

## A strange affair

Last weekend saw the Pachabo take place online. This is a national competition for the winners of each county's premier knockout tournament. Having been roundly beaten in round one I had little expectation of playing this event this season. However, due to trouble fielding a team and the EBU not wanting teams to drop out, the winning team can pick a sub if needed. Luckily I was kindly asked to step in and substitute for part of the weekend, something I was happy to do and pleased and surprised that the rules allow for a player to play in the very team that had knocked him out! (only in bridge!) 😊.

The event is fun for its unique scoring. There are sixteen points up for grabs in each four-board match with eight being decided on point a board basis (did you do better than the other team?) and eight by teams IMPs scoring. What the tactics are for such an event I had little idea and after 100 boards I must confess I still don't!

Our finish of 8<sup>th</sup> was one the county's highest for a while and, in a very strong field, a pleasing outcome.

This hand below shows what a strange affair this event is and how borderline decisions can win a board unexpectedly.

At love all, I held

♠3

♥AK

♦J953

♣AKQ1032

and heard RHO open 1S. I chose initially to double as I was too good for a simple two club bid, hoping to bid clubs next time showing a good hand, but when it came back to me it was at the four level, yuk! The auction thus far being (1S), X, (2H), P (from pd), (4S).

Look at the hand and, before reading on, decide what you would do. What now? Double, pass or 5 clubs? I thought for a while and contemplated all three.

They all have merit, though pass seems a bit too wimpy. If partner has something in the minors five clubs could be right or if something in spades double could be. After a long thought I chose five clubs at the other table they chose to double. 😊 If you doubled or passed you now have to decide what to lead?

The full hand...

North		
	♥ 9865 ♦ 10742 ♣ 76	
West		East
♠ 4 ♥ Q107432 ♦ 8 ♣ J9854		♠ QJ1098765 ♥ J ♦ AKQ6 ♣ void
South		
♠ 3 ♥ AK ♦ J953 ♣ AKQ1032		

West doubled me in five clubs very quickly and I went three down for -500 when the opposition were non vulnerable. 😞 So what of the other table? Having doubled four spades, they led a top club! Whoops, this was ruffed and allowed our team mates to ruff a diamond on table for ten tricks. 😊 Plus 590 and because of the strange scoring a somewhat lucky win by 90 points on the board! 😊 Heart ace and a spade switch beats four spades and a big defeat. So, a useful tip when deciding on such hands which ace to lead - the one in the shorter suit is normally safer as it is more likely to survive.

Well done to anyone who passed or doubled and found the defence.

Rob Miller