

Bridge at the Village Lesson Hand—December 10, 2018

Brian Potter, Club Manager and Club Director

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On this week's lesson deal—board fifteen—North–South have a red suit slam on West's power and 5=5=3=0 shape. North also has an awesome hand loaded with black suit winners.

Board: 15	♠KQJ5	Possible Auction												
Dealer: S	♥T	West	North	East	South									
Vul.: NS	♦J				Pass									
♠A8642	♣AKQ985	1♥ (1)	5♣ (2)	Pass (3)	Pass									
♥AKJ62	♥Q943	† (4)	Pass	5♦ (5)	Pass									
♦AK9	♦T87542	6♥ (6)	All Pass											
♣	♣J													
	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;"></td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N			W	E			S					
N														
W	E													
	S													
	♠73													
	♥875	16			Lead: ♠K or ♠Q									
	♦Q63	19	HCP	3										
	♣T7643	2												

Bidding Notes—Board 12

- (1) With a 2½ to 4 loser hand, West has the strength for a 2♣ opening. Since the hand is playable at the game to slam level in three different suits, West avoids self-preemption by opening 1♥.
- (2) After South's first seat pass, many North players might preempt with 3♣ or 4♣. Our North can count nine or ten winners (on a bad day losing two red aces, the spade ace and a long spade). Making slam (or even game) will require help from partner who has already passed. North correctly chooses between, 2♣ (a good opening hand with a six-card {or longer} club suit) and a 5♣ preempt where North counts the three spade honors as long clubs after the real trumps are in.
- (3) East feels a temptation to bid 5♥ but resists. Understanding East's temptation is easy. Some East players will yield to temptation. They score the game, but they may miss the slam. Good West players will strain to avoid burying East for competing on slim values and pass the 5♥ overcall.
- (4) West shows a hand with extra values and asks East to choose between defending 5♣† and playing game (or slam)..
- (5) East can see West's defensive heart winner(s) evaporating under club ruffs. 5♥ would be the weaker way to pull the double (discouraging slam). 5♦ shows West "where East lives," suggests an alternate denomination, and encourages a red suit contract.
- (6) West realizes that East must have diamond values and heart support. Expecting both red queens and a little help in spades, West goes for the gusto.

Opening Lead Notes—Board 12

- » North has essentially two opening lead choices: A top club striving to avoid surrendering an overtrick or a top spade to drive out the ♠A and try for one winner in each black suit.

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- » As the cards lie, neither lead really works. All the defense can ever get is one spade no matter what North leads.

Play Notes—Board 12

- » West wins the opening lead in the closed hand, pulls one trump with the ♥A, and cashes one top diamond. At trick four the table overtakes the ♥J with the ♥Q and leads a small to the ♦9 (finessing for South's expected ♦Q). After the ♦Q drops, West has a high trump (the ♠H9) remaining on the table to pull the last trump *and* provide an entry to the three long diamonds—parking three spade losers on the diamonds. Now West can surrender a spade and claim the remaining tricks with trumps.

Thoughts on Board 12

- » North's 5♣ preempt was a *great* bid. 2♣ was certainly reasonable, and either 3♣ or 4♣ would have been a “normal” preemptive overcall. North realized that, between the club length and the black suit power, that East—West must have a red suit game or slam. Immediate preemption must be right for North—South. At unfavorable vulnerability with nine or ten winners in hand, the correct preemption level must be the eleven or twelve trick level. Preempting to 5♣ allowed for the remote possibility that North would play the preempt (probably doubled), make the contract and score the game even if the defender let North play undoubled.
- » East—West also did well to brush North's preempt aside and declare the hand. +480 for 5♥ making six is a healthy improvement over +100 for 5♣† down one. Bidding the slam was icing on the cake.
- » Note that 7♣† and down three (for –800) is, at matchpoint scoring, a good save against 6♥ making (for –980 to North—South). The risk of losing two spades and two red aces (down four for –1100) is high enough so that few pairs will sacrifice in 7♣ against 6♥.