

## Essex Contract Bridge Association

### The Warboys Trophy 2019 Season

#### Report on Session held 10th June 2019

The first of this month's deals examines the effect of differences in bidding system, style and judgement on what at first sight appears to be a straightforward case.

The second looks at how declarer may take advantage of a favourable lead in an unusual way.

The third considers aggressive pre-emption and subsequent judgement.

#### Board 4

Bd: 4	♠ A43				
Vul: All	♥ Q76				
Dir: West	♦ 108				
	♣ AK943				
♠ 10875	N	♠ KJ9			
♥ AK8	W 4 E	♥ 105			
♦ 93	S	♦ QJ7542			
♣ QJ107		♣ 85			
13	♠ Q62	♣♦♥♠ N			
10 HCP 7	♥ J9432	N 2 1 3 1 2			
10	♦ AK6	S 2 1 3 1 2			
	♣ 62	E - - - - -			
		W - - - - -			

There always seems to be one complicated hand and this is it.

The most likely course of events is that North will open 1Nt (12-14) and South will transfer to Hearts. Those pairs who would "break" transfer with four card support and maximum HCP will be at an advantage. When North fails to break South will likely be deterred from any lingering game ambitions, hence North will play comfortably in 2H.

Pairs who play a strong 1Nt and a "short club" will open 1C and after a 1H response North has to choose between his normal 1Nt rebid or, because of the Diamond shortage, raise 1H to 2H. In the latter case South does not know this of course and may envisage a minimum range hand with five Clubs and four Hearts opposite. South can hardly do less than make an invitational raise by whatever methods are at his disposal. North now has to judge whether he has done enough or, because of his controls and the fact it is IMP scoring, push on to game.

It is worth considering the effect of playing transfer responses to a short 1C. Here the auction may start 1C-1D-1H- 1D showed Hearts, 1H showed three card support in a minimum range opening hand (up to 15hcp but probably a weak 1Nt type, with four hearts North would bid 2H), South may decide to just bid 2H to inhibit any competition or he may push on with a bid of 2C which is a range enquiry and they are back to the same position as the natural sequence above except that South knows that North has precisely three Hearts.

It is in auctions like the latter two above, where small variations in the application of system and judgement prevail, that game may be reached. 4H will fail quite quickly if the defence draw trumps from the off, or lead a Spade from the West seat then switch to trumps. There are not enough entries to set up North's fifth Club; eventually two trumps, one Spade and one Diamond will be conceded.

However, when West is on lead the attractions of the Club Queen at trick one, give 4H some sort of chance. Declarer needs to find the King of Spades with East (it is) and the Ten of Hearts in a doubleton or with East (both apply here). In which case declarer's best chance of eliminating his Diamond loser is to ruff it in dummy rather than try to set up the Clubs. So, declarer wins the Club lead with the King (ultimately it makes no difference if he wins the first trick in dummy) and plays three rounds of Diamonds ruffing low in dummy as West discards a Spade. It looks like South can play on Spades at any stage but the timing is crucial. After the ruff, if South leads a trump from dummy and finesses the 9, West wins the King and can now beat the contract by cashing the Ace of Hearts and leading a Spade. South has no better play than to duck in dummy; East wins the King and plays a fourth round of Diamonds thereby creating a trick for West's 8 of Hearts *en passant*. Declarer can avoid this by deferring a trump lead and playing a Spade to his Queen. East's entry for the trump promotion is consumed too early to do any good for the defence. Whatever the defence does after this declarer can play trumps safely from either hand, playing East for the Ten.

In the event only one pair (in the A Section) reached 4H. This slipped through when a penalty card prevented the defence from drawing a second trump before switching to Spades.

### Board 17

Bd: 17	♠ AQ2		
Vul: None	♥ 62		
Dlr: North	♦ J82		
	♣ 65432		
♠ 987		N	♠ J10543
♥ 1083		W 17 E	♥ AKQ9
♦ AQ10943			♦ 7
♣ 9			♣ AK10
	♠ K6		♣♦♥♠ N
7	♥ J754		N - - - -
6 HCP 17	♦ K65		S - - - -
10	♣ QJ87		E - 3 3 3 1
			W - 3 3 3 1

A likely auction for East/West is 1S-2S-3H-3S-4S. Perhaps East won't bother looking for a 4-4 Heart fit and jump to game instead. Best defence is to lead trumps on the go but it seems inconceivable that South will find the King of Spades lead. More likely he will lead the Queen of Clubs or possibly a Heart if the suit has not been bid. The latter scuppers any chance of beating 4S of course. A Diamond lead is also unlikely but does put declarer under pressure straightaway. East would have liked to keep the Diamond finesse in reserve if the Jack of Hearts doesn't drop but may be put off this winning line if South happens to lead one. However, the Queen of Clubs is favourite at trick one and East wins and ruffs his Ten of Clubs in dummy and plays trumps. East should not cash his second, high Club before ruffing the Ten because if trumps break 4-1 he can get forced in Clubs and lose trump control.

On this straightforward line of play East needs to draw no more than two rounds of trumps, finding they are 3-2, before testing the Hearts and then resorting to the Diamond finesse which brings home the game. The combined odds of four Heart tricks or two Diamond tricks are very good but there is another possibility which avoids the Diamond finesse. Let us say East wins the Club lead and ruffs the Ten in dummy as above, then instead of drawing trumps immediately he explores the Heart suit. Even if one of the high Hearts gets ruffed this will only lead to defeat if the hand with short hearts started with specifically four trumps or only two trumps one of which is not an honour. In every other case declarer will either be able to cross ruff his way to ten tricks, or if the defence can draw dummy's trumps, he will still have the Diamond finesse in reserve. On the actual deal North can ruff the third

Heart with the 2 of Spades but no matter what he does next the defence is held to three trump tricks. Well, it's an unusual line of play and whether it has better odds than the more straightforward line I will leave readers to work out.

In the A section two pairs missed game and one got too high; another went off in 4S as did one in the B where every other EW made game.

### Board 19

Bd: 19	♠ 3		
Vul: E/W	♥ KQJ1075		
Dir: South	♦ 10852		
	♣ Q5		
♠ KJ98		N	♠ 107652
♥ 64		W 19 E	♥ A2
♦ 76			♦ AKQJ4
♣ J10986			♣ A
8	♠ AQ4		♣♦♥♠ N
5 HCP 18	♥ 983		N - - 2 - -
9	♦ 93		S - - 2 - -
	♣ K7432		E 2 4 - 5 1
			W 2 4 - 5 1

Nothing complicated about this deal, but it is interesting to look at how and why players pre-empt and how their opponent's cope with the barrage.

After two passes North will take some pre-emptive action. The hand qualifies for a weak 2H but with a good suit, 6-4 shape and favourable vulnerability an opening 3H is surely a better action. (An inspired 4H may appeal to those with very aggressive instincts.) East will be bidding Double in any North opening scenario and West will remove to Spades. When 3H is opened followed by Double and a Pass by South, West will bid 3S and East will be inclined to just raise to game knowing that West doesn't have enough to bid 4S himself. Of course, South, expecting seven Hearts in his partner's hand, should raise to 4H. If West ventures 4S now his side may get too high, however the West hand is really a bit short on high cards to bid voluntarily and 4H will travel back to East who will try another Double. A bit of pressure on West now; does he take the money or try for a vulnerable game? Although he can't be sure of four card support from East, he is likely to bid 4S. East, although holding a mighty hand should appreciate that his partner is bidding under pressure and any higher level is risky. Good judgement all round....but as it happens NS can push to 5H and show a small profit if EW just take the money.

In the event every EW made game in Spades except one who accepted 500 from 5H.