

Learning Points – Little Differences Can Mean a Lot

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

N Deals

♠ 3

EW Vul

♥ J1062

♦ J102

Mike

♣ K10832

Steve

Often little things you don't control have a big impact on bidding decisions. Sometimes they work out just right.

♠ K862

N

♠ AQJ5

♥ AK

W 9 E

♥ 9543

♦ 653

S

♦ 97

♣ AJ95

♣ Q76

The Bidding

Perhaps it's remarkable that South passes with such good ♦ and 4 ♠ in 3rd seat. Many 2/1 bidders today would open 1 ♦, upgrading the hand for the spades and the club shortness. West's 1NT promised 14+ to 17 HCP. East West began a Stayman auction. South justified the original pass by overcalling.

♠ 10974

Deep Finesse:

♥ Q87

NS: 1♦,

♦ AKQ84

EW: 1♣, 1N,

♣ 4

1♥, 3♠

This seems a bit more risky at the 2 level when an opening bid could have involved partner in the decision at the one level.

North

East

South

West

Pass

Pass

Pass

1NT

Pass

2♣

2♦

2♠

Pass

3♠

Passed Out

West shows the 4 Card ♠ suit (denying 4 ♥). East has a nice ♠ fit and a choice. Many would bid game here playing 15-17 HCP or 16-18 HCP 1NT ranges. However East decided that

North leads ♦ J

the addition of many 14+ HCP hands meant game was less sure. East's invitation was declined by West (would you?).

The Play

The ♦ J is an obvious lead. South overtook to lead the ♣ 4. East viewed this card suspiciously and won the ♣ A. Two high hearts followed by a low spade to dummy allowed the 1st of 2 possible ♥ ruffs. The 2nd spade to dummy revealed the bad rump split, but it didn't matter. Declarer lost a ♣ and a ♣ ruff, and 2♦. 3♠ making 3 for +140 was worth 6.5 matchpoints out of 8 (81%).

Post Mortem

West judged well not to raise to game holding 3 small cards in the opponent's suit. Often this holding spells trouble as 2 or 3 losers might be lurking off the top. Importantly, East West did not bid rotely nor ignore their agreements. This is one small victory for discipline.