

BERMUDA BOWL HANDS

I have been reading *The All Time Best Deals, Bermuda Bowl*, written by Henry Francis and Brian Senior, about the first 50 years of the Bermuda Bowl, from 1950. It's a book I hadn't read before, and I want to share some interesting hands with you.

From the 1981 Final between USA and Pakistan

Meckstroth and Rodwell play a very active game. On this hand it backfired:

	♠ K 8 2		
	♥ J 4		
	♦ A 9		
	♣ K Q 9 8 5 4		
♠ J 7		♠ 10 9 5 4	
♥ A 10 6 5 3		♥ K Q 8	
♦ 7 5 3 2		♦ Q J 10 4	
♣ 6 3		♣ J 7	
	♠ A Q 6 3		
	♥ 9 7 2		
	♦ K 8 6		
	♣ A 10 2		

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1♣
1♥	2♥	3♥	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	5♣
All Pass			

North's 2♥ cue-bid denied four spades, implied a club fit and forced to game. South showed his spade values, hoping to provide North with some useful information.

When North could not bid 3NT, South continued to 5♣, confident of strong support opposite – exactly what he got.

At the other table, North-South bid to 3NT. It was played by South, so West simply led a low heart and the defence cashed the first five tricks. However, even if played by North, it would have been plausible for East to lead the ♥K, hoping to strike partner's suit.

Obviously, opposite a passed hand, Meckstroth realised the opponents had a game making and wanted to make life difficult. However, sometimes when it isn't your hand it pays to stay quiet, giving the opposition less information – whether it relates to the bidding (as in this case) or the play (if you reveal too much about your hand shape).

From the 1985 Final between USA and Austria

This example of declarer play was a highlight of the final. Of course, once again, declarer had been provided with a blueprint from some indiscreet bidding by the defenders.

	♠ K Q J 10 5 3		
	♥ J		
	♦ A Q 8 2		
	♣ A J		
♠ 9 8		♠ 6 4 2	
♥ Q 9 8 3		♥ 2	
♦ 10		♦ J 9 7 6 4 3	
♣ K Q 9 8 7 4		♣ 5 3 2	
	♠ A 7		
	♥ A K 10 7 6 5 4		
	♦ K 5		
	♣ 10 6		

West	North	East	South
Terraneo	Ross	Fucik	Pender
		Pass	1♥
1NT *	Double	2♦	4♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Double	5♦	Pass	5♥
Pass	5NT	Pass	6♦
Pass	7♠	All Pass	

[On the above auction, South denied the ♥Q but showed the ♦K making the grand slam an excellent option.]

With silent opponents, the normal line is to win the club lead then play the ♦K, a diamond to the Ace and ruff a diamond with the ♠A, planning to draw trumps and claim. That is how the Austrian declarer approached the hand but the 6-1 diamond break meant that he went two down.

Hugh Ross had a lot more information to go on, however. The comic 1NT overcall and East's diamond bid suggested that there was some distribution about. More to the point, it indicated that all the ingredients were present for a double squeeze, and there was no need to risk a defensive ruff.

Ross won the club lead and ran all his trumps (discarding 4 hearts and 1 club from dummy). Then he led a diamond to the King and a diamond back to the Ace. When he cashed the ♦Q, West had no answer, having to give up his control of either the ♣K or the heart suit. In practice, rather than unguard the heart suit, Terraneo threw his top club, hoping against hope that Fucik might hold the ♣J. It was not to be and Ross had earned his side a massive 17 IMP swing.

All I can say is: opposite a passed hand, making the comic 1NT overcall is unwise, for all the reasons already given!

From the Qualifying Rounds in 1997

Round 1 saw a neat piece of declarer play from Paul Thurston of Canada.

Dlr East	♠ A K 7 4 2	
Nil Vul	♥ 8 4	
	♦ A 10 8 6	
	♣ A 4	
♠ Q 9 6 5		♠ 10 3
♥ A Q 9 6 3 2		♥ J 10
♦ 7 5		♦ 9 2
♣ Q		♣ K J 10 7 6 5 2
	♠ J 8	
	♥ K 7 5	
	♦ K Q J 4 3	
	♣ 9 8 3	

Thurston, South, was declarer in 5♦ after his opposition East had opened 3♣.

West led the ♣Q and Thurston won the Ace, played a high trump to hand, then three rounds of spades, ruffing high. A second trump to dummy was followed by a further spade, on which Thurston threw a club, end-playing West. That defender underled the ♥A, but Thurston won the King and could cross to dummy with the ♦10 to cash the fifth spade, discarding his remaining club. With a trump still in dummy, he could just give up the heart loser and claim his contract.

Counting, counting, counting. I can't emphasise it enough. He gave West 1 club, 2 diamonds, 4 spades and no longer needed to rely on the ♥A being onside.

From the Final in 1997 between USA2 and France

	♠ 9 5 3	
	♥ A 10	
	♦ J 10 9 2	
	♣ A 9 6 2	
♠ J 10 2		♠ A Q 7
♥ Q 7 4		♥ K J 6 3 2
♦ 7 5 3		♦ A K 6 4
♣ K Q 8 7		♣ J
	♠ K 8 6 4	
	♥ 9 8 5	
	♦ Q 8	
	♣ 10 5 4 3	

Both Easts declarered 4♥, but the play went very differently.

Multon led the ♥8 to Mouiel's Ace. Mouiel switched to the ♦J, and Wolff won the Ace then led the ♣J. Mouiel won and tried a spade switch, but Wolff won the Ace, drew trumps ending in dummy and took two diamond discards on the clubs. Making 10 tricks, +620.

At the other table, Rodwell led a spade. That looked to be a good start for declarer as he won dummy's Jack, but it did not turn out that way. Mari led a low club and Meckstroth took his Ace. Back came a diamond to the Ace and now Mari's problem was finding a way to get to dummy to take his discards on the club winners.

Looking at all four hands, it is easy – play the ♥K then ♥J from hand, forcing out the Ace, then cross to dummy with the ♥Q. However, that only succeeds because the ♥A is doubleton. Mari tried the ♥K but that was ducked. Now he changed tack, playing three rounds of diamonds, establishing a ruff as a route to dummy. Meckstroth won the third diamond as Rodwell pitched a club. A spade came through; Mari rose with the Ace and continued with his plan, ruffing the fourth diamond in dummy. Unfortunately, that allowed Rodwell to discard another club. Mari threw his spade loser on the ♣K then played the ♥Q to Meckstroth's Ace.

A fascinating battle between declarer and the defence was completed with a club being led, which promoted South's ♥9 into the setting trick. -100 and 12 IMPs to USA2.

This was a lovely defence, thinking about declarer's issue (entry to dummy) and then following up with working out a way to defeat the contract.

The book is full of fascinating deals. There's always something new we can learn about our game!

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