

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH TANNAH HIRSCH
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A REAL TWO-WAY FINESSE

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH		EAST	
♠ A		♠ K 9 7 2	
♥ K 6 3		♥ 4	
♦ J 8 5 2		♦ K 10 9 7 4	
♣ A K Q 10 7		♣ 6 4 2	
WEST			
♠ Q J 10 4			
♥ Q 8 5 2			
♦ A Q 3			
♣ 8 3			
SOUTH			
♠ 8 6 5 3			
♥ A J 10 9 7			
♦ 6			
♣ J 9 5			

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: Queen of ♠

Some finesses can be taken either way. It is rare to find a case where it is right to take a finesse both ways!

Despite the weakness of the diamond suit, the heart fit made it correct for North to make a reverse bid in that suit on the second round — in the modern style that is forcing to two no trump or three of opener's first-bid suit. North rebid hearts to confirm a five-card or longer suit, then proceeded to game after North raised.

West led the queen of spades, won in dummy perforce. To guard against

spade forces, declarer led a low heart and finessed the nine. West countered neatly by allowing the nine to win. Declarer continued with a trump to the king, but East's club discard was a fatal blow. South tried to recover by coming to hand with the nine of clubs to ruff a spade on the table, then re-entered the closed hand with the knave of clubs to cash the ace of hearts and then surrender a trick to the queen.

The defenders made no mistake. They cashed two spade tricks and a diamond for down one.

The deal was a classic lesson for declarer — never trust your opponents! Even with a four-one trump split the contract could not be defeated as long as South maintained trump control. After the nine of trumps wins the second trick, South should continue with the jack and, when West follows, run it! If it loses to the queen, there is still a trump in dummy to control spades. A club is the entry back to hand to draw the outstanding trump, and declarer collects one spade, four hearts and five clubs at a minimum.

As the cards lie, the second finesse wins, so declarer can pick up trumps and clubs, making 11 tricks. Neat!

(Tannah Hirsch welcomes readers' responses sent in care of this newspaper or to Tannah Hirsch c/o Tribune Content Agency, LLC., 16650 Westgrove Dr., Suite 175, Addison, TX 75001. E-mail responses may be sent to gorenbridge@aol.com.)

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PLAY OR DEFEND?

Both vulnerable. East deals.

NORTH		EAST	
♠ K 6		♠ A 9 8	
♥ Q 6		♥ A 7	
♦ K Q 10 7 6 2		♦ 9 8	
♣ Q 10 5		♣ A K J 4 3 2	
WEST			
♠ 7 2			
♥ J 5 3			
♦ A J 5 4			
♣ 9 8 7 6			
SOUTH			
♠ Q J 10 5 4 3			
♥ K 10 9 8 4 2			
♦ 3			
♣ Void			

The bidding:

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
INT	2♠	Dbl	Pass
3NT	4♥	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Opening lead: Nine of ♣

Study the diagram above. After the lead of the nine of clubs, would you rather play or defend four spades?

We like East's decision to open one no trump on a hand which is, essentially, balanced and contains the requisite high-card strength. West's double of the two-spade overcall was negative, showing some values and not for penalties. Thereafter, the auction was natural, with North taking a preference to partner's first-bid suit.

Suppose you elect to declare. After ruffing the opening salvo you lead a heart to the queen, which loses to East's ace. East continues with the ace of spades and another and

declarer will have to concede another heart trick, as well as the ace of diamonds. Down one.

Wait a moment, you can improve on your line. At trick two run the ten of hearts. East wins with the ace and reverts to a club, forcing South to ruff. If declarer continues with a trump to the king, East allows it to win, wins the second trump with the ace and forces South again with a club while the hearts are still blocked. Declarer has no plain-suit entry to hand to draw the last trump, so trump control shifts to the defenders. Clearing hearts first is no better. East can win the second trump, put partner on lead with the ace of diamonds and get a heart ruff for down one.

But don't decide to defend just yet. After running the ten of hearts at trick two to the ace and ruffing the second club, declarer can survive by leading the king of hearts! That kills the queen, but South is ahead of the game. The next heart is ruffed high. Whether East overruffs or discards, one trick in each suit except clubs is all the defenders can get!

A complex hand. If East ducks the ten of hearts at trick two, declarer is at the crossroads. A low diamond toward the king-queen should prevail, but the defenders might still obtain the setting trick should declarer falter.

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THRUST AND PARRY

East-West vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH

♠ A J 9
♥ A K 8 5
♦ A K 7 6 5
♣ 2

WEST

♠ 8 7 5
♥ J 7 6 2
♦ 9
♣ A 9 5 4 3

EAST

♠ K 10 2
♥ Q 9
♦ Q 10 8 4 2
♣ Q 8 6

SOUTH

♠ Q 6 4 3
♥ 10 4 3
♦ J 3
♣ K J 10 7

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: Four of ♣

If possible, try not to select a line of play that depends on just one specific lie of the cards. Whenever possible, combine your chances.

North's auction described his hand perfectly — a better-than-minimum opening bid with five diamonds, four hearts and three spades. South had no better second-round bid than two no trump, even though that could be passed. When North offered spades

as a possible contract, South elected to correct to three no trump on the strength of his holding in the unbid suit. North wisely accepted this decision.

Not surprisingly, West led a low club, declarer capturing East's queen with the king. The best chance was to develop diamonds, and the correct way to tackle the suit was for declarer to lead a diamond from the table toward the knave. Rather than rely on that alone, which would fail on a five-one break even if East held the queen, declarer prepared a fall-back position by leading a spade to the jack, losing to East's king. The eight of clubs was covered by the ten and allowed to hold the trick.

Now it was too dangerous to cross to dummy to lead a diamond away from the ace-king. Should East win with the queen, a club return would surely sink the contract. Instead, South continued by cashing the ace of spades and leading the nine to the queen. When both defenders followed, declarer had nine tricks — three spades, and two in each of the other suits.

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A FOR AVOIDANCE

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

♠ K 10 4 3
♥ Q
♦ Q J 9 6 3
♣ K 10 6

WEST

♠ 7 5 2
♥ 10 8 6 3 2
♦ 4
♣ 9 7 5 3

EAST

♠ A J 9
♥ K 7 5 4
♦ A 10 8 7
♣ 8 2

SOUTH

♠ Q 8 6
♥ A J 9
♦ K 5 2
♣ A Q J 4

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: Three of ♥

A good business and a good contract often have a common link — location, location, location. Here's what we mean.

The auction is straightforward. After South's no-trump opening bid, North checked for a four-four spade fit via the Stayman Convention, then settled in three no trump when none was located.

West led the three of hearts, covered by the queen and king and won with the ace. Obviously, there was no problem if diamonds broke three-two or, in the event of a four-one break, if West held the ace or length. The prudent declarer,

however, protects against the possibility of East holding four diamonds headed by ace-ten.

If tricks are lost to the West hand, there is no immediate threat from that quarter since the jack-nine of hearts pose a double stopper. But losing the lead to East could be hazardous — it will permit a lead through the jack-nine of hearts and could lead to the contract's demise.

At trick two declarer crossed to dummy by leading the four of clubs to the ten, then returned a low diamond from the table. East could not rise with the ace — that would set up the suit for declarer — so had to play low, and South's king won. Declarer now had seven tricks. Since a diamond continuation would have handed the timing to the defense, declarer led a club to king and returned a spade. Again East could not profitably rise with the ace, and her majesty won in hand. At last it was safe to play a second diamond. South's care was rewarded when West discarded a spade on this trick. East captured the knave with the ace and reverted to hearts, but declarer rose with the jack, cashed out the clubs and took a second diamond for nine tricks — one spade, two hearts, two diamonds and four clubs.

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ A K ♥ J 9 7 6 5 3 ♦ 10 3 2 ♣ K 6

Do you open the bidding? If so, do you choose one heart or two hearts?

Q 2 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠ K J 9 6 ♥ 3 ♦ A 10 9 4 3 ♣ Q 3 2

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	?	

What action do you take?

Q 3 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠ A 10 6 ♥ J 9 8 3 ♦ A K 10 9 5 ♣ 7

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♦	1♠	2♥	Pass
?			

What do you bid now?

Q 4 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ Q 7 5 ♥ 10 9 7 2 ♦ 9 ♣ K J 6 5 3

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH **EAST** **SOUTH** **WEST**

1♠ 2♣ ?
What do you bid now?

Q 5 - As North, vulnerable, you hold:

♠ Q 9 6 5 ♥ A 10 9 4 ♦ 10 5 ♣ A 9 6

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	?	

What do you bid now?

Q 6 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ J 9 8 ♥ A K 10 5 3 ♦ K J 7 ♣ 8 6

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♣	Pass	?	

What do you bid now?

Look for answers on Monday.

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NOTHING TO DISCARD

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

♠ K 5 4 3

♥ Q 5

♦ 5 4 3

♣ A K Q 9

WEST

♠ 9 7 2

♥ 10 8 7 3

♦ A Q 7 6 2

♣ 4

EAST

♠ Q J 10 8

♥ K 6 4

♦ J 9

♣ J 6 3 2

SOUTH

♠ A 6

♥ A J 9 2

♦ K 10 8

♣ 10 8 7 5

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: Six of ♦

It is surprising how effective just cashing a winner can be. Here's an example of what can happen.

The auction was routine. With a balanced hand opposite a minimum opening bid, there was no reason for North to look for an 11-trick contract, so the raise to three no trump was automatic.

West led a low diamond to the jack and king, and it seemed that the fate of the contract hinged on the heart finesse. Declarer crossed to dummy with the queen of clubs and led the queen of hearts, covered with the

king and taken with the ace. What seemed like a routine contract suddenly became complex when declarer led a club to the king and West discarded a low heart.

It might seem that a finesse for the ten of hearts was the best shot for nine tricks, but declarer decided there was no rush to commit to that line. Instead, declarer played off dummy's remaining high club and West had a discarding problem. A diamond would be parting with a winner. To unguard the ten of hearts seemed unnecessarily risky. It looked perfectly safe to discard a spade, but the defender was quickly disabused of that idea.

Reading the distribution perfectly, South cashed the ace and king of spades. He then led a diamond to the ten and queen. West was able to score four diamond tricks, but at the end had to lead a heart into South's Jack-nine tenace to give declarer nine tricks.

In retrospect, it might have been wiser for West to sluff a second heart on the high club and keep three spades. Would declarer have read the position and played to drop the ten of hearts? We will never know!

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

Q 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ **A K** ♥ **J 9 7 6 5 3** ♦ **10 3 2** ♣ **K 6**

Do you open the bidding? If so, do you choose one heart or two hearts?

A - We think the hand is clearly worth an opening bid of one heart. This hand is every bit as good as a balanced 13-point hand. A weak two bid would be a poor choice. This hand has pretty good defense, not a pretty good suit.

Q 2 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠ **K J 9 6** ♥ **3** ♦ **A 10 9 4 3** ♣ **Q 3 2**

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♦	Pass	1♣	Pass
2♣	Pass	?	?

What action do you take?

A - If partner were certain to have four-card support, we would bid four spades. Partner will sometimes raise on three-card support and that would make any game contract difficult on this hand. The diamond spot cards are good and we would make a game try bid of three diamonds, passing should partner bid three no trump. If partner bids three spades, confirming four-card support, we would carry on to four spades.

Q 3 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠ **A 10 6** ♥ **J 9 8 3** ♦ **A K 10 9 5** ♣ **7**

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH	NORTH	EAST	WEST
1♦	1♣	2♦	Pass
?	?	?	?

What do you bid now?

A - The auction has improved your hand considerably. Even a jump to four hearts does not do it justice. Cue-bid two spades now, then raise hearts at your next turn.

Q 4 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ **Q 7 5** ♥ **10 9 7 2** ♦ **9** ♣ **K J 6 5 3**

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	2♣	?	?

What do you bid now?

A - We would bid two spades. The poor club spot cards suggest that you will not be able to extract much of a penalty, if any. It is almost always a bad idea to go looking for penalties when you have a fit for partner that he doesn't know about yet.

Q 5 - As North, vulnerable, you hold:

♠ **Q 9 6 5** ♥ **A 10 9 4** ♦ **10 5** ♣ **A 9 6**

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	?	?

What do you bid now?

A - The modern style after a two no trump rebid is to bid the "new minor;" three clubs in this case, to ask partner if they hold three-card heart support or a four-card spade suit. A bid of three spades instead shows four-four in the majors exactly and partner should not bid four hearts with only three-card support. Bid three spades.

Q 6 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ **J 9 8** ♥ **A K 10 5 3** ♦ **K J 7** ♣ **8 6**

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	?	?

What do you bid now?

A - Make the same rebid whether you play two-over-one forcing to game or not. Jump to four spades. If your response was a game force, your jump to game shows a minimum for that action — the Principle of Fast Arrival. If the latter, a raise to three spades would be invitational, not forcing, and you are a whit too strong for that.

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