

Ask Dwight For April 8 Newsletter - Monday morning, Feb 12, Board 9.

Hi Dwight:

We were N/S. We want to know how the auction should have gone.

Thanks!

A. Player

The diagram shows a bridge hand with the following cards:

- North:** ♠ A 10 6, ♥ 4 3, ♦ 8 3 2, ♣ K Q 9 5 4. (D, NV)
- West:** ♠ Q 9 8 4, ♥ J, ♦ 10 7 6, ♣ 8 7 6 3 2. (V)
- East:** ♠ 5 2, ♥ A K 10 9 7 6 2, ♦ J 9, ♣ J 10. (V)
- South:** ♠ K J 7 3, ♥ Q 8 5, ♦ A K Q 5 4, ♣ A. (NV)

HCPs: 9 (North), 3 (West), 9 (East), 19 (South).

Dwight's Response:

Hello A. Player,

A very interesting board and general concept board. I will give you my suggested auction and then some explanations.

The auction to me should be:

P-3H-3NT-P

P-P

Why 3NT with conviction?

Counting ...in two ways:

- 1) the heart suit
- 2) points around the table

Explanation:

- 1) East has 7 hearts presumably and South has 3 leaving 3 hearts to be divided between West and North. They will be split 3/0 or 2/1 in the two hands.

- 2) Give East about 7/8 points, along with South's 19, that leaves about 14 points left for West and North, so you should assign half of those to your partner, North. That means your combined point value is favoured to be about $19+7=26$ points, enough for game but unlikely slam.

Back to 1): If West has all 3 outstanding hearts, they will either double 3NT or raise to 4H in which case North will have a long suit (5 or more) and will bid that suit to play. If West has only one or two, they will pass and no matter how those hearts are specifically divided the E/W pair can not take more than 2 tricks in the suit so bidding 3NT is perfectly safe.

So, the question to further address is why not make a takeout X or bid 4D? If one thinks about the overall hand you can be assured that it is unlikely that suits will break evenly because of the known Heart length with East. When off-shape hands are known to exist on any deal, and you have combined game strength between the two hands it is generally easier to take 9 tricks than it is to take 10 or 11. So one should aim for the best possible and most probable game under the circumstances. Don't worry about the singleton club!!!! Partner will have some of those for sure (or you will hear about it from West). As for bidding 4 Diamonds, the problem is that your partner will not know how strong your hand is, plus it takes you past the most probable good score available by bidding and making 3NT.

I hope that addresses your question. Let me know if you have further questions.

db