

**#43 - Hand of the Week – Posted July 28, 2018**  
**Some fundamental guidelines to consider.**

Dealer West. None 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: West Vul: None		♠ J 5 4	♥ A K J 8 6 3
		♦ 4	♣ A K 3
♠ K 9 6 3	West	North	♠ A 8 7
♥ 5 2	8	East	♥ Q 9
♦ K Q 5 3	South		♦ 10 9 8 2
♣ J 10 6			♣ 9 5 4 2
16		♠ Q 10 2	
9 6		♥ 10 7 4	
9		♦ A J 7 6	
		♣ Q 8 7	

**Bidding:** (two possibilities)

<b>W</b>	Pass	
<b>N</b>	1♥	Showing 5-card major (or more), 5 hearts, 12-21 pts.
<b>E</b>	Pass	
<b>S</b>	2♥	Has 3 cards to support North's major suit, showing 6-9 pts.
<b>W</b>	Pass	East and West now pass
<b>N</b>	3♥	With 16 pts, invite to game. North should also consider the 9 <sup>th</sup> trump which adds extra strength, plus the singleton. North's hand is worth about 19 pts now. North might just bid 4♥ because there is the danger that South could pass a 3♥ invitation.
<b>S</b>	4♥	If North did not take it to game, South would now. With the knowledge that North has at least 16 pts, South knows game is there.

## Computer-Generated Prediction and Actual Results:

N/S should all make 5♥, but not all did.

The best scores for E/W happened because N/S did not bid to game. Often, players benefit because of the poor bidding skills of the opponents, and not because of anything they did or did not do. Bridge is sometimes unfair this way.

We were #2 N/S and we got the top board, bidding 4♥ and making 6♥, two overtricks. Most others made 4♥ or 5♥ and three N/S pairs did not bid to game. We wondered if we missed bidding a slam, but we should not have made a slam if the defence played better.

### What is there to learn from this game?

East led the ♦10. North (me) played the ♦Ace from dummy and took the trick. I led another diamond from dummy. West played the King or Queen, hoping those two cards would take a trick or two now that the Ace was gone. I ruffed it.

Guideline: With 9 trump: "8 Ever, 9 Never" — meaning, with 9 trump missing the Queen, do not try a finesse (never). As with many bridge guidelines, this strategy is not always successful, but if you practice it consistently, the percentages should be on your side.

I followed that rule, even though I know it does not always work, and played the ♥Ace and ♥King, pulling all the trump. If the finesse was tried, East's ♥Queen would take a trick which must have happened to those four who took 10 tricks only.

In our game, the problem for East/West occurred when a small spade was led from dummy and West did not play the ♠King — the rule is that 2<sup>nd</sup> hand usually plays low. North played the ♠Jack and East ducked the ♠Ace. Perhaps East believed that you shouldn't take a trick with the Ace the first time the suit is led. At some point, East discarded a spade also and when West played his ♠King, thinking that East could not have the ♠Ace, East was forced to play the ♠Ace on the same trick, so North took two tricks in spades.

If you are playing against a suit contract, think carefully before you "duck" your Ace. You might not get another chance to play it as the opponents might be able to discard that suit and trump your Ace later. Also, your partner could have the King and does not want to lead away from it. If you are playing against a NT contract, then it may be a good idea to "duck" the Ace. Sometimes not then either. When I am Declarer, I am always a little bit gleeful (but quietly so) when I see my opponents' Ace and King both fall on the same trick when two tricks could have been taken with them earlier in the game. An undeserved trick for me and much appreciated. But in this case, thanking them would show poor manners.

Dir: West Vul: None		♠ J 5 4 ♥ A K J 8 6 3 ♦ 4 ♣ A K 3		♠ A 8 7 ♥ Q 9 ♦ 10 9 8 2 ♣ 9 5 4 2				
♠ K 9 6 3 ♥ 5 2 ♦ K Q 5 3 ♣ J 10 6	West North 8 South East							
16 9 6 9		♠ Q 10 2 ♥ 10 7 4 ♦ A J 7 6 ♣ Q 8 7		♣♦♥♠N N 2 1 5 3 4 S 2 1 5 3 4 E - - - - W - - - -				
Board No 8 None Vul Dealer West								
Pairs		Contract			Scores		Points	
N/S	E/W	Bid	By	Tks	N/S	E/W	N/S	E/W
1	10	4♥	N	5	450		7½	3½
2	11	4♥	N	6	480		11	0
3	1	4♥	N	5	450		7½	3½
4	3	4♥	N	5	450		7½	3½
5	5	4♥	N	5	450		7½	3½
6	7	4♥	N	4	420		3½	7½
7	9	3♥	N	5	200		2	9
8	12	4♥	N	4	420		3½	7½
9	2	4♥	N	5	450		7½	3½
10	4	3♥	N	4	170		0½	10½
11	6	4♥	N	5	450		7½	3½
12	8	2♥	N	4	170		0½	10½