

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH TANNAH HIRSCH & BOB JONES

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VALUABLE INTERMEDIATES

East-West vulnerable. South deals.

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

The bidding:

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

Opening lead: Three of ♠

Intermediate cards can be extremely important in bridge, but it is up to the player to get the maximum mileage from them. We don't count any points for 10's and nines, so a player must use his judgment to evaluate them properly in the auction. He also must use them to good effect in the play.

North raised briskly to three no trump. This seems like a slight overbid, but North was promoting his excellent intermediate cards. In fact, his 10 of diamonds and nine of clubs, combined with South's 10 of clubs, were crucial in the play.

West led a spade and South had a

lot of work to do. He won in hand performance and led a low diamond toward the dummy. West would have done well to duck this, but he was worried that South had the ace and he would lose his king if he ducked, so he rose with the king and played a second spade. Declarer won and led the jack of diamonds, which was allowed to hold. Taking advantage of dummy's 10 of diamonds, South continued the suit forcing a second trick there.

East played a heart to partner's ace and West cleared the spades. At this point, South had three spades, two hearts and two diamonds. The ace of clubs got him up to eight tricks and the ninth could only come from clubs. A club toward the queen was pointless. If West had the king he would win and cash his spades, so declarer had to play East for that card. The great club spots gave him several choices. South chose to play a club to dummy's nine. When this forced the king, he could claim nine tricks. What if the nine had lost to the jack? South would win the red-suit return in dummy, finish cashing his tricks there and play a club to his 10! Nine tricks anytime East has the king of clubs.

(Tannah Hirsch and Bob Jones welcome readers' responses sent in care of this newspaper or to Tribune Content Agency, LLC., 16650 Westgrove Dr., Suite 175, Addison, TX 75001. E-mail responses may be sent to tcaeditors@tribune.com.)

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CHRISTMAS?

East-West vulnerable. East deals.

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

The bidding:

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
Pass	3♣	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♠

Study the hand above and decide who, if anyone, erred in the bidding or play.

West passed the double thinking that Christmas had come early. South let the opening lead run around to his queen and next led the king of clubs from his hand. The horrible split in the trump suit doomed him to three losers in that suit plus one loser in

each of the other three suits. Six losers in all and a score of plus 300. What is your verdict?

Your first thought might be to blame West for leading a spade rather than a heart. A heart lead would have gained a trick for East-West and produced a result of plus 500. West's spade lead worked out poorly, but he can't be faulted for choosing it. It was just unlucky.

We do blame West for choosing to pass the double! He had a vulnerable game bonus in plain sight and he should have bid three no trump instead. That contract would have produced an overtrick or two and earned the vulnerable game bonus.

When you are in a competitive auction and you have game or slam prospects, take time to consider the vulnerability. Should you be vulnerable and your opponents' are not, you should usually just pursue your own prospects and not bother with a small penalty that might be available.

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THE OPENING LEAD IS IMPORTANT

East-West vulnerable. South deals.

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

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♦	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass
6♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: Two of ♠

The opening lead can be a crucial first strike for the defense, but it can also be very important to declarer.

The vulnerability kept East from bidding his spades, but the auction told West what to lead. South won the

heart shift at trick two and immediately drew three rounds of trumps. Next he cashed four heart tricks, discarding a club. It was time to tackle the clubs. After a moment's thought, South cashed the ace of clubs and led another club, finessing dummy's jack when West followed low. Six diamonds bid and made!

East-West were perplexed. This was a strong game and all the players knew that the percentage play when missing four to the queen was to cash the ace and king. Why had South taken this anti-percentage play? "The opening lead" was South's answer. He knew from the early play that West started with three cards in each red suit. The two of spades lead suggested he had exactly four cards in that suit. That left him with three clubs. South cashed the ace of clubs first in case East's singleton was the queen, and then took the marked finesse. Nothing to it!

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THOUGHTFUL PLAY

Both vulnerable. North deals.

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

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: Four of ♦

Good players frequently make careful little plays "in case it matters." It usually doesn't matter and virtue must be its own reward, but sometimes...

South let the opening lead run to his jack. One hurdle cleared! He then led a diamond back to dummy's ace to lead a trump to his queen, losing to the king. The defense would have prevailed at this point had West cashed the ace of hearts and

continued hearts, but that was not obvious. Instead, he continued safely with the king of diamonds and South ruffed this carefully with dummy's eight of spades. Next came the 10 of spades. East won the ace, revealing the spade position. Not wanting to set up the king of hearts in dummy and unsure of the club distribution East returned a low trump. South inserted the seven, then drew the remaining trump and claimed his contract, conceding a heart at the end. Had declarer ruffed the third diamond with dummy's six, he would have to win this third spade in dummy with the eight, and would not be able to draw trumps and run the club suit.

South played the hand well, but did you notice that the defense missed yet a second chance for glory? When East won his ace of spades, he could have played a heart to his partner's ace and West could continue with a devastating fourth round of diamonds. Declarer would have had no answer and the contract would have been defeated. Defense is difficult!

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q 1 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ A 6 4 ♥ A K 8 ♦ 6 2 ♣ K Q J 10 6

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♣	Dbt	Pass	1♦
?			

What call would you make?

Q 2 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ A K 9 4 ♥ A J 10 ♦ K 10 6 3 ♣ K 2

The bidding:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	1♠	?

What call would you make?

Q 3 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ A ♥ 9 8 5 ♦ 10 8 5 ♣ K J 10 9 5 4

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
Pass	1♠	?	

What call would you make?

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

♠ 7 5 2 ♥ A J 5 4 2 ♦ A 9 4 3 ♣ 2

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
3♦	Pass	?	

What call would you make?

Q 5 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ K Q J 10 6 ♥ 10 6 ♦ A J 10 9 3 ♣ 10

As dealer, what call would you make?

Q 6 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ 9 8 6 3 ♥ 5 4 ♦ A 7 6 5 ♣ 10 3 2

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	Pass	?	

What call would you make?

Look for answers on Monday.

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GOOD TECHNIQUE

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

♠ 10 7 6
♥ Q 10 8
♦ K 6 4
♣ A 7 5 3

WEST

♠ A Q 5 2
♥ 5 3 2
♦ 5 3
♣ Q J 10 9

EAST

♠ K J 9
♥ 7 6
♦ J 10 9 7
♣ K 8 6 2

SOUTH

♠ 8 4 3
♥ A K J 9 4
♦ A Q 8 2
♣ 4

The bidding:

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

Opening lead: Queen of ♣

South won the opening lead with the ace of clubs and counted his tricks. Five trumps, three diamonds and the ace of clubs were nine. It seemed his only hope for a 10th was a 3-3 split in diamonds, just a 33-percent chance. After some thought, he found a line that would give him 10 tricks should trumps split no

worse than 3-2. This was about twice as likely as the 3-3 split he would need in diamonds.

At trick two, South ruffed a club with the ace of hearts. Next came his low heart to dummy's eight to ruff another club with the king of hearts. Declarer now led his nine of hearts to dummy's 10 and ruffed the last club with his jack of hearts. A diamond to dummy's king allowed him to draw the last trump and he now had the 10 tricks he needed — three ruffs in declarer's hand, three trumps in the dummy, three high diamonds and the ace of clubs.

This technique required declarer to ruff three times in the long trump hand in order to gain one trick. It is known as a "dummy reversal." This is quite common with a 5-4 trump fit. Declarer need only ruff twice in the hand with five trumps to gain one trick and drawing the opponents' trumps is easy. It is uncommon with a 5-3 trump fit, but this declarer was up to the task.

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

Q 1 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ **A 6 4** ♥ **A K 8** ♦ **6 2** ♣ **K Q J 10 6**

The bidding:

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

What call would you make?

A - Your intention was to re-bid two no trump had partner responded at the one-level, but that plan has been aborted by the opponents. You still want to compete and you can support the other suits. Double.

Q 2 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold:

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

The bidding:

WEST 1♠
NORTH Pass
EAST 1♠
SOUTH ?

What call would you make?

A - A one no trump overcall has a slightly wider range than an opening bid — say 15 plus to 18. This hand is a bit stronger than that, but it is still your best action. Bid one no trump.

Q 3 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ **A** ♥ **9 8 5** ♦ **10 8 5** ♣ **K J 10 9 5 4**

The bidding:

NORTH 1♠
EAST Pass
SOUTH 1♠
WEST ?

What call would you make?

A - Take advantage of the vulnerability and put pressure on your opponents. Bid three clubs.

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

♠ **7 5 2** ♥ **A J 5 4 2** ♦ **A 9 4 3** ♣ **2**

The bidding:

NORTH 3♦
EAST Pass
SOUTH ?
WEST ?

What call would you make?

A - Partner has advertised that he has no defense and you don't have enough to beat a game. Bid five diamonds. We would also admire any player who tried a psychic three spades in this position! At this vulnerability, stealing is not a crime.

Q 5 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

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

As dealer, what call would you make?

A - Bid one spade. This hand is so good that, should partner raise to the two-level, we would invite game.

Q 6 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ **9 8 6 3** ♥ **5 4** ♦ **A 7 6 5** ♣ **10 3 2**

The bidding:

NORTH 1♠
EAST Pass
SOUTH ?
WEST ?

What call would you make?

A - You have a chance to take the two-level away from the opponents and you must do it. Bid two spades. Should you wind up putting this hand down as dummy, partner won't be disappointed.

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