

## ESSEX CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

### WARBOYS TROPHY 2020 Session 2 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020

The second round of this year's Warboys Trophy is likely to be last for some time for reasons of which we are all aware.

However, don't miss visiting the ECBA web-site; a quiz page is being set up which will give you some Bridge challenges to think about.

So, what was interesting at the March Warboys? Here are three deals with the common theme of pre-emption.

#### Board 4

Bd: 4	♠ AQ9		
Vul: All	♥ 6		
Dlr: West	♦ K1065		
	♣ AQ873		
♠ J105	N	♠ K8764	
♥ AJ10974	W 4 E	♥ 83	
♦ QJ	S	♦ A932	
♣ 62		♣ J4	
15	♠ 32	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N	
9 HCP 8	♥ KQ52	N 3 2 - - 2	
8	♦ 874	S 3 2 - - 2	
	♣ K1095	E - - 2 1 -	
		W - - 2 1 -	

At most tables West, as dealer, will either open a weak 2H or a multi 2D. When it's 2H, North has a fairly straightforward take-out double. The lack of a fourth Spade should not deter competing. East has no reason for anything other than pass. It is South who is in an awkward position. Passing the double is too risky sitting under the long Hearts. If he has 2Nt available as a natural bid, showing less than 11hcp, that may work out; indeed, computer says NS can make eight tricks in no-trumps. However, most pairs play 2Nt as either "pick a minor please partner" or as a relay to 3C in the Lebensohl style. After the 3C response South either passes or corrects to 3D; South also has second bids of 3H, 3S and 3Nt available. All these bids will vary in meaning from bidding them directly in response to the double. What all these variations mean is up to each partnership. 3C looks the ideal spot to land in; it will not matter at teams but at pairs it will lose out to no-trump part-scores that make more than seven tricks.

When West opens a Multi 2D North has more of a problem. A take-out double with no tolerance for Hearts will probably be avoided and North will hope to balance when the bidding comes back to him. If he does try a double East should make his normal bid of 2H; South may double this to show he has the suit and when West passes North can correct to 2Nt. South shouldn't take this as a serious game try as he now knows Hearts sit over him and with only 8hcp should pass or more likely correct to 3C. There is a risk in all this; some pairs use Pass when their partner's Multi 2D is doubled

to convey the same message as 2H would without the double. This isn't very sensible as occasionally the Multi bidder's partner would rather play in 2D doubled than force his partner to play in 2H or 2S which could be in a lot more trouble. If East does pass the double on this deal, South will bid 2H and North will try 2Nt. Providing this doesn't show a much stronger hand or actually shows both minors then NS should not get too high.

When North passes the Multi, East will bid 2H and this will come back to North. Its normal to play a penalty double at this point and 2Nt for the minors, as here. In which case 3C will be easily settled on.

There is another agreement, growing in popularity, to play a different defence to the Multi in which an overcall of 2H is a take-out of Hearts and Double is a take-out of Spades. It works fine on this deal. North bids 2H and South, depending on agreements, relays or bids directly to 3C.

Have you discussed all these options with your partner? I wouldn't be surprised to see big variation in outcomes on this deal.

In the A section only two NS pairs stopped in 3C making useful IMP gains, the rest were losing either a few IMPs in games or a lot of IMPs unsuccessfully defending 2H doubled.

In the B section, a similar pattern, one NS pair bid and made 2Nt, the rest conceding from minus 100 to minus 670.

### Board 11

Bd: 11	♠ 6		
Vul: None	♥ Q10987632		
Dir: South	♦ 8		
	♣ AQ3		
♠ J953		N	♠ AK74
♥ 5		W 11 E	♥ A
♦ AQ1095			♦ J762
♣ K72			♣ 8654
8	♠ Q1082	♣♦♥♠N	
10 HCP 12	♥ KJ4	N - - 4 - -	
	♦ K43	S - - 4 - -	
10	♣ J109	E 3 3 - 3 2	
		W 3 4 - 3 2	

The outcome here may well depend on whether West believes that his 10hcp merits an opening bid. Whether he bids 1D or passes North has an obvious 4H pre-empt. This could go wrong at equal vulnerability but the odds favour exerting maximum pressure on East.

If West has opened the bidding then East will likely bid 5D or Double if that shows Spades and tolerance for Diamonds. If West passed originally East will have to decide if his hand is good enough for a 4-level take-out double. If he decides to pass, he should do so without undue hesitation in order to avoid compromising his partner who may want to protect even though he has already passed. EW will do well to reach 4S or 5D conceding a small penalty as 4H is unbeatable. South, having support for his partner and some defence may be in two minds whether to bid on or to defend. He probably has a bit too much defence and too many potential losers to venture 5H at "love all", and not quite enough to double EW games unless he is "playing for tops" at match-pointed pairs.

Another variation in the auction may occur if West passes, North opens 4H, East doubles, South passes and West bids 4S. Now North thinks that West does not have opening values and knows that South is not strong enough to redouble (an unusual action in any case in these kind of auctions). North may, therefore, double 4S to tell his partner that he has some defence outside of his long Heart suit and give South the option of passing or sacrificing. As it happens South will be content to pass the double. Quite aggressive bidding and more likely to occur at favourable vulnerability.

It will be interesting to see the actual results.

In the A section three NS pairs played 4H, one was doubled for the most IMP. Two were pushed to 5H-1 doubled, and one pair defended 4S undoubled -1.

In the B section four NS pairs out of five played 4H; one was doubled and two others made an overtrick. The remaining NS played in 3H+1; it seems everyone was taking a cautious view at that table.

### Board 16

Bd: 16	♠ Q105		
Vul: E/W	♥ J		
Dir: West	♦ Q109		
	♣ Q107654		
♠ 842	N	♠ KJ963	
♥ AQ963	W 16 E	♥ 10872	
♦ J752		♦ 6	
♣ A	S	♣ 932	
7	♠ A7	♣♦♥♠ N	
11 HCP 4	♥ K54	N 3 3 - -	
18	♦ AK843	S 3 4 - -	
	♣ KJ8	E - - 4 3 -	
		W - - 4 3 -	

Not an opening pre-empt this time but the opportunity for a pre-emptive raise depending on, as ever, partnership system. As on Board 11, West has the chance to get the ball rolling with a light but justifiable opening, this time it's 1H. North has nothing sensible to do but pass (there may be some non-sensible action of course) and East, if it's the agreed style, has an obvious pre-emptive bid of 3H. These bids tend to work best in a 5-card major opening context as the partnership will have at least a nine-card fit in line with the "Law of Total Tricks". South is in a bit of a fix. He wants to bid but knows his partner is short in Hearts and it seems inevitable North will bid Spades if he doubles for take-out. South is entitled to assign a few, theoretical hcp, to his partner so he may try 3Nt. It seems inconceivable that EW will bid on, but you never know. If they get to 4H North may try 5C (he may even bid it over 3Nt). This will turn out to be a good save only if the Wests in 4H all manage the Spade suit correctly. With South surely marked with the Spade Ace, West should finesse the 9 on the first round as he will always lose two tricks in the suit if South also has the Ten or Queen.

The defence to 3Nt needs care. West is on lead and knows that his side has nine cards in Hearts, presumably South has at least Kx and East, known to be weak, may have no entry to lead the suit through declarer. Leading a low Heart will be fine if East has the Jack, however, West should realise that if declarer has KJx he can't set his suit up no matter what he leads. So, the only situations to consider is where neither East nor South has the Jack. If North has the singleton Jack, as here, it creates protection for South's King....unless West leads the Queen. It's a great defence if you find it

at the table. Don't worry about South Holding KJ10, modestly accept the applause when you beat the contract.

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that many South's declared 3Nt....

In the A section, one South made an overtrick in 3Nt, the rest played 3D+1 three times, 4C -1 once and 5C-2 twice.

In the B section 3Nt was played once, but curiously by North, one down after a Heart lead. Another North, equally curiously, made 5C after the Ten of Hearts lead; perhaps leading this card deceived West who presumably didn't find a Spade switch. Returning either red suit will give declarer eleven tricks. At the other tables one North made 3C, one failed by one trick in 4C and South by two tricks in 5D.

IM 19 March 2020