

Rubens' Pearls on Hand Evaluation (4)

..... on VALUATION TECHNIQUES: 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.

Nature and Location of Side Suit Honours:

BD: 5		♠ AT8	Dir: N		
		♥ QJ63	Vul: NS		
		♦ Q74			
		♣ Q53			
♠ Q73			♠ 952		
♥ AKT82	7/12/21pm		♥ 975		
♦ 9			♦ KJT62		
♣ AJT9			♣ 84		
		♠ KJ64			
		♥ 4			
		♦ A853			
		♣ K762			
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	2	1	2	2
S	2	2	1	2	2
E					
W					
					11
					14
					4
					11

BD: 6		♠ AJT7			
		♥ A8752			
		♦ 73			
		♣ K3			
♠ Q63			♠ K985		
♥ T	6/12/21		♥ J43		
♦ AQJ54			♦ 986		
♣ AJ92			♣ T6		
		♠ 4			
		♥ KQ96			
		♦ KT2			
		♣ Q8754			
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2		3		
S	2		3		2
E		2		2	
W		2		2	
					1
					14
					1

After a heart opening by West and a balancing double by South (assuming she passed on the first round) North knows her heart honours are well placed for a NT contract and the honour combination probably ensures she has the heart suit doubly stopped. Similarly, had South opened 1D third hand and West overcalled 1H, North could bid 2NT with confidence. This contract makes comfortably despite the 22HCPs and bad break in partner's diamond suit.

After a 1D opening from West and a 1H overcall by partner how strongly should South support her partner's heart suit? She can count 10HCPs and up to 4 points in distribution (extra heart and a singleton), BUT her KD is poorly placed, based on the bidding, her diamond suit is slightly longer than desirable and her side suit is headed by only a secondary honour. All these are depreciating factors. A bid of 3H (or equivalent) would be prudent. North, on the strength of her HCPs, number of controls and honour combinations, will probably bid game

Help in Side Suit:

BD: 21		♠ 72	Dir: N	
		♥ 9872	Vul: NS	
		♦ AK72		
		♣ Q95		
♠ J954		♠ AKQ86		
♥ T5	2/12/21pm	♥ KQ643		
♦ J93		♦		
♣ AK86		♣ T42		
		♠ T3		
		♥ AJ		
		♦ QT8654		
		♣ J73		
		♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
N		2		9
S		2		9 14
E	4	3	5	
W	4	3	5	

East opens 1S and partner raises to 2S. With a fit established, East feels that game in spades is highly likely but, with the partnership understanding that a new suit bid after suit agreement does not necessarily indicate 4 or more cards, bids 3C to check partner's holding in that suit. Partner has a maximum for her 2S raise as well as a strong holding in clubs and bids 4S with total confidence.

Wasted Honours:

BD: 10		♠ AKT84	Dir: E	
		♥ QT	Vul: ALL	
		♦ 65		
		♣ J532		
♠ Q953		♠ J62		
♥ 5	8/12/21am	♥ K8764		
♦ AKJ42		♦ Q9873		
♣ AQ7		♣		
		♠ 7		
		♥ AJ932		
		♦ T		
		♣ KT9864		
		♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
N		4	1	
S		4	1	10
E		3	1 1	
W		3	1 1	16 6

Let us assume that East and South pass, neither choosing to open their weak two-suiters. West opens 1D. North will probably overcall 1S. E-W have a very strong diamond fit and both have good distributional values. East with about 12 total points (6 distribution points via an extra diamond and a void) may raise to 4D or 4C if they use splinter bids. However, both West's club honours and East's KH are wasted values and even though West knows that East is short in clubs in the second case, it is too late because only nine tricks can be made.

Answer to Exercise (3)

The High Card Point Counting system can lead to unintentional overbidding even with balanced hands when the two hands are duplicated with the same length in each suit and overlapping honours. The 34HCP potential slam hand below, will probably make only 10 tricks. Fortunately, this level of duplication is rare and the High Card Point Counting system works well for balanced hands most of the time.

AQJ	K103	Another evaluation technique, the loser trick count (LTC) can handle
AQ32	KJ94	honour duplication . The original LTC, which counts three losers for three
KQ	AJ	or more card suits not containing an Ace, King or Queen and reduces that
A432	8765	count by one for each of those honours present, predicts correctly here
		that only ten tricks can be made. For interest, while keeping the left hand
		balanced, rearrange the rags to make 13 tricks. What a difference the
		placement of the rags can make!

Exercise 4:

♠ 743
♥ K8632
♦
♣ T8643

You are East. N-S are vulnerable and you are not. North opens 1D, you pass, South bids 2D (inverted minor=10+HCPs/no major), your partner bids 3D (long majors), and North bids 5D. Do you bid your hearts?