

Tidbit 17

Bridge belongs to the Bidders

Interpretation:

The fact of the matter is that at duplicate bridge players tend to score better when they have won the contract than when defending. There are a number of reasons for this such as players find defending harder than playing the hand and “controlled” overbidders seldom get punished by being doubled. Instead they go one or two down undoubled in their contracts which usually scores better than the defenders playing in and making theirs. The “Law” of Total Tricks discussed in Tidbit 13 is really a guide on how high a partnership can bid in their chosen suit without getting a bad result.

If you have the HCPs or a good solid suit don’t be afraid to speak up even if your opponents have both bid and your partner has passed. As they say, “fortune favours the brave”. On most occasions you will come out of it OK. Just watch the vulnerability and learn the scoring.

Examples:

BOARD 21					
BD: 21	♠ AKQ52	Dir: N			
	♥ K86	Vul: NS			
	♦ KJ52				
	♣ 9				
♠ 9764		♠ T83			
♥ AT5		♥ 43			
♦ A96		♦ Q874			
♣ AK4		♣ JT72			
	♠ J				
	♥ QJ972				
	♦ T3				
	♣ Q8653				
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT				
N	1	1	4	1	1
S	1	1	4	1	1
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-
					16
					15
					3
					6

Consider this hand, the subject of last week’s exercise.

The bidding discussed then was 1S-Pass-1NT-Pass etc but West has 15HCPs and doesn’t have to pass. What say West ventures a double?

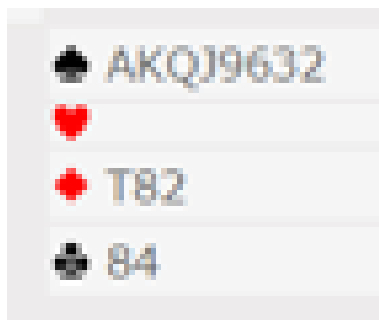
North may choose to bid 2D in case West is lying in wait with a long, strong club suit, but if she passes, East will bid 2C. South will pass and North will probably bid 2D or re-open with a double. Given a re-opening double by North, South is likely to take what she considers the safer option of bidding 2H rather than passing. It is now going to be harder than if the opponents had not bid at all for North-South to reach their game contract in 4H, worth 620. Their likely best result would be South leaving the 2C doubled contract in for 300.

BOARD 4					
BD: 4	♠ 83	Dir: W			
	♥ AK654	Vul: ALL			
	♦ 9876				
	♣ 73				
♠ QJ5		♠ AT9			
♥ QT9		♥ J87			
♦ A5		♦ Q3			
♣ QJT42		♣ A9865			
	♠ K7642				
	♥ 32				
	♦ KJT42				
	♣ K				
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT				
N	-	4	2	1	-
S	-	4	2	1	-
E	3	-	-	-	1
W	3	-	-	-	1
					7
					12
					11
					10

West opens 1C. Sitting North do you pass or bid 1H with your 7HCPs vulnerable? It is very unlikely you will be doubled for penalty at the one level. The risk arises when your partner assumes you are stronger (say 10+HCPs) and bids too high. There is a way around this called the unassuming cue bid where partner (South) checks the strength of your holding by bidding the opener’s suit. This shows a good raise of your overcall to the 3 level which enables you to sign off cheaply if necessary.

Your lead-directing overcall of 1H is a disincentive for East with 11HCPs but no heart stopper to bid 2NT. On a heart lead by South, as long as you duck the first round, 3NT cannot make. On a diamond lead or possibly a spade lead by South, 3NT can make.

Exercise:



You are South and second to bid. East-West are vulnerable and you are not. East opens 1H. What do you bid second to speak as South?

Answer to Tidbit 16 Exercise:

BOARD 21						
BD: 21	♠ AKQ52				Dlr: N	
	♥ K86				Vul: NS	
	♦ KJ52					
	♣ 9					
♠ 9764				♠ T83		
♥ AT5				♥ 43		
♦ A96				♦ Q874		
♣ AK4				♣ JT72		
	♠ J					
	♥ QJ972					
	♦ T3					
	♣ Q8653					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
N	1	1	4	1	1	16
S	1	1	4	1	1	15 3
E	-	-	-	-	-	6
W	-	-	-	-	-	

North	East	South	West
1S	Pass	1NT	Pass
??			

What is your rebid as North? If you bid 2D, what do you bid if partner now bids 2H?

Even though your 5- card spade suit is strong you should not rebid it. Your partner has shown 6-9HCPs and game is unlikely to be on unless you can find a fit. A rebid of 2D is not forcing but preferred. It will probably get a raise from partner if they have a good holding in the suit. A rebid of 3D becomes a stretch if partner has the minimum for her 1NT response. Since showing preference with a small doubleton to a possible 4 card suit in diamonds to a 5-1 in spades where she holds the singleton JS, partner may instead well venture a 2H bid over your 2D bid. Whether you now decide to raise to 3H or not, a heart contract plays very well notwithstanding poor West's 3 x Aces and 15HCPs.