

CAUTIOUS BIDDER [31]

Sorry I've missed a week, but I was diverted by an encounter with a rather fearsome looking gentleman in fancy dress. The scythe was disconcerting, but fortunately for me he only wanted a chat.

I've chosen this hand from the first Western League match of the season, when East Wales played Somerset. This competition operates at three levels, dubbed A, B, and C. It provides an excellent opportunity for club players to gain experience of teams play and at the same time to represent their area.

Our A team for this match comprised Aida Aris and Mike Best, playing with Sue and myself. We had a narrow win, to which the following hand contributed.

Board 29; Dealer North; both vul

	♠A10	
	♥J542	
	♦A9643	
	♣J3	
♠93		♠QJ7654
♥10983		♥AK7
♦KQ10		♦J82
♣10862		♣4
	♠K82	
	♥Q6	
	♦75	
	♣AKQ975	

Sue and I sat East/West. We bid as follows.

W	N	E	S
	P	1S	2C
X	P	3S	P
P	P		

Sue did well to find a double (promising four hearts) on her meagre collection. My jump rebid might be considered a trifle exaggerated, but it's how I like to bid. This 'style', if I can dignify it as such, can of course go wrong. If Sue had had an eight or nine count she might have raised to game and we would have incurred an unnecessary minus. But there is also a plus side. Our opponents allowed us to buy the hand in Three Spades. This contract can be defeated by two tricks if the defence comes to a diamond ruff. As it was I was able to escape for one down – minus 100.

This was the bidding at the other table, with Mike sitting North, and Aida, South.

W	N	E	S
	P	1S	2C
P	2D	P	2N
P	3N	P	P
P			

As you can see, the decision-making at this table was very different. Firstly, West opted not to contribute, judging that her hand lacked responding values. Mike for his part thought the North hand merited entry into the auction. It's a moot point whether his 2D call promised some residual support for clubs, but if you have that understanding, bidding on the North hand is clearly indicated. East opted not to contribute further and Aida decided that her club suit was good enough to invite game in No Trumps. Mike accepted the game try, as he should.

Three No Trumps was an excellent spot. Only 24 points, but nine top tricks. If the defence broach declarer's weakest suit, which is hearts, they will concede an overtrick.

So we gained eleven IMPs. It was a classic example of a hand being won in the bidding. I might have been doubled in Three Spades, and the defence might have secured their diamond ruff. That would have been a 500 penalty, but it would still have been a gain.

GD