



Bath Replays

37 Payday at the Corwen

Corwen Trophy, Hinkley, 6-7 June 2009

Confession: I spend far too much of my time analysing systems, the latest conventions or fads and working on partnership agreements when perhaps I ought to spend a bit more time on my declarer play and defence. But when all the hard work does come off it's all the more satisfying. At least I like to think it's satisfaction, as opposed to smug.

Take this deal. Our opponents are English Internationals. No pressure then.

Partnering Ron King and playing a Variable NT with KERI system responses replacing Stayman, I'm sitting West, and hold:

♠ AQ743
♥ K
♦ Q6
♣ 97432

North is Dealer. Our illustrious opponents pass throughout.

partner: 1♥ [11+ points and 4+ hearts]

me: 1♠ [6+ points and 4+ spades. All pretty standard so far]

partner: INT [13-16 balanced, may have a 5-card heart suit. We have the mechanism to uncover it - if needs be]

me: 2♣ [a forced puppet to 2D]

partner: 2♦ [job done]

me: 2♠ [shows invitational strength and exactly 5 spades]

Ron now has choices:

- pass if minimum and 3-card support
- pass if minimum with 2-card support where the high cards are better placed for a suit contract than for NT
- 2NT if minimum with 2-card support but the high cards are best suited for NT
- 3NT if maximum with 2-card support
- 3H if maximum with 5 hearts and 2-card spade support
- 3S with a good 14- or poor 15-count and 3-card spade support
- 4S if maximum with 3-card spade support

♠ AQ743
♥ K
♦ Q6
♣ 97432

♠ K2
♥ A7642
♦ J43
♣ KQ6

Holding the East hand shown right, he quite correctly passes the invite.

There's not much to the play: the hand plays itself - you can't avoid losing one spade, two diamonds and two clubs, so make exactly 8 tricks in a spade contract. The only difference is that the King/Hill partnership have +110 whereas a huge majority of the EW field are in negative equity, having gone too high. I know, I know. We can all find hands that suit one system better than another, but when it works against a tough field and particularly against tough opponents ... (damn, bordering smug again).

If you're interested in adding something different to your partnership understanding, I for one would recommend Klinger's book: *Bid better, much better, after opening INT* which outlines his KERI system. I think it's worth the effort - moreover it's fun.

Simon Hill
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