

Bath Replays

35 The Butler did it

Board 24. 4 June, 2009.

It was the first Thursday night of the month, and we weren't having a good night. We were playing teams equivalent scoring and had already given away a couple of huge swings which would ensure that we didn't come anywhere near the top.

It was the last hand of the night, West was the dealer and passed and, as North, I picked up the fine 19-point hand shown right. We're playing a 20-22 Two No Trump opener and I know that, on this type of hand, I should open 1♠ and rebid 3NT over partner's response, but, as I said, we were having a bad evening, it was the last hand of the night and I didn't think I could bear hearing partner pass with a poor 5 points so I bid 1♣ in the hope of encouraging a response.

Partner has also had a bad night, suspects that we don't have a game in the majors, doesn't fancy No Trumps, so eschews the more normal 1♦ in favour of 3♣ as it 'gave a complete picture of his hand' in one bid: 8 losers, no 4-card major, good trump support. It's a nice safe, teams-type bid.

Anyway, not sure what came over me but at that point I bid 6NT, hoping that my partner had a diamond stop and LOTS of clubs for me to cash. And that was it:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Pass	3♣
Pass	6NT	All pass	

East is on lead and is looking at the hand shown right. Hoping that I have the ♦K in my hand, he leads a safe card, the ♣10.

So there I am in 6NT with a combined 27 count and heading for a fall. Clearly the rest of the room is going to be in 3NT.

I win the club lead in hand and lead the ♦J, which gives East an immediate problem. Winning with the Ace makes his Queen finessable; ducking doesn't help as I will just lead another diamond and repeat the finesse; covering sets up the suit after I knock out the Ace. He decides to cover. I win with the King and play out the diamonds. When East takes his Ace he has another problem: what to lead now? He doesn't know but nothing can help. He leads the ♥J, which runs to my Queen.

I've now got 4 club tricks, 4 diamond tricks, 2 heart tricks and 2 spade tricks. 6NT bid and made and finally a swing to the good guys!

Now what are the lessons? There are none, just an explanation of the bizarre bidding sequence that got us to where we ended. What made me open 1♣? What made my partner bid 3♣? What made me bid 6NT? You've guessed it – the Butler did it!



Peter van Praag
June 2009

♠ AK85
♥ AQ
♦ J42
♣ KQ86

NORTH
Dealer 24 EAST
SOUTH

♠ 3
♥ 763
♦ K10985
♣ AJ73

♠ AK85
♥ AQ
♦ J42
♣ KQ86
♠ Q10942
♥ K9854
♦ 6
♣ 54
NORTH
Dealer 24 EAST
SOUTH
♠ J76
♥ J102
♦ AQ73
♣ 1092
♠ 3
♥ 763
♦ K10985
♣ AJ73