

#20 - Hand of the Week

Sometimes a slam is difficult to bid.

You and partner are playing East/West.
N/S vulnerable, Dealer East

Dir: East Vul: N/S		♠ J 5 4					
		♥ 10 6 3					
		♦ J 9 5 3					
		♣ 7 6 4					
♠ Q 2	West 2 East	♠ K 8 7 3					
♥ A K J 9 2		♥ Q 5					
♦ A 10 8 2		♦ Q					
♣ K 8		♣ A Q 9 5 3 2					
<table border="1"> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td></tr> </table>		2	17	13	8	♠ A 10 9 6	
2							
17	13						
8							
		♥ 8 7 4					
		♦ K 7 6 4					
		♣ J 10					

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.

If you wish to try the bidding yourself first, avoid looking at the bidding below.

Bidding: (Some possible scenarios to show how players might reach their contract. This does not mean that other bids are not possible.)

E	1♣	13 HCP, plus 2 for length
S	Pass	8 HCP
W	1♥	17 HCP (West knows that they will end up in game level or higher. Slam is possible. He must ensure that game level is reached so must bid in a way that East will not pass before reaching game. A change of suit in the first round is forcing.)
N	Pass	2 HCP
E	1♠	Show 4-card spade suit. (*See note below.)
After this, the bidding could go different ways. Here are 3 possibilities:		
W	3NT	West knows that East has at least 12 pts, has a stopper in spades, and together they have enough pts for game in NT. The bidding will end at 3NT by W.
W	2♦	Means 4 th suit forcing and usually shows 5 of the major. East bids 3♣ to show at least 5 clubs and no stopper in diamonds. West bids 3NT. Contract: 3NT by W
W	3♦	A jump shift is forcing. If there's a chance that East might misunderstand 2♦ as just another bid and pass, 3♦ might be a better bid. Also shows a stronger hand. East bids 3NT, seeing that all suits are stopped so 3NT should be safe.
*Note: If E bids 2♣ instead, West might bid 3♣ (not knowing if there is a stopper in spades), East might respond 4♣, and then West takes it to 5♣. This is only speculation.		

Actual Results (East/West viewpoint): 3NT by E or W gave the highest scores. 5♣ gave the lowest score for E/W, but the highest score for N/S.

Computer-Generated Prediction: E/W can make 6NT or 6♣ but no one bid slam.

What is there to learn from this game?

In this case, a game level contract in 3NT gave a much better score than 5♣. East should bid the spades in the 2nd round to show a stopper, rather than rebidding the clubs. N/S can benefit from the bidding by E/W which has no bearing on how well N/S bid or played the game. This sometimes happens, so when the final results are tallied, it's not always because of one pair's brilliant play, but because their opponents couldn't find the best contract.

Opening lead:

West declarer: ♦3 by North (lead from longest and strongest suit, 4th highest, might also depend which suits were bid).
East declarer: ♠6 from South vs NT

contract; ♠Ace from South if vs 5♣ contract. Don't underlead an unsupported Ace in a suit contract. Best not to lead away from an unsupported King. Once trick is taken with the ♠Ace, and now seeing the dummy hand, South might lead the ♦King to force out the ♦Ace as there are not a lot of other good alternatives.

Dir: East
Vul: N/S

♠ J 5 4
♥ 10 6 3
♦ J 9 5 3
♣ 7 6 4

♠ Q 2
♥ A K J 9 2
♦ A 10 8 2
♣ K 8

North
2
South

♠ K 8 7 3
♥ Q 5
♦ Q
♣ A Q 9 5 3 2

♠ A 10 9 6
♥ 8 7 4
♦ K 7 6 4
♣ J 10

2
17 13
8

	♠	♥	♦	♣	N
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	6	3	6	4	6
W	6	3	6	4	6

Board No 2 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	1	3NT	W	6	490	1½	5½	
3	5	5♣	E	6	420	7	0	
4	7	3NT	E	5	460	4½	2½	
5	9	3NT	E	6	490	1½	5½	
6	2	3NT	E	6	490	1½	5½	
7	4	3NT	W	4	430	6	1	
8	6	3NT	W	6	490	1½	5½	
9	8	3NT	W	5	460	4½	2½	