

Learning Points – Expert Play Makes Up for Optimistic Bidding

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by Steve Moese; edited by Mike Purcell

W Deals	♠ Q7	
NS Vul	♥ J2	
	♦ Q64	
Adam	♣ AQ10872	Steve
♠ 986	N	♠ AJ532
♥ A10973	W 12 E	♥ Q65
♦ 1072	S	♦ AJ53
♣ 63		♣ 5
	♠ K104	Dealmaster Pro:
	♥ K84	EW: 1♦, 2♥,
	♦ K98	2♠
	♣ KJ94	NS: 1N, 3♣

Saturday January 17, 2009. Saturday Evening Open Pairs, Mike Lipp, Director, Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070 . My partner is Adam Parrish

Competitive bidding required an artful balance between getting to the right spot and making it hard for opponents to make the final decision. Here East took an optimistic view of the hands and West more than delivered by choosing a play approach that let opponents contribute at will.

The Bidding

At favorable vulnerability in pairs it is often right to stretch just past what is likely to make. Opponents can go wrong two ways: letting us make an overtrick or overbidding themselves to an unmakeable contract. Sometimes competing enables our side to get 2 bites from the same apple.

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	Double
Pass	2♣	Double	3♣
3♥ ¹	Pass	Pass	Pass

North leads ♥ J

1= OBAR – Opponents Bid and Raise, we intervene.

OBAR is an acronym popularized by Marty Bergen. When opponents bid and raise they likely have an 8+ card fit.

Therefore we stretch to pre-balance – bid before partner if we

have a useful unbid suit. Since East indicated interest in 3 suits and some extras, West found 3H an easy call. East's 1S opening bid is of the 11-15 HCP Precision variety. Notice how these limited openings help competitive decisions.

The Play

Declarer could count only 3 tricks off the top. We would need help from the opponents. The opening lead eliminated 2 possible losers. The trump lead looks innocent from North's perspective but eliminated one of declarer's loser's off the bat as the Q drew the K and A. North misstepped on the 2nd trick by failing to cover the D10. This let West score 3 D tricks. The 3rd D trick allowed a spade pitch, eliminating but one spade loser. 2 Spade ruffs set up the long spades. In all declarer lost 1S, 1D, and 1C.

3H+4 and +170 was worth 10 of 12 Match Points. Sometimes simply making 4 can be worth as much as bidding the game in matchpoints.

Bd 11	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15
MP	1	11.5	0	4	10	6	5	---	11.5	---	2.5	8	8	2.5	8
Score	-600	200	-630	-130	170	-100	-110	---	200	---	-150	-50	-50	-150	-50

Post Mortem

Declaring to induce opponents to help as much as possible often reaps rewards. Here 2 small missteps were converted into an almost top board.

Learning Pointers:

- 1) Find a reason to bid when black versus red. Favorable vulnerability is a friend to distribution.
- 2) Play so opponents will help you.
- 3) Make your chances add up – with luck they will!