

Learning Points – High Level Slam Decisions II

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N Deals

♠ Q1076

NS Vul

♥ J106543

♦ 10

Steve

♣ 87

Mike

♠ K32

N

♠ A984

♥ 9

W 21 E

♥

♦ AKJ963

S

♦ Q8542

♣ K53

♣ AQ62

♠ J5

Duplimate:

♥ AKQ872

EW: 5♠, 6♦, 4♣

♦ 7

NS: 2♥

♣ J1094

January 13, 2009. Tuesday Evening Open Pairs, Rob Weidenfeld, Director, Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070 . 19 Tables across 2 sections.

Are you up to speed on defensive bidding agreements when opponents sacrifice against your possible slam at the 6 level?

The Bidding

As is often the case, a Precision auction and a Standard or 2/1 auction has the same language (just subtly different meanings based on opening bid limits).

North	East	South	West
Pass	1♦ ¹	1♥	2♥ ²
4♥	Pass ³	Pass	6♦
6♥	Pass ⁴	Pass	Double
	Passed Out		

West leads ♦ A

1 = 11-15 HCP at least 2 ♦ Cards

2 = ≥ Limit Raise, at least 5 ♦ Cards

3, 4 = Forcing Pass

South chose a slightly conservative overcall. Many would make a weak preempt with his hand. West will cue bid South's heart bid anywhere under 5♦. East's 1st pass is the Forcing Pass. Here East says "Partner we are in a game auction and have a known fit. My pass says I have no duplication in their suit (Hearts) and something extra. Help us choose whether to declare or defend." Partner will either bid on or double. After a forcing pass, letting the opponents play an undoubled contract is unwise.

West chose to bid 6♦ directly, confident that partner would continue on with 1st round control in ♥ and sufficient side suit extras. North chose to obstruct again. East's 2nd forcing pass is revealing, and shows 1st round control of ♥. Looking at 33 in the black suits and 4 losers there, West chose to double instead of bidding 7♦. Would that be the right decision?

The Play

Partners first card at trick one is Suit Preference. Why? We are known to hold length and Dummy has a singleton – both together create a suit preference signal requirement in our methods. The defense rattled off the 1st 5 tricks, cashing 2 each in the black suits. Declarer claimed down four at that point.

6♥^X-4 for -1100 was worth 8 of 8 match points.

Bd 11	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9
MP	2	8	6	6	2	4	0	2	6
Score	420	1100	920	920	420	800	200	420	920

Post Mortem

East has 12 tricks in 6♦ off the top, after ruffing the opening lead. The hope for an overtrick was lost when the black suits broke 4-2 in opposite hands. Declarer can make 7♦ on a simple squeeze if either opponent holds 4 cards in BOTH black suits, or if ♣ breaks 3-3 (then pitching the 3rd spade from the West hand let's declarer ruff out the hand).

Interestingly, if declarer plays for the squeeze, the hand will always make whenever Clubs break 3-3. This is often the case with simple squeezes is an extra chance or "two bites from the apple" advantage in choosing an approach to play the hand.

The Law of Total Tricks suggests NS should sacrifice. South could have helped the partnership by making a disciplined jump to 2♥ at the 1st turn. Regardless what West does (within reason) North is then better placed to throw an accurate wrench in the works.

With a known 12 card fit, rote application of the Law might drive some to bid 6♥ immediately. This would be right black vs. red, but at unfavorable vulnerability this is simply a bad choice. Better would be to bid 5♥ directly (not 4). This adjusts for the scoring disadvantage and takes up enough space to make finding the optimum spot tougher. Bidding 4♥ then 6♥ allows EW to exchange additional information that is helpful to making the right final decision. Take this advantage away by bidding immediately as high as you can afford within the Law (of Total Tricks)!!

Learning Pointers:

- 1) The forcing pass is an important understanding. Put it in your arsenal. Agree how it changes when opponents sacrifice at the 6 level or higher. For more detail Google “Forcing Pass” or see: http://www.bridgehands.com/F/Forcing_Pass.htm There are many aspects for partnership agreement here. Be sure to discuss the important ones.
- 2) Passing to show 1st round control at the 6 level when opponents are sacrificing is very valuable indeed.
- 3) Value down 3 card off suits when deciding whether to double or bid 7.
- 4) Agree with partner how you will handle sacrificing situations. Does a direct jump to a final level show no defense, or the ability to defend? Does bidding in 2 steps to the final sacrifice imply good defense or no defense? Make your choice and stick to it.