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EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT FOR BRIDGE PLAYERS

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BIDDING 6-PACK

Problems

Board 7	Both Vul				
♠ 85	South	West	North	East	
♥ J752	Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠	
♦ T32	??				
♣ AK93					
Board 8	None Vul				
♠ 96	East	South	West	North	
♥ A87532			2NT	Pass	
♦ 76	??				
♣ KJ7					
Board 10	Both Vul				
♠ J97532	South	West	North	East	
♥ 9				1♥	
♦ 9	Pass	1NT	2♣	Dbl	
♣ 76432	??				
Board 11	None Vul				
♠ AQ6	East	South	West	North	
♥ K54		Pass	2♥	Pass	
♦ AKJ6	??				
♣ KJ2					
Board 15	N-S Vul				
♠ 8	East	South	West	North	
♥ AJ7543		Pass	1♣	1♠	
♦ T8	??				
♣ T542					
Board 21	N-S Vul				
♠ 8542	North	East	South	West	
♥ KQ	??				
♦ AQ983					
♣ 65					

Solutions

Board 7	Both Vul				
♠ 85	South	West	North	East	
♥ J752	Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠	
♦ T32	??				
♣ AK93					

South has an in-between sort of hand. The Law of Total Tricks tells us that this hand should compete up to the 3-level, based on the 9-card Heart fit. But South is too good to bid 3♥ immediately (that would be preemptive) and not good enough to cue-bid 2♠ (that would be game-invitational). So, playing standard methods, the solution is to bid 2♥ here, and to be prepared to compete later to the 3-level if necessary.

However, there is a useful gadget for this hand, namely "Constructive Raises in Competition". Playing that gadget, over East's 1♠, South bids 3♣ or 3♦ to show a four-card raise and a half-decent hand, in other words, something in between a preempt and a game invitation. One common treatment is that bidding 3♣ is a constructive raise *with* a singleton, and that 3♦ is a constructive raise *without* a singleton.

On the actual deal E-W will get to 4♥ with or without this gadget. But if they happen to have that constructive raise available it makes it more difficult for West to support Spades and for E-W to find their good 4♠ save.

Board 8	None Vul				
♠ 96	East	South	West	North	
♥ A87532			2NT	Pass	
♦ 76	??				
♣ KJ7					

The question is "Should East be making a slam try with this hand?" Perhaps he should, considering that West might hold something like: ♠ Ax, ♥ AQx, ♦ Axx, ♣ AQxxx. With that perfecto there are no fewer than 13 tricks in No Trump or Hearts, and it must be possible to come up with a number of semi-perfectos where 12 tricks are possible. So, maybe East should try: 2NT 3♦, 3♥ 4♥. Assuming that E-W are playing Texas, going to game the slow way (via a Jacoby Transfer) is played by most as a mild slam try. This approach allows Opener to express an opinion about his hand, which in this case will be "No slam". Making 11 tricks, as it happens.

Board 10	Both Vul			
♠ J97532		South	West	North East
♥ 9				1♥
♦ 9	Pass	1NT	2♣	Dbl
♣ 76432	??			

After North gets Clubs into the auction, East shows extra values with his Double. What is your call with that South hand? Only one HCP, and yes, N-S are vulnerable, but even so, with that magnificent distribution. South must a large number of Clubs here. How large? We'd say that 5♣ is about right. On a good day it might make and if it doesn't then it will probably be a good sacrifice against a N-S game. And, of course, by bidding the limit of the hand directly, we apply maximum pressure on the opponents, making them guess at the five-level.

Board 11	None Vul			
♠ AQ6		East	South	West North
♥ K54			Pass	2♥ Pass
♦ AKJ6	??			
♣ KJ2				

It's conceivable that West has the ♥AQ and ♣A, in which case East can count 11 tricks. Where would the 12th trick be found? Perhaps West will have a doubleton Diamond, in which case Declarer can hope to ruff the ♦Q out, failing which he can hope for the doubleton ♣Q, and if that fails then there is always the Spade finesse. So we would say that 6♥ is (just about) worthwhile if West has the perfect hand. East could try 4NT (Roman Key Card) but that might get E-W dangerously high if West has: ♠xx, ♥AJTxxx, ♦xxx ♣xx. One solution is to use 4♣ here as Roman Key Card, which often allows East to try for slam and get out at the four-level. Another wrinkle here is that some players like to modify the Roman Key Card responses, when made by a preemptor, to the following:

1 st Step	No Key Cards
2 nd Step	One KC, no trump Queen
3 rd Step	One KC, with trump Queen
4 th Step	Two KC, no trump Queen
5 th Step	Two KC, with trump Queen

The logic of these revised responses is that it is not possible to have a preemptive hand with three or more Key Cards (assuming that 10 HCP is your max for a Weak Two). Anyway, after all that science, it turns out that West has an unsuitable hand for slam but that 12 tricks can be made anyway, with the aid of a couple of finesses.

Board 15	N-S Vul			
♠ 8		East	South	West North
♥ AJ7543			Pass	1♣ 1♠
♦ T8	??			
♣ T542				

What are your choices?

- *A Pusillanimous Pass?* Perish the thought!
- *A Club Raise?* No, it wouldn't do to give up on Hearts completely.
- *A Boisterous 2♥?* No, that would be an over-bid. Much as we like the 6th Heart, the singleton in the enemy suit and the Club fit, Partner will expect us to have more high-card values for this bid.
- *A Negative Double?* That would be our second choice.
- *A Preemptive 3♥?* That's the ticket! Sure the suit could be better, but it's a hand with lots of offense (thanks in part to the Club fit) and very little defense. Such hands should be preempted, especially at this vulnerability.

After you bid 3♥, suppose that South bids 3♠ and North raises. Back to you (East). Yes, at this vulnerability, we would try 5♣. Of course, if this were to work out badly, we can look forward to the standard lecture from Partner, the one that goes "Once you have preempted you have told me your hand, you're not supposed to bid again". But, as it happens, 5♣ doubled is a fine save against 4♠, down two tricks for -300. So there will be no lecture, instead it'll be "Nice bid, Partner!"

Board 21	N-S Vul		
♠ 8542		North East	South West
♥ KQ	??		
♦ AQ983			
♣ 65			

Would you open the North hand? It does pass the Rule of 20, but it's a hand with flaws. The doubleton ♥KQ is considerable wastage, look how much better the hand would be if it were: ♠KQ85, ♥42, ♦AQ983, ♣65. Now that *does* look like an opening bid! It's generally better to have the high cards in the long suits, and our own choice would be to pass the actual North hand. If North passes, N-S will go plus, defending a Heart part-score. But, if North does open the bidding with that motley assortment then N-S will go minus, going down in 3♠ or 4♠.