

## CAUTIOUS BIDDER [3]

The East Wales Congress, held at the Lysaghts Institute in Newport over last weekend, saw a somewhat reduced field of twenty-six teams. Still, there were plenty of strong players amongst them and a tough competition was assured. The two day event was won by the Cardiff pair of Filip and Diane Kurbalija, teamed with Patrick Shields and Dan McIntosh. McIntosh and Shields may be less familiar names to some, but Patrick is a Welsh international of long standing and Dan McIntosh is a former English Junior International, now based in the Channel Islands. They make a formidable pairing.

We played the winners in the third match on Sunday, and they pretty well demolished us. This hand was one of two game swings out.

Dealer West; both vul

	♠A9875	
	♥92	
	♦A62	
	♣Q82	
♠6		♠KQ1032
♥10653		♥KQJ74
♦KJ1054		♦98
♣J104		♣A
	♠J4	
	♥A8	
	♦Q73	
	♣K97653	

At the table where Filip and Diane sat North/South against our team-mates, Liz Atkinson and Chris Rochelle, the bidding was as follows.

<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
P	P	1S	2C
P	2S	3H	P
P	P		

Diane's entry into the auction in the South seat, coupled with her partner's unassuming cue bid, may perhaps have given East/West the impression that their opponents held more playing strength than was in fact the case (each pair had twenty points). Whether or not that was the explanation, Liz's failure to make a negative double at her second go when holding useful cards in both red suits seems a trifle cautious. In the circumstances Chris's 3H call when the bidding came back to him showed a powerful hand and now Liz might have bid the heart game. Only five points, but surely worth bidding on once a fit has been located.

This was the bidding at our table, Shields and McIntosh holding the East/West cards.

<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
P	P	1S	P
1N	P	3H	P
4H	P	P	P

Sue elected not to make a club overcall with the South hand so Shields and McIntosh were given a free run. Dan McIntosh did well to dredge up a 1NT response at his first go, and Shields' 3H rebid showed 5/5 and an invitational hand (strong pairs tend to be clear about these things). Some holding the West hand might have concluded that they had done more than enough already, but Dan McIntosh knows that bridge is a game of tricks and the nine card heart fit persuaded him to bid the game.

Patrick Shields did not detain us long with the play. He successfully ran the eight of diamonds, forcing the Ace (the finesse against the Queen was a better bet than putting up the King since the finesse could later be repeated if necessary). The diamond finesse having succeeded, and the Jack of spades having fallen, he soon had his ten tricks: four natural heart trucks, two established spade winners, two spade ruffs, plus the King of diamonds and the Ace of clubs. Chris Rochelle made the same ten tricks, but that was still nine IMPs away.

GD