



Bath Replays

5 Nil desperandum

Board 4. Tuesday April 24, 2007

Sitting west and vulnerable, you wisely pass with a balanced 4-3-3-3 10-count. All pass round to South, who opens 1♥ (5-card majors). You pass again. North replies 2♥, your partner passes, and so does South, and ... A quick huddle.

♠ A942
♥ Q72
♦ A108
♣ 653

Dealer West
All vulnerable

Are you going to let the contract die there and allow South to play and make 2♥?

You might defeat it, so perhaps you should.

No, I want to compete: the points are balanced, and a part-score our way may score better.

What to bid? Double might be best, but partner won't thank me if she has to play in a 4-3 fit at the 3 level. Let's bid 2♠ and hope for the best. A 2-level contract in the major might score better, even in a 4-3 fit.

Such is the distorted logic that occasionally compels you to bid unwisely. So 2♠ it is, then. What is dummy going to hold?

Groan. Dummy has only a poor doubleton spade, but does have 5 clubs: 3♣ would have been a good contract. At 110, it would have been better than the 100 for defeating 2♥ by one trick. Now I'm going to give NS a plus score - sorry, partner. A 4-2 trump fit with only the Ace between us. Ah well, let's see what happens.

♠ A942 ♠ 85
♥ Q72 ♥ 104
♦ A108 ♦ K652
♣ 653 ♣ AQJ98

You thank partner as positively as you can muster, and concede the first two tricks to the ♥AK.

South switches to ♦9, covered by the 10, Jack and dummy's King.

The defence have more trumps than you, so they have to be drawn. A low spade to the 9, taken by North with the Q.

A low diamond is returned, and the reason for the diamond switch becomes apparent as South ruffs with ♠10.

South doesn't have too many good options, and exits with ♠K to remove dummy's trump. So you take the trick with the Ace and draw the final two trumps.

South exits with a heart, but you still have the ♥Q to take the trick.

You try the club finesse, and it holds. Back to your hand with the ♦A to repeat the finesse and claim.

You have lost two heart tricks, two rounds of spades and a ruff. Plus 110 for an above-average score, and no apology required. Nil desperandum ... but you might not be so lucky next time.

♠ Q73
♥ 965
♦ QJ743
♣ K10

Yes, the defence could do better by playing trumps, but neither North nor South has a holding they believe they should lead from, nor did they know about my bid with a weak 4-card suit ... Oh, I've just told them.

♠ A942 ♠ 85
♥ Q72 ♥ 104
♦ A108 ♦ K652
♣ 653 ♣ AQJ98

*Trevor Purches
10 May 2007*

♠ KJ106
♥ AKJ83
♦ 9
♣ 742