

♠♥ **Considering your options!** ♦♣

Last Thursday (6<sup>th</sup> October, 2016) Board 15 offered potential for good bidding and sound declarer play.

Dlr: South  
 Vul: N/S  
 Optimum NS 2210

♠ K Q 10 9  
 ♥ A K Q J 7  
 ♦ A  
 ♣ A 8 4

♠ J 7 5 3  
 ♥ 8 5 4 2  
 ♦ Q 10 9  
 ♣ 7 2

NORTH  
 WEST 15 EAST  
 SOUTH

♠ 6 4 2  
 ♥ 10  
 ♦ 8 6 5 4  
 ♣ K Q J 6 5

♠ A 8  
 ♥ 9 6 3  
 ♦ K J 7 3 2  
 ♣ 10 9 3

N 3 5 7 6 6  
 S 3 5 7 6 6  
 E - - - -  
 W - - - -

23  
 3 6  
 8

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The hand was played at 12 tables and was played in NT on three occasions and in a heart contract at the remaining 9 tables.

All thirteen tricks CAN be made (see end of article) in the heart contract but a very reasonable contract of 6H is the ideal contract and 12 tricks can be made with relative safety.

The scorecard for the board shows that 4 pairs bid the small slam but only two declarers made the contract. Of the 5 pairs who played in the heart denomination, but who did not reach the slam, one declarer made 10 tricks, two made 11 tricks and two made 12.

Assuming that North becomes declarer East is likely to lead the ♣K.

**Board No 15 N/S Vul Dealer South**

**Deal: MynewWinDupgame**

NS	EW	Bid	By	Tks	+Sc	-Sc	+	-
1	18	6♥	N	12	1430		21	1
2	20	3NT	N	12	690		18	4
3	22	3NT	N	11	660		11	11
4	24	4♥	N	11	650		7	15
5	14	4♥	N	11	650		7	15
6	16	6♥	N	11		100	1	21
7	19	6♥	N	11		100	1	21
8	21	4♥	S	12	680		15	7
9	23	5NT	S	11	660		11	11
10	13	6♥	N	12	1430		21	1
11	15	4♥	N	10	620		4	18
12	17	4♥	N	12	680		15	7

As soon as dummy hits the table declarer should stop and consider optional lines of play. On any reasonable heart break (3-2 or 4-1 = a combined 96%) declarer can count 11 tricks as follows:

- 5 trump tricks in hand
- 3 top spades
- 2 top diamonds
- Ace of clubs.

Where to for a twelfth trick?

Four obvious possibilities present themselves:

- 1) Finesse the ♠10 on the second round of the suit. This amounts to approximately a 50% chance.
- 2) Draw trumps and hope that ♠J drops in three rounds...approx. 27%
- 3) Establish AND CASH the ♦J. Awkward...this requires cashing the ♦A, playing a spade to dummy's A and then cashing the ♦K for a club discard from hand and ruffing a diamond in hand AND with the ♦Q falling on the first second or third round of the suit (37%)...AND then being able to re-enter dummy to cash the established ♦J. This will require that the hearts break 3-2 AND that the ♥10 drops in two rounds leaving dummy's ♥9 as an entry which will also draw the last trump in one of the opponents hands! Alternatively, for the hand with the ♦Q(xx) to also hold ♥10 or ♥10x. Odds? ...extremely low given that the starting point is a poor 37% chance of finding ♦Q, ♦Qx or ♦Qxx.
- 4) Ruff the THIRD round of spades in dummy. A 4-3 spade break (62%) will see this line home. Clearly this is a better line than either 1) or 2). Note that with this line it is important not to play three top spades before attempting to ruff the fourth round in dummy. And it can be increased in those situations where West holds 5 spades AND where the hand with the doubleton spade (East) does NOT hold 3 or more trumps including the ♥10. And the odds can be improved further by playing two rounds of trumps before ruffing the third round of spades with dummy's ♥9. In the actual hand the ♥10 drops on the first round of trumps. Declarer can now ruff a low spade (♠9 or ♠10) in dummy with ♥9 (in case West has only two spades!).

Clearly line 3) offers the best chance. So, win the first trick and play two top trumps (actually only one round needed when East plays ♥10 on first round of trumps). Cash ♦A and then play two top spades ending in hand and lead ♠9 or ♠10 and ruff with dummy's ♥9. Cash ♦K and discard a losing club. Now play a trump from dummy if you only cashed one top trump prior to ruffing the third spade. Otherwise, ruff a diamond in hand and draw the remaining trumps and cash ♠Q.

Twelve tricks and slam made! The only real problem was to bid it! But, once bid, it should always be made! And even if not bid, twelve tricks should still be made!

Oh...almost forgot...how to make 13 tricks.

Win the first trick.

Cash ♥A

Cash ♦A

Play spade to dummy's ♠A

Cash ♦K ...discard club from hand

Finesse ♠10

Cash ♠K...discard a club from dummy

Cash ♠Q... discard last club from dummy

Ruff your last club in dummy

Draw trumps and claim thirteen tricks

5 trumps in hand

4 spades

2 diamonds

Ace of clubs

club ruff in dummy

Voila!

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