

Mentor/Mentee game
9-Jan-2024
Mentor Discussion

Comments from Michael Lavine on the Unit 191 January 9
mentor/mentee game.

Board 11. South deals. none vulnerable.

	North	
	♠ 852	
	♥ 98753	
	♦ T972	
	♣ Q	
West		East
♠ QJ4		♠ KT763
♥ QJ2		♥ KT6
♦ Q6		♦ K54
♣ AKJ96		♣ 85
	South	
	♠ A9	
	♥ A4	
	♦ AJ83	
	♣ T7432	

Board 11 is full of close decisions. South will open the bidding, of course, but some Souths may open 1C and others may open 1D. The problem with opening 1C is that South doesn't have a good rebid if partner responds in either major. South doesn't have enough support to raise either major; South's clubs are not worth rebidding; and South doesn't have enough strength to reverse into 2D. It seems best to rebid 1NT even though the hand is not balanced. An alternative is to open 1D and then, if North

responds in a major, to rebid 2C. See [HERE](#) for a more thorough discussion of which minor to open by Larry Cohen.

After South opens, we come to West. If South opened 1C, then West is quite likely to bid 1NT. EW can use all their notrump bidding tools, so East will likely transfer to spades, then bid either 2N or 3N. West, knowing of the eight-card major fit, will likely place the contract in spades, but has a close call between accepting or declining East's invitation to game. The good clubs sitting over the club bidder are encouraging but the secondary honors in the red suits might not pull their full weight, so are discouraging. In our game, three pairs reached four spades and two pairs reached three spades. One EW played two clubs and one played three notrump.

If South opened 1D, then what should West bid? 1NT is unappealing because West doesn't have a diamond stopper. 2C is possible because of the good club suit. Double is also possible because West is short in diamonds and can support every other suit. At our table, West doubled. Now East is worth a jump response in spades, which shows about 10 points. That got us to 4S.

Four spades is a good contract. There are 9 easy-looking tricks — 4 spades, 2 hearts, 1 diamond, and 2 clubs. A tenth trick could come from a diamond ruff, a club finesse, or setting up a long club. Unfortunately for EW, the defense can get a club ruff along with their three aces to defeat 4S.

Board 18. East deals. NS vulnerable.

	North	
	♠ J9	
	♥ 72	
	♦ AQJT8	
	♣ KJT7	
West		East
♠ K82		♠ AQT4
♥ JT983		♥ K54
♦ 9		♦ 73
♣ Q654		♣ A832
	South	
	♠ 7653	
	♥ AQ6	
	♦ K6542	
	♣ 9	

I expect every East opened 1C. Then, should South bid 1D? In my opinion, no, because that diamond suit is not robust enough for a vulnerable overcall and because 1D does not take up much of EW's bidding room. When South passes, West bids 1H. Then should North act? In my opinion, yes, because that diamond suit is robust enough, because North has a lot of potential for tricks between the two minors, and because this 2D bid does take significant bidding room away from EW. That gives East an easy call: double. That's a support double showing exactly three-card support for hearts. See [HERE](#) for Larry Cohen's notes and [HERE](#) for details on www.BridgeBum.com.

South has enough to raise diamonds and no one else has more than they've already shown, so North likely plays in 3D. In our

game four NS played in 3 diamonds; two EW played in hearts; and one North played in 2C.

I expect East will lead a low heart, partner's suit, and North will take and win the heart finesse. That gives NS 10 tricks: 5 diamonds, two hearts, and, once trump are drawn, either three club ruffs in South or two spade ruffs and a heart ruff in North. NS will lose just two spades and a club. For some reason our four Norths made only nine tricks.

Board 20. West deals. Both vulnerable.

	North	
	♠ AK	
	♥ JT742	
	♦ T95	
	♣ 962	
West		East
♠ T873		♠ 42
♥ A		♥ KQ965
♦ AJ8432		♦ KQ76
♣ 73		♣ KQ
	South	
	♠ QJ965	
	♥ 83	
	♦ —	
	♣ AJT854	

I expect West to open 2D and North to pass. Then East should consider the following points. (i) There may be a game in hearts. West could have, for example, the two red aces along with two other hearts. Then there could be 5 heart tricks plus 6 diamond tricks. Of course NS might cash 3 tricks in the black suits first,

but the game would still make. (ii) East has excellent support for diamonds, so is not afraid of bidding higher. (iii) NS could easily have lots of spades and East doesn't want to make it easy for NS to bid them.

I think the most important consideration is (ii): the possible heart game. So as East, I would bid 2H. Bidding a new suit over a weak two bid is fairly rare, but it's good to understand the bid. When responder bids a new suit, opener should raise with any three cards or with a high honor doubleton. (Some pairs may play slightly differently.) Lacking support, opener should rebid their suit or, with a maximum, show an outside feature. On this hand West cannot support hearts and doesn't have an outside feature, so I suggest a rebid of 3D. Five of our seven tables played in diamonds. There is nothing to the play and all five EW made 10 tricks.