

Hand of the week 16: Twin Town

Last Wednesday, May 27th, we played a pairs match with out Twin Town of Aachen in Germany. The match was closely contested and honours were eventually evenly split with NS being won by the Aachen pair of Vladimir Belfermann and Philipp Papst, and EW being won by the Halifax pair of Betty Gabbittas and Christine Bennett with scores of 74% and 64% respectively.

We had a good result on this hand:

S	med029	2+
♠	97653	
♥	A864	
♦	1064	
♣	10	

After 2 passes, West opens 1♣, Martin, sitting North, overcalled 1♠ and East bids 2♣. It is my usual policy to 'bid to the fit' in these situations and so a raise to 4♠ would be standard. The reason for this is to pre-empt the opponents and make their constructive bidding harder. In this situation East has only made a weak raise so it is quite possible they don't have a game on. It would be difficult for West to introduce hearts over a 3♠ bid so the most likely option is that they will bid 4♣, or pass. Pass is the most likely unless West is very strong.

If West bids 4♣ I can always bid 4♠ later, and if they bid 5♣ I am not likely to bidding 5♠. On this occasion I think 3♠ is sufficient.

West overcalls 4♣ and Martin doubles.

What next?

I only have 1 trick for partner in defence. Martin has a strong hand, but not strong enough to double 1♣. We might have a reasonable chance of making the game in spades and would therefore have to take 4♣ 4 off to get a good score, so in this situation a raise to 4♠ seems reasonable, which gets passed out. Maybe I should have bid that the first time!

Martin gets a diamond lead, and this is the full hand:

N M27Evans **2+**
♠ KJ1082
♥ 53
♦ AKQJ
♣ 53

W mcdoodle
♠ A
♥ KQ7
♦ 9752
♣ AKJ97

W	N	E	S
Pass Pass			
1♣	1♠	2♣	3♠
4♣	Dbl	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

E hxscord **2**
♠ Q4
♥ J1092
♦ 83
♣ Q8642

S med029 **2+**
♠ 97653
♥ A864
♦ 1064
♣ 10

4♠
North
0 0

After the A♠ drops, Martin has a loser in spades, hearts and clubs, and makes 4♠ for a top.

Another interesting hand came against one of the Aachen pairs:

N M27Evans **2+**
♠A9
♥Q8
♦J1082
♣KQ1064

W Mickymaus **2**
♠832
♥K953
♦Q76
♣J73

W	N	E	S
			2♥
Pass	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

E Lord2000
♠KQJ765
♥7
♦A943
♣A9

S med029 **2+**
♠104
♥AJ10642
♦K5
♣852

4♠ East
0 0

After a weak 2 open was passed round to East they took the rather bold decision to go straight to 4♠. For declarer, the play is to first lead low to the K, establishing the trick for a later club discard. In diamonds, the play is to finesse against South for the King. Declarer should cash the Ace (in case of a singleton K) and then lead low towards the Queen. This way they only lose 1 diamond, and will make 5 spades, 2 diamonds and a ruff, Ace clubs and King hearts for 10 tricks.

Can the defence set up their tricks before declarer makes the contract?

If the defence can set up the club trick before declarer discards, they will make 2 Aces, a club and the K diamond for one off. The key is to avoid letting declarer throw their club loser on the K♥. So what should South lead, and what do we know from the bidding?

West did not overcall so must be weak without a long suit. Partner did not support so must be short in hearts. South can see 2 potential tricks in hand and must find two tricks with partner. Declarer most likely has 7 or more spades.

We can rule out a diamond lead.

A spade lead is quite passive, but might prevent declarer ruffing losers in dummy. It is unlikely to give anything away as we are expecting declarer to be strong in trumps. A club lead also looks quite passive. The only danger with these leads is that it might finesse partner and give declarer an extra chance if they don't have any natural entries to table.

Finally a heart, this is a more attacking lead- the hope is that partner has a singleton heart, so cash the A♥ then hope for a ruff. In fact this is what I lead. This set up the K♥ immediately and declarer made the contract. Thinking about it more, it is more likely that declarer is short in hearts, so leading the suit is more likely to give something away than make anything for the defence.

In retrospect I think the spade is the safest lead. On seeing dummy, partner is most likely to take A♠ and switch to K♣. Then when South wins the K♦, they can cash the A♥ and a second club defeats the contract.

Remember to take inferences from the bidding and consider when a passive or attacking lead might work best!

Thanks to everyone who played in the match, we are looking at options for one off events going forward so keep an eye on the website!