

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH TANNAH HIRSCH & BOB JONES

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A FINE MESS

East-West vulnerable. South deals.

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

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1NT	Pass	2♣	2♥
2♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: Six of ♥

East-West had a conventional agreement about a two-club overcall, accounting for West's silence. A two-club bid would not have shown clubs. He wasn't willing to risk a three-club bid at this vulnerability. East chimed in with his excellent suit, but North-South still reached game easily. Could they make it?

South won the opening heart lead, an obvious singleton, and cashed his king and queen of trumps. Next came a trump to dummy's ace, East discarding a heart. Declarer ran the jack of clubs, losing to the queen, and West shifted to a diamond — nine, 10, ace. South now led the king of clubs, losing to the ace as East shed another heart.

West played a second diamond and the hand was an open book to South. He knew East started with two spades, six hearts, and one club, therefore four diamonds. The diamond queen had to be with East. South went up with dummy's king, leaving this position:

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

South cashed dummy's 10 of clubs, discarding a diamond from hand and East was cooked. A diamond discard would allow South to ruff out his queen, so he discarded another heart. South next led dummy's remaining heart and East had a "Hobson's choice" — either lead away from his diamond queen or establish South's five of hearts. "What a fine mess this is," thought East, as he conceded the contract.

(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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IRINA RULES

East-West vulnerable. East deals.

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

(Hands rotated.) The bidding:

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Dbl	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣*	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

*Asking for three-card spade support

Opening lead: Ten of ♦

This hand is from the World Championship Ladies Teams, known as the Venice Cup, played in Bali, Indonesia recently. South was Irina Levitina of New York, representing the United States.

Declarer won the ace of diamonds and played a trump to her king. She reasoned that East's double, as a

vulnerable passed hand, surely meant that she held a singleton heart. This presumed 5-1 heart split would prevent her from developing dummy's long heart for her 10th trick, and the other suits offered no hope. Levitina backed her card-reading with her courage and led a heart toward dummy at trick three, inserting dummy's nine when West played low! She now had the 10 tricks she needed — five spades, four hearts, and one diamond.

The percentages were in her favor. There were four low hearts outstanding and only two high ones — the jack and 10. Should East have a singleton heart, as declarer believed, it was twice as likely to be a low card rather than a high card.

There is a legitimate defense to defeat this contract. East-West must start with three rounds of clubs, ending in the East hand. The fourth round of clubs now promotes a trump trick for East.

The new year starts with a beautifully played hand. May there be many more.

Happy New Year!

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Thursday, January 2, 2014

GOREN BRIDGE

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TRUMP PROBLEM

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ 10 9 8
♥ A 10 8 7
♦ 7 3
♣ Q 10 6 2

WEST
♠ A 7 4 3
♥ Q 4
♦ 10 8 6
♣ K 8 5 3

EAST
♠ Q 6 2
♥ K 9 5
♦ 9 5 4 2
♣ 9 7 4

SOUTH
♠ K J 5
♥ J 6 3 2
♦ A K Q J
♣ A J

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: Six of ♦

South won the opening lead in hand and stopped to consider the trump position. The eight and seven in dummy muddled the waters. Without them, South might well have found the winning play of low to the 10, losing to the king, and laying down the ace on the next round of the suit. The extra spot cards allowed for the possibility of leading to dummy's

seven on the first round of the suit. It was a complicated card combination and South didn't want to tackle it right away.

Declarer started cashing his diamonds, discarding a spade on the third round. West ruffed the fourth round low. Dummy over-ruffed, then played a club to South's jack. West won and returned the suit to declarer's ace.

South now led a trump. When the queen appeared from West, the trump position seemed clear — West was either out of trumps or down to the singleton king — but the spade position was not. South next started cashing dummy's clubs, discarding a spade from hand on the queen. East ruffed the 10 of clubs low. South over-ruffed and played a trump to East's now bare king. Next came a low spade from East and the key moment had arrived. Our hero guessed correctly, playing the jack, and scored up his game when that forced the ace. Well played!

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Friday, January 3, 2014

GOREN BRIDGE

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THOUGHTFUL BID

Neither vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH
♠ 4 3
♥ A K 10 8 7
♦ Q 6 3
♣ K 8 5

WEST
♠ A Q 10 7 5 2
♥ Q 5
♦ A 4
♣ Q 10 4

EAST
♠ K J 9 8 6
♥ Void
♦ K 10 9 8 2
♣ J 9 2

SOUTH
♠ Void
♥ J 9 6 4 3 2
♦ J 7 5
♣ A 7 6 3

The bidding:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	2♥	4♠	5♥
5♠	Pass	Pass	?

Opening lead: ??

Another wild-and-woolly competitive auction, as we often see in modern bridge. In the good old days, players would have the decency to stay out of your auction when you and your partner had good hands. No more! Sometimes they leave tire tracks up and down your back.

What should South do at this point

in the bidding? His defensive prospects against five spades are slim, and it looks likely that a six-heart bid will be a successful sacrifice. But what if it pushes East-West to six spades? Will they be able to defeat that contract? If they can't, bidding on is certainly foolish.

Decisions like this are among the most difficult that a bridge player faces. Should South elect to bid on, his bid should be six clubs! This bid will serve as a lead director should the opponents bid to six spades. North-South already have suit agreement in hearts. Only a club lead will defeat six spades, and six hearts will prove to be a good sacrifice on a spade lead.

This problem is from Frank Stewart's excellent new book "What's Your Call?" available from the author for \$23.95 postpaid, at P.O. Box 962, Fayette, Ala., 35555.

It can be signed and inscribed on request.

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Saturday, January 4, 2014

GOREN BRIDGE

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

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

♠ A 8 6 5 ♥ J ♦ A Q J 8 ♣ K 10 9 8

The bidding:

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

What call would you make?

Q 2 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ Void ♥ K J 6 ♦ A J 10 7 2 ♣ A K 9 7 4

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♦	2♠	Pass	Pass
?			

What call would you make?

Q 3 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ Q 4 3 ♥ A J 5 4 ♦ 2 ♣ A K J 7 6

The bidding:

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

What call would you make?

Q 4 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ A K J 8 4 3 ♥ K 10 5 4 ♦ Void ♣ K Q 8

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
?			

What call would you make?

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

♠ A ♥ 8 7 6 5 4 ♦ A K 9 6 ♣ A K 2

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

What call would you make?

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

♠ Q 9 ♥ A K J 3 ♦ K 9 8 ♣ 10 9 6 3

East opens one spade. What call would you make?

Look for answers on Monday.

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Sunday, January 5, 2014

GOREN BRIDGE

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THE ONLY CHANCE

North-South vulnerable. East deals.

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

The bidding:

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

Opening lead: Three of ♥

The overcall of a 15-17 no trump opening is usually based on a six-card suit. North traded heavily on that for his raise. South was happy to bid on to game.

West picked a brilliant time for a trump lead, the only lead to trouble declarer. East won and cashed his other high trump, preventing a spade ruff in dummy, then shifted to the

queen of spades. South won in hand with the king and drew the remaining trump. Time to count!

East had promised 15-17 points, so West could hold, at most, one jack. The club queen had to be with East and the finesse in that suit couldn't succeed. In addition, East had shown up with a doubleton heart, meaning that he almost certainly held at least three diamonds and there was no chance to ruff out a doubleton king in that suit. What should declarer do with all this information?

South led a spade to dummy's ace and led the jack of clubs off the board. East covered with the queen, South winning the king. Next came a club toward the dummy, declarer inserting the nine when West played low. Four hearts bid and made!

This play is known as a "backwards finesse." It is rarely used, but it gives declarer a 50 percent chance when the location of the queen is known to be "offside." The relevant card becomes the 10.

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GOREN BRIDGE

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

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

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

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♦	Pass	INT	2♥
?			

What call would you make?

A - It is very unusual, after opening one diamond, to re-bid in clubs holding only 4-4 length in the two suits. This is an unusual case. Partner's response denied a four-card major, therefore, he must have a four-card or longer minor. Bid three clubs! Partner will never give you a preference back to diamonds with only three-card diamond support.

Q 2 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ **Void** ♥ **K J 6** ♦ **A J 10 7 2** ♣ **A K 9 7 4**

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♦	2♣	Pass	Pass
?			

What call would you make?

A - Playing negative doubles, as many do these days, partner's pass may not denote weakness. He might have a good hand with spade strength. For this reason, you must keep the bidding open whenever you are short in the opponent's suit. You should choose to double if your hand can stand a penalty pass by partner. Your aces and kings will contribute plenty to the defense. Double!

Q 3 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ **Q 4 3** ♥ **A J 5 4** ♦ **2** ♣ **A K J 7 6**

The bidding:

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

What call would you make?

A - It is tempting to force to game, but should partner have soft values in diamonds, the hand might play poorly. Bid three hearts, invitational.

Q 4 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ **A K J 8 4 3** ♥ **K 10 5 4** ♦ **Void** ♣ **K Q 8**

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♠	Pass	INT	Pass
?			

What call would you make?

A - Resist any temptation to bid three spades. Partner might have short spades with four or more hearts and an easy game, or more, could be missed. Bid two hearts. You can bid three spades next if you get another chance.

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

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

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

What call would you make?

A - Resisting temptation seems to be our theme this week. Should you bid three diamonds, partner might well have to give preference back to hearts with only two-card support! You would have to bid three no trump with few tricks. Bid two diamonds.

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

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

East opens one spade. What call would you make?

A - Double. You have minimal, but acceptable, values for this bid. Although four hearts are not promised by your double, it is good to have four when you double light.

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