

Interesting hand 5 : Board 11 Wednesday 8th March

This board has cards in the North/South hands in an interesting combination which come up only rarely. This makes it worth a second look.

S will almost certainly open 1NT. A pass from W leaves N to contemplate his 2 suiter. This hand has two almost identical good 5 card majors with only 5 losers. It is possible to visualise a S hand which makes a slam viable but caution is needed. The pair have only about 26/28 HCPs and S's bid of 1NT should be taken as 8 loser.

Dlr: South
Vul: None

Optimum NS +460

♠ J 6 3 2
♥ J
♦ K J 3 2
♣ J 7 4 3

NORTH
11
SOUTH

♠ A Q 9 7 5
♥ A Q 9 7 5
♦ 8 7
♣ Q

♠ 4
♥ K 8 4 2
♦ 10 9 6
♣ K 9 6 5 2

14 7 6 13

♠ K 10 8
♥ 10 6 3
♦ A Q 5 4
♣ A 10 8

	♠	♥	♦	♣	N
N	-	2	5	5	5
S	-	2	5	5	4
E	1	-	-	-	-
W	1	-	-	-	-

However, N certainly has the values for a game so where does he start? It looks like a transfer but into which suit? Let us jog forward a little as you should always do before asking for a transfer. What will be his next bid?

There are options. He could transfer into spades with a view to bidding 4H next. This bid is known as “Fast Arrival! What does it mean? Well, it is saying to your partner that the limit of your ambition is game in either major. Partner would bid 4S with better support for this suit.

Second option is to transfer into spades intending to bid 3H. The 3H bid shows at least 5:5 in the majors. It is also forcing to game. The intention is to make a “Slow Arrival” to the four level so as not to exclude a slam if, for example, the 1NT bidder has useful support in the major and top cards in the minors. A 3NT trump response remains open to the 1NT bidder although this would seem odd as the No trump bid must have 3 cards in at least one major! (try the arithmetic).

Is there a third option of a transfer into hearts followed by a bid of 2S or even 3S? This is not a good option as although 2S is forcing to game it may show only 4S. 3S is horrible after 2H...unless N is worried that his partner won't remember that the change of suit after the transfer is game-forcing!

In my view the best sequence here is the “Fast Arrival” sequence. A slam is only a remote prospect with the chances depending either on pretty precise cards with S or a finesse or two. Once 4Hs is bid by N, S will convert to 4S, making 5 for a good solid game contract.

It is interesting to note that, if S is strong and has strong support for the spade suit, he can “super-accept” the transfer to spades by bidding 3S. Should he do so N may want to revise his “Fast Arrival” and consider a route to a possible slam. That, of course, is not the situation here

Very often players look at the basic principles of transfers without necessarily understanding the full scheme of the follow-up. This hand illustrates the need to learn the system right through to the end.