

#41 - Hand of the Week – Posted July 14, 2018
How to make it difficult for opponents to find the best contract.

Dealer North. N/S Vulnerable

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 might learn from this game.

Dir: North Vul: N/S		♠K 2	♥J 4 2	♦A J 10 7 6 5 2	♣2												
♠Q 8 4	♥A K 7	♦K 4	♣A K J 8 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>West</td><td>South</td><td>East</td></tr> </table>	West	North	East		21		West	South	East	♠J 9 6 5 3	♥Q 8	♦Q 9 8	♣Q 9 3
West	North	East															
	21																
West	South	East															
<table border="1"> <tr><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> </table>		9	20	7	4	♠A 10 7	♥10 9 6 5 3	♦3	♣10 7 6 5								
9																	
20	7																
4																	

Bidding: (Three possibilities.)

N	3♦	Pre-emptive bid, showing 7 diamonds and fewer than 12 pts
E	Pass	
S	Pass	
W	Double!	With 20+ pts, West would be annoyed with that pre-empt. West has half the high-card points in the deck and knows that E/W should be competing!
N	Pass	Nothing else to bid.
E	3♠	Bid his longest, strongest suit.
S	Pass	
W	3NT or 4♠ or 4♣	Might want to think about this very carefully. With 20 pts, does he bid to game or not? He has only one stopper in diamonds. East is not promising 5 spades; he could have just 4 spades. So, they might have only 7 trump in spades. East was forced to bid; East could have 0 pts.

Computer-Generated Prediction and Actual Results:

Best score for E/W was 3NT making 4 which happened only twice. Next best score was West just making 3NT, which is what the computer predicts. And the next highest was 3♦, doubled and left in for penalty.

Other bids are interesting. West seems to prefer clubs to spades and bid higher than 3NT which eliminated a 3NT contract as a possibility.

The two brave West players who took a chance on 3NT did the best. So, it can be a good idea to take a risk based on judgment when you have a balanced hand.

One would think that 4♣ was a reasonable and makeable contract, but not so. Those who stopped at 3♠ fared better, but the computer prediction shows they can make 2♠ only.

Why would #8 East pass and leave the double in? Perhaps he didn't pay attention to his partner's bid. However, that resulted in a higher than average score for them, though not the best score. West might not have been pleased to see East pass his double, until he saw the results.

What is there to learn from this game?

Pre-emptive bids can be powerful, especially at the 3 level and even when vulnerable. North did well to force West to bid spades or clubs at the 4 or 5 level and to make it much more difficult for E/W to find their best contract. Only 3 out of 12 pairs were able to get to 3NT after that pre-empt, assuming all North players opened with 3♦, which we do not know for sure. Perhaps some North players opened with 1♦ (9 HCP adding 3 pts for length = 12) which would make it easier for E/W to start bidding at a lower level and easier to find their contract.

It takes practice and partnership cooperation to figure out the best contract with very little space to bid. West is not likely to pass with 20 pts. Perhaps, in the future, I will be more willing to take a chance on 3NT with just one stopper, even when the opponents have shown 7 of a suit but a weak hand.

Dir: North
Vul: N/S

♠ K 2
♥ J 4 2
♦ A J 10 7 6 5 2
♣ 2

♠ Q 8 4
♥ A K 7
♦ K 4
♣ A K J 8 4

West
North
21
East
South

♠ J 9 6 5 3
♥ Q 8
♦ Q 9 8
♣ Q 9 3

9
20 7
4

♠ A 10 7
♥ 10 9 6 5 3
♦ 3
♣ 10 7 6 5

	♠	♥	♦	♣	N
N	-	1	-	-	-
S	-	1	-	-	-
E	2	-	1	2	3
W	2	-	1	2	3

Board No 21 N/S Vul Dealer North								
Pairs		Contract			Scores		Points	
N/S	E/W	Bid	By	Tks	N/S	E/W	N/S	E/W
1	3	3NT	W	3		400	2	9
2	4	4♣	E	-1	50		8	3
3	6	4♣	W	-2	100		10½	0½
4	8	3♦*	N	-1		200	3	8
5	10	3♠	E	3		140	4½	6½
6	12	3♠	E	3		140	4½	6½
7	2	4♣	W	4		130	6	5
8	5	4♣	W	-1	50		8	3
9	7	3NT	W	4		430	0½	10½
10	9	5♣	W	-2	100		10½	0½
11	11	4♣	E	-1	50		8	3
12	1	3NT	W	4		430	0½	10½