

## Summertown Bridge Bulletin, 10 May 2021

Some may remember when often you would have to wait days to find out the results of your duplicate session, the director having to go home to make sense of a pile of illegible travellers and copy them on to squared paper. When I was at college, the university bridge club would meet once a week, the results appearing several days later in the shop window of a university outfitters which kindly gave over some of its display of gowns, scarves and oars to show various club notices (the distant ancestor of a website).

Years later computer scoring was the first great leap forward, then websites to broadcast the results, then a wireless device on every table. But online bridge has now brought us the ultimate in instant gratification – the moment the last card of a hand is played, you know your score on that hand. In the old days you might say to your partner as you go one off in 3NT “bad breaks, can’t make it” - and no one would notice when the long delayed listings showed all the other pairs mysteriously made an overtrick. Now it is straight away painfully clear to everyone that you have zero on the board. Your partner can even play it through card by card, pointing out where you went wrong. Not that she would of course.

There were some interesting hands on Monday night, although I’m not sure I could take away many lessons.

On Hand 8, most played in 2♥ or 3♥ by West making 9 tricks, but three pairs made 10.

Diagram illustrating a bridge hand (Hand 8) with the following details:

- Dealer:** West
- Vulnerability:** None
- Optimum Contract:** EW 3H: -140
- Hand 8 (North):** ♠ 8 5 4 3, ♥ A K J 5, ♦ 10 2, ♣ A 9 8
- Hand 8 (South):** ♠ 10 9 7 2, ♥ Q, ♦ A Q J 7, ♣ 7 6 4 3
- Trick Count:** West 9, South 10
- Final Score:**

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

At some stage West has to tackle spades, leading up to the Queen and subsequently up to the Jack. Bad luck, both the top honours are offside, so you lose another spade. Except in the three cases mentioned, where once South was in with the K♠ they immediately cashed the A♠ – thinking maybe it was bound to drop anyway. Except of course West doesn’t know that. Playing West I remember thinking, as I led the second spade and North played low, ‘surely he would play the Ace if he had it’, but some hidden force still made me play the Queen from dummy.

Dlr: South  
Vul: None

♠ 10 9 4 3 2  
♥ Q 10 7 6  
♦ 10 8 5 3  
♣ - -

Optimum  
EW 6C:  
-920

♠ A Q J  
♥ J 8 5 3  
♦ Q J  
♣ K Q J 6

W NORTH E  
S 11 A  
T SOUTH T

♠ K 7 6  
♥ 2  
♦ A K 9 7 2  
♣ A 10 9 3

♠ 8 5  
♥ A K 9 4  
♦ 6 4  
♣ 8 7 5 4 2

2  
17 14  
7

♣♦♥♠N  
N - - - -  
S - - - -  
E 6 4 1 3 3  
W 6 5 1 3 3

Hand 11 is an example of how desperately unfair bridge can be. With 31 points between them E-W are tempted to a slam. With the missing honours in hearts 6NT is obviously hopeless, while 6♦ or 6♣ look great. But minor suit slams can be difficult to bid; most pairs were in 3NT and two were in 6NT, played by West. As it happens there is no reason for North to lead a heart (particularly if West has opened with 1♥), and the two pairs in slam, and most of the others, made 12 tricks. So commiserations to the one pair who bid the excellent 6♣ but, most unfortunately, found a 5-0 trump break and went one off (although the computer analysis says it's

possible to make, by continually playing on diamonds and using your trumps to crossruff rather than draw).

This is a personal story about Hand 13, but perhaps we can all learn from it. I was South, watching my partner play 3NT. We had had a pretty drear evening and as her hand appeared I was thinking 'please, not a diamond lead' and then the 2♦ appeared from East. The lead implied the diamonds were 5-4, so I had no hope as North dutifully held up until the third round, knocked out the A♣ and waited for the onslaught. Except the fourth diamond trick was taken by West's 9♦ (one of the reasons that the standard lead from this holding is the 8, not the 2!), and the suit was blocked. As my partner cashes out, I am thinking 'must be good, maybe not a top but well up there'. Then I look at the other results: 3NT+1, 3NT + 2, 3NT +3, 4♠ + 2, 4♥ +1 .....

Dlr: North  
Vul: All

♠ A J 7 6  
♥ A J 6  
♦ A 5 4  
♣ 10 7 6

Optimum  
NS 6C:  
+1370

♠ Q 10 4  
♥ Q 7 5 4  
♦ K Q J 6 3  
♣ 3

W NORTH E  
S 13 A  
T SOUTH T

♠ 9 5 3  
♥ 10 9  
♦ 9 8 7 2  
♣ A 9 5 2

14  
10 4  
12

♠ K 8 2  
♥ K 8 3 2  
♦ 10  
♣ K Q J 8 4

♣♦♥♠N  
N 6 1 5 5 2  
S 6 1 5 5 2  
E - - - -  
W - - - -

All in all I think I prefer to wait a few days for the results, you can dream a little longer.

*Cliff Pavelin*