

Learning Points – Finding and Overtrick When You Need One

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Saturday Afternoon October 25, 2008. Grand National Pairs Flight B Qualifiers.

W Deals	♠ 10	
Both Vul	♥ KJ432	
	♦ 873	
Mike	♣ J1043	Steve
♠ K53	N	♠ AJ9864
♥ A6	W 20 E	♥ 1085
♦ Q106542	S	♦ KJ9
♣ 86		♣ K
	♠ Q72	<u>Deep Finesse:</u>
	♥ Q97	EW: 3♦, 3♠
	♦ A	NS: 4♥, 5♣
	♣ AQ9752	S: 1N

When it comes to bidding, competitive auctions are the toughest part of the game. Here North South can make 4♥ while East West can make 3♠. Piece together the clues and find the overtrick even the double dummy analyzer missed!

The Bidding

Some aggressive players might choose to open the North hand 2♥, but that's just not our style opposite a partner yet to speak. In 3rd seat, the weak two opening bid is an intriguing choice, and so would be a weak jump overcall.

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

East's opening bid is limited to 15 HCP (we play Precision) and shows a 5+ card major. South's overcall is natural, and West's raise shows a great 7+ to 10 HCP. With 11 or 12 HCP West would have opened the bidding!

South leads ♥7

Now North can introduce hearts because his clubs are good enough for a preemptive raise. Offering 3♥ is a good way to improve the score and locates values well for partner. East's immediate 3♠ bid is not based on strength. It simply guarantees 6 cards – East is telling West s/he has enough information to know we hold a 9 card trump suit and should compete to the 3 level (Law of Total Tricks).

East is NOT inviting West to game. We use Maximal Overcall Doubles in this situation to invite game. When partner has raise our suit and opponent have bid a level higher in the suit directly below our suit, a double is a conventional invitation to game. This allows East to compete freely with 6 spades and a weak hand. The 2♣ overcall to East's left devalues East's hand so passing is prudent. South faces the last choice, and chose to pass.

The Play

South has an interesting opening lead decision. The ♦A might be a popular choice, but here gives declarer much needed timing. The ♥7 attacks known strength and gives up little. East chose to duck the heart, setting up a heart ruff in dummy. North won and shifted to the ♣J felling East's ♣K. South continued Clubs, East ruffing.

East was sure HCP were with South and backed that decision by playing the ♠J for a false finesse. When South covered, the trump suit was accounted for and 10 tricks were available. 3♠ making 4 for +170 was worth 6.5 matchpoints out of 8 (81%).

Post Mortem

This hand puts pressure on South for both the bidding and the opening lead. Once South hears East's 3♠ bid, here's how the thinking should go:

Partner must have some values for the 3♥ bid. With few HCP only a pass would do. Partner rates to have 4-6 HCP (East West 20-22 HCP). With values in ♥, perhaps we have only one loser in that suit. East West have bid as if they own 9 trumps. Partner must have a singleton ♠. There's a good chance the only losers we have are 1 ♠, 1 ♥ and 1 ♣. 4 ♥ is indicated from the information available.