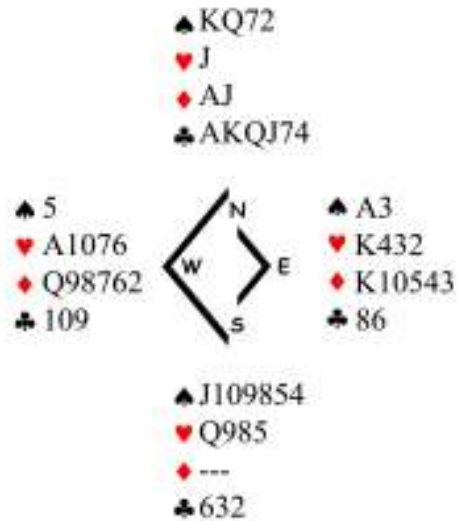


146. Give Partner Leniency for Stretching

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W	N	E	S
2♦?	Dbf	4♦?	4♠
5♦?	5♠	All Pass	

--East West Vulnerable--

Today, I will take a break from the beginner bridge columns and discuss a hand that happened last year in open pairs of the Trail summer sectional. This bridge tournament is just around the corner this July 5th to 7th at the Trail curling rink. See my web site for more information.

The bidding:

Please take note of the question marks in the bidding above. First of all, West does not have a vulnerable first seat weak two. He has a four card major, the diamond suit is too weak and his hand could be too strong if partners opens a heart. In first or second seat, one needs two of the top honours or three of the top five honours. It is no fun being doubled and not being able to draw trump without some difficulty.

Secondly, East should bid either three or five diamonds. Four diamonds will just push the opponents to a makeable game. East and West having a good diamond fit may tell the other partner one is short in diamonds.

Thirdly, West raises his preempt to five. He cannot do this, otherwise his first preempt should have been either a pass or a preempt at a higher level. Here, it should be a pass. Furthermore, East could be raising the preempt to further the preempt and not to make. Now West has furthered the preempt even more and the opponents could double for 800.

West's five diamond bid give the opponents an opportunity to double or to play. East's preempt is bad in the first place because, even at the two level, with a different arrangement of the cards, the opponents may collect more than their game can give.

Furthering the preempt:

If both are vulnerable, one does not want to be down three doubled. That would give 800 while the opponents can only make around 600. If one preempts, the partner knows, at equal vulnerability, they will be down two. If partner can see two cover cards, the contract will make and if he raises the preempt one level for every cover card he has, he is just furthering the preempt and can expect to be down no more than 500 doubled. If the preempter wrongly takes over the captaincy, he has given a Christmas present of 800 points or more.

Cover Cards are just the top three trump and all the aces and kings. Queens and jacks, unless they are in the trump suit, are often useless opposite partner's preempt.

Stretching:

South will stretch to bid with such good distribution. Partner should give leniency and not make a slam try. Slam is often not there when the opponents are both bidding or preempting legitimately. Other times, partner should give leniency when partner opens or preempts in third seat not vulnerable.

The play:

Declarer should not try to ruff in the short trump hand. Instead he should draw trump as fast as he can because the club suit is a resting place for his losers.

Result:

Five Spades makes for 450.

Note:

-All the bridge columns may be viewed at <http://watsongallery.ca>.