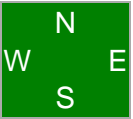


Tales of Akarana It's all in the bidding.

That was pretty much the case this evening. There was little in the play to challenge declarers or defence but plenty of imps on offer with some correct bidding decisions:

		<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1.	♠ 10 4	Pass	1 ♥	2 ♦	Pass
	♥ A Q 8 6 5	Pass	?		
	♦ A J				
	♣ A 10 9 8				

While discussing this hand, and still as North, would you take any action after West raised 2 ♦ to 3 ♦?

		<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2.	<u>Board 25</u>		2 ♠	3 ♥	?
	North Deals				
	E-W Vul	♠ A 9 8 4 2 ♥ 9 4 ♦ A K 10 3 ♣ A Q			

2 ♠ showed 5 spades and a 4+ card minor with below opening strength.

		<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
3.	<u>Board 28</u>		♠ 10 9 2	1 ♥	Pass
	West Deals				
	N-S Vul	♥ 9 4 2 ♦ K Q 10 3 ♣ A K 5			
		4 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
				?	

4 ♣ is a splinter agreeing diamonds.

1. Back to our first question(s). It was a good idea to do something with the best “something” being to bid your second suit. You might have wished for a stronger hand or longer clubs but failure to take any action would result in a minus score:

Board 24

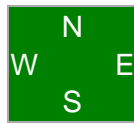
<p>West Deals None Vul</p> <p>♠ J 3 2 ♥ J 7 3 2 ♦ 9 4 3 2 ♣ Q 6</p>		<p>♠ 10 4 ♥ A Q 8 6 5 ♦ A J ♣ A 10 9 8</p> <p>♠ K 9 8 6 5 ♥ 4 ♦ 8 ♣ J 7 5 4 3 2</p>
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<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♥	2 ♦	Pass
Pass	?		

You will not always strike 6 card support in bidding but it feels wrong not to compete at all. Double does not seem right either because of your lack of spades (what do you bid over partner’s 2♠ let alone 3♠?) but also your diamond holding makes it unlikely that your partner is trap-passing. 3♣ would at least always return you a plus score even if you did not reach the cold club game.

It is even harder to take action over the raise to 3♦ though at least North-South should always go plus after South’s singleton heart lead. Only Jeff Thompson- John O’Connor reached the club game with two more pairs playing a club partial. Three tables saw East-West one down in 3♦ though the danger of West raising diamonds is that East might and did twice try 3NT unsuccessfully. A good dive against the making 5♣ contract.

2. Board 25
 North Deals
 E-W Vul



♠ A 9 8 4 2
 ♥ 9 4
 ♦ A K 10 3
 ♣ A Q

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♠	3 ♥	?

Five card trump support and a decent looking hand, no matter which minor suit partner held. There are two drawbacks to going above game level, the two little hearts at which you are staring and the knowledge that partner might have taken a little liberty point-wise with their opening.

You might have to gamble on the second of these but there would have been a nice surprise had you checked on that heart suit:

Board 25
 North Deals
 E-W Vul

♠ K Q 6 5 3
 ♥ —
 ♦ Q 9 7 2
 ♣ 5 4 3 2

♠ J 7
 ♥ K 10 7 6 2
 ♦ J 8 4
 ♣ J 10 6



♠ 10
 ♥ A Q J 8 5 3
 ♦ 6 5
 ♣ K 9 8 7


♠ A 9 8 4 2
 ♥ 9 4
 ♦ A K 10 3
 ♣ A Q

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♠	3 ♥	5 ♠
Pass	5 NT	Pass	6 ♠
All pass			

Lucky? Against the odds? Perhaps but is 5 ♠ in danger opposite a minimum but sound 2 ♠ opening? The answer may be “possibly” but not this time. 5 ♠ asks partner to bid slam with first or second round control in the opposition’s suit. 5NT showed total control of hearts though South would still not look for grand-slam. With a heart void, and a 10 count, North should really open at the one level.


Only one table made it beyond 4♠...and that was to collect 800 from 5♥x. Shame... a missed opportunity.

3.

<p><u>Board 28</u> West Deals N-S Vul</p>		<p>♠ 10 9 2 ♥ 9 4 2 ♦ K Q 10 3 ♣ A K 5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>West North East South</i></p> <p>1♥ Pass 2♦ Pass 4♣ Pass ?</p>
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This should be the easiest of the three problems. 4♣ was a splinter agreeing diamonds and whether or not your approach is Acol style or 2 over 1 Game Force, the splinter detracts from your hand. That ♣K is not necessarily pulling much weight. Issue a warning. Bid 4♥. If partner still goes on, they must have something special.

They did not, really, and were forced to take the heart finesse in whichever slam they bid. 6♦ proved better than 6♥...less off!

<p><u>Board 28</u> West Deals N-S Vul</p>	<p>♠ J 7 5 ♥ Q 10 8 5 ♦ 9 2 ♣ Q 8 7 4</p>		<p>♠ A 6 3 ♥ A K J 7 3 ♦ A 8 5 4 ♣ 9</p>	<p>♠ 10 9 2 ♥ 9 4 2 ♦ K Q 10 3 ♣ A K 5</p>
	<p>♠ K Q 8 4 ♥ 6 ♦ J 7 6 ♣ J 10 6 3 2</p>			
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	
4♣	Pass	4♥	All pass	

A sixth heart or ♠K in the West hand would have been enough in 6♦. As it was, the heart situation defeated all the slammers. Only three pairs stayed below the 5 level, though 5♦ would have made. For the rest, the warning was either not given or heeded.

Richard Solomon