

Tales of Akarana

The Natural Psyche...or “Bidding the Boss Suit”.



RULE

The race to bid spades was a key factor on one particular board this week. Would you bid them in this auction? You are South with:

♠ KQT5

♥ 9854

♦ 63

♣ 986

and hear the following:

West	North	East	South
1♦	x	1♥	?

You could make a negative double (maybe a little presumptuous), call 1♠ (seems better but does that show five?) or look at the rest of your hand and just pass.

What about the following auction where you are West with:

♠ 7432

♥ A7

♦ AKT8742

♣ -

and hear:

West	North	East	South
1♦	x	1♥	Pass
?			

Pass is surely no option here but would you content yourself with 2♦ or would you show your “powerful” second suit?

I like the idea of sticking in a spade bid here before reverting to where my strength and intentions really lie. Sometimes, by bidding the suit, it makes it harder for the opposition to find their own spade fit. That was certainly the case here but keeping the opponents quiet also made it impossible for my partner to make his splinter bid:

Board 24	♠ A J 8 6
West Deals	♥ K Q J
None Vul	♦ —
	♣ K Q J 7 5 2
♠ 7 4 3 2	
♥ A 7	
♦ A K 10 8 7 4 2	
♣ —	
	♠ 9
	♥ 10 6 3 2
	♦ Q J 9 5
	♣ A 10 4 3
	♠ K Q 10 5
	♥ 9 8 5 4
	♦ 6 3
	♣ 9 8 6

West	North	East	South
<i>Richard Solomon</i>	<i>Mike Dunn</i>	<i>Gary Chen</i>	<i>Owen Camp</i>
1♦	Dbl	1♥	Pass
1♠	2♣	2♦	3♣
5♦	All pass		

Owen (South) took the conservative approach of passing 1♥ enabling me to get the spades in first. When partner, unasked, showed some diamond support, I was not going to hang around and battle away against the opponents’ black suit bidding. I kept the opponents out

of spades though had guided them to their cheapest dive, in 6♣, only two down, though no great dive if East-West took their own “dive” in 6♦.

A black suit lead from North makes 6♦ easy to play (ruff three spades in the East hand), though there are also 12 tricks on the ♥K lead. West wins and has to use a trump to cross to dummy to dispose of their heart loser on the ♣A. Now, West gives up a spade to South whose best defence is a second round of trumps. West can now only ruff two spades in dummy but the fortunate (not a word North would use) lie of the heart suit enables the ♥10 to be set up to discard West’s remaining spade loser.

Was I too premature, too confident in bidding the diamond game? 9 of the 14 tables played in 5♦ with North doubling (the “stripe tailed ape” struck again) unsuccessfully six times. Mike Dunn did well by passing. Jeff Thompson-David O’Shaughnessy risked all but survived by diving in 6♣ while two North-South pairs had contrasting spade excursions, one conceding 50 in 5♠ and the other just a little more a level higher!

The final table saw some explosive bidding after David Dolbel did call 1♠ on his paltry 5 count as South. He did not realise then that he was about to be declarer in slam:

West	North	East	South
Pam	John	Michael	David
Canning	Evitt	Curry	Dolbel
1♦	x	1♥	1♠
2♦	4♠	5♦	Pass

Pass 6♠ x Pass

?

Maybe Pam Canning could have raised to 6♦ a round earlier but John Evitt made what looked like an advance sacrifice over 5♦. Even though Michael Curry (East) took the axe to 6♠, Pam started wondering. Had North-South really bid all the way to 6♠ on a 4-4 fit? If they had 9 spades and her partner could produce just the ♥K or the ♣A, then all 13 tricks in diamonds would be very attractive.

So, she bid on and got doubled by John Evitt. Michael obliged with the high club but there was nowhere for him to hide that tiny spade.

6♠ x loses more than the two missing aces. At the very least, West must score a club ruff but West can engineer a heart ruff too. Thus, the race to bid spades had interesting results...a dive over a making slam if South got the spades in first but the slam being missed if West called the suit.

The “boss” suit? Does that mean we must bid it?



Richard Solomon

