

## Position Is Everything In Life

Matchpoints

EW Vul

East Dlr

♠ K 10  
♥ A Q 8 7  
♦ K 8 7  
♣ Q 10 9 7

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	?	1 ♦	Pass

Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Welcome to this, the 36th session of Shark's Pointer's Online!

I grew up in a lower-middle class Italian family in Central Mass. My parents played a card game called "pitch" when I was growing up. I never heard of the game of bridge until I was off at college. My wife was much more cultured. Her dad was a successful patent attorney who played bridge on a daily basis during his rail commute from Long Island to New York City. Sadly, Sue's dad passed away before I met her, but I did get to know her mother quite well. I remember when Sue would sit slouched in a chair, her mother would say, "Susan, position is everything in life!".

Perhaps some of you can relate to this advice which will be the topic of today's discussion, but by "position", we'll be talking about the word in the context of bidding, and show how position is so important in getting great results at bridge.

Let's start with the diagrammed deal. The auction goes as follows. Your LHO opens the bidding 1D at unfavorable vulnerability, and the person on your right bids 1H. You have a pretty good hand, but my guess is you would pass. But you are not vulnerable at matchpoints, and I am going to suggest you should bid 1 NT. But, you may say, you only have 14 points and your promise 15-17 for this bid. That's true, but it doesn't take a lot of imagine to figure out that if you do pass, it is likely you will see an auction proceed as follows...

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Matchpoints

East Deals

E-W Vul

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♦	Pass
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♠	All pass		
2 ♠ by East			

Normal play and defense will result in EW quite likely making 8 or 9 tricks in 2S for +110 or +140.

On the given hand, what will East bid, if you should bid 1 NT? Double is usually showing 3 card heart support, so he can't bid that. Being vulnerable, I would suggest that it will very likely be passed out, and East would likely lead a heart. I think it is going to be very difficult to beat 1 NT,

In fact, I plugged this hand into the software program Tim has shared on his website and I discovered that with best defense and best play, EW are cold for 9 tricks in spades, and double dummy they can actually beat 1 NT two tricks for +100, but certainly can slip up to allow NS to go down only 1 or even make the hand. Even down 2, the best result possible will result in a terrible result!

The key was North's 1 NT bid, it essentially blocked East from being able to rebid 1S. There are a number of bids where position is so very important. Sometimes you get in the opponents's way such as this hand, but sometimes you get in your partner's way. Sometimes you go for a number!

So you have to use good judgment. But thinking about position will, I guarantee, improve your results immediately. Here is a hand from a recent tournament...

## Position Is Everything In Life

Matchpoints  
South Deals  
N-S Vul



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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 ♥	3 ♥	?	Pass

A lot of these positional bids require thinking ahead and realizing what the likely contract will be.

You hold the East hand at matchpoints and the auction proceeds as follows.

What is your bid?

Before you answer, ask the opponents what 3H means. You're told it shows Spades and a minor.

So now ask yourself what are the likely suits and it would seem obvious that North has a big hand with spades and clubs. What is your objective? Do you want to sacrifice? You might have a good sacrifice, but one pointer I want to share is that hearts do not outrank spades. So, the save will have to be at a pretty high level, and it is not clear it will be that cheap.

The answer is to bid 4 ♦, and when South bids 4 ♠, now you can decide whether or not to change sacrificing in 5 ♥. Here was the complete deal...

## Position Is Everything In Life

Matchpoints  
 South Deals  
 N-S Vul

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

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

5 ♥× by West

As you can see, if EW are allowed to play 5Hx, they will only lose 2C, 1S, and 1H for down 2 and a close to top score.

If instead, North pulls the double to 5S, partner will lead a diamond and holding 5S to 11 tricks will actually net a 74% result. If you just raise hearts like a good doobee, partner will lead the K of hearts and NS will score all the tricks!

These competitive auctions occur frequently and getting these boards right or wrong will make you or break you.

I want to share a cute hand with you in which one of my partners showed a lot of imaginative and make a very bold, but not unreasonable, bid that generated a top result against a world champion!

## Position Is Everything In Life

Matchpoints  
South Deals  
E-W Vul

♠ K Q J 10 6 5  
♥ A J 5  
♦ A 5 2  
♣ A



West	North	East	South
<i>Selen</i>	<i>Jan Jansma</i>	<i>Shark</i>	
			3 ♣
Dbl	3 NT	Dbl	Pass
Pass	4 ♣	4 ♦	Pass
?			

Jan Jansma was sitting North playing with a student. Jan's partner dealt and opened the bidding 3C in first seat. Selen did a smart think in my opinion, by doubling with her huge hand and not just jumping to 4S. Getting info from partner can only help, and holding the master suit, she was always going to be in control of the auction. Jan Jansma, one of the top players in the world, bid 3 NT which I doubled. Selen was content to sit for this, and now Jansma bid 4C. I bid 4D and it was Selen's turn.

What would you do?

## Position Is Everything In Life

Matchpoints  
South Deals  
E-W Vul

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Selen</i>	<i>Jan Jansma</i>	<i>Shark</i>	
Dbl	3 NT	Dbl	3 ♣
Pass	4 ♣	4 ♦	Pass
6 ♠	All pass		

6 ♠ by West

Opening Lead 9 of ♣

Selen made what I think is a brilliant bid! She bid 6S!

First of all, it could be ice cold. If I have 5 good diamonds, and as little as the Q of hearts, the only thing that might set it would be a diamond ruff.

This was the full deal...Of course, a heart lead would have set it, but who would lead a heart on this auction?

Jan Jansma led a club and Selen won in hand and knocked out the Spade Ace, won the return and ran her diamonds pitching her heart losers. Making six for +1430 and a 95% board!

The following hand is one of my favorites....

## Position Is Everything In Life

North Deals  
None Vul

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

Opening Lead 6 of ♥

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

3 NT by North

My RHO opened the bidding 1 ♣, her partner bid 1 ♦, and I took advantage of my position at the 1 level to get a lead directional 1 ♥ bid in. South rebid 1 ♠, and partner raised my hearts. (Note - when you have values, 4 trumps and some ruffing value (not 4-3-3-3) raise partner - even if he is a passed hand - especially at the 2 level.)

Now this looks like a heart lead was awful! South won with the 10 in dummy and immediately played A and a diamond. West ducked the first time but North persisted in driving out the K.

Now a heart came back, and North was doomed! His only tricks are 5 ♦ and 2 ♥. He can certainly bid other tricks in both clubs and spades, but he will lose 2 hearts, 1 diamond, 1 spade, and 1 club.

Take a close look at this hand, and lead something other than a heart away from the KJ.

The 10 protects the suit from being run. Declarer has time to set up his 5 diamonds and establish a couple of spade winners while keeping control of the hand.

As strange as it may seem, a heart lead is the only way to beat 3 NT!

Today's Shark's Pointer is to pay attention to the bidding. Make it tough for the opponents and easy for your side to get to the right contract and make the right lead.