


## TALES OF AKARANA

### “GAME” FOR ALL

Three makeable suit games and a great sacrifice in the fourth. Even 3NT was only one down! The board must be worth a look.

A poser for you first. You are West

Board 8  
West Deals  
None Vul

♠ J 9 7 5 2	
♥ K 8 3 2	
♦ Q 5 4 3	
♣ —	


<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♥	2 ♦	2 ♥
?			

What is your choice of bid? There is the very slow approach of a simple diamond raise, a more constructive approach of mentioning spades or the aggressive value bid of 5♦. You just have to do something.

I like bringing the spade suit into play though the aggressive value bid would have worked a treat this time:

Board 8

West Deals	♠ Q 3	
None Vul	♥ A J 10 7 5	
	♦ A	
	♣ K Q 7 6 3	

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

♠ K 10
♥ 9 6 4
♦ J 2
♣ A J 10 9 5 4

With no entry to the South hand for a diamond ruff, 4♠ was a cold contract, presuming that spades were drawn in two rounds. The advantages of a direct 5♦ were that firstly it was an advance sacrifice, a very cheap one against a suit which had not yet been

mentioned (clubs). Then, with spades never mentioned, West would apply the axe to a likely 5♥ call from North.

However, 2♦ was not a universal call on that East hand. At our table, East contented themselves with a weak 3♦ jump. Strangely, playing 5 card majors, South passed this, as did West. I had not come to pass and tried the effect of 4♣ as North. That gave South an interesting choice of bids.

Superficially, it looks like a raise to 5♣ is the winner though that surely would have attracted 5♦ from West. However, West was not so sure they wanted to bid on when South returned to hearts. Thus, 4♥ became the final contract.

West was correct too, or could have been, had their partner led top of their doubleton. West ruffs and even if they guess wrong with the diamond return, they will get a second shot to find the spade switch to beat the contract with a second ruff.

However, after a more normal diamond lead, I was home as long as hearts broke 3-2 and thus laid down the ♥A. I did not want to try to cross to dummy with a club fearing a ruff while I did not necessarily need a spade trick to make 10. This highlighted my other chance, of dropping a singleton honour in the pre-emptor's hand. I continued hearts and although West won ♥K and got a club ruff by switching to a spade, I had my 10 tricks (5 clubs, 4 trumps and ♦A).

11 clubs but the contract played and made in hearts. The board was played 8 times with 3 declarers making 5♣, one failing in the club slam while 4♥ made and went down. East-West played the board twice, once successfully in 4♠ and the other time almost as successfully conceding just 50 in 5♦. A board, indeed, for all seasons.

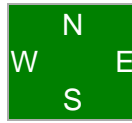
Game was possible for both sides on the following too. Shape and support for partner seem almost more important these days than high card points:

Board 40

West Deals  
None Vul

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

♠ A 10 3 2  
♥ 10 4  
♦ Q 8 5 4 2  
♣ A J



♠ Q 9 7 5  
♥ —  
♦ K J 6 3  
♣ 9 8 7 6 2

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠	2 ♥
2 ♠	3 ♥	4 ♠	All pass

4♠ seems a great idea on the East hand with a known double fit and a void. Maybe South disliked their 3 doubletons and did not plough on to 5♥. 4♠ simply required playing trumps for one loser.

Three of the 6 tables reached the five level. Against 5♥, West would start with the ♠A and hopefully would get a non-too encouraging signal from East. Yet, West can see the danger of the short ♣J in their own hand making a diamond switch imperative at trick 2.

If West fails to open, then, conceivably, North-South will have a clear run to 4♥ though even if the opposition fail to find their spade fit, a 2♦ overcall from West should propel the auction to the 5 level. The board does show yet again that “the 5 level does belong to the opposition”.

*Richard Solomon*