



1 Championship pairs hands

When I am writing about hands from the Championship pairs the first thing I do is look at the hands where Deep Finesse claims that a slam can be made; these tend to throw up interesting play or bidding issues. This month that strategy didn't work. Instead I want to discuss first a hand where the play of a suit combination in a game contract provides the technical interest.

Board 17
North dealer
None vul

♠ T95		♠ AJ74
♥ JT84		♥ A9
♦ J863		♦ AQ5
♣ AT		♣ KJ73
	<div>♠ N ♥ W E ♦ S ♣</div>	♠ KQ
		♥ K762
		♦ 972
		♣ 9842
	♠ 8632	
	♥ Q53	
	♦ KT4	
	♣ Q65	

According to Deep Finesse the best North-South contract is 3NT. The best lead for the defence is a heart. That will establish two heart tricks but declarer has time to knock out the ♣A and come to 1 spade, 2 hearts, 3 diamonds and 3 clubs.

Many pairs however understandably played in 4♠ which, according to Deep Finesse should be defeated. In practice however

a lucky declarer may well succeed. To defeat the contract the defence must lead $\clubsuit A$ to obtain an eventual club ruff (they also get a trump trick and a heart). But against another lead declarer has a chance. There is a heart and a club to lose so everything devolves upon losing one trump trick.

What is the best way to lose one trick in a suit where you, as declarer, have 8632 opposite AJ74? Whole books have been written on how to play various suit combinations and, for this particular combination, the chances are rather slim. If the opposing cards divide 3-2 you can succeed either if your right-hand opponent holds both the King and the Queen (finesse the Jack) or if your right hand opponent holds just the King and the Queen (play the Ace and duck the next round).

Here it is the latter alternative that actually occurred but is that the one you should play for? I confess I am not sure. On the surface West is more likely to hold KQx or KQ than East to hold KQ. In reality however you will need to make your decision after West has followed with a small card when you lead from the South hand and, at this point, West cannot hold exactly KQ. So I think it will be a guess in the end and may depend on your table feel.

My second hand features some tactical points about bidding.

Board 7
South dealer
Both vul

♠ J
♥ KJT965
♦ QT9
♣ Q98

♠ AKQ974
♥ Q7
♦ 8
♣ T543

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ T853
♥ 4
♦ J654
♣ KJ72

♠ 62
♥ A832
♦ AK732
♣ A6

If East-West are playing weak two bids then West will open 2♥ in second seat, North may overcall 2♠ and East will raise to 4♥ and South should certainly bid 4♠. Whether West competes to 5♥ is between him and her conscience. However, an interesting tactical decision for North occurs if West passes initially. The choice is between bidding spades at level 1, 2 or 3.

Aggressive players may feel that West is marked with a good hand that will lead to a game in hearts. Such players may try to prevent this by bidding 2♠ or 3♠. Personally, I don't have much sympathy with this view. True, partner is a passed hand but he may still have some useful values; if you pre-empt he won't be inclined to look for a spade game. However, if you really feel that you want to pre-empt then it is better to pre-empt as high as you dare: 3♠ is better than 2♠. My own preference however is for a simple 1♠; it describes my hand more accurately and partner will be better able to judge how far to compete.

2 Presidential news and comments

New Secretary As I reported last month, we have a new secretary: Barbara Wilkes has kindly agreed to undertake this role. If you have any issues or concerns you would like raised at committee, you can raise them directly to a committee member, write in or email Barbara - wilkesm@extra.co.nz. The committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month. The agenda is sent out approximately a week prior to this; if you can keep this in mind it will help with the management of these meetings.

Welcome aboard Barbara.

AGM The AGM is going to be held on a Sunday, November 10th at 1.30pm this year and at the conclusion of the meeting we will have a session of bridge for those interested in playing. If you would like to stand as a committee member or have someone you think would be possible candidate, please contact one of the current members.

World Wide Pairs This is going to be held at the Otago Bridge Club on Friday the 1st of November. We are welcome to attend this as part of an agreement we have with Otago. If you have not played in this event before I would highly recommend it. The hands are very interesting and a booklet is provided at the conclusion of play, giving scores for possible results and discussions regarding bidding and playing of the hands.

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