

Hand of the Week 11/19/2019

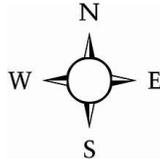
By Frank Merblum

Two Hands from the NAP

Last weekend, Doug Doub and I played in the premier pairs event for New England – the Flight ‘A’ North American Pairs. We have had great success in this event and hoped to come within the top three in order to qualify for the national finals in Columbus, Ohio. However, we fell a bit short and came in fifth. At least I have a couple of good hands to present from the event as follows.

HAND 1 - You are South, on opening lead, defending 3NT:

♠ A98
♥ 96
♦ J8
♣ QJ10643



♠ 10542
♥ J73
♦ K106
♣ A95

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
2H*	P	1D 3NT	P All Pass

*Shows 9 – 10 HCP balanced (no 4 card major)

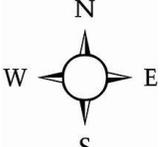
Lead: ♠2

You are playing against Doug Doub, a fine declarer. Partner wins the K of spades and Doug drops the J.

Partner returns the K of hearts which Doug wins with the A and plays the K of clubs. Of course you duck (playing the 5) and partner plays the 2 (showing 3). Now Doug plays the 3 of spades. So what is going on???

Clearly, Doug has the singleton K of clubs and needs two dummy entries to set up the clubs. If you carelessly play the 4 of spades (as our defender did), you have given away the contract.

Doug now finessed the 9, drove the A of clubs and had 9 tricks. Note that Doug gave the defense a chance to go wrong by playing a high spade at trick 1. Had he carelessly followed with the 3 of spades, there was no chance to make the contract. The full hand:

Dir: E	♠ K76		
Vul: Both	♥ KQ82		
	♦ 952		
	♣ 872		
♠ A98	N	♠ QJ3	
♥ 96	W  E	♥ A1054	
♦ J8	S	♦ AQ743	
♣ QJ10643	♠ 10542	♣ K	
	♥ J73		
	♦ K106		
	♣ A95		

HAND 2 – You hold the following:

♠KJ10432 ♥103 ♦AK962 ♣Void

There are three passes to you and of course open 1S. The next hand doubles and partner redoubles showing a 1NT response (we play transfers after a take-out double). Your right-hand opponent now bids 1NT and it's your bid. I'm a firm believer of Grant Baze's adage of 6-5 come alive so I bid 4S. I felt there was no reason to bid my diamonds and wanted full concealment of my hand. The opening lead is the 3 of diamonds, showing an odd number, and now you have to play the hand.

Dir: W	♠ 86		
Vul: E-W	♥ KJ84		
	♦ J4		
	♣ KJ1082		
	N		
	W  E		
	S		
	♠ KJ10432		
	♥ 103		
	♦ AK962		
	♣ -		

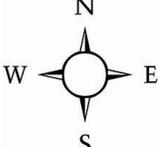
I decide to play the J and it goes Q on your right. It looks like the diamonds are 3-3 so you win the diamond and play another high diamond and ruff a diamond in dummy. Sure enough, everyone follows to 3 rounds of diamonds.

Now it's time to play trumps so you lead your remaining trump from dummy. It goes 5 on your right and you play the ??? Time to figure out what is going on at this point since this decision may decide the fate of your contract.

It appears that your left hand opponent has both the A of hearts and A of clubs and is probably short in spades. The idea now is to avoid losing 3 trump tricks. If righty has AQ9x of spades, you are going down. So let's play for the one holding where you can survive a 4-1 break.

What if lefty has the singleton Q of spades? That is exactly what I played for by playing the spade K and was rewarded by losing only 2 trump tricks and the A of hearts (of course, I guessed that correctly). That play was worth almost a top board in the finals.

Oh well, better luck next year. The full hand:

Dir: W	♠ 86		
Vul: E-W	♥ KJ84		
	♦ J4		
	♣ KJ1082		
♠ Q		♠ A975	
♥ A952		♥ Q76	
♦ 853		♦ Q107	
♣ A9643		♣ Q75	
	♠ KJ10432		
	♥ 103		
	♦ AK962		
	♣ -		

West	North	East	South
P	P	P	1S
Dbl	Redbl**	1NT	4S
All Pass			

**Transfer showing a 1NT response

Lead: ♦3