

04/01/2021 Hand of the Week 45: Placing honours

A straightforward bidding sequence to 3NT- now plan the play

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> D 16 </div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> N Erika Pick </div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">W</td> <td style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 2px;">N</td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">E</td> <td style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 2px;">S</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">2NT</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">P</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">3NT</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">P</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">P</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">P</td> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> </table> </div>		W	N	E	S	2NT	P	3NT	P	P	P		
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<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> W BBandHXCh2 </div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">♥5</div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> E CENSOPRANO </div>													
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> ♠ 863 ♥ AJ8 ♦ AJ10 ♣ AKQJ </div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">♥3</div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> ♠ A75 ♥ 4 ♦ Q653 ♣ 9762 </div>													
		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">♥Q</div>															
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				<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> 3NT W NS: 0 EW: 0 </div>													

You have 4 tricks in clubs, can establish 3 diamond tricks and have 2 Aces, so there is a good chance of making the contract. The usual play in this situation is to duck 2 rounds and win the 3rd round of hearts. This is so that if the suit breaks 5-3, South will be unable to lead a 4th round through for North to run the suit. If the suit breaks 4-4 you are only losing 3 hearts tricks.

However, there are some complicating factors in this situation. You only have one entry to table and the diamond suit is going to get blocked. Firstly, in order to establish the diamonds you will have to play A♦, then J♦ and 10♦ if this is ducked- you can then use the A♠ as entry to the Q♦

If you win the A♥, you can then take your clubs and establish the diamonds. The risk is that South wins the K♦ and then leads through your hearts- the defence will take a diamonds and 4 hearts. Note that if North holds K♦, your J♥ is protected from a further heart lead.

Secondly, the spade suit looks vulnerable- if South switches to spades after winning the Q♥, this will simultaneously remove your entry to dummy and also establish 3 spade tricks for the defence- in this case the defence will win a heart, a diamond and three spades.

Given that the contract is certainly going off if you duck, you should take the A♥, at trick one and hope that North holds the K♦

