

Summertown Bridge Bulletin, 1st November 2021

Hello everyone,

This is Steven Bliss again. There were 10 tables playing on RealBridge this week and my hands this time are mainly about competitive bidding, nearly always (by an odd coincidence) involving the club suit.

On Board 6, South and West have got powerful and shapely hands, and North and East have got weak hands with no fit for partner. The trick was therefore not to get too high (and especially not to be doubled). Almost every South opened 1♣, and most Wests then bid 2♣ (a Michaels cue bid showing both majors). North passed, and most Easts bid a reluctant 2♥ (one passed the 2♣ bid, which was not a success, going four off). South persevered with 3♣, and most Wests bid 3♥, which was bound to go off (one unlucky pair went four off, doubled). However, four

Dir: East
Vul: E/W

♠ Q 8 5
♥ 8 6 5 3 2
♦ A 10 9 3
♣ 3

Optimum
NS +110

♠ K 10 9 7 6 3
♥ K Q 10 9 7
♦ K J
♣ - -

W	NORTH	E
E	6	S
S		T
T	SOUTH	

♠ 4
♥ J 4
♦ Q 8 7 4 2
♣ Q J 10 6 4

6
12 6
16

♠ A J 2
♥ A
♦ 6 5
♣ A K 9 8 7 5 2

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	2	-	-	-	-
S	3	1	-	-	-
E	-	-	1	1	1
W	-	-	1	1	-

Souths couldn't resist bidding their clubs one more time, and it was then easy for East to double 4♣, which went at least two off. It all shows the power of fit. South playing with East could make 5♣, and North playing with West could make 4♥, but as things stand no one can make anything much.

Dir: East
Vul: None

♠ J 10 3
♥ J 10 9 2
♦ Q 10 4 3
♣ Q 2

Optimum
NS -450

♠ A 8 7 6
♥ K 8 3
♦ A K 9 6 2
♣ 5

W	NORTH	E
E	14	S
S		T
T	SOUTH	

♠ K Q 9 5 4 2
♥ Q
♦ J 8
♣ J 10 8 3

♠ - -
♥ A 7 6 5 4
♦ 7 5
♣ A K 9 7 6 4

6
14 9
11

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	3	-	3	-	-
S	3	-	3	-	-
E	-	2	-	5	3
W	-	1	-	5	3

Board 14 was another distributional hand. East-West have a fairly easy 4♣ contract, and should be able to bid it, but they weren't always allowed to play there. Five Easts opened a weak 2♠, and three a multi 2♦; one opened 1♠, and I opened 3♣ (a 'Brian Senior' bid). Souths took a variety of approaches: one passed, some doubled, and some bid hearts or clubs. (No one used 'Leaping Michaels, where a jump to 4♣ over a weak 2♠ shows hearts and clubs.) Where opener had bid spades, West generally raised to 4♠. Where North-South bid on, in hearts or clubs, East-West did best to double and get

a plus score: the computer, which sees all the cards, thinks that 5♣ can be made, but no one managed it. (You might do so if you knew in advance that South was void in spades.)

Dlr: South
 Vul: N/S

♠ 8 3
 ♥ K 10 9 4
 ♦ Q 3
 ♣ Q J 9 5 2

Optimum
 NS +140

♠ 9 4 2
 ♥ Q 7 5
 ♦ 10 8 2
 ♣ 7 6 4 3

W NORTH E
 S 15 A S
 T SOUTH T

♠ Q 10 6
 ♥ A J 2
 ♦ K J 9 6
 ♣ A K 8

♠ A K J 7 5
 ♥ 8 6 3
 ♦ A 7 5 4
 ♣ 10

8
 2 18
 12

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	3	1	3	2	1
S	1	-	2	2	-
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

On board 15, we were in what I thought would be the normal contract of 2♠ by South, but to my surprise no fewer than four pairs played in club contracts by East-West, all going off (usually 4 off) for bad scores. As you can see, both NS and EW have 20 points each, but NS have got shapely hands, whereas EW have got flat hands that can't develop tricks in any suit. The bidding always started with 1♠ by South and 1NT by North, and nearly every East then doubled (it's hard to keep quiet with 18 points!). Now, where South bid 2♦ West should have passed, but not everyone did. Some Souths passed after the double, and West was forced to bid 2♣. At

other tables West was let off the hook, when South bid diamonds, but bid 3♣ anyway: even non-vulnerable, undoubled, this cost more than the makeable 2♠ contract the other way.

On board 16, East has the best hand at the table, and a powerful club suit, but has only two unwelcome choices - either go off in a club contract, or let the opponents play in spades. 4♠ is actually a tricky contract: there are three top losers, but East has to present declarer with a trick whenever he or she gets in, so it can be made. The bidding begins with 1♠ by North, and 2♣ or maybe 3♣ from East. Where South doubled, North passed for penalties rather than look for game on a possible misfit, and this scored well. Where South bid a suit, the spade game was normally reached, but only half the declarers made it.

Dlr: West
 Vul: E/W

♠ A J 7 5 2
 ♥ 10
 ♦ A 7
 ♣ A Q 8 5 4

Optimum
 NS +420

♠ 9 4
 ♥ 8 7 3 2
 ♦ J 10 9 4 2
 ♣ 7 3

W NORTH E
 S 16 A S
 T SOUTH T

♠ K Q 3
 ♥ A Q 4
 ♦ 5
 ♣ K J 10 9 6 2

♠ 10 8 6
 ♥ K J 9 6 5
 ♦ K Q 8 6 3
 ♣ - -

15
 1 15
 9

♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
N	1	3	3	4	3
S	1	3	3	4	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Overall there were several hands where people incurred penalties, and bad scores, by bidding on. This would have worked if partner had anything like 'the right cards' – but unfortunately, partners often don't!