

CAUTIOUS BIDDER [17]

The South-West of Ireland Bridge Congress, held in Killarney each May, is for me and Sue one of the most enjoyable weeks of the year. The setting is out of this world. If you stay in The Lake Hotel, which is the playing venue, you can walk into their restaurant and look out over the lakes and mountains and imagine that you've died and gone to heaven (unlikely in my case, I know). It really is quite stupendous.

The bridge is run by the charismatic Diarmuid Reddan, who takes care of everyone and everything. No partner? - Diarmuid will find one for you. No team-mates? - Diarmuid will whistle some up. There are always two events running in parallel and Diarmuid takes care of both, unaided. He also deals all the boards, manages the money, and takes the entries. When the need arises, he plays (very well).

Apart from the first and final days you only play bridge in the evenings, leaving your days free to explore this wonderful part of Ireland. Why not try it next year?

The following hand was played in the Men's and Ladies Teams events.

Dealer North; both non-vul

	♠ void	
	♥ J965	
	♦ KQJ97	
	♣ KJ63	
♠ 7653		♠ AKQJ1098
♥ 8		♥ Q
♦ 852		♦ A106
♣ AQ1052		♣ 84
	♠ 42	
	♥ AK107432	
	♦ 43	
	♣ 97	

This was the bidding at my table.

<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
	1D	4S	P
P	P		

I was East and I saw no point in bidding anything other than Four Spades (Sue did the same in the Ladies event). This gave South a difficult decision. In both cases he/she elected to pass. It was then very difficult for North to back in when the bidding came back round to him. If he doubles he is forcing partner to the five level and that is not really a practical proposition given such a moderate opening hand. If you study the hand you will see that North/South are 'cold' for Five Hearts, but East's aggressive action had made it difficult for them. I don't think I could have found it in me to pass the South hand, but I admit that bidding Five Hearts could be wrong (and expensive).

What of Four Spades? South began with a top heart and his partner's count signal made plain the need to switch. This South duly did - to a diamond - following which the contract could no longer be defeated.

It was a simple matter for declarer to take his Ace, draw trumps, and exit with a diamond. (Note that it would have been very poor play to attempt the club finesse.) North could take his diamond winners but was then end-played, forced either to lead round into dummy's club holding or to concede a ruff and discard. Ten tricks.

As can readily be seen when you look at all four hands, a club switch at trick two would have defeated the game. Should South have found it? He'd look pretty silly if his partner had three diamond tricks to cash whilst declarer's clubs were running. But what are the odds? The diamond switch seems almost automatic, but I think there's a case for a club. I wouldn't have found it, but I think some good players might.

Last week's Teltscher hand

How many of you spotted last week's deliberate mistake? In the five card ending that I provided I gave East an extra spade and only one trump. There would have been no squeeze in that case. This (below) was the actual position, with East in his contract of Six Diamonds requiring the remainder of the tricks. As you can see, declarer's penultimate diamond squeezes South in three suits. At the table South opted to give up his club guard, enabling declarer to overtake his Jack of clubs and enjoy three club winners in addition to his last two diamonds. Apologies if I gave anyone a headache wondering what on earth I was on about.

