

## CAUTIOUS BIDDER [18]

The Welsh Bridge Union is made up of four regions – the North, Mid, East and West. East and West are, in terms of Welsh geography, South-East and South-West. Each year, coinciding with the Welsh Bridge Union AGM and the election of a new President, the four regions do battle on three fronts, competing for the Perry Shield (Open), the Spickett Bowl (Ladies) and the President's Cup for players who (allegedly) do not normally play outside their own club.

It is a very good event and one in which the East has a good record, as befits the region with the greatest playing strength. This year the East team for the Perry comprised Filip Kurbalija & Tony Ratcliff; Mark Roderick & Mike Best; and Sue Ingham and myself. Our Ladies team comprised Ceri and Maggie Pierce; Helen Houston and Mia Deschepper; and Nalini Dewan and Vida Halford. The President's Cup team is usually rotated between clubs who express an interest and this year the East team was made up of players from the Mid Glamorgan club, based in Pontyclun.

Mark Roderick did very well on this hand, played against the Mid.

**Dealer South; both vul**

	♠Q106	
	♥void	
	♦KQ106532	
	♣J53	
♠A52		♠K8743
♥KQ765		♥10843
♦A		♦7
♣Q964		♣A102
	♠J9	
	♥AJ92	
	♦J984	
	♣K87	

This was the bidding at the table where Mark and Mike sat East/West.

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

Mark declared the hand from the West seat on the lead of the King of diamonds. As you can see, Mark has a spade and (as a minimum) one club to lose. He cannot afford, in addition, to lose two heart tricks. Critically, Mark decided that North's advertised diamond length made it likely that trumps would not be breaking and he took the courageous decision to play South for long trumps. In order to do that he would need to play towards his own hand, and to do so three times. Accordingly, having taken the Ace of diamonds he led a spade to his King in dummy, and advanced the 10 of hearts, intending to run it. This caters for the actual 4-0 break and for North holding the singleton 9.

South covered the 10 with his Jack, and Mark won, noting with some satisfaction North's diamond discard. He then played Ace and another spade, establishing dummy's two small

spades as winners. North took his Queen and exited with a low club, which Mark ducked to South's King. South played back a club and this went round to Mark's 10 in dummy. Mark now advanced the 8 of hearts. South took his Ace, but Mark's Ace of clubs gave him a further entry to dummy, where he had winning spades and, in hand, Q,7 of hearts lying cosily over South's 9,2. He therefore had the remainder of the tricks, having lost just one trump, a spade and a club. Very nicely played.

This was another hand from the event that I thought was instructive.

**Dealer West; both vul**

	♠KJ1092	
	♥Q2	
	♦K854	
	♣Q8	
♠Q643		♠85
♥8		♥AK943
♦QJ9		♦A32
♣J9643		♣AK2
	♠A7	
	♥J10765	
	♦1076	
	♣1075	

This was the bidding at the table where Sue and I sat North/South, playing against the North.

W	N	E	S
P	1S	X	1N
P	P	2H	P
P	P		

East managed to scrape home in his ungainly contract of Two Hearts, but as you can see East/West had failed to do justice to their powerful holding. Only a combined 24 count, but two five card suits and a very easy 3NT available their way, despite the apparent spade vulnerability.

Mike and Mark had no difficulty in reaching the top spot at the other table in our match, so what went wrong here? East showed a powerful hand by doubling and then following up with Two Hearts – a hand too strong to make a simple overcall. It is West therefore who should have done more. At the same time Sue deserves credit for her 1NT response. Had she passed, West would have bid Two Clubs – and then, I suspect, East would have driven to game. Many players would pass with Sue's hand - “only five points” - but in general it is right to respond with hands as moderate as this even when you don't have support for partner's suit. Follow the example of the animal kingdom in potentially lethal scenarios and puff yourself up. One of a number of potential benefits is that West may give up on any thought of game; after all, the opponents have laid claim to both opening and responding values. So try it next time – follow Sue's example and puff yourself up.

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