

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH TANNAH HIRSCH & BOB JONES

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LUCK OF THE LEAD

North-South vulnerable. East deals.

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

The bidding:

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	1NT	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Opening lead: Three of ♠

This hand is from a recent teams' event.

West, warned off a diamond lead by the auction, led a perfectly normal low spade. This was ducked in dummy, South winning East's jack with the ace. Declarer continued with the spade 10, won by West's king, South noting the fall of East's eight. West shifted to a low heart, won by East with the king, and hearts were

continued. South won in hand with the queen and led a spade, inserting dummy's seven when West played low.

South now had eight tricks — three spades, two hearts, two clubs and the ace of diamonds. Declarer could have made an overtrick by playing West for all the diamonds, but that would not be the right percentage play. South correctly ran the queen of diamonds to West's king, planning on a double-finesse. West cleared the hearts and South played a diamond to his nine. No luck on that play, but there was plenty of luck otherwise. West had no winners to cash, East had no entry and South had nine tricks!

In the replay, the other North-South pair had a convoluted "expert" auction, resulting in the same contract played by North rather than South. A less helpful opening lead left declarer with guesses in every suit. He didn't guess very well and the contract drifted two down — a very useful swing for the successful declarer's team.

(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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CHINA ON THE RISE

Both vulnerable. South deals.

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

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3NT*	Pass	4NT	Pass
6NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
*24-26 points, balanced			

Opening lead: Three of ♣

China has been a rising force in the bridge world for some years now. Today's hand is from an important Chinese tournament last year. The actual auction would take two columns to explain, so we've substituted an auction that provides the same information and arrives at the same place. The two clubs (very strong hand) and two diamonds (waiting bid) were both artificial. South, with a high-card minimum, should probably have passed at his

last turn, but then there would be no story to tell.

The opening club lead went to East's nine and declarer's ace. Declarer crossed to dummy with the jack of diamonds and ran the jack of hearts. West won the ace and led back another diamond. South cashed the king of clubs. Should the queen fall doubleton, he would have 12 tricks after another heart finesse. No luck. A 3-3 split in hearts would give him 12 tricks, but there was a problem. He needed two entries to the board — one to finesse in hearts and another to cash the long heart. South led his low spade and, holding his breath, inserted dummy's 10 when West played low. He now had the extra entry he needed and was able to score up his slam.

Not so fast. This never actually happened. Chen Yuechen, the 25-year-old Chinese expert sitting West, made the fabulous play of the jack when South led his low spade! This prevented the second dummy entry and defeated the slam. Chinese bridge players have earned the respect of the international bridge community. It is easy to see why.

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TOO ACTIVE?

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

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

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♠	3♦	4♦*	5♦
Pass	Pass	5♥	6♦
6♠	7♦	Pass**	Pass
7♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

*Game forcing spade raise, good values

**First-round diamond control

Opening lead: Ace of ♦

East held some side assets that might have annoyed the opponents in a high-level spade contract, but not enough to think he could buy it in five diamonds. An immediate six-diamond bid would have been better. Over five diamonds, North was able to make a slam try with his five-heart bid. East's six-diamond bid was

irrelevant, as South was accepting partner's slam try anyway. West's seven-diamond bid allowed East to show his void in that suit, and South was willing to bid seven. Was it a good grand slam? An old bridge slogan says: "A good grand slam is one that makes!"

South ruffed the opening diamond lead and drew trumps in three rounds, ending in dummy. The winning club finesse was next, followed by a heart to dummy to repeat the finesse. Had clubs split 3-2, South would have had 13 tricks. The 4-1 split left him with some work to do, but not much. West had promised seven diamonds in the auction, and showed up with three spades and a club in the play, so he could not hold more than two hearts.

South ran all of his trumps, coming down to one heart and one club in his hand and the king-nine of hearts in dummy. East had to find a discard from the queen-jack of hearts and the king of clubs. Regretting that he had ever entered this auction, he threw his cards in and conceded the grand slam! Well bid by North-South, but they had help!

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TEST THE WATERS

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

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

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	6NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: Queen of ♥

A three no trump re-bid by a player who has opened with one of a minor shows a massive holding in his minor — often a solid suit. North would have preferred some room to explore for a suit contract, but there was no room available. His jump to six no trump was a good shot.

South won the opening heart lead and led the king of diamonds, which was allowed to hold. The diamond queen also held, so South continued with the diamond jack. West won and played another heart. East had shown out on the third diamond, so South knew the diamonds weren't coming

home. Dummy was having trouble finding discards. A spade and two hearts had gone on the first three diamonds, but the next discard was difficult. South had to make a commitment between spades and clubs. He should not rely on 3-3 clubs with the queen onside when there was a better chance for dropping the jack of spades.

Declarer discarded a club from dummy at trick five and another club on the 10 of diamonds. When the spade jack failed to cooperate, the slam failed. Declarer was certainly unlucky to have run into bad splits in both spades and diamonds. Could he have done better?

The third diamond was an error. He needed to know the spade split before committing himself to discards. South should have led his low spade to dummy's ace and returned a spade back to his queen. He would have learned about the bad spade split in time to use the clubs as a fall-back plan. He would then have discarded spades while trying to set up his diamonds and still had the club suit to fall back on when the diamonds split poorly. The lucky lie of the club suit would have allowed him to score up his slam.

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Saturday, February 8, 2014

GOREN BRIDGE

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

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

♠ K 10 9 7 6 ♥ A 8 ♦ K 10 9 7 4 3 ♣ Void

Right-hand opponent opens one no trump, 15-17. What call would you make?

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

♠ K Q 7 ♥ K 10 7 6 ♦ K J 7 2 ♣ A K

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

What call would you make?

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

♠ K 10 7 5 4 ♥ J 5 ♦ A K 10 ♣ J 6 2

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♥	3♦	?	

What call would you make?

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

♠ 6 5 ♥ K 4 3 ♦ K 10 2 ♣ A K 10 6 4

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
?			

What call would you make?

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

♠ Q 10 9 ♥ A J 2 ♦ 10 9 7 3 2 ♣ A 9

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	3♣	?	

What call would you make?

Q 6 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ A K 10 9 6 ♥ A Q J 6 ♦ 7 4 ♣ 6 3

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♠	Pass	Pass	2♦
?			

What call would you make?

Look for answers on Monday.

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Sunday, February 9, 2014

GOREN BRIDGE

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RULES OR GUIDELINES?

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

♠ J 6 2
♥ K 8 4
♦ A 10 9 5
♣ J 10 3

WEST

♠ K 10 8 4 3
♥ 6
♦ 6 2
♣ K Q 7 4 2

EAST

♠ 9 7 5
♥ Q 5 3
♦ J 8 4 3
♣ A 9 5

SOUTH

♠ A Q
♥ A J 10 9 7 2
♦ K Q 7
♣ 8 6

The bidding:

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

Opening lead: King of ♣

“Rules” that we are given to follow when we learn bridge are not really rules — they are guidelines. Common sense replaces these “rules” whenever there is a conflict.

The defense started with three rounds of clubs, South ruffing the last. A spade shift by East would have been better, but he was hoping that a third club would cash. South remembered the rule, “Eight ever,

nine never,” and cashed the king and ace of trumps. The queen didn’t fall, but he was still in good shape if the jack of diamonds dropped. Declarer cashed the three top diamonds, but there was no sign of the jack. He was still good if the spade finesse worked. When that failed as well, South felt abandoned by the gods.

South was extremely unlucky that his line of play failed, but can you see an improvement — one supported by bridge logic, not by a peek at the opponents’ hands?

After cashing the king of trumps, South should have finessed for the queen on the next round, defying the rule. Why? Had West been able to win the queen of trumps, he would have been embarrassed by his next play — a spade into the ace-queen, a diamond lead picking off his partner’s jack, or yielding a ruff-sluff. South would be assured of his contract whether the trump finesse won or lost. Common sense should have prevailed.

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

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

♠ **K 10 9 7 6** ♥ **A 8** ♦ **K 10 9 7 4 3** ♣ **Void**

Right-hand opponent opens one no trump, 15-17. What call would you make?

A - There are many conventional “toys” available over an opponent’s one no trump. One toy lets you bid two diamonds to show diamonds and a major. The next toy lets you bid two spades to show spades and a minor. With no toys to play with, bid two diamonds natural. Whatever your methods, it is important to bid with hands like this.

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

♠ **K Q 7** ♥ **K 10 7 6** ♦ **K J 7 2** ♣ **A K**

The bidding:

SOUTH 1♦
WEST Pass
NORTH 1♣
EAST Pass

? What call would you make?

A - Bid two no trump, showing 18-19 balanced. Partner won’t raise no trump with five spades. He will make some bid to allow you to show three-card spade support. Should he pass two no trump, you might miss an eight-card spade fit, but you will have stayed at the two-level.

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

♠ **K 10 7 5 4** ♥ **J 5** ♦ **A K 10** ♣ **J 6 2**

The bidding:

NORTH 1♦
EAST 3♦
SOUTH ?
WEST ?

? What call would you make?

A - You are vulnerable with game-forcing values. It is almost always right, in these situations, to pursue your game. Should you bid three spades, partner will never be able to bid three no trump when he doesn’t have a spade fit. Bid three no trump yourself!

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

♠ **6 5** ♥ **K 4 3** ♦ **K 10 2** ♣ **A K 10 6 4**

The bidding:

SOUTH 1♣
WEST Pass
NORTH 1♥
EAST Pass
?

? What call would you make?

A - It is sometimes correct to raise partner’s major with only three-card support. Three to an honor with a ruffing value fits the bill. Bid two hearts.

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

♠ **Q 10 9** ♥ **A J 2** ♦ **10 9 7 3 2** ♣ **A 9**

The bidding:

NORTH 1♠
EAST 3♣
SOUTH ?
WEST ?

? What call would you make?

A - Over a pre-empt, partner must allow you room to bid three spades on much less than this, so he might pass three spades with enough for game. You should be aggressive here. Bid four spades!

Q 6 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ **A K 10 9 6** ♥ **A Q J 6** ♦ **7 4** ♣ **6 6 3**

The bidding:

SOUTH 1♠
WEST Pass
NORTH 2♦
EAST ?

? What call would you make?

A - Partner couldn’t respond to your opening bid, so the opponents have more points than your side does. Still, you cannot allow them to play at the two-level when you have two major suits of this quality. Bid two hearts.

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