

These Are A Few of My Favorite Themes

"Bid What You Hope You Can Make!" (Then Make It!)

South Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 10 3		♠ K J 7 6 4									
♥ K Q J 10 5 4		♥ —									
♦ 10 9 8 3		♦ J 7 5									
♣ 10		♣ Q 9 8 7 2									
♠ 9 2	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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> </div>		N		W		E		S		♠ A Q 8 5
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 9 8 7 3 2		♥ A 6									
♦ A Q 4 2		♦ K 6									
♣ 5 3		♣ A K J 6 4									

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			2 ♣
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♣	Pass	5 ♦
Pass	6 ♥	Pass	6 NT
All pass			

6 NT by South

One of my favorite themes is to "Bid What You Hope You Can Make!" This bold bidding and play by South certainly epitomized this! The methods used by N-S were arguably not the best, as 6H played by North would go down immediately on a diamond lead. South knew her partner only had a good heart suit and was missing an ace, so she not unreasonably took a shot at 6N. The defense slipped a bit as East pitched 2 clubs on the run of the hearts. Now South followed the recurrent theme that if one hand is known to be significantly longer in one suit, then that hand's partner will likely to be significantly longer in other suits - and therefore more likely to hold a specific card in that suit. So, even though East pitched two clubs, declarer led the 10 of clubs off dummy after cashing all dummy's hearts - and led it ride, bringing in 6 hearts, 5 clubs and the A of spades to make the slam and get a cold top in a field of over 100 contestants!

These Are A Few Of My Favorite Themes

"Bid What You Hope You Can Make!" (Then Make It!)

IMPs
South Deals
E-W Vul

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	6 ♠!	5 ♦
Pass	Dbl	All pass	Pass

6 ♠× by East

Here's another great example of "Bid What You Hope You Can Make" - as East decided he would have a hard time finding out if partner had the K of clubs which is all he needed for slam to be cold. North's double violated another couple of my favorite themes -

#1) Never Double Without Trump Tricks, and

#2) Never Double For A One Trick Set at IMPs

Here's what happened at the other table....

These Are A Few Of My Favorite Themes

IMPS

"Make Lead Directional Bids"

South Deals
E-W Vul

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	5 ♠	5 ♦
Pass	6 ♣!	Pass	6 ♦
All pass			

6 ♦ by South

Here's what happened at the other table....

After East bid a very sound 5S, North balanced in with 6C as insurance against opps bidding a slam and making on a diamond lead, while suggesting partner bid 6D, which he did, as you can see.

My favorite themes exemplified by this deal are

#1) Lead Directional Bids Give You A Great Edge in Competitive Auctions, and

#2) Even When In Doubt, Taking Out a Little Insurance is Often Wise!

These Are A Few Of My Favorite Themes
 "Play For the Cards to Be Where You Need Them"

Matchpoints
 North Deals
 E-W Vul

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	1 N
All pass			

1 N by South

Opening Lead 2 of ♥

Here's another recently played hand that highlights some other of my favorite themes.

After the lead of the 2 of ♥, the first important theme is

#1) Stop and Think Before Playing to Trick One and

#2) Play For The Missing Honors To Be Where You Need Them to Be (in order to help you make your contract). Accordingly, our declarer immediately rose with the heart K, as he needed an entry to dummy to finesse diamonds. Putting in the 9 or 10 of hearts may be the best chance for two tricks in this suit, but, timing is everything and we can only get two tricks if the opps are kind enough to keep playing that suit. So, declarer rose with the K and ran the 9 of diamonds, followed by the Q and another cashing 4 diamond tricks.

Now here was another of my favorite themes...

#3) If You Give the Opps A 50-50 Chance To Go Wrong, They Will - 90% of The Time!

South now played his other heart up towards dummy, and sure enough West rose with the Q, and cashed the Ace - crashing partner's J. Now, West shifted to a club, South won the Q and A and threw West back in with a club - and once again West was endplayed (either lead a heart to dummy's established winner or lead away from the K of spades. South ended up making 10 tricks!

These Are A Few Of My Favorite Themes
 "Bridge Is A Great Game - But It Is Only A Game"

NAP Flight A Finals 3rd Session

Mansfield, MA 11/10/19

East Deals

None Vul

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Mark Aquino</i>	<i>Sheila Gabay</i>	<i>Andrew Chesterton</i>	<i>Victor King</i>
		1 ♠	2 ♣
2 ♠	Dbl	3 ♠	4 ♣
Dbl	All pass		

4 ♣× by South

I want to close today's talk on a very sad note. I didn't want to start with this, for fear that I might not be able to hold it together enough to get thru the presentation.

Anyone who played in a tournament in New England in the past 30 years will be very familiar with the name Victor King. He was a Grand Life Master with over 14,000 masterpoints. He and Sheila Gabay dominated KO's and matchpoint events for the past several years. A resident of Hartford, CT he worked for many years at Traveler's Insurance until recently taking an early retirement to bicycle extensively around the world. This past weekend, he was brutally murdered in his apartment. Victor was not only a great bridge player, he was a great human being who will be very missed. I want to close with a hand that helped he and Sheila to do what they had never done before - which was to qualify for the National Finals in the North American Pairs.

The bidding was as shown. After Andrew made an excellent 3S bid, showing a weak hand with extra spade length, Victor thought and thought and thought. Finally, he came out with a masterful bid of 4C and I made a knee-jerk double that I soon regretted as Victor quickly chalked up 10 tricks for +510. This catapulted Victor and Sheila into a qualifying position for the NABC. They were both thrilled. Then the pandemic hit and a week before they were supposed to compete in the Spring NABC, the tournament in Columbus, OH was canceled. The ACBL then pushed things back and scheduled the NAP final for the Summer NABC in Montreal - but that too was cancelled. So, they were never able to compete. If they had, I sure wouldn't have bet against them winning the whole thing!