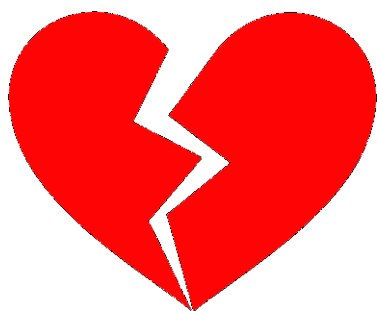


HEART ATTACK ...and HEART BREAK!



The evening was littered with long heart suits. The heart suit normally has to play second fiddle to the black ♠ but much of the action revolved around the red hearts.

Spring Lin and Kevin Fan were the only pair to get to 6♥ when the North- South cards were:

Board 9:

North (dealer)	South
♠ AJT2	♠ 5
♥ A4	♥ KJT98765
♦ 7542	♦ -
♣ KQ6	♣ A985

Grand was makeable but just being at the 6 level was great....and hard to do despite the opposition having something to say in diamonds. Yet, as you might expect, hearts lauds over its red cousin, especially when there is an 8 card suit around.

What surprised me was that more North-Souths were not more active in hearts after the following start to the auction on Board 24:

<u>Board 24</u>		West	North	East	South
West Deals	♠ 9 8	Pass	Pass	1 ♦	3 ♥
None Vul	♥ Q 7 3				
	♦ Q J 8	Dbl	?		
	♣ A 10 9 7 3				
♠ K J 7 3					♠ A Q 6 2
♥ 10 9 2					♥ —
♦ K 10 9					♦ A 7 5 4 3 2
♣ K 8 2					♣ Q J 6
					♠ 10 5 4
					♥ A K J 8 6 5 4
					♦ 6
					♣ 5 4

South's 3♥ bid is "text-book" and only the vulnerability might put North off jumping to 5♥ before the opposition had time to find their spade fit. At our

table, after the 5♥ jump, Linda Cartner and Glenis Palmer did well not to take the push to 5♠ but took the (insufficient) +300 money from 5♥x.

Surprisingly, at half of the 12 tables, East-West bought the board in 4♠, with two declarers failing. If South had pre-empted, it would seem wise to ruff the opening heart lead and play ♦A and a second diamond meaning that South would be ruffing thin air. Although clubs will always provide a way back to the East hand, a club discard by South on the second round of diamonds, should always get the defence a third but not a fourth defensive trick.



At the other three tables, South bought the contract in 4♥, one time even with success.

Everyone played hearts on Board 23 with those at the 5 and 6 level having no chance with 2 aces and a certain trump to lose. Trump? One defender held ♥QT92 sandwiched between J54 and AK8763. Only 2 declarers and DealMaster Pro managed to make the heart game...heart-break in both senses of the word.

However, the real heart-break came on Board 16... and with it comes a warning that it is very dangerous to make a plea as you put down your dummy:

<u>Board 16</u>		♠ K 5	
West Deals		♥ 7 2	
E-W Vul		♦ K 10 9 4 3	
		♣ J 10 7 6	
♠ A Q J 8 4 2	♠ —		♥ Q J 9 8 6 4
♥ K 5 3	W	N	♦ 5 2
♦ A 7 6	S	E	♣ A 9 8 4 2
♣ 5			
		♠ 10 9 7 6 3	
		♥ A 10	
		♦ Q J 8	
		♣ K Q 3	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT	Pass
2 ♠	All pass		

1NT was a one round force with Linda Cartner (East) having no more to say when spades were rebid. "No more to say?" As she laid down dummy, with

diamonds in the place normally reserved for trumps, she commented that she hoped they did not have a heart fit.

This game can be cruel. The choice for East-West here is to play in 2♠ and fail by a trick as declarer plays ♠A followed by ♠Q or play in 4♥ making 2 overtricks! 5 East-West pairs played in hearts, two in game, while all bar one who played 2♠ failed.

Are we too pessimistic at times? After limiting one's hand with 1NT, maybe we should try 3♥? This can be passed though on this evening, West would be delighted to raise to game.

Hearts plays at least 4 tricks better than spades, "heart-break" for those who were left to sweat in the master-suit. Nice suit, is hearts, if you can bid them!

Richard Solomon