

Duplicate -bidding and play

We will assume that you know roughly what happens in a duplicate tournament -that the same hands are played by the other pairs and the contracts recorded. {It needn't really be your concern *how* the director awards scores to the best and worst results but common sense dictates that if one N/S pair (say) on board 9 made 13 tricks in 4Sp and every other N/S pair on board 9 only managed 10 tricks then the ones who made the most tricks will get a "Top" (the top score)}.

Duplicate is obviously different to rubber and chicago bridge and the tactics will need to reflect this.

Imagine you are North and in a game of rubber you pick up a 20 pts hand; you are pleased of course and will probably expect to be able to reach game and be halfway to winning the rubber. Similarly in chicago the likely game that you will bid and make will give your score a welcome boost.

In duplicate holding 20 pts is ...o.k. but it is only the same 20 pts that every other North will pick up and bid with.

In rubber bridge, bidding 3NT (or 5D or whatever game) will be an excellent result - in duplicate bidding and just making game might result in a poor score (a "bottom").

The point is that on this imaginary hand with 20 pts every North is in competition with every other North. Lets see what might happen :-

N	S
AK53	987
K6	QJ
AKJ7	Q9865
Q76	AJ3

2NT -----3NT (seems a fair auction)

On a heart lead North has 9 tricks and will make their contract.

[this scores 600 pts Vulnerable].

The 9 tricks can be got without risk and although an overtrick might be found with a succesful club finesse , if that finesse lost then 3NT would go down; it would be criminal to ever consider risking the contract for overtricks if you were playing rubber or chicago bridge. In duplicate ...a player might well take the chance of the finesse to get a better score.

[If they take the club finesse and it works they will score 630 and will beat every other North who settled for 600]

Now the Norths who do take the club finesse are not necessarily thrill seekers with a gambling problem ; they may have made a fine judgement -they might have worked out from the opponents' discards for instance that the club finesse was likely to work. But it would be a risk.

And the risk is rewarded in duplicate. I have said that you don't need to know how the final scores are computed but if there was a 5 table duplicate and one North made 630 and all the other four Norths made 600 then our finessing North will score [8 out of 8] and all the other Norths [3 out of 8]; that margin of 5 pts could well be enough to win the tournament.

