

Acol Bridge Club - Christmas Game - 2016

Par Contest

Commentary courtesy of the English Bridge Union

<p>Hand 1</p> <p>♠ KJ ♥ 983 ♦ K987 ♣ KQ85</p>	<p>♠ A9 ♥ AKQ76 ♦ J32 ♣ 942</p> <p>♠ Q875432 ♥ 2 ♦ 65 ♣ J76</p> <p>♠ T6 ♥ JT54 ♦ AQT4 ♣ AT3</p>	<p>North will open 1H, and the brave/foolhardy Easts may bid spades. South seems to be worth between 3 and 4 hearts but the tens would sway me towards game. The play should be straight forward. North wins an opening black suit lead, draws trumps and drives out the king of diamonds.</p>
<p>Hand 2</p> <p>♠ 83 ♥ K64 ♦ QJT6 ♣ 9852</p>	<p>♠ KT76 ♥ A853 ♦ K8 ♣ JT6</p> <p>♠ 52 ♥ T72 ♦ 97432 ♣ AKQ</p> <p>♠ AQJ94 ♥ QJ9 ♦ A5 ♣ 743</p>	<p>I imagine most pairs will arrive in 4S in an uninterrupted auction via 1S – 3S – 4S although the raise to game by South isn't at all automatic. West has an obvious QD lead – top of a sequence – and with three inescapable club losers declarer has to try and find a way of not losing a heart trick. Accordingly he might well lead the QH but West must not cover! See what happens if he does. Declarer will win with the ace and lead a low heart to the nine and any potential heart loser vanishes. Of course West should not cover the queen but should cover the jack if that comes next, thus promoting his partner's ten. If South was the exposed hand then it would be obvious perhaps but somehow things seem much more difficult the other way round. In fact the contract can always be made if declarer draws trumps, eliminates diamonds and exits with a club. Now the defence will have to open up the heart suit or concede a ruff and discard</p>
<p>Hand 3</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ KJ65 ♦ T932 ♣ Q952</p>	<p>♠ KQ7 ♥ A32 ♦ 86 ♣ KT873</p> <p>♠ A64 ♥ T74 ♦ AKJ74 ♣ J4</p> <p>♠ JT9832 ♥ Q98 ♦ Q5 ♣ A6</p>	<p>Are you playing weak twos? If so North should raise South's opening to the level of the fit, ie 3 spades, East will reluctantly pass. If South passes as dealer North should open 1NT (12-14) and again N/S should be able to settle in a comfortable 2 or 3 spades. E-W can do quite well in diamonds, unless South finds ace and another club, leading to a trump promotion. But the vulnerability would put me off bidding 4D over 3S.</p>

<p>Hand 4</p> <p>♠ 1072 ♥ AKQ ♦ QJT98 ♣ 62</p>	<p>♠ A8 ♥ 109876 ♦ 765 ♣ KJT</p> <p>♠ J543 ♥ J ♦ AK ♣ A97543</p> <p>♠ KQ96 ♥ 5432 ♦ 432 ♣ Q8</p>	<p>3NT by West. North leads the 10 of Hearts. How did you do?</p> <p>More than likely most N/S's got a chance to take 2 Club tricks and 3 Spade Tricks but failed to do so?</p>
<p>Hand 5</p> <p>♠ AK5 ♥ AQ8542 ♦ QT83 ♣</p>	<p>♠ Q93 ♥ T97 ♦ 9 ♣ QJ8652</p> <p>♠ JT2 ♥ 63 ♦ AKJ42 ♣ A43</p> <p>♠ 8764 ♥ KJ ♦ 765 ♣ KT97</p>	<p>3C opener from North, please no!</p> <p>East opens 1D, and West responds 1H: no need to rush and 2H would show a better suit. East rebids 2D, so what sort of hand does he have? No second suit (he could have bid that cheaply), and probably not 3 hearts. So essentially a balanced hand. But he hasn't opened 1NT(playing weak NT) or rebid 1NT(playing strong NT), so he must have either six, or five good, diamonds. West should also realise that 5D is likely to be a poor score at pairs, being outscored by 3NT. There are plenty of entries to set up hearts, so 6D gets my vote: expecting to make five diamonds, one or two club ruffs, one or two hearts (depending on the finesse), two spades and two long hearts.</p>
<p>Hand 6</p> <p>♠ AKQ ♥ T6 ♦ K7643 ♣ AJ2</p>	<p>♠ 986 ♥ A874 ♦ Q92 ♣ K43</p> <p>♠ 53 ♥ QJ532 ♦ AT85 ♣ T8</p> <p>♠ JT742 ♥ K9 ♦ J ♣ Q9765</p>	<p>After 1D – 1H, West will rebid 1 or 2NT depending on method. East should explore for a heart fit (Crowhurst/Checkback), but 3NT looks the likely contract. North should lead a, hopefully, safe spade. West must attack hearts immediately; if he plays on diamonds first he will not have an entry to the heart winner. Then I think it is a guess whether you play the diamond A or K first. If you play K then you should finesse next time (Law of Restricted Choice). Note the clubs are a frozen suit, whoever broaches them will concede two tricks in the suit.</p>

<p>Hand 7</p> <p>♠ AK4 ♥ K92 ♦ KQ7 ♣ 8642</p> <p>♠ QJT65 ♥ J85 ♦ 864 ♣ A7</p> <p>♠ 83 ♥ A64 ♦ AJT3 ♣ QJT3</p> <p>♠ 972 ♥ QT73 ♦ 952 ♣ K95</p>	<p>This time West will play in 3NT and North will undoubtedly lead a top spade. Even with two stops in the suit declarer should duck the first trick in an effort to cut communications because he has to lose the lead twice in order to set up a club trick. But if he simply just leads a low club from hand it will be a simple matter for South to win and return his remaining spade and now when North wins the next club he will have two more spades to cash. Imagine instead that declarer is more devious and crosses to dummy with a diamond at trick three and leads the club queen. Doesn't it look as though declarer is taking a finesse? If South plays low on the club queen then declarer will have successfully cut communications between North and South and will make his contract.</p>
<p>Hand 8</p> <p>♠ T63 ♥ 94 ♦ A32 ♣ KQ987</p> <p>♠ Q82 ♥ 853 ♦ 98654 ♣ T4</p> <p>♠ J975 ♥ AQT6 ♦ QT ♣ A52</p> <p>♠ AK4 ♥ KJ72 ♦ KJ7 ♣ J63</p>	<p>East will open 1NT which South should double (for penalties). West will probably be happy with that. North should take the double out to 2D: he has so little defence. The cards lie well for North and this should make, possibly with an overtrick. If West bids 2C (weakness take-out) or Rdlb (start of a take out sequence), then North will be happy to pass and E/W will play in 2C. Even if N/S lead trumps, there is time to set up a diamond ruff for the eighth trick.</p>
<p>Hand 9</p> <p>♠ QJ53 ♥ Q93 ♦ K73 ♣ QT9</p> <p>♠ A76 ♥ K74 ♦ T92 ♣ AK83</p> <p>♠ T82 ♥ AT85 ♦ 864 ♣ 762</p> <p>♠ K94 ♥ J62 ♦ AQJ5 ♣ J54</p>	<p>It seems likely that North will declare 3NT and that East will lead a low heart and the spotlight falls on West if declarer plays a small card from dummy. If the queen is played then declarer will make two tricks in the suit whenever he holds either the ace or king and indeed three tricks when he holds both. On the other hand if West plays the nine instead then declarer will be held to just one trick if he holds just the ace or king and not the ten. But how do you know that East didn't start with both top hearts, I hear you ask? Well from the sight of dummy East can hold no more than six points at most.</p>

<p>Hand 10</p> <p>♠ 92 ♥ A75 ♦ KJ753 ♣ AQ2</p>	<p>♠ J76 ♥ QJ96 ♦ Q6 ♣ 8754</p> <p>♠ KQ4 ♥ K842 ♦ A82 ♣ KT3</p> <p>♠ AT853 ♥ T3 ♦ T94 ♣ J96</p>	<p>This time East will declare 3NT and South will lead the spade five to the jack and king. (There would be no point in holding up because declarer can see from the lead and the cards in dummy and his hand that North has at least three spades.) With only eight tricks on top the diamond suit quite rightly looks the place to look for the ninth but declarer has to be careful. If he takes a finesse after cashing the ace and North wins, then a spade back will prove ruinous if South started with a five carder. In fact if the diamond finesse is right then declarer does not need to take it but should do everything he can to prevent North gaining the lead. Accordingly he should play a diamond to the king and then one back to the ace and a third one if the queen hasn't appeared. But a fair amount of the time North will have been dealt queen doubleton.</p>
<p>Hand 11</p> <p>♠ J864 ♥ 52 ♦ KQT95 ♣ J4</p>	<p>♠ A75 ♥ KT86 ♦ AJ ♣ KT65</p> <p>♠ QT92 ♥ 43 ♦ 7642 ♣ Q83</p> <p>♠ K3 ♥ AQJ97 ♦ 83 ♣ A972</p>	<p>Whether the contract is 4H or 6H the defenders must strive not to give away extra tricks and I imagine the lead will be the diamond king. With the prospect of a loser in both minors declarer may go tamely but he just might fool the defenders into making a mistake. Suppose he wins the opening lead, draws trumps and plays three rounds of spades, ruffing the third in hand before exiting with a diamond. West will win and might think he is endplayed and be panicked into leading a club, thus opening the whole suit up for declarer. However an astute defender should have a count of the hand and realise that a ruff and discard will not aid declarer at all – and simply exit with either a spade or a diamond when a club will have eventually to be lost.</p>

<p>Hand 12</p> <p>♠ K92 ♥ Q753 ♦ KJ ♣ T762</p>	<p>♠ QT5 ♥ T92 ♦ 932 ♣ J983</p> <p>♠ A743 ♥ 86 ♦ AQ64 ♣ Q54</p> <p>♠ J86 ♥ AKJ4 ♦ T875 ♣ AK</p>	<p>Like hand 8, East will open 1NT which South should double (for penalties). But here neither W nor N have anywhere to take-out. North, who really doesn't fancy the defensive chances, might try 2C, but this doesn't play well! Probably best to stand the double and hope that -180 is not too bad a score.</p> <p>Against 1NT*, I would lead a top heart to have a look at dummy. Now a small heart continuation looks the best chance. East should play the Q from dummy; South is hardly likely to have led an unsupported honour. That is 7 tricks.</p>
<p>Hand 13</p> <p>♠ QT7 ♥ T7 ♦ JT2 ♣ KQJ82</p>	<p>♠ A6 ♥ A9865 ♦ KQ85 ♣ 75</p> <p>♠ KJ85 ♥ KJ4 ♦ A76 ♣ A93</p> <p>♠ 9432 ♥ Q32 ♦ 943 ♣ T64</p>	<p>I imagine that North will open 1H and that East will overcall 1NT, which will be raised to game by his partner. Now there is a common fallacy that one should always lead the top card of partner's suit but that is far from the truth. Suppose, here, that South leads the heart queen. Then declarer will have two heart tricks and can safely knock out the ace of spades and come to ten or eleven tricks. If instead South leads the two then North can win and play a low heart back and if declarer finesses South will win and clear the suit. Now when North wins the spade ace he will have enough tricks to defeat the contract. Of course a bright declarer will rise with the king of hearts at trick two, thus blocking the suit, and knock out the ace of spades! Nevertheless the principle of leading the correct card in partner's suit is a sound one.</p>
<p>Hand 14</p> <p>♠ AKJ5 ♥ T32 ♦ AT932 ♣ Q</p>	<p>♠ T63 ♥ Q965 ♦ Q87 ♣ JT6</p> <p>♠ 874 ♥ AK74 ♦ KJ654 ♣ A</p> <p>♠ Q92 ♥ J8 ♦ ♣ K9875432</p>	<p>1D 4C ?, 4D is feeble, and both 5D and 6D are guessing, would partner think Dbl was for penalties? Would 4M be forcing? How about 5C? But would this mean diamond support and not needing much for slam, or would it be pick a major? So many questions, and it all depends on your partnership understanding. Maybe South will help you by not bidding 4C!</p>

<p>Hand 15</p> <p>♠ AQJT53 ♥ J8 ♦ QJ5 ♣ 65</p>	<p>♠ 96 ♥ Q5 ♦ A874 ♣ AQJT8</p> <p>♠ K872 ♥ 763 ♦ K32 ♣ 743</p> <p>♠ 4 ♥ AKT942 ♦ T96 ♣ K92</p>	<p>N/S should make 12 tricks in hearts, due to the secondary fit in clubs. But it is difficult to see them bidding slam. A weak 2H opening will be overcalled 2S and now East should bid on to 4S whatever N/S do. This will probably end the auction. Personally I think South is too good for 2H. A 1H opener will allow North to show his clubs, and maybe some tolerance of hearts. Then South may bid on to 5H, which is just about consistent with the Law of Total Tricks!</p>
<p>Hand 16</p> <p>♠ JT ♥ KQ3 ♦ J862 ♣ AJ52</p>	<p>♠ AKQ763 ♥ 42 ♦ 943 ♣ T7</p> <p>♠ 54 ♥ AJ6 ♦ QT75 ♣ Q964</p> <p>♠ 982 ♥ T9875 ♦ AK ♣ K83</p>	<p>1NT overcalled by 2S might end the auction. The 2-2 spade break means North can take a diamond ruff for a ninth trick. Enterprising Wests will reopen with a double. E/W will normally make 9 tricks playing in a minor, but South should probably bid 3S on the grounds that at least one side can make nine tricks.</p>
<p>Hand 17</p> <p>♠ A932 ♥ Q3 ♦ 8643 ♣ T75</p>	<p>♠ KJT765 ♥ 987 ♦ 7 ♣ 932</p> <p>♠ 4 ♥ KJT52 ♦ A52 ♣ KJ64</p> <p>♠ Q8 ♥ A64 ♦ KQJT9 ♣ AQ8</p>	<p>1H from East. (Surely you didn't open this 2S as North) South has a difficult choice now. 2D seems feeble; a bit too good for 1NT; Dbl followed either by D or NT a bit aggressive. The single heart stop is a worry so I would make the slight underbid of 1NT. Now North should be able to show a weak hand with long spades.</p>

Hand 18	♠ K9 ♥ AK43 ♦ 86 ♣ KQT95	<p>1D overcalled by 2C and two passes. West rebids 2D and now North can show his second suit of hearts. Pity for West, as N/S now play in a higher scoring contract.</p> <p>But what if West opens a gambling 3NT? North must not lead a club. Top of a sequence, or 4th highest are aimed at developing tricks. Here there is too big a danger that declarer will find two winners in dummy to go with his presumed seven diamond tricks. Lead a top heart to get a better picture of the hand. Now you can see that the defence should tackle the majors. Any early play of clubs will enable declarer to cash at least eight tricks.</p> <p>So after a top heart switch to K and another spade (you 'know' South has the ace). This gains when South has AJx(x) of spades or JTxx of hearts. (OK, if West holds Jx, QJx; you should lead a club, but only against that precise holding!)</p>
♠ J7 ♥ Q96 ♦ AKQT973 ♣ J	♠ QT832 ♥ 85 ♦ 42 ♣ A843 ♠ A654 ♥ JT72 ♦ J5 ♣ 762	