

WHY INVESTMENT BANKERS ARE GREAT BRIDGE PLAYERS

In a recent lesson I said that detectives make great bridge players because they look for clues when they play or defend a hand. Many of the top bridge players are investment bankers. They know that sometimes you have to give up something to get something. That works in bridge as well as in investing. Take these two recent hands from the Richmond paper.

9 8 7 3
A K J 10
5 4 3 2
Q

Partner and RHO both pass, and you decide to open four spades. All pass. West leads the ace of clubs. Before you play to trick one, stop and go through our well-known basics.

A K Q J 10 5 4 2
7 5 4
K 7 6
———

Count your winners. Seven spade tricks, and at least three heart tricks. If the queen of hearts is on side, and the finesse works, you have 11 tricks. If the ace of diamonds is in the East hand, and you lead towards your hand, you have 12 tricks.

Count your losers. You have a potential heart loser, and three possible diamond losers. Why do you care, since you have at least ten winners.

Don't forget to ask WHAT CAN GO WRONG. If you pull trump and the heart finesse loses and if West has the ace of diamonds, you can go down.

Here is how players of different levels of bridge experience would play the hand. Newer players love to pull trump and take finesses. That is what most of our newer players would do. They would trump the club, pull trump and take the finesse.

The next level of play, the ones with some experience, would cash the ace of hearts in the dummy, before taking the finesse, just in case East had the singleton king, come back to their hands with a trump, pull trump and take the finesse. If the queen had dropped under the ace, they would rightfully be very proud of their foresight.

A pretty good declarer would think, I cannot afford to let East in. If the finesse works, I do not need it. I am giving up a trick, if the finesse would have worked, but I am possibly insuring the contract if the singleton or doubleton queen is in the East hand. **Very good**

thinking. He would cash the ace and king, and then play a third heart, setting up the long heart in dummy. If West wins, he cannot lead diamonds, and the contract is safe.

The investment broker thinks before he plays to trick one. He sees what could go wrong, and asks "WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT." He wonders if he can set up the hearts with out risking putting East in. So he makes an investment. Instead of trumping the club at trick one, he DISCARDS A HEART FROM HIS HAND!!!!!! It does not matter what West does next. Declarer wins the next trick, draws trump, and plays the ace and king of hearts. Now he leads the jack of hearts from the dummy. If East covers, he trumps, and the 10 is the tenth trick. He can still lead up to the king later, in order to try to make 11 tricks. If East does not cover, he lets it ride, and if West wins, he cannot do you any harm. The king of diamonds is safe. He pitched one diamond on the losing heart, and can throw another one on the good heart. All you lose is a club (he did not trump at trick one), the ace of diamonds, and one heart. If you found this line of play, you were the only player in the room to lose a club trick, but you were also the only player in the room to make four spades, as you will see.

On this particular day, the investment paid off. All of the other players would have gone down one, for minus 100. The investment banker, who gave up one or two potential tricks, to give himself a sure thing, would have been plus **620**, for a cold top. Here is the full deal. As you can see, the queen of hearts was off side, and when it lost, East would play the jack of diamonds, and the defenders would get three diamond tricks.

| | | | |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|--|
| | 9 8 7 3 | | |
| | A K J 10 | | |
| 6 | 5 4 3 2 | 2 | |
| 9 8 | Q | Q 6 3 2 | |
| A Q 9 8 | | J 10 | |
| A 10 9 8 7 5 | A K Q J 10 5 4 | K J 6 4 3 2 | |
| | 7 5 4 | | |
| | K 7 6 | | |
| | ----- | | |
| | K 5 | | |
| | K J 10 9 | | |
| | Q J 8 7 5 3 | | |
| 7 4 2 | Q | Q J 10 3 | |
| 8 6 4 | | A Q 7 5 3 | |
| K 9 6 4 2 | A 9 8 6 | 10 | |
| 6 2 | 3 | K 4 2 | |
| | A | | |
| | A J 10 9 8 7 5 | | |

| NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | WEST |
|------------|---------|----------|------|
| 1 Diamond | 1 Heart | 2 Clubs | Pass |
| 2 Diamonds | Pass | 2 Spades | Pass |
| 2 No Trump | Pass | 5 Clubs | |

For the same reason that many investment bankers are great declarers, many of them are also great defenders. I have given you all four hands. Even looking at all of them, the correct defense is very hard to find.

Partner leads the 4 of hearts. The investment banker looks at all of the street signs before deciding what to do. He analyzes the auction and realizes that South has shown a hand with 6 or 7 clubs, exactly four spades, and one or two red cards. Dummy's 9 of hearts forces the queen. And the broker stops to see if there are any dangers. When declarer plays the three of hearts, he knows that partner has a three-card fit. The partnership agreement is to lead small from three cards, giving count, and declarer knows this because this is the smallest remaining card out. Now he knows that if he plays the ace, declarer will ruff, and pull trump and throw his losing spades on the good hearts in the dummy. If declarer has two entries to dummy, he can set up the hearts, pull trump, and throw away his losing spades. Partner had a three-card fit and did not raise. Partner probably does not have the ace of spades or the ace of diamonds. Declarer has two losing spades in his hand. What can we do about that? It is time for an investment.

With only one trump in the dummy, the banker's king of clubs is golden, Declarer cannot take it away from our banker if he does not cover the queen. But the banker can envision what is going to happen next. If he makes a neutral lead like a diamond, declarer will play a spade to dummy's king, play a heart, forcing the ace, setting up the hearts. He will then cash the ace of spades, trump a spade in dummy, pitch a spade on the winning heart. Then he will return to his hand, get out the trump, and claim. Making 5. Declarer will lose a heart and a club.

If he plays a small club, declarer will win in dummy, ruff out the ace of hearts, pull trump, giving up the king, get to dummy with a spade, and throw the losing spades on the good hearts,

So the banker makes a wise investment, He plays the king of clubs killing the dummy. He gives up his club trick, but he gets two spades in return. A one hundred percent profit, if you count tricks. If you count points, he is plus one hundred, while other East/West pairs are minus 600. Now the declarer is sorry that he did not bid three no trump, which is ice cold.

Here are two hands in which you have to give up a winning trick to get the best possible result. You must check the signs, and determine whether your investment is a wise one. If you got this one right, you might want to go into investment banking.

I hope that you enjoy these lessons. I enjoy finding good hands and putting them in context.

I am always glad to answer your bridge questions if you can furnish me with the hand from which the question arises. I am not computer savvy, so I cannot access the hands on my own.

Bob Pustilnik

You can reach me at maddhtr@hotmail.com. I always answer your inquiries at my first possible opportunity.

Please support the Bridge Center games.

Monday at 2:15, 0 - 3500

Wednesday at 1:15. 0 - 3500. This week the game will be at its usual time, 1:15, but starting November 11, it will be moved to 10:15, in response to some of the suggestions that we have received in answer to Mimi's recent email.

Wednesday at 10:15 0 - 3500

Wednesday at 6:35, 0 - 299

Thursday at 1:15, 0 - 1500

Friday at 1:15, 0 - 500.

Please also support the Friendly Bridge/Richmond Bridge Association games:

Sunday at 1:15 (up to 500) and 6:35 (up to 200)

Tuesday at 7:00 (up to 500)

And for the newer players who play in Linda's Sunday afternoon game, please join Linda for a review of several of the problem hands from that game at 4:45 on Mondays. I will continue to join Linda when my work schedule permits. We have a great time, and the hour goes so quickly that it hardly feels like a lesson.