands without a major suit fit), the convention offers little or no improvement over natural methods, and (3) when responder holds a strong hand, *Flannery* may have a self-preemption effect. Those who do not care for *Flannery* see it as a solution for a problem that does not exist. Those who play *Flannery* love it.

- (2) With perfect defense (winning three spades, a spade ruff, one heart, and two clubs), North–South score +500 defending 3♣ doubled. As a practical matter, a nonvulnerable game will usually score better than the likely defense at the table. Catching East in this unsound preempt will be exceptional good fortune.
- (3) With a good club stopper, heart fillers, all suits stopped, and a likely trick source in diamonds, South bids to a likely good contract.

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Opening Lead Notes—Board 17

- » With a doubleton in the suit where partner preempted, leading partner's suit against 3NT must be a good idea. Continue the suit upon regaining the lead. At worst, leading partner's suit should provide a safe exit. If partner has a side entry, 3NT may have poor prospects.

Play Notes—Board 17

- » On most reasonable lines of play, South should collect three spades, three hearts, no less than one diamond, and two clubs.
- » Some lines may catch West in an end play that will force the defense to yield more than one diamond trick.

Thoughts on Board 17

- » This is an example hand where *Flannery* may backfire. After the 2♦ opening, East will probably not preempt in clubs and South may “wrong side” the heart contract by bidding 4♥ rather than 3NT. With South declaring 4♥, the defenders may begin with the ♦A and a diamond ruff followed a couple of trump winners to defeat the heart game. The more likely club lead may give South a chance to make 4♥.