

Hamman's Law - Refuted

Russ Shoup

Ohio's District 11 heroes took on Texas (District 16) in the first knockout round of the Grand National Teams Championship Flight and soon the great Bob Hamman and his world-famous theory were tested.

My partner was Marc Low, and Hamman was playing with Bart Bramley.

Dealer:N Vul : : N-S	♠ 10 9 8 4 3 ♥ A 6 ♦ Q 10 8 4 ♣ Q 5		West North East South <i>Shoup Bramley Low Hamman</i> Pass Pass 1♥ 3♣ Pass Pass 3NT(1) All Pass
♠ K J ♥ 10 3 2 ♦ 6 2 ♣ K 10 8 7 3 2		♠ A 7 6 5 2 ♥ Q J 5 ♦ J 9 7 3 ♣ 9	(1) Hamman's Rule: If 3NT is reasonable, do it now.
	♠ Q ♥ K 9 8 7 4 ♦ A K 5 ♣ A J 6 4		

I guessed to lead the magic ♠K, forcing Hamman to admit to his ♠Q. Dummy's spades were daunting, but I persisted with the ♠J to unblock the suit and to create the third defensive winner in partner's hand. Partner signaled with the ♠7, a suit-preference signal for a heart switch. Hamman, meanwhile, let go of a heart after a long pause.

I continued with the ♥2 (suggesting an honor). Dummy played low, and Marc false carded with the ♥Q so that Hamman couldn't tell which defender might end up on lead if there were some later end play afoot.

Hamman fired a club toward dummy, so I flew up with the king. (If I had ducked, Hamman would have been able to knock out the ♠A to score two spades, two hearts, three diamonds and two clubs for nine tricks.) I realized that it was hardly likely that Hamman would have pitched a heart from K-J-x-x-x, so I returned another heart to dummy's ace, creating a fifth defensive winner for our side. Ohio soon scored plus 100 to prove Hamman wrong ... this time.

At the other table, teammates Scott Gates and Bob Sulgrove got plus 1100 after 1♥-(3♣)-Dbl -All Pass for a 15-IMP pickup, sending Ohio to a comfortable win.

Hamman's Law – Proved

By Mark Horton

the deal cited above (on pg. 8 of Tuesday's Daily Bulletin) Bob Hamman could have proved his famous rule (If 3NT is a reasonable choice, bid it) in several ways, despite the defensive efforts of his opponents.

Dealer:N Vul : : :NS	♠ 10 9 8 4 3 ♥ A 6 ♦ Q 10 8 4 ♣ Q 5		West North East South Pass Pass 1♥ 3♣. Pass. Pass 3NT All Pass
♠ K J ♥ 10 3 2 ♦ 6 2 ♣ K 10 8 7 3 2		♠ A 7 6 5 2 ♥ Q J 5 ♦ J 9 7 3 ♣ 9	
	♠ Q ♥ K 9 8 7 4 ♦ A K 5 ♣ A J 6 4		

Hamman was South. West got off to the good lead of the ♠K and continued with the ♠J (on which declarer pitched a heart) before exiting with a low heart.

One way for declarer to play is to win the heart switch in dummy and play a spade. If East wins and returns a club, declarer plays low and has nine tricks. If East instead tries a second heart, declarer can duck and be sure to come to nine tricks. However, this works because hearts are 3-3. If they are 4-2 and declarer ducks, East plays another heart and declarer is a trick short. Declarer can prevail by winning the second heart and playing a low club.

Taking into account the possibility that clubs are 7-0 and hearts 4-2 (not unlikely after West's overcall), I think declarer has a beautiful way to get home if the full deal looked like this:

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Taking into account the possibility that clubs are 7-0 and hearts 4-2 (not unlikely after West's overcall), I think declarer has a beautiful way to get home if the full deal looked like this:

- ♠ 10 9
 - ♥ --
 - ♦ Q 10
 - ♣ --
-
- ♠ A
 - ♥ ---
 - ♦ ---
 - ♣ 10 9 8 7
-
- ♠ A
 - ♥ J
 - ♦ J 9
 - ♣ --
-
- ♠ --
 - ♥ 9 8
 - ♦ 5
 - ♣ J

When dummy throws a spade on the ♣J, East has no good move.