

MOUNTNESSING BRIDGE CLUB

*Meets every Thursday at 7.25 for 7.30
at Mountnessing Village Hall, Roman Road, Mountnessing, Essex, England, CM15 0UG*

A 'grand' way to win the championship...

Hand played on 27th August 2009
Board number 21 – Summer Trophy
Dealer North
Vulnerability NS Vulnerable
Submitted by Dennis Valtisiaris & John Sutcliffe

	North ♠ Q642 ♥ A6532 ♦ AQT5 ♣ -					
West ♠ - ♥ 974 ♦ J7432 ♣ KQT53		East ♠ T75 ♥ QJ8 ♦ K9 ♣ J8764	The Bidding			
	South ♠ AKJ983 ♥ KT ♦ 86 ♣ A92		North 1♥ 4♣ 5♠	East No No No	South 1♠ 4NT 7♠	West No No End

Dennis & John won the trophy this year, and this interesting hand, which poses challenges both in the play and in the bidding, helped them on their way. The first two bids are routine, but what does North re-bid after the obvious 1♥ opener? Dennis writes:

In my opinion the decision rests with North on what to bid after opening 1♥ and hearing partner respond 1♠. (No opposition bidding). I believe North's Hand has improved in playing strength with South's 1♠ response

The following choices for opener's rebid are available:

- a) 2♠ I believe is wimpish.
- b) 3♠ implies a flattish hand and interest playing in only 3♠ if responder is minimum, or in 3NT if responder's is flat with points, or 4♠
- c) 4♠ is just a shut out. I think the hand is too good for this bid. You need room to investigate.
- d) 3♦ is not too bad a bid, but it may inhibit South from bidding 3♠ if he has a 5-card suit and we could finish up in a poor 3NT contract.
- e) I decided that as my partner had denied support for Hearts he would probably only have a singleton / doubleton in that suit. With three card support and 6-9 points he would have raised. Therefore a game in Spades was probably on or close, in which case I chose to splinter in clubs, showing shape and interest in game. My partner now knows I have at least 5 hearts and 4 spades

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with a singleton or void in clubs. He also knows I am not 4-4-4-1. He then used Roman Key Card Blackwood to discover I had two aces with the Queen of trumps and over my 5-Spades bid he jumped to seven. I do not believe 7♠ can be found if North asks for Aces.

Having bid this fine contract next is the small matter of making it... From South's perspective, there are three potential losers on this hand – two clubs and a diamond. Clearly the clubs could be trumped in Dummy, but to take care of the diamond loser declarer either needs to set up and enjoy Dummy's long hearts, or fall back on the 50% diamond finesse. John writes:

A diamond was led. I considered it most improbable that this lead was away from the King, so I rose with the Ace. I played one round of trumps and discovered the bad news - disaster! Now the only real hope was to find the hearts breaking 3-3. I played 3 rounds of Hearts – if they break 5-1 or worse with the shortage in the hand holding trumps, there is no hope anyway – but as it turned out all clear!

After the initial diamond lead the play gets very tricky unless either the trumps are 2-1 or the hearts are 3-3. Say trumps are 3-0 and hearts 4-2. Declarer plays one round of trumps and discovers the bad break. He plays three rounds of hearts; assuming that it is East who is now out of hearts, I think East does best to discard, allowing South to trump cheaply. A club is ruffed to get to Dummy, and the fourth heart is ruffed to establish the long card. You can draw trumps finishing in Dummy and enjoy the last heart – but you need two discards and you only have one!

However, after an initial lead of the King of Clubs you can cope with 3-0 / 4-2 breaks, because, providing the opening lead is won in hand with the Ace and a diamond rather than heart is discarded from Dummy, you can ruff both losing clubs, and draw trumps and you still have the Ace of Diamonds to get to Dummy to enjoy the discard on the fifth heart.

A cursory glance at the traveller for board 21 shows that only one other pair bid the grand slam (unsuccessfully) and that only a few made 13 tricks. See the results for August 27th at http://mountnessing.theodman.com/Results_pages/2009_10/2009aug27summertrophyoverallrankings.htm. Presumably those who only made 12 tricks made the lazy play of the diamond finesse.

Well bid, well played – and well 'championed'!