

Bridge at the Village Lesson Hand—February 4, 2019

Brian Potter, Club Manager and Club Director

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This week's lesson deal—board seven—is both a difficult bidding challenge and a complex play problem for both declarer and the defenders.

Board: 7 Dealer: S Vul.: All ♠Q64 ♥ ♦AQT5 ♣AT9652	♠AJ9853 ♥Q9854 ♦3 ♣7 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;"> N W E S </div> ♠72 ♥K7632 ♦72 ♣KJ83	<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> Possible Auction </div> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♣ (1)</td> <td>2♣ (2)</td> <td>2♦ (3)</td> <td>4♥ (4)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5♦ (5)</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3? (6)</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Lead: ♠7 or ♥3	West	North	East	South				Pass	1♣ (1)	2♣ (2)	2♦ (3)	4♥ (4)	5♦ (5)	Pass	3? (6)																	
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Bidding Notes—Board 12

- (1) West has misgivings about the rebid. The hand is too weak for a reverse into diamonds, and the club suit is barely rebiddable.
- (2) North, holding excellent distribution, interrupts with a *Michaels Cue Bid*.
- (3) East shows strength with diamonds, but not strength as great as the holding.
- (4) With a ten-card heart fit, South barrages to the highest sensible contract. Down 500 will be good against an adverse vulnerable game or excellent against an East–West slam. With an improbable good hand, North may bid on.
- (5) West shows strong support without a spade control. Perhaps, East can choose between game and slam.
- (6) What is East to do? The major suit honors are probably well placed. With support, the diamonds may well be solid. Opposite West's 1♣ opening, the ♣Qx should be useful. A likely major suit lead will come up to either ♠K10 or ♥AJ10. Three losers or fewer seems probable. The six cover cards are ♠A, ♥K, ♦AQ, and ♣AK. How many will West hold? Will shortness eliminate the need for some cover cards? Should East pass or advance to slam?

Opening Lead Notes—Board 12

- » The ♠7 and ♥3 are the standard leads to attack in a major suit. If North can read the ♠2 as suit preference for clubs, that could be an excellent lead.
- » Without the Michaels Cue Bid, the ♣8 might be an excellent deceptive lead that could transform the ♣K into a trick.

Play Notes—Board 12

- » With East declaring a diamond contract, the ♠A is a sure loser. The ♠J and the ♣KJ are potential losers. If North holds ♠AJ, the ♠KQ10 can play for two winners, one loser and a discard (a club from East to eliminate the club loser). Ruffing the two low hearts will build two tricks. Counting winners, East has two

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spades, one heart, eight diamonds, and one club for twelve tricks to make six diamonds.

- » The tricks are there and the loser count is in bounds. Considering the major suit leads, first: At trick one, ruff a heart high; cross to the closed hand with the small trump; ruff the last heart high, and draw the last trump with the remaining high trump on the table. Now, lead a small spade to the ♠K10 in the closed hand. Play the ♠10 under the ♠A or to finesse the ♠J if North plays a spot card. Win with the ♠K if North plays the ♠J. If East won the spade trick, the remaining spades are equal. One will lose to North's ♠A and a club loser will go on the third spade trick (reaching the table via the ♣A. Then, the closed hand will be all trumps.

Let a spade lead ride to the ♠K10. Play spades as above without worry that South will win the ♠J. If North wins the ♠A, there are now two spade winners and a club discard (unless North continues spades and South ruffs the second round—fortunately, not happening tonight). If North North plays the ♠J or a spot card, establish a second spade winner and a club discard as above. Gaining the lead (losing at most a spade and preserving entries to the table for the club discard on the long spade), ruff two heart losers, pull trumps, and discard the club loser on the table's third spade.

- » A deceptive ♣8 lead presents interesting problems. Conventionally, a large spot lead indicates the lack of an honor. If true, letting the club ride to the ♣Q would lose two fast tricks to North's ♣K and ♠A. Rising with the ♣A might drop a singleton ♣K in North or strip North's hand of clubs. If North holds ♣Kx or ♣Kxx, North will win the ♣K and the ♠A. Thus, any club play at trick one works when South has deceptively led away from the ♣K fourth. The ♣A works when North has any singleton club. If East survives the trick one play in clubs, ruffing diamonds and disposing of a club loser (either by winning the ♣Q at trick one or by discarding a club on the table's long spade) will work whenever twelve tricks are available.

Thoughts on Board 12

- » Yes, the double dummy analysis says that East–West can make 6♦. Declaring any diamond contract, East should play to make six. Sometimes, there will be twelve tricks. Other times, sneaky defense, unfortunate card layouts, or slips by declarer will hold a diamond contract to no more than eleven tricks.
- » As a practical matter, East–West may be best placed in 5♦ going +600 when slam goes down and +620 when slam makes. Aiming for +1370 in 6♦ places large demands on both the East–West bidding and East's declarer play.