

Learning Points – Defending Against a Weak Notrump II

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W Deals

♠ AJ76

None Vul

♥ 83

♦ Q532

Mike

♣ AJ9

Steve

♠ Q8

N

♠ K1092

♥ Q1075

W 24 E

♥ AK6

♦ K109

S

♦ AJ6

♣ 10873

♣ Q62

♠ 543

♥ J942

♦ 874

♣ K54

Duplimate:

EW: 3♥, 2♠,

3N, 2♦, 3♣

Here's another hand from the recent Independence Ohio Regional January 2008 Open Pairs Flight B.

It's not often that we get the chance to play the same contract at the same table twice in a row, but that's what happened here. I wonder if we can do better this time.

The Bidding

North's opening falls within a Weak NT range of 12-14. The weak doubleton is not an impediment to Weak NT bidders.

East's 17 HCP balanced hand shouts for a penalty double.

South passes, and West passes as well.

South's pass depends on the bidding style adopted by the pair.

If a redouble by South is business, then pass is correct with this hand, hoping partner will redouble for run out. If redouble is a rescue call, then by all means use it here. Opposite South's pass, North should consider a redouble for run out. This can be converted to penalties by North when appropriate. After all,

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Double*	Pass
Passed Out			
East led the ♠2			

North is on a 12 point 4243 with only 2 quick tricks.

What if North-South use a strong NT instead?

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Passed Out			

East-West would likely find their NT game testing for a major suit fit along the way. West's hand is a marginal raise at best, but the 10's and 9's make this hand strong opposite a NT opener by partner. East will believe all values are working and will be able to read North's hand for extra trick opportunities.

The Play

East led the ♠2 (4th from an honor) and West had no trouble playing the ♠Queen. Often this position sets up a defensive tenace over declarer. Declarer won the ♠A and played a small ♥ toward the ♥Jack. East grabbed the ♥Ace and ♥King, continuing with a 3rd ♥ when West signaled ♥5 then ♥7. We use upside down attitude signals – a low card says partner has an asset in the suit and can tolerate a lead by me. Signaling with a low card makes sense since we save higher cards to taking tricks later in the hand.

Partner takes the 3rd and 4th heart and plays the ♠8. This allows us to win 3♠, and maybe 4. Declarer ducks to East's ♠9. East switches to the ♦6, hoping to promote another tenace over North. Instead EW reel off 3 ♦ tricks. We have taken 9 tricks so far. East now faces a dilemma: If North has a singleton SJ, then cashing spades I right. If North's CA is singleton, then leading a club to endplay North is right. East guessed wrong, cashing the Spade King.

4 Card Ending

♠ J7 or J

♥

♦ Q

♣ A or AJ

Mike

Steve

♠

N

♠ K10

♥

W 24 E

♥

♦

S

♦

♣ 10873

♣ Q6

♠ 5

♥

♦

♣ K54

The result down 4 for EW +800 and top board.

While East's error to the 10th trick was meaningless in terms of match points, East should have gotten it right on general principles. Pay attention only to spades and clubs. Lead the suit North was forced to discard **twice**.

Notice that counting the minor suits is not easy but doable. Since partner has shown 2 spades and 4 hearts, he should hold 7 cards in the minors. And which is his 4 card suit? Partner should have 4 clubs, because North still has the diamond Queen, the only card still missing so North had 4 diamonds to begin with.

Needless to say Pair 1 North-South was happy to see us move for the next round.