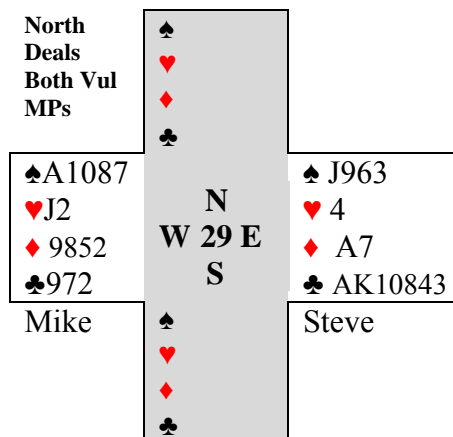


Learning Points – Tales From the NAP 9

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Declarer Play Level: Intermediate



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

This is the 2nd hand from our first evening round. We had a lucky result on our very 1st board. Can we continue the trend on these next 2 hands?

The Bidding

East faces a simple overcall in most methods after North's 1♥ opening bid. Making a takeout double on such a 2-suiter often leads to rebid problems. Since East's hand has 6 losers, East expects to get the spades into the picture if they are available by the 2nd round of bidding.

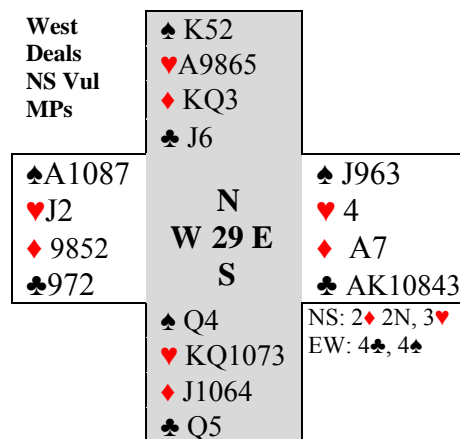
North	East	South	West
1♥	2♣	3♣ ¹	Pass
4♥	4♠!	5♥!!	5♠!!!
Dbl	All Pass		
South leads ♥K			
¹ = Limit raise or better.			

South decides a limit raise (or better) is the right way to approach the contract and West passes. North optimistically presses to game and East is now facing a tougher decision. At the very least, 4♠ will get NS out of their comfortable game. Perhaps they can't make 11 tricks in ♥s. South continues on to 5♥ with little hesitation, suggesting they have a 10 card+ trump fit. Lo and behold silent West decides he's heard enough and puts the bar at 5♠. North doubles and all pass.

The Play

Lightening it seems does strike twice in the same place. For the 2nd time in 2 hands, the opening lead decides whether we get a top or bottom. And for the 2nd time, the opening leader has incomplete information and cannot readily find the killing lead. Here, North can help by overtaking and switching. However the temptation to cash all tricks was too great.

The ♥K is very reasonable given partner's opening bid. The ♥ continuation was ruffed by East who drew trumps. Split honors would help keep the damage to a minimum, so East expected to finesse South twice. On the ♠J East popped up with the ♠Q. Hopefully this was from a doubleton. After winning the ♠A on board, declarer continued with a small ♠ toward the ♠9 in hand. Winning the ♠K at trick 4 left North with no answer. The ♦K was won with the ♦A and East hoped for a 2-2 Club split. Indeed when the ♣J and ♣Q fell doubleton EW chalked up 11 tricks. The losing ♦s went away on the long ♣ in hand. This time defenders needed to find a ♦ lead or better still a ♦ switch after winning the 1st ♥. Without a ♦ switch, NS give up precious tempo and EW can make 11 tricks. Making 11 tricks for +850 was worth 17 of 17 MPs. A very lucky start continues. Can we dare hope for more? Two down, 25 to go.



Pair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
MP		16	8	0	8	8	8	17	8		8
Result		710	100	-140	100	100	100	850	100		100

The NAP scores cross two different sections. Results from the rest of the field:

Pair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
MP		8	8	8	15	8	8	8	8			1
Result		100	100	100	170	100	100	100	100			-100

Post Mortem

Perhaps North should force the defense by overtaking the HK and switching to the DK. From North's viewpoint South could hold only 4 Hs meaning East had a doubleton and 2 losers.

What fascinates on this deal is how both sides overbid. EW were right to reach 4♠. However 5♠ required a misstep that opponents were willing to make.

Are partner and I too aggressive? Time will tell.

Learning Points

1. Highly distributional hands often yield more tricks.
2. 4-6 hands with 6 or fewer losers deserve more bidding. This is an exciting shape.
3. When advancing at the 5-level be sure the contract they bid is making. You might be sacrificing for a sacrifice.

Keywords: Competitive Bidding, Phantom Sacrifice, 5-level decisions, Opening Lead.