

# Bath Replays

## 2 Rule of 20 rules OK

Board 14. Somewhere in cyberspace.

“It’s only a bottom,” as they say. But here is one such disaster, played on the net recently by two of our club members, which considerably strained their fragile partner relationship.

The two hands were as shown.

East was the dealer and after three passes, North opened the bidding, EW remaining silent throughout.

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
—	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♦	Pass
Pass!	Pass		

*North*

♠ AKQxxx

♥ Kx

♦ Qxx

♣ xx

*South*

♠ Jx

♥ A9xxx

♦ AJTxx

♣ x

Dealer: East  
No-one  
vulnerable

South makes 12 tricks in Diamonds, as the King is onside. By the same token, the more valuable 6♠ makes also.

The question is: who is the more culpable for this disaster? Let’s analyse the bidding in closer detail.

When East failed to open the bidding, South took stock of his 10 points and nice little shape and thought about muddying the waters with a heart bid. However, knowing his partner’s sensitivity on opening with a weak hand, he decided to pass, as he considered neither of his two red suits strong enough. Better to enter the auction later. With no intervention, the next five bids were automatic: South was able to bid both his red suits and North continued with his strong spades, revealing a six card suit.

After the 3♠ bid, South had several alternatives left to carry the auction forward. A simple 4♠ by him was by far the safest, but would kill the bidding stone dead. A cue bid of 4♣ would be adventurous, showing a control or splinter, but would partner fully appreciate its significance, with his partner bidding three suits after a pass? Alternatively, he could take the bull by the horns and go straight to RKCB which would confirm the trump suit and set partner’s mind at rest. In the end he chose to rebid his diamond suit, confirming his 5-5 holding in the red suits, leaving it to partner to make the decision. North promptly did and passed. Wailing sounds all-round!

From North’s point of view, he was facing a passed hand which had started bidding very aggressively. He had bid spades three times without support. But how much support is required with AKQ9xx? To lose more than one trump trick would surely be very unlucky. Besides which, he held Kx of his partner’s first suit and Qxx of the second. Surely, a game bid in spades stood a fair chance on anyone’s money.

How much better it would have been if South had a little more courage and opened the bidding, as he had first thought. Not only would he have got both his red suits in at a lower level but would still have a further bid left to show his singleton club. Hopefully, this would have pushed North to the Spade slam after RKCB, if he decides to risk it on a possible finesse.

The moral of the hand is this. Opening weak but shapely hands can be fun, providing you’re sitting opposite a very friendly, tolerant partner.

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