

AND THE MINIMUM PERCENTAGE IS?

38%



That's for bidding games, especially vulnerable ones. How bad can they be for us to say we should be in part-score?

There were 6 low point-count, lowish percentage games to be bid this week. Most were makeable though there were chances for the defence on two of them.

Let's see whether they should be bid. Perhaps the worst first!

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

Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul

♠ 7 6
♥ K 6 3 2
♦ A 6 5 3 2
♣ 8 3

♠ A K 9 4
♥ Q 8 7 5
♦ K 9
♣ 6 5 2



♠ Q J 10 3
♥ A J 9
♦ Q 10 4
♣ K Q J

♠ 8 5 2
♥ 10 4
♦ J 8 7
♣ A 10 9 7 4

1NT was 15-17 and 3♦ invitational showing 4 hearts and the longer minor. East had all the middle cards West probably should have had and the game was bid. Diamonds needed diamonds to break 3-2. That brought the percentage odds down to the mid 30's (it is really hard to estimate odds of a successful guess were the king not to appear as early as it did.)East sensed that clubs were breaking 5-3 and after seeing diamonds very well placed, took the heart finesse for 9 tricks. The lead could have been more favourable for declarer but part-score was probably better in the long run.

One 24 point 3NT with a long club suit foundered when the killing 5 card spade suit was in opening leader's hand.

However, if you keep bidding all such vulnerable games with long-running suit, you should come out on the right side of the ledger:

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

Board 23

South Deals
Both Vul

♠ K 9 5 2
♥ 10 6 2
♦ 10 6
♣ Q J 9 3

♠ A Q J 7 6
♥ 9 8 7
♦ Q 2
♣ 8 7 4



♠ 4 3
♥ A K J 4 3
♦ 8 5 3
♣ K 10 2

♠ 10 8
♥ Q 5
♦ A K J 9 7 4
♣ A 6 5

In the post-mortem, 3♦ would receive more sympathetic support if North held ♥J87 but then ♣J74 would not have helped the cause that much. South had six good diamonds and a useful ace. How East wished they had bid 2♥ as the ♣Q was led and after six rounds of diamonds, the ♠K was where declarer wanted it.

A non-vulnerable game required a well-placed ace of one suit, king of another and the trump king and jack taking just 1 trick for the defence with 5 in the defence's hands. It all seems a bit much for a non-vulnerable 22 hcp game...but they all happened for declarer this night.

However, would you bid with the following hand after this sequence where 2♦ is a one-round force:

♠ A872	West	North	East	South
♥ -	1♥	Pass	2♦	?
♦ AKJ				
♣ 876542				

Would it make any difference if East's bid was 1NT, less than game force style? Only your side is vulnerable.

2♣ would not win this day but a double of 2♦ most certainly would. It looks like at 5 of the 12 tables, no action was taken as the final contract was 4♥:

Board 28		
West Deals	♠ Q J 9 6 5 3	
N-S Vul	♥ 6 4	
	♦ 9 4 3	
	♣ 10 3	
♠ K	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 10 4
♥ A K Q J 9 8 7 3 2		♥ 10 5
♦ 8		♦ Q 10 7 6 5 2
♣ J 9		♣ A K Q
	♠ A 8 7 2	
	♥ —	
	♦ A K J	
	♣ 8 7 6 5 4 2	

A 4♥ opener from West would certainly have allowed South to make a take-out double. Twice, West bought the contract in 5♥ though four times, North-South pushed on to 5♠, to very good effect.

Even one down in 5♠, doubled or not, is a good result but neither East defending 5♠ found the only guaranteed successful defence of three top clubs. (The defence would also be successful on a trump misguess.) Two other tables took the push to 6♥ for a peaceful one down.

So, a 15 point vulnerable game to go with some other low count ones, mainly 3NT with long minors. They may not all make but they ask either the defence to do the right thing or from some assistance from the “card god”. Maybe they are not all as bad as their percentages might suggest.

Richard Solomon