

Essex Contract Bridge Association

The Warboys Trophy 2019 Season

Report on Session held 11th September 2019

If there is a common theme this month it's about taking a positive approach in bidding and defence.

Board 5

Bd: 5	♠ AKQ10864				
Vul: N/S	♥ 2				
Dir: North	♦ 5				
	♣ AQ52				
♠ 532	N	♠ —			
♥ Q9843	W 5 E	♥ J1065			
♦ J3	S	♦ AK108			
♣ 1043		♣ KJ876			
15	♠ J97	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N			
3 HCP	♥ AK7	N - 2 - 6 4			
12	♦ Q97642	S - 2 - 6 4			
10	♣ 9	E 1 - 2 - -			
		W 1 - 2 - -			

A good slam for NS with four out of seven pairs bidding it in the B section but only two in the A. There's not much to the play; even if EW could cash a Diamond then switch to trumps (they can't because East hasn't got any trumps) declarer can still ruff two Clubs in dummy and discard one on dummy's Hearts. So, the interest is in the bidding. Slam is easier to reach if North opens a strong 2 bid of some sort. Even if East gets busy with his shape, South will see slam potential when he hears about North's Spades. The auction may go 2C-dbl-2D-p-2S-dbl-3H-4h-P-p-5C-p-6S.

Well, that needs some explaining; 2C is a strong opening, East's doubles show Clubs then take-out, 2D by South shows suit and values as he could pass the double if weak. 3H by South, a suit shown by East, is a cue bid. North's pass, whether West bids 4H or doubles, also shows a control in Hearts, without which he would bid 4S.

South can count 8+ tricks in North's hand and 3+ in his own hand so should not be shy of cue bidding 5C.

It's useful to use Pass in forcing situations to give more definition; for example, if East doubles 4H, North passes to show second round control and redoubles to show first round control.

Board 6

Bd: 6	♠ KJ954		
Vul: E/W	♥ 92		
Dir: East	♦ 1076		
	♣ AK6		
♠ 106		N	♠ A82
♥ Q85		W 6 E	♥ A1063
♦ J95			♦ A8
♣ QJ432		S	♣ 10875
11	♠ Q73		♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N
6 HCP 12	♥ KJ74		N - 3 1 4 1
11	♦ KQ432		S - 3 1 4 1
	♣ 9		E 1 - - - -
			W 1 - - - -

Although NS can make ten tricks in Spades game may not be reached, especially if East opens a weak no-trump on his three aces. Both North and South may feel they should be competing but there is no obvious bid for either of them. However, they still need to optimise the defence.

South will normally lead his fourth highest Diamond and declarer will take the percentage line of playing low from dummy. Unluckily for him North's Ten will force his Ace. There is no point in holding up as the defender's Diamonds may be blocked. East sets about the Clubs; North may pass the first one to try to get better view of the overall distribution. Winning the first or second Club, (South discarding a Heart in the latter case), North has to decide how to continue. There doesn't seem to be any rush to cash the Diamond suit, if indeed they are all good. North turns to the Spade suit; if South has already discarded a Heart, North may read this as showing something in Spades, but in any case, a Spade switch seems the right thing to do and to cater for East holding AQx North should lead the Jack. This is an example of a "surround play"; it prevents declarer running a small Spade to the Ten and retains the King and 9 in North's hand "surrounding" the Ten when dummy has started with

10x or 10xx. It wasn't necessary this time but it pays to look out for this type of opportunity. East wins the Ace of Spades and continues Clubs; South will have recognised what his partner was attempting and can clarify the position by discarding the Queen of Spades as North wins the Ace of Clubs. The defence then cashes four Spades (South throwing Hearts) and four Diamonds. Declarer just makes his three Aces.

Note that, in these situations, an astute declarer holding AQx, and recognising what the defender is trying to do, should duck the Jack lead (or play the Ace) in order to sever the defender's communications.

In the A section you had to reach 4S to score any IMP; only two pairs managed it. In the B only one pair reached the game but were defeated.

Board 14

Bd: 14	♠ 52		
Vul: None	♥ AK865		
Dir: East	♦ 97		
	♣ J762		
♠ QJ87		N	♠ 64
♥ 7		W 14 E	♥ 43
♦ K1084			♦ AQJ6
♣ KQ109			♣ A8543
8	♠ AK1093	♣♦♥♠	N
11 HCP	♥ QJ1092	N - - 5 2 -	S
11	♦ 532	S - - 5 2 -	E 3 3 - - -
10	♣ -	W 3 2 - - -	

How the auction develops here will largely depend on East's evaluation as dealer. Opening bids that may be considered are; Pass, 1C, 1D, 1Nt, 2C.

A natural 1C will be assumed. The spot-light turns to South; most will wheel out Michaels' Cue bid showing 5+/5+ in the majors and now West has a crucial decision. 2H seems just right, showing at least a good raise to 3C. North will usually bid his hand, 4H, although some devious minds may try a pass to see what happens. Assuming 4H from North then East can envisage 9+hcp with West and quite likely Heart shortage, so 5C seems the right action even though he has a minimum opening. The 9+ card fit and source of side tricks in Diamonds should give some comfort.

South has bid his hand so should pass and let North assess matters. North can see that, with 4 Clubs in his hand, his partner must be void so will press on to 5H. EW can do no better than defend this, unsuccessfully as it happens.

In the B section only two NS pairs reached game; in the A six NS pairs played in 4H+1 and one defended 5C-1.

IM 25.9.19