

Analysis of Hands and Other Information
(May 31, 2021)

Last Week's Assignment:

AJ5
AQ102
743
J64

Bidding: W N E S
 1S P P 2H
 P 4H All Pass

109743 Q6
6 75
AKJ6 109852
KQ8 9753

West leads the king of diamonds and continues with the ace, which you ruff. After drawing the adverse trumps, how do you proceed?

K82
KJ9843
Q
A102

In view of the bidding, it may seem safe to take the spade finesse; but, in fact, this would represent an unnecessary hazard (if the actual holdings were as shown above). West may have opened the bidding with five spades to the ten. In this case, if you finessed the jack and lost, East would return a club. If West has the K/Q of clubs, you would be in great trouble on this hand.

This contract should make if you decline the spade finesse and play for an elimination instead. After drawing trumps, ruff dummy's last diamond and play off the AKJ of spades. The queen does fall; but, it does not matter whether it does, or not. Whoever wins the third spade would have to open up the clubs or concede a ruff/sluff.

If West has the queen of spades and returns a club, you lose only one club trick. If he returns a diamond or a spade, ruff in dummy and discard a club from your hand. **The situation you have to guard against is that East might win the spade finesse and return a club.** Even if you duck, West will exit with a spade. Now you eventually have to lose another club trick. Down one.

Indicators of a “possible” Endplay:

- 1) Adequate trumps in both hands to pull trumps and still have at least one trump remaining in each hand;
- 2) A suit that you benefit from if one of your opponents leads it for you;
- 3) A suit that you can void (strip) both the dummy and your hands in the suit; and,
- 4) A suit to “throw in” the opponent at a strategic point in the hand.

Hand 1.	KQJ5	Bidding:	N	E	S	W
	QJ2		1C	P	1S	P
	AJ5		2S	P	3S	P
	1087		4S	All Pass		

4	72
983	AK76
Q8743	K1096
KJ62	543

A109863
1054
2
AQ9

Contract: 4S

Opening Lead: 9 of hearts

Losers: Spades = 0
Hearts = 2
Diamonds = 0
Clubs = 2

Total Losers = 4

Play of the Hand:

1) West leads 9 of hearts, won by East's king of hearts.

2) East continues with the ace of hearts and plays a third round of hearts to dummy's queen of hearts (all follow).

Your inclination at this point is to draw trumps and lead the 10 of clubs for a finesse. But, double dummy, you can see that this line of play will end up giving you two club losers.

3) At trick four, play the ace of diamonds and ruff a diamond.

4) Lead a spade to the dummy and ruff another diamond completing the strip of the diamond suit.

5) Lead spade to dummy's queen, pulling the remainder of the opponents' trumps.

6) Now, lead the 10 of clubs and let it ride to West's jack.

7) West is endplayed in the minor suits. If he leads a club, he gives South two club tricks. If he leads a diamond, he gives the declarer a ruff/sluff. South can ruff in either hand and toss a club from the other hand.

Would you buy a used car from a salesman who told you that your brakes would only work 50% of the time? I DON'T THINK SO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

As most of us know, finesses only work 50% of the time; but, we continue to finesse and to finesse and to finesse. If you should find yourself in a contract that depends on a finesse, think about whether you can use a strip and throw-in (the endplay) as an alternative way to play the hand.

Let's see how this works in Hand 2.

Hand 2.

109
K8642
K83
K107

Contract: 6H

Opening Lead: Jack of diamonds

KJ73
10
J1092
Q432

Q8652
93
654
986

Losers: Spades = 1 (unavoidable)
Hearts = 0
Diamonds = 0
Clubs = 1 (avoidable)

A4
AQJ75
AQ7
AJ5

Total Losers: 2

If you rely totally on a successful finesse in clubs, you can make 6H. But, your dilemma is which way to finesse for the club queen. Is there a way for you to increase your chances of making this hand to 100%? YES! The endplay!!!!!!!

Play of the Hand:

- 1) Win the jack of diamonds with your ace.
- 2) Draw the opponents' trumps (two rounds in this case).
- 3) Strip the diamond suit by playing the king and queen.
- 4) Play the ace of spades and throw-in one of the opponents by leading your second spade.
- 5) If either opponent leads a spade or a diamond, he gives you a ruff/sluff. If either opponent leads the club, play low from the next hand and you automatically win three club tricks. You have put your opponents in an impossible situation. Whatever they do now will give you a trick and your contract of 6H.

QED

New Minor Forcing

Using traditional bidding methods, either of the following bidding sequences would illustrate the use of new minor forcing (NMF).

- a) 1C 1H
 1N 2D* (the other minor or new minor)

*Bid must be alerted.

- b) 1D 1S
 1N 2C* (the other minor or new minor)

*Bid must be alerted.

The NMF bid after a one notrump rebid by the opener is forcing for one round. It promises at least game invitational (GI) values (about 11 or more HCP). It is most frequently used when the responder has a five-card major suit. He is trying to find out if his partner has three-card support for his major. If he doesn't, he either rebids 2N or 3N depending on the strength of his 1N bid.

Opener	You	Your Hand:	Axx
1D	1H		AKxxx
1N	2C (NMF)		xxx
			xx

The 2C bid is artificial and must be alerted. It serves as a check back to locate three-card heart support.

The NMF bid is also effective when responder holds 5S and 4H (after a minor suit opening bid). It asks opener if he has a four-card heart suit or three-card spade support.

Opener	You	Your Hand:	AKxxx
1D	1S		AQxx
1N	2C (NMF)		x
			Jxxx

In this hand, you have the strength for game; but, you want to explore for a possible major-suit fit, either 5-3 spade fit or 4-4 heart fit.

Let's return to the opener's hand and see what he should rebid after his partner has made the forcing NMF bid. The opener must further describe his distribution in an attempt to find the best final contract. In most cases, the opener may indicate whether he holds minimum or maximum strength for his one notrump second bid.

Below are the available options from which the opener must choose.

1)	1D	1S	Opener:	Axx
	1N	2C (NMF)		KJxx
				Q98x
				Kx

Your first priority is to show 4 hearts. Later, you can show that you also hold three-card spade support if there is no 4-4 heart fit between the two hands.

2) A two or three response to responder's NMF bid shows three-card support in the major and indicates either a minimum or maximum hand.

1C	1S	Opener:	Kxx
1N	2D (NMF)		Axx
<u>2S*</u>			Kxx
			Qxxx

*You are showing a minimum hand with three-card spade support.

1D	1H	Opener:	Ax
1N	2C (NMF)		QJx
<u>3H*</u>			A10xx
			Kxxx

*You are showing a maximum hand with three-card heart support.

3) A rebid of two or three notrump (in response to your partner's NMF bid) confirms a stopper in the unbid suit and indicates a minimum or maximum bid, respectively.

1D	1H	Opener:	K10x
1N	2C (NMF)		Qx
<u>2N*</u>			K10xx
			AJxx

*Your rebid of 2N shows a minimum with a spade stop.

1D	1H	Opener:	K10x
1N	2C (NMF)		Kx
<u>3N*</u>			K10xx
			AJxx

*Your rebid of 3N shows a maximum with a spade stop.

Finally, a rebid of your original suit is natural and denies the ability to make any other bid.

1D	1H	Opener:	xxx
1N	2C (NMF)		Ax
<u>2D*</u>			KJxxx
			AQx

*Your rebid of 2D shows 5 plus diamonds and no spade stopper.

In conclusion, I have presented just the bare basics regarding the NMF bids. If interest warrants, I can do a much more in-depth coverage of the topic.

Balancing

The reopening of a dead auction is called balancing.

West	North	East	South
1D	P	P	???

South will rarely pass at this point. E/W has died at 1D. Obviously, East didn't have the necessary six points to keep the bid open. North did not have the necessary points/shape to overcall or make a takeout double.

In the above auction, it is likely that N/S have about one-half the high card points. South must not sell out at 1D. Note that less strength is required to balance than to bid in the immediate seat (North, in this instance). South (the balancer) knows that his partner must have some cards.

Let's look at some examples of the possible bids available to South, the balancing hand.

1) K986 Q752 65 A87

In the balancing position, add four points to your hand (borrowing from what you think your partner has) and make a takeout double. When North responds, he needs to remember to subtract four points from his hand before responding.

2) K76 K63 AQ9 9752

Bid 1N showing 11-14 HCP, plus a stopper in the opener's suit.

3) A84 K63 AJ9 AJ86

Here, you have 17 HCP—too strong for a mere one notrump overcall. You need to double first and then rebid 1NT which shows between 15-18 HCP.

Other balancing situations include:

West	North	East	South
1H	P	2H	P
P	???		

As North you hold: QJ86 8 A753 J1076

You did not hold enough strength to act over the opening bid of 1H. However, now that E/W have died in a part score, it is clear they don't have the HCP necessary for a game in hearts.

Your partner figures to have about 10 HCP. Rather than selling out to 2H, you should "balance" with a takeout double.

Perhaps your partner will bid 2S and go down one for a -50 score. But if the opponents can make 2H, your side gets a score of -110.

NOTE: Try never to let your opponents play at the two-level. Always try to push them up to the three-level, if possible.

If interest warrants, I can do a more in-depth coverage of balancing.

Regarding the Moysian Fit Hand assignment from the May 17th lesson, I inadvertently gave South 14 cards and both West and North only 12. I apologize for the error.

The hands should be as follows:

AQ
K843
AJ5
J432

872	10653
75	J1094
Q432	96
Q1075	AK8

KJ84
AQ6
K107
96

Contract: 4H

Opening Lead: Ace of Clubs

Next Week: The Crossruff