

## Forgive And Forget

West Deals  
None Vul



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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1 ♣	1 NT
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT
All pass			

Opening Lead 4 of ♥

3 NT by South

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Welcome to this - our 47th session of Shark's Pointers Online!

Today, I am going to talk about something that is so important for all of us. As we strive to continually improve our results, our competitiveness, our learning tools, and various techniques how to enhance our memory - we need to keep all of this in balance. If we can't learn how to move on after a bad result - or sometimes, even after a good result - our own enjoyment of the game will deteriorate - not to mention the impact on our partners and on the duration of our partnerships. I can tell you from personal experience that this is not an easy thing to do. But I can tell you, it is quintessential. All the great players - from Bob Hamman on down - will tell you that the secret of their success has been the ability to put the last hand out of their minds and stay focused on the hand before them. It even goes deeper than that. We have to discipline ourselves to forget about a terrible overbid partner just made that put us into a difficult, if not completely hopeless contract. And after we go down in a contract we could have - and arguably should have in many cases - we have to put it out of our mind as we move on to the next challenge or opportunity.

Today's Shark's Pointer is "Forgive And Forget". More often than not, the one we have to forgive is ourselves. Let's look at the above hand from the recent Online NABC Robot Individual. I would have preferred a club lead, as I would have an easy route to 2S, 2H, 2D, and 3C, but the actual lead of the 4 of ♥ actually was more problematic.

## Forgive And Forget

West Deals  
None Vul

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



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

NS 3N; NS 4♣; NS 2♠; NS 2♥; NS 3♦; Par +400

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1 ♣	1 NT
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT
All pass			

Opening Lead 4 of ♥

3 NT by South

This was the dummy...

I have 2 spades, 2 hearts, at least 2 diamonds, and 1 club. I have chances for 2 extra tricks in clubs, but it doesn't look like I'll have enough lots of extra tricks in diamonds, but with the opening bidder on my right, it looks like the Q of diamonds will be offside. How should I proceed?

Since the 2 of hearts was missing, it seems possible and probably likely that West chose to lead from a 5 card suit, rather than leading the suit his partner had bid. So, I thought it best to duck the opening lead. Now the K of ♠ was returned. I'll just show how I actually misplayed this hand, and then go back and point out how I should have known to play it differently.

I won the spade shift, and played a low club towards dummy. East won the J, and continued with Q and a spade. Now I play a heart to dummy to lead the 10 of clubs off dummy. West covered with the Q and I won as West followed low. Now, I gave up a club, hoping tht East was out of spades, but he wasn't and I went down one, for an 11.1% score. Not great. When I checked the double dummy analysis, it showed that I was ice cold for 3 NT - on any lead! So what did I miss?

## Forgive And Forget

West Deals  
None Vul

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



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

NS 3N; NS 4♣; NS 2♠; NS 2♥; NS 3♦; Par +400

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1 ♣	1 NT
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT
All pass			

Opening Lead 4 of ♥

3 NT by South

The answer, in retrospect, is fairly obvious.

One of the most common, recurrent themes we've discussed is developing a model of the opponents' distribution and high cards. Oftentimes, this will require some educated guesswork and some logical, but not 100% ironclad proof. On this hand, we should assume that East has the KQJ of clubs, it is pretty certain he also holds the KQ of spades, and we know he has the Q of hearts. That totals 13. If he also had the Q of diamonds, his total would be 15 and he would have opened 1 NT. Armed with this quite reasonable assumption, I now see a very good line of play. I win the Ace of spades, play Ace of diamonds, finesse the J, and when this holds with East following, I can see at least 4 diamonds, 2 hearts, 2 spades and 1 club. If diamonds are 3-3, I will have an overtrick. So, let's proceed with this plan...

I won the Ace of spades, I play Ace of diamonds, hook the J, cash the K and return a diamond, pitching 2 clubs from hand. Here is the position...

## Forgive And Forget

♠ 6  
♥ A 5  
♦ 7  
♣ 10 8 2



♠ J 10  
♥ K 7  
♦ —  
♣ A 9 7

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1 ♣	1 NT
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT
All pass			

Opening Lead 4 of ♥

3 NT by South

Here is the position...

West now won and shifted to a club. East played the J. Uh oh!. I can win the club and play a heart to dummy and cash my diamond, but when I now give up a trick to the Q of Spades, the opps win and cash 2 clubs. They score 2 clubs, 1 spade, 1 diamond and 1 heart - down 1!

So, what went wrong?

## Forgive And Forget

West Deals  
None Vul

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

NS 3N; NS 4♣; NS 2♠; NS 2♥; NS 3♦; Par +400

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1 ♣	1 NT
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT
All pass			

Opening Lead 4 of ♥

3 NT by South

Let's go back and duck that K of spades! Now the defense is powerless. If they now shift to a high club, we win and return a club. We have plenty of time to set up the needed club tricks. If they continue spades win as cheaply as possible in hand and clear diamonds. Big difference now is that, having ducked a spade, you are in complete control and can safely finesse a spade in the end game to ensure your contract. You are in control - not the opponents.

This was tough going down on this hand - and tougher yet for not having thought about the fact that the opening bidder probably did not hold 15 hcp - until long after the hand.

Ducking the spade shift is a tough play, but as a general rule, it is good technique to duck in this situation - provided that a shift will not kill you.

Alright. Let's forgive ourselves for going down in this hand, and try to forget it as we move on to another hand. This time, we had all the info we needed to defend properly - but blew it!

Here's the hand...

## Forgive And Forget

Matchpoints  
South Deals  
Both Vul

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

Opening Lead 10 of ♥

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	3 NT	All pass	2 NT

My partner led the 10 of ♥ on the diagrammed deal. Declarer played the Q from dummy, and I signalled with the 6. Declarer continued with the Q and J of clubs, partner playing the 5 of hearts on the second club, and now declarer played a low diamond to dummy's Q and my K.

The heart position was clear to me, and had I just returned a heart, declarer would win in hand, run the clubs and throw partner in with the K of hearts to lead away from the A of spades or the J of diamonds. Anticipating partner's problem, I shifted to the J of spades. Declarer covered with the K and partner won his ace. I hoped he could read the heart position and return a heart, but he thought I had J10 doubleton of spades and returned the spade 7. This was disastrous, and when the smoke cleared, declarer actually made 11 tricks for a cold top. Can you see my big goof on this hand?

Knowing from the play that declarer was likely to be 5-2-3-3, I had a clear, completely safe but aggressive return of a diamond - not a spade. Now there should be no confusion, and while my partner is still going to get squeeze endplayed if declarer rises with the Ace of diamonds, A of hearts, and runs his clubs - he'll only make 9 tricks - not 11!

If declarer ducks the diamond, a diamond back and declarer is likely to go down a trick!

Let's assume declarer doesn't do something foolish by ducking my diamond return. Look at what happens if declarer rises with the Ace of diamonds, and runs his clubs...

## Forgive And Forget

Matchpoints

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

♠ K 10 6 3
♥ A
♦ 4
♣ —

Opening Lead 10 of ♥

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	3 NT	All pass	2 NT

3 NT by South

Declarer has won 2 hearts, 1 diamond and 4 clubs for a total of 7 tricks. He cashes his last club in dummy and pitches a spade from hand and West has to hold on to the Q of Spades, so he has to choose between coming down to a singleton K of ♥. or a singleton J of ♦. Either way, declarer plays a heart to his Ace, and throws West in with a diamond. West can cash 2 diamonds or a diamond and a heart, depending upon his discard on the last club. But either way, he must come down to the AQ of ♠, and concede the 9th trick to South's K.

Let's look at one more huge mistake I made the other night that was 100% avoidable. This time the error is in declarer play...

## Forgive And Forget

IMPs

West Deals

N-S Vul

♠ K 9 8 6

♥ K

♦ K J 10 3

♣ Q J 9 4



♠ A Q 7 4

♥ A Q

♦ A 9 6 5 4

♣ K 2

Opening Lead 10 of ♥

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 ♥	Dbl	5 ♥	6 ♠
All pass			

6 ♠ by South

The other night I was playing with World Champion Pat McDevitt of Brookline, MA against a very aggressive expert pair. West opened the bidding 2H, Pat doubled and East bid 5H. Back to me, I guessed to bid 6 ♠, which ended the auction, and I received the lead of the 10 of ♥.

The dummy is as shown above.

I overtook dummy's K of hearts with my ace. I had to lose the Ace of clubs, I had to avoid the loss of a spade if possible, and I had to guess how to play the diamonds. A lot of word ahead. Not wanting to give up on 3-2 spades and still cater to some of the 4-1 splits, I played A of spades and a spade to dummy. This way, I could pick up 4-1 spades on my right if there was a singleton J or 10 on my left, so I played to protect against that holding. Fortunately, the suit split 3-2 with West pitching a heart on the 3rd round. Now, I cashed the Q of hearts, pitching the J of diamonds, before playing the K of clubs. East won the Ace, and East made the best return of a heart, giving me a ruff and a sluff.

This was the position...



Forgive And Forget

IMPs

♠ 9  
 ♥ —  
 ♦ K 10 3  
 ♣ Q J 9



♠ 7  
 ♥ —  
 ♦ A 9 6 5 4  
 ♣ 2

Opening Lead 10 of ♥

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 ♥	Dbl	5 ♥	6 ♠
All pass			

6 ♠ by South

In practice, I ruffed in hand, pitching the 10 of ♦ from dummy. I played a club from dummy and cashed the 9 of spades. Now I cashed the Q and J of clubs, West showing out on the J of clubs. Now I played K of diamonds and 3 of diamonds. East showed out, and I went down 1.

Here was the full layout....

## Forgive And Forget

IMPs  
West Deals  
N-S Vul

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

Opening Lead 10 of ♥

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 ♥	Dbl	5 ♥	6 ♠
All pass			

6 ♠ by South

So, what did I miss here?

Well, if I had thought a little more, there was a virtually 100% line of play available - assuming hearts were divided 6 in the West hand, and 4 in the East hand. I actually have a complete count. West had 2 spades and 2 clubs. Of that we are completely certain. That leaves 9 cards in the red suits. If he had 6 hearts, he had to have started with 3 diamonds.

So, let's go back to the critical point at which we were given the ruff and a sluff - which is pretty much forced. A diamond return takes away the guess, and a club return sets up dummy's 9 for an extra trick.

## Forgive And Forget

IMPs

♠ 9  
♥ —  
♦ K 10 3  
♣ Q J 9



♠ 7  
♥ —  
♦ A 9 6 5 4  
♣ 2

Opening Lead 10 of ♥

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 ♥	Dbl	5 ♥	6 ♠
All pass			

6 ♠ by South

We have to keep 3 diamonds and 3 clubs in dummy, so we have to ruff the heart return in dummy - not in my hand.

Once again, we know West had 6 hearts and 2 spades, playing on clubs will give a complete count on the hand. If, as in the actual case, West shows out on the 3 round of the suit, we know West had to have started with 3 diamonds, so it will be 100% to play a diamond to my Ace and finesse the 10.

To summarize, I have given you 3 examples in which I made terrible mistakes - that were totally avoidable. If an accomplished and very experienced player like myself makes these kinds of mistakes, don't be too unforgiving of yourself the next time you make a very bad and avoidable mistake.

Today's Shark's Pointer is - Next time you realize you made a huge mistake, try very very hard to forgive yourself, forget the hand for the time being, and move on to the next hand! The more you do this, the more enjoyable your game will be - and the better by far your overall results will be. Without doing this, you'll be cursed to make a lot more mistakes as your concentration will be blurred by thinking about past mistakes - instead of avoiding future ones!

See you all next Friday!