

## What Could I Have Done?

One day, playing bridge on the internet, I had the misfortune to be the dummy for the following two hands. Now the questions are.....was I a victim of circumstances, was I at fault for picking either or both of these partners, was I just plain unlucky, and should I have some empathy for my partners? And most importantly, what could I have done different and/or better.

On Hand 1, I could easily have solved any play problems by simply bidding more....6♦ in this case as it would have restricted partner's line of play. But, alas, partner was only in a pedestrian 5♦.

Hand 1: Dealer: South      Vul: Both    IMPS

West

♠ 953

♥ A

♦ A10862

♣ KQJ5

East (Me)

♠ A

♥ Q10532

♦ QJ954

♣ 102

Bidding:

South	West	North	East	Opening lead: Queen of ♠'s
Pass	1♦	Dbl	1♥	
1♠	2♣	2♠	3♦	
3♠	4♦	Pass	5♦	
all pass				

My partner in 5♦ managed to go down only 1! North led the Queen of spades and at trick 2 my partner played a diamond to the Ace (North showing out), ruffed a spade and led another diamond. South won the King, led a club to partner's Ace and got a ruff. Nice huh? Down one for -12 imps.

Had I bid a slam on my cards, partner would have had no choice but to make it by playing for the King of diamonds onside.

This theme leads me to discuss just how differently one should play when it's obvious you are in the wrong contract. Recently I saw a player go down two vulnerable tricks in a 3NT contract playing against the odds because they were not in 6 of a minor which would make it playing with the odds. The -1570 imp swing was worth -17 imps, while making 3NT would have been -12 imps. So the player could have saved 5 imps. On the other hand had his anti-percentage play worked and 3NT made on the nose while the slam went down, he would have gained 12 imps. Obviously sorting this all out at the table takes time which is one reason for the sometimes slow play at the expert level.

And now for the second theme hand.....but with a different partner. You don't think I'd play more boards with the first partner, do you?

Hand 2: Dealer: South Vul: Both IMPS

West (my partner)

♠ K

♥ Q987532

♦ Q8

♣ AJ8

East (Me)

♠ 953

♥ AJ4

♦ AJ762

♣Q9

Bidding:

South	West	North	East	Opening lead: Queen of ♠'s
Pass	1♥		Pass	2♦
Dbf	2♥		2♠	4♥
4♠	5♥		all pass	

South won the Ace of spades and returned the two which partner ruffed. He then led the Queen of heart, ten, small, King. South now led the ten of spades which declarer ruffed. He then led the Queen of diamonds, (covered with King), then the Jack of diamonds which got ruffed for down 1 and -12 imps again.

So what could I have done this time?

Now I suggest that the morals to these two stories are:

- (1) Beware of losing TWO trump tricks missing only the Kxx.
- (2) Beware when the Queen of spades is led.
- (3) Beware when one of you holds the 953 of spades.

I couldn't wait to share these two stories with a friend of mine and his comments were priceless. While we both had some empathy for each of my partners, he agreed with all three morals, but added that I was totally at fault for insisting to sit East. Had I been West, my partner could have been writing this.!

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