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EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT FOR BRIDGE PLAYERS

1st September, 2010

BIDDING 6-PACK

Problems

Board 1	None Vul			
♠ J7	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
♥ 98643		Pass	2♣	Pass
♦ A32	2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
♣ QT2	??			

Board 2	N-S Vul			
♠ 3	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
♥ K9854				Pass
♦ K762	1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
♣ AJ2	??			

Board 24	None Vul			
♠ 9873	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
♥ KJ5		Pass	1♦	2♣
♦ AQJ	??			
♣ 953				

Board 26	Both Vul			
♠ AQ963	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
♥ K				1NT
♦ AK92	??			
♣ J62				

Board 28	N-S Vul			
♠ A72	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
♥ J842		Pass	1♠	Pass
♦ T4	2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
♣ AKQ2	??			

Board 30	None Vul			
♠ A93	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>
♥ Q8653	Pass	Pass	1NT	2♠
♦ J952	??			
♣ 3				

Solutions

Board 1	None Vul			
♠ J7	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
♥ 98643		Pass	2♣	Pass
♦ A32	2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
♣ QT2	??			

After originally making a 2♦ waiting bid, what is your choice now? Let's assume that you have available a "second negative" of 3♣ for use with really bad hands. That means that anything else shows something, let's say at least a King. That being so, West can choose between:

- 3♥: Yes, there are five of them, but what a rotten suit!
- 3♠: West will probably support Spades later but there's no rush to do so with a doubleton, it's quite possible that East has only a 5-card suit.
- 2NT: This is a fairly wide-ranging bid, showing some values but denying support or a suit worth bidding ... which is exactly what West has!

So, you bid 2NT and East bids 3♠. Now you can and should support Spades. But not by bidding 4♠, it's better to bid 4♦. As you did not bid 3♦ earlier, 4♦ is clearly a cue-bid in support of Spades. Now East tries a cue-bid of 4♥, and you have done your all, so you bid 4♠, leaving it up to Partner to make any further moves (which he will).

Board 2	N-S Vul			
♠ 3	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
♥ K9854				Pass
♦ K762	1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
♣ AJ2	??			

Let's look at South's rebid (and let us assume that N-S are playing a 2/1 style). What would be your choice? You could simply raise to 3♦, but surely a more descriptive bid is 3♠, showing Diamond support and shortness in Spades. Splinters usually work best when we have a minimum hand, the reason being that there is little point in jumping the bidding to ask "Do you like your hand opposite my shortness?", and then when Partner says "No!", bidding on anyway because *we* still like *our* hand. That being so, 3♠ is the perfect splinter, after which South will be happy to leave the rest of the decisions in Partner's capable hands.

Board 24	None Vul			
♠ 9873	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
♥ KJ5		Pass	1♦	2♣
♦ AQJ	??			
♣ 953				

Here is a quick refresher course in the use of Negative Doubles when there happen to be *two* unbid majors:

- **1♣ followed by a 1♦ overcall:** Now a Negative Double shows *both* majors (usually 4-4, but could have 5 Hearts ... but not 5 Spades, that would be a 1♠ bid). The adjunct to this treatment is that a 1♥ or 1♠ bid in this situation does not guarantee more than a 4-card suit.
- **1♦ followed by a 2♣ overcall:** In this case, it is not practical for the Negative Double to guarantee both majors and this Double is used for a number of different hand types, including, (a) a hand which actually *does* two 4-card majors, or (b) a hand with a 5-card major that was not strong enough to bid it directly; or (c) a hand with one 4-card major which has safety somewhere else (2NT or higher, or Opener's suit).

So, in the hand shown, South makes a Negative Double, based on her so-called Spade suit.

Board 26	Both Vul			
♠ AQ963	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
♥ K				1NT
♦ AK92	??			
♣ J62				

Assuming that Double is natural (showing a good hand) would you double 1NT with the North hand? We don't recommend it because:

- North does not have an attractive opening lead (a Spade lead might give up an early trick, then a few Clubs could be cashed, with -180 or -380 soon appearing on the horizon).
- A Double will make it easier for E-W to compete in Hearts.

So, our suggestion is to bid 2♠. If the N-S methods mean that 2♠ shows "Spades and a minor" then so much the better, but a natural 2♠ would be fine too.

As it happens, 2♠ is the winning call, scraping up a lucky 8 tricks on the lie of the cards, whereas, if North leads a Spade against 1NT doubled, then the bottom line for N-S is a rather unsightly -780!

Board 28	N-S Vul			
♠ A72	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
♥ J842		Pass	1♠	Pass
♦ T4	2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
♣ AKQ2	??			

Here's an interesting bidding problem! Conventional wisdom tells us that the 4-4 fit is better than the 5-3, and sometimes (particularly in the slam zone) even better than the 5-4. On occasion this is true, but we should also take into account the quality of the trump suit, and here is a case in point. South has a choice between Hearts (probably a 4-4 fit, but could be 5-4), and Spades (probably 5-3). Notwithstanding the alluring charms of the 4-4 Heart fit, it seems to us that South should be supporting Spades with that hand. Here are some reasons why:

- In terms of high cards, South's Spades are better than her Hearts
- South has some Club tricks ... they won't provide any useful pitches in Spades (North has too many) ... but if North has moderate Hearts (such as Axxx or Kxxx) then perhaps a Heart loser or two can be pitched away.
- If South bids 2♠ (forcing) and North rebids 3♥ (presumably showing 5-5) then South can always bid 4♥.

Argue the point if you will, but we suggest that South opts for Spades. The bottom line? 11 tricks are available in Spades, just 10 in Hearts.

Board 30	None Vul			
♠ A93	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>
♥ Q8653	Pass	Pass	1NT	2♠
♦ J952	??			
♣ 3				

East's hand is not quite good enough to go to game, but he would like to compete to 3♥ (not that 3♥ is a sure thing, West might well have a small doubleton in Hearts). So, it's a good hand for Lebensohl, whereby:

- A direct 3♥ is game-forcing, giving Opener the choice between 3NT and 4♥
- 2NT is conventional, requiring Opener to bid 3♣, after which Responder passes (with Clubs) or else signs off in 3♦ or 3♥.

That being the case, East bids 2NT, West makes the requested bid of 3♣ and East signs off in 3♥.