

Samuel Kosky

October 1955

The sudden death of S.-Kosky came as a severe shock to the world of bridge in which he played. One day he was toiling away at Lederer's as if untouched by time; the next, a heart attack where no heart trouble had been suspected, and our old friend had left us.

Kosky was perhaps the greatest natural genius this country has produced. He was short, dynamic, pugnacious and charming, shy and retiring all at once. His private life was quiet—he was a bachelor—his life at the bridge table usually tempestuous.

Kosky played the game at lightning speed, bid what he thought he could make, and made it. He almost never tranced during the play of a hand. If he did, the position could only be fantastically difficult, and even then he solved the problem far more quickly than anyone else could have done. His brain for cards was electronic, and in many years' play I cannot remember a bad lead from him. It is no exaggeration to say that we all bid extremely conservatively with Kosky on our left, for in no time, did we do otherwise, would come that devastating lead, and any foolish optimism

was shown to be out of place. His dummy play had to be seen to be believed.

Conservative, as are all great players, he could move with the times, and his bidding, although he still clung to old friends such as the opening three clubs strong, did not remain stagnant.

Ethically he was the strictest of the strict and often penalised himself in defence because of some fancied hesitation by his partner. A man of strong character and unswerving principle, he commanded respect from all. Nobody disliked Kosky. He could scarify them at the table and did; he could reduce good players to dithering helplessness by over-severe criticism; he could do what he liked; but nothing could affect the regard in which he was held. That inner steel spine of principle was unmistakable, and magnetically retained the affection of all, no matter how foolish he made them feel at the table.

A strict Jew of the tribe of Levi, he is buried in the cemetery at Edmonton, and an era passes with him. He will be missed. It will be many years before the words "Kosky would have made that hand," cease to be heard regularly.

N.S.