

Dealer
WEST 1 EAST
SOUTH

Bath Replays

10 Short and sweet

Board 1. Tuesday May 1, 2007

No great lessons to be learned from this board - except perhaps for a brief introduction to Norman Points - but it has its moments.

Sitting North as dealer, I picked up the fine hand shown below.

♠ AKQJ94
♥ KQ9
♦ AK7
♣ 3

Spotting only three losers, so judging it to be worth a strong opening bid, I opened a Benji 2♦, to which my partner responded 3♥. We were playing Norman Points, a simple system of stepped responses which allows you to show Aces (2 'points' each) and Kings (1 'point' each).

My partner therefore has 5 Norman Points, which means he has either one Ace and three Kings or two Aces and one King. The first possibility is easily discounted, as I'm looking at three Kings in my own hand.

So we have all the Aces and all the Kings and very solid intermediates. I figure I can see 13 tricks, so bid 7 No Trumps.

The complete bidding sequence was therefore short and informative:

Me: 2♦
Partner: 3♥
Me: 7NT

The play was even shorter.

East selected an opening lead and, before Partner tabled his hand, I was able to claim, explaining that I would throw my losing diamond on the ♣K in dummy.

Fortunately, East didn't turn up with 5 spades to the 10 (and in any case, South had long hearts, so it wouldn't have mattered anyway). As you can see from the complete deal, 7NT is an easy make, with 15 top tricks available. Unfortunately we weren't doubled!

If only bridge was always this easy...

Peter van Praag
15 May 2007

Norman Points Responses to opening 2♦:

2♥ 0 'points'
2♠ 1 'point'
2NT 2 'points'
3♣ 3 'points'
3♦ 4 'points'
3♥ 5 'points'

♠ AKQJ94
♥ KQ9
♦ AK7
♣ 3

♠ 8	Dealer	♠ 1032
♥ 7543	WEST 1 EAST	♥ 6
♦ 63		♦ QJ954
♣ QJ8765	SOUTH	♣ 10952
		♠ 765
		♥ AJ1082
		♦ 1082
		♣ AK

Postscript: Obviously, you don't need Norman Points to reach the optimum contract of 7NT (though it takes rather more bids to get there). An obvious route would be 2♦ from North, a natural 3♥ response, followed by 3♠, 4♠, and then Blackwood for Aces and Kings. But surprisingly few pairs got there on the night. Just four out of 12 were in 7NT, a further five preferred 7♠, and the other three chickened out and stopped at the 6 level.