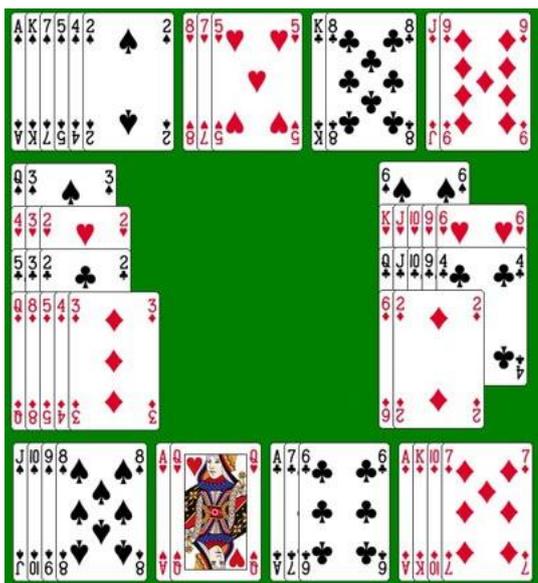


Try to get the best out of whatever contract you end up in, even though others are in a higher contract. Such a situation arose during play last Friday.



Dealer was East who passed and sitting South, I opened 1NT

Auction				
West	North	East	South	
Pass	2♥	Pass	1NT	
Pass	Pass	3♣	2♠	
Pass	Pass	Pass	4♠	
Pass	Pass	Pass		

with 18 HCPs and partner bid 2H (alerted as a transfer to spades) which I duly accepted.

East then put in a bid of 3C.

Now I jumped to 4S showing 4 spades and a maximum.

Partner knows that East's bid means that a club would be led and that I must have at least two clubs. This meant that his King runs a strong risk of being 'decapitated' and that slam might just be out of reach so he passed.

Partner could have inquired about aces by using 4NT (we play Roman key card). This would have told him that I have 3 key cards and he has the other 2. Also if he had known that we have a 10 card fit meaning that the Queen of Spades is irrelevant unless East has all 3 remaining spades, would have given confidence to go for slam.

Play				
	West	North	East	South
1	2♣	8♣	9♣	*A♣
2	3♠	*K♠	6♠	8♠
3	Q♠	*A♠	2♦	9♠
4	*Q♦	J♦	6♦	7♦
5	5♣	*K♣	4♣	6♣
6	4♦	9♦	6♥	*10♦
7	3♣	*2♠	10♣	7♣
8	2♥	8♥	J♥	*A♥
9	3♦	5♥	J♣	*A♦
10	5♦	7♥	Q♣	*K♦
11	3♥	*4♠	9♥	Q♥
12	4♥	5♠	10♥	*10♠
13	8♦	7♠	K♥	*J♠

A small Club was dutifully led and I was so disappointed when dummy went down that we were not in slam that I took it with the Ace. I could have made 7 by finessing the Queen of Hearts and cross-ruffing all the other losers.

However, as I was not in slam, after drawing trumps, I ran the Jack of Diamonds. I thought if it wins, I can discard 2 Hearts on Diamonds and not worry about the Heart finesse.

The Heart finesse would have been a better strategy because I should suspect that East may be missing a queen, the Queen of Diamonds, but without the King of Hearts, she would have been bidding on tram tickets.

I noticed that some folks made 7 and a couple of pairs had actually bid 6. Even though I was not in the contract that I felt I should have been in, I should have tried to get the best out of the hand anyway!

Happy Bridging, Bal