

## CAUTIOUS BIDDER [28]

The final 'Pro-Am' Teams of the summer was played on Thursday. Liz Atkinson deserves great credit for this initiative which has proved notably successful. It has given more Cardiff members some experience of Teams play and has also provided a shot in the arm for Thursday evenings. Angela Gilbert was the clear overall winner. I was feeling under the weather for this last one so Dave Bolwell came off the subs bench to replace me. (I shall take as read how great an improvement this represented, so no need to write in.)

Sue mentioned this hand to me, so I looked it up on the website. There was considerable variation in the results at the six tables in play, which in itself makes it of interest.

### Board 22, Dealer East; E/W vul

	♠75	
	♥J10932	
	♦5	
	♣AK1085	
♠982		♠K3
♥KQ854		♥A
♦KJ10		♦Q9642
♣Q2		♣J7643
	♠AQJ1064	
	♥76	
	♦A873	
	♣9	

This was the auction at the table where Sue and Dave sat East/West against Simon Gottschalk and Aida Aris.

W	N	E	S
		P	1S
P	1N	P	2S
P	4S	P	

Before commenting on the bidding, or the play, it should be noted that only two pairs bid to the spade game (the others being Sue and David's team-mates, Jason He and Nalini Dewan). Two pairs stopped in Two Spades, and at the other two tables East/West bought the contract in Three Diamonds and Two No Trumps respectively (both undoubled) for the loss of 200 and 300.

Both East and West had an opportunity to enter the auction, but in each case the decision to do so would have been marginal so in my view they cannot be criticised for remaining silent. Simon and Aida play a method under which responder's bid of a new suit at the 2 level is game forcing. Accordingly, as an integral part of this method, the 1NT response to partner's suit opening is 'wide range' - up to a poor twelve count. At Teams there is a premium upon bidding your games, even thin ones, so you should in general be more aggressive, although it's still nice to bring partner in on the act.

It seems to me that Aida's rebid of Two Spades was a bit of an underbid (albeit it does guarantee a six card suit under their methods). I might have opted to rebid Three Spades with that South hand, which has considerable playing strength. Had Aida done that, Simon

might reasonably have raised to game – only eight points, but an attractive hand in terms of trick potential opposite a long and powerful spade holding. As it is he seems to have compensated for Aida's (arguable) underbid with a considerable overbid of his own. An invitational raise to Three Spades would have been warranted, in which case Aida would surely have raised to Four. Hey ho.

Aida made her game (all four declarers who played in spades arrived at ten tricks). Sue, who had had a glass of wine by this stage, wondered whether the game might have been defeated, but with the spade King inside there is nothing the defence can do that will break the contract. As it happens the heart suit is blocked, but even had the defence been able to cash two immediate heart winners and (probably best) switch to a trump, declarer can take the spade finesse before playing Ace and another diamond, ruffing. The second club honour provide a home for one of declarer's little diamonds so when the King of trumps then somewhat fortuitously falls under the Ace, that is ten tricks. Whichever way the play goes, declarer has three losers in the red suits, but no more provided she ruffs a diamond and cashes her club winners before broaching (or continuing) trumps.

It's annoying for the defence when a speculative bid comes off, but they should console themselves by making a mental tally of the number of times it doesn't work so well.

Changing the subject somewhat, I don't know how many readers of this column look at the Bridge Winners website. It's an American site, but a lot of British players follow it and it has many articles of interest. The web address is <https://bridgewinners.com>

This week there was an article by Boye Brogland, the Norwegian player who played a leading role in exposing cheating at the top of the professional game. The article is entitled 'The Next Step' and concerns other forms of unethical play which fall short of collusive cheating. It is particularly focussed upon hesitations or BITs (breaks in tempo) in bidding or play. These pauses inevitably convey additional (unauthorised) information to partner, who has to be careful not to take advantage of knowing that partner was contemplating some alternative action. I don't believe that any pairs at our local clubs hesitate deliberately in order to convey additional information to partner, but some do display marked variations in their tempo which inevitably have this effect. Bridge is a thinking game, and there are times when we all need to take a little more time, but it has to be understood that these variations create ethical strain and need to be avoided as far as possible. I noted just this week that Richard Hughes, as the partner of a player who had hesitated, did the right thing and passed at his turn when it must have been very tempting to bid on. Well done Richard – but the message has to be: as far as is humanly possible, bid and play in tempo so you don't put partner under this ethical pressure.

We're on holiday next week so there will be a break in these words of wisdom.

GD