

Bath Replays

28 Sleight of hand

Board 18. Tuesday 16 September 2008

This hand comes from the EBU Simultaneous Pairs, 16 September 2008. Gordon Mobley and I sat W/E against Simon Hill and Ron King as N/S.

N/S vulnerable. Dealer East.

	♠ 972	
	♥ J83	
	♦ AKJ1072	
	♣ J	
♠ AQ108	NORTH	♠ KJ643
♥ Q95	WEST 18 Dealer	♥ K10742
♦ -		♦ 43
♣ A109432	SOUTH	♣ 7
	♠ 5	
	♥ A6	
	♦ Q9865	
	♣ KQ865	

As East, I passed, and Ron opened 1♦. Sally Brock's commentary recommends a double on the West hand, but with a six-card suit I don't think that Gordon's 2♣ overcall was at all bad. Simon bid 3♣ to show good support for diamonds, which Ron misunderstood as a DAB (Directional Asking Bid) in clubs, and his 3NT ended the auction. However, the point of this write-up is not to report on Ron's failure to remember his bidding system. We all do that.

Gordon led a low club and the Jack won on the table. Ron now found a spectacular deceptive play. With malice aforethought, he played the ♠9 from table. I saw no reason to cover, and Gordon won with the 10. Now put yourself in Gordon's position. A spade continuation looks like conceding an extra trick to declarer. At Teams you might try the ♥Q in an attempt to defeat the contract, but at Pairs this looks rather speculative. In the event, Gordon quite reasonably returned a club and +600 was already very good for N/S. I'd rather not dwell on how it ended up +660, but in truth that score was not a lot worse for us.

If East had had solid or semi-solid spades, Ron would have been defeated by at least two tricks, so we should look at alternative lines. A more cautious line would be to grab eight tricks while they are still available. This would have scored a bit less than 50% nationally. How about playing a diamond to hand and knocking out the ♣A, hoping that the defence might not find the spade switch? The snag with this line is that East is now out of clubs and gets the chance to signal. On the whole, I think that Ron was justly rewarded for his enterprise.

*James Dunlop,
October 2008*