

The Flight A Swiss: A Winner's Perspective

David J. Weiss

In the October issue, I described how Gerry Bare and I failed to win the Swiss in Long Beach. The next regional was at Hollywood Park, and we found a winning formula. We uh, were unable to re-sign Swanson and Garber, and instead recruited Nels Erickson and Michael Schreiber (along with Chris Larsen) from the team that won last time.

Slams were once again troublesome. Try this defensive agony faced by Gerry:

North
 ♠Q73
 ♥QJ5
 ♦K974
 ♣KJ9

East
 ♠—
 ♥K963
 ♦J1063
 ♣AQ1054

| | | | |
|-------|-------|------|-------|
| Weiss | North | Bare | South |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | 1♥ |
| Pass | 2♦* | Pass | 6♥ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

*explained as a three-card limit raise

I led the diamond five, won eventually by declarer's ace. After cashing a high spade, South played the club six, covered by the seven and king. Obviously you will grab the trick, by what next?

The winning, and correct, play, is a low diamond. A high diamond allows partner's queen to be ruffed out. A heart is also a possibility, and Gerry tried one. However, declarer's seven forced West's ten, and now the run of the trumps squeezed Gerry in hearts and clubs. The diamond king was the final re-entry; that's why a diamond return sets the slam. In the critical position, the nine of hearts would have also been good enough as in that case West's preserved ten can guard the heart suit in the endgame.

North
 ♠Q73
 ♥QJ5
 ♦K974
 ♣KJ9

West
 ♠984
 ♥1042
 ♦Q85
 ♣8732

East
 ♠—
 ♥K963
 ♦J1063
 ♣AQ1054

South
 ♠AKJ10652
 ♥A87
 ♦A2
 ♣6

But this disaster was just another push. At the other table, a club was led to the jack and queen. East (who apparently was not playing parity leads) tried to cash a second club, ending the defense.

I messed up this bidding problem. Marshall, what should be my call here?

♠87
 ♥73
 ♦AKQ9875
 ♣Q7

West Bare East Weiss

♦AKQ9875

♣Q7

West

Bare

East

Weiss

1♣

1♥

Pass

?

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I confess to trying 3NT, thereby achieving the ultimate in hopes
Down in game when slam makes.

| | | |
|----------|----------|---------|
| | North | |
| | ♠AK652 | |
| | ♥A52 | |
| | ♦J1062 | |
| | ♣4 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠Q1043 | | ♠J9 |
| ♥KJ9 | | ♥Q10862 |
| ♦— | | ♦43 |
| ♣AKJ1093 | | ♣8652 |
| | South | |
| | ♠87 | |
| | ♥73 | |
| | ♦AKQ9875 | |
| | ♣Q7 | |

But that was just another push too. Of course, West shifted after the
first trick; 430 for me. Across the street, they reached a same 50 for 400. It
pays to have teammates who bring back good results.
Since we won, I feel justified in showing one ~~deserved~~ triumph. Gerry made
a really fine bid to earn a swing.

♠10864
♥K52
♦65
♣A874

| | | | |
|-------|------|------|------|
| Weiss | West | Bare | East |
| 1♦ | Pass | 1♥ | Pass |
| 2♥ | Pass | 2NT* | Pass |
| 3♦ | Pass | ? | |

The 2NT bid was an artificial negative, denying five spades and denying a
game-going hand. Partner's 3D shows a minimal reverse and can be passed.
While Pass and 3NT both seem like reasonable bids, either will end the auc-
tion without your knowing whether you're in the right spot. Gerry did better. He
bid 3♥. Now I, holding:

♠Q75
♥AQ72
♦KQJ102
♣K

was able to bid 3NT, knowing that Gerry had 4-3 in the majors, and therefore
at least four clubs, along iwth a maximum negative. My solid diamonds had to
give us play for the game. With, say, the jack of hearts instead of the jack of dia-
monds, I would have passed 3♥ and hoped to stagger home while 3NT had
little play.