

#31 - Hand of the Week – May 5, 2018

How do you respond to a NT bid by partner with 4-5 in the majors?

You and partner are playing East/West.
Dealer North. N/S Vulnerable

Dir: North Vul: N/S		♠ -- ♥ 7 4 ♦ 10 9 8 5 4 3 2 ♣ 10 8 3 2									
♠ Q 10 9 5 2 ♥ 10 8 5 2 ♦ -- ♣ K J 6 4	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>WEST</td> <td>NORTH</td> <td>EAST</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>21</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>SOUTH</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST		21			SOUTH		♠ A K 3 ♥ A K J 3 ♦ J 6 ♣ A Q 9 7
WEST	NORTH	EAST									
	21										
	SOUTH										
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0											
6 22											
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Try bidding the hands before checking the bidding below.

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.)

E	2♣	22 HCP, very strong hand.
W	2♦	Waiting, showing 3+ pts.
E	2NT	Showing a balanced hand with 22-24 HCP, no 5-card major.
W	3♣	Stayman, asking for a 4-card major
E	3♥	Showing a 4-card heart suit (does not deny a 4-card spade suit)
W	4NT	Count dummy pts when having an 8-card fit in a major; add 4-5 pts for the void, so West now has 10-11, plus 22 by East, investigate slam possibilities
E	5♠	3 Aces
W	6♥	Missing one Ace so should not ask for Kings. Must go to the 6 level in hearts now, so bid it and hope for the best.

Computer-Generated Prediction and Actual Results:

According to the computer, East should be able to take 11 tricks making 5♥. Twice East made 6♥. Once it was doubled (by South most likely) and still made 6♥, Three times East made 5♥.

Spades was not as good a contract: 4♠ went down 2 and 6♠ went down 1.

3NT was the worst contract, going down 3. The only contract that can make a grand slam is clubs! A minor! The pair who bid 5♣ went down 1.

What is there to learn from this game?

Bridge can be a fickle game. Sometimes the results of a bridge game can raise more questions than it gives answers. Even when you follow the rules and advised methods of bidding, it doesn't always result in the best contract.

West can make the best score in clubs or hearts, yet the rule is to transfer to the player with the stronger hand.

South is most likely to lead the ♦Ace (top of touching honors) which will be trumped.

There are a few different ways to respond when having 4-5 in the majors after a NT opening bid by partner.

Some may transfer to spades and then bid the hearts. Some may use Stayman and then bid the spades. Whatever method you use, your partner might not quite understand what you are doing. The pair who bid 6♥, which was doubled, got the top board but East should not make 6♥ (according to the computer results) yet they benefited from the opponent's double, when the opponent should have benefited.

Some claim that a 4-4 split in trump is better than 5-3. This game shows that a 4-4 split in hearts as trump gives a better result than the 5-3 fit in spades as trump, but does that hold up all the time?

You should not give up faith in the rules. Sometimes it just doesn't work out.

Don't be too greedy. Bidding and making 6♥, even with an overtrick, is better than bidding 7♥ and going down 1. The next top boards below the one pair who bid 6♥ and made it, were the players who stopped at 4♥ or 5♥ and made 4♥, 5♥ or 6♥.

And finally, the best thing to learn is that the experts are not right all the time. So, when you make a mistake, you should not feel bad at all. Sometimes, you may get a top board.

The image shows a bridge hand interface. At the top left, it says 'Dir: North' and 'Vul: N/S'. The cards are: ♠ --, ♥ 7 4, ♦ 10 9 8 5 4 3 2, ♣ 10 8 3 2. Below this are the hands for West and East. West's hand: ♠ Q 10 9 5 2, ♥ 10 8 5 2, ♦ --, ♣ K J 6 4. East's hand: ♠ A K 3, ♥ A K J 3, ♦ J 6, ♣ A Q 9 7. In the center is a trick board showing 'NORTH' and 'SOUTH' with '21' in the middle. Below the cards is a small board with '0', '6', '12', and '22'. To the right is a card layout showing ♣, ♦, ♥, ♠, N, S, E, W with counts: N (3, -, -, -), S (3, -, -, -), E (6, -, 5, 4), W (7, -, 6, 4). At the bottom is a table titled 'Board No 21 N/S Vul Dealer North'.

NS	EW	Bid	By	Tks	+Sc	-Sc	+	-
1	8	4♥	E	6		480	1.14	9.86
2	10	6♥*	E	6		1210	0.05	10.95
3	12	4♠	E	-2	100		9.86	1.14
4	14	4♥	E	5		450	3.32	7.68
5	16	5♥	E	5		450	3.32	7.68
6	1	4♥	E	4		420	5.50	5.50
7	3	6♠	E	-1	50		7.68	3.32
8	5	3NT	E	-3	150		10.95	0.05
9	7	7♥	E	-1	50		7.68	3.32
10	9	5♣	E	-1	50		7.68	3.32
11	11	4♥	E	5		450	3.32	7.68