

Sometimes more is Less - Norman's Notes No. 47

Pain for East

Dealer South. Both vulnerable.

♠ K 3
♥ K 10 2
♦ A Q 9 7 5
♣ A K J

♠ A Q 7 2
♥ Q 8
♦ K 8 4
♣ 10 8 6 5

It is not at all clear that North-South should bid a slam with these hands. North's 20 HCP are somewhat scattered: likewise, South's 11. There is an ace missing, and finesses may be needed in hearts and/or clubs. In practice, both fail, and yet bold bidders at Bury Club were in luck: East was triply squeezed early in the play.

At one table South opened - vulnerable - with those 11 points, and North could hardly be blamed for pressing on to 6NT. At another (no names) this was the bidding:

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
			<i>pass</i>
<i>pass</i>	2♣ (a)	<i>pass</i>	2NT (b)
<i>pass</i>	3NT	<i>pass</i>	5NT (c)
<i>pass</i>	6NT (d)	<i>End</i>	

(a) 8 tricks or 19-20 balanced.

(b) Natural, positive.

(c) Is your hand better than it might be?

(d) "Yes". (Just about).

After that bidding, West makes the safe lead of ♠10 against South's 6NT. The full hands:

	♠ K 3	
	♥ K 10 2	
	♦ A Q 9 7 5	
	♣ A K J	
♠ 10 9 8	<div style="background-color: #8ebf4d; width: 100px; height: 100px; border: 1px solid black;"></div>	♠ J 8 6 5
♥ A 9 6 4 3		♥ J 7 5
♦ 10 2		♦ J 6 3
♣ 4 3 2		♣ Q 9 7
	♠ A Q 7 2	
	♥ Q 8	
	♦ K 8 4	
	♣ 10 8 6 5	

If the diamonds behave, declarer can count 11 top tricks after forcing out A♥. What about a 12th? Let's try running the diamonds. Declarer discards clubs and West has no problem either. But East is in trouble on the 4th diamond, and more trouble on the 5th. Any discard in effect concedes a trick in that suit. After running the diamonds and conceding a heart trick, declarer can safely try each suit in turn (if necessary).

The contracts:

- 6NT bid three times (once by South): 12 tricks made twice and 10 tricks once
- 3NT bid three times by North: 12 tricks made twice and 11 tricks once