

Bridge at the Village Lesson Hand—September 10, 2018

Brian Potter, Club Manager and Club Director

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On this week's lesson deal—board sixteen—the intense competitiveness of modern bidding. Forty years ago, after West opened 1NT, North would probably pass (but might have overcalled 2♦). In both cases, East would usually sign-off in spades. Then, East would probably play the spade partial.

Board: 16

Dealer: W

Vul: EW

♠AQ72
♥AK76
♦862
♣A5

N	♠	♥	♦	♣
S				
E	1	4		
W	1	4		

♠J
♥QJ
♦KQ9754
♣Q432

N	E
W	S

♠K10543
♥54
♦J10
♣J986

♠986
♥109832
♦A3
♣K107

11	5
7	7

Possible Auction

West	North	East	South
1NT (1)	‡ (2)	2♥ (3)	‡ (4)
2♠ (5)	3♦ (6)	Pass	4♦ (7)
;? (8)	...		

Lead: by North against ♠s—♦K or ♥Q
by East against ♦s—♣6

Bidding Notes—Board 16

- (1) 15–17 HCP balanced hand (4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, or 5-3-3-2) with a five-card major suit possible.
- (2) DONT: One-suited hand willing to play at the two-level or higher against a 1NT opener.
- (3) Jacoby Transfer to spades promising five or more spades.
- (4) Good hand in context, especially if partner's suit is hearts. South has stretched to double the transfer bid. The usual treatment shows a good heart suit and asks partner to lead hearts. With merely ♥109832, requesting a heart lead suggesting a heart contract is not a good idea, unless North has good hearts.
- (5) Bidding spades as responder requested. Some partnerships use special methods in this sequence to show heart length and strength or extra spade length.
- (6) North shows a good hand with good diamonds.
- (7) South figures that the trump bulled covers a loser. If North is worth 3♦, then the partnership must be worth 4♦.
- (8) The quandary West faces is one of the reasons some partners use the special rebids as mentioned in note (5). If West had been able to show four (or five) spade cards with either maximum count or a club doubleton, East may have had something to say over 3♦. As matters stand, West must choose among four big positions: (a) Pass—selling out to 4♦, likely with the balance of power, (b) Double—without trump control but with enough aces and kings for a one trick set, (c) 4♠ with a known nine-card or longer trump fit—possibly without the controls and other high cards to win ten tricks, or (d) 4♥ as a choice of major suit games—riskier than 4♠ because it may confuse partner and there is no certainty of ten tricks playing in either major suit.

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If West bids over 4♦, North and South will both face a tough “bid, defend, or double” decision. This time, –300 in 5♦† is better than –620 in 4♠ bid and made. Some of the clever tricks mentioned in note (5) may help East–West. The pair sitting north–south has less help from the bidding theorists. *The Law of Total Tricks* is probably their best guide.

Opening Lead Notes—Board 16

- » North will probably lead a top diamond.
- » Against a diamond contract, East has a tougher lead problem. The auction argues against leading a red suit, and leading away from the broken spades feels wrong. That leaves a club lead. From ♣J986 with the suit unbid, most players will lead the ♣6.

Play Notes—Board 16

- » East–West should lose two diamonds and a club in a spade contract—making four spades.
- » Playing diamonds, North–South should lose one spade, two hearts and a club to make three diamonds.

Thoughts on Board 16

- » Note (5) mentioned clever bidding devices partners employing *Jacoby Transfers* might use. A quick survey of some devices follows:
 - If a defender doubles the transfer bid, redouble to show length and strength in the suit of the transfer bid. This is a suggestion to play the redoubled contract for game and redoubled overtricks.
 - If a defender doubles the transfer bid, pass to show less than three cards in the transfer target suit. Accepting the transfer promises three or more cards.
 - Super Accepts: Bids above a simple bid in the transfer target suit up to a single jump in the transfer target suit show four (or five) trumps and some hand feature (e. g., a side suit doubleton, maximal high card strength, or a powerful side suit fragment {something like AKx, AQx, or KQx in a side suit}).
- » Competing against adverse 1NT opening bids is a good idea when your partnership has a safe mechanism for doing so. 1NT is difficult to defend. The opening lead will often give declarer the fulfilling trick. Further, most partnerships have a sophisticated bidding technology arsenal available after a 1NT opening. A little competitive bidding can sabotage parts of that arsenal and force the opening side into less familiar or less capable methods.
- » The *DONT* convention offers the safest and most frequently usable entry into the auction after an adverse 1NT opening bid.