

Bridge at the Village Lesson Hand—July 30, 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: 4
Dealer: W
Vul: All

♠108
♥109873
♦532
♣QJ8

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N	6	7	5	6	4
S	6	7	5	6	4
E					
W					

♠QJ
♥AJ54
♦K986
♣A53

N		E
W		S

♠AK432
♥Q2
♦AQ10
♣K62

♠9765
♥K6
♦J74
♣10974

	15	
3	HCP	4
	18	

Possible Auction

	West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠ ⁽¹⁾
	Pass	1NT ⁽²⁾	Pass	2♣ ⁽³⁾
	Pass	2♥ ⁽⁴⁾	Pass	4NT ⁽⁵⁾
	Pass	6NT ⁽⁶⁾	All Pass	

Lead: ♣10, ♣9, or ♣7

Bidding Notes—Board 12

- (1) With its excellent honor structure, this 18 HCP hand has sufficient strength for a strong jump shift. Yet, it is potentially playable in notrump, spades, diamonds, and clubs. That leaves South too uncertain about denomination for the strong jump shift. Hence, the quiet 1♠ response with stronger, forcing bidding to follow, later.
- (2) With the ♠QJ unguarded, North chooses to count them less than 3 HCP for both the opening bid and the 1NT rebid. Thus, North has slightly undervalued the opening hand at 12–14 HCP and balanced rather than opening 1NT to show a balanced 15–17 HCP.
- (3) Checkback Stayman—South has asked North to rebid 2♠ with three-card spade support or with a doubleton spade to rebid 2♥ with four hearts. Otherwise, North should rebid 2♦.
- (4) North denies a third spade and shows a four-card heart suit. Now, South expects North to have =2=4=4=3 distribution. In the South hand all the honors are working hard. The four aces and kings offer distributed controls with power in spades. Both red queens are working hard as fillers in suits where North probably holds four-card length and some high cards. The ♦10 may also have some potential as a useful plus value.
- (5) South invites North to rebid 6NT with a maximum 12–14 HCP hand or pass with a minimum. Technically, South should hold 19 HCP for this bid. The fifth spade and the excellent honor structure justify the overbid (and the corresponding slight risk that the defenders will hold either ♥A ♣A or ♥AK to beat the slam off the top).

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- (6) North demoted the ♠QJ to somewhere around 0–2 HCP for the 1NT rebid. After South has bid spades *and* hinted at a possible fifth spade with *Checkback Stayman*, the excellent honor structure more than justifies promoting the North hand to 15–16 HCP feels right. Now, North holds a super maximum for accepting the invitation to 6NT.

Opening Lead Notes—Board 12

- » Both North's red suit bidding and East's red suit holdings suggest a black suit lead. From the East seat, there is not much to choose between clubs and spades, but South's bidding hints that North–South probably hold a 5–2 or 6–2 spade fit. Thus, leading a club is probably East's best shot.
- » Some might choose the fourth best ♣4, but West might expect an honor higher than the ♣10. Leading any club except the ♣4 probably gets the defense off to a better start. Choose the club that best matches your partnership opening lead agreements.

Play Notes—Board 12

- » As the cards lie, North has twelve top tricks at notrump: five spades, one heart, four diamonds, and two clubs. There is no possible defense.

Thoughts on Board 12

- » Oddly, 7♠ played in the 5–2 fit is also, as the cards lie, bullet proof. South wins the opening lead, pulls trumps in four rounds, cashes four diamonds, discards a heart from the South hand on the fourth diamond, cashes the ♥A, ruffs a heart (dropping East's ♥K), enters dummy with a top club, and cashes the ♥J for the thirteenth trick.
- » “Stretching,” as South did with the slam invitational 4NT bid, can pay off in mysterious ways. Partner can (as in this case) show up with unanticipated extra values. An opponent may be end played on the opening lead. A defender may win an early trick (e. g., the first trick) and rectify the count for a *squeeze*. An opponent may simply blunder.