5. Not opening "High Fives"

Say you are 5-5 in the majors. Which is the better auction with partner responding (say) 1NT? (a) 1 v-1NT-2 v?

Clearly (b) is superior, because partner can give you a preference back to your first suit without having to go up to the Three-level. With two five-card suits, you should always bid the higher-ranking suit first, planning to bid the lower-ranking next, finishing the two-stage process more economically. Therefore, if you bid l, then 2, you must have more hearts than spades.

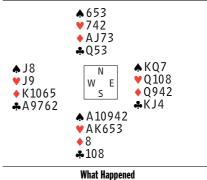
What Happened

West could have led any one of his 13 cards and 3♥ would have gone one down. He chose  $\bullet 5$  — from an unappetising series of options. Declarer won dummy's A and started on spades (best), leading to  $\triangle$  A then  $\triangle$  2. East won  $\triangle$  Q and led a second diamond. Declarer ruffed and led ♠4. East won ♠K and led a third diamond. Declarer ruffed and now cashed **V**AK. Leaving  $\mathbf{V}$ Q out, he led the winning  $\mathbf{A}$ 10 and threw \$3. East ruffed and switched to \$4. West won \$A and returned a second club to East's ♣J. One down — 'twas ever thus.

## What Should Have Happened

After South bids his five-card suits in the correct order, high-then-low, declarer ends up at the more comfortable Two-level. West can lead any one of his 13 cards and the outcome will be eight-five (tricks) to N-S.

Dealer: South, Vulnerability: Neither



(1) Erroneously thinking, "I can bid 1♥ now and 1♠ next." But how can you bid 1♠ next — the bidding will be above 1♠ when it comes back to you?

(2) Thinking (as he should) that partner has more hearts than spades, typically  $4 - 5 \checkmark$ , even  $4 - 6 \checkmark$ .

Contract: 3♥, Opening Lead: ♦5

What Should Have Happened			
S	W	N	Ε
1♠(1) 2♥	Pass Pass	1NT 2♠(2)	Pass end

- (1) "High fives". Start high, finish low.(2) Standard preference bid, knowing part-
- (2) Standard preference bid, knowing partner has five (or more) spades.

Contract:  $2 \spadesuit$  , Opening Lead:  $\blacklozenge 5$ 

The only marginal situation is 5 \$\( 5 - 5 \), for there is an undoubted economical advantage in opening 1 and rebidding 1 . However, such a route makes it hard to show the fifth spade. I'd stick with the simple rule, "High fives", whether opening, responding or overcalling. andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk