

March 2017

Once again you are on BBO playing at an expert table when you pick up the following hand

| | | Bidding | | | |
|-----------------------|--|----------------|------|-----|----------|
| Dealer South | | | | | |
| All vulnerable | | | | | |
| South | | S | W | N | E |
| ♠ J4 | | 1NT | pass | 2C | pass |
| ♥ K64 | | 2D | pass | 3NT | all pass |
| ♦ AKQ | | | | | |
| ♣ Q10764 | | | | | |

The bidding has been short and sweet. West leads the ♠5 and dummy goes down

North

♠ K7
♥ AJ92
♦ J1052
♣ AJ5

South

♠ J4
♥ K64
♦ AKQ
♣ Q10764

Initial Analysis

You try the ♠K and it holds which is a pity in a way because if it had lost you could have gone down gracefully, now you might go down kicking and screaming. Despite all your points you still only have 8 top tricks. You are going to have to make a decision as to whether West started with the ♥Q or the ♣K, and you know you always get this wrong (see previous articles). As both are 50/50 chances does it matter? If the club finesse works we could end up with 12 tricks, whereas if the heart finesse works we might end

up with only 9 tricks. Perhaps for this reason the club finesse is a better choice? If this is how you are thinking, then you are on the wrong track. Whichever line you decide to take you are going down if it fails. But before committing yourself to either finesse, which we all agree has only a 50/50 chance of success, we can increase the odds in our favour by doing one of the following –

- a) If we decide to take the heart finesse we can first cash the ♣A in the hope that the king falls singleton.
- b) If we decide to take the club finesse we can first cash the A♥ and K♥ in case the queen falls.

I won't bore you with the odds; your gut tells you that there is a much better chance of the second option succeeding than the first.

It is true that if the ♥Q fails to drop and the club finesse fails you will go two off in this contract instead of one, but if you don't take this extra chance and go down in a cold contract you will have nightmares for a long time, so which is worse?

Here is the full hand

North

♠ K7
♥ AJ92
♦ J1052
♣ AJ5

West

♠ AQ953
♥ 8753
♦ 92
♣ 43

East

♠ 10862
♥ Q10
♦ 9876
♣ K83

South

♠ J4
♥ K64
♦ AKQ
♣ Q10764

Conclusion

Sometimes in bridge we make mistakes not because we are not thinking, but because we are not thinking about the right things.

When joining BBO one of the things you must do is rate yourself as a player. I promised in one of my earlier articles to talk about expert players on BBO or maybe I didn't but here goes anyway.

There is a standing joke that there are only 300 real expert bridge players in the world, 1500 of whom play on BBO. So how do you recognize the frauds?

Here are 3 tips for you

- 1) If the expert comes from a country where you have reason to believe that the local herd of goats might be held in higher esteem than the women, then the rating of Expert has nothing to do with his ability, he simply does not want to be mistaken for a woman. The corollary to this is that the women players from these countries will never rate themselves higher than Advanced. This is because under no circumstances do they want to be mistaken for a man.
- 2) If the player comes from a country where the political dogma dictates that all are equal then a player will rate himself as expert because his neighbour has rated himself as expert. As there are millions of bridge players from this part of the world then logically many of them are experts, but how will you know which ones? Here's what I think. If their nom de plume consists of 6 digits which might prove to be their girlfriend's telephone number or perhaps the number of people living in the same village or tenement block, then they are probably not an expert. If they lack the imagination to call themselves Lotus Flower floating on Pond or Moonlight Shining on Hidden Fountain then what chance have they got of getting a two way finesse right? In fact I would extend my logic to any player who has more than 3 digits in his sign on name. Why 3 digits you may ask, why not 2 or 5? Any of you who have read The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy will already know the answer to that, but for the rest of you who are curious, send me a stamped addressed envelope and I will reply.
- 3) Finally a group to avoid at all costs are those so called experts who have failed to inform the rest of us of their country of origin. You can be sure that wherever they come from English is certainly not their 2nd or even 3rd language. If they are struggling to translate **Country** what are their chances of getting the correct answer to **How do you rate your technical ability?**

So there you have it, sign on and enjoy!