

Bridge at the Village Lesson Hand—April 8, 2019

Brian Potter, Club Manager and Club Director

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This week, on board twelve, both sides can win nine tricks with a major suit as trumps. The auction should leap toward game rapidly. In each replay, the winning pair may be the one able to stop bidding, sooner.

Board: 12 Dealer: W Vul.: NS	♠T9 ♥AJ7543 ♦93 ♣K32	♠AQJ64 ♥KQ6 ♦Q62 ♣96	<table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; text-align: center;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	N			W		E	S			Possible Auction <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥⁽¹⁾</td> <td>2♠⁽²⁾</td> <td>3♦⁽³⁾</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♠⁽⁴⁾</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥⁽⁵⁾</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♠⁽⁶⁾</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South	Pass	2♥ ⁽¹⁾	2♠ ⁽²⁾	3♦ ⁽³⁾	3♠ ⁽⁴⁾	Pass	Pass	4♥ ⁽⁵⁾	4♠ ⁽⁶⁾	All Pass						
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Bidding Notes—Board 12

- (1) The North hand, in the eyes of some, is slightly light for a second seat, unfavorable vulnerability *weak two opening bid*. Replacing a heart spot with any of the missing honors (even the ♥10) would convert most doubters into 2♥ openers. Others will admit that a stronger hand would be nice and table the 2♥ bidding card without a second thought.
- (2) Natural, two-level overcalls of adverse weak two openings show a five-card suit and the high card strength of an opening hand. When one must overcall at the three-level, the hand should have a sixth trump or an additional king in high cards.
- (3) Many South players would simply bid 3♥. South's 3♦ bid above might be natural, a *control bid*, or a lead director. South's intent might be playing in either red suit or encouraging a diamond shift if North gains the lead as a defender. Partnership agreements, more than standards, define bids like South's 3♦ bid, above.
- (4) Conventional wisdom suggests that, with five-card support and a ruffing value, West should bid 4♠. Yet, the ♦K provides enough extra strength so that a spade slam might have good prospects. A heart cue bid would show the stronger hand and give East a chance to choose between game and slam.
- (5) South's 4♥ bid may win in several ways. 4♥ may make. Going down one undoubled in 4♥ will score better than 3♠ making. Bidding 4♥ may discourage East–West from continuing to a successful 4♠.
- (6) This bid wins if either 4♠ or 4♥ makes. When both contracts fail, bidding 4♠ is the only losing action.

Opening Lead Notes—Board 12

- » Since East holds two natural trump winners, the defense can hold a heart contract to nine tricks, even after a destructive diamond lead, as long as the defense does not persist with diamonds.

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- » With East declaring a spade contract, North–South have three cashing aces and the king of clubs. Cashing either red ace and letting declarer in before cashing the other will let East discard red losers in the suit where defenders still hold the ace. On the opening lead is a good time for defenders to cash out.

Play Notes—Board 12

- » Each declarer will be at the mercy of the defenders. Even the weakest defense will probably not give North a chance to win a tenth trick in a heart contract. Two trump winners against a North–South heart contract give the defenders time to collect a top spade and a natural diamond winner.
- » In the other direction, if the defenders let East in after cashing one red ace, East will have the time and discards to pull trumps, discard West's losers in one red suit on the established red suit winners in the other red suit—making 4♠.

Thoughts on Board 12

- » This board is a bidding battle. East–West should compete to the three-level and start looking for the red cards if North–South push beyond 3♥.
- » When East–West discover their ten-card spade fit, they may have a hard time constraining themselves to the three-level. The game bonus will tempt some East–West pairs to accept a push to 4s when a penalty double works better.