

May 2021 ACBL Bulletin Notes

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Page 16, "How's Your Imagination?" by Frank Stewart, writing as Curmudgeon

These two deals demonstrate one of our favorite bridge themes: during the bidding, picture the play and reevaluate your hand

Deal 6 – where are the hearts?

6	♠KQ64	♥5	♦A943	♣J974
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass	
2♦	Dbl	Pass	?	

East-West have never bid hearts and they are settling in a diamond fit. It is unlikely they have missed an eight-card heart fit. The better the pair the more unlikely that is. North did not overcall 2♥, so does not have six. South, as we see, has a singleton heart. The heart

distribution, therefore, is EW, seven (and, specifically, West with four and East with three or, with a weak hand, East might have mentioned hearts before diamonds), North, five, and South, one.

East-West is settling in 2♦, indicating each has a minimum hand for his bid. Give them about 20 HCP. South has 10 HCP, which leaves 10 for North. So, North has about 10 HCP and a five-card heart suit, but did not overcall. North's points are not in hearts. Given the EW diamond fit (probably eight cards) and South's diamond holding, North probably has a singleton diamond. So, North's points are not there, either. North's points are in the black suits. And because South holds the ♠KQ, leaving only five spade points for North, about half of North's points must be in clubs.

North should have four spades for his negative double. North's hand appears to be four spades, five hearts, one diamond (at most) and, therefore, three or four clubs. So North-South have an eight-card spade fit and a seven- or eight-card club fit with the club points behind the opponent club bidder. South's ♦A will cover North's diamond singleton for no diamond losers. And given South's singleton, there will be only one heart loser.

Picture South ruffing hearts and North ruffing diamonds. 4♠ is likely to make. South should bid 4♠, as the hands fit great.

Deal 12 – providing heart ruffs

12	♠K1054	♥A2	♦7532	♣A85
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass	
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	
Pass	2♠	3♦	?	

East has bid diamonds three times, and South has four of them. North has little or no wasted values there. North must have four hearts, or East-West would have eight hearts and be playing there and not diamonds. So, two hearts can be ruffed in South. So, there is only one heart loser at most. South also has the ace of clubs. 4♠ has a good shot. Bid it.

Page 63, "Test Your Play" by Eddie Kantar

Yes, it's from the Advanced Player Section, but it's not too tough:

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Dlr: South ♠ 8 6
 Vul: N-S ♥ A K 6
 IMPs ♦ Q 9 7
 ♣ A 10 9 8 4

♠ K 7 4
 ♥ 5
 ♦ A K J 10 8 6
 ♣ J 7 6

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♦
2 ♦ ⁽¹⁾	2 ♥ ⁽²⁾	3 ♥	3NT
4 ♥	Dbl	Pass	5 ♦
All Pass			
(1) Majors			
(2) Stopper			

West leads the ♥Q.

The key to this deal is like so many others: "think at trick one before you play." And have a "plan B."

Almost certainly West holds the ♠AQ or ♠AJ behind your ♠K, so you can't afford to let East in with a club. That means you will have to pitch two of your clubs. There is only one way to do that:

1. Duck the opening lead. Let West win the ♥Q!
2. It's now too late for West to lead a club, which would have been the killing lead at trick one. On a club switch, you win the ♣Ace and pitch your remaining two clubs on the ♥AK.
3. You then ruff a club, return to dummy with a diamond and ruff another club, leaving two good clubs in dummy, assuming a 3-2 club split.
4. Draw trumps, ending in dummy, and pitch two spades on the long clubs.

Plan B: If clubs do not split 3-2 you can take a ruffing finesse through East if West has a singleton honor.

The steps described give you a likely chance (no, not 100%) of making the contract, as opposed to a near 0% chance if you allow East to get in.