

Summertown Bridge Bulletin, 27 March 2023

Congratulations to Sandra and Krysa, first by a mile last night. Robert and Irene were second, Moira and Trevor third.

In what may have been the last ever Summertown RealBridge session (but let's hope not), there were no very exciting hands, but maybe it just seems like that as I was not playing. Anyway, I have tried to find a few boards with some points of interest.

On Board 5 every West was in 3NT, two went one off, two just made, and one made an overtrick. Four had the helpful lead of a low club. I have a theory that a lead from four to the Jack always gives away a trick. It may be a rubbish theory, but certainly in this case it was right, as declarer immediately gets four club tricks. In this case West will have replied 1♥ to East's opening diamond bid, so North would be put off leading that suit.

It looks tempting for declarer to play on diamonds – if they are 3-3 or the Jack falls, you have lots of diamond tricks - so most people led ♦Q at trick 2 and South took the Ace. The trouble is that later on, when declarer plays the

♦K and the Jack does not drop, you dare not play another, as if they are 4-2 you end up potentially losing three diamond tricks as well as a spade and a heart. In one case, the play I thought was nicest, declarer played a club to dummy and led a diamond from there. South now dare not play the Ace, thinking West has doubleton queen. Having one diamond trick in the bag, declarer then left that suit alone, played small to the ♠J and finessed the ♠9 on the way back. No more problems.

Dir: North
Vul: N/S

♠ K 7 3
♥ 10 6 5 3
♦ 8 2
♣ J 8 6 2

Optimum
NS -400

♠ A Q 8 5
♥ Q 9 8 4
♦ Q
♣ A 10 7 3

W	NORTH	E
S	5	A
T	SOUTH	T

♠ J 9
♥ A 2
♦ K 10 6 5 4 3
♣ K Q 5

4		
14		13
	9	

♠ 10 6 4 2
♥ K J 7
♦ A J 9 7
♣ 9 4

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

Dir: East
Vul: None

♠ Q 9 2
♥ K 8 4
♦ K 7 6 5
♣ Q 9 4

Optimum
NS -420

♠ J 6 3
♥ A Q 7
♦ 9 4
♣ A K J 7 6

W	NORTH	E
S	14	A
T	SOUTH	T

♠ A K 8 7 5
♥ 10 9 6 5 3 2
♦ J 2
♣ - -

	10	
15		8
	7	

♠ 10 4
♥ J
♦ A Q 10 8 3
♣ 10 8 5 3 2

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

What do you open on Board 14 as East? Only 8 points, but a 6-loser hand if partner has anything in spades or hearts. If you open a weak 2♥, you may easily miss a game; but if you pass, it may not be easy to come in later. In fact three of the five Easts did pass and all arrived at 4♥ in the end. One opened 2♥ and partner bid four, only a shade optimistic. The other opened 2♦ multi, South doubled, West passed (maybe should redouble), North bid 2NT and that was passed out, one off for a top for N-S!

It looks as if in 4♥ you might lose two diamonds (assuming a diamond is led – otherwise you will rapidly get rid of them),

a heart and a spade. But in fact you can play ♣AK (throwing spades) and ruff a club, bringing the queen down so the a third spade goes on the ♣J. Everyone managed this. However, if you do get into 4♠, you cannot avoid these four losers.

Dlr: South
 Vul: N/S

♠ 7 6
 ♥ A K 4 2
 ♦ Q 9 4 2
 ♣ K Q 4

Optimum
NS -90

♠ Q J 5
 ♥ Q 10 7 3
 ♦ 6 3
 ♣ J 7 6 3

W NORTH E
 S 15 A
 T SOUTH T

♠ 10 9 4 3
 ♥ 9 5
 ♦ A K J 8
 ♣ A 9 8

14
 6 12
 8

♠ A K 8 2
 ♥ J 8 6
 ♦ 10 7 5
 ♣ 10 5 2

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

Board 15 was a rare example of all tables being in the same contract, 1NT by North, and getting the same lead, ♦A. But everyone made a different number of tricks, from 5 to 9. In two cases, East continued with diamonds, making declarers task a bit easier. The others switched to ♥9. Declarer can now set up a diamond by force as you have Q, 10 and 9 with just K and J still out. This gives you six tricks in all: two spades, two hearts, a diamond and a club. Passive defence will hold you to this – but, as often happens, defenders find it difficult to defend passively.

Dlr: North
 Vul: None

♠ 7 6 2
 ♥ 7 6 2
 ♦ J 10 2
 ♣ A 10 3 2

Optimum
NS +140

♠ A 9 8
 ♥ A Q J 5 3
 ♦ K 7 3
 ♣ K 6

W NORTH E
 S 17 A
 T SOUTH T

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

5
 17 5
 13

♠ K Q J 5
 ♥ 9
 ♦ A 9 5
 ♣ Q J 8 7 5

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

Finally, on Board 17, all the E-W pairs played in hearts, three in 3♥, two in 4♥. Left to themselves they would all probably have stopped in three, but typically N-S are bidding as well, making things more difficult. Anyway, in the play two made 9 tricks, two 8, and one made 7.

It looks as if you should lose 2 spades, 2 diamonds and 2 clubs, making only 7 tricks. The only (unlikely) extra chance would be to set up the thirteenth diamond before the opponents have set up all their tricks. So why is it only one declarer was held to 7 tricks? Again, because defenders eschew passive defence and play their Aces prematurely.