

30- 2024 – Don't be a Blockhead

Dealer North, All Vul

I played this hand on-line with an unknown partner:

NORTH

J72
A84
643
Q652

WEST

KQ
KQ109
QJ52
KJ8

EAST

6
J7653
A109
A974

SOUTH

A1098543
2
K87
103

THE BIDDING

North	East	South	West
P	P	2S (1)	X (2)
3S (3)	X (4)	P	3NT (5)
P	P	P	

- (1) As NS were vulnerable, I downgraded my hand and opened 2S, despite a 7-card suit
- (2) I think Double was the correct bid. The general rule is to have a Stop-and-a-Half in the bid suit (Spades). Bare KQ was not enough for a NT bid
- (3) Could also have bid 4S, but vulnerability may have scared him off
- (4) I prefer a 4H bid – West's Double indicates Hearts
- (5) Maybe West hoped East would have Spade cover to assist?

THE PLAY

In Bridge, there is so much to work out in the roughly 4 minutes that a Hand is played. Whether you are Declarer or a Defender, both will see ½ the Cards when Dummy goes down. You need to work out how you Play the Hand (or Defend it). You need to remember how the bidding went, work out likely shape, look for body language of the other Players as the Hand progresses, keep count of everything (especially Trumps and the next most important suit). You must decide whether to finesse or play for a

drop of key cards. You need to look for Squeezes and End-Plays. You must make sure you are in the right Hand at the right time.....

.....and you must not Block a suit!!!!

In this Hand, I decided to lead SA, followed by S10. That was meant to tell Partner that I had a run after S10. SK won in Dummy. Partner played 2 small spades, retaining SJ (Oh dear!). Partner was soon in with HA, and cashed SJ, but I could not win this. My Partner then played a Diamond, Declarer played DA, eschewing the Finesse

Declarer then cleverly negotiated the Clubs (knowing then I had 7 Spades), so North probably would have longer Clubs. He played CK, followed by CJ. North covered with CQ, and Declarer made 10 Tricks

MORAL OF THE STORY

North should have counted. He knew South had 6+ Spades, he had 3 and Dummy 2. So Declarer had a maximum of 2. He should have discarded SJ. He blocked the suit. We should have made 7 Tricks

The above is a simple example. Unblocking can be hard to see, but you must be alert to it

Ian Morison

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From Bangkok