

GIVE YOUR HAND ITS DUE

Look at this complete deal. Do you see anything wrong with the bidding?

D	8														
		N North ♠ Q109432 ♥ 84 ♦ K432 ♣ A	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">E</td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">S</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">P</td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	1♦	2♣	P	P	P			
W	N	E	S												
1♦	2♣	P	P												
P															
		W West ♠ 875 ♥ AJ6 ♦ AQ106 ♣ Q42	E East ♠ J6 ♥ K7 ♦ 9875 ♣ J10653												
		S South ♠ AK ♥ Q109532 ♦ J ♣ K987	2♣ N NS: 0 EW: 0												

No? If you didn't notice anything wrong, maybe a description of the play will help.

East leads a low diamond - partner's bid suit. West wins the ♦A and returns a trump; won, per force, by the ♠K. A club to the ♣A and the ♦K and a diamond ruff with dummy's ♠A. Now the ♣K, discarding a heart, and a club ruff. Declarer plays the ♠Q, felling the ♠J. He then takes out the last trump with the ♠10. Now the declarer is left with a heart and diamond loser, making 4.

Clearly, North and South missed this easy game. After hearing North's preemptive "weak two spades" he didn't see that he could contribute any more than the two spade tricks. He had a six card suit of his own, but didn't envision it taking any tricks at all. The ♣K is a potential trick, but a weak two promises about 5 tricks. South could add only 2 or 3. That doesn't equate to 10 tricks.

The problem was in North's preemptive bid of 2♣. Yes he counted only 9 HCP but he should have looked further. Since he had 6 spades, he could expect his partner to hold at least 2 spades. Then he would have a fit and with a fit he can use the technique of Losing Trick Count.

Losing Trick Count counts the losers in the top three positions of each suit. He had two spade losers (the ♠A and ♠K), two heart losers, two diamond losers (the ♦A and ♦Q) and no club losers. This is a six loser hand and he only needs three "cover" cards from South to reduce 6 losers down to 3 losers; the requirement for a game in spades. A cover card is an ace or a king.

With only 6 losers, North is too strong for a 2♠ overcall. The normal opening hand has 7 losers; and overcall has more. He should have overcalled 1♠. This allows him to find out if his partner has the right cards to allow him to bid game.

This is the way the bidding should have proceeded;

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠

South's 2♥ advance is a two over one bid that promises 5+ hearts and 10+ points. This allowed North to show his six card suit by rebidding 2♠. Now South knows there is a fit in spades. If North has as many as 9 losers, there will be a total of 14 losers in the two hands. This is out of a total of 24 losers (3 losers/suit x 4 suits x 2 hands). Subtracting 14 losers from 24 indicates there are 10 winners. Therefore, South jumped to 4♠.

Notice that South did have 3 cover cards: The ♠AK and the ♣K. That is how North was able to make a game holding only 9 HCP.

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

<http://tinyurl.com/p4x4kg7> 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.