

# Bridge at the Village Lesson Hand—March 25, 2019

Brian Potter, Club Manager and Club Director

1/2

On this week's lesson deal—board four—normal differences between normal bidding choices make all the difference.

Board: 4 Dealer: W Vul.: All ♠A643 ♥Q83 ♦T4 ♣KQJ4	♠KQT ♥2 ♦QJ2 ♣T98765 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; margin: 5px;">                     N W E S                 </div> ♥K4 ♦AK6 ♣A32	<b>Possible Auction</b>			
		West	North	East	South
		1♣ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	1♠ <sup>(2)</sup>	3♥ <sup>(3)</sup>
		3♠ <sup>(4)</sup>	Pass	¿? <sup>(5)</sup>	...

  

	♠2 ♥AJT9765 ♦98753 ♣	8 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">                     12 HCP                 </div> 15																										
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## Bidding Notes—Board 4

- (1) Playing a strong notrump system, West plans a 1NT rebid to show 12–14 HCP with a balanced hand.
- (2) East has a balanced hand. The notrump response to show a balanced hand with 15 HCP is certainly possible. Nonetheless, most players will respond 1♠ and force to game during the subsequent bidding. Suppressing a five-card major suit to bid notrump, while possible, would be *very unusual*.
- (3) The substantial disparity between the two red suits makes the heart jump overcall preferable. The extra preemption relative to both 2♠ (*Michaels Cuebid*) and 2NT (*Unusual Notrump Overcall*) also recommends the natural jump overcall as South's preferred action.
- (4) West holds a minimum, and passing is certainly a reasonable alternative. Yet, bridge is a bidder's game. West's choice is less important than it seems because . . .
- (5) East is forcing to game no matter whether West bids or passes. Which game? 3NT or 4♠?

## Opening Lead Notes—Board 4

- » Against 4♠, South will probably lead the ♥A.
- » Against 3NT, again South leads a heart. The choice will be among the ♥A (please, unblock), ♥J (top of an interior sequence), and ♥9 (fourth best). With the ♥K and ♥Q both outstanding, the best hope for the defense is that declarer's heart stopper is ♥Qxx while partner began with ♥Kx(x). In this case, partner will win the first heart with the king and return the suit for seven fast defensive tricks

## Play Notes—Board 4

- » Against 4♠, South's ♥A reveals the ♥Qxx on the table, the ♥K does not drop, and partner contributes the ♥2. South may feel dejected. Now, either North or East remains with ♥K bare while the other is void. If South continues spades (The ♥5 as suit preference for a club return is best.), North will—ruff, felling East's bare

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king. South ruffs North's club return with the singleton ♠2 and returns another heart to a second heart ruff by North for the setting trick. Score up +100 to North–South. On any other lead, East–West will win the opening lead and draw two rounds of trumps (extracting South's ♠2 before it can cause any harm). Now the defenders win only two trumps and the ♥A for +620 to East–West.

- » Against 3NT, South's ill considered ♥A lead settles matters immediately. East claims four clubs, two diamonds, and four major suit winners for ten tricks. The defense wins two spades and the ♥A. There is no squeeze for an eleventh trick because declarer has no second menace to collaborate with the ♦6. East–West score: +630.

When South under leads the ♥A, play is more protracted. East wins the ♥K at trick one and probably begins working on spades. All lines lead to two spade tricks for North who cannot return a heart. If North makes inspired exits with diamond honors, the ♦10 on the table will drop establishing South's ♦9 as a too late entry to the ♥A. Club exits leave declarer with a heart loser and (route to an eleventh trick. All lines lead to 3NT bid and made with an overtrick for +630 to East–West.

South's clairvoyant double dummy ♦9 lead (perhaps, inspired by a desire to reach North for a heart shift up to the ♥AJT9) against 3NT will pin the ♦10 on the table and secure a third round diamond winner before East can cash the long spades for +600 to East–West. If your opponents regularly find leads like this one, you are playing in a game of a very high standard.

Thoughts on Board 4

- » The *post mortem* clearly reveals East's best action at note (5). At rubber, Chicago, or IMP scoring; bidding 3NT to assure game and winning the rubber (going +600 or +630 at IMPs) and eliminate any chance of going –100 is obviously best. Matchpoint scoring, where +620 wins one matchpoint against every pair who scores +600 (or less), forces a more complex analysis. Bidding 4♠ will win whenever North–South cannot get a cross ruff going (when North has two or more hearts or South holds a club). So if the probability of the crossruff is less than  $1 - 600 \div 620$  (almost 3.23%), playing 4♠ will win over playing 3NT (against double dummy defense) often enough to compensate for the times the defenders prevail. Wish East good luck figuring those odds at the table!

With a clever, thoughtful partner (like yours), bidding 3NT at matchpoint scoring is best, too. With heart shortness, West can correct to 4♠ for the extra twenty points and a share of the matchpoint top. With the today's actual holding (♥Qxx), West will pass to eliminate the defensive crossruff and score up the nine trick game. There is no reason that East should be the hero and pick the best contract with the first rebid.

Keeping West in the decision loop lets the partnership act with critical knowledge of West's heart holding. East lacks that critical knowledge. East *should force to game* (bidding 3NT). West *should choose the best game* (passing or correcting to 4♠ according to the heart holding). This is another hand where clear, organized thinking and partnership collaboration eliminate the imagined need for mathematical talent among good bridge players.