

INTERFERENCE PAYS DIVIDENDS

Look at this entire deal. You are sitting in the South. Notice the bidding by the opponents.

D		N North		
13		♠ 98632		W N E S
		♥ Q108		1♦ P 1♣ P
		♦ 9		3♥ P 2♥ P
		♣ AJ105		4♣ P 3♠ P
				4NT P 6♥ P
W West		E East		
♠ AQ7		♠ AJ63		
♥ K974		♥ AK52		
♦ QJ864		♣ KQ764		
♣ 3				
		S South		
		♠ KJ1054		
		♥ 52		
		♦ 1073		
		♣ 982		
				6♥ E NS: 0 EW: 0

East has 17 HCP and opens 1♣. West holds 12 HCP and bids his 5-card diamond suit before mentioning hearts. Some would bypass the diamonds and get the major suit out in the open first. West has enough points to start with hearts and bid diamonds later. East has the strength to reverse with 2♥ for his rebid. An opener's reverse is a rebid that forces the responder to go to the 3-level to get back to opener's first suit. This bidding sequence should never be used with less than 17 HCP. West confirms the trump suit with 3♥. Now the pair start cue bidding the side suits to show 1st or 2nd round controls. Finally, West checks on aces with a Blackwood bid of 4NT. West has two aces and a void. He assumes his partner has enough for slam and blasts into 6♥.

Your best lead is the ♠J, the top of an interior sequence. East counts his losers in a suit contract, and in slam, should count winners also. One usually counts the losers in the hand with the longest trump, but in this 4-4 hand, it is easier to count losers in the hand without the void. Therefore, from the West perspective, the declarer has 2 spade losers and 1 club loser. He can't do anything about the club loser, but he can ruff one spade in his hand and discard the other spade on the good club. Counting winners, he has 1 spade, 1 spade ruff, 4 hearts, 5 diamonds and 1 club after the ♣A is forced out.

East's only problem is the missing hearts – the ♥Q and ♥10. He needs the hearts to split 3-2 and he needs the ♥Q to be in North. After winning the opening spade lead with the

♠A, he should immediately attack trump by leading toward the ♥J in his hand. This will win and he can now pull the last two trump. Once trump are gone, he loses a club to North's ♣A and now he can win in his hand, whatever North return and discard a spade on the good club. He will have another heart in his hand to ruff dummy's last spade. The diamonds make up the rest of the 12 tricks in the slam.

When I played this hand I was sitting in South. I took a more aggressive tack. I overcalled the opening bid with 1♠. Even though I held only 4 HCP and the rest of my hand was as flat as could be, and we were vulnerable, there were several positive factors. First, the bid is fairly pre-emptive. It cuts out a whole level of the auction and that might be enough to disrupt the opponents' constructive bidding. Second, it suggest a lead for North if West becomes declarer. It's the only suit in my hand that has any value in taking tricks. Third, I wasn't worried about having to declare in 1♠. My partner already passed and with my pathetic hand, I was sure the opponents had more than the balance of strength and would keep bidding.

Well, this is how the bidding proceeded in our auction:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♣	1♠
Dbl	4♠	Dbl	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

West's double was takeout for the two red suits. North's preemptive jump promised 5 spades. East's double was cooperative and asked West to either bid one of his long red suits or stand for the double if he held the missing spades and strength. West decided to bid his 5-card minor and that's where the auction ended.

The opponents made the same 12 tricks in diamonds. However, instead of scoring 1430 points they only made 620. In a team game, where this hand was played, we scored 13 imps which is a very big deal. Notice that my partner and myself had a total of only 11 points yet bid to the 4-level. We each held 5 spades and the Law of Total Tricks says that we were safe to bid to the level of the combined number of trump. Had we been allowed to play 4 doubled, we would have lost 2 spades, 2 hearts, 1 diamond and 2 clubs

– 7 in total. That is down 4, or -1100 points. That is less than the -1430 East/West actually made at the other table.

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/jhd535t> or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the “Next” button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on “Play” you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own. If you click on GIB, the software will analyze the hand and show the result for each opening lead.

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