

Bridge at the Village Lesson Hand—October 8, 2018

Brian Potter, Club Manager and Club Director

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On this week's lesson deal—board seventeen—South holds a very powerful hand, if North has fitting cards or ten-plus high card points for a notrump slam. This is a difficult hand to bid. It is a minimum for a strong, forcing, artificial 2♣ opening. With a hand suitable for play in notrump or every suit except hearts, that self-preempting opening loses some appeal. Some might open 2NT, but that seems misguided with a heart singleton and such good spades.

Board: 17 Dealer: N Vul: None	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> ♠4 ♥764 ♦KJ10872 ♣J96 </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> ♠9765 ♥KQ3 ♦Q4 ♣A732 </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"> <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td></tr> </table> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> ♠AKQ3 ♥A ♦A653 ♣KQ85 </td> </tr> </table>	♠4 ♥764 ♦KJ10872 ♣J96	♠9765 ♥KQ3 ♦Q4 ♣A732	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td></tr> </table>	N		E	W				S		♠AKQ3 ♥A ♦A653 ♣KQ85	<h3 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Possible Auction</h3> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;">West</th> <th style="width: 20%;">North</th> <th style="width: 20%;">East</th> <th style="width: 20%;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♦ (1)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦ (2)</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥ (3)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠ (4)</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♣ (5)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♦ (6)</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">Lead: ♥J, ♥8, or ♣10</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	Pass	1♦ (1)	Pass	3♦ (2)	Pass	4♥ (3)	Pass	4♠ (4)	Pass	5♣ (5)	Pass	6♦ (6)	All Pass	
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Bidding Notes—Board 12

- (1) With six to nine certain to likely winners, South takes the low road with 1♦ and hopes that *someone* will keep the auction alive.
- (2) Partner meets South's hopes with an *inverted minor suit raise*. With awareness that North has long diamonds in a weak hand, South focuses on the 5♦ and 6♦ contracts as likely resting places.
- (3) *Key Card Kickback* with diamonds as trumps—the key cards are ♠A, ♥A, ♦AK, and ♣A. If North has none of them, South will sign-off in 5♦. If North has one, South will ask about the trump queen (♦Q) and bid 6♦ if North has the queen. In the (*very*) unlikely case that North has the ♦K and the ♣A, South will bid 6♦ when North denies the ♦Q and 7♦ when North shows the ♦Q.
- (4) One (or four) key cards: North has either the ♦K or the ♣A but not both.
- (5) The cheapest non-trump suit bid asks for the trump queen. Without the ♦Q North should bid 5♦. Any other bid shows the trump queen and commits the partnership to a slam.
- (6) North believes that South must have four or more diamonds and an amazing hand. The sixth diamond makes it likely that the ♦Q will drop with a 2–1 split of the adverse diamonds.

Opening Lead Notes—Board 12

- » With good spades, East might have doubled 4♠ to request a spade lead. If East has a trump winner, leading the singleton ♦9 might eliminate that defensive winner. That leaves a rounded suit. With such heart length and so few top honors, heart prospects look dim, but so does a lead from ♣10x. It's a coin toss.

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Play Notes—Board 12

- » South wins the first (or second) trick, pulls trumps, knocks out the ♣A unless the defense won the first trick, and claims 3 spades, 1 heart, 6 diamonds, and 2 clubs.

Thoughts on Board 12

- » This is a difficult slam to bid. South players who open 2NT will probably end in 3NT making one overtrick on a heart lead. If South opens 2♣ strong and artificial the likely auction will probably (East–West passing throughout) begin:

2♣–2♦; 2♠–3♣; 3♦–4♦; . . .

South's 2♠ probably over promises a five-card suit. Considering the likely misfit North probably continues with a double negative 3♣. With North's 4♦ rebid the partnership finally has the strain settled, but bidding past 5♦ may snatch defeat from a possible average score in 5♦.

- » Even if North–South begin (East–West passing), “1♦–2♦; 3♠–3NT; . . .”, the nearly certain 3NT negative response to South's strong jump-shift probably stops the auction in game. South needs awareness of the big diamond fit to consider a slam.
- » The *inverted minors* treatment simplifies South's slam investigation on this board. Unfortunately, this treatment (designed to mesh with a weak notrump opening bid) combined with the popular strong notrump risks landing at the three-level in a 5–3 minor suit fit with less than 20 HCP. Quite a few pairs accept this risk and use the *inverted minors* treatment with a strong notrump opening.