

Last Thursday we played a rematch against Kyle of Lochalsh bridge club. For those with long memories you will remember we played them back at the start of lockdown (see HOW 12A) and scored a narrow teams victory 78-47.

This time we played 4 teams of 4 matches on RealBridge. Board 10 proved to be very interesting!

All vulnerable, LHO opened 1♦, and Erika overcalled 2NT, which is a CRO bid showing 5-5 in the majors (see HOW 1). RHO continues with 3♦:

♠ K986432
♥ 9
♦ 654
♣ 87

Erika should have 8- 15 points, so it looks like we have a big spade fit, but without the balance of the points. The opponents seem to have a good fit in the minors so will probably be looking for game in diamonds.

4♠ is pre-emptive but doesn't really stop them bidding 5♦, one option would be to go straight to 5♠ to try and prevent them finding the slam but with both sides vulnerable we can only afford to go 2 off.

The opponents most likely have a 9 card diamond fit, so Erika probably has a singleton diamond and doubleton club- so we are most likely losing 3 tricks in the minors.

What about the majors? Erika could potentially be quite weak but probably still has at least 3 honours, however, there is a reasonable chance we are missing enough to be losing 2 so I think 4♠ is sufficient. LHO bid 5♦, Erika went to 5♠, RHO bid 6♦, and Erika doubled! The full hand:

Bd 10, Dlr E 6♦ X-1 E		♠ K986432 ♥ 9 ♦ 654 ♣ 87	N Andrew Hardy 6♦ X E Tricks taken: 11 Save adjustment																								
W David Olive ♠ Q ♥ Q1053 ♦ J1082 ♣ KQ53		E Fiona Scully ♠ J10 ♥ AJ7 ♦ AKQ973 ♣ J2																									
0 0 < >	♠ A75 ♥ K8642 ♦ — ♣ A10964	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> <td>2NT*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♦</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>5♦</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>5♠</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6♦</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		W	N	E	S			1♦	2NT*	3♦	4♠	5♦	P	P	5♠	P	P	6♦	P	P	X	P	P	P	
W	N	E	S																								
		1♦	2NT*																								
3♦	4♠	5♦	P																								
P	5♠	P	P																								
6♦	P	P	X																								
P	P	P																									
Erika Pickles S																											

Normally bidding a slam missing 2 Aces is a bad think, but it actually works out alright on this occasion!

Firstly, Erika has a slight lapse and should have bid 3♣ to show hearts and clubs. As it is, I would probably end up showing the spades at some point anyway so there was no harm done on this occasion.

Erika cashes the two Aces to take the slam on off. On this lead 5♦ would make, as declarer can take out trumps and can discard the hearts on the clubs. However, playing 5♦ might be more tricky as South will likely lead A♠ then 7♠. East can only establish 2 club winners in this situation so will have to fall back onto the heart finesse which fails, so also 1 off.

What about 5♠?

East will most likely lead the A♦. Declarer should ruff this, then play a low spade to the K and lead the 9♥ towards the K♥. East will take the A♥ and lead K♦. Declarer has to ruff this with the A♠, but can now throw their 3rd diamond on the K♥, cash the A♣ and be left with a loser in club and spades for 1 off.

A couple of pairs managed to find 3NT in EW. Most likely this would only happen if North does not show their spade suit- NS could potentially take 8 tricks off the top if South can find a spade lead. On a heart or club lead declarer only has 8 tricks off the top, and South should find the spades at the second time of asking for 1 off.

As 4♠ makes for NS, the optimum contract is therefore 5-1♦ for EW. Overall the matches were 2-2 but KOLC won on IMPS 184-215. We are planning an 'end of lockdown' match, hopefully in early summer.

Teams. Kyle of Lochalsh v Halifax	
Match scores	
Kyle A	58
Halifax A	32
Kyle B	28
Halifax B	57
Kyle C	57
Halifax C	58
Kyle D	72
Halifax D	27