

16/11/2020 Hand of the Week 39: Halifax vs Halifax round 2

We had another good turnout for our international match against Halifax, Nova Scotia, a total of 18 tables. Honours were evenly split again, with Moira & myself winning NS, and the Canadian pair of Trish & Diane winning EW. The contrasting bidding styles were evident on this board which led to a wide variety of final contracts:

<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">7</div> <div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">D</div>	N Mogsy157	W	N	E	S
	♠ AK43 ♥ Q7 ♦ J76 ♣ AQ52	1♦	X	1♥	2♣
W Hawkmoon1	E 5HPlace	P	P	2♦	P
♠ Q108 ♥ J105 ♦ AQ102 ♣ K74	♠ 976	P	3♣	P	P
S med029	♥ K843	P	P	P	P
♠ J52 ♥ A962 ♦ 85 ♣ J1093	♦ K943	P			
		♣ 86			
		3♣ S	NS: 0 EW: 0		

Playing a strong NT, our Canadian opponents opened 1♦, Moira doubled and after a 1 level bid from East I was able to show my club suit. This allowed us to find the contract of 3♣.

The J♥ was lead, to the Q-K-A. After the club finesse works, I lead low towards the J♠ which loses to West's Q♠. The 10♥ was followed by a second spade. When the suit breaks 3-3, I was now able to make 4 clubs, 3 spades, a heart and a diamond ruff for 9 tricks.

Some North's chose to overcall 1NT, which is a little risky without a diamond stop, but with the suit breaking 4-4 the contract can make. Other EW pairs competed to 2♥.

With Yorkshire pairs sitting EW, there is a weak NT open for East. The successful defence is the A♠ lead by North. South follows with a low card indicating an odd number, which allows North to continue and establish the suit. EW make their 4 diamond tricks, allowing North to signal their entry in clubs. When South gets in with the A♥ and switches to the J♣, NS should make 4 clubs, 3 spades and the heart for 2 off.

Now to hand 10, what do you open with this?

S	med029
♠	K10
♥	85
♦	AK
♣	AKQJ1052

With 10 playing trick I chose to go with a game-forcing 2♣. Partner shows a weak response and after rebidding 3♣ partner bids 3♦. There is now a bit of a dilemma! Are you going to accept a part score, or go for game- either 3NT or 5♣?

There are 9 tricks off the top in NT but the hand looks very vulnerable to a heart lead. In 5♣ you have to make 2 more tricks and are unlikely to have any entries to table to take the spade finesse.

3 pairs took the gamble in 3NT, 9 played in 5♣ and 6 took the part score.

The full hand:

10 <sub>D</sub>	N Mogsy157	W N E S
	♠ 6543 ♥ K74 ♦ Q654 ♣ 76	P 2♦ P 2♣ P 3♦ P 3♣ P 5♣ P 4♣ P P
W Hanjul	E urkins	
♠ AQ97 ♥ AQ1062 ♦ 32 ♣ 43	♠ J82 ♥ J93 ♦ J10987 ♣ 98	
	S med029	
	♠ K10 ♥ 85 ♦ AK ♣ AKQJ1052	5♣ S NS: 0 EW: 0

Partners K♥ proves to be a lifeline, and declarers K♠ is protected from the lead by West.

3NT proves to be the best contract with the A♥ onside, and can make 11 tricks.

In theory 5♣ can go off if East can find the courage to lead hearts, as it removes the entry to the Q♦ but understandably no-one found this at the table.

We are planning to arrange another contest in the new year. Thanks to everyone who supported the match on both sides of the Atlantic!