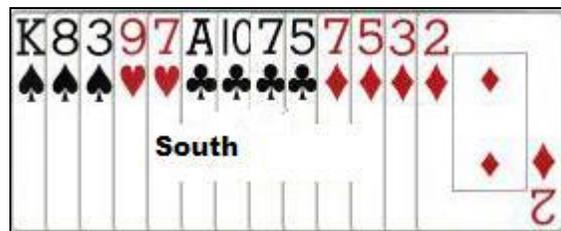


#7 - Hand of the Week

You and partner are playing East/West.
North/South Vulnerable, Dealer East



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See next page for bidding analysis, actual results with real players, the computer-generated prediction and thoughts on what you can learn from this game.

Bidding: (One possible scenario to show how players analyse the bidding.)

E	1NT	15 HCP (balanced hand in 15-17 HCP range, no 5-card major)
S	Pass	7 HCP
W	2♥	6 HCP + 1 for length, Jacoby Transfer to spades
N	Pass	12 HCP (Possible bid might be 3♣, but North may consider that as too risky since N/S are vulnerable)
E	2♠	Complete the transfer to 2♠
S	Pass	
W	3♠	Re-evaluate hand. No way of knowing if East has 2, 3 or 4 spades. Counting length, add 1 pt for 5 th card in spade suit = 7 pts. West should have 8 pts to invite to game, but also has a singleton. The singleton gives the hand more strength in a trump contract and less strength in a NT contract. Will chance it and bid 3♠. With a fit in spades, West could count 2-3 pts for singleton = 8-9 pts total, but East could have just 2 spades.
N	Pass	
E	Pass	With the minimum 1NT opening hand, East will pass and not take it to game.
		Contract is 3♠ by E.

Actual Results (East/West viewpoint):

Highest board was E/W Pair #1, bidding and making 4♠. Lowest boards were 1NT going down 1 and 3♠ going down 1.

Ten tricks were made twice (scores of 170 and 420). Computer does not indicate that 10 tricks are possible in spades, only in hearts.

Computer-Generated Prediction:

E/W can make 3♠. Surprisingly, E/W can make 4♥ by East or 3♥ by West. N/S can make 2♣. A NT contract is not considered for E/W.

What is there to learn from this game?

#1 Pair E/W bid 4♠ because North put in a 3♣ intervening bid, forced East to bid 3♠, and West, thinking that East had 3 spades for support and/or extra points to bid 3♠, took it to game based on extra strength for his singleton club in opponent's long, strong suit.

East would lose 1 club, 1 heart, and 1 spade. In order to make 4♠, East must try the diamond finesse, playing the ♦K first and then leading low toward the ♦A/♦J.

From the results, it appears that several pairs do not play Jacoby transfers (four contracts in spades are in the West) or else East did not open 1NT. Perhaps some West players passed the 1NT opening allowing North to bid a safe 2♣ and then West finally bidding 2♠ to take the contract.

Hand analysis diagram showing cards for both sides, a trick count of 18, and a trick tally grid.

Dir: East Vul: N/S Optimum EW 420

♠ 9 7
♥ K Q 4
♦ Q 10 4
♣ K Q 8 3 2

♠ Q 10 6 5 4
♥ J 8 5 2
♦ K 8 6
♣ 6

West North East South
18

♠ A J 2
♥ A 10 6 3
♦ A J 9
♣ J 9 4

♠ K 8 3
♥ 9 7
♦ 7 5 3 2
♣ A 10 7 5

	♠	♥	♦	♣	N
N	2	-	-	-	-
S	2	-	-	-	-
E	-	-	4	3	-
W	-	-	3	3	-

Board No 18 N/S Vul Dealer East								
Pairs	Contract			Scores		Points		
	N/S	E/W	Bid By	Tks	N/S	E/W	N/S	E/W
1	5		1NT E	-1	50		6½	0½
2	7		3♠ W	-1	50		6½	0½
3	9		2♠ W	2		110	4½	2½
4	2		3♠ W	4		170	1	6
5	4		2♠ E	2		110	4½	2½
6	6		2♠ W	3		140	2½	4½
8	1		4♠ E	4		420	0	7
9	3		2♠ E	3		140	2½	4½

Is a club bid from North a wise move? On one hand, it gives South a good choice for the lead, but on the other hand, it tips off East which hand of the opponents holds the strength. It also gives West extra trumping power and the knowledge to steer away from NT and to give his singleton club added weight. If left in 3♣, North would have made a good sacrifice, giving E/W 100 pts (going down 1 trick) instead of E/W making 140, 170 or 420. It would be a poor idea for E/W to allow a club contract to stand and it shows that no one did.

The results show a considerable variation in the skill level of the players. A contract of 3♠ is makeable and yet three pairs made only 2♠.

Conclusion: With a singleton in opponent's suit, count dummy pts and bid accordingly. Communicate this extra strength to your partner (1NT opener). If opponents compete for the contract in a suit where you have a void or a singleton, don't give up too soon, even without a lot of HCPs. That singleton in their suit boosts your strength considerably!

Also, even duplicate level players are not always the best bidders or players! Pair #5 West left his partner in 1NT with 5 spades and 6 HCP. West must not know the basic rules for responding to a 1NT opening with a 5-card major suit, regardless of points.