

Summertown Bridge Bulletin, 28 February 2022

A slightly smaller turnout last night but nonetheless, as usual, lots of interesting hands. After some poor results recently, we ourselves had a very lucky evening – as you'll see! Second place was a tie between Moira and Trevor, and Linda and Dave, so well done to all of them.

Our fairy godmother first appeared on board 4, when our opponents were the only ones to find their way into 6NT – and then took only 11 tricks, with life made more difficult for them because South was on lead and chose to start with a spade.

On all the other tables West was declarer in 3NT and North led a small heart, making it easy to set up 12 tricks in complete safety.

But wait! The computer says you can always make 13 tricks, even when played by East. How can this be, with neither the clubs nor the diamonds breaking?

The diagram shows a bridge hand with the following details:

- Contract:** 6NT (North is declarer, South is dummy).
- Declarer:** West (Vul: All).
- Optimum Score:** EW 7N: -2220.
- Hand Distribution:**
 - North (Declarer):** ♠ 2, ♥ K 5 3 2, ♦ J 6 5 4, ♣ K 9 8 3.
 - South (Dummy):** ♠ K Q J 6, ♥ A Q, ♦ A K 8 7 3, ♣ 7 6.
 - East:** ♠ A 7 4, ♥ 10 7 4, ♦ Q.
 - West:** ♠ A 7 4, ♥ 10 7 4, ♦ Q, ♣ A Q J 5 4 2.
- Trick Count Table:**

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	6	6	2	5	7
W	6	6	2	5	7
- Additional Elements:** A box shows a trick count of 7, 19, and 13. Another box shows a trick count of 1.

Most declarers won the first trick in dummy, took the club finesse, played off the ♦Q, returned to dummy with a spade, took another club finesse, shrugged their shoulders when South showed out and then gave up a trick to the ♣K. Moira – who could no doubt see that 12 tricks would be no better than an average score – decided not to give in so easily, and after taking ♣A, continued with ♠A. This couldn't give a worse result (as her own hand could now win all the tricks except one), and it also had the effect of putting North under pressure to find a discard. When a diamond appeared, all 13 tricks were there.

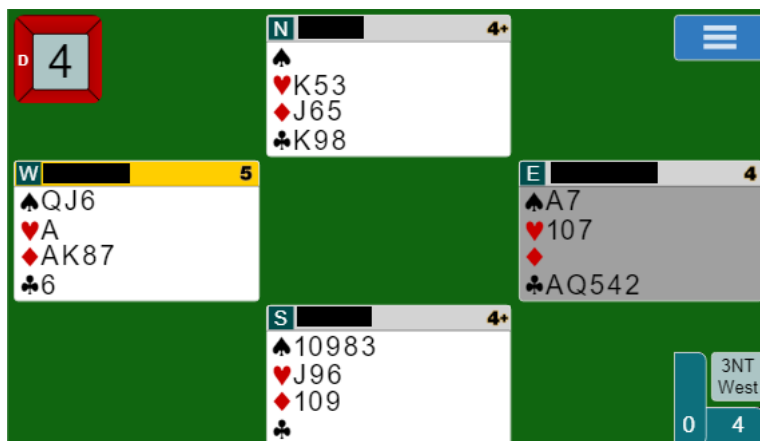
Ah, you say, but North could have chosen to discard hearts ... then what? Well, yes, then declarer would be back to 12 tricks. There is a legitimate way to make 13 tricks, though, and it does involve using the spades to squeeze North: but it has to be done a little earlier in the hand – and is practically impossible to find at the table! See if you can work out how to do it from this position, with West on lead:

The screenshot shows a bridge hand interface with the following details:

- Contract:** 4 (North is declarer, South is dummy).
- Declarer:** West (5).
- Hand Distribution:**
 - North (Declarer):** ♠ K 5 3, ♥ K 5 3 2, ♦ J 6 5, ♣ K 9 8.
 - South (Dummy):** ♠ Q J 6, ♥ A, ♦ A K 8 7, ♣ 6.
 - East:** ♠ A 7, ♥ 10 7, ♦ Q, ♣ A Q 5 4 2.
 - West:** ♠ 10 9 8 3, ♥ J 9 6, ♦ 10 9, ♣ 10.
- Score:** 3NT West, 0 to 4.

Did you spot it?

Rather than continuing immediately with another club, West must play off the spades next. To avoid giving away a trick, North has to discard all three hearts. Now West cashes the ♥A, and North has no more safe discards: a diamond will set up declarer's suit, while a club will establish that suit after another successful finesse.



Isn't that elegant?

Now, back to reality with another hand on which we lucked out.

Dir: North
Vul: All

♠ A Q 8
♥ 10 4
♦ J 8 3 2
♣ Q J 9 7

Optimum
NS
1S+2:
+140

♠ K 7
♥ K Q 8 2
♦ A K 10 6 5
♣ A 4

W	NORTH	E
WEST	13	EAST
S	SOUTH	T

♠ 6 5 3 2
♥ 9 7 5 3
♦ 9 7 4
♣ 8 5

10	0
19	11

♠ J 10 9 4
♥ A J 6
♦ Q
♣ K 10 6 3 2

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

This board produced no fewer than 6 different contracts out of 7 tables! After North and East passed, four Souths chose to open 1♣ (a bit light, but it's third in hand, and there are four decent spades as well). When this happened at our table, Sandra doubled, North redoubled to show values, and Krys managed to summon up a bid of 1♥. Even when South then passed, it was clear to Sandra – looking at her 19 points – that Krys couldn't have more than a point or two at the most, but she decided to raise to 2♥, hoping that would stop the opponents from finding a low-level fit. Rather surprisingly, this became the final contract, and so Krys had the unusual experience of being

declarer while holding a complete Yarborough. His eventual result of one off turned out to be an excellent score.

Another table had a very similar bidding sequence but ended up rather too high in 4♥ – managing to make 8 tricks, but not their contract! - while several N/S pairs played in clubs, making 10 or 11 tricks.

Where South decided against opening the bidding, it was actually harder for E/W to find a sensible contract, with even a lowly 1♦ ending up two down.

All of which goes to show that picking up a really good hand – much as we all like to see them – isn't necessarily the way to get an equally good score. You also need to have Lady Luck on your side!