



Marin Unit 508 Benefit for Homeward Bound of Marin

Virtual Club Game & Zoom Party
December 27, 2020

The Marin Unit's Virtual Holiday Benefit on December 27, 2020 was a huge success, with the glitterati of the bridge world turning their talents into a big win for Homeward Bound of Marin. We had 8 tables in the 299'er game. Thank you to everyone who donated, bid, and played. You made this event the success that it was.

Our wonderful pros reviewed the hands played in the 299'er game and their analyses follow. Thank you to each of the professionals who shared their thinking about these hands. A huge thank you as well to Richard Reitman, who edited the reviews. We hope you enjoy the hand analyses and find them useful.

ANALYSIS OF HANDS played December 27, 202

Hand 1

Bob Thomson

Only one player has anything like an opening bid, and that's North. Does North have an opening bid? My answer is yes. Eleven high cards points is an optional opening bid, but this one should be opened because you have such a convenient rebid. You open one club, partner will likely bid one heart, and you can conveniently rebid one spade. Whereas, if you had four hearts instead of four spades, you would have an awkward rebid over partner's likely one spade response, and it might be best just to pass the hand in first seat.

Dlr: N	1
Vul: None	
11	♠ A 10 9 4
9 10	♥ 3
10	♦ Q 7 6
	♣ K Q 9 6 4
11	♠ K 5 2
9 10	♥ J 10 8
10	♦ A J 8 5 3
	♣ 3 2
11	♠ Q J 7
9 10	♥ A Q 9 5 2
10	♦ 9 2
	♣ J 8 5
11	♠ 8 6 3
9 10	♥ K 7 6 4
10	♦ K 10 4
	♣ A 10 7

Hand 2

Bruce Blakely

This is an interesting hand that shows the benefit of playing in the "Magic 4-4 Fit." Although N-S have nine spades and only eight hearts, the hand plays better in the shorter heart suit since there are discards available in a heart contract which are not available when spades are trumps.

After East passes, South with 17 points opens 1NT. North has 11 points with 5-4 in the majors and should bid 2C, Stayman. When South shows a four-card heart suit, North bids 4H. Interestingly, when the hand was played in the 299er event, however, it was universally played in 4 Spades, not in the superior Heart contract.

West has a difficult hand to lead from with a singleton spade and honors in all three of the other suits, but no sequences. Most Wests led a trump in the spade contract. However, some led a club which gives away the 12th trick right away. If West does not lead a club initially, when in with the Ace of Diamonds, he or she must not lead a club or that later club lead will also give away the 12th trick.

The hand plays better in hearts. On most leads, South can pull trumps in three rounds and unblock the spade suit, then cross to dummy with a diamond ruff to discard two clubs and one diamond on long spades and make six. In hearts, declarer will usually take four hearts, six spades, the Ace of Clubs and a diamond ruff for 12 tricks. In spades, on the other hand, the hand will only make 11 tricks if West does not lead the club suit.

In hearts, the declarer can almost always take 12 tricks. Only on the unusual lead of the Ace of Diamonds at Trick 1, followed by a second diamond, which forces declarer to shorten dummy's trump length, can declarer be held to five. On that defense, declarer cannot both pull trumps and unblock the spades. If declarer plays three rounds of trumps, there is no fast entry to dummy and West will earn a second trick with the King of Clubs. If declarer pulls only two rounds of trumps, and then tries to unblock the spades, West will be able to ruff in to hold declarer to five as well.

Although the hand was played in spades at all tables, most declarers will make six in Hearts and should be held to five in Spades, so long as West never leads away from the K-J of clubs.

Dlr: E

Vul: N-S

2

11	♠ J 8 7 6 5 2 ♥ K Q 9 2 ♦ K ♣ Q 6
10 2	17
♦ A J 10 6 5	♠ 9 4 3 ♥ 10 4 ♦ Q 9 3 2 ♣ 8 4 3 2
♣ K J 9 5	

♠ 10	♠ A K Q ♥ A 7 5 3 ♦ 8 7 4 ♣ A 10 7
♥ J 8 6	



"I am so glad that we were able to make a sizeable contribution to this worthy organization. It was a very enjoyable event and I hope that we will run the silent auction for Homeward Bound again next year."

- Bruce Blakely

Hand 3

Arti Bhargava

Bidding is as follows: P – (1C) – X – (P) – 1H
 (P) - 4C (splinter; showing at least 20 dummy points since partner can have as little as 6 HCP) – (P) – 4H (South has nothing extra, and wants to end the auction).

However, N has a very powerful playing hand, and wants to make another attempt at slam, so N can now bid 5H asking partner if they have good trump, and with 2 good trump, S should bid 6H (this is advanced, but a good thing to learn). In other contexts, 5H would ask partner if they have 1st or 2nd round control in clubs, but N doesn't need to know about clubs b/c they have already shown control of C with the splinter.

Play of the Hand:

On the K of C lead, ruff in the dummy. Play A of H, Q of H (overtaking with K in Hand to create an extra entry). Play a D to Q, then 10 of H to J; then repeat finesse; then AK of Spades, ruff a S, pull last trump and claim (or play another D, K falls, and you claim).

Hand 3 (another perspective)

Wafik Abdou, MD

After 2 passes, N starts with 1D (not strong enough for 2 clubs, even using Garrazo's gadget showing 6 diamonds and 4 of a major), with EW silent, S responds 1H, now N has options:

1- splinter to 4C then cue bid C.

2- a straightforward exclusion KC ask with 5C, finding one he can then ask about the diamond K via a 6C ask, note - asking with 6D would confuse the issue. NS will end up in 6H from the S.

The play is interesting after dummy ruffs the cK opening lead. HA, HQ overtaken with HK discovering the bad news, now wide-open play is to overtake heart ten pull trump and hope diamonds are 3-2, That works but I am not sure it's best! In real life, most will play along cross ruff lines taking one diamond finesse, scoring 8 hearts, 2D, 2S. If the D finesse loses and a trump comes back, then you hope trumps are 3-2 and setting up diamonds leads to 12 tricks. If D finesse loses and hearts are 4-1 it's not your day!

Dlr: S	3
Vul: E-W	
20	♠ A K 4 ♥ A Q 10 7 ♦ A Q J 9 8 3 ♣ -----
11 4	5
	♠ Q 7 6 3 ♠ 9 8 5 2 ♥ 5 ♥ 8 4 3 2 ♦ K 7 4 ♦ 10 5 ♣ K Q J 8 5 ♣ A 9 6
	♠ J 10 ♥ K J 9 6 ♦ 6 2 ♣ 10 7 4 3 2

Dlr: S	3
Vul: E-W	
20	♠ A K 4 ♥ A Q 10 7 ♦ A Q J 9 8 3 ♣ -----
11 4	5
	♠ Q 7 6 3 ♠ 9 8 5 2 ♥ 5 ♥ 8 4 3 2 ♦ K 7 4 ♦ 10 5 ♣ K Q J 8 5 ♣ A 9 6
	♠ J 10 ♥ K J 9 6 ♦ 6 2 ♣ 10 7 4 3 2

Hand 4

Gene Simpson

W 1c with the 5-4-0-4 intention to rebid 1s then d to show hand.
N has 3 choices: pass, 1h, or 2h. Most people bid 2h as they like to preempt.
E should bid 3s over any bid.
S will come to the party with a 4h bid or a 4s cue bid.
Auction becomes very interesting here.
W should compete to 4s over 4h.
N, if he did not bid 2 h, should bid 5h here, but pass if he had bid already.
If N bids 5H, E has an easy 5s bid here.

Dlr: W

Vul: Both

4

6	♠ 8 ♥ A 10 9 6 5 3 ♦ 9 8 3 ♣ Q 10 8
13 6	15
15	♠ K J 7 2 ♥ ----- ♦ K Q 10 4 ♣ K J 9 7 2
	♠ A Q 10 9 6 5 3 ♥ ----- ♦ 7 6 5 ♣ 6 5 3
	♠ 4 ♥ K Q J 8 7 4 2 ♦ A J 2 ♣ A 4

Most bridge wisdom says the 5 level belongs to opponents, but with a void and knowing partner has a 7 card suit, W should compete to 5 s if E has not.

5 level belongs to opponents but with such a big fit it is very hard to sell out. As S, if my partner had made the bad 2h bid, I would compete to 6 h as a sacrifice.

Great hand and probably best hand of the day.

Learn with a Pro

We hope you enjoyed playing in the game and find these hand reviews helpful. Many of our pros have instructive websites, offer classes, and give teaching lessons.

If you are interested in learning more, contact information is below:

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Hand 5

Ed Nagy

Normal bidding would be 1d-p-1s-p-2c-now 2nt or 3nt depending on how light North will open.

Over 2nt North should bid 3 c to alert partner that North's hand is very distributional and not suited for NT.

South would usually correct 3c to 3d. If South bids 3nt over 2c then the hand depends on finding the diamond queen.

After the normal H queen lead, South cannot really afford to hold off because of the danger in the spade suit. Also, unless East has 6 hearts, it won't do any good.

Best to win the heart and play your club winners to see what the opponents discard.

Although West will show up with only two clubs West will also be discarding spades.

If West discards 3 spades and presumably has long hearts it would seem right to play East for diamond length.

However, cashing the diamond ace and running the diamond jack will only give you three diamond tricks unless the queen is doubleton.

However, making 3NT should be an above-average result.

Dlr: N

Vul: N-S

♠ 8 6

♥ 3

♦ AJ 10 6 2

♣ AQ J 8 2

12

7 9

12

♠ K J 10 9 2

♥ Q J 10 5 2

♦ 3

♣ 9 4

♠ A 4

♥ K 8 6 4

♦ Q 9 5 4

♣ 7 5 3

♠ Q 7 5 3

♥ A 9 7

♦ K 8 7

♣ K 10 6

5

Hand 5 (another perspective)

Wafik Abdou, MD

North deals and opens 1D, the opponents are silent. South responds 1S, North rebids 2C and now South has choices: I prefer an invitational 2N over which North will retreat to 3C and South will correct to 3D where there's an easy 10 tricks. 2nd choice is an invitational 3D which will end the auction for the same result. 3rd choice is an aggressive game forcing 2H (fourth suit) and that may lead to a hopeless 3NT or a 50:50 diamond game.

An interesting situation would arise if an enterprising West enters the auction with 2H over South's 1S, East will be happy to raise and if they buy the contract at 3H will go plus for a fantastic result, or sacrifice in 4H doubled over 4D for a decent score.

Dlr: N

Vul: N-S

♠ 8 6

♥ 3

♦ AJ 10 6 2

♣ AQ J 8 2

12

7 9

12

♠ K J 10 9 2

♥ Q J 10 5 2

♦ 3

♣ 9 4

♠ A 4

♥ K 8 6 4

♦ Q 9 5 4

♣ 7 5 3

♠ Q 7 5 3

♥ A 9 7

♦ K 8 7

♣ K 10 6

5

Hand 6

Gary Soules

A very interesting distributional board. Being vul in first seat, east has 11 points but a void in hearts. As they say, you cannot usually get beat out of the spade suit so you make a disciplined pass. Over south's one club, west is looking at a very nice spade suit and should bid a vul 2 spades. North would bid 4 hearts saying I am not strong enough to bid 3 hearts forcing so I will tell partner I have lots of hearts. East will of course bid 4 spades. Whose hand is it is a mystery, so south will bid 5 hearts. West should pass but will east bid 5 spades? With a void he will. All might pass but will north bid 6 hearts? The winning bid since even though north has a stiff club he cannot get a ruff with no trumps. Therefore, five spades makes.

What did you decide to do on this freak hand?

Hand 7

Howard Parker

South should pass in 1st seat vulnerable (11/2 quick tricks but too flat 4333).

West passes.

North should open 4H (partner is a passed hand and you want to make the maximum preempt even vulnerable).

There is an old saying about what do you call a 9 card suit headed by the Ace Queen: TRUMPS.

Now things might get interesting when this is passed back to west. If west now bids 4 spades (this may look like a crazy bid but remember that south is a passed hand and that means east probably has a good hand for you). Now what should north do?? Again, with the 9 card suit it is usually right to bid on. But if north is very disciplined and has been taught that once you preempt you are DONE, he might pass. Of course, south now has a problem. With 4 spades he might want to defend but north did bid 4H vulnerable and is probably short in spades so 5H probably is correct. Now east has a dilemma. He should not do anything but pass because west is a passed hand and is probably bidding on east's hand already.

At least west's 4S bid should get east off to the ace of spades lead holding north to making 5.

Dir: E

Vul: E-W

6

8	----
9	AKJ9842
11	108643
12	8
♠ A Q J 10 7 6	♠ K 9 8 5 3
♥ 6 5 3	♥ ----
♦ 2	♦ A Q J 7
♣ Q 10 5	♣ J 9 7 2
♠ 4 2	
♥ Q 10 7	
♦ K 9 5	
♣ AK 6 4 3	

Dir: S

Vul: Both

7

6	3
7	AQ10987543
16	1076

11	
♠ K J 9 8 7	♠ A 5 4
♥ -----	♥ K
♦ 8 4 3	♦ AQ 5 2
♣ K 10 7 6 5	♣ Q J 9 8 2
♠ Q 10 6 2	
♥ J 6 2	
♦ K J 9	
♣ A 4 3	

Hand 8

Mark Moss

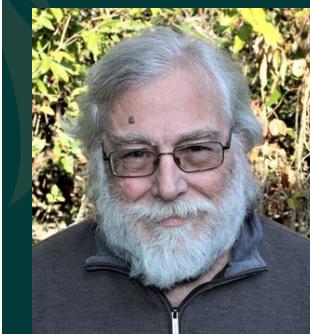
West deals and passes as does north. East will open in third seat with a rather lousy 12-count (lousy means poor suit texture -- no T or 9s, no five-card suit, lots of Qs, only one ace and no kings). That's a very marginal opener for solid bidders in first or second seat but a clear opening bid in third seat (where the requirements for opening bid drop by at least one or two HCPs). Most will open the east hand 1D although some might choose 1S. (The advantage of 1S is that it may make it more difficult for South and, since partner is a passed hand, West is unlikely to bury East by raising too high. The disadvantage is that it ostensibly promises 5 spades and east only has four relatively weak spades).

Assuming a 1D opening by east, South will overcall 1H. West has only six points but they include a pretty good 5-card spade suit so should bid 1S. North has a reasonable hand and support for partner's heart suit so should bid 2H -- promising 6 - 10 support points. East's hand has good support for partner's spades and should bid 2S.

South's hand is better than average and should compete with 3H. Note: 3H is strictly competitive while 2NT, 3C, and/or 3D are all game tries. This should probably end the auction but either East or West might compete to 3S. Note: neither East nor West should expect to make 3S but, since they are not vulnerable, they can afford to go down one trick (or two if undoubled) and still score better than -140 if North/South can make 3H. Certainly if vulnerable, neither East nor West should seriously consider another call.

Assuming South plays in 3H, if West leads partner's suit, the defense will likely take two diamonds, one spade, and one club. If West leads his top spade, then South will have a chance to pitch a diamond loser on the king of spades. Note also: the Q of hearts is onside (as expected since East opened the bidding). So assuming a contract of 3H and a diamond lead, South will make nine tricks +140. With a spade lead, South will take ten tricks +170.

If East/West compete to 3S, North/South must double to get a good match-point score. Played in spades, West has one spade loser, 2 heart losers, 1 diamond loser, and 2 club losers for a total of six losers. If undoubled, that will score -100. If doubled, that will score -300. So 3S will either score -100 for a near top or -300 (if doubled) for a bottom.



An Emerald Life Master, Bob Thomson has been active in the Bay Area bridge community since the late 1970s. He won the North American Swiss Teams in 1981 and the open Board-a-match teams in 1990. After a break to raise his daughter, Bob returned to bridge in 2008. He won the 2014 Flight A Grand National Teams and has won over fifty Regional events. Nowadays, Bob teaches and gives playing lessons.

Contact Bob at bob@synapse-cs.com

Dir: W	♠ K 9 3	8
Vul: None	♥ J 8 2	
	♦ 8 6 4	
8	♣ A 10 8 3	
6 12		
14		
	♠ A 10 8 4 2	♠ Q 7 6 5
	♥ 7 3	♥ Q 5 4
	♦ J 10 3	♦ A Q 5 2
	♣ J 7 6	♣ Q 5
		♠ J
		♥ A K 10 9 6
		♦ K 9 7
		♣ K 9 4 2

Hand 9

Steve Smolen

You should get to 4H by East. If East chooses to pass, West will open 1C 1H 3C 3D 4H or East opens 1H 2C 2D 2H (playing 2/1) and 4H in standard.

The play is pretty straightforward. Win the opening lead and lead hearts. When the opps win the AH, they should shift to a Spade (K then A and a ruff). There's nothing you can do about that, but if not, you can finish drawing trumps ending in dummy, and run your clubs. You should pitch 2 Dia first, then S. Since the Clubs split, you will get 5 pitches and can take a Dia finesse at the end.

Dir: N

Vul: E-W

10	♠ K 3
15 11	♥ A 10 9
4	♦ K 9 8 5 3
	♣ 9 4 3
	♠ J 7 5
	♥ K Q 7
	♦ J
	♣ A K J 10 8 7
	♠ Q 10 2
	♥ J 8 6 5 3
	♦ A Q 10 7
	♣ Q
	♠ A 9 8 6 4
	♥ 4 2
	♦ 6 4 2
	♣ 6 5 2

9

Learn with Gabby



Gabby was 2nd place finisher in this year's NABC Women's Pairs, and her team was 17th in the most recent WBF World Mixed Teams. Other recent successes include several top-10 national open finishes. She has played the regional circuit professionally for several years with Michael Kamil, her bridge and real-life partner.

Gabby's particular skills in hand evaluation and defensive methods have made Gabby a much sought-after instructor for all levels of players. Contact Gabby at: gabrielle7nt@gmail.com

Robert Todd's Adventures in Bridge

On Robert's Adventures in Bridge website, you'll find free access to over 350 articles. Also available are premium memberships that provide practice hands and educational videos for the latest articles. Robert also does weekly Webinars which you can attend alive or access the webinar library on his website!

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Hand 10

Mark Moss

Some very aggressive Easts might consider the hand borderline but nearly all would pass. South has an easy pass. In the modern style, West has a "perfect" 3H opener -- seven good hearts and nothing else of much value. In the old days, to open at the 3-level, one should have an expectation of 7 tricks if vulnerable and an expectation of 6 tricks if non-vul. Now-a-days preempts are a bit looser and the West hand (with six tricks in hand) should definitely open 3H.

Dir: E	10
Vul: Both	
15	♠ K Q
7 10	♥ 5 4 2
8	♦ Q J 8 2
	♣ A K 10 5
♠ 8 4	♠ A 10 9 6 5
♥ A Q J 10 9 6 3	♥ K
♦ 7 6 4	♦ K 10 9
♣ 9	♣ 7 6 4 3
	♠ J 7 3 2
	♥ 8 7
	♦ A 5 3
	♣ Q J 8 2

That puts North in a very awkward spot. Fifteen HCPs suggests bidding. But North has no suit that can be bid at such a high level. So how about a double by north? Double virtually guarantees 3 spades and almost always suggests 4 spades. The one exception is a huge hand (18 or so HCPs) with a nearly solid suit. Well, North has short spades and does not have a huge hand so double is out. That is, by the process of elimination, North has nothing to safely bid and thus should pass. Actually, passing often works out -- if N/S can generate a plus score on defense and cannot generate a plus on offense, N/S will score well.

East doesn't have enough to bid and should pass as should South. So presumably it's a one-bid auction and West plays 3H.

North's lead will probably be a high club (some play A from AK while others play K from AK – there is no "right" answer; it's a matter of partnership agreement). South should conventionally play the Q, which guarantees the J (or a singleton which isn't possible on this auction). So North can safely lead a small club at trick 2. This trick will be ruffed. West should now play trumps from the top until they are drawn. There are losers in spades (one), clubs (one) and diamonds (two or three).

The only interesting suit is diamonds. What's the best way for West to play this suit? Certainly, leading from the West hand is best. If West leads and plays the K on the first round, there will be three diamond losers when South has the A and two when North has the ace. Thus, this is 50%. If West leads and plans to play the 9 (or T) the first time and leads again planning to play the T (or 9) the second time, the likelihood of success increases to approximately 75%. This play "wins" whenever North holds either the Q or the J or both. So it's the better play and the proper bridge play.

West should bid and play 3H. And West should make 3H, losing one club, one spade, and two diamonds.

Hand 11

Peggy Strong

Probable bidding: S W N E
P 1C 2H 3H
P 3NT all pass

After West opens the bidding 1C, North overcalls 2H, showing a 6-card suit, less than an opening hand, with most of North's strength in his long suit. A weak 2-bid can happen as an overcall as well as an opening bid. Since South passed as dealer the 2H overcall is disruptive to E/W, which undoubtedly holds the majority of the points on this deal.

East has an opening bid of her own, but cannot bid 3NT without a heart stopper. East can force West to bid, and hopefully bid 3NT, by cuebidding 3H. If East had spades she would have made a negative double, so West should not bid the spade suit. Also, East is too strong to bid 3C, as that would not be forcing; nor would bidding 3C show that East has an opening bid. West has a heart stopper so should make the bid of 3NT, which will land the partnership in the appropriate contract.

Whether that contract can be made is doubtful! North leads 4th best heart against 3NT and South produces the HQ. West can win the trick with the K, but now North is the dangerous opponent and West must make sure to keep North from winning a trick and running the heart suit. All finesses should then be made into the South hand, and all the finesses will lose -- 9 tricks difficult to come by!

Suppose West does not make the automatic play of winning the HK at trick 1! If North has the 6-card suit promised, then South's HQ is a singleton and West can take finesses into the North hand without fear (the HK will remain a stopper if North leads another heart.) It is possible that North has made a weak jump overcall with only a 5-card suit, but that is not a regular occurrence. If allowed to win the heart Q, South is endplayed into leading a suit that will give West a trick.

Declarer can come to 3 spades, 2-3 diamonds, and 3 or 4 clubs depending on whether South is finessed for the Q on the *first* round of that suit.

Dlr: S	11
Vul: None	
5	♠ 5 3
12 14	♥ A J 9 4 3 2
9	♦ 7 6 5 4
	♣ 6
♠ J 8 6 4	♠ A Q 10
♥ K 10 5	♥ 8 7 6
♦ K J 10	♦ A 8 3
♣ A 9 5	♣ K J 10 8
	♠ K 9 7 2
	♥ Q
	♦ Q 9 2
	♣ Q 7 4 3 2

Hand 12

Bruce Blakely

After three passes, South with 15 points and 4531 distribution opens 1H. North bids 1S and South must decide whether to raise to 2S or 3S. There is not much to the play on this hand. The key issue is whether N-S are able to get to game. Those who got to game received a good score.

There are no spade losers. While there is a potential loser in diamonds, the King of Diamonds is in the pocket so there are no actual losers in that suit. There are two losers in Hearts to the Ace and King and one loser in Clubs to the Ace.

On any lead, declarer should draw trumps in three rounds and set up the heart suit. The long club in hand can either be discarded on a heart winner or ruffed in dummy.

All pairs should be making four on the hand. However, one pair made five when the East West pair underled the Ace of Clubs at Trick 1, losing to dummy's singleton King. And one pair made only three when declarer did not finesse in diamonds.

Hand 13

Wafik Abdou, MD

North deals and opens 1S. After a forcing NT response, he rebids 2D which is passed. If West balances with 2H that would lead to plus 110 or 140, however South may compete to 3D which leads to -100 or 200 if East doubles with his 3 Diamond tricks.

If North opens 1NT instead of 1S he will play it there and scramble 5 tricks for a poor result.

Matchpoints is an exciting game. West must balance and not sell out to 2D. Now South has losing options, including competing to 3D and then the spotlight is on East who must make a close matchpoint double.

Dlr: W

Vul: N-S

10	♠ A Q 8 3
7 8	♥ 10 4
15	♦ J 6 3
	♣ Q J 4 3

12

♠ 9 7 5	♠ J 6
♥ A K 7	♥ 6 5 3
♦ 7 5 4 2	♦ K 9 8
♣ 10 7 5	♣ A 9 8 6 2

♠ K 10 4 2
♥ Q J 9 8 2
♦ A Q 10
♣ K

Dlr: N

Vul: Both

14	♠ J 7 5 4 2
7 12	♥ A Q 9
7	♦ K 8 3
	♣ A 5

13

♠ A 9 8	♠ Q 10 6 3
♥ K 10 7 4 2	♥ 5 3
♦ 7 6	♦ A Q J
♣ 6 3 2	♣ K 10 9 7

♠ K
♥ J 8 6
♦ 10 9 5 4 2
♣ Q J 8 4

Bruce Blakely is a Diamond Life Master who teaches bridge to motivated players online and in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has written over 70 bridge lessons on bidding, play, defense, bridge theory, and unusual hand distribution. His specialty is teaching intermediate players who want to improve their skills to be competitive in duplicate tournaments.

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Hand 14

Tracey Bauer

This is a hand that will be determined by West's actions and how experienced they are.

East should open a standard 15-17 NT.

South being balanced should pass.

West is very weak with a five-card major. When you have a 5-card major, most hands opposite a 1NT opener are better played in the major - especially when you have a small doubleton. In NT this hand is worthless, but in spades you will be able to ruff hearts.

Rule of thumb....the weaker you are and having a small doubleton, you will want to play in the major. If you have 5-7 hcps and your doubleton has an honor, you have more reason to pass 1NT.

North- South should stay out of the auction and hope to set any contract. They do not have enough shape or hcps in either hand to enter the fray. Wait for a positive result....coming in when you are this flat is losing bridge.

Hand 15

Brian Zhang

The normal contract seems to be 3NT, and the seemingly best auction would be a 1D opening by South, a 2C overcall by West, and then a 2S bid by North. Without a club stopper nor 3 card spade support, South should rebid 3D without enough values to bid 3H. Following the 3D bid, the decision is passed to North, who holds 12 HCP. With diamond support and the fitting king of diamonds, 3NT is likely to be the correct bid. However, it is more difficult to reach 3NT if South passes in 1st seat, downgrading the singleton club king. Then, West will open 1C and North will overcall 1S. East, with 3 HCP, would pass, and South would likely bid 2D. West, with only 12 HCP, should pass, which leaves North with a decision: Pass or 3D. From North's point of view, South has a maximum of about 11 points, which added to 12 points, is 23 points which is not enough for game. Likely, North will pass 2D and South will declare there.

If NS bid to 3NT, East will be on lead and lead a club, which is normal due to the club bid by West. West would take the king with the ace and likely return a club, declarer pitching a heart from dummy. Now, declarer will likely test diamonds, finding them 2-2. Declarer can then cash all of the diamonds, pitching a heart and two spades from his/her hand. All declarer has to do now is knock out the ace of spades to claim 11 tricks, 6 diamonds, 2 clubs, 1 heart, and 2 spades. However, if South is declaring a diamond

Dlr: E

Vul: None

12

1 15

12

♠ 9 8 5 4 3

♥ 10 8

♦ 9 7 6

♣ J 6 5

♠ 7

♥ A K 5 3

♦ K 10 5 2

♣ Q 8 7 2

♠ A Q 10 6

♥ 9 6 4 2

♦ A J 8

♣ A 9

♠ K J 2

♥ Q J 7

♦ Q 4 3

♣ K 10 4 3

14

Dlr: S

Vul: N-S

12

12 3

13

♠ A 9

♥ K 9 8

♦ J 7

♣ A 10 7 6 4 2

♠ K J 6 5 4

♥ Q 10

♦ K 6 2

♣ Q J 3

♠ 10 8 7 3

♥ J 6 5 3

♦ Q 4

♣ 9 8 5

♠ Q 2

♥ A 7 4 2

♦ A 10 9 8 5 3

♣ K

15

contract, such as 2D or 3D, he/she would likely receive the lead of a diamond or heart. On a diamond lead, declarer draws trumps in two rounds and knocks out the club ace. Now, if West returns a heart, playing the queen is likely correct because without the king of hearts, West has at most 10 HCP, as he/she does not hold the queen of diamonds. After the queen of hearts holds, declarer can play a heart to the ace and attempt to steal a spade trick. If West plays a low spade, you can now pitch the spade queen on the club queen and then pitch a heart on the club jack. Now, declarer ruffs a spade, ruffs his/her remaining heart loser, and then claims all of the remaining tricks. However, on an aggressive heart lead, it is not as easy to guess hearts, as West may have the spade ace, the heart jack, the diamond queen jack, and the club ace, which adds up to 12 points, which is enough to bid clubs at the one/two level, depending on whether South opened 1D or not. If playing the heart ten fails to draw out the king, such as the actual hand, draw trump and play out the king of clubs. It is still possible that you will be able to steal a spade trick later on. However, if you play the queen of hearts, and it holds, you may choose to follow the same line of play as if you received a diamond lead: draw trumps, play the club king, then attempt to steal a spade trick.

Hand 16

Cris Barrere

West has a weak two in clubs, but that's the two-level suit we reserve for our artificial strong opening, so pass is normal. North has a fine weak 2d opener – a good 6-card suit with a bit of shape. East has a nice if light 2h overcall. Notice that since partner is a passed hand, game prospects are known to be slim. South has some values but no bid since they lack support for opener. Now it's up to West again; what should they do? Probably nothing. They don't have significant support, the Qd is likely a wasted value and their partner is already counting on them to have a little something.

Notice how we re-evaluate our hand based on the bidding. If the overcaller had a really good hand, they would have started with a double. While game is possible on a very lucky layout, at Matchpoints going plus is the key to success so the stop is good. Declarer should lose one spade, one heart and two diamonds (either ruffing the last diamond in dummy or perhaps finessing the club to get a discard, depending on how the defense goes.) The result as most tables should be 2h making 3 for an above average result for the declaring side.

Dlr: W	16
Vul: E-W	
	♠ 9 7 4
	♥ 4
9	♦ A K J 8 7 4
10 12	♣ J 9 3
9	
	♠ J 6 2
	♥ J 2
	♦ Q 5
	♣ A Q 10 8 6 4
	♠ A Q 3
	♥ A Q 10 9 6 5
	♦ 10 9 6
	♣ 5
	♠ K 10 8 5
	♥ K 8 7 3
	♦ 3 2
	♣ K 7 2



A Grand Life Master with two national wins and a perennial high Barry Crane Top 500 finisher, Cris really enjoys teaching and coaching improving players at all levels.

Contact Cris at crisbarrere@sbcglobal.net

Board 17

Jim Griffin

The auction will likely either go:

1C-(1H)-1S-(1NT)

2S-All pass

---or---

1C-(2H)-DBL-P

2NT-All pass

Dir: N

Vul: None

14

12 7

7

♠ A J 3

♥ 7 2

♦ A Q J 8

♣ 9 7 4 3

♠ K 7 2

♥ K Q 10

♦ 10 9 4

♣ K Q J 2

♠ Q 4

♥ A J 8 6 5 4

♦ 6 5 2

♣ 10 5

♠ 10 9 8 6 5

♥ 9 3

♦ K 7 3

♣ A 8 6

Against 2NT, if East makes the likely 4th best Heart lead, North will scramble home with 7 tricks for down 1.

Against 2S, the 7H lead will probably allow 2S to make unless East wins and immediately shifts to a diamond. If he tries for a heart ruff only 2 diamond tricks will come to pass. In order to set 2S, E-W must arrange to get 3D, 1H, and 2S.

Should E-W be allowed to play in either 2H or 3H, the very lucky lie of both hearts and diamonds will allow 3 to be made.

Hand 17 (another perspective)

David Yoon

After a 1C opening from North, East has to decide what to bid with their hand. The vulnerability should encourage a 2H overcall - which shows 6-10 HCP and a decent six card suit. This preemptive bid should make it very difficult for the opponents to figure out their best contract because they have to start at a higher level to find their fit(s). At the same time, East's bid should make it very easy for West to decide how high they should compete in this auction because they know specifically what East has for their bid.

To further describe why 2H is much more of an appealing bid, if East decided to pass the 1C opener, South would respond 1S, which North now will rebid 1NT. Regardless if South passes or bids 2S, they have gotten to a very secure contract.

Now if East bids 2H, South has a very difficult dilemma. If South bids 2S, that shows extra points - something they do not have. If South makes a negative double, they only promise four spades and North would not bid spades unless they have four themselves.

Some auctions should end over 2H and East should lose one spade, one heart (by playing towards the AJ8654 twice using diamonds and spades as entries!) and two club tricks.

17

Hand 18

Howard Parker

South should open 1S based upon their good suit and 2 quick tricks, ACE=1 KQ=1.

West would now overcall 1NT with 16 HCP balanced and a spade stopper.

If North passes 1NT, 100-150 is available on defense. If instead North competes in Hearts, anything from -50 to + 140 is possible depending on how the play goes.

Dlr: E

Vul: N-S

9

16 4

11

♠ A 5 4 2

♥ A J 2

♦ K J 4

♣ K 9 6

♠ 8

♥ K 10 7 4 3

♦ A Q 7 2

♣ 10 4 2

♠ J 7 6

♥ Q 8 6

♦ 9 8 5

♣ J 8 7 5

♠ K Q 10 9 3

♥ 9 5

♦ 10 6 3

♣ A Q 3

18