

# Better Bridge



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The pendulum swings.

In business terminology we convey a sense of urgency compactly, tersely, yet inoffensively thus: "Time is of the essence. Presto! Do not dawdle. We need it now."

In the theater the essence is in the timing. The most brilliant piece falls flat when the pace is wrong. Chekhov cannot be rushed, nor O'Neill. Comedy, however artless it appears, requires precision, a lively flow.

At the bridge table, proper timing is equally essential. The pendulum swings. Handled exactly, in correct sequence — success; improperly — failure.

Sometimes the timing necessary involves only a single move. On occasion three or four plays must be made in consecution to achieve the desired goal.

Here is an example of a simple sequence:

## North

S 7 6 5  
H 8 6 4 3  
D K 9 7  
C A 5 2

## West

S 9  
H Q J 10  
D J 6 5 2  
C J 9 8 7 4

## East

S J 10 8 3  
H K 9 7 5 2  
D 10 8 4  
C 10

## South

S A K Q 4 2  
H A  
D A Q 3  
C K Q 6 3

Dealer — South. Both sides vulnerable.

South	West	North	East
2 C	Pass	2 D	Pass
2 S	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 C	Pass	3 S	Pass
4 D	Pass	5 C	Pass
6 S	All Pass		

North-South bid smartly to a good slam. Moreover, they did well to bid it in spades rather than no-trump for the suit slam has extra chances.

West had a natural lead, an unbid suit to boot, and so began with the queen of hearts, East signalling encouragement with the seven. Declarer had no foreboding and wondered whether he had missed a grand slam.

Two rounds of high trumps reassured him as West showed out on the sec-

ond, uncovering a trump loser. He continued with two more, West discarding a club, a diamond and a heart. East won the jack of spades and returned a low heart, South ruffing. There was no way to avoid the loss of a club, however, and declarer had to admit defeat at the last trick.

Having suggested a club suit in the auction, South could not expect either defender to unguard it, holding four or more. Of course, the suit might lay 3-3 but that only happens for the opponents not for you and me.

A better plan was available.

After West failed to follow to the second spade, South must enter dummy with the club ace to lead another club. East cannot gain by ruffing for now South comes to five spades, the ace of hearts and six minor suit tricks, so he discards a heart. Declarer wins and re-enters dummy to lead a third club. Since the scenario has not changed in two leads, South wins this, then ruffs his fourth club with dummy's last trump.

Whether or not East overruffs the end result is the same for declarer gains an extra trump trick in either case.

Six no-trump does not stand against a heart lead and a 4-1 spade division; six spades does if the timing is right.

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