

## Rubens' Pearls on Hand Evaluation (8)

.....on HAND VALUATION TECHNIQUES-SLAM BIDDING

- Culbertson's rule for inviting slams can be extended to 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. (Note that this last principle is recommended for small slams and bidding in general).

Culbertson's rule for slam invitation was to make a slam try if your partner holding a perfect minimum would make it a laydown. Rubens extends this principle to inviting games as well. Sometimes partner will have a perfect maximum for her bid but you will have more success if you don't pin your hopes on that serendipitous situation. The converse is that you should bid game or slam yourself if you can live with partner having an even imperfect minimum.

Rubens also recommends a finesse rule (of unknown origin) for slams. Bid a small slam if it depends on a finesse **at worst**. Do not bid a grand slam if you think it will depend on a finesse.

BD: 16	♠ J52 ♥ 8 ♦ QT3 ♣ AKQJ96	Dir: W Vul: EW	
♠ K ♥ AT72 ♦ AK9752 ♣ T8	13/12/21	♠ Q9764 ♥ Q943 ♦ 86 ♣ 43	
	♠ AT83 ♥ KJ65 ♦ J4 ♣ 752		
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
N	3	1 2	13
S	3	1 2	14 4
E	2 2		9
W	2 2		

West	North	East	South
1D	2C	Pass	Pass
2D	3C	Pass	??

Do you bid on? It sounds like your partner has 6 or more good clubs and you have good stoppers in the majors. As far as inviting game in NT, a perfect minimum hand for your partner would be a running six-card club suit and a diamond stopper. However, that would only yield 8 tricks in NT. It would be a higher probability of success to pass.

BD: 25	♠ A42 ♥ K9843 ♦ J4 ♣ T96	Dir: N Vul: EW	
♠ KQ863 ♥ Q72 ♦ AQ63 ♣ 8	9/12/21pm	♠ J9 ♥ A6 ♦ K8752 ♣ AKJ7	
	♠ T75 ♥ JT5 ♦ T9 ♣ Q5432		
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
N			8
S			13 16
E	2 6 2 5 5		3
W	2 6 3 6 6		

North	East	South	West
Pass	1D	Pass	1S
Pass	3C	Pass	3H (4 <sup>th</sup> suit forcing)
Pass	3NT	Pass	4C (Gerber)
Pass	4S(2)	Pass	??

You are West. What do you bid? A perfect minimum for partner would contain the KD, the AS, the AC and the KH (she has a heart stopper). That only comes to 14HCPs but she jump rebid showing more. This holding would provide 3 and probably 4 x spade tricks, 1 x heart trick, 1 x club trick, 5 x diamond tricks plus club ruffs. 6D should be a laydown but at worst it might rely on a finesse. The contract makes on all leads but probably won't in practice on the JH lead because it requires an unusual ruffing finesse in clubs rather a simple one!

Answer to Exercise (7):

BD: 10	♠ AKT84	Dir: E
	♥ QT	Vul: ALL
	♦ 65	
	♣ J532	
♠ Q953		♠ J62
♥ 5		♥ K8764
♦ AKJ42	8/12/21am	♦ Q9873
♣ AQ7		♣
	♠ 7	
	♥ AJ932	
	♦ T	
	♣ KT9864	

  

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
N	4		1			10
S	4		1			16 6
E		3		1 1		8
W		3		1 1		

Use the other evaluation techniques to see if you can predict a better diamond contract for E-W than suggested by the Loser Trick Count.

Assume for the sake of the exercise that West opens 1D and North passes.

(A 2H "multi" opening by South or a 1S overall by North would tend to dampen E-W ambitions.)

E-W has a combined 22HCPs. When length and distribution points are added the Total Point Count is in the range of 29-31 which indicates 5D should be a good contract. If the Pair can get a better sense of honour nature and location from the bidding, they will find the key to dampening their expectations because the primary honours in their side suits are not located to protect their secondary suit (spades). If East jumps to 3D after the sequence 1D-1H-1S based on distributional points, East may relapse into 4D when East bids 3NT, knowing that the combined points are probably not there and West has wasted values in clubs. This is certainly not an easy hand for E-W to avoid overbidding their hand.

Exercise 8:

♠ A974
♥ K932
♦ AQ3
♣ K4

West (you)	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2H(transfer)	Pass
3S ( superaccept)	Pass	4C(control bid)	Pass
4D (control bid)	Pass	4S(no heart control)	Pass
4NT(key card ask)	Pass	5H( 2 without the QS)	Double
?? What do you bid??			

♠
♥ 2
♦ QJT9762
♣ A9432

You are East not-vulnerable. Partner opens 1D, most likely 4+ cards and North overcalls 4S. What do you bid?

Answers to Exercise (8)

BD: 7		♠ QJ2	Dir: S	
		♥ 76	Vul: ALL	
		♦ J974		
		♣ T763		
♠ A974	9/12/21pm	♠ KT653		
♥ K932		♥ Q54		
♦ AQ3		♦ K65		
♣ K4		♣ AJ		
		♠ 8		
		♥ AJT8		
		♦ T82		
		♣ Q9852		
		♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
N				4
S			16	13
E	1	3	4	5
W	1	3	4	5

You have a very clear picture of partner's hand. His Key Card Response tells you he has the KS but not the QS and the AC. He can't have the AH or else he would have cue bid hearts as a control. You can't count on him having more than 5 x spades and you are going to get a heart lead following South's double. The slam is only going to make if you can find the QS. Even if partner has the JS the odds are no better than 50%. It would be prudent to simply bid 5S.

BD: 12		♠ KQJ87542	Dir: W	
		♥ J8	Vul: NS	
		♦ 4		
		♣ KJ		
♠ A93	14/12/21pm	♠		
♥ KT95		♥ 2		
♦ AK53		♦ QJT9762		
♣ T5		♣ A9432		
		♠ T6		
		♥ AQ7643		
		♦ 8		
		♣ Q876		
		♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
N				11
S			14	7
E	3	5		4
W	3	5		4

What would be a perfect minimum hand that your partner might hold to make slam in diamonds? Nothing in spades AH, AD, KD and KC would be perfect and even 7D might be on if he has a doubleton club. A bid of 6D is certainly justified and also supported by the last Ruben principle to be aggressive if your trump holding is strong. (This principle is recommended for bidding in general, not only for slams.)

