

♠♥ **The Power of Shape ... and a double game swing!** ♦♣

Dir: East
Vul: All

♠ --
♥ K 10 8 7 5 4 3
♦ A 8 7
♣ 9 8 3

Optimum
EW -500

♠ A 7 6 4 3
♥ --
♦ J 9 6 4 2
♣ 6 5 4

W	NORTH	E
E	10	S
S	SOUTH	W

♠ 10 9 8 5 2
♥ Q 2
♦ K 5 3
♣ A K 10

7	12
5	16

♠ K Q J
♥ A J 9 6
♦ Q 10
♣ Q J 7 2

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	2	-	5	-	4
S	2	-	5	-	3
E	-	2	-	3	-
W	-	2	-	2	-

View Larger
Play it again

Board No 10 Both Vul Dealer East								
-								
NS	EW	Bid	By	Tks	+Sc	-Sc	+	-
1	7	4♥	N	11	650		15	-15
2	6	5♥	N	11	650			
3	5	5♠*	E	9	500		-5	5
5	3	4♥	S	12	680		5	-5
6	2	4♥	N	11	650			
7	1	4♠	E	10		620	-15	15
8	13	5♥*	N	11	850		12	-12
9	12	5♥	N	11	650		10	-10
10	11	4♠	E	10		620	-15	15
11	10	4♥	S	10	620		15	-15
12	9	4♠*	E	9	200		-10	10
13	8	4♠*	E	9	200		-12	12

On Thursday, 27th April 2017, Board #10 in the first session of the Club T/4 was an interesting example of 'The Power of Shape'!

The 'Optimum' result on the board is EW -500, i.e. 5♠x-2.

N/S can make 5♥ hearts but E/W can sacrifice in 5♠x and suffer only a two trick deficit, -500 as opposed to -650.

First let's look at the bidding. Most players will open the East hand with 1♠. And South has a standard strong 1NT overcall. It's how the bidding take off from this point that really matters.

Where East/West are playing a 5 card Spade (or 5 card Majors) then West knows that they have AT LEAST a ten card fit.

Bid to the level of your total trumps. In this case West knows that East/West have a trump fit of at least ten cards and can therefore bid at least to 4♠. Note that a direct jump to a major suit game is usually based on distribution/shape as opposed to high-card values.

Even if using a simple hand valuation approach it should be an easy case of assessing the PLAYING strength of the West hand with spades as trumps.

And more than likely it will be a good 'save' against a NT or heart game by the opponents.

So, West should raise partner's opening 1♠ bid directly to 4♠. Note that this 'pre-emptive' raise also has the benefit of making life awkward for the opponents.

And now the spotlight turns to North. Again, the power of shape should make it easy for North to find a bid of 5♥ opposite his partner's strong NT overcall which guarantees a strong heart fit of at least nine cards.

Over 5♥, East, holding defensive values in the minor suits, will likely pass and the spotlight will once again fall on West.

Bidding 5♠ and being doubled will gain 3 imps if 5♥ makes and 5♠x goes ONLY two light. The problem is that three light in 5♠x will result in an 800 penalty and could mean a 4 imp loss if partners only make 650.

On this hand 5♠x is the optimum. N/S can make eleven tricks in hearts but not twelve. And East/West may only lose 500 (or less!) in 5♠x.

The travelling score sheet suggests that eight E/W partnerships bid to 4♠ over which only 4 N/S pairs bid on to 5♥. One N/S pair earned 12 imps when making 5♥x while their partners suffered only a 200 penalty in 4♠x. No East was held to eight tricks, all making a minimum of nine tricks and two declarers actually made ten tricks in the spade contract!

Two teams gained **double game swings** when the two pairs on each team made game their way at both tables! This resulted in a 15 imps gain to the two teams.

And lastly, a brief look at the defense to the spade contract by E/W. The travelling score sheets indicate that E/W can make nine tricks if East is declarer whereas West should be held to eight tricks. The reason for the difference lies in the fact that North can lead clubs and therefore set-up a club trick for the defense BEFORE declarer gets the diamond suit established for a club discard from the East hand.

Although South can lead a club (but only ♣Q or ♣J without giving East a soft trick with ♣10) South cannot play a second round of the suit without giving a trick to declarer.

The situation is different if North is on lead at trick one and finds the club attack. Now South will either win the first trick or be able to play a second round of the suit from his ♣QJx when he gains the lead with a trump or the ♦Q. Either way N/S will establish a club trick in addition to the two trumps tricks and two diamond tricks thus giving the defense a total of five tricks.

The safest lead from the South hand is clearly the ♠K but declarer will now be able to play a diamond towards his ♦K and get the diamond suit established before N/S can establish a club trick.

An interesting hand indeed...it is important to appreciate the power of shape!

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April 28th, 2017