

Interesting hand 7 : Board 10 Monday 20th March

Today's hand has unusual aspects both in the bidding and the play which make it both interesting and difficult.

E is dealer and will surely open 1C. S will overcall 1D with his good 6 card suit. W might double to show his 4 hearts or bid 1H. A pass would actually make life more difficult for N/S ! N has a big two suiter in the majors with only 4 losers but is void in partner's suit. Over a bid showing a 1H response from W, N finds his second suit redundant so will be restricted to thinking about his spades.

Dlr: East
 Vul: All
 Optimum NS +140

North: ♠ K Q J 8 7 5, ♥ A K 9 4 3, ♦ - -, ♣ 6 5
 South: ♠ 9 6 3, ♥ Q 10 7 5, ♦ J 8 5 4, ♣ K 10

North: ♠ A 2, ♥ 8 6, ♦ K 10 7, ♣ A Q J 4 3 2
 South: ♠ 10 4, ♥ J 2, ♦ A Q 9 6 3 2, ♣ 9 8 7

Trick Count: 13, 6, 14, 7

	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	-	2	3	-
S	-	2	3	-
E	1	1	-	1
W	2	1	-	1

Of course if W passes, N has to decide how to bid his two suiter. He could perhaps start with 2C to show both majors (what else could it mean ?) This will at least force his partner to bid as well as making life more difficult for E. E may still risk 3C although vulnerability may make him wary. S will repeat his diamonds over 2C but may have to think again over 3Cs. Whatever S decides N is unlikely to lie down even in the knowledge that neither suit is attractive to his partner. 3S over 2D or even 4S over 3D or 3C.

Returning to the more likely scenario of W having shown hearts, N has a dilemma. His partner is likely to be short in hearts but weak in HCPs with opponents showing close to 20 and holding 13 himself. His void in partner's suit is neutral suggesting a possible source of establishment and/or discards but suggesting entry problems. He will want to bid spades but at what level in the knowledge that his chances of active support from partner are slim ?

An argument can be put for any of 1S, 2S, 3S or 4S ! On balance I prefer 1S to start. A change of overcall suggests a strong suit and, with opponents being unaware of each other's strength, N will surely get another bid. Over 1S E will rebid his clubs, probably now passed by S and W. N may now want to make a final try to see if game is possible and may bid 3S, an invitation partner will probably decline. The pair would play in 3S.

The hand analysis will show you that 9 tricks is all that N/S can make so , In theory the contract is right but most pairs will make more. Why ?

Let us look at E's hand for a lead. Clubs are unattractive and may be giving a trick away to the KC. Trumps are equally unattractive as S has shown no support. He may try partner's suit and lead his 8H. N will take AKH and lead a third ruffing unless E plays AS (best: followed by a trump return) More likely E will discard allowing N to ruff low and cash AD throwing a club followed by a diamond ruff. Another heart follows ruffed with TS, leaving 9H as a winner. Another diamond ruff and declarer will come to at least 11 tricks.

The more observant will see that a lead of AS followed by a small spade will take away access to the diamond suit and leave with two losing clubs as well as two losing hearts.

Hindsight is a fine thing !