**Week4 - Judgment or System ?**

Good bidding is mostly a matter of fine judgment in evaluating your resources knowing whether your hands fit well or badly and whether your values are suitable or not .

 I give you one of my favourite hands which features possibly  the greatest  pair of all time the Americans  Eric Rodwell & Jeff Meckstroth who are noted for playing a particularly  complex version of precision club

 You hold the following big hand

 AKJTxxx

x

AQJxx

void

 the bidding uncontested goes

 1h -1s -2c -2d -2h -3s -4h ?

 the points to bear in mind about this sequence are 1h was 11-15 and promised 5 cards and  2d fourth suit forcing and was played as a game force which is probably a better approach than playing the bid as a 1 round force since it avoids all those ambiguous invitational sequences when players are unsure about whether a bid is forcing or not .

 What has partner shown here ?

 He has bid hearts 3 times which suggests a 7 card suit together with 4 clubs so only holds 2 cards in our suits therefore the fit is terrible he did not raise 3s so has either a singleton or void in the suit .Therefore although a superb hand at the start it has turned to dust now and venture beyond game and you receive  a minus score best is to rebid 4s now as even 4h is in danger.

 He holds

 void

KQJxxxx

xx

KQxx

  The other side of the bidding coin is complex system which is not to everybody's taste but to have a good system and to know it very well reaps enormous benefits .I was lucky to partner Trevor Ward for many years and he has a superb method of which the following hand is a wonderful  example of the method  from the Pachabo

 AKx

void

T9xx

AKQJxx

 you open 1c ( strong ) and following a series of questions ( relays ) you find out that partner holds

 5 hearts

 4 diamonds

 2-5-4-2 distribution

 6 controls ( ace is 2 and king is 1 ) so all you now need to do is to place the final contract without further ado ?

 the answer is 7c since you can count 6 clubs ,2 tricks in each side suit and a spade ruff in the dummy is the 13th trick .He holds

 xx

AKxxx

AKxx

xx

"Simples"  as the small furry creature in those adverts would say !

**Week 3**

 A knowledge of squeeze play is considered the preserve of the expert.

 Try your hand at the following grand slam

**North**

Qxx

KQxx

xxx

xxx

**South**

AKJTxx

Ax

AKJ

AQ

 there are 12 top tricks ( 6 spades ,3 hearts,2 diamonds and the CA )

One declarer thought he could combine his chances by drawing trumps cashing the DA & DK and if no DQ dropped he could fall back on the club finesse .

 I give you the full hand

**West**

x

JT9x

xxx

JTxxx

**East**

 xxx

xxx

Qxxx

Kxx

So both the CK and DQ lie favourably so it is impossible  to fail in 7s surely ?

Consider an alternative line of play if you run 6 rounds of spades 2 top diamonds  plus CA you reach the following 4 card end position:

KQxx

Ax

J

Q

What will the defence do? One hand will be forced to retain 4 hearts to guard the 4th round in the dummy and if the hand with the four or more  hearts ( either hand ) holds either DQ or CK it will be squeezed to concede the grand slam so this line of play succeeds 75% of the time when either defender holds 4 hearts and one of the crucial minor suit honours whereas the other line is a tad over 50% .

Here the superior line fails and  the poorer line succeeds which is one of the charms of bridge and possibly the reason why  we always come back for more.