

Summertown Bridge Bulletin 31 May 2021

Hello, this is Steven again, with three boards from last night. Sometimes you have nights when not much goes right, and as you'll see last night was one of mine! Two of the hands feature weak two openings, and the third is a potential slam hand.

Dir: North
Vul: None

♠ 10 9 3 2
♥ A J 10 8 4
♦ J 3
♣ Q 5

Optimum
EW 4D:
-130

♠ 7
♥ 9
♦ A K 9 7 5
♣ A J 10 8 7 2

| | | | |
|---|--------------|---|---|
| | NORTH | | |
| W | 1 | E | A |
| S | T | S | T |
| T | SOUTH | | |

♠ K Q J 8 6 4
♥ 6 5 2
♦ Q 10 4
♣ 3

| | | | |
|---|----|----|----|
| | | | |
| N | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| S | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| E | | | |
| W | | | |

♠ A 5
♥ K Q 7 3
♦ 8 6 2
♣ K 9 6 4

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| N | - | - | - |
| S | - | - | - |
| E | 3 | 4 | - |
| W | 3 | 4 | - |

On the first board of the evening, after a pass from North, everyone opened 2♠ with the East hand. As South I debated whether to double – it's the right shape, but only 12 points (and only 8 of those outside spades). In the end I passed, as did two other Souths, on the grounds that we certainly couldn't make game and might not make three of anything either. Although that was true, 2♠ by East makes, whereas 3♥ by North only goes one off at worst, for a better score. Two Norths played in 3♥, and one West ran to 3♣ after the double and went one off (although the

analysis says it's makeable). I suppose it proves that it pays to fight for the part scores at pairs.

The problem on Board 11 was whether to open 2♠ as dealer with the South hand. In favour of opening: right shape and points, not vulnerable, most other people will. Against opening: poor suit, minimum points, 6-3-2-2 shapes don't play so well, and opponents aren't vulnerable either (so three off doubled would cost more than a game their way). In the end I opened 2♠, as did everyone else. Everyone doubled with the East hand too, but after that we had a variety of contracts. Three pairs got to the normal 3NT and made 10 or 11 tricks. One was only in 2NT, and one went off in 5♦ (it can make on a cross ruff).

Dir: South
Vul: None

♠ J 3
♥ Q J 10 9 2
♦ 9 8 6 2
♣ 8 4

Optimum
EW 3N+1:
-430

♠ K 9 7 6
♥ A 5
♦ J 10 4 3
♣ J 9 2

| | | | |
|---|--------------|---|---|
| | NORTH | | |
| W | 11 | E | A |
| S | T | S | T |
| T | SOUTH | | |

♠ Q
♥ K 8 7 3
♦ A K Q
♣ A K 10 7 6

| | | | |
|---|---|----|---|
| | | | |
| N | 4 | 21 | 6 |
| S | 9 | 6 | 6 |
| E | | | |
| W | | | |

♠ A 10 8 5 4 2
♥ 6 4
♦ 7 5
♣ Q 5 3

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| N | - | - | - |
| S | - | - | - |
| E | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| W | 5 | 5 | 3 |

At my table West made the reasonable decision to pass the double, and I went four off for -800 and a bottom. As Andrew Robson says, the frequency of penalties at pairs is more important than the size of them, and an occasional -800 will happen – but that wasn't much consolation.

Incidentally, a useful convention when partner doubles a weak 2 bid is Lebensohl – all weak hands (less than 8 points) respond 2NT (or a natural 2♠ over 2♥), so that any 3-level response guarantees 8 or more points. This stops you playing in 2NT when 3NT is cold. If the opener's partner passes, your partner will normally reply with a forced artificial bid of 3♣ and you can then either pass if your suit is clubs, or bid your own suit to play at the 3 level.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------|-------|----|---|---|---|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dlr: East Vul: E/W | ♠ A K 9 ♥ - - ♦ A Q 7 6 5 2 ♣ A 9 3 2 | Optimum NS 6S: +980 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♠ 4 2 ♥ Q 6 3 ♦ 10 9 8 3 ♣ K Q 10 8 | <table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>NORTH</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td style="font-size: 2em;">6</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>SOUTH</td><td>T</td></tr> </table> | W | NORTH | E | E | 6 | S | S | SOUTH | T | ♠ 10 5 3 ♥ K J 7 5 4 ♦ J ♣ J 7 6 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| W | NORTH | E | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| E | 6 | S | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| S | SOUTH | T | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"> <tr><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td></tr> </table> | 17 | 7 | 6 | 10 | ♠ Q J 8 7 6 ♥ A 10 9 8 2 ♦ K 4 ♣ 4 | <table border="1"> <tr><td>♣</td><td>♥</td><td>♦</td><td>♠</td><td>N</td></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>6</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>6</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> </table> | ♣ | ♥ | ♦ | ♠ | N | N | 1 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 4 | S | 1 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 4 | E | - | - | - | - | - | W | - | - | - | - | - |
| 17 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♣ | ♥ | ♦ | ♠ | N | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| N | 1 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| S | 1 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| E | - | - | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| W | - | - | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Hand 6 is a potential slam hand, with points on bidding and play. Five of the six Souths opened 1♠, with a minimum opener which passes the rule of 20 (your points plus the number of cards in your two longest suits). The bidding usually went as follows: 1♠-2♦-2♥-3♣ (4th suit forcing)-3♥-? After that the three optimists went rapidly to 6♠, the pessimist (Steph) signed off in 4♠, and one pair had a misunderstanding and played in only 3♠. The final pair, which didn't open the South hand, also ended up in 3♠.

If you play Roman Key Card Blackwood (say the 4130 version), after agreeing spades North can bid 4NT. Partner bids 5♣ to show one key card, you then bid 5♦ to ask about the trump Queen, and partner bids 6♦ to show the ♠Q and ♦K. That is a useful way to play RKCB and gets you to a pretty good slam.

Anyway, the actual results were 6♠+1, 6♠, 6♠-1, 4♠+1, 3♠+4 and 3♠+2. The hand would be really easy to play if West didn't lead a top club, but five Wests did and that removes an entry to dummy. Without the club lead you can draw trumps and play on diamonds, ruffing the fourth round if necessary and using the ♣A to get back to winning diamonds. But after a club lead you have two possible lines of play:

Plan A – draw trumps immediately and hope the diamonds break 3-2, making all 13 tricks if they do, and just making your contract if they don't.

Plan B - ruff two hearts in dummy, making 12 tricks with 5 spades in your hand, 2 ruffs in dummy, 3 top diamonds and 2 outside aces. You will still make all 13 if diamonds break. However, you need three entries to your hand (two to take heart ruffs and one to draw the last trump). The diamond king is one entry, and club ruffs are another two – all fine if trumps break 3-2, but you'll go off if they don't.

So you either play for diamonds to break (plan A) or trumps (plan B), and there's little to choose between the two options. Here plan B works, but only John Cecil took this line. Christopher made 6♠+1 when West discarded a diamond early on, so perhaps plan A gives the defence more chance to go wrong. As I was only in 4♠, I could combine chances by playing two rounds of trumps and then taking one heart ruff, guaranteeing 11 tricks with the chance of 13. An interesting hand.....