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EDUCATION & ENTERTAINMENT FOR BRIDGE PLAYERS

6th July, 2011

BIDDING SIX SEVEN-PACK

Problems

| | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| Board 2 | N-S Vul |
| ♠ KQT542 | <i>West North East South</i> |
| ♥ Q | Pass Pass |
| ♦ AQ3 | 1♠ Pass 2♥ Pass |
| ♣ AJ9 | ?? |

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Board 10 | Both Vul |
| ♠ KQ | <i>North East South West</i> |
| ♥ AQT3 | Pass 1NT 3♣ |
| ♦ T854 | ?? |
| ♣ K42 | |

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Board 13 | Both Vul |
| How would you get to slam on these hands? | |
| ♠ J862 | ♠ AKT95 |
| ♥ | ♥ QT96 |
| ♦ A965 | ♦ 3 |
| ♣ AK872 | ♣ Q53 |

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Board 15 | N-S Vul |
| ♠ T632 | <i>South West North East</i> |
| ♥ 4 | ?? |
| ♦ Q8 | |
| ♣ AQJ643 | |

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Board 17 | None Vul |
| ♠ A652 | <i>East South West North</i> |
| ♥ KQ9 | 1♠ |
| ♦ J3 | ?? |
| ♣ KQ42 | |

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Board 17 | None Vul |
| ♠ Q | <i>West North East South</i> |
| ♥ AJ7643 | 1♠ 1NT 2♦ |
| ♦ 95 | ?? |
| ♣ JT86 | |

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Board 19 | E-W Vul |
| ♠ AKJ2 | <i>South West North East</i> |
| ♥ Q3 | ?? |
| ♦ 92 | |
| ♣ KQT92 | |

Solutions

| | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| Board 2 | N-S Vul |
| ♠ KQT542 | <i>West North East South</i> |
| ♥ Q | Pass Pass |
| ♦ AQ3 | 1♠ Pass 2♥ Pass |
| ♣ AJ9 | ?? |

An awkward rebid problem for West! A forcing 2♣ would be perfect, but as East is a passed hand that bid is not available and the choices appear to be:

- 3♠ would create a force and show a 6-card suit (we don't think the suit needs to be solid or semi-solid because 2♣ is not forcing and West needs a way to show the actual hand-type). But the trouble with 3♠ is that it may take 3NT out of the picture (it is unlikely that East will have stoppers in both minors and be comfortable bidding 3NT himself).
- 3♣ would be a way to mark time, but it probably won't achieve very much.
- 3NT looks like the practical bid to us, describing the hand quite well but giving up on a 6-2 Spade fit.

How does our 3NT suggestion work out? E-W do indeed have a 6-2 Spade fit that is good for 12 tricks. And, according to Deep Finesse, 3NT makes only 10 tricks. But, in practice, North will lead a Diamond against 3NT and now Declarer has 12 tricks and a good board. So, as is often the case, 3NT is right even when it is wrong.

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Board 10 | Both Vul |
| ♠ KQ | <i>North East South West</i> |
| ♥ AQT3 | Pass 1NT 3♣ |
| ♦ T854 | ?? |
| ♣ K42 | |

What does Double show when the opponents overcall Partner's 1NT opening? Here's one method that's fairly popular:

- A Double of 2♣ is Stayman
- A Double of 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ shows values (at least game-invitational values and at least two cards in the doubled suit)
- A Double at the three-level is *negative*, looking for a 4-4 major fit. Although the bid is not for penalty, Opener will quite often pass.

Using these methods, North doubles.

Board 13 **Both Vul**

Here we look at both hands and a possible (but not very good) auction:

| | |
|---------|---------|
| ♠ J862 | ♠ AKT95 |
| ♥ | ♥ QT96 |
| ♦ A965 | ♦ 3 |
| ♣ AK872 | ♣ Q53 |

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| <i>West</i> | <i>East</i> |
|-------------|-------------|

| | |
|----|----|
| | 1♠ |
| 4♥ | 4♠ |

Pass

East has a typical Rule-of-20-inspired opening bid, West splinters in Hearts, and East is going nowhere. Looking at just the E-W hands you'd have to say that 6♠ is a fine contract and that 7♠ would make on a good day. So, who was the culprit in the above auction? Not East, in our opinion, he has a minimum hand and some Heart wastage. No, the culprit is West, his hand is just too good for a splinter ... the shortness is actually a void ... and there is a strong 5-card Club suit. Surely a better auction would be:

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| <i>West</i> | <i>East</i> |
|-------------|-------------|

| | |
|----|------|
| | 1♠ |
| 2♣ | 2♥ |
| 2♠ | 4♦ |
| 6♠ | Pass |

This time it is East that splinters (in Diamonds) and that should be enough for West to try the slam. Injustice is done when the Spades are 3-1 and the Clubs are 5-0. Ouch! Plain unlucky. But at least you earned some style points for a sensible auction.

Board 15 **N-S Vul**

| | | | | |
|----------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| ♠ T632 | <i>South</i> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> |
| ♥ 4 | ?? | | | |
| ♦ Q8 | | | | |
| ♣ AQJ643 | | | | |

What is your choice?

- **Pass?** We suppose that will be the majority choice, given the unfavorable vulnerability.
- **3♣?** That's not ideal when holding a 4-card major side-suit, all the more so as the hand is so close to opening values.
- **1♣?** If South cannot bear passing with those Clubs then perhaps she could try a light 1♣ opening. True, it's only 9 HCP, but it almost passes the Rule-of-20. So perhaps 1♣ is not as crazy as it might appear.

Board 17

♠ A652
♥ KQ9
♦ J3
♣ KQ42

None Vul

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> |
| | | | 1♠ |
| ?? | | | |

We are constantly being reminded that this is a bidder's game, but bidding 1NT with that miserable 15-count is pushing that advice to the limit. It's minimum in terms of point count, the hand has no intermediates, the ♦J is flapping in the wind, and the enemy suit is not particularly well covered (that Spade holding would be immensely better if it were ATxx!). The only good thing we can say about the 1NT overcall is that it happens to work well on the actual deal, which we consider to be most unfortunate ☹

Board 17

♠ Q
♥ AJ7643
♦ 95
♣ JT86

None Vul

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |
| | 1♠ | 1NT | 2♦ |
| ?? | | | |

It's usual to play "systems on" opposite a 1NT overcall, in which case Texas would still apply for those who use that convention. Furthermore, it is common to play that Texas is still on after (South's) competition, provided that the opponents do not bid above 3♣. Is that 4♦ bid a bit aggressive? Perhaps, but we do like those 6-4 hands, they have a habit of playing well!

The bottom line on this one is that 4♥ makes 10 easy tricks, despite East being miserably minimum for his 1NT overcall.

Board 19

♠ AKJ2
♥ Q3
♦ 92
♣ KQT92

E-W Vul

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| <i>South</i> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> |
| | | | |
| ?? | | | |

We don't have a strong aversion to opening 1NT with South's 4=2=2=5 shape, but only if there is some good stuff in the two doubletons. Here almost all of South's values are in the long suits, and this is surely a 1♣ opening. The most common reason (or excuse) for opening a slightly off-shape 1NT is to solve a rebid problem, but South cannot use that one here as, when holding four Spades, there is no rebid problem (unlike 2=4=2=5 hands where we might be stuck after opening 1♣ and getting a 1♠ response).