

22/06/2020 HAND OF THE WEEK 19

On Friday evening (12/6), on board 6, only three pairs from eight reached the ideal contract of 4H. Here's how the bidding should go.

East opens 1H holding:

752
AK954
AK5
A5

West has:

A
Q62
QJ3
Q97643

So West replies 2C showing 10+ HCP and a club suit. East now bids 2NT showing a balanced hand and 15 – 17 HCP.

It looks as though half the pairs then went straight to 3NT.

But there's no rush; you know that the partnership has at least 26 HCP and so you're going to game whatever. But should it be in no trumps or hearts? If East has a five hearts then that looks a better bet.

West has a useful three card heart suit and a singleton Ace of spades which could allow for a ruff or two in a heart contract. So West should bid 3H. This shows three card support since with four West would have raised in hearts immediately.

If East only had four hearts she could bid 3NT but with a five card suit and poor spades a 4H bid is superior.

The play is straightforward and 4H makes with an overtrick whereas 3NT goes off on the correct lead.

South holds:

QJ64
JT87
642
J2

On the bidding a spade lead looks best and this does defeat 3NT. On any other lead it's possible to make 3NT though one South led the 7 of hearts and East still only made eight tricks even though there are now nine tricks off the top!

When will people stop blindly leading fourth longest?

MSE: 13/6/20

Additional comments:

The full hand- the final contract in most cases was 3NT by East.

	<p>♠ K10983</p> <p>♥ 3</p> <p>♦ 10987</p> <p>♣ K108</p>																	
<p>♠ A</p> <p>♥ Q62</p> <p>♦ QJ3</p> <p>♣ Q97643</p>	<table><tr><td>N</td><td>E</td><td>S</td><td>W</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♥</td><td>P</td><td>2♣</td></tr><tr><td>P</td><td>2NT</td><td>P</td><td>3NT</td></tr><tr><td>P</td><td>P</td><td>P</td><td></td></tr></table>	N	E	S	W		1♥	P	2♣	P	2NT	P	3NT	P	P	P		<p>♠ 752</p> <p>♥ AK954</p> <p>♦ AK5</p> <p>♣ A5</p>
N	E	S	W															
	1♥	P	2♣															
P	2NT	P	3NT															
P	P	P																
	<p>♠ QJ64</p> <p>♥ JT87</p> <p>♦ 642</p> <p>♣ J2</p>																	

As East has opened hearts it seems fairly straightforward for South to lead a spade. When declarer find the hearts split 4-1 they only have 8 tricks. The best hope is for a mis defence, so cross to dummy and lead Q♣.

North needs to be careful and should cover with K♣ to avoid giving declarer 2 club tricks. It should be apparent that the only chance for defence is to prevent declarer winning 2 club tricks, so you need to hope that South has the J♣.

It can sometimes be difficult to know when to cover a finesse. It is usually correct to cover the Q if you are unable to see the J. If declarer has the J you have lost nothing, but you gain if partner holds it.