

## Rubens' Pearls on Hand Evaluation (2)

The following is a summary of pointers on Hand Evaluation Rubens made in his book "The Secrets of Winning Bridge".

### ..... on HAND VALUATION

- High Card Point counting works best for balanced hands.
- The High Card Point count could be adjusted upwards where you have Aces and Kings or good quality intermediate cards or a fit with partner. High Card Points should be adjusted downwards for unguarded honours.

### ..... on LOCATION OF HONOURS

- The longer the suit in which an honour is located, the more valuable the honour.
- Honours in combination are more valuable than isolated honours.
- The nature and location of your side suit honours affects their value.
- Your hand is depreciated if you have honours in a suit in which partner is void. Conversely, your hand is appreciated if your honours are in a suit where partner also holds values.
- With a trump fit and wishing to invite game, it is useful to bid a suit in need of help from honours which your partner may hold.

### ..... on IN-OUT VALUATION

- It is better to have your secondary honours in partner's suit and your primary honours outside it.

### ..... on APPLYING VALUATION TECHNIQUES

- An Adjustment to the Losing Trick Count
- Culbertson's rule for inviting slams can be extended to inviting games.
- The Finesse Rule for bidding a small slam
- In a close decision be aggressive if your potential trump holding is strong and vice versa.

### ..... on COMPETITIVE BIDDING

- Assessing the offensive versus defensive potential of a hand is crucial in competitive bidding.
- An opening one-bid will normally contain 4 to 5 offensive tricks and 2 to 3 defensive tricks. Compare your opener with this to assess its offensive versus defensive orientation.
- A more offensive hand contains:
  - more cards in your own suits, and fewer cards in theirs
  - more of your honours in your suits
  - the more secondary honours you have in your suits and primary honours in theirs
- A more defensive hand is the opposite.
- If the suit in which your honours are located is not known to "belong" to either side, primary honours are defensive and secondary honours are offensive.
- In close decisions, pass the decision to partner, if possible
- It is the partner with length in the enemy trump suit who is best able to judge the combined offensive-defensive potential of his partnership.
- The partner whose hand has been less well defined by the bidding should make the final decision on the contract.

## Christmas Poser

♠ 9853

♥ Q986

♦ T972

♣ 2

You are South with E-W vulnerable. West opens 1C, partner overcalls 1NT and East passes. Do you bid and, if so, what?

Clue: "One man's trash is another man's treasure"

Playing in 1NT does not look promising even though partner has 15-17 high card points for her overcall. Because of your 4-4-4-1 shape any suit that partner has other than clubs is bound to play better. If you play Simple Stayman, bid 2C and pass anything including 2D that partner responds. Normally, you should have 8 high card points to bid Stayman over your partner's 15-17 point 1NT bid but with this particular shape (or 4-4-5-0) you can afford to bid 2C and pass the response. The bid is known as "Garbage Stayman".

The hand was played on December 2<sup>nd</sup> (pm). Nine tricks are possible for N-S in diamonds but West opened and played in 1NT on three occasions or a club contract on four occasions.

|         |            |         |    |
|---------|------------|---------|----|
| BD: 32  | ♠ AQ       | Dir: W  |    |
|         | ♥ KJ5      | Vul: EW |    |
|         | ♦ KQ63     |         |    |
|         | ♣ 9874     |         |    |
| ♠ KT2   |            | ♠ J764  |    |
| ♥ 432   |            | ♥ AT7   |    |
| ♦ A5    |            | ♦ J84   |    |
| ♣ AKQ65 |            | ♣ JT3   |    |
|         | ♠ 9853     |         |    |
|         | ♥ Q986     |         |    |
|         | ♦ T972     |         |    |
|         | ♣ 2        |         |    |
|         | ♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT |         |    |
| N       |            |         | 15 |
| S       | 3          | 2       | 16 |
| E       | 2          |         | 2  |
| W       | 2          |         | 7  |

| Contract | Lead | Tricks |
|----------|------|--------|
| 1NT W    | 9C   | 8      |
| 2♣ W     | KD   | 8      |
| 2♣ W     | KD   | 9      |
| 1NT W    | 9C   | 10     |
| 3♣ W     | AS   | 8      |
| 1NT N    | 4S   | 5      |
| 1NT W    | 3D   | 8      |
| 2♣ W     | 9C   | 8      |

Exercise:

|        |
|--------|
| ♠ Q6   |
| ♥ QT3  |
| ♦ QJT3 |
| ♣ AKJ5 |
|        |
| ♠ JT84 |
| ♥ KJ98 |
| ♦ 95   |
| ♣ QT9  |

This balanced hand is from recent play. How many HCPs does it have and how many tricks should it make in no trumps using normal guidelines? What is its unusual weakness and what is its unusual strength?