

Mentor/Mentee game
14-Nov-2023
Mentor Discussion

Comments from Michael Lavine on the Unit 191 November 14
mentor/mentee game.

Board 8. West deals. No one vulnerable.

North	
♠ 7	
♥ Q95432	
♦ 8654	
♣ 32	
West	East
♠ AKQT8	♠ 642
♥ 8	♥ AKJT
♦ A32	♦ KQ9
♣ AJ76	♣ Q85
South	
♠ J953	
♥ 76	
♦ JT7	
♣ KT94	

Six spades is a very good contract for EW, and so is six notrump, but no one bid it, so let's discuss how to get there. I expect every West will open 1S and NS will remain silent. East has a game-forcing hand with three card spade support. Different partnerships may show that in different ways. In 2/1, the main way for responder to show a game force with three card support is to start by bidding two of a lower ranking suit, then support opener's suit. Many pairs will do that, though Easts may differ on whether they start with 2C, 2D, or 2H. Some partnerships use a jump to 3NT over a major to show a balanced 13-15 HCP with

three card support, so some Easts may bid 3NT. But after East shows a game force with three spades, West will have to decide whether and how to continue. In my opinion, West, with 18 HCP, a singleton, and control of all four suits, is clearly worth bidding a slam. Since West has four of the five key cards and control of every suit, West could simply bid 6S. An ambitious West could bid 4NT Blackwood first. Then when East shows one key card, West could bid 5NT to announce possession of all key cards plus the spade queen. That way, if East had extra strength or a source of extra tricks such as a running side suit, East could bid 7 spades. In my opinion, this slam should not be missed.

Board 9. North deals. EW vulnerable.

North

♠ 85432

♥ 74

♦ JT3

♣ 632

West

♠ AKQ

♥ AKJT62

♦ Q7

♣ J8

East

♠ 96

♥ —

♦ AK98542

♣ T754

South

♠ JT7

♥ Q9853

♦ 6

♣ AKQ9

After North passes, should East open 3D? Years ago bridge authorities recommended the rule of 2, 3, and 4 for deciding whether to open preemptively. That rule says to estimate how many tricks you can take in your own hand, then bid two more than that if vulnerable vs. non-vulnerable, three more than that at equal vulnerability, and four more than that at favorable vulnerability. Here, East can expect to win about six diamond tricks. So, at unfavorable vulnerability, East would pass. However, experience has shown that it pays to open preemptively more freely than the rule says. I would expect most modern Easts to open 3D. Pairs who still follow the rule of 2, 3, and 4 might open 2D, even with a seven card suit. On this deal, South would find East's opening very annoying. South has a hand that would open the bidding if East hadn't gotten in the way and South would now like to compete. But, in my opinion, South's hand is not strong enough to bid over 3D, so South should pass. Now what about West? West expects East to have six cards outside

of diamonds and East can cover at least five of them. Even if NS can take the first two club tricks, West can cover all of East's outside losers after that. West also has the diamond queen, a good filler in East's suit. East is probably not preempting at unfavorable vulnerability with a lousy suit, so West should expect 5D to have a good chance by taking 7 diamond tricks and 4 or 5 side-suit tricks. However, 4H might be a better contract. A new suit below game by responder is forcing after an opening preempt, so West can bid 3H to see whether East has heart support. When East can do nothing more than return to 4D, West can bid 5D. Pairs who follow the rule of 2, 3, and 4 can also expect 6 tricks from East and 5 from West so should also end up in 5D. On these cards, EW can take 12 tricks unless NS start by taking two club tricks, in which case EW get only 11 tricks. In the mentor/mentee game only two EW pairs bid 5D. One pair bid 4D. One EW went down in 3N and the other two pairs let NS play in 3H or 4S.

Board 12. West deals. NS vulnerable.

North

♠4
♥AQ97
♦AQT3
♣A974

West

♠J97
♥KT3
♦J75
♣QJ85

East

♠KQ8
♥J85
♦K964
♣KT6

South

♠AT6532
♥642
♦82
♣32

I expect West to pass and North to open 1D. Should East double? East's hand has 12 HCP and support for spades, hearts, and clubs but I would pass. The HCP are minimal for a takeout double and so is the support for the other suits. Also, a DBL suggests shortness in diamonds. In my opinion, a DBL misdescribes East's hand. However, regardless of whether East doubles, I think South should bid 2 spades. Most pairs play weak jump shifts, and this hand qualifies. A weak jump shift to the two level shows about 2-5 HCP and a six card suit. I think the 2S bid should end the auction and that South will take approximately 8 tricks: 4 spades, 2 hearts, 1 diamond, and 1 club. Note: North should not rescue South from 2S. At our club no one played in spades. One North played 2H; one West played 2C; three Norths played in notrump; and one East played in notrump. Had South bid 2S and North passed they would have done better than all the other NS except the lucky North who made 2H.

Board 18. E deals. NS vulnerable.

North

♠ AKT94

♥ KJ4

♦ 753

♣ 93

West

♠ 652

♥ 7532

♦ JT6

♣ 654

East

♠ Q73

♥ T98

♦ AQ

♣ KQJT8

South

♠ J8

♥ AQ6

♦ K9842

♣ A72

Despite holding only 14 HCP, I think East should open 1NT because the club suit is likely to take extra tricks. This hand has more trick-taking potential than, say ♠ K73 ♥ Q98 ♦ AQ3 ♣ KJ74, which most players would open 1NT.