

Summertown Bridge Bulletin, 9 January 2023

Congratulations to Sandra & Krys, who won with a score of 63%. The Blissers were second, and the Sheppards tied in third place with Irene and Robert. Actually I helped the winners by abysmal declarer play on hand 6, trying to be too clever. I promised them I would include it in this bulletin, but I was just too embarrassed. Instead I am looking at three hands involving a lot of clubs.

Dir: North Vul: E/W	♠ A 10 6 3 ♥ 10 9 8 5 4 ♦ 4 ♣ Q 10 9	Optimum NS -300																																							
♠ K Q J 7 ♥ J 7 ♦ A Q 8 6 5 ♣ 5 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="background-color: red;">W</td><td style="background-color: green;">NORTH</td><td style="background-color: red;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: red;">E</td><td style="background-color: yellow; text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">9</td><td style="background-color: red;">S</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: red;">S</td><td style="background-color: green;">SOUTH</td><td style="background-color: red;">T</td></tr> </table>	W	NORTH	E	E	9	S	S	SOUTH	T	♠ 9 8 5 2 ♥ A K Q 6 3 ♦ J 10 2 ♣ 2																														
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On hand 9, the bidding was different at every table. Twice East opened 1♥ and South bid 2♣. What should West do in this common type of situation? Both of them bid 2♦, but it is sometimes recommended you should double in this 4-5 case when it is the major having the four cards. Whereas if you had five spades and four diamonds they say you should bid the major. It works here anyway. The other time South jumped to 4♣ over the 1♥. This time West did double but East bid 4♥, which goes down because of the unfortunate break. At all the other tables East did not open; one South opened 3♣ passed out, and the others opened just 1♣, leading to everyone bidding.

In the end four of the six tables played in club contracts at various levels by South, making 9, 10 or 11 tricks. What should South make? Whatever the lead, declarer should play to the ♠A and lead up to the ♦K hoping to reduce the number of diamond losers. West takes the Ace and surely must switch to a trump to reduce the ruffs. Declarer can now cross-ruff but is still stuck with another diamond loser to make only 10 tricks. If the opening lead is a trump (unlikely), only 9 tricks are there.

Dir: North
Vul: All

♠ A
♥ A 8 2
♦ 9 5
♣ A J 9 7 6 4 2

Optimum
NS +110

♠ K 8 3
♥ K 4 3
♦ K J 8 7 2
♣ 8 5

WEST NORTH EAST
13
SOUTH

♠ Q 7 6
♥ Q J 7 6
♦ Q 6 3
♣ Q 10 3

13
10 9
8

♠ J 10 9 5 4 2
♥ 10 9 5
♦ A 10 4
♣ K

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

On hand 13, again the bidding was different at every table. At least North always opened 1♣ and all but one South went 1♠. Two Norths just rebid 2♣, and at one of these tables South simply passed. Looks wrong to me, but +110 was a good result. The other South bid 2♠ just making for the same score.

The remaining Norths rebid 3♣ over their partner's 1♠; to me it looks worth it with a 6-loser hand. Question: should South now press on to 3♠? I think so, since if your partner has just two spades, it is

likely to get you a better result when playing pairs. If North's ♥2 is changed to the ♠3 then a spade game is likely. But anyway, it wasn't to be. 3♠ is one off and if North continues to 4♣ it is also one off. Fortune favours the brave? Not here. Another bottom.

Here is another club hand; at all but one table NS were in three, four or five clubs, making ten, eleven or twelve tricks (the number of tricks not correlated with the level of the contract). If played by South, you probably get the ♥K lead. Knock out the spade, now whatever West leads you can cash your three diamonds first and then embark on a complete cross-ruff. At trick 12, the lead is in the South hand, with just two spades left, and poor West is sitting with 10 and 8 of trumps under North's K and 9. Easy when you can see all four hands. Just like hand 9, West can only frustrate this by leading a trump initially and leading another when in with the ♠A.

Dir: West
Vul: E/W

♠ 7
♥ 9 6 5 3
♦ A Q 6
♣ K 9 7 3 2

Optimum
NS +920

♠ A 8
♥ K Q J 8 2
♦ 10 5 3
♣ 10 8 4

WEST NORTH EAST
16
SOUTH

♠ K 10 5 3 2
♥ A 10 7 4
♦ 9 7 4 2
♣ - -

9
10 7
14

♠ Q J 9 6 4
♥ - -
♦ K J 8
♣ A Q J 6 5

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	6	-	-	1	-
S	5	-	-	1	-
E	-	-	2	-	-
W	-	-	2	-	-

Hand 2 also involved a load of clubs – but I'm bored with this, and you probably are too. Happy New Year to everyone.