

Bridge at the Village Lesson Hand—August 6, 2018

Brian Potter, Club Manager and Club Director

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On the very first board, East–West have grand slam, according to the double dummy analysis. The play is somewhat easier in clubs than in notrump. Most partnerships with a point counting emphasis will probably stop in 6NT or 6♣.

Board: 1 Dealer: N Vul: None	♠J9843 ♥102 ♦105 ♣10654 ♠106 ♥K98 ♦A4 ♣AKQJ82 ♠AQ5 ♥AQ43 ♦KJ97 ♣97 ♠K72 ♥J765 ♦Q8632 ♣3	West 3♣ (2) 4♦ (4) 5♦ (6) 6NT (8)	Possible Auction North Pass Pass Pass Pass	East 1NT (1) 3♥ (3) 4NT (5) 5NT (7) 6? (9)	South Pass Pass Pass All Pass
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N ♠♥♦♣ S E 7 3 6 5 7 W 7 3 5 4 7	N W E S	1 17 HCP 16 6	Lead: ♣3	
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Bidding Notes—Board 12

- (1) 15–17 HCP and balanced.
- (2) Natural game force and slam invitation with a powerful six-card or longer club suit. This partnership uses 4-suit transfers, too. By bidding 3♣, West lets the partnership place the declaration in either hand. East will play notrump contracts, and West will play club contracts.
- (3) Natural suit, control, or stopper for 3NT. East has skipped diamonds to show the superior heart control.
- (4) Kickback—key card asking convention. This partnership uses *1430* responses.
- (5) Two key cards (♠A and ♥A without the ♣Q—trump queen).
- (6) More Kickback, promising all five key cards {♠A, ♥A, ♦A, ♣AK} and asking what king(s) opener holds.
- (7) East has the ♦K.
- (8) West believes that 6NT is high enough, but—with the “right hand”—opener may bid 7♣ or 7NT.
- (9) How much do you love the ♣97? . . . the major suit queens? . . . the ♦J? What do you do? . . . pass? . . . bid 7♣? . . . bid 7NT?

Opening Lead Notes—Board 12

- » Either pointed suit lead hands declarer the thirteenth trick. Either a spade or a diamond lead runs a “free finesse,” making a winner of either the ♠Q or the ♦J.
- » Leading the ♥5 (fourth best) is no better. North must, to avoid surrendering the thirteenth trick at trick one, cover a spot from the table with the ♥10. That will telegraph the ♥J765 in South and the ♥102 in North. East can read the heart suit and take the marked heart finesse for South’s jack.

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- » A deceptive lead of the ♥6 or ♥7 might work by helping declarer misplace the ♥J10x(x) with North.
- » The only lead which cannot immediately surrender the thirteenth trick is the ♣3. After the club lead, East can take one spade, three hearts, two diamonds and six clubs off the top. If South discards properly, the reward will normally be the thirteenth trick.

Play Notes—Board 12

- » There is no play for 7NT that one might reasonably find at the table, but East has a double dummy play. Leading the ♦J on the first round of diamonds to smother North's ♦10 while finessing South's ♦Q will force a third diamond trick with either the ♦J or the ♦9.
- » At clubs, West can pull three more rounds of trumps after a club lead and cash three top hearts. That should reduce South to “♠Kx ♥J ♦Qxx ♣—” with the singleton ♥J known. North will have followed to all four rounds of trumps and discarded a spade on the third heart. Now, to build a thirteenth trick West might finesse North for either the ♠K or the ♦Q. If either of those plays lose, South will cash the ♥J to defeat the contract. Now, West might try the double dummy play mentioned above. Since North has no heart to lead, twelve tricks remain secure. There is another play. West can cash the ♦AK and ruff a small diamond. If South has not bared the ♠K to keep four diamonds, the ♦Q will come down (along with North's ♦10), and West will have thirteen winners.
- » At notrump, East can also run four clubs and three hearts to reach the position where leading the ♦J on the first round of diamonds is a safe play for a thirteenth trick without putting a 6NT contract in jeopardy.

Thoughts on Board 12

- » South's opening lead choice is probably the most challenging aspect of this hand. Against notrump played in East, finding the ♣3 will not be easy. Many South players will make a different lead and East will often romp home with all the tricks.
- » Against a club contract by West, North has an easier lead problem. Any spade or any club will get the defense off to a good start. Either diamond gives away all the tricks, and either heart will probably help declarer pick up South's ♥J. Since a spade lead is a natural attacking lead, North will rarely go wrong with the opening lead choice. After that, it is merely a matter of retaining the ♠Jxx to prevent declarer from using the ♠10 as a squeeze menace against South's ♠K.