

04/26/11 Regular Game

Board 9

North Deals

E-W Vul

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

EW 6N; EW 6♣; EW 5♠; EW 3♥; EW 2♦

This deal was a bit of a bidding challenge for West. After a 1♣-1♠; 2♣ start, West has a great deal of slam interest but no convenient descriptive bid available. The book bid is probably a forcing 4♣, which will surely get the partnership to slam on this deal as East has a super max 2♣ bid with outstanding controls. However, one can picture plenty of other 2♣ rebids (Kx AJ Qxx KTxxxx) where slam is not so great. You never want to be in 5 of a minor when 3NT is making at matchpoints. West might improvise with a forcing and ambiguous 2♦, after which East should jump to 3NT and show an excellent 2♣ rebid in context (denying three ♠ or four ♥ in most expert partnerships). With that, West should bid 4♣ (forcing!) and either via cuebidding, Blackwood or both the partnership should get to the laydown 6♣.

You might infer from the above comments that I really liked the East hand, and I decided to upgrade it to a 15-17 NT at my first turn. Aces, kings and tens are undervalued, and even though the hand is very suit oriented, it is always a good idea to get the general nature of your hand across in a single bid when possible. My partner was not certain that we would be on the same page about the meaning of a jump to 4NT after Stayman (it is quantitative in standard inviting 6NT, but occasional partnerships often have a mix-up on these types of sequences), so she made a direct (and conservative) 4NT call in response to 1NT. Even though I only had 14 HCP, her failure to use Stayman was encouraging (partner should have some stuff in the minors), I had great controls and a source of tricks in clubs. Jeff Goldsmith, whose wonderful website is linked on our club site, has a fun section where he lists his "Imperious Rules of Bridge." (<http://www.jeff-goldsmith.org/bridge/rules.html>). Rules 39 and 40 suggested I needed to accept this invitation, so I bid 6♣ over 4NT and we found slam.

One last piece of advice is to have an understanding with partner what bids mean along the way after a quantitative 4NT as it can't hurt to have some understanding there. Pass and 6NT are easy, but do five level bids show aces and accept, or suggest a potential better strain? The latter will either be a five card suit or a strong four card minor; you can assume that Stayman would have been employed if partner had a four card major. I've run across people playing the ace-asking way, but I strongly recommend the latter meaning as the better agreement so you can play in a suit when you have a fit, and try 6NT otherwise. Gerber is always there to ask for aces if need be.