

17 - 2023 – An Interesting Hand

Here is an interesting Hand, Dealer East all Vul:

	AKQ10852	
	AK32	
	2	
	2	
63		J974
Q1098765		-
KJ4		A10987
6		10973
	-	
	J4	
	Q653	
	AKQJ854	

The Bidding was robust:

E	S	W	N
P	1C	2H (1)	6S
P	P	P	

The bidding was explained as follows:

(1) = Weak Jump overcall

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE BIDDING?

West decides bidding 3H is too dangerous, even with 7 Hearts, as EW are Vul, so overcalls just 2H

North makes a bold bid with 6S. North has a 4-loser hand, and Partner opened. This is not unreasonable

The 2H bid by West cramps bidding space, and North needs to ensure Partner does not pass out below game. I would have asked for Aces first, just in case Partner has none (stop in 5S) or 2 (then ask for Kings in case a grand slam is on)

EAST'S LEAD & THE PLAY

East can see straight away that 6S is very unlikely to make. East is sure to get a Spade trick based on North's bid, and is very likely to get DA. Having no Hearts, East cannot lead partner's suit. East must not lead a Spade into North's guaranteed Spade strength. If East leads a Club, and Dummy can run a few, North may be able to throw losing Diamonds, thus the DA winner disappears

So, East must lead DA. When it wins, East knows she will put the Contract down. East should then lead a Club, hoping to block North from playing them later to discard losers (East has 4 Clubs, Dummy 7 = 11 – it is even possible West has none and can ruff)

South wins with CA, then plays CK. West must trump (West does not know North has only 1 Club., nor that East has a certain Spade winner). If North has 2 Clubs, the ruff takes 6S down, if North has only 1 Club (already played), then the ruff forces North to over-ruff (or go down) putting North back in Hand, unable to reach Dummy again

As things transpire, North loses DA, SJ and H3 and H2, down 3. The only Contract that can make is 3NT, provided DQ is held back, not used to cover any Diamond lead by East, as the suit becomes blocked

Note 5C by South fails on a Heart lead, Ruff, Diamond back, Heart Ruff (this requires East to underlead DA, hoping West has DK – it is hard to find this, and could be bad if North has DK single)

What if East had a Heart and led it, or a Spade? North makes easily, by drawing 3 rounds of Trumps, then entering Dummy via North's sole Club, and discarding 3 losers on 3 more rounds of Clubs

MORAL OF THE STORY

When you are leading to a Slam, make a mental note of where you might get the tricks to put Declarer down. Make sure you don't give the Contract away by bad leads

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Bridge lover

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