

# Bridge at the Village Lesson Hand—September 3, 2018

Brian Potter, Club Manager and Club Director

1/2

On Board 6, North–South have sixteen fast tricks in notrump or either minor. Board 14 is more interesting to bid.

Board: 14

Dealer: E

Vul: None

♠842  
♥QJ6  
♦Q8742  
♣Q8

	N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	6	6	3	3	6
S	6	6	3	3	6
E					
W					

♠Q7  
♥K972  
♦AK5  
♣AKJ2

	N		E
W			
	S		

♠KJ1053  
♥A  
♦J63  
♣9543

♠A96  
♥108543  
♦109  
♣1076

20  
7 HCP 4  
9

## Possible Auction

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

Lead: ♦4 or ♥Q

### Bidding Notes—Board 14

- (1) North *could* (by counting the ♠Q at full value) call this hand a balanced 20 HCP and open 2NT. Today's North is (perhaps, sensibly) too conservative for that approach and opens 1♣ with a plan to rebid 2NT showing a balanced hand with 18–19 HCP.
- (2) Now, North regrets the conservative opening. The ♠Q7 probably pull their full weight. Now, North needs forcing bids while searching for strain and level. 2♥ is a *reverse* that promises more than 15 points and forces a rebid out of South.
- (3) South shows a club fit without promising more than 6–8 support points.
- (4) *Fourth suit forcing to game* asking South to further describe the responding hand. North is willing to probe for slam in notrump or either black suit if South can show useful values (e. g., a source of tricks and 2 keycards or 3 keycards).
- (5) Could the 3NT bid mean that spades are a trick source? Has South simply bid the game with the smallest commitment? Might 4♥, 4♠, or 5♣ be a superior contract? Is there slam potential from the known 26–31 HCP?
- (6) Usually, three passes will end the auction here. An inspired, aggressive, or crazy North player might imagine eight or nine black winners with three or four red controls and probe past 3NT towards slam. Today, there is a reward for such action. On a bad day, The defense wins the ♠A, a diamond, and two clubs.

### Opening Lead Notes—Board 14

- » The auction has suggested that diamonds may be a weakness. Looking at five diamonds to an honor, West will probably pick the fourth best diamond for an opening lead.
- » A small heart to South's stiff ace aims toward establishing a heart trick for the defense, but a top heart (unblocking for East) is even better—all to no avail. South will have the spades established before East–West can build a second trick.

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2/2

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Play Notes—Board 14

- » South counts three or four spade winners, the ♠A as a loser, two heart winners, two diamond winners and a diamond loser, and two club winners with up to two club losers. Clubs offer some chances for four winners and no loser—three winners and one loser being most likely. Two or three (if spades break 4–2 or 3–3) pointed suit losers might go away on long spades. Thus, even when everything goes wrong, South expects to win three spades, two hearts, two diamonds, and two clubs for nine tricks. Playing in 3NT, South will focus some energy on building overtricks.
- » Since South must lose the lead once (to the ♠A) to establish spades, establishing them should begin while holding red suit stoppers. Thus, South wins the opening lead, cashes the ♣A (preparing for a club finesse after running clubs), and leads the ♠Q. A heart opening lead will let East–West clear hearts when they win the ♠A. In compensation, the ♣Q and then the ♣10 drop so that each black suit yields four tricks and clubs provide an entry to the established spades. Declarers who play all out (not holding up in hearts) will win eight black suit tricks and four red suit tops for twelve tricks total.

Thoughts on Board 14

- » This hand is a case where the double dummy analysis calls for a line of play that is unlikely at the table. Even though winning twelve tricks is possible, very few pairs will bid a slam.
- » Most pairs will probably end in 3NT after North opens 2NT or on an auction similar to the one above.
- » When North declares, the more difficult heart lead is more likely. North can safely play all out because either hearts block or West unblocks and North's ♥9 becomes a fourth round stopper.