

## Summertown Bridge Bulletin 16 January 2023

Hello, this is Steven again. Last night's bridge was rather thinly attended (11 pairs) but there were many interesting hands. Congratulations to Dave & Linda, the only pair to score over 60%.

Dlr: North  
Vul: N/S

♠ A K J 10 4  
♥ 7  
♦ A K 10 3 2  
♣ K 3

Optimum  
NS  
+1370

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

WEST NORTH EAST  
5  
SOUTH

♠ Q 8 5 3 2  
♥ K 8 3  
♦ Q 7  
♣ 10 7 6

18  
6 7  
9

♠ - -  
♥ A Q 10 9 6 4  
♦ 9 6  
♣ Q J 8 5 4

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

I've chosen three hands which might be played in everyone's favourite contract of 3NT. On Board 5, 4♥ looks like the best contract – one player bid that but their partner 'corrected' to 4♠, which luckily made. Everyone else played in 3NT, making 8, 9, 10 or 11 tricks.

When the hands fit badly, and you finally subside in no trumps, it's usually awkward to play, and this hand was certainly awkward. Most people played on clubs, and luckily they break 3-3, so you have four club tricks and five top tricks

elsewhere. To make overtricks needed a bit of help from the defence. My partner decided not to bid the hearts at all, which worked out very well when West took the ♣K with the Ace and switched to a heart.

On Board 8, every North opened 1♠. Where East overcalled 2♥ (which would have been expensive if doubled) South went straight to 3NT. Otherwise South bid 2♦, North raised to 3, and South generally settled for 3NT. That contract is a bit easier on a heart rather than a club lead. The problem is that you want to knock out the Ace of diamonds and also do something with the spades, but you are nervous about losing the lead twice if the clubs are 5-2.

At my table North-South bid on to 6♦ (no point playing in 5 at pairs!). This needs spades to lie nicely, and they do, so the contract might have been made. However, you need to preserve entries to North's hand, to set up the spades and then get back to them, and declarer got the timing wrong and went off.

Dlr: West  
Vul: None

♠ Q J 6 3 2  
♥ A  
♦ K Q 8 2  
♣ 10 9 5

Optimum  
NS +920

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

WEST NORTH EAST  
8  
SOUTH

♠ K 7 4  
♥ Q J 9 6 4  
♦ A 6  
♣ J 8 3

12  
2 11  
15

♠ A 8  
♥ K 10 3 2  
♦ J 7 4 3  
♣ A K 2

♣♦♥♠N  
N 3 6 2 5 4  
S 3 6 2 5 4  
E - - - - -  
W - - - - -

Dlr: East  
Vul: None

♠ A J 4

♥ 10 9 7 6

♦ 6 4 3 2

♣ K 7

Optimum  
NS -430

♠ K Q 8 7 5

♥ K 3

♦ A K J 10 8 5

♣ - -

WNORTHE

14

SSOUTHT

♠ 6 3 2

♥ Q J 4

♦ Q 9 7

♣ A Q 9 4

8	
16	11
5	

♠ 10 9

♥ A 8 5 2

♦ - -

♣ J 10 8 6 5 3 2

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

On Board 14, only one pair got to 3NT, and it was largely South's doing! South opened 3♣ (reasonable enough if third in hand, as there's less danger of missing a better contract in hearts, but debatable second in hand with such a poor club suit). West doubled (too strong to bid a suit, and hoping partner won't jump to 4♥!), and now it was easy for East to bid 3NT, which made 10 comfortable tricks. Everyone else played in 3♠ or 4♠.

I think that if West bids diamonds first, and then bids spades strongly, North might work out that South has no diamonds, but as it was no one found that defence and 4♠ always made. We all try to play in the known 5-3 major fit, but here (with poor spades and so many diamond winners) 3NT actually works better. Easy with hindsight – Steph & I played in 4♠ like everyone else!

*Steven Bliss, January 2023*