

Essex Contract Bridge Association

The Warboys Trophy 2019 Season

Welcome back to the Warboys. This season my reports will examine a few selected deals and will focus on different bidding styles and technical aspects of declarer play and defence.

The gender neutral "his" will be used throughout.

Report on Session held 13 Feb 2019

Board 2

2	<p>♠ 975 ♥ J ♦ AQJ974 ♣ 863</p>	<p>♠ K103 ♥ Q8752 ♦ 108 ♣ AQ2</p>	<p><i>Dir: E</i> <i>Vul: N-S</i></p>																														
<p>♠ AJ842 ♥ K104 ♦ 65 ♣ KJ10</p>	<p>♠ Q6 ♥ A963 ♦ K32 ♣ 9754</p>																																
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At first sight of the East-West hands it looks like a run-of-the-mill part-score in a major suit. However, we first have to consider how the auction may go in practice. The trend to light openings may encourage East to open 1H which will almost inevitably lead to game, probably in Hearts. More likely there will be two passes to West who has an "obvious" 1S bid though facing a passed partner and not desperate to rebid the Spades West may try 1NT instead; in which case after a transfer to Hearts and a raise to 2NT West will have to decide whether to pass or convert to 3H. No-trumps are almost guaranteed to result in a minus score for EW. Usually we expect the auction to go 1S-2H-P as West will not envisage game opposite a passed partner and will be satisfied to have arrived in an eight-card fit at the two-level.

We mustn't forget North; after a 1S opening North may be tempted to bid 2D though this is risky especially at adverse vulnerability. South would expect a little more from his partner and may compete his side to a dangerous level; after all, three trumps to the King, an Ace and a doubleton are quite useful holdings opposite a vulnerable two-level overcall.

We will assume East plays the hand in 2H. Assuming a passive defence, the number of tricks East achieves will depend on the views he takes in the play of the major suits. We will concentrate on the Heart suit. With this particular combination the obvious temptation is to play low towards the K104 and insert the Ten unless South plays an honour. As we can see North makes the singleton Jack and an unsuspecting East will lose two further trump tricks and thereby be held to eight tricks at best, perhaps seven tricks, depending on his view in Spades. A first round finesse of the Ten does gain

when South holds any combination of three cards that includes the Jack. This is clearly the best way to try to restrict losers in the suit to only one. However, it is not necessarily the best way to lose no more than two tricks in the suit; this is an important consideration at IMP scoring as you want to make sure of your contract. In fact, the suit can be restricted to just two losers against any 3-2 or 4-1 break. Let us say that the defence lead a Club; East wins in hand and leads low Heart to the King. If this holds the next move is to return to the East hand and lead a small trump toward the Ten. If the suit was breaking 3-2 nothing bad can happen and if either North or South started with AJ9x they will be restricted to two tricks. If the King loses to the Ace then East should continue by playing small towards the Ten and again the defence is restricted to two tricks in the suit whether East or West started with four trumps.

Playing small to the King also restricts the losers to two at most when North has the singleton Jack as was the case on this board. This play leads to an easy eight tricks for declarer and nine if he happens to get the Spade position right, though this is less likely when he discovers the Heart shortage with North.

An interesting variation is for declarer to win the initial lead in dummy with the Jack or Ten (preserving two entries to the East hand) and play Hearts by leading the King. Regardless of whether this loses to the Ace or not the next play is small towards the Ten. This also restricts the losers to two.

On the actual deal declarer can theoretically restrict his trump losers to one after playing the King in either of the above scenarios by returning to hand and running the 8 or 7 if South plays the 6. However, declarer will have to manage his entries very carefully to carry this out; easy to see “double dummy” not so easy in practice.

The defence can complicate matters if they lead three round of Diamonds “on the go”. Declarer will probably take the ruff in dummy, discarding a Spade from hand. This will deprive declarer of the chance of restricting his trumps losers to one. However, if he takes the Diamond ruff in his own hand he keeps all option open.

A somewhat complex hand to kick-off with. This was reflected in the results with 7,8, 9 and 10 tricks being made in major suit contracts. One pair in the B section bid and made 4S on the lead of the Heart Jack. The correct defence would be for South to win the Ace and return the 9 as a suit preference signal for Diamonds rather than Clubs. After taking his first ruff North will have to switch to Diamonds from AQJ974 and the defence will collect two ruffs and two Diamonds to go with the Ace of Hearts for two down.

Board 17

17	♠ K54 ♥ 106 ♦ K8765 ♣ 982	<i>Dir: N</i> <i>Vul: None</i>																														
♠ AJ ♥ AKQ97 ♦ Q ♣ KQJ65	♠ Q9632 ♥ 854 ♦ 1032 ♣ 104																															
6 22 2 10	♠ 1087 ♥ J32 ♦ AJ94 ♣ A73	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">♣</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">♦</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">♥</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">♠</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">S</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">E</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">-</td> </tr> </table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	1	-	-	-	S	-	1	-	-	-	E	4	-	4	2	-	W	4	-	4	2	-
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After three passes West has to consider whether to open 1H or a forcing strong bid. Although two-suiters are not always easily handled by strong two openings the West hand will generate nine or ten tricks on its own account most of time and should not risk 1H being passed out. Pairs playing 2C as their only strong opening need to differentiate between an Acol 2 type with eight playing tricks and a game forcing hand. It is probably best to reserve 2C as a game force (except after a 2NT rebid) and open the eight playing trick hands at the one level and make a game or forcing rebid. If West opens the hand above with a game-force he will have no problem reaching the easy 4H contract. A typical auction may be: 2C-2D-2H-2NT-3C-4H.

A point arises with the second-round negative in the above sequence as to whether it is better to use 2S rather than 2NT. 2S permits opener to bid 2NT showing a four card Spade suit without having to bid 3S which can now show five Spades together with six Hearts. The benefit is probably marginal at the game level but may be critical for a slam.

Let us say West has AKT96 AKQ654 A 3 and East QJ7 2 97653 QT54

The auction may go 2C-2D-2H-2S-3S-4S-5S-6S. The 5S bid asks for better trumps than promised and East should accept. He also gets to be declarer and can ruff one or more Hearts in hand to set the suit up. With one Spade less West rebids 2NT and East can try 3C to show a stop.

Of course, if you use 2S as a negative then 2NT becomes a positive with at least four Spades.

In the event game was missed at half the tables.

Board 21

21	♠ QJ654 ♥ AQJ542 ♦ Q ♣ 6	<i>Dir: N</i> <i>Vul: N-S</i>																														
	♠ A1032 ♥ K96 ♦ 852 ♣ 874	♠ K8 ♥ 107 ♦ KJ643 ♣ 10953																														
12 7 7 14	♠ 97 ♥ 83 ♦ A1097 ♣ AKQJ2	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>♣</td> <td>♦</td> <td>♥</td> <td>♠</td> <td>NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	5	2	4	4	5	S	5	2	4	4	5	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-
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With North's major suit holding there is always a concern that the Spade suit will get lost after opening 1H. Nevertheless, opening 1S rather than 1H is likely to lead to more problems as partner will assume that your Spades are the longer suit. So, 1H is favourite; partner may even bid Spades himself, so no problem. The interesting situation arises on an auction like: 1H-2C-2H-3D-.....now if North bids 3S this will be taken as fourth-suit-forcing and if South bids 3NT North cannot be sure that South has more than Ax or Kx. North is better off bidding his Hearts again and if South bids 3NT he will have more than just Ax or Kx as a stop in Spades. North can now decide whether to convert to 4S or pass 3NT. There is quite a lot to be said for passing 3NT on the latter auction as the North hand is probably worth three or four tricks in No-trumps and South clearly has strong minors. It may be a case of nine tricks easier than ten, particularly if either major suit breaks badly. On the actual

deal South's major suit holdings give him the easy bid of 4H over 3H. The defence can just hold declarer to ten tricks by playing three rounds of Spades thereby promoting a trump trick, though as at out table with Spades not having been bid, the defence may not realise this possibility. In the event 3NT was as popular as 4H. It appears that South declared 3NT four times and North declared 4S once; all of which suggests that North opened 1S quite often.

IM 17 Feb 2019