

The Real Deal

by Larry Cohen



Larry Cohen, a many-time National champion, is a popular writer and lecturer, living in Boca Raton, Florida. Information on Larry's upcoming activities can be found by visiting www.larryco.com.

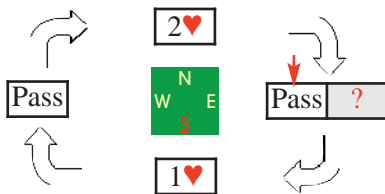
One of Larry's favorite teaching methods is to analyze random deals. He feels that any time you deal out a deck of cards, there are numerous lessons that can be learned.

This Real Deal was dealt by Vicki Grethe. Yes, it really and truly was human-dealt. Players often think such wild deals are only created by the computer.

The East hand is super-freaky. What should East do as the dealer? It is tempting to preempt, but with what? The long suit is diamonds, but preempting with a side five-card major is pretty much a no-no. So, painful as it is, East should pass.

South has a spectacular hand. South could open with a strong $2\clubsuit$ bid, but I prefer $1\heartsuit$. A two-suited hand is difficult to describe by starting with $2\clubsuit$. You often run out of space by starting at the two-level. I would be willing to risk that it won't go $1\heartsuit$ -Pass-Pass-Pass. By opening $1\heartsuit$, I expect to have a better chance to describe the nature of my hand through the subsequent auction.

West doesn't have enough to overcall either $2\clubsuit$ or $3\clubsuit$, and North has a normal raise to $2\heartsuit$ —the only 'normal' hand at the table.

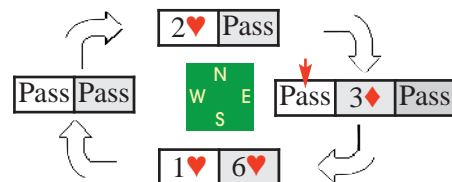


Now East's time has arrived! East wants to get into the auction, and I think $3\diamondsuit$ is the way. East can plan to bid spades later. There surely rates to be more bidding.

South, still recovering from the shock of partner showing support for

learns about partner's heart support, there's no longer a good reason to introduce the spade suit.

So much for East's "later"! The spades have to be left unmentioned, unless East is willing to recklessly bid $6\spadesuit$ —attempting a sacrifice in $6\spadesuit$, or in $7\diamondsuit$ if partner corrects back to East's first suit.



$6\heartsuit$ is a fine contract, but on another day! With decent splits in the major suits, South would make twelve or thirteen tricks. On this day, South is destined to go down.

THE OPENING LEAD AGAINST $6\heartsuit$

What should West lead against $6\heartsuit$? I like to lead singletons, but not here. When you have good trumps, there is no reason to try for ruffs. With this heart holding, West very likely has a trump trick. West could lead the $\clubsuit K$, but I'd settle for partner's suit and lead a diamond.

THE PLAY IN $6\heartsuit$

How should South plan the play, not expecting such vile splits? The usual way to plan a suit contract is to count losers. Maybe there is a heart to lose,

but the focus is on spades. What will declarer do with all those low spades?

Declarer's proper play is to win the opening lead and play the $\spadesuit A-K$. The plan is to ruff spades in dummy. If the spades divide 3-3, declarer will have an easy time. Even if the spades divided 4-2, declarer would have great chances.

When spades divide 5-1, the world ends. West ruffs the second spade, and can safely lead another diamond.

THE REAL DEAL			
DEAL: 6	NORTH		
DLR: E	\spadesuit 8 3		
VUL: BOTH	\heartsuit K 6 2		
	\diamondsuit K 5 3		
	\clubsuit 10 7 5 3 2		
	WEST	EAST	
	\spadesuit 4	\spadesuit Q J 10 9 5	
	\heartsuit Q 9 8 4	\heartsuit —	
	\diamondsuit 7 4	\diamondsuit Q J 10 9 8 6 2	
	\clubsuit K Q 9 8 6 4	\clubsuit J	
	SOUTH		
	\spadesuit A K 7 6 2		
	\heartsuit A J 10 7 5 3		
	\diamondsuit A		
	\clubsuit A		

the six-card heart suit, has no easy bid. Opposite good trumps and some spade help, it is possible that $7\heartsuit$ is a laydown. On the other hand, opposite lots of wasted minor-suit pictures, slam might not be so great. South could try to paint a picture of the hand by bidding spades, but I think it is practical to abandon science and simply jump to $6\heartsuit$, a contract that should have a good chance of making. Once South

A two-suited hand is difficult to describe by starting with $2\clubsuit$.

Declarer still has way too much work to do. Declarer can't avoid a heart loser and handle all the spade losers—three of them! It's likely declarer will fail by several tricks.

It's a good thing East didn't choose to "sacrifice" against the 6♥ contract. It would be expensive to lose points on a hand where East and West are destined to gain points. ♦



Vicki Grethe

This deal comes from **Vicki Grethe**. Vicki saw her Aunt, Uncle, Mother, and Father play bridge all of her childhood, but never picked up the game. "When I was in my twenties, my Mother did tell me that I should learn the game for my retirement. I was hardly thinking of that at the time."

But ships and bridge seem to go together. "Shortly after retirement, my husband and I were sailing around South America on the *Silver Whisper*. We had 7 sea-days, and there were lessons for beginners. I decided then and there that it was time to learn the game. That was December 2001, and I haven't looked back. I play at least three times a week."

Vicki shares a picture of Aunt Eva with Charles Goren, taken in 1967 on a bridge cruise. It's interesting because Goren is rarely seen in a casual photo.



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