

07/06/2021 Hand of the Week 67: Maximising you chances

This week declarer play. After your opening of 1♠, West bids 2♥ and partner doubles suggesting a holding in both minors. After you respond 3♣, partner bids 3♠ which you convert to game

West lead a heart:

<div>7</div> <div>D</div>		<div>N Erika Pick</div> <div>♠ 105</div> <div>♥ A75</div> <div>♦ J8654</div> <div>♣ K64</div>	<table> <tr> <th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr> <td>2♥</td><td>X</td><td>P</td><td>1♠</td></tr> <tr> <td>P</td><td>3♣</td><td>P</td><td>3♣</td></tr> <tr> <td>P</td><td>P</td><td>P</td><td>4♠</td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	2♥	X	P	1♠	P	3♣	P	3♣	P	P	P	4♠
W	N	E	S																
2♥	X	P	1♠																
P	3♣	P	3♣																
P	P	P	4♠																
<div>W HXscottie</div>			<div>E Mogsy157</div>																
	<div>♥ K</div>																		
	<div>S med029</div> <div>♠ AKJ62</div> <div>♥ 98</div> <div>♦ K7</div> <div>♣ AJ103</div>																		
		4♠ S	NS: 0 EW: 0																

Partner had a slight dilemma- an intermediate hand- the hearts look vulnerable in NT but they only have 2 spades. We have a combined 24 count, West should have at least 10 points and a 5 card heart suit. East has 6 points at most.

Off the top we have 2 spades, a heart and 2 clubs, but we should be able to make at least 7 tricks in the black suits.

We only have 1 heart loser, possibly 2 diamond losers and the finesses in spades and clubs to think about. Where to start?!

There are a number of finesses we can take but only limited entries to table, and we know that west holds the balance of the missing points.

There is no reason not to take A♥, and then try to clear the trumps. The 10♠ holds, and the trump are then found to break 2-4.

How do you proceed- the options are:

Cross to the K♣ and then finesse clubs?

Cross to the K♣ and lead a low diamonds- finesse East for the A♦?

Lead J♣ and finesse West for the Q♣?

We have taken the first 5 tricks and are now in this position:

<div>W</div> <div>7</div> <div>D</div>		<div>N</div> Erika Pick		<div>W</div> <div>N</div> <div>E</div> <div>S</div>			
		♠ 7 ♥ J865 ♦ K64 ♣ K64		2♥ X P 1♠ P 3♣ P 3♣ P P P 4♣			
<div>W</div> HXscottie				<div>E</div> Mogsy157			
		<div>S</div> med029					
		♠ 6 ♥ 9 ♦ K7 ♣ AJ103					
				4♣ S NS: 5 EW: 0			

We can discount the diamond play as this only gives 9 tricks even if the A♦ is onside- East will win and play hearts, leaving you stuck in hand and having to play away from your AJ clubs.

The key to this hand is managing entries and maximising your opportunities- you give yourself 2 chances if you finesse the Q♣ first- if this loses can still cross to the K♣ and finesse the diamonds. Yes you might lose to the Q♣ in East who could then lead a diamond to partners AQ but bad luck if both finesses are losing.

If you cross to table first and lose the club finesse, West will continue hearts and you will be stuck in hand having to lead away from your diamonds.

The full hand:

<div>W</div> <div>7</div> <div>D</div>		<div>N Erika Pick</div> <div>♠ 105</div> <div>♥ A75</div> <div>♦ J8654</div> <div>♣ K64</div>	<div>W N E S</div> <div>2♥ X P 1♠</div> <div>P 3♣ 3♣</div> <div>P P P 4♣</div>			
<div>W HXscottie</div> <div>♠ 87</div> <div>♥ KQ1063</div> <div>♦ A102</div> <div>♣ Q98</div>			<div>E Mogsy157</div> <div>♠ Q943</div> <div>♥ J42</div> <div>♦ Q93</div> <div>♣ 752</div>			
		<div>S med029</div> <div>♠ AKJ62</div> <div>♥ 98</div> <div>♦ K7</div> <div>♣ AJ103</div>				
			<div>4♣ S NS: 0 EW: 0</div>			