

### Interesting hand 3 : Board 15 Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February

This time we have a hand from the Wednesday session but you will pick up the theme. Board 15 resulted in 5 pairs making 12 tricks in hearts and one going 4 down doubled in 5S. Only one pair bid the heart slam leaving the sacrificing pair in spades with a very poor result.

Is this surprising?

Dir: South Vul: N/S	♠ A 9 5 3 ♥ J 10 6 2 ♦ K Q ♣ A 8 6	Optimum NS +1400			
♠ Q 10 8 7 6 4 2 ♥ 8 ♦ 9 7 2 ♣ J 5	<table style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">NORTH</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; font-size: 2em;">15</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	15	SOUTH	♠ K J ♥ Q 5 ♦ J 10 8 4 3 ♣ K 7 4 3
NORTH	15	SOUTH			

  

14	10
3	13

  

♠	♥	♦	♣	N
5	2	6	1	5
S	5	2	6	1
E	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-

The simplest approach is to look at N/S assuming no interference. An opening 1H from S is an easy start. N has 14 HCPs but also 8 losers but 3 of these are in the trump suit. It seems that game is a good prospect. On this basis, the Jacoby convention provides a good starting point. This enables a player with game going support but no singleton or void (for a Splinter) to show this by bidding 2NT. This creates space and leaves a direct raise to 4 for a pre-emptive hand with no slam interest. There are various ways of playing the responses which either enable opener to show a feature or a Losing Trick Count. The latter can be better and is here. A LTC of 5 opposite an assumed 7 from responder immediately suggests that a slam may be on.

Whatever method is used the reply is likely to be at the 3 level thereby allowing space for a cue bidding sequence....4C from N, 4D from S, 4S from N. It is now not unreasonable for S to bid 6Hs. With QH dropping and AS and AD providing respective discards the contract will make for the loss only of KC. Only 27 HCPs but a good fit.

The question then arises as to whether a bid from W is likely or desirable. In favour is the vulnerability and against the extreme weakness with only 3 HCPs. A bid of 3S showing 7 looks foolhardy on any view with a weak jump overcall of 2S being marginally better. If this is made N has a rather less easy task. If he bids 4H that may well be the end of it. Jacoby does not come into play over an overcall. One wonders about a bid of 3S. What could it mean? It is clearly strong and demands a bid from S. It must imply some level of support or at least tolerance for hearts and it keeps the pair below their fall back of 4H. As I have written before, when you are not excluding a slam and N is certainly not doing this as he will know that S is likely to be short in spades, you should try to find something to keep the bidding going.

My guess is that in practice S would bid 4H over 3S and it would be passed out.....unless of course E or W want to pursue spades. An unwise decision on any view either because it may push N/S into the slam or because it should make only 6 tricks. 800 is worse than the heart game.

Without in any way recommending interference from W on the first round you can see how much more difficult it becomes for N/S and then you can see why so many find the risk too tempting to resist!