

MOUNTNESSING BRIDGE CLUB

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

“2020” Comments on “IF YOU MESS UP AN ARTIFICIAL BID, THEN BRIDGE ETIQUETTE MAY TAKE YOU TO A FARCICAL DISASTER”

Submission by Alaric Cundy: [Click here](#)

Commentary by Alaric Cundy

Firstly, it is worth reminding readers that anybody can download the ‘Bridge Solver’ analytical tool for free, and use it to analyse different Declarer plays and / or defences, on any hand of their choosing – such as this one! To access ‘Bridge Solver Online’ go to this link:

<https://mirgo2.co.uk/bridgesolver/upload.htm> It is also available to download as an App for Android devices or Chromebooks or as a Windows desktop App here:

<https://mirgo2.co.uk/bridgesolver/index.php?section=1> This tool is embedded into the Bridgewebs website and it is used by the ‘Play it Again’ facility.

There are two different threads in this commentary:

1. Ethics
2. What might have been.....

The original article was primarily about mis-explanations / mis-bids and the ethical questions that flow from them. There was actually an ethical issue that was missed from the original report. West thought when he bid 2D that he was making a natural take-out of 1NTx, but when East announces ‘Transfer to Hearts’, West is now in possession of the unauthorised information that partner has taken the bid in a completely different way. West should ignore the announcement and take the 2H bid at face value.

So what on earth should 2H from East mean if the 2D was natural? It would be reasonable to take it as showing a 5-card heart suit and a doubleton diamond. With that interpretation, West’s courageous bid of 5D, at unfavourable vulnerability, seems even more ... courageous.... On the other hand, the 8 HCPs in the West hand, opposite 12-14, suggest there might be chances of breaking 4S, providing that the defence is careful. Declarer is unlikely to have many entries to Dummy, and so will be playing from hand. What the defenders need to do is to *avoid* taking finesses for Declarer. If West really was a fan of courageous bidding, then a less courageous, and in my view almost justifiable, bid from West might have been a double.....

Now, let’s look at what might have been on this board, through the eyes of Bridge Solver.

Bridge Solver does not even list 5Hx by East as a feasible contract on this board; it does, however, say that 3H can be made by *North / South*.

Interestingly, if 1NTx were to be passed out, then NS can take the first 7 tricks, but with two side Aces and six top diamonds East will claim the rest of the tricks, for a reasonable match-pointed score of -200 on the board.

If West had been allowed to play in 5Dx, there are in fact lines of defence that would allow Declarer to escape with just the one off, for -200 and potentially quite a good match-pointed score. Mind you, the route to -500 is pretty much automatic: if North leads either the singleton spade, or a heart, the contract is doomed.

4S by South can always make on any lead – basically, it comes down to North guessing the Clubs correctly. What would West lead against 4S?

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1. At first thought, a trump might look likely (and as it happens, it doesn't cost), but bear in mind partner's 1NT opening. South is pretty much marked with 7 spades, and if partner has Qxx, there will be a void in Dummy, and the trump lead would cost a trick. Too risky!
2. Another line of thinking might be that if partner has the King of Clubs in amongst his 12-14 HCPs, then Ace, Ten of clubs could be a good start. As it happens, that defence takes away Declarer's guess.
3. If we are supposing (as we should be doing, ethically) that partner has a 5-card heart suit, then the doubleton heart looks excusable. However, again this comes down to partnership understandings. With a re-biddable 5-card heart suit, personally, I would open 1H rather than 1NT, so the inference would be that on this hand partner's presumed suit is 'gappy', and hence it is not a good idea to lead through it into a strong hand.
4. So that leaves diamonds – at first sight, not an attractive option, but it will work well so long as partner has either the Ace or the Queen

OK, so West doesn't want to lead anything! In practice,

- a trump lead still leaves Declarer with the guess in Clubs;
- a heart lead risks conceding an over-trick: if East wins with the Ace, South unblocks (which might be read as a false card) and if East returns a heart, hoping partner will be able to ruff it, Declarer can draw trumps, and cash the remaining hearts, thereby making 11 tricks;
- a diamond lead and a diamond return leaves Declarer facing the Club guess;
- as above, the Ace of Clubs lead solves Declarer's problem. Interestingly, the highly improbable lead of the *Ten* of Clubs puts Declarer on a critical guess at trick 1....

The lessons from this hand are very simple and basic:

- (a) Do verify that you and partner are playing the same bidding system.....
- (b) Be prepared for, and accept, medicine-time if wheels do come off in your bidding
- (c) "Red v Green" sacrifice bids very rarely pay off
- (d) If you dig yourself into a hole and the opponents give you a life-line, grab it with both hands!