

13. Play Bridge with Nigel Rosendorff

(Today's bridge column comes courtesy of Nigel Rosendorff, formerly of Perth, nowadays in Sydney.)

1. With only East-West vulnerable, West opens 1♥. What would you do as North with:

♠ AJ95
♥ 832
♦ AQ
♣ Q1054

2. With only East-West vulnerable, West opens 1♥. North doubles and East passes. What would you do as South with:

♠ KQ1087
♥ 95
♦ KJ
♣ A872

3. Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

North
♠ AJ95
♥ 832
♦ AQ
♣ Q1054

South
♠ KQ1087
♥ 95
♦ KJ
♣ A872

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| 1♥ | Dble | Pass | 4♠ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

West leads the ♥A, ♥K, ♥Q. East follows and South ruffs the third round. South plays ♠A, and ♠K. Both opponents follow. Plan the play.

Here is the full deal:

West dealer : East-West vulnerable

| | | |
|----------|----------|------------|
| | North | |
| | ♠ AJ95 | |
| | ♥ 832 | |
| | ♦ AQ | |
| | ♣ Q1054 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ 62 | | ♠ 43 |
| ♥ AKQ106 | | ♥ J74 |
| ♦ 85 | | ♦ 10976432 |
| ♣ KJ93 | | ♣ 6 |
| | South | |
| | ♠ KQ1087 | |
| | ♥ 95 | |
| | ♦ KJ | |
| | ♣ A872 | |

1. Bidding today has changed dramatically, it is very aggressive with light openings, many varieties of weak twos and lots of pre-emptive bidding. Therefore, when a player has a reasonable hand, but not ideal to get into the bidding, they need to take a slight risk and bid!

The idea of the ‘wait and see approach,’ means players miss the boat on many occasions, better to get in early than later.

Take today’s deal. After West opened one heart many players would pass on the North hand fearing that if they made a takeout double partner would surely respond in diamonds. Yep that is the downside but passing will often create more problems and on this hand, North’s double made bidding game simple for South.

2. South has 13 HCP and West has opened the bidding. North’s takeout double figures to be in the 12-15 HCP range. As North doubled 1♥ with a minimum takeout double, North should have support for spades, at least three. That entitles South to jump to 4♠.

3. Sadly, South’s play was not up to his bidding. Against South’s 4♠, West started with three top hearts. Declarer ruffed, drew trumps and then played the ace of clubs and a club to dummy’s queen. Now he had to lose two club tricks. Bad luck about the 4-1 break.

However, from the bidding it is clear that West must hold the club king for his opening. If so, declarer has a simple way to insure ten tricks. After drawing trumps, South plays diamonds ending in hand, stripping both hands of red suits and then leads a low club towards the queen. West will play low and dummy’s queen wins. Declarer returns to the South hand with a trump and leads another low club towards dummy. West wins with the jack but is now endplayed, forced to either lead from his king of clubs or concede a ruff-and-discard.

2. Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

North
 ♠ Q72
 ♥ 9
 ♦ K862
 ♣ QJ1054

South
 ♠ 984
 ♥ AKJ2
 ♦ AQJ10
 ♣ A6

| | | | |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | 2NT |
| Pass | 3NT | All Pass | |

West leads the ♥4: nine – ten – jack. South plays ♣A: seven – four – two and the ♣6: eight – queen – nine. How would you continue?

Here is the full deal:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>North ♠ Q72 ♥ 9 ♦ K862 ♣ QJ1054</p> <p>West ♠ AJ106 ♥ Q6543 ♦ 4 ♣ K87</p> <p>South ♠ 984 ♥ AKJ2 ♦ AQJ10 ♣ A6</p> | <p>East ♠ K53 ♥ 1087 ♦ 9753 ♣ 932</p> | <p>This deal, from the Victor Champion Cup held in Melbourne a few years ago, features a number of interesting plays! After South opened an aggressive two no-trump (20-22), North raised to three no-trumps. West led his fourth best heart and South won the jack. Next declarer played ace and another club, East playing low then the nine suggesting spade values (suit preference after standard count) ducked all round.</p> <p>Declarer then played another club. West won the club king, exited a diamond and that was eleven tricks to declarer. After South won the first heart with the jack and played ace and another club, there was no reason for West to duck. After winning the club king, West should hope East has the spade king, very likely given East's play in clubs. So an easy switch to the spade jack, ducked all round, followed by a low spade to the king and a quick one down.</p> |
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Well, not really. A roll call of points means that if South has 20-22 points, East can have at most two points. That was West's excuse. Many players however, often upgrade hands so what might appear as nineteen points to one player may mean twenty or twenty-one to another. Although it may be giving up an overtrick or two, West should have factored in that South might have upgraded the hand. West should there go for the only real chance to beat the contract and play East for the spade king.

How about declarer? After the second club is won in dummy, South should stop and take stock. South has three heart tricks, four diamond tricks and now two club tricks – contract! Simply take your winners. Why play a third club and give the defenders another chance to find the winning defence? We all have blind spots.