

A Day Late & A Dollar Short

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Welcome to this - our 55th session of Shark's Pointers Online!

Last weekend, I played in the Online District 25 Grand National Teams Open Flight Championships with Pat McDevitt, Dean Panagopoulos, and Stephen Gladyszak. Two years ago, playing with the same team we not only won the District Championship, we added two strong players - Frank Merblum and Adam Grossack - and went all the way to finish tied for 3/4 in the National Finals in Las Vegas. This year we crapped out! We lost both our matches on the first day and were 1 of only 4 teams out of the initial 12 to be eliminated after the 1st day.

Today, I am going to highlight a few of the hands that proved disastrous. In each case, the winning bid or play was somewhat obvious - just after the wrong decision was made! Accordingly, today's Shark's Pointer's Online theme will be "A Day Late & A Dollar Short".

Let's begin looking at the biggest swing of our 1st match - and it occurred on the very second deal...

A Day Late & A Dollar Short

D25 GNT Open Round 1

Board 2

South Deals

E-W Vul

♠ K 8 6
♥ 8 5
♦ A 10 9 3
♣ A Q J 10



♠ A J 10
♥ K Q 9 2
♦ K Q 7 4 2
♣ 9

Opening Lead 3 of ♥

West	North	East	South
<i>Dan M.</i>	<i>Steve G.</i>	<i>Dot K.</i>	<i>Dean P.</i>
			1 ♦
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	4 NT	Pass	6 ♦
All pass			

6 ♦ by South

Steve and Dean had a nice auction to get to 6D on this hand. 2C was game forcing, so Stephen's bid of 3D confirmed diamonds as trumps and was 100% forcing. Dean cue bid his spade Ace while denying the heart Ace. Steve cue bid the Ace of clubs. Dean's 4D bid was RKCB, and Stephen's 4 NT bid showed 2 keycards without the Q. Dean now bid 6D which rated to have a good play after the lead of the 3 of hearts. This first round match was against a very pleasant Maine team. At this table, Dottie Kelleher sat East, and Dan Morgenstern was West. After a heart to the A and the J of hearts return, West following with the 4 of hearts, as the K of hearts won the trick.

How would you play this hand? At our table, Jack Mahoney and Laura Lipman had an easy time of it in 3 NT, scoring up 11 tricks. If you make 6D, you will win 10 IMPs, if you go down, you'll lose 11 IMPs.

A Day Late & A Dollar Short

D25 GNT Open Round 1

Board 2

South Deals

E-W Vul

♠ K 8 6
♥ 8 5
♦ A 10 9 3
♣ A Q J 10



♠ A J 10
♥ K Q 9 2
♦ K Q 7 4 2
♣ 9

Opening Lead 3 of ♥

West	North	East	South
<i>Dan M.</i>	<i>Steve G.</i>	<i>Dot K.</i>	<i>Dean P.</i>
			1 ♦
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	4 NT	Pass	6 ♦
All pass			
6 ♦ by South			

Dean has to count his tricks. He has 5 diamonds in hand, 2 hearts, 1 club, and 2 hearts - totaling 10. He needs to get 2 ruffs in dummy. If trumps are 2-2, the hand is cold. The first hurdle is passed when the opening leader does not ruff the heart return, but instead follows with the 4. Since you hold the 2 of hearts, the lead of the 3 may be very significant. Check to see if opps are playing 3/5 leads or 4th best. Opps may falsecard, but rarely do on opening lead suit count. They are playing 3/5, so it looks like the opening leader either started with 3 hearts or 5.

Next, we have to check to see if trumps are 4-0, so we must lead a high diamond out of hand in order to cater to 4-0 in either direction. Both follow, so another hurdle is crossed. Here's where Dean made his first mistake. He continued with the other diamond from hand. The problem with this, is that when LHO shows out, he no longer can use dummy's 2 remaining trumps to ruff losers. If, instead, he draws the second round of trumps in dummy, it's possible for him to pitch one of dummy's spades on the Q of hearts, and ruff a spade as well as his 4th heart in dummy - if LHO started with 3 hearts and RHO started with 4. Dean doesn't have to decide just yet. At this point, before playing a second round of trumps, it can't hurt for him to play a club to the Ace and return the Q watching the opponents' count cards. Now a second round of trumps to dummy intending to claim if both opps follow, or to ruff another club if trumps prove to be 3-1...

A Day Late & A Dollar Short

D25 GNT Open Round 1
Board 2

♠ K 8 6
♥ —
♦ 10 9
♣ J 10



♠ A J 10
♥ Q 9
♦ Q 7
♣ —

Opening Lead 3 of ♥

West	North	East	South
<i>Dan M.</i>	<i>Steve G.</i>	<i>Dot K.</i>	<i>Dean P.</i>
			1 ♦
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	4 NT	Pass	6 ♦
All pass			

6 ♦ by South

If the club King does not drop, but both opps follow, you have a couple of options. You might just follow up on your initial assumption that LHO started with 3 hearts. Now, if you play East to have started with 3-4-3-3 distribution, just cash your Q of hearts pitching a spade, ruff a heart in dummy, play 3 rounds of spades ruffing in dummy and win the last trick with your high trump as East will have to follow and be down to the J of diamonds on the last card.

If you assume that East started with 2-4-3-4 distribution, you still cash the Q of hearts and ruff a heart, but now you have to play a trump to hand and continue a trump. If West started with the K of clubs, he will be squeezed down to 2 spades and your last 3 spades will score. If West pitches a low club and comes down to 3 spades, the odds heavily favor leading the A of spades and running the J.

If the K of clubs comes down, you just draw the last trump, cash the Q of hearts pitching a spade from dummy, and score the rest of the tricks. Here was the full hand....

A Day Late & A Dollar Short

D25 GNT Open Round 1

Board 2

South Deals

E-W Vul

♠ K 8 6		♠ 9 7 2
♥ 8 5		♥ A J 10 7
♦ A 10 9 3		♦ J 8 5
♣ A Q J 10		♣ K 8 2
♠ Q 5 4 3	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A J 10
♥ 6 4 3		♥ K Q 9 2
♦ 6		♦ K Q 7 4 2
♣ 7 6 5 4 3		♣ 9

Opening Lead 3 of ♥

West	North	East	South
<i>Dan M.</i>	<i>Steve G.</i>	<i>Dot K.</i>	<i>Dean P.</i>
Pass	2 ♣	2 ♦	1 ♦
3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦	Pass
4 NT	Pass	6 ♦	All pass

6 ♦ by South

If Dean had followed this line, the K of clubs would have come down on the 3rd round and he would have made the hand. Unfortunately, he played for a black suit squeeze against West and lost a spade trick to go down one - a 21 IMP swing in a match we lost by 24 IMPs.

This was a very close match through out. Our biggest adverse swing was not bidding 5H vulnerable which was very lucky to make, instead of accepting a mere 100 against 5Cx. Those 11 IMPs in addition to a couple other small swings were the only real swings until the very last board in which we could have picked up about a dozen IMPs. Even though this wasn't enough to cover the margin of our loss, I want to share it because it highlights a very interesting defensive situation..

A Day Late & A Dollar Short

D25 GNT Open Round 1

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul



♠ A J 7 5 2
♥ A K J 9 6 4 2
♦ 9
♣ —

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
3 ♣	3 ♦	4 ♣	4 ♥
5 ♣	Pass	Pass	?

A few hands later, you pick up this 5-7-1-0 hand and the auction proceeds as shown.

Do you bid 5H or double?

I'll show you your partner's hand and let you decide...

A Day Late & A Dollar Short

D25 GNT Open Round 1

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

♠ Q 10 6
 ♥ 8 3
 ♦ K Q J 10 8 4
 ♣ 7 2



♠ A J 7 5 2
 ♥ A K J 9 6 4 2
 ♦ 9
 ♣ —

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
3 ♣	3 ♦	4 ♣	4 ♥
5 ♣	Pass	Pass	?

It's still not clear, but I doubled and set it 1 trick. Dan Morgenstern bid 5H and this was the full deal..

A Day Late & A Dollar Short

D25 GNT Open Round 1

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

♠ 4	♠ Q 10 6	♠ K 9 8 3									
♥ 7	♥ 8 3	♥ Q 10 5									
♦ A 5 3 2	♦ K Q J 10 8 4	♦ 7 6									
♣ A K J 9 5 4 3	♣ 7 2	♣ Q 10 8 6									
	<table style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center; line-height: 40px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A J 7 5 2										
	♥ A K J 9 6 4 2										
	♦ 9										
	♣ —										

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
3 ♣	3 ♦	4 ♣	4 ♥
5 ♣	Pass	Pass	5 ♥
All pass			

5 ♥ by South

It's still not clear, but I doubled and set it 1 trick. Dan Morgenstern bid 5H and this was the full deal..

As you can see, 5H is one of those "ice cold contracts" we talked about previously...

After K of clubs lead, all you have to do is play 1 high trump and exit with a diamond. West must rise and play another club, which you ruff and lead a spade to dummy. What ever East does, you are home free, all you have to do is get back to dummy with the other high spade and finesse the Q of hearts.

In practice, Dan played the AK of hearts and now led a diamond. Looking at all four hands, it is easy to see the winning defense is to rise with the Ace of diamonds, but if you held the West hand, would you be more likely to play declarer to be 5-7-1-0 or 4-7-2-0?

Stephen Gladyszak is unquestionably a truly great player and he got it wrong!

Lose 11 - instead of win 7!

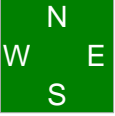
A Day Late & A Dollar Short

D25 GNT Open Round 1

Board 14

West Deals

N-S Vul

<p>♠ J 9 8 3 ♥ 7 6 5 3 ♦ 10 2 ♣ A 8 4</p>		<p>♠ A 7 4 ♥ A 9 8 ♦ Q 8 6 4 ♣ K 9 3</p>	<p>♠ K Q 6 5 ♥ K Q ♦ K J 7 5 ♣ Q J 10</p>
		<p>♠ 10 2 ♥ J 10 4 2 ♦ A 9 3 ♣ 7 6 5 2</p>	

West	North	East	South
<i>Jack M.</i>	<i>Pat M.</i>	<i>Laura L.</i>	<i>Mark A.</i>
Pass	1 ♦	1 NT	All pass

Opening Lead 2 of ♥

1 NT by East

At neither table did the EW pair find their optimal 4-4 spade fit. Here they played 1 NT. At the other table, after North opened a weak NT, Dean doubled and South bid 2C which showed clubs and a higher suit. This was passed around to Dean who doubled again, and Stephen bid 2H where the hand was played. So, at the other table, things were "four-two itis" for our opponents, as our teammates ended up in their 4-2 heart fit going down 2.

At our table, I was on lead against 1 NT and got off to a good start by leading my 2 of hearts. Pat won the Ace and continued the suit. Laura played a high spade from hand, and continued a spade when Pat ducked. Pat won the 2nd round of spades and returned a heart. I cashed my 2 hearts, and was on lead in this end position...

A Day Late & A Dollar Short

D25 GNT Open Round 1

♠ —		♠ —
♥ —		♥ —
♦ Q 8 6 4		♦ K J 7
♣ K 9 3		♣ Q J 10
♠ 9 8	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 6
♥ —		♥ —
♦ 10 2		♦ K J 7
♣ A 8 4		♣ Q J 10
♠ —		♠ —
♥ —		♥ —
♦ A 9 3		♦ A 9 3
♣ 7 6 5 2		♣ 7 6 5 2

West	North	East	South
<i>Jack M.</i>	<i>Pat M.</i>	<i>Laura L.</i>	<i>Mark A.</i>
Pass	1 ♦	1 NT	All pass

Opening Lead 2 of ♥

1 NT by East

We have won 1 spade and 3 hearts. Declarer has won 2 tricks. I shifted to the 7 of clubs and declarer ducked as Pat won the K. From here it was obvious that Pat did not have the Ace of diamonds or he would have opened 1 NT and declarer had no problem making 7 tricks.

But look what happens if I shift to the 3 of diamonds instead of a club. Pat will cover the 10 if that is played, or if the 2 of diamonds is played, Pat can play the 8! Now when Pat gets in with the K of clubs, a diamond back will get us 2 diamonds and the setting trick!

The play of the 8 of diamonds is what is called "an intrafinesse." Pretty spiffy!

This was our very last board of our first match, and, even if we got it right at both tables - instead of getting it wrong at both - it would still be, if you'll pardon the expression - a day late and a dollar short!

A Day Late & A Dollar Short

West Deals
E-W Vul

♠ J 9 5	♠ A K Q	♠ 10 8 4 3 2
♥ 9 8 6 3	♥ A Q	♥ K J 10
♦ J	♦ Q 6 4 2	♦ K 8 3
♣ K J 9 8 4	♣ A 7 6 5	♣ 10 2
	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin: 5px;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ 7 6	
	♥ 7 5 4 2	
	♦ A 10 9 7 5	
	♣ Q 3	

West	North	East	South
<i>Larry Lau</i>	<i>Pat McD</i>	<i>Brett Adler</i>	<i>Mark A.</i>
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 ♣
Dbl	Pass	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

4 ♠ by North

We still weren't out of the event at this point, but we were disappointed that we had to play another 14 board match in order to survive to the next round. A win in the first match would have given us a bye to the next day.

So, whereas it might be suggested that our teammates dumped us in the first match, we more than got even in the second!

Take a look at this brilliant auction...

What happened?! My demons took over! I thought Pat's pass of 3Cx denied a club stopper. When he bid 3S over my 3D, I thought he had a 5 card suit. Auction was the same at the other table, except North bid 3 NT which was a lucky make on a club lead.

After we played in our 3-2 spade fit and lost 11 IMPs, it occurred to me, I should have just bid 3N over pard's 2 NT and forget about a 4-4 heart fit.

The next hand was a classic "Shark Attack!"

A Day Late & A Dollar Short

GNT D25
Round 2 Board 21
South Deals
N-S Vul



♠ J 10 3
♥ 9
♦ J 9 7 2
♣ K Q J 8 6

West	North	East	South
			<i>Mark A.</i>
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT	Pass
			?

This was my hand, and as I have preached lead-directional bids so often, one can only guess what was going thru my mind when I passed instead of bidding 2C!

But the auction wasn't over yet!

A Day Late & A Dollar Short

GNT D25
 Round 2 Board 21
 South Deals
 N-S Vul

♠ A K 7 6 5 4	♠ 8	♠ Q 9 2
♥ A 7 3	♥ K Q 10	♥ J 8 6 5 4 2
♦ A 10	♦ K 8 6 4 3	♦ Q 5
♣ 9 4	♣ 10 7 5 3	♣ A 2
	♠ J 10 3	
	♥ 9	
	♦ J 9 7 2	
	♣ K Q J 8 6	

West	North	East	South <i>Mark A.</i>
			Pass
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
All pass			
4 ♠× by West			

I could have really stuck my neck out and bid 4C after East bid 3S, and that would only go down 1 trick. What I did in practice was totally idiotic! I passed until the end and now doubled! Pat, quite understandably led the K of Hearts and we were -790 to lose 7 IMPS. Had I bid 2C which is actually pretty clear, Pat would obviously lead a club and we would beat 4S to win 11 IMPs!

I realized what I should have done on this hand as soon as it was over. In fact, I was talking to myself during the auction and God only knows why I didn't bid 2C. I saw how effective that bid would have been - but it was a day late and a dollar short.

We got buried and were out. Even though we were out of that event, life goes on and Pat and I are still great friends. The very next day, we played online. Here was one of the hands that highlighted my other frequent lesson to bid to the hilt when you have a huge trump fit with partner.

Here was the hand....

A Day Late & A Dollar Short

East Deals
Both Vul

	♠ K 4 3		
	♥ J 8 7 2		
	♦ Q J 9 5		
	♣ 10 2		
♠ A 5	N	♠ 10 9 7 2	
♥ A Q 10 6 4 3	W	♥ —	
♦ 8	S	♦ 10 6 4	
♣ K Q 7 4	E	♣ A J 9 6 5 3	
	♠ Q J 8 6		
	♥ K 9 5		
	♦ A K 7 3 2		
	♣ 8		

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1 ♦
1 ♥	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
3 ♦	Dbl	4 ♣	Pass
4 ♦	Dbl	Pass	Pass
6 ♣	All pass		

Opening Lead Q of ♠

6 ♣ by East

Pat played this hand beautifully! He won the Ace of spades, played a low heart from dummy, ruffed in hand, played a trump to dummy and played A and a low heart - setting up the suit.

Now a third trump to dummy, running the hearts, pitching 3 diamonds and conceding a spade - making 6C!

We had a 78% game to come in 1st in nearly 200 pairs.

Only trouble was that it was a "day late and a dollar short!"

See you next week, folks!