

## Summertown Bridge Bulletin 7 December 2020

Hello all – four weeks have passed, so this is Steven Bliss again. I'm going to look at two hands – one potential slam hand and one interesting part score.

Dir: South Vul: E/W	♠J1093 ♥-- ♦AJ82 ♣AJ1094	Optimum W 6H; -1430																																							
♠AKQ74 ♥AKQ1087 ♦K9 ♣--	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="background-color: #008000; color: white;">W</td><td style="background-color: #008000; color: white;">North</td><td style="background-color: #ff0000; color: white;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #ff0000; color: white;">e</td><td style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">3</td><td style="background-color: #ff0000; color: white;">a</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #ff0000; color: white;">s</td><td></td><td style="background-color: #ff0000; color: white;">s</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #ff0000; color: white;">t</td><td style="background-color: #008000; color: white;">South</td><td style="background-color: #ff0000; color: white;">t</td></tr> </table>	W	North	E	e	3	a	s		s	t	South	t	♠52 ♥J3 ♦Q73 ♣KQ8752																											
W	North	E																																							
e	3	a																																							
s		s																																							
t	South	t																																							
<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">11</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">21</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">8</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">0</td><td></td></tr> </table>		11		21		8		0		♠86 ♥96542 ♦10654 ♣63	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">♣</td><td style="text-align: center;">♦</td><td style="text-align: center;">♥</td><td style="text-align: center;">♠</td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">E</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td></tr> </table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	N	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	1	-	5	5	4	W	2	-	6	5	4
	11																																								
21		8																																							
	0																																								
	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																																				
N	-	-	-	-	-																																				
S	-	-	-	-	-																																				
E	1	-	5	5	4																																				
W	2	-	6	5	4																																				

Hand 3 has interesting points on bidding and play. West has a massive two-suiter and will open an Acol 2 clubs or Benji 2 diamonds. Some people will make a positive response with the East hand (8 points and a long club suit), although I prefer only to make positive responses when you have at least 3 controls (an ace and a king or three kings). A possible Acol sequence is 2 clubs – 2 diamonds – 2 hearts – 3 clubs – 3 spades - ? East probably does best to give preference to 4 hearts, and then West has to decide whether to look for slam or not, knowing that the hands fit badly.

Although I find Benji Acol more accurate, it is a nightmare when you have a really strong hand with hearts! West opens 2 diamonds, East bids 2 hearts (negative) and West bids 3 hearts. Now there is very little room to explore below game level, and the strong hand will be exposed as dummy – not at all ideal.

Anyway, three pairs bid 6 hearts, one played in a hopeless 6 spades, and everyone else stopped in game. Only one pair (Irene Holland and Mike Fletcher, last night's winners) made 12 tricks, after the usual lead of the ace of diamonds, when North optimistically continued with the ace of clubs. Despite the bad trump split declarer was able to take one top heart, a top diamond, two top spades, ruff a small spade with the jack of hearts, and then discard the remaining spades on the last diamond and a top club. South could ruff in on the third round of clubs, but was over-ruffed and trumps drawn. (The computer can of course make 6 hearts on any lead, because it knows the heart position.) I think the moral is that, when good players bid a slam missing two aces, they probably know what they're doing!

The next hand is over the page.

Dir: West Vul: N/S	♠AK432 ♥J84 ♦A87 ♣A8	Optimum EW 3D; -110																																							
♠1095 ♥AK9 ♦Q92 ♣KJ64	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="background-color: green; color: white;">W</td><td style="background-color: red; color: white;">North</td><td style="background-color: green; color: white;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: green; color: white;">e</td><td style="background-color: white; color: black; font-size: 2em;">12</td><td style="background-color: green; color: white;">a</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: green; color: white;">s</td><td></td><td style="background-color: green; color: white;">s</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: green; color: white;">t</td><td style="background-color: red; color: white;">South</td><td style="background-color: green; color: white;">t</td></tr> </table>	W	North	E	e	12	a	s		s	t	South	t	♠Q8 ♥76 ♦KJ653 ♣Q1075																											
W	North	E																																							
e	12	a																																							
s		s																																							
t	South	t																																							
<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">16</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">13</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">8</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td></td></tr> </table>		16		13		8		3		♠J76 ♥Q10532 ♦104 ♣932	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">♣</td><td style="text-align: center;">♦</td><td style="text-align: center;">♥</td><td style="text-align: center;">♠</td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">E</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> </table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	N	N	-	-	2	2	1	S	-	-	2	2	1	E	2	3	-	-	-	W	2	3	-	-	-
	16																																								
13		8																																							
	3																																								
	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																																				
N	-	-	2	2	1																																				
S	-	-	2	2	1																																				
E	2	3	-	-	-																																				
W	2	3	-	-	-																																				

Hand 12 is a 'bread and butter' part score hand, but at pairs these count just as much as the slam hands. Many pairs now play a strong no trump and will open the West hand 1 club. North overcalls 1 spade and East has a problem as partner's club suit may not be 4 cards. If East bids 2 clubs, South presumably raises to 2 spades and that is the final contract.

However, the majority will open a weak no trump, and North will double. With 8 points East might leave the double in, but it's risky with no stopper in either major suit. (1 NT goes one off if North starts with two top spades and makes if he/she leads fourth best). If East passes, South should escape to 2 hearts (by a 2 diamond transfer if you play that). Most Easts, however, will rescue into a suit contract, and there are at least four ways to do it:

1. Simply bid a natural 2 diamonds
2. Redouble to show an unspecified 5-card suit – partner must bid 2 clubs and you correct to two diamonds
3. Bid two clubs as an exit transfer to diamonds
4. Bid two clubs as the lower of two (normally 4-card) suits.

Whichever system East uses, South has to decide whether to come in with hearts or leave it to partner (who might have a long suit or a penalty double). It is important to have a clear understanding with your partner in these situations. Steph and I once went to a very good seminar by John Slater (who has been a top county player for many years). John argued that the person who doubles a weak no trump nearly always has a strong no trump, so their partner should respond in the same way as they would to a NT opening – Stayman, transfers and Lebensohl if you play it. Hence, using Lebensohl, I could bid 2 hearts competitively, knowing that partner should pass, and this played nicely – although, if I pass, North will bid 2 spades which plays equally well.

Hands like this come up frequently. If you play a weak no trump you need a rescue mechanism over a double. If it's your partner making the double, you need to agree what your calls mean, so that you can take a penalty when possible and find a good part-score (or even a game) otherwise. On the night, one EW pair played in 3 diamonds, just making, but otherwise all the NS pairs played in hearts or spades, making 9 or 10 tricks.