

## Summertown Bridge Bulletin, 5 July 2021

Hello everyone, this is Steven again. There were a lot of interesting hands last night. I've chosen three hands from the end of the evening which are all about coping with pre-empts. People like pre-empting because it's hard for opponents to judge, and often this works very well; but sometimes it's hard for your partner to judge too. Hence there's quite a lot of luck involved, as you'll see.

Dlr: South  
 Vul: N/S

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

Optimum  
 EW 4S:  
 -420

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

W NORTH E  
 S 15 A  
 T SOUTH T

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

♠ 7 6 3  
 ♥ 9 8 5 4  
 ♦ 6 5 4  
 ♣ A Q J

12  
 9 12  
 7

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

The normal opening on Board 15 (5 out of 9 pairs) was 2♠ by West, and North normally came in with 3♥. East usually bid just 3♠, and West went on to 4♠ whether or not South supported the hearts. 4♠ usually made with an overtrick.

One pair let the bidding die in 3♥, and another pair opened a multi 2♦ instead of 2♠ and let opponents play in 3♥ (only one off for a poor EW score). One pair opened 3♠, passed out. My table was less timid! I also opened 3♠, North bid 4♥, East 4♠ and South 5♥: I should have passed this but went on to 5♠

(with solid spades and at most one trick in defence). Luckily 5♠ made after the ♥A was led, as I could discard two losing clubs on hearts, although 5♥ doubled (at least 3 off) would have scored better. It's hard to judge in these situations.

Hand 17 shows the destructive power of pre-empts. 6♠ is laydown for EW, but only one pair bid it. That was Linda & Dave, who won the whole event: here they were helped by the fact that North didn't bid.

Every other North opened 2♥ (or a multi) – clearly minimal, but worth it non-vulnerable at pairs. East has an awkward bid now: most bid diamonds or an 'unusual 2NT' (not recommended against weak two bids), though I'd prefer to risk a double despite having only three spades. South usually bid 3♥ or 4♥ (4♥ is an overbid when the hand is so flat, and might be expensive if doubled, but it succeeded in keeping EW out of slam).

Every West now bid 4♠ and was left there: East couldn't picture that partner's spades were so good, and West couldn't picture that partner's hand was so strong. The pre-empt triumphs again!

Dlr: North  
 Vul: None

♠ 4  
 ♥ K Q 8 6 4 3  
 ♦ 10 7 3  
 ♣ 9 6 3

Optimum  
 EW 6S:  
 -980

♠ A K 10 9 8 5  
 ♥ J 10  
 ♦ Q 5  
 ♣ Q 7 4

W NORTH E  
 S 17 A  
 T SOUTH T

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

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

5  
 12 18  
 5

♣♦♥♠N  
 N - - - -  
 S - - - -  
 E 6 6 1 6 1  
 W 6 6 1 6 1

Dlr: East  
 Vul: N/S

♠ A K  
 ♥ Q J 7 6 5  
 ♦ Q 9 8  
 ♣ A K 4

Optimum  
 EW 4Sx:  
 +300

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

NORTH  
 18  
 SOUTH

♠ Q J 9 7 5 3 2  
 ♥ 9  
 ♦ J 7 4  
 ♣ J 5

♠ 10 8  
 ♥ K 10 8 4 3 2  
 ♦ 10 6  
 ♣ Q 9 7

19  
 11 5  
 5

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

Board 18 was another hand where it paid to pre-empt to the hilt.

One East passed, and NS bid smoothly to 4♥. Another East opened just 2♠ (which I would if vulnerable) and again opponents got to 4♥. One East opened a multi 2♦, after which NS had a mix-up and played in 3♦ - not a success.

Every other East opened 3♠. At two tables this was passed round to North, who bid 3NT and was (rather surprisingly) left there: this would go off on a diamond lead, but made plus one on both occasions after a spade lead. Most other Wests raised 3♠ to 4, as I did, thinking that this couldn't be too expensive, might even make, and would make things difficult for North (who must have a strong hand). North can only double now, for a moderate score when 4♠ goes 2 off. South at two tables went on to 5♥, which has no chance (although one EW pair still went on to 5♠ ...)

Are there any general lessons to be learnt? Well, it pays to pre-empt aggressively when not vulnerable, and to support partner to the hilt immediately: after that, everyone is guessing to some extent!

*Steven Bliss*