

03/29/11 Unit Game

Board 20
West Deals
Both Vul

♠ 9 8 4 ♥ 7 ♦ J 10 9 2 ♣ A Q 7 6 3	♠ A Q 10 7 6 5 ♥ K Q 8 4 ♦ Q ♣ 9 2	♠ J 2 ♥ A 5 3 2 ♦ K 8 5 3 ♣ K J 4		
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♠ K 3 ♥ J 10 9 6 ♦ A 7 6 4 ♣ 10 8 5				

NS 4♥; EW 3♦; NS 1N; EW 2♣; NS 1♠

West	North	East	South
<i>Seth</i>	<i>Catherine</i>	<i>Pete</i>	<i>Deb</i>
Pass	1 ♠	Dbl	1 NT
2 ♣	2 ♠	All pass	

2 ♠ by North

At last, when I asked GIB to bid this hand, the results were exactly as bid at the table. Though the ♦ Q is likely worthless, the North hand is clearly an opening bid. For example, using Bergen's rule of 20, 11 working high card points (HCP) plus 10 cards in the two longest suits is 21. In addition, you should strain to open any hand with a good spade suit. (The old Goren rule was, add a point for a spade suit.)

My takeout double is automatic, though minimum. It pays to act early, rather than wait for an opportunity to back in later. Deb's free bid (she was not forced to bid) of 1NT shows 8-10 HCP. Seth's 2♣ shows 6-9 support points - with the singleton heart and fifth club, this is a maximum. Catherine rebid her spades, absolutely correct. With a minimum opening, six cards in a higher suit, four in a lower suit, rebid the six-bagger. A subsequent bid in another suit is then weak. I am not permitted to bid again without serious game interest, so I passed. Deb has a minimum for the values she showed, and also passed. Seth and I had only basic tools, so he passed.

A possible continuation would have been 2NT by Seth, showing a max with primary clubs and secondary diamonds - the unusual notrump, since this bid could not possibly be natural. We would then play 3♦, unless Catherine grabbed the gold ring at 3♥. If she does, it's clearly a weak hand, so Deb should probably pass. 4♥ is a very difficult contract to make, with 4-1 hearts.

Not that it would happen, but we can set 2♠ on the lead of the ♥A and another. I led the obvious ♣4. Partner won the ♣A and immediately shifted to the ♥7. After long thought, I won the ♥A and ... played two more clubs. This posed no problem for Catherine, who raked in ten tricks for a fine score. The correct return was the ♥2, giving the ruff and asking for a low suit return (♣).

A chief problem in bridge is blind spots. I never seriously considered that the ♥7 might be a singleton, even though I had noticed all the lower spots - Catherine might have bid the suit with ♥KQ84. (It would have been unethical to play partner's haste in switching, of course.)