

Learning Points – Nothing In Life Is Free

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LEVEL: Intermediate

N Deals

♠ A7

Mike

Both Vul

♥ J542

♦ 532

♣ AT53

Tuesday April 21, 2009. Tuesday Evening Open Pairs, Kay Mulford, Director, Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070 .

♠ J652	N	♠ K43
♥ T98		♥ K763
♦ J4	W 9 E	♦ AQ
♣ J976	S	♣ K842

Sometimes free finesses are not so free. The best overtricks are those we earn by planning ...

Bidding

East opens a strong NT and South bids 2♣, modified Cappelletti. North bids 2♦ to end the auction. Some South's will bid 2♠ to show their major/minor 2-suiter. North will correct back to 3♦.

The Play

♣2 lead looks to declarer like a free finesse ... but look harder. The key this hand will be finessing East in diamonds, hearts and perhaps spades as many times as possible. If ♣Q wins, you are trapped on the board killing a key entry to North's hand. Even worse, cashing the ♣A later will not allow declarer to pitch an obvious loser.

♠ QT98

♥ AQ

♦ KT9876

♣ Q

Paul

North	East	South	West
Pass	1N	2♣ ¹	Pass
2♦ ²		Passed Out	

West Leads 2♣

1= Show either a Minor or Major/Minor (Modified Cappelletti, see below)

2= Relay bid. Partner passes with ♦ or bids a Major.

Noting this, declarer overtook the ♣Q and immediately played trump. East fearing the endplay, played ♦A and exited ♦Q. Declarer wins ♦K in dummy and sees that trump is out. Knowing that a ♥ finesse is needed, declarer plays a low ♠ to reach his hand.

How do you play the ♠ suit? Remembering the auction and reading the cards helps. East has shown ♣K, ♦A and ♦Q. West has shown ♦J. Therefore by inference, East must have BOTH ♥K and ♠K for their bid (15-17 HCP) and either 0 or 1 jack. So, declarer should play ♠A and low to the ♠Q. North will get in after ruffing East's ♣ return and play ♠Q and low ♠ for a ruff in declarer's hand (even if the ♠J falls on the ♠Q). Then declarer can finally take the ♥ finesse. Final Result: 2♦+5 was an average-plus board. How important was making all those overtricks? 2♦+4 was a near bottom!! Sometimes it is not about getting a top as much as avoiding the bottoms.

Post Mortem

East's opening lead is a free finesse of the ♣K but in this case winning the ♣Q actually costs you a trick. Having a plan for the hand at trick 1 can help you avoid these transportation mistakes.

Modified Capelletti is a popular defensive bidding approach over 1NT openings that preserves the penalty double, and allows direct single suit bids in the major suits (See insert). Interfering over their 1NT opening has shown to be a valuable defensive tactic. We take them out of a comfortable low level contract, interfere with their constructive bidding, and help direct our defense if opponents declare.

Mod. Capelletti Over opponent's 1NT:

Double = Penalty – either balanced top of their range, or a 6+ 1-loser suit with a side entry.

2♣ = minor 1-suiter or Major/minor 2-suiter

2♦ = Both Majors

2♥, 2♠ Natural

2N = Minors

Learning Pointers:

- 1) Before playing to trick 1, have a plan for how to make the contract. Most importantly confirm how you will move between hands to execute your plan. Failure to plan before trick 1 can lead to disaster later on.
- 2) Remember the auction. Sometimes what is bid (and what is not) can help you play your contract for the best results.