

Summertown Bridge Bulletin 27 June 2022

Hello, this is Steven again. There were a lot of interesting hands last night – I’ve chosen four, all potentially played in four of a major. Congratulations to Mike & Irene who won, and Roger & Paul who came second.

The most common contract on Board 4 was a rather thin 4♥ by South (a typical sequence was 1NT-2♣-2♥-3♥-4♥). To make the contract you have to lose only one heart trick and avoid a diamond loser. Most people started to draw trumps by leading the Queen for a finesse: when this lost to a singleton King there was a second trump loser. The safest way to lose no more than one trump is actually to lead small to the Ace and then back towards the Queen (my bridge encyclopaedia says that this will work 87% of the time). In diamonds you have to start with an honour from South, then lead to the Ace in dummy and (hoping that West’s Jack was from a doubleton) finesse the 9. Not easy, and no one actually made 4♥. The people who played in no trumps made at least nine tricks.

Dlr: West
 Vul: All

Optimum
 NS +630

♠ 5 2
 ♥ A 7 3 2
 ♦ A 5 3
 ♣ K 10 6 2

♠ A K 7 6 3
 ♥ 10 9 5 4
 ♦ J 7
 ♣ Q 8

W NORTH E
 S 4 A
 T SOUTH T

♠ J 10 4
 ♥ K
 ♦ 10 6 4 2
 ♣ J 9 7 5 3

11
 10 5
 14

♠ Q 9 8
 ♥ Q J 8 6
 ♦ K Q 9 8
 ♣ A 4

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

Dlr: South
 Vul: None

Optimum
 NS +140

♠ 5 4
 ♥ A J 5 4 2
 ♦ 8 5
 ♣ K Q 9 7

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

W NORTH E
 S 11 A
 T SOUTH T

♠ 10
 ♥ K Q 10 9 6 3
 ♦ 4
 ♣ A 8 5 4 2

10
 10 9
 11

♠ K Q J 9 8 7 6 2
 ♥ - -
 ♦ A J 6 3
 ♣ 3

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

On Board 11, four NS pairs played in 4♠ (some Souths opened 4♠) and two EW pairs made expensive sacrifices. The computer says that 4♠ should go off, but most people were allowed to make it. West generally led a top diamond. South won and played a club, won by East. With no diamonds, and unwilling to give access to dummy, East now led the ♠10, covered by South’s Jack. Every West took the trick with the ♠A,

which proved fatal as dummy’s ♠5 became an entry to two winning tricks. If West ducks the first spade dummy is cut off and declarer will go off. It’s rare for a 5 to be such a crucial card!

Dlr: East
 Vul: None

♠ 8 5
 ♥ K Q 8 5 4 2
 ♦ J 7
 ♣ A 9 2

Optimum
NS -420

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

W NORTH E
 S 14 A S
 T SOUTH T

♠ 9 7 4
 ♥ A 9 7 3
 ♦ A 6
 ♣ 7 6 5 4

♠ K J
 ♥ J 10 6
 ♦ K 10 8 5 4
 ♣ Q J 10

10
 11 8
 11

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

On Board 14, one North was allowed to play in 2♥ but at every other table West played in 3♠ or 4♠. The computer says West should make 10 tricks, but Krys was the only person who did (against Steph & me unfortunately). 4♠ isn't a great contract, but the trumps break perfectly and the ♦K is in the right place. The winning line (on the lead of a top heart) is to discard a club from hand, draw trumps with the finesse, then lead a diamond to the Ace and a diamond back. The defence can take the ♦K and two club tricks but

that is all. A diamond lead would be more awkward: you have to win with the Ace, take the club discard on the heart, and then play on diamonds before drawing trumps.

My last hand is about bidding not play. As you can see there are 11 tricks in hearts, but that is all. Unfortunately for them, three out of six pairs played in a slam. It largely depended on whether you opened the North hand: four pairs did (all with 1♦ – 1♥ would be more normal if playing 4 card majors) and two passed. North has a minimum opener – only 12 points, 3 of which are a singleton King – and 4-4-4-1 hands are awkward to bid and play. If partner hasn't got an opening bid you won't miss a game. So on balance I think it's better to pass (sometimes wrong, but right here!).

Dlr: North
 Vul: None

♠ Q 10 6 4
 ♥ K 10 7 4
 ♦ A 10 4 2
 ♣ K

Optimum
NS +450

♠ 9 5
 ♥ Q 8 3
 ♦ 9 8 3
 ♣ Q 9 7 6 2

W NORTH E
 S 17 A S
 T SOUTH T

♠ A 8 7
 ♥ J 9
 ♦ J 7 6 5
 ♣ J 10 8 3

♠ K J 3 2
 ♥ A 6 5 2
 ♦ K Q
 ♣ A 5 4

12
 4 7
 17

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