

## The Power of Aces: Golden

Have you ever doubted it? If you ever thought your aces were worth only 4 high card points, then you were not playing at Akarana this Wednesday night.



Firstly, a bidding problem for you. It was for me and I am not sure I still really know the answer:

	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
♠ A 10 5		1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥
♥ K Q 7	3 ♦	Dbl	Rdbl	4 ♠
♦ 6	Pass	Pass	5 ♦	Pass
♣ K Q 7 6 5 4	Pass	?		

As North, you opened a 2+ 1♣ and heard your partner show 4+ spades (yes, 1♥ showed spades). West's 3♦ was a weak jump with your double showing three spades. The rest is, as they say, "Bridge".

There is a guideline that the player in your partnership who bids to game normally knows what action to take in a subsequent competitive auction. So, South bid to game and took no action... and you?

## The Power of Aces

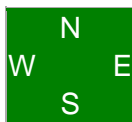
Aces... Great to have them. See how Paul and Mark Hangartner used the aces at their disposal on this board. Throw in some singletons and the sky could be and was the limit!

### Board 20

West Deals  
Both Vul

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

♠ 9 7 3  
♥ Q 10 9 7 5 2  
♦ K Q  
♣ Q 9



♠ 8 4  
♥ J 6  
♦ 10 8 5 2  
♣ J 10 8 6 2

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

	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	<i>Paul</i>		<i>Mark</i>	
	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
	3 ♦	Pass	4 NT	Pass
	5 ♥	Pass	7 ♠	All pass

1♥ showed 4+ spades (becoming a popular treatment!) with 3♦ a splinter. Mark took control and opposite two key cards bid straight to grand. The ♣K was an unnecessary bonus with ♠JT being far more relevant in the play of the hand when Mark came to ruffing diamonds. A decent brother would put down some reasonable trumps...and Paul is certainly that! A nicely bid grand with the trump suit bid properly for the first time at the 7 level!

Back though to my problem. What was I to do over 5♦? If you decide to bid 5♠, tell me what you would do when East bids 6♦. I did not heed my partner's recommendation about passing and saved myself the bother of doubling the diamond slam. Not for the first time in my life, I doubled a 5-level contract which was cold for an overtrick....despite our side having 25 high card points. The defenders were lacking one most valuable commodity...aces! The one they held was worth nothing!

<p><u>Board 1</u> North Deals None Vul</p> <p>♠ 8 6 3 ♥ 9 4 3 ♦ Q J 9 8 7 4    3 ♣ —</p>	<p>♠ A 10 5 ♥ K Q 7 ♦ 6 ♣ K Q 7 6 5 4</p>		<p>♠ — ♥ A 10 8 6 ♦ A 10 5 2 ♣ A 10 9 3 2</p>	<p>♠ K Q J 9 7 4 2 ♥ J 5 2 ♦ K ♣ J 8</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;"><i>West</i></td> <td style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></td> <td style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></td> <td style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♦</td> <td>Dbl</td> <td>Rdbl</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Dbl</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		1♣	Pass	1♥	3♦	Dbl	Rdbl	4♠	Pass	Pass	5♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl	All pass	
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3♦	Dbl	Rdbl	4♠																						
Pass	Pass	5♦	Pass																						
Pass	Dbl	All pass																							

The lead of my singleton diamond solved declarer's only problem, that of finding the ♦K. He then proceeded to cross-ruff the hand, "kindly" giving the defence a heart trick late in the play. A slam with three aces opposite a 3 count. Congratulations to Pamela Canning and Michael Curry who bid and made their diamond slam.

The majority of East-Wests never got into the bidding and took 4♠ one down. Aces, voids, singletons are all very valuable. Together in the same two hands, they are truly golden. How many high card points do you assign to an ace? Maybe a couple extra after seeing the above.

*Richard Solomon*