

Waiting for.... Godot? A Bridge Movie

By

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Note: A bridge movie is intended to give the reader bidding and play decision as the hand develops. For maximum enjoyment answer the bolded questions, before reading the suggested answers.

Playing IMPs, E-W vul, you pick up as East: ♠AQ ♥2 ♦K109764 ♣J754. N-S are two strong, aggressive players. The bidding starts:

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♥	?	

What do you bid?

You have a good 10 HCPs, a solid six card suit, and good playing strength. A hand with which I would open the bidding. Despite all of these plusses, the best bid is pass. Why? Because vulnerable vs not, an overcall should show a full opening bid. This sounds illogical, I know, as I said this is an opening bid. However, I would want at least 13 HCPs.

Besides, it's not the end of the world if you pass! Partner is a passed hand so the chances of making a game are very slim. Plus, you don't give the opponents info about your hands, which may be a big help if they end up declaring! Pass, and wait to see what happens.

The bidding continues:

West	North	East	South
			Pass

Pass	1♥	Pass	Pass
2♣	3♥	?	

What are you thinking?

Vulnerable, partner is not fooling around. They likely have at least 5 good clubs, 8-11 HCPs. North also has a good playing strength hand, jumping to 3♥ opposite a partner who likely has very little in points, and who knows how many hearts.

Anything else?

Yes! You need to ask yourself who can make what? The answer is that you are a favourite to make 5♣! Give partner ♠976 ♥87 ♦32 ♣AK10976, and five clubs is cold. What about the opponents? Well, they can probably make 3♥ or 4♥.

So what do you bid?

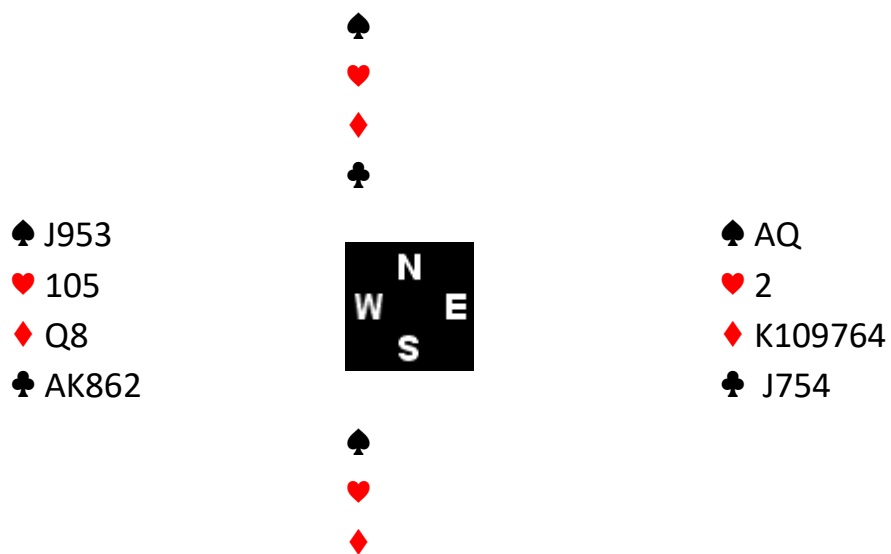
5♣ seems obvious. You are bidding for a make. But the opponents also know that. They make well bid 5♥ at this vulnerability, hoping to go for -100 instead of -600. I think the best bid is 4♣. +130 may still be a good score, and win IMPs. Maybe at the other table North opened 4♥, which would likely end the bidding. Making or down one on your estimation. In these cases, +130 would result in winning either 2 IMPs or 11 IMPs.

The main reason to bid 4♣ is to buy the hand, preferably in 5♣. And that is what actually happened at the table:

West	North	East	South
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Pass	1♥	Pass	Pass
2♣	3♥	4♣	Pass
Pass			

Dummy puts down:





North leads the ♥A, and switches to the ♠6.

What are your prospects and what is your plan?

It looks like you can make the hand by if you can avoid a club loser, and set up your diamond suit. You can avoid a club loser if:

- the suit is 2-2, or
- North has a singleton Queen.
- North has a singleton 9 or 10, and you run the Jack of clubs at trick two.

What is your plan?

It is not 100%, but I think you want to play the ♦8 from your own hand, on the first round of the suit. Therefore, you need to play a club to your hand, in order to achieve this goal.

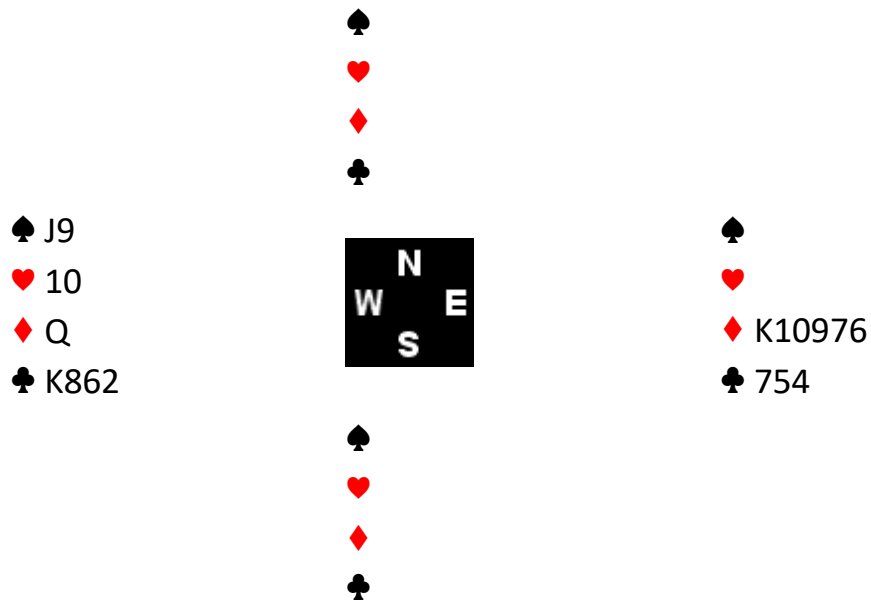
What is your club play from dummy at trick 2?

Lead the ♣J and if it goes low, run it. Why? Clubs may well be 4-0, but rate to be at least 3-1. North has 7 or 8 hearts, and seems to have some spade length with their play at trick two. If you lose to a stiff ♣Q or ♣Qx, that is life. This club play protects you against going down two, for -200, against expected bad splits. Plus, South might make a mistake.

When you lead the club jack, South covers with the queen, and north follows with the nine.

Now what?

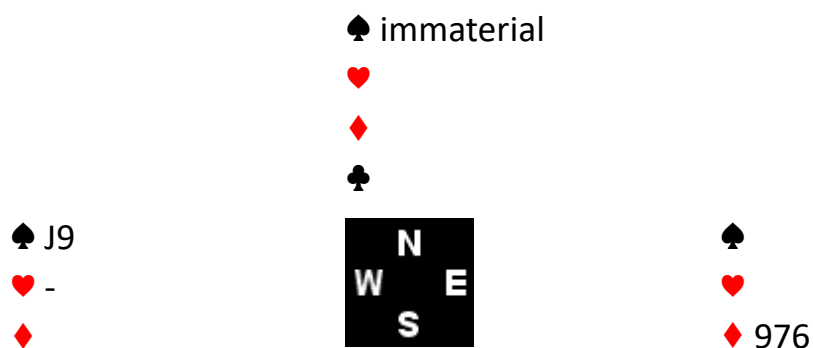
You are just about there. It looks like South has ♣Q103. Play the ♦8 as planned. North wins and returns another spade. Here is the position:



Now what?

Lead the ♦K! If both players follow, ruff a diamond, ruff a heart and play diamonds. Assuming ruffs in, overruff, pull their last trump, and ruff a major card, and dummy is good.

If instead North shows out on the ♦K, lead the ♦10, and take a ruffing finesse in diamonds. Assume south covers with the ♦J, ruff, ruff either major to reach this ending:



♣ K86

♣ 75

♠ 7
♥ J
♦ 5
♣ 103

Again, lead winning diamonds. When South ruffs, overruff pull South's last trump, and ruff a spade to dummy, which is now high. The full deal:

	♠ K1086	
	♥ AKQ9863	
	♦ A	
	♣ 9	
♠ J953		♠ AQ
♥ 105		♥ 2
♦ Q8		♦ K109764
♣ AK862		♣ J754
	♠ 742	
	♥ J74	
	♦ J532	
	♣ Q103	

Lessons to Learn

1. Your expectations of a hand can turn on a dime. Here, it was wise not to enter the auction prematurely, and reevaluate when new information was made available. You were not waiting for Godot, but waiting for more information.
2. North should have opened 4♥ opposite a passed hand. Waiting for Godot, and opening 1♥, was the wrong strategy. North knows the opponents do not have a spade fit, so if they want to enter the auction, they have to bid at the five level. Hard to do, especially vulnerable!

3. North would have done better had they led the ♦A. Looking at dummy, it looks like their best chance is for partner to hold the ♥J, and underlead their hearts and get a diamond ruff.

4. South should have been thinking about the trump suit as soon as dummy hit, and should have played small smoothly!! Maybe they were thinking, 'why did I name this article *'Waiting for Godot'*'?

In any case, South needs to be ready!! Actually playing the ten on the first round of auction would have worked too!

5. Running the ♣J at trick two is probably the right play, but close. It is a hard play to make, because if it is wrong you look silly. But making the right play, even if it doesn't work is in itself its own reward! Maybe partner will reward you for making the right play....maybe tickets to a good play by Samuel Beckett!