

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH TANNAH HIRSCH & BOB JONES

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LINCOLN ON LEAD?

Both vulnerable. South deals.

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

The bidding:

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

*Heart fit, 10 plus points

Opening lead: Jack of ♥

South took a moment to analyze the opening lead. It certainly was not from jack doubleton or jack third. A lead from either of those holdings gives away a trump trick on many layouts. It must be either a singleton jack or a deceptive lead from queen-jack doubleton. South stole a glance at the opening leader — noted his top hat, craggy features and dark beard — and decided he was an honest man.

Declarer won the trump lead in hand and led a diamond to the board's king, West splitting his honors. Next came the seven of trumps from dummy, declarer letting it run when East played low. Success! South repeated the trump finesse, finished drawing trumps, then led a club to knock out the ace. The king of spades was a late entry to the clubs and South had 10 tricks — five hearts, one spade and two tricks in each minor.

Note that if South misreads the trump position and cashes both the ace and king, the defense can always prevail. Say declarer leads a club at trick three. West wins and plays a low spade, threatening to give East a ruff. Dummy wins the king and cashes two club tricks while South discards his remaining two spades. Next comes a trump toward his 10. East rises with the queen and plays his remaining spade. South can ruff this and draw trumps, but he uses his last trump in the process. When he concedes a diamond, West will have a black winner for the fourth defensive trick.

(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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PERFECT COUNT

Both vulnerable. South deals.

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

The bidding:

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

Opening lead: Ace of ♠

One can have a lot of fun playing bridge without counting, but counting is an essential skill for competitive players.

West realized that continuing spades was pointless — he had no side entry — so he shifted to a low club at trick two. South allowed East's nine to hold the trick and won the club continuation. South needed a trick from the queen of spades so he

led toward it at this point, West winning the king and clearing the clubs. Next came a heart to dummy's jack, East winning and returning the suit. South won the queen in hand and took a moment to think.

Declarer was surprised that East hadn't cashed the long club. When he didn't cash it, that surely meant that he didn't have it. West had shown up with six spades, four clubs and two hearts. That left room for at most one diamond. South led a diamond to dummy's king and continued with the diamond seven, confidently running it when East played low. Nine tricks in the bag!

The opening lead was certainly reasonable, but note that the defense would have prevailed had West started with a low club. He could set up two club tricks before the spade queen could be established, using his high spades as entries. East could not be prevented from scoring his king of hearts and the defense would have five tricks.

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WHAT'S A 'TELL'

Neither vulnerable. North deals.

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

The bidding:

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

Opening lead: Jack of ♣

East asked a question during the auction as to the length promised by South's three-heart bid. Questions like this can be perfectly innocent, but they often indicate length or strength in the suit that was the subject of the question. This is what poker players call a "tell" and a good declarer will pick up on it.

The defense started with three rounds of clubs, forcing declarer to ruff in dummy. The jack of trumps was led off dummy, covered by the

king and South's ace. Next came the ace of diamonds, followed by the ace, king and a spade ruff in dummy. East over-ruffed leaving this position:

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

East led a club. South, backing his table feel, trumped this in his hand with the three and over-ruffed in dummy with the seven. Dummy's king and queen of diamonds were cashed, declarer discarding spades, before leading another diamond. This caught East in a classic trump coup! The queen and nine of hearts captured East's 10-2.

Conclusion — it is best not to ask questions about the opponents' auction unless you have a serious need-to-know.

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THE WINNING SHIFT

Both vulnerable. North deals.

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

The bidding:

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

Opening lead: Ten of ♦

Light overcalls have their pluses and their minuses. One of the minuses is that partner might misjudge your ability to assist in the defense.

The opening diamond lead was ducked to East's king. East shifted to a spade, his partner's suit. Declarer won the ace and played a trump to the queen, losing to the king. Back came another spade to the queen and king, West shifting back to diamonds.

The six of trumps was led, seven, eight, spade discard from West. Declarer then played a club to dummy's jack and continued with the

trump four to the nine and 10, West discarding a diamond. Next came a diamond to dummy's ace, leaving this position:

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

On the lead of the jack of spades, East was toast! A club discard would allow South to discard a club, cash the club ace and lead another club to catch East in a classic trump coup. Should East ruff instead, South overruffs and cashes the trump ace, squeezing West in the black suits. A lovely hand!

Note that a club shift by East at trick two would defeat the contract. The defense could then play two rounds of clubs early, breaking up the potential squeeze. Would East have found the winning shift had West not made his light-weight overcall? We'll never know.

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

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

♠ 9 ♥ K Q 5 4 3 ♦ A Q J ♣ K Q 5 2

Right-hand opponent opens two-spades, weak. What call would you make?

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

♠ K Q J 10 ♥ A 2 ♦ 10 6 5 4 ♣ A 10 5

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
4♥	Pass	?	

What call would you make?

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

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

The bidding:

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

What call would you make?

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

♠ 9 ♥ Q J 8 5 3 ♦ 2 ♣ A 10 9 6 5 2

With the opponents silent, partner opens 1NT. What is your plan?

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

♠ Q 9 3 ♥ A J 8 2 ♦ J 3 ♣ A K 7 2

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
2♦*	Pass	?	

*6-11 points, six-card diamond suit

What call would you make?

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

♠ A 5 ♥ K Q 8 6 4 ♦ Q 10 ♣ J 9 4 2

The bidding:

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

What call would you make?

Look for answers on Monday.

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AT THE CROSSROADS

North-South vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH

♠ A 7 5 4

♥ 9 2

♦ K Q 7 6 3

♣ A 10

WEST

♠ K J 6

♥ K Q J 4

♦ A 10 8

♣ Q J 9

EAST

♠ 10 8

♥ A 10 8 5

♦ 4 2

♣ 8 7 5 4 3

SOUTH

♠ Q 9 3 2

♥ 7 6 3

♦ J 9 5

♣ K 6 2

The bidding:

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

*diamonds and a major

Opening lead: King of ♥

East's two-heart bid was made on razor-thin values, but it allowed his side to compete to their best contract — three hearts. It may also have encouraged West to double the final contract. There is a lot of money to be made at a doubled, vulnerable, partial. Who would cash in?

The defense started with two rounds of hearts, followed by a shift to the queen of clubs. Declarer won

with the ace in dummy and led a trump, inserting his nine when East played low. This lost to the jack, but South was in control! He won the club continuation with the king in hand and led the queen of spades, pinning East's 10 and holding his trump losers to one.

This play is known as an "intra-finesse." Once the trump problem was solved, it was a simple matter to draw the remaining trump and knock out the diamond ace. Three spades, doubled, bid and made!

This contract could have been defeated. After two rounds of hearts, the defense was at the crossroads. Should West play on clubs or diamonds? West knew that South had at most the queen of spades, no high hearts and no high diamonds. It was very unlikely that he would have freely entered the auction with no high club either. West should have shifted to ace and another diamond. Should declarer try the intra-finesse, he can give partner a diamond ruff. Anything else and he gets two trump tricks. Down one either way.

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

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

♠ 9 ♥ K Q 5 4 3 ♦ A Q J ♣ K Q 5 2

Right-hand opponent opens two-spades, weak. What call would you make?

A - Should you overcall three hearts or make a take-out double? Bidding three hearts after doubling requires a very good hand, 18 points minimum. We think this hand is good enough to double first and bid three hearts later, but it is a close decision. We would not fault a player who simply bid three hearts directly.

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

♠ K Q J 10 ♥ A 2 ♦ 10 6 5 4 ♣ A 10 5

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
4♥	Pass	?	?

What call would you make?

A - The players of yesteryear will remember a gadget called a “Culbertson Asking Bid,” where a five-diamond bid here would ask about a diamond control for slam. That convention is a relic, and this hand isn’t quite worth it anyway. Pass.

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

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

The bidding:

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

What call would you make?

A - Three no trump would be a reasonable bid, but that would give up on a possible slam. A five-diamond contract is another option and, if we jump there right now, it will pinpoint our extreme heart shortness. Should partner hold a suitable hand without much wastage in hearts, he might raise to six. We would bid five diamonds.

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

♠ 9 ♥ Q J 8 5 3 ♦ 2 ♣ A 10 9 6 5 2

With the opponents silent, partner opens INT. What is your plan?

A - This hand is worth a game-force. Should you employ transfers, bid two diamonds, transferring to hearts and continue with a bid of three clubs. Without transfers, jump to three clubs now and bid hearts at your next turn, at the four-level, if necessary.

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

♠ Q 9 3 ♥ A J 8 2 ♦ J 3 ♣ A K 7 2

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
2♦*	Pass	?	?

*6-11 points, six-card diamond suit

What call would you make?

A - A maximum from partner and we might have a game. The way to find out is to bid two no trump. Partner will re-bid his suit with a minimum and we’ll let him play there. Any other bid shows a maximum and we’ll try three no trump as our most likely game.

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

♠ A 5 ♥ K Q 8 6 4 ♦ Q 10 ♣ J 9 4 2

The bidding:

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

What call would you make?

A - Partner is a passed hand and any game our way is unlikely. He surely has at least a five-card suit and no further bid is safe for us. This contract should be playable. Pass.

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