

ESSEX CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

WARBOYS TROPHY 2020 Session 1 12th February 2020

A new year, a new Warboys Trophy. This month's report includes three consecutive slam hands, each of which presents its own challenge.

Board 11

Bd: 11	♠ 976	
Vul: None	♥ 10952	
Dir: South	♦ 9653	
	♣ J5	
♠ K108543	N	♠ --
♥ Q3	W 11 E	♥ AKJ876
♦ A		♦ KQ2
♣ Q1074	S	♣ AK62
1	♠ AQJ2	♣♦♥♠ N
11 HCP 20	♥ 4	N - - - -
8	♦ J10874	S - - - -
	♣ 983	E 7 2 7 3 6
		W 7 2 7 3 6

Not an easy grand slam to bid with confidence. A possible auction may proceed: 1S-2H-2S-3C-3H-4C-4D-5H-6C-7C/7H. East's 3C bid may not guarantee a four-card suit but may be bid on a strong holding in order to set up a forcing situation. West will show some support for Hearts which will take on more significance in his mind later in the auction. After two cue-bids in Clubs and a jump to 5H by East, West must play his part by showing genuine Club support. Never-the-less it will require a lot of partnership confidence to bid the grand slam. There shouldn't be any problem reaching 6H or 6C. In the A section five of seven pairs bid 6H or 6C as did three in the B section where one pair distinguished themselves by reaching 7C. Worthy of a "Well done!"

Board 12

Bd: 12	♠ 74	
Vul: N/S	♥ A84	
Dir: West	♦ Q982	
	♣ J1082	
♠ AK108	N	♠ Q953
♥ 953	W 12 E	♥ KQ107
♦ --	S	♦ AK1053
♣ AQ7653		♣ --
7	♠ J62	♣♦♥♠N
13 HCP 14	♥ J62	N - - - - -
6	♦ J764	S - - - - -
	♣ K94	E 4 3 5 6 4
		W 4 3 5 6 4

6S may well be reached but it is a delicate slam. Setting up Clubs and leading twice towards the dummy's Hearts requires too much to-ing and fro-ing and it will be impossible to draw trumps to stop South over-ruffing dummy. Let us say North leads a trump as he may well do. West lets it run to hand and leads a Heart. North will duck his Ace and now West can ruff a Diamond in hand and lead another Heart. If North wins his Ace and plays another trump West wins in hand to play another Heart to dummy and ruffs another Diamond. West is now out of trumps but can cash the Ace of Clubs, ruff a Club with dummy's 9 of Spades, draw the last trump with the Queen and make the fourth Heart and three Diamond tricks. If North ducks the Ace of Hearts West wins the King and ruffs another Diamond in hand then leads a third Heart setting up the Ten. No return from North can damage the contract.

6S was attempted twice in the A section, succeeding once. It was bid once in the B and made after the lead of the Ace of Hearts.

Board 13

Bd: 13	♠ KQ72	
Vul: All	♥ 94	
Dir: North	♦ Q764	
	♣ A95	
♠ AJ105	N	♠ 86
♥ 72	W 13 E	♥ AKQJ10853
♦ AJ109	S	♦ K3
♣ KQ8		♣ 3
11	♠ 943	♣♦♥♠ N
15 HCP 13	♥ 6	N 1 - - - -
1	♦ 852	S - - - - -
	♣ J107642	E - 2 6 2 6
		W - 2 6 2 6

A decent enough slam which is easy on a non-Spade lead, maybe not so straightforward to bid. The East hand qualifies as eight playing tricks and if playing Benjaminised Acol can be opened 2C as the suit is not actually Clubs. (NB it does not fall into the definition of a Strong Two and players who would open 2C on this type of hand should make it clear on their convention card. Also if they choose to open 2H they should announce it as “intermediate to strong”.) West will inevitably drive to slam and as South has no particular reason to lead a Spade, 6H by East on any other lead will be problem free.

Bidding a slam becomes less certain if East opens 1H or even 4H. Perhaps East will try a South African Texas 4C showing solid Hearts and nothing else or semi-solid with an outside trick. However, this hand is just a bit too good for this treatment and as West will not venture beyond game, the slam will be missed.

6Nt by West is also a likely resting place and now North will certainly lead a Spade honour hoping to cash the other one when in with the Ace of Clubs. West will win the first trick and rattle the Hearts hoping for a squeeze to develop. This is indeed the case but West will have to arrive at an end position which is not entirely obvious. West and North each have to make six discards; West must keep three Diamonds so his first five discards are one Diamond, two Clubs and two Spades. Meanwhile North discards one Diamond, two

Spades and two Clubs. West's sixth discard is the last Spade and North does likewise, relying on South to guard the suit with the 9. West cashes dummy's K of Diamonds and exits with a Club to North's, now bare, Ace and North is obliged to concede two Diamond tricks. A complex and far-sighted position which may not be needed if North and South pitch too many Diamonds early on.

Six pairs bid the slam in the A section, two were defeated when West was declarer and the King of Spades was led. In the B three pairs bid and made 6H.

Board 14

Bd: 14	♠ J	
Vul: None	♥ J942	
Dir: East	♦ AK765	
	♣ K98	
♠ Q105432	N	♠ AK
♥ 765	W 14 E	♥ KQ108
♦ QJ4	S	♦ 102
♣ 3		♣ AQ1075
12	♠ 9876	♣♦♥♠ N
5 HCP 18	♥ A3	N - 1 - - -
5	♦ 983	S - 1 - - -
	♣ J642	E 1 - 2 4 1
		W 1 - 2 4 1

4S is a likely destination for East-West. West, the likely declarer on a natural auction, needs to avoid losing two Heart tricks (note the similar position in Board 12). North will cash two top Diamonds and without X-Ray vision West will need to choose between trying for one of two favourable positions in the Heart suit or finessing the Queen of Clubs or ruffing out the King of Clubs. The latter certainly does ruff out but West will run out of trumps in the process and the 4-1 break in Spades will beat him. Having won the third Diamond in hand West may try a Heart to the Queen immediately, without much hope as North has already turned up with an Ace and a King, but suppose South ducks

smoothly. West cashes dummy's Spades, plays Ace and another Club and ruffs, then draws two more rounds of trumps. North is not under too much pressure, discarding two Diamonds and a Heart. Now, when West leads a second Heart and North plays low West will have come to the cross-roads. Time will stand still. On balance West, reflecting on the low likelihood of North holding all the red tops, may well play the Ten of Hearts and make his game, but it is by no means certain.

Three pairs in both sections bid to 4S. One in the B was defeated. Somewhat unlikely, one East-West pair in the A defended 3Nt Doubled by North, only two down.

IM Feb 2020.