


95. Balancing

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♠ J753 ♥ 54 ♦ A74 ♣ Q862	♠ 64 ♥ KJ1063 ♦ KQ5 ♣ A54		♠ AQ2 ♥ 987 ♦ J1086 ♣ J93
♠ K1098 ♥ AQ2 ♦ 932 ♣ K107			
W	N	E	S
1♥	P	2♥	P
P	Dbl	P	2♠
All Pass			
--None Vulnerable--			

The bidding:

West, with 13 high card points and five hearts, opens one heart. East, with support and six to nine points, makes a simple raise. West passes so he has no desire to invite. He has 12 to 14 points.

If North passes, the auction will end. Therefore, he is in the balancing seat. The opponents have from 18 to 23 points, so on average, he and his partner will have 21 points. Therefore, North doubles.

This is a balancing takeout double that shows no extra values and only a desire to push the opponents to the three level. North is counting on South to have points because the opponents made no attempt at game and have shown a fit.

South bids two spades and the auction passes out.

The contract: Two Spades by South

The opening lead: The king of diamonds.

Anybody who would lead a heart should realize that a heart is meant to be led up to the KJ10xx holding and not away from it. A lead other than a heart is best to let partner lead it at his first opportunity.

The play:

Declarer wins the ace of diamonds and plays a small trump. East ducks smoothly and declarer plays the ten. It holds. he plays a small club to the dummy, the queen wins and he then plays another trump. East wins the ace and plays a heart. Declarer loses the queen to the king and West plays diamonds.

Declarer will draw trump and ruff a heart and play a club to the ten forcing the ace. He will lose one club, two diamonds, one heart and one spade, making his contract

The result: Two spades making +110. Opponents would have made two hearts.

Notes:

-Three hearts will go down one on a club lead. South must play the ace of hearts stopping declarer from making a finesse to the jack or ten. Now declarer has a tough time getting back to the board. He will get back on a diamond making a two heart contract by making a second heart finesse.

-In order for balancing to be successful, as is the case here, the opponents must have a fit.

-Even if two spades goes down one it is better than -110.

-Do you have a question or a hand of note that occurred at your bridge table? If yes, send it to me at wt.watson@yahoo.ca and I will answer it. The questions may appear in a future column.