

18 - 2023 – Card Play

Here is an interesting Hand from last week, Dealer South, NS Vul:

	AQ	
	K862	
	82	
	KQJ86	
98752		643
4		J1093
Q763		AJ109
952		43
	KJ10	
	AQ75	
	K54	
	A107	

The Bidding went:

S	W	N	E
1NT (1)	P	2C	P
3H (2)	P	4NT (3)	-
5S (4)	P	6NT	P
P	P		

The bidding was explained as follows:

- (1) = 15-17
- (2) = Extended Stayman reply (maximum and good Hearts)
- (3) = RKCB
- (4) = 2 Key Cards plus HQ

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE BIDDING?

It is not clear why North did not settle in 6H, but 6NT it was

[Interestingly, the better Contract, 6H, cannot make as East will win a Heart and DA]

THE PLAY

At the Club, 6NT (and also 6C) went down many times. Why, as there are 12 sure tricks if you play it properly?

The best lead by West is S9, as was led many times at the Club

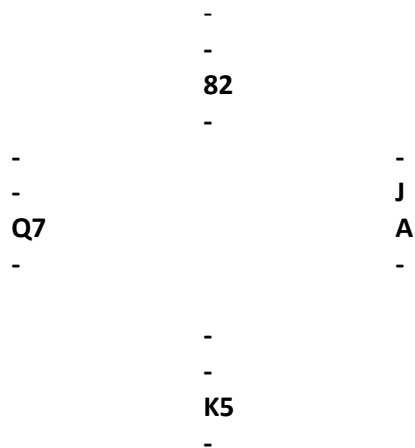
Declarer must take stock and count the winners. There are 5 sure Clubs, 3 Spades and 3 Hearts = 11. That's 1 short

The Contract will make easily if the Hearts break 3-2 – Trick 12 comes from the long Heart

But what if Hearts do not break 3-2, but instead 4-1 or 5-0? Declarer must play to counter this possibility

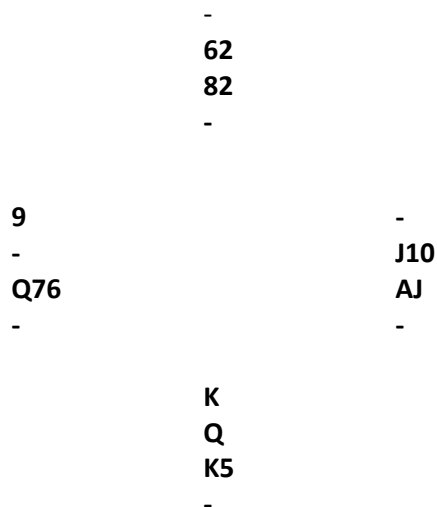
If Hearts break badly, Trick 12 is obviously DK, leading from Dummy towards it and hoping DA is with East

But you cannot do this late in the play. If, leading from Dummy, you come down to:



West will win the last 2 Tricks, and you are 1 down. Maybe that is what happened at the Club...

So, you must guard Hearts and Spades and play a Diamond from Dummy as follows:



After West wins DA, you win the last 3 Tricks in hand, to make your Contract

The finesse is a 50:50 chance

But you can also give yourself extra chances by watching carefully as you play the cards. Firstly, win S9 in Dummy with SA, creating some doubt in East's Hand that West may have SK, meaning East must keep a Spade to play back to West when in with DA

Then play 5 rounds of Clubs. West must find 2 Discards, East 3 Discards. Does East keep Hearts or Diamonds? South may have HQ and/or DK, DQ. East is under pressure to discard, and if you see East and West both discard a Heart or either of them discard 2 Hearts (leaving just 3 outstanding), you are home without the Diamond Ace being onside (5 Clubs, 3 Spades and 4 Hearts)

MORAL OF THE STORY

It is essential to count your winners early, and then have a plan to make extra Tricks needed. Here you must have the courage to lead towards DK early enough, so your other suits are guarded

Putting the Defenders on trial as they must find discards also helps your cause – they may throw cards which help you make your Contract

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Bridge lover

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