



County Bulletin

Issue 26

OCTOBER 2014

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Editorial

As you will no doubt have noticed, the County News section in English Bridge has been reduced as a consequence of the change to the size of the magazine itself. In order to accommodate all the news that County New editors like myself wish to include, there will be extra space devoted to this information in the on-line version of English Bridge, which can be viewed via the EBU website. There will be three parts to this new section. The first will be the same as that in the printed version and as it is limited to 160 'words', it will contain reports on just major successes. The second will be longer and hopefully I can use that to inform everyone about the results of county and club events; for this I need (more) information from all of you out there. The third section will be an In Memoriam so please do your very best not to appear in that any time soon. If you are sending information to me please note that I have to send it in to the EBU several weeks before the magazine appears, so there can be a delay in it appearing as fresh news. Thanks.

Expensive deal

by Pete Nickson

Some people believe that playing Rubber Bridge for decent stakes can make you more careful in your bidding and play as errors cost you money rather than merely matchpoints. It can certainly be an expensive way to improve your game.

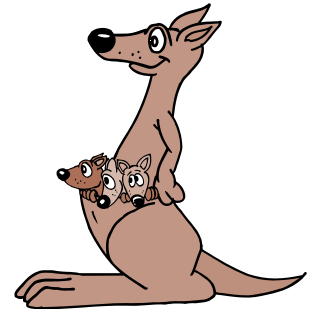
On this deal from a round of Chicago both sides were +90, it was everyone vulnerable and North dealt. When he passed, East opened one spade and South started on his suits with a two heart overcall. Even though his side had a partscore, West might have done better to jump to the spade game (everyone was playing basic Acol, so a fit-jump of four diamonds was not really possible), which would have given N/S less room to explore. When West merely jumped to three spades it was normal for East to pass. Now South got to bid his second suit and West belatedly introduced his diamonds, but once North supported to five clubs, South would not be kept out of slam. East added to the cost by doubling - as you can see N/S make 6♣ doubled easily, which was not cheap at £4.00 per hundred. A sacrifice in six spades would have saved some pennies, but it was not to be.

Chicago Game All Dealer North

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

HAND FROM DOWN UNDER

by Tim Bourke



Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

South saw little point in asking for key cards as that might have given East an opportunity to make a lead-directing double of North's response.

West led the queen of spades and when dummy was tabled, declarer saw that it would be easy if trumps were no worse than 3-1. The lead was won in the dummy, but things became a little more complicated at trick two when East discarded a club on the ace of hearts. After that unpleasant blow, declarer needed West to have begun with at least four spades. Since West had not led a minor-suit card declarer also presumed that West had begun with at least two cards in each minor.

Declarer abandoned trumps and led a club to the queen to ruff a spade. After cashing the ace of clubs. He cashed the ace and king of diamonds before ruffing dummy's third spade. He continued with the king of clubs which offered West no winning option. At the table West ruffed in with the nine of trumps to prevent a diamond discard from dummy. Declarer overruffed this with dummy's jack and continued by trumping dummy's last spade and cashing the king of hearts.

West had been reduced to the queen of trumps and a spade and dummy to a trump and a diamond, while declarer had a low card in each of the minors. Now declarer only needed to advance his last club. Nothing could then prevent dummy's remaining trump from scoring the twelfth trick.

Alternatively, declarer could have trumped a spade at trick two and led a heart to the king at trick 11 to achieve a similar *en passant* position.

WBU Premier League....by Bob Pitts

In the Netherlands they run a series of leagues within the bridge community with the ultimate goal being to obtain promotion to their Premier division (The Meesterklasse). The Welsh Bridge Union have initiated a similar structure, with the first Premier League weekend taking place recently. Whether the idea will be a success is unclear as at present there are few teams outside of South Wales willing to form local leagues, but it is to be hoped that this situation will change.

The top division has eight teams and there will be relegation and promotion between that and the other leagues. The first weekend took place in mid-September and several local players are involved.

This hand was of considerable interest; have a think how you might get on playing it.

	♠ J 3		♠ A 7 6
East	♥ A 10 9		♥ K J 7 2 West
	♦ A J 10 3 2		♦ 8
	♣ K Q 10		♣ J 9 8 6 2

After two passes, South opens one diamond and as East you overcall one no-trump. West checks on whether you have a four or five card major and when he gets a negative reply drives you to the no-trump game. North ignores his partner's suit and leads the spade five. You duck and South wins with the queen and returns the two. Your jack is taken by North's king and you duck again. The spade ace is knocked out and you have to win whilst discarding a small diamond from hand. When you play a club from dummy, South hops in with the ace (naturally, you unblock the club king) to cash the spade ten, you throw another diamond from hand and a heart from dummy, whilst North follows with the last spade. South continues with the diamond king, which of course you win. The queen of clubs sees South showing out, so you next cross by playing the ten of clubs to dummy's jack to run the suit. South throws away three small diamonds and lastly a small heart. Clearly, South started with a 4-3-5-1 shape and after ten tricks is down to the diamond queen and two hearts. As South has kept the diamond queen, you can afford to throw the remainder of your holding in that suit. North has three hearts remaining and you have all three of yours as well. The question is, where is the heart queen? Has North got it or has South been squeezed in the red suits and is down to the doubleton queen at this point. Whilst the opportunity to make the contract via a squeeze is appealing, a lot imps are at stake. There is also the consideration that if you finesse and South has both red queens then you will be two off. Well against us declarer went for the squeeze option and was an unlucky one off as the heart queen was in the North hand, but well played by Welsh international Mark Roderick.

Some hands improve as the auction proceeds but others just start to get worse.... In the first match on Sunday morning sitting West I picked up ♠ A K Q 7 4 ♥ A J ♦ A K Q 10 6 ♣ 9 - wow a decent hand! Partner passed and the next hand opened a multi two diamonds (always weak with a major). I started by doubling and North bid two spades. This expressed a desire to stop there if South has a weak two in spades but happy to play in hearts at a higher level. It was already looking like a misfit hand and that partner would not have much. Partner now came in with two no-trumps, which was a Lebensohl style bid showing a long suit but (probably) few points. South passed and in case partner held some diamonds (I am an optimist) I now bid a forcing three diamonds; this bid is forcing because with a poorer hand I would just call three clubs waiting to hear what he has. This ended the bidding! No surprises to find partner putting down a 1-5-1-6 one count. I was able to ruff a spade in dummy and emerge with 10 tricks. I was a bit concerned as 3NT would make as the jack of diamonds was tripleton, but at the other table they had tried to play in spades without success (our South did not deem his hand worth a weak two opener).

Finally a cautionary tale to demonstrate that even International players can lose their concentration. On the previous board our opponents had mis-defended and let my partner make a vulnerable game. My right-hand opponent was so upset by what he felt was an incorrect signal, that on the next hand when as West he had to play this trump suit in a slam, he started with a small card to the ace (there was no danger of a ruff out).

West	♦ Q 8 7 6 5 2		♦ A 10 9 3 East
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When South showed out he was one off. Of course when North follows with a small card inserting the nine from dummy guarantees success. So remember, don't let one bad board distract you as it might generate another one.

Update - the second weekend has just taken place and the two teams with local players both finished in the middle of the table - no glory, but they will still be in the Premier League for next season.

Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association

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All of the club contacts are available on the County website

Calendar

All events here are correct at time of publishing but you are advised to take the precaution of checking with the organisers in all cases.

October

11th	Northern Bridge League round 4	
12th	North Wales green-pointed Swiss pairs	Northop
16th	Merseyside League KO Cup round 1	LBC & MBC
19th	Chester Bowl (charity pairs event) - full	Deva BC
30th/Nov. 1st	EBU Seniors Congress	Birmingham

November

2nd	Merseyside Cup	MBC
10th-13th	Children in Need simultaneous pairs	Clubs
30th	Waterworth Cup (County pairs/Corwen qualifier)	MBC

January

5th-9th	BGB simultaneous pairs	Clubs
17th/18th	Chester Congress	Deva BC

Avoidance Play.....by Bob Pitts

One technique that sometimes needs to be employed by declarer is that of an avoidance play. This involves trying to prevent the defender that can attack a delicate holding from obtaining the lead. Here is an interesting example from a recent duplicate. After opening with a forcing bid, you arrive in four spades as South. Cover up the East/West hands and consider your line on the lead of a trump. Whilst players often lead trumps because they think it is a safe option, it can also imply that all other suits had less appeal. You win the trump lead in hand whilst East throws a middle heart. So how are you going to make the contract if the ace of clubs and the ace & queen of hearts are all wrong? If West holds the king of diamonds you can establish the queen in dummy, but you must be careful. Cash another high trump in hand, and then lead the club jack. West gives this a quick look and covers with the queen, and.....you duck. You want to keep East off lead and this ensures it (East cannot overtake with the ace if he holds it as that would establish the king in dummy). West is still reluctant to play a red suit (a good sign) so continues clubs. Just in case he is being sneaky you can always try the king now, but not surprisingly East has the ace. You ruff and play ace and another diamond. West takes his king and now you have a discard for a heart loser, with an entry via the spade jack. Had all of these machinations been unsuccessful, you could still have played for the heart ace to be onside. This line is not a certainty but has very good chances compared to the alternatives.

Note how well West had done to lead a trump, the club lead found at some tables let the contract through when declarer played low from dummy at trick 1.

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

Finally, have you looked closely at the East-West cards. If you start on clubs by leading the queen, pinning South's jack, twelve tricks are available. When is the last time you and partner passed throughout on a deal and yet could make a slam in two different denominations?

Chester Congress - January 17th/18th - Book early to avoid missing out!!!

The Chester Bowl charity pairs event on October 19th is already full.