

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen!

Welcome to this, the 31st session of Shark's Pointers Online!

*"For all sad words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest of these - It Might Have Been"*

- John Greenlief Whittier, 1856 (Maud Muller)

Immediately following last week's special tribute to Victor King, I spent the better part of the next 4 days participating in a major online team championship sponsored by the United States Bridge Federation. This tournament was established to honor Justin Lall, one of the greatest bridge players of our day, who died a month before his 34th birthday due to complications from a liver disease. In 2012, Justin, at age 25, became the youngest Grand Life Master ever - a record that has since been surpassed by our own Zachary Grossack of Newton, MA.

Before I get into today's presentation about some of the regrets I want to mention from the JLall1, I do want to briefly say a few words about the USBF. It has been my honor and privilege to serve on the Board of Directors of the USBF since January 1, 2019. The USBF is a small organization with less than 300 members. All of the positions on the board are completely voluntary with no financial remuneration. I can tell you it is a very busy job indeed - especially during this past year in which the pandemic has resulted in the introduction of online competitions. These are very new for us, and the security measures against cheating are very challenging to say the least. The USBF has done an amazing job in conducting these tournaments- primarily due to the work of Chief Operating Officer Jan Martel. She is truly an unbelievably efficient and hard working individual. I encourage all to look into joining the USBF or providing needed financial support by becoming a supporting member. All details are on our website at [www.usbf.org](http://www.usbf.org)

Today, as I mentioned, I am going to highlight a few of the more interesting hands I had in which I made very costly bidding decisions during the 2nd match on the 4th day of the competition that resulted in my team's not quite making it to the round of 16 that starts later today.

Today's talk is entitled "If I Had It All To Do All Over Again!"

Here's the first bidding challenge I faced....

## If I Had It All To Do Over Again

North Deals  
N-S Vul



♠ K J 7  
♥ A Q 9 8 7  
♦ —  
♣ Q 8 5 4 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	2 ♦	?

Today's first hand features both one of the smarter and one of the dumber bids I have made in a long time.

At unfavorable, with partner being a passed hand, my first decision was what, if anything, I should bid. We still could easily be cold for game - or we could easily go for 1100!

2D was explained as 9-13 HCP and 6 diamonds - a bit stronger than a normal weak 2 at this vulnerability.

I decided the most prudent, and least risky bid would be to double - not bid 2H. In retrospect, I think that was a smart decision.

But the auction was far from over...

## If I Had It All To Do Over Again

North Deals  
N-S Vul



♠ K J 7  
♥ A Q 9 8 7  
♦ —  
♣ Q 8 5 4 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	2 ♦	Dbl
2 ♠	2 NT	Pass	?

2 ♠ was explained as forward going but non-forcing. While not specific, it sounds like a good 5 card or possibly 6 card suit with 10-11 HCP. Partner bid 2 NT which came back to me.

Before continuing, let me say that thinking back on it, sometimes we lose track of the bidding in the middle of the auction. Whereas I was alert to the fact that partner was a passed hand when I decided to double instead of bidding 2H, I now must have forgotten, because there is clearly one and only one call this hand can make - and that is PASS!

Spoiler alert! This is not what I did at the table, and this is where the wheels came off...

## If I Had It All To Do Over Again

North Deals  
N-S Vul



♠ K J 7  
♥ A Q 9 8 7  
♦ —  
♣ Q 8 5 4 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	2 ♦	Dbl
2 ♠	2 NT	Pass	3 ♥
4 ♦	Dbl	Pass	4 ♥
All pass			

4 ♥ by South

My 3H bid was a TERRIBLE bid!! I must have forgotten that partner was a passed hand.

I should have at least another ace to make that call.

Now when partner doubled 4D, I got nervous and pulled to 4H.

The only good news is that the opps were kind enough not to double. Here was the full deal...

## If I Had It All To Do Over Again

North Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ A 10 9 8 5 3	♠ Q 6 4	♠ 2
♥ K 10 5	♥ 4 2	♥ J 6 3
♦ 6 5 2	♦ A K 10 8	♦ Q J 9 7 4 3
♣ K	♣ 10 9 6 3	♣ A J 7
	♠ K J 7	
	♥ A Q 9 8 7	
	♦ —	
	♣ Q 8 5 4 2	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	2 ♦	Dbl
2 ♠	2 NT	Pass	3 ♥
4 ♦	Dbl	Pass	4 ♥
All pass			

4 ♥ by South

The defense started with the lead of the singleton K of clubs, and when that held, West shifted to Ace and a spade. That got ruffed, then back came Ace and a club ruff. Another spade ruff. I still had 2 trumps to lose- DOWN 4! -400. At the other table, the opps played 3D making 3.

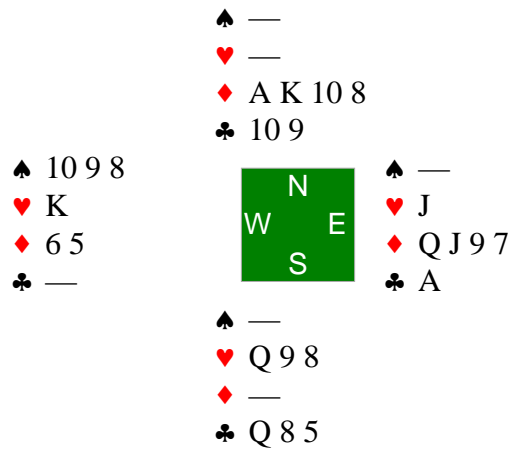
So, how would we have done in 4Dx? Let's go back and check...

Let's assume, I start by leading a small club. Based on the double, declarer will be fairly certain that North has all the missing trumps, and I have AQxxx of hearts and will play accordingly. He will win the K of clubs and play Ace of spades and ruff a spade. Now a heart back, and I will probably rise with the Ace and return a heart. Dummy will win the 10 and ruff another spade.

Now the J of clubs is ruffed in dummy and another spade is led at this point....

## If I Had It All To Do Over Again

North Dealer  
NS Vul



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	2 ♦	Dbl
2 ♠	2 NT	Pass	3 ♥
4 ♦	Dbl	All pass	

4 ♦ × by East

Now another spade is led from dummy and it doesn't matter what North does. If she ruffs high, East will pitch the J of hearts. If she now continues with a club, this will get ruffed in dummy and a trump lead will from dummy will give East 3 out of the last 4 tricks - making 4!

This is one of the most dangerous doubles - one that exposes a poor trump split and thereby enables declarer to make a contract that would never normally be made.

The next hand illustrates an equally terrible double - the one is not made that allows a contract to make that would have been defeated if doubled!

## If I Had It All To Do Over Again

East Deals  
N-S Vul



♠ Q 10 3  
♥ K Q 9 5 2  
♦ 3 2  
♣ A 6 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		2 ♥	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	?

This was a very descriptive auction. East's 3C response was artificial and showed that the 2H bid was based on a 5 card suit.

I passed 3 NT and partner made the normal lead of 4th from her longest and strongest...

## If I Had It All To Do Over Again

East Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ A 8 6	♠ J 9 4 2	♠ K 7 5
♥ A 4	♥ 3	♥ J 10 8 7 6
♦ K Q J 9 7	♦ A 10 8 5 4	♦ 6
♣ K Q J	♣ 10 3 2	♣ 9 8 7 5
	♠ Q 10 3	
	♥ K Q 9 5 2	
	♦ 3 2	
	♣ A 6 4	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 NT	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
3 NT	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead 5 of ♦

3 NT by West

I thought about doubling, but forgot my lecture about not listening to the demons! I started thinking it might get redoubled and make. This was very poor judgment. The auction reveals that it was very unlikely that West had the 3 missing hearts, so partner very likely had at least one heart to lead, and surely would have had I doubled.

After a heart lead, declarer can never get more than 8 tricks. The small diamond lead gave him a ninth trick. This was a huge swing as our teammates were making a partial. We lost 7 IMPs instead of winning 4 IMPs.

A lot of times we worry about doubling and allowing contracts to make or not being able to defeat a contract we double. We often overlook the risk associated with not doubling when we need to in order to defeat a contract.



## If I Had It All To Do Over Again

North Deals  
None Vul



♠ K Q 10 9 7 6  
♥ Q 9  
♦ K 8  
♣ K J 6

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 NT	Pass	?

In the same set of 10 boards, I faced another decision - which I got wrong again and cost our side another dozen IMPs...

Partner dealt and opened a strong NT (14+ to 17 HCP).

This was my hand and I weighed 3 different options.

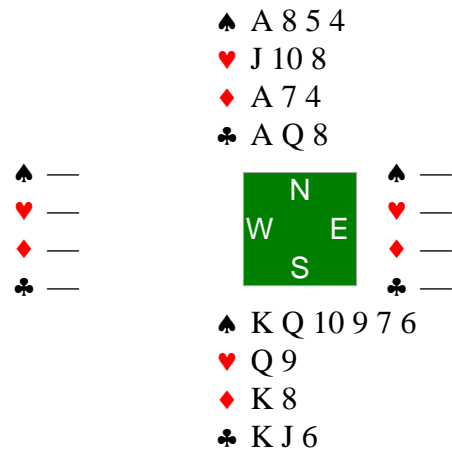
- 1) My first instinct was to bid 4H - a Texas transfer to 4S and then bid 4 NT (RKCB for spades). If partner showed 3 keycards, I would close my eyes and bid what I hoped we could make.
- 2) I thought of bidding 4C (Gerber), if partner shows 3, then bid 6S.
- 3) Finally, I thought of inviting by transferring to 2S, and raising to 4S.

Can you think of any other plausible auctions?

Problem with the first and second options was that even if partner had 3 aces, there is no guarantee we are not off the AK of hearts or possibly a club and a heart.

Partner could hold...

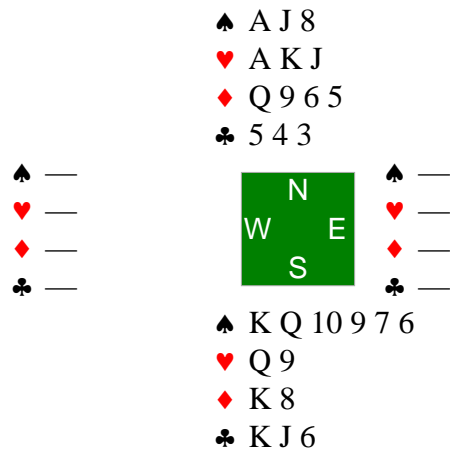
# If I Had It All To Do Over Again



Which has no play for 6 spades.

Or partner could have a hand like this...

## If I Had It All To Do Over Again



You would sign off in 5S when partner shows only 2 aces, but as you can see, 5 spades is not cold. In fact, on a bad day, you will even go down in 4S! (A of diamonds, 2 clubs and a ruff)

## If I Had It All To Do Over Again

North Deals  
None Vul



♠ K Q 10 9 7 6  
♥ Q 9  
♦ K 8  
♣ K J 6

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 NT	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

4 ♠ by North

So, I tried "Door #3" and bid the hand this way...

Partner passed 4S and this, of course, was the complete layout...

## If I Had It All To Do Over Again

North Deals  
None Vul

♠ 4 3	♠ A 5 2	♠ J 8
♥ 10 8 5 4 2	♥ A J	♥ K 7 6 3
♦ Q 5	♦ A J 10 9 7	♦ 6 4 3 2
♣ 10 8 4 3	♣ Q 5 2	♣ A 9 7
	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;">             N W     E    S           </div>	
	♠ K Q 10 9 7 6	
	♥ Q 9	
	♦ K 8	
	♣ K J 6	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 NT	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

4 ♠ by North

Partner had a very good hand, but her demons say the A and K of clubs crashing down if she bid 6 Spades. But as you can see, 6 Spades was ice cold! Some days it doesn't pay to get out of bed! Hope you have a great day - and, speaking of demons, I sure hope you are not Triskadekaphobic on this Friday the 13th!

See you all next week - same time and same station!