

## Summertown Bridge Bulletin, 21 June 2021

I seem to remember that sometimes when playing rubber bridge in the old days, once you made the tricks for your contract you would throw the hand in, more eager to hurry on to the next deal than bother about the almost irrelevant ‘above the line’ scores for the odd overtrick. How things changed with the invention of pairs scoring. The scoring method for each deal - two points for every pair you beat – is very simple to apply; I reckon if computers had existed then we would have had more like cross-imp scoring even at Pairs. It must have changed the whole way the game was approached. Not just because of the importance of overtricks, but because every hand is equally important. Your score when you get the opponents six down doubled vulnerable on one hand is no better than their score on the next hand when you just make a trick less than everyone else in INT.

Since every deal is equally important, when we play just 18 boards at online bridge (why do we play just 18?), each deal is worth over 5% of the total. You may be feeling complacent with 55% as you go into the last round, but if you then get two bottoms (undeserved of course), you’ll end up with 49%. While two tops (I wish) would give you over 60%.

There were quite a lot of lively deals tonight. I’ve chosen just three:

Dir: East  
Vul: All

♠ Q J 7 5  
♥ Q J 5  
♦ 7  
♣ A 9 7 5 3

Optimum  
NS 6S:  
+1430

♠ K 8 4  
♥ 10 6 2  
♦ K 10 6 3  
♣ 10 8 2

W NORTH E  
S 10 S  
T SOUTH T

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

10	
6	5
19	

♠ A 9 6  
♥ A K 4  
♦ A 9 8 5  
♣ K J 4

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

On Board 10, every South is in game in NT and only one received the diamond lead which holds it to 9 tricks. Many of the rest made 12 tricks by entering dummy with Q♥ and finessing the J♣, ending up just losing a spade. (Better than playing small to A♣ and then finessing the Jack as if there are four to the Q 10 on your left you will lose two clubs, and the contract.)

But several players, presumably grateful not to have a diamond lead, counted 4 clubs, 3 hearts, a spade and a diamond, great, just lose a club and 9 tricks are certain – so they play K♣, then duck J♣. Maybe this gains against certain 4-1 distributions? But this is pairs. Here making 9 or even 10 tricks is a bad result. (I’m glad this is not social media, when 10,000 people would tell me why I’m wrong.)

Board 16 showed just how many different ways there are of bidding unmakeable contracts.

Only one West opened - a weak two in Diamonds – North doubled and South played in 2♥, two off. In most other cases North opened 1NT. Nearly all the Easts then felt they had to do something. Some bid 2♥, going off. Two Easts bid 2♣ showing the majors, a good hand for this bid but leaving West with a problem. Both Wests (I was one) decided to bid 2♠, no doubt wishing we had left 2♣ on seeing dummy. One East bid 2♦ over the 1NT (maybe showing Spades and another?), which West gratefully passed, the only contract to make on this deal. A couple of Norths opened 1♠, and in both cases EW still ended up in Hearts, going off of course. No doubt some expert can tell us what ‘should’ have happened.

Dlr: West  
Vul: E/W

♠ A K Q 4  
♥ 9 7 6 5  
♦ 6 5  
♣ K 3 2

Optimum  
EW  
1C+3:  
-130

♠ 10 2  
♥ - -  
♦ J 9 7 4 3 2  
♣ A Q 9 7 5

W	NORTH	E
E	16	S
S	SOUTH	T

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

12		15
7		
	6	

♠ 9 8 7  
♥ J 10 4 2  
♦ K Q 10 8  
♣ 6 4

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

Dlr: East  
Vul: N/S

♠ K 10 6 4  
♥ - -  
♦ 4 3 2  
♣ J 10 7 6 5 4

Optimum  
NS 4S:  
+620

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

W	NORTH	E
S	18	T
T	SOUTH	T

♠ Q 8  
♥ 10 7  
♦ J 10 9 6 5  
♣ K Q 9 3

4		8
11		
	17	

♠ A J 9 3  
♥ Q 6 5 3  
♦ A Q 8 7  
♣ A

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

I bet there were several people whose fortunes were changed on the last round, ours included. On Board 18, eight Souths opened 1♥, with West generally gulping (luckily, we can't see our opponents' faces on BBO!) and passing. In two cases North passed as well, and that was 300 to EW. Twice EW played in 4♥ doubled (once even after South's 1♥ opening) and that was 300 or 500 to NS. Our NS opponents bid well to find their spade fit and just go one off.

Congratulations to the winners, Dave and Linda. And do remember to register for the Midsummer 'RealBridge' pairs on Thursday next week.

*Cliff Pavelin*