

## Summertown Bridge Bulletin 25 January 2021

Wouldn't you just know it? It is your turn to write the bulletin and you have just had one of those nights where you wonder why you play this fascinating but frustrating game – for fun? I think we all know how it feels to have made so many decisions which turned out not to have been the best ones in the circumstances. But for some of us, the reverse is also true. They will say “we made fewer mistakes”.

In most bulletins, the commentator highlights one, two or three significant hands. From my point of view, I could have highlighted all 18 but I will try to concentrate on three hands where the issue of vulnerability constricted most pairs from entering the auction. In each example, the pair or pairs brave enough to risk a vulnerable bid where their system did not always justify doing so were rewarded with a top or a very good score.

Dir: North  
Vul: N/S

♠ Q 10 7 6 2  
♥ A K J 7  
♦ 7 5  
♣ 6 2

Optimum  
NS  
2S+1:  
+140

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

	NORTH	
WEST	5	EAST
	SOUTH	

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

	10		15
7			
	8		

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

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

Take hand 5. The bidding is likely to begin with East opening one of a minor suit and West bidding 1NT to show 6-9 points. Only one North was allowed to play in spades and this gave them a top or near top. East is in a no-win situation: 2 spades makes and any further bid from East is no better. He/she is between a rock and a hard place.

The next example is hand 10. Following 1NT from South, West with 14 points has no reason to double being vulnerable; and after a pass from North, why should East compete vulnerable with 11 points and a broken 5 card spade suit sitting left of opener. Those who risked bidding were amply rewarded, while those who abided by the demands of their system or were influenced by the vulnerability fared less well.

Dir: East  
Vul: All

♠ J 6 5  
♥ J 8 6 3  
♦ 10 5 2  
♣ 5 4 3

Optimum  
EW 3N+1:  
-630

♠ A Q 4  
♥ Q 9 2  
♦ A Q 9 6 3  
♣ 9 8

	NORTH	
WEST	10	EAST
	SOUTH	

♠ K 10 9 8 2  
♥ 10 7 5  
♦ K 8  
♣ K Q 2

	2		
14			11
	13		

♠ 7 3  
♥ A K 4  
♦ J 7 4  
♣ A J 10 7 6

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

Dlr: East  
Vul: N/S

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

Optimum  
NS 3H:  
+140

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

NORTH
18
SOUTH

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

12	
8	12
8	

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

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

The third example is hand 18. Sensible and measured competing by North/South was rewarded with either 3H making or getting 4C one down. Not everybody made the right judgment, which is nearly always the case.

Keen readers of these bulletins (aren't you all?) will have observed that this reviewer seems to be obsessed by the risk-reward balance. Perhaps I should have chosen to highlight the three slams in diamonds: one actually bid and made (hand 8); two not bid (hands 4 and 16). For this bulletin, you will be relieved to see there are no further references to Harry Callaghan. My muse this time is more appropriately Kenneth Williams in "Carry on Caesar" with the immortal lines 'infamy, infamy, they've all got it in for me'.

As is the nature of all sports and games, tomorrow is another day. In the Test Match just finished in Galle (Sri Lanka), the English spin bowlers in the Sri Lankan first innings did not manage to take one wicket on a pitch which favoured spinners. In the Sri Lankan second innings, the English spinners took all ten wickets for 126, effectively winning the game. Was it their good bowling or the Sri Lankan bad batting or something in between? Enjoy your bridge!

*Trevor Dawn*