


Tales of Akarana


Spades over Hearts... and Diamonds, too?

It is so good holding the spade suit in the many highly competitive hands our dealing machine conjures up for us. Heart bidders have to find cunning ways to stop their opponents bid one more but at the same level. Take the following. It seems like you have to convince your opponents that pushing on to game is taking a step too far in order to shut the spade bidders up.

<u>Board 15</u> South Deals N-S Vul		♠ 3	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		♥ A 4 2				Pass
		♦ Q 8 4 3	1 ♥	Dbl	2 ♥	2 ♠
		♣ Q 7 6 5 2	3 ♥	Pass	Pass	3 ♠
			Pass	Pass	?	

Although West's 3♥ bid was just competitive and not inviting game, the East hand does indeed look like it is worth a shot at game. If you bid 4♥, someone is bound to bid 4♠ with only the vulnerability being a negative factor. How high would you want to go..5♥ or prepare to trust that the opponents are too high in their spade game?

Taking the push, albeit reluctantly, talked North-South out of competing above 4♥. Interestingly, there are still some players who still want decent suits for their weak 2 openings, rather than any random or even five- card suit!

<u>Board 15</u> South Deals N-S Vul		♠ A K J 6	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		♥ J	1 ♥	Dbl	2 ♥	2 ♠
		♦ 9 7 6 5 2	3 ♥	Pass	Pass	3 ♠
		♣ K J 8	Pass	Pass	4 ♥	All pass

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

♠ Q 10 8 7 5 2
♥ Q 9 5
♦ K 10
♣ 4 3

A Weak 2♠ opening would have propelled North to game very quickly with it being very doubtful that East-West would have continued to the makeable 5♥ game. The ♦A lead proved terminal for a couple of E/W pairs defending 4♠ with the rest beating the contract of either 4 or 5♠ by one trick.

Double or Pass

Would you double East's 1♥ opening bid with the following collection (all vul):

- ♠ KJ9
- ♥ AQ3
- ♦ K982
- ♣ T62

If West was to produce a value redouble, you would surely wish you had stayed silent though there seem to be enough goodies to justify this low-level action. Failure to double proved expensive on Board 26:

<p><u>Board 26</u> East Deals Both Vul</p>		<p>♠ Q 8 7 6 5 4 2 ♥ 9 5 ♦ — ♣ Q J 8 7</p>	
<p>♠ 10 3 ♥ K 6 2 ♦ J 7 4 3 ♣ A K 9 3</p>		<p>♠ A ♥ J 10 8 7 4 ♦ A Q 10 6 5 ♣ 5 4</p>	
		<p>♠ K J 9 ♥ A Q 3 ♦ K 9 8 2 ♣ 10 6 2</p>	
<p><i>West</i></p>	<p><i>North</i></p>	<p><i>East</i></p>	<p><i>South</i></p>
<p>3♦</p>	<p>Pass</p>	<p>1♥ 4♥</p>	<p>Pass All pass</p>

Another victory for the heart suit. West did very well to pretend he had 4 hearts and show his point-count and 4 hearts with 3♦...and the 10-card spade fit was lost.

With a club ruff saving a declarer in 4♠ the bother of finding the ♠A, only the unkind positioning of the ♥K prevented 4♠ from making. Two North players did even better after the A lead saved the heart loser. The field was somewhat split between those in 4♥ or 4♠ which must mean the double of 1♥ was not universal.

What about this? The moneyor the slam? Neither side is vulnerable.

West	North	East	South
			5♦

X Pass ?

East holds:
 ♠ K84
 ♥ 764
 ♦ —
 ♣ KQT9842

What has this got to do with an article on the “master” spade suit? The double hardly asked you to bid your better major!



The money..or the bag!

The “money” kept you in line with the room (this is Swiss Pairs, remember) but the slam was much more rewarding, no matter how high you went:

Board 27

South Deals
 None Vul

♠ A J 10 9 3 2
 ♥ A 5 2
 ♦ 3 2
 ♣ A 3

♠ Q 7
 ♥ Q 10 9 8 3
 ♦ 7 6 4
 ♣ J 7 6



♠ K 8 4
 ♥ 7 6 4
 ♦ —
 ♣ K Q 10 9 8 4 2

♠ 6 5
 ♥ K J
 ♦ A K Q J 10 9 8 5
 ♣ 5

A victory for diamonds over spades. It looks like North or South would bid 6♦ over 6♣ at least increasing the East-West reward from 300 to 500. Only Mark Robertson and Sylvester Riddell restored the natural order of things by bidding and making 6♠.

Richard Solomon