**Summertown Bridge Club Bulletin 23 May 2022**

A screenshot of a computer

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We’re not very good at bidding minor suit slams, are we? 3NT is such a safe haven that we forget that it is possible to bid and make them.

North opens 1 and South responds 1. North must surely bid a game forcing 3. 2 doesn’t do the hand justice. Now South, steeped in the tradition of ‘if in doubt, bid 3NT’, must stop and think: ‘Well 3NT is sure to make, but hang on, what about a club slam?’

North has shown a 5-loser hand and South, with 7 or 6½ losers, could bid 3. North now shows the 5th with 4 and South could now bid 6. If South is of a nervous disposition, he will whisper 5. North remembers that other adage, ‘If the rest of the field is in 3NT, then 5 is not a contract we want to play in’ and bids 6.

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Oh how easy it is to be ‘squeezed’ if we have not been concentrating... South leads 5 against 3NT and North plays 8 irrespective of what card is played from dummy. South gets in with K and plays a second round of clubs. A and K win the first two rounds. North has not played 6, so East has it. East has not won a trick with 10, so North has it. South must hang onto Q and discard Q on the second last trick.

Calendar

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Back to missed minor suit slams. South should open 1, not 1. It is easier to show your shape by opening the higher suit when 5/5 or, here, 6/6. West steps in with a weak jump overcall of 2. North is very excited, but does best to double, showing 4 hearts. 3 would promise a 5-card suit. A bid of 3 by North is a possibility but it depends on your partnership agreement. For many, 3 would be a Jacoby slam try agreeing diamonds, but it is usually better to show a major first.

East is almost pointless but, with an 11-card fit, should jump to 4. South, who wisely opened 1, can now bid 5 and North will bid 6.

Calendar

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Precise bidding and play is (well, would have been) needed to bid and make 4. South opens 1 and, playing 4-card majors, North should respond 1 (cheaper of 4s) not 1 or 1NT. South should rebid 1, not 1NT or 2NT. North raises to 2 and South bids 4. As is so often the case, success means establishing a long suit and making sure you have enough entries. Spades will usually provide the entries, but South must hang on to A and not waste it on the third round of trumps.