

The opponents' bidding can often help declarer during the play of the cards. Equally important is the failure of an opponent to bid, as the following two hands illustrate.

KJ93
A742
Q75
62

AQ10762
K9
J3
KJ8

West was the dealer and, after three Passes, South opened One Spade. West overcalled Two Diamonds and North invited game by bidding Three Diamonds. This cue-bid of the opponents' suit showed a good raise to Three Spades (a direct jump to Three Spades would have been a weaker bid). South accepted the invitation and bid Four Spades.

West took the first two tricks with the Ace and King of diamonds and led a third round. East ruffed dummy's Queen of diamonds and South overruffed. South drew trumps and realised the success of the contract depended on playing the club suit for just one loser. South led a low club from the dummy, East played low, and South wondered whether to play the King or the Jack.

Before playing a card, South thought back to the bidding. West had Passed as dealer and had turned up with a six-card diamond suit headed by the Ace and King. If West held the Ace of clubs he would surely have opened the bidding with One Diamond, so East must hold the Ace. South's King of clubs won the trick and a later club ruff in dummy gave South his tenth trick. Game made, thanks to the first call made in the auction - a No Bid !

On the next hand declarer needed to guess which opponent held the Queen of spades :

A106
97532
Q102
85

KJ3
QJ1084
7
AK72

West, dealer, opened One Club and this was passed round to South who overcalled One Heart. West Passed, North raised to Two Hearts and South decided to jump to Four Hearts.

West led a low club, East played the Jack and South won with the Ace. At trick 2, South led the Queen of hearts. West won with the King and then took the third trick with the Ace of hearts as East discarded an encouraging eight of diamonds. West duly switched to a low diamond at

trick 4, won by East's Ace. East continued diamonds at trick 5, South ruffing. South cashed his King of clubs and followed with a club ruff in dummy, a diamond ruff in hand and a last club ruff in dummy. This was the position with four tricks remaining and with North on lead :

A106

9

KJ3

J

South had the option of finessing either way for the missing Queen of spades, but which opponent held it ? West, who had opened the bidding, was probably the favourite but was it possible for East to have it ?

No. Thinking back to the early play, East had played the Jack of clubs at trick 1 and had won trick 4 with the Ace of diamonds. If he also held the Queen of spades that would give him seven high-card points and he would surely have responded to his partner's opening One Club bid.

South led a low spade to his King and confidently finessed the ten of spades on the next trick. Ten tricks and game made. Once again it was an opponent's first call, a No Bid, that gave declarer all the information he needed.

Enjoy your bridge !