

♠♥ **What an interesting hand. Did you have the toys to cope with it?** ♦♣

On Thursday, 17th November, 2016 Board 20 was a very interesting deal. The hand was played at 13 tables. At three tables the contract was played below game level...in diamonds at two tables and the part-score in spades at another table. Two pairs bid and made the diamond game, one pair failed in 5♥, five pairs bid the spade game. Only two pairs bid to a slam...6♣ at one table and 6♦ at the other table.

Dir: West
Vul: All

♠ K 10 6
♥ A Q 9 8 3
♦ J 6 5
♣ 9 7

Optimum
NS 2210

♠ 7 5 2
♥ 10 7 6 4
♦ 2
♣ K 8 6 5 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST
20		
SOUTH		

♠ Q 9
♥ K 5 2
♦ Q 3
♣ A Q J 10 4 3

10
3 14
13

♠ A J 8 4 3
♥ J
♦ A K 10 9 8 7 4
♣ --

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	7	2	7	1
S	-	7	2	7	1
E	2	-	-	-	-
W	2	-	-	-	-

View Larger
Play it again

At one table the bidding proceeded in an unusual fashion through the deployment of two unusual bidding gadgets!

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♣	2♣*
Pass	3♠	Pass	5♣**
Pass	5♠***	Pass	6♣

Board No 20 Both Vul Dealer West								
-								
NS	EW	Bid	By	Tks	+Sc	-Sc	+	-
1	19	6♣	N	13	1460		24	
2	21	3♦	S	13	190		5	19
3	23	4♠	S	13	710		17	7
4	26	5♦	S	13	640		9	15
5	28	5♦	S	13	640		9	15
6	16	4♠	S	13	710		17	7
7	18	6♦	S	13	1390		22	2
8	20	5♥	N	10		100		24
9	22	3♦	S	13	190		5	19
10	24	4♠	S	13	710		17	7
12	27	4♠	S	12	680		12	12
13	15	3♠	N	10	170		2	22
14	17	4♠	S	13	710		17	7

Notes:

2♣* = **Ghestem** ... a system that allows the bidder to show any two suits (5+/5+) after opponents have opened the bidding. In this instance South's 2♣ shows diamonds and spades, at least 5 or more cards in each suit.

3♠ = Showing a non-minimum hand (remember that North has already passed so in this case he is showing 9-11 hcp)

5♣ = **Exclusion Blackwood**. Roman Key Card Blackwood with spades as trumps **but excluding the suit bid, i.e. clubs**.

5♠ = 2 Key Cards without the ♠Q.

And then South bid the spade slam. And of course there was no problem with the play.

Michaels is another commonly used bidding convention which enables the non-opening side to show two-suited hands. **Ghestem** has the benefit over **Michaels** in so far as there is instant identification of the two suits whereas with **Michaels** a minor suit may not be identified until later in the bidding.

Using **Ghestem** to show two suits of 5+ cards each after the opponents have opened the bidding:

Opening Bid	5♣+/5♦+	5♦+/5♥+	5♦+/5♠+	5♣+/5♥+	5♣+/5♠+	5♥+/5♠+
1♣	N/A	2NT	2♣	N/A	N/A	2♦
1♦	N/A	N/A	N/A	2NT	2♦	3♣
1♥	2NT	N/A	3♣	N/A	2♥	N/A
1♠	2NT	3♣	N/A	2♠	N/A	N/A

Fortunately there is an easy to remember 'aide-memoir' which makes it easy to recall how to show your two suits:

- a) A **cuebid** = the extreme suits
- b) A **jump in a minor** is 'exclusive', i.e, exclude the suit opened and the minor suit that partner bids
- c) **2NT** = lowest two unbid suits

And what about 'strength'? At favourable vulnerability you could be weak. At equal vulnerability you could be weak/intermediate and if bidding at unfavourable vulnerability your hand should be strong.

Exclusion Blackwood... sometimes referred to as Voidwood

After a trump suit has been agreed, a jump to the four or five level in another suit (usually unbid up to this point or else a suit bid by the opponents) says 'partner I am void in this suit and I am interested in a slam in our agreed suit. Please show me the number of Key Cards that you have in all suits excluding the one in which I am void'.

A series of step responses, similar to regular Roman Key Card Blackwood, can be used to show your Key Cards. In the following examples partner's second bid is Exclusion Blackwood

You	Partner
1♦	1♥
3♥	4♠ or 5♣

You	Partner
1♣	1♠
2♠	5♦

You	Partner
	1♥
3♥	4♠, 5♣, 5♦

Use your usual Roman Keycard Responses but remember not to include the keycard of the suit which has been 'excluded'.

So, there you have it. These are two useful bidding conventions which you should consider adding to your armoury.

**Paul J Scannell,
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