

Better Bridge

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Bridge is not poker. The banter and bluffing that have grown up around the poker table are taboo to the serious bridge player.

The bridge ethic is more attractive. It outlaws, for example, deliberate hesitations which are intended to mislead. Accordingly, most hesitations (and there are many) are inadvertent rather than deliberate.

Gratuitous information given away by an obvious pause is frequently costly to the partnership. However, redress to the nonoffending side is not automatic. He who would take advantage of the information does so at his own risk. One who incurs a poor result as a reward for unusual action will keep the result. At the same time the offender may be penalized.

The auction:

South, declarer at six spades was able to make good use of one such balk to bring home 12 tricks. At his first opportunity to call, East hesitated perceptibly before passing. East's assortment of scattered honors appears en-

ting but hardly warrants action between two bidders in a forcing sequence. Ignoring East's problem North-South reached the small slam with an aggressive auction.

The play:

West chose a heart lead — East didn't have to bid to suggest it after all — to declarer's delight. East won the ace and returned a low heart to South's king. Trumps were drawn in three leads.

Now declarer took stock. To make the slam it was necessary to eliminate the potential diamond loser. Several options were available. First, the club queen might fall in two leads establishing dummy's jack for a discard. With only five clubs in the North-South hands this was unlikely. Alternatively, a diamond finesse might succeed or the queen drop doubleton.

At this point declarer recalled East's anguish during the auction. Perhaps East actually held all the missing high cards. If so, could he withstand the pressure of a squeeze?

The ace of diamonds was cashed. Nothing. The ace and king of clubs did not produce the queen. South ran trumps to reach this ending:

S —
H J
D A 8
C J

Immaterial

S —
H Q
D Q 9
C Q

S 8 5
H —
D J 10
C —

On the penultimate spade declarer threw the eight of diamonds from dummy. East was forced to discard the nine of diamonds or else set up one of dummy's jacks. Having stripped East of all but his three bare queens, declarer guessed the situation.

A diamond to the ace brought down the queen. Declarer reentered his hand by ruffing a jack. The established jack of diamonds won the slam going trick.

North

S A 7
H J 10 5
D A K 8 7 4
C J 10 7

West

S 9 6 2
H 9 8 7
D 6 2
C 9 6 5 4 2

East

S J 4
H A Q 6 4 2
D Q 9 3
C Q 8 3

South

S K Q 10 8 5 3
H K 3
D J 10 5
C A K

South was the dealer. Both sides vulnerable.

South	West	North	East
1 S	Pass	2 D	Pass
3 S	Pass	4 S	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 H	Pass
6 S	Pass	Pass	Pass

West led the nine of hearts.

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