

Learning Points – Even a Bad Guess is Worth Something

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Bidding Level: Basic / Intermediate

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| North Deals All Vul MPs | ♠ K94 ♥ K92 ♦ A83 ♣ 9872 | |
| ♠ Q7653 ♥ A6 ♦ KJ1075 ♣ Q | N W 13 E S | ♠ J1082 ♥ J8753 ♦ Q9 ♣ J5 |
| | ♠ A ♥ Q104 ♦ 642 ♣ AK10643 | |

North East South West
 Pass Pass 2♣¹ 2♠
 2N 3♥ 3N All Pass
 1= 11-15 HCP 6+ ♠
 East leads ♠J

the 2-1 split, declarer ran the ♣s pitching a low ♥ and ♠. West Pitched 2♦ and 3♠. East pitched 2 of each major. Now declarer must play ♥s. Do you place East or West with the ♥A? Declarer chose East (wrongly) leading to the ♥10. Making 10 tricks was worth 14 of 17 MPs.

Post Mortem – Hard to get the ♥s right on this auction. Since opponents failed to find a ♦ lead (East will never do it), North should be content to make an overtrick.

Learning Points

1. Stretching for game with extras doesn't always mean HCPs. Sometimes the extra is length in our suit.
2. Using suit long suit valuation, South is worth 15-16 HCP (Kaplan & Rubens Hand Evaluator says 15.95).
3. Bounty to the aggressive. Bridge is a bidder's game. Some bids are just surer than others!
4. Don't rail against bidding game on only 23 HCP. Figure out when it can be right to do!

Keywords: Counting tricks, cover cards, hand evaluation, tricks not points make game.

A/X Open Pairs, Qualifying, Indianapolis Regional Mike Ma is my partner. We play Precision.

Sometimes competitive auctions make guessing right a premium. Can 23 HCP be enough for 3N? Yes, if there's enough tricks.

The Bidding – In our version of Precision, partner shows only 5 ♣s in 3rd seat not 6. When West overcalled 2♠, 2N seemed natural and forward going, supported by the inference we have a 9+ Card trump fit. 3♥ by East offered an alternative (or East just likes to bid) and partner decided the robust ♣ suit and major cover cards was worth mentioning 3N.

The Play – On a ♥ lead declarer has an easy road to 11 tricks. On a ♠ lead 10 or 11 are possible. On a ♦ lead, 9 tricks will be the limit as long as ♣s behave. Chances are good that ♣s will play for 6 tricks. No need to protect against ♣QJ5 in East as North can get home with 5♣s, 1♦, 1♥, and 2♠s. But after all, this is Match Points. Winning the ♠A in dummy, declarer tested ♣s. Finding

| | | NS | EW | NS MPs | EW MPs |
|-----|---|-----|-----|-----------|-----------|
| 3♠ | W | | 140 | 1 | 16 |
| 3♣ | S | 150 | | 7 | 10 |
| 3N | N | 660 | | 16 | 1 |
| 1N | N | 210 | | 12 | 5 |
| 2♣ | S | 130 | | 4 | 13 |
| 3♣ | S | 150 | | 7 | 10 |
| 3♣ | S | 150 | | 7 | 10 |
| 3N | N | 660 | | 16 | 1 |
| 3♠ | W | 100 | | 2.5 | 14.5 |
| 2♠X | W | | 670 | 0 | 17 |
| 3♠X | W | 200 | | 10 | 7 |
| 3♠ | W | 100 | | 2.5 | 14.5 |
| 3N | N | 630 | | 14 | 3 |
| 3N | N | 660 | | 16 | 1 |
| 3♣ | S | 150 | | 7 | 10 |
| 2N | N | 210 | | 12 | 5 |
| 4♣ | S | 150 | | 7 | 10 |
| 2N | N | 210 | | 12 | 5 |