

Learning Points – Tales From the NAP 3

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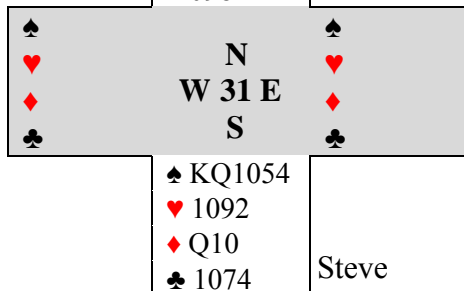
Bidding Level: Intermediate

South Deals
NS Vul
MPs

♠ J9
♥ A73
♦ KJ873
♣ J98

Mike

Cincinnati Sectional and North American Pair Qualifier - Session 1 of 2 sessions. My partner is Mike Purcell. We play a 2/1 version of Precision.



The Bidding

Discipline in 1st seat follows the rule of 2-3-4. Vulnerable against Not Vulnerable, South should have **6 winners** in hand to open a weak 2. South has 4 winners - not a disciplined bid. Look at the havoc it caused opponents.

The Play

Declarer can count 7 losers. Is there any chance for a 7th winner? Down 1 might be a good result. Opponents have 23 HCP – they are not likely making game. The absence of bidding suggests they hold no shortness in trumps and no biddable 5-card suits. Can we take advantage of that?

South West North East
2♣!! All Pass
West leads ♥Q

Declarer ducks the opening lead and wins the ♥ continuation (in case RHO has a doubleton ♥). Declarer chose to start on ♦s before ♠s (a useful pitch might happen). West wins the ♦A and plays a 2nd ♦!! ♣s must be split evenly with 1 defender holding the ♣AQ and the other the ♣K. 3 rounds of ♦s allows north to pitch a ♣ from hand (no way to get extra tricks from ruffs in the short hand here). Now the ♣J from the Dummy (looking like a declarer finessing the ♣AQ) lands the play in West winning the ♣Q. West faces many choices. A ♥ would shorten dummy but keep the ♣A over South's ♣K. A spade would be wrong if partner holds the ♠Q. West chose to clear ♠s from dummy.

NS were down 1 (4♠s, 2♦s, 1♥) for -100 worth 14.9 of 17 MPs (87%).

Pair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
MP	12.74	8.5	15.91	8.5	4.26	8.5	4.26	14.85	8.5			
Result	-110	-120	50	-120	-140	-120	-140	-100	-120			

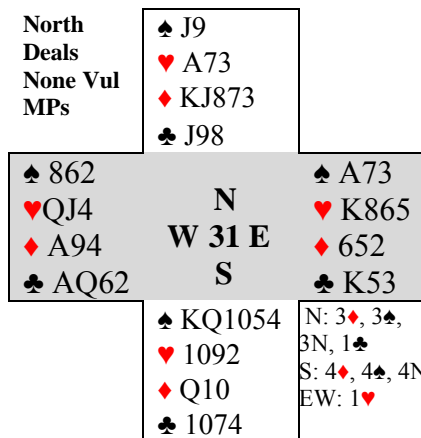
Pair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
MP	8.5	4.26	12.74	10.20	12.74	16.96	1.62	0.03	1.62			
Result	-120	-140	-110	AVE+	-110	100	-150	-200	-150			

Post Mortem

Weak 2's are destructive when opponents have balanced shapes and a majority of strength. Top level play has seen an explosion of weak 2 bids with generally positive results in world championship competition. If you play 5 card suit weak 2 bids be sure to adjust your methods to define when you have a 5-card suit and what strength you will be. The rationale is that holding 5 cards means partner is likely to hold $8/3 = 2.67$ cards in support on average. The Law of Total Tricks says an 8 card fit is often safe at the 2 level. Be sure partner is on the same page.

NS were very lucky to land on their feet on this hand. No bad deed goes unrewarded. NB: Mike and I do NOT play 5-card weak-2 bids. This was a unilateral attempt to get a good result. ☺

This hand worked for NS because all of South's HCP were working and the combined suit quality for ♠s and ♦s was sound (no weak intermediates).



If you do choose to play 5-card weak-2 bids, then be sure to adjust your bidding agreements to enable this choice. The biggest mistake players make is to adopt a convention without fully appreciating how it affects what else they do. If you fail to adjust your bidding approach you might be putting too much pressure on partner in constructive sequences and increase the number of bad results you get.

Will you always follow the rule of 2-3-4 when opening a weak-2 in 1st or 2nd seat? How will you handle 5-card suits? Don't fly off until you have worked out how you will handle this change. You should adjust your own constructive bidding approach and determine with partner what suit quality requirements you expect in a 5-card suit. Ogust is a systemic way for responder to learn about the suit quality and strength of opener's hand.

I prefer to avoid opening a 5 card weak 2 with 5-6 HCP unless all HCP are in the suit and I have a singleton in the hand. I also expect the suit quality to be rich – more 8s, 9, 10s than 2s, 3s, or 4s. If the hand is a 7-loser hand with a 5-card major I prefer to make a 1-level bid if I have defensive values. And yes, I prefer favorable vulnerability so that I do not cause my partner or my team a horrible result when things go wrong.

How to modify Ogust for 5-card Weak-2's:

Disciplined Weak-2 5-11 HCP & 6-card suit	5-Card Weak 2's 5-11 HCP
Responder's 2N asks opener to describe further:	Responder's 2N asks opener to describe further:
Opener 's bids describe the hand as follows 3♣ = Weak Suit and Weak Hand (5-8 HCP) 3♦ = Strong suit and Weak Hand (5-8 HCP) 3♥ = Weak Suit Strong Hand (9-11 HCP) 3♠ = Strong Suit, Strong Hand (9-11 HCP) 3N = 6 solid tricks	Opener 's bids describe the hand as follows 3♣ = 5-card suit 3♦ Asks Range (Game Force) 3♥ = Weak 3♠ = Medium 3N = Strong 3♦ = 6-card suit and Weak Hand (5-7 HCP) 3♥ = 6-card suit and Medium Hand (8-9 HCP) 3♠ = 6-card suit and Strong Hand (10-11 HCP) 3N = 6 solid tricks

Learning Points

1. If you go beyond your agreements, do so in small steps. Remember you are on your own. Those you fool might include your partner.
2. When declaring a contract others will not, make as many tricks as possible. Don't add more risk.

Keywords: Weak 2 on 5 card suit, constructive bidding and suit quality requirements