

## Learning Points – Coming Alive with 6-5 Part I

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by Steve Moese; edited by Mike Purcell

S Deals

♠ J  
♥ J875  
♦ 10932  
♣ 7652

←Mike

Tuesday January 6, 2009. Tuesday Evening Open Pairs, Mr. Bob VeVerka, Director, Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070

Both Vul

♠ 1086	N	♠ KQ3
♥ AK1042	W 23 E	♥ Q63
♦ J5	S	♦ KQ8764
♣ A104		♣ 3

Highly distributional hands are a great opportunity even when both vulnerable. Marty Bergen teaches “Come alive with 6-5!” as a sound reminder that the Law of Total Tricks will generally favor these hands. Often there are more tricks than total trumps.

### The Bidding

Mike and I play Precision but our auction would match most standard or 2/1 approaches. The only inference is that South is limited to 15 HCP.

♠ A97542  
♥ 9  
♦ A  
♣ KQJ98

Duplimate:  
NS: 5♣, 1♠  
EW: 3♦, 2♥, 1N

Steve→

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♥	Pass	3♦
4♣	Dbl	Pass	4♥
4♠	Dbl	5♣	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Passed Out	

South’s hand has 14 HCP, all working, in a 4 loser hand (2♠, 1♥, and 1♣). South holds 5 controls (A=2, K=1), half that needed for slam! That means at worst we could be only down 2 in a 5 level contract. South keeps bidding to suggest a sacrifice. While a close decision South believes 4♥ will likely make and a small vulnerable sacrifice would be wise. EW bidding shows their strength and West duly doubles to protect their game interests.

West leads ♥A

### The Play

Declarer counts 2 winners and needs to develop 9 more to make this 11 trick contract. 7 more would likely be a profitable sacrifice as -500 beats the -620 EW would score for their ♥ game. Counting losers shows only 2! 1♥ and 1♣. The key is to develop ♠ without losing control of ♣ due to red suit ruffs, and cross-ruffing where possible.

East’s ♥A lead wins and switches to the ♦J won by declarer in hand. Declarer sets about ruffing spades to set up the suit. While the *a priori* odds favor a 4-2 split, a 3-3 split would be nice to avoid a big set. The ♠A followed by a low ♠ ruffed in dummy. A ♥ ruff is a safe return to hand for the final ♠ ruff clearing the suit. Dummy then leads trumps. West holds off one trick then wins and continues with the ♦5. South ruffs, draws trumps and claims good spades and trumps.

5C<sup>X</sup> + 5 for +750 earned 8 of 8 MPs.

Bd 23	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
MP	5	3	0	1	3	5	7	8	---	---	---	---
Score	300	200	-620	100	200	300	670	750	---	---	---	---

### Post Mortem

Hand evaluation based on point count alone fails when distributions become exciting. South bid hoping for a profitable sacrifice, found a partner with 2 HCP and a hand distribution that let the doubled game make. Lucky? Sure – but choicefully prepared. Luck always favors the prepared. Here the Law of Total Tricks missed big time – 17 Total Trumps (9♣+8♦) but 20 Total Tricks (11♣+9♦) !!

### Learning Pointers:

- 1) On shapely hands count tricks and losers not just HCP, then decide if partner can have enough cover cards (the honors you are missing) to enable game or slam.
- 2) Consider sacrificing when the loser count is favorable regardless of what partner has. You might just make it! 6-5 hands are always exciting.