

## TALES OF AKARANA

### “Is That a Heart Suit I See Before Me?”

That might be a question the North players might have been asking themselves after the opposition bid the two suits North did not hold in the following auction:

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Pass
1♠	?		

<p>North held:</p> <p>♠ -</p> <p>♥ T9876</p> <p>♦ A2</p> <p>♣ AK8754</p>	<p>Do you make a Michaels bid (say 2♦), a rather unusual take-out double or bid where your strength is, in the club suit?</p>
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There is a case to just emphasize clubs as if partner chose hearts, being say 2-2 in those suits, the going could be a bit tough. However, whatever will excite partner most was going to be the winning action this evening:

<u>Board 2</u>		♠ —									
East Deals		♥ 10 9 8 7 6									
N-S Vul		♦ A 2									
		♣ A K 8 7 5 4									
♠ J 10 9 7 3	<table border="1" style="width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K Q 5
		N									
W		E									
	S										
♥ A 4		♥ 3 2									
♦ K J 7 4		♦ Q 10 9 8 6 3									
♣ 9 6		♣ J									
		♠ 8 6 4 2									
		♥ K Q J 5									
		♦ 5									
		♣ Q 10 3 2									

Even with a simple club overcall, some aggressive spade bidding by one's opponents should give South a strong clue that pushing on to 5♣ might be a very good idea. If North does show at least 5-5 in hearts and clubs after West's 1♠ bid, then South will certainly compete to the 5 level.

As can be seen, there is nothing East-West can do to stop their opponents making 12 tricks if clubs are trumps. Only an initial club lead beats 6♥ with East getting a ruff.

Despite this, half the East-West pairs were allowed to play the board in 4♠ while 2 more played 5♠ down one, once doubled, and three more North-Souths got to play their suits at the 5 level, twice doubled making with an overtrick.

The interesting contract is 4♠. This can only be beaten if the defence leads a heart. Even a club lead followed by a heart switch is no good since West can win, ruff the second club they hold high in dummy, draw trumps and give up a trick to the ♦A.

On a heart lead, West wins but because of the 4-0 trump break, has to lose a club before drawing trumps or else they will suffer two club losers. At that point and not at trick 2, South can secure the diamond ruff which beats the contract but only if the defence gets a heart trick at the same time. If South gets their diamond ruff too early, declarer can simply draw trumps and discard a heart and a club on the run of the diamonds. No-one defeated 4♠.

If North leads a club and switches to a heart, West must ruff a club immediately or else the defence can prevail as declarer cannot draw all the trumps without losing the lead... enabling East to get their ruff.

Even beating 4♠ or 5♠ by a trick is a terrible result for North-South. The only chance they have realistically of bidding to an unlikely slam with less than half the high card points is for North to show two suits...for better or for worse. (of course, 6♠x down 2 or 3 could also be the end result.) This time...and probably on balance, it is for the better.

*Richard Solomon*