

Lockdown has not hampered the flourishing junior bridge scene in Oxford, under the inspirational guidance of Holly Kilpatrick. Their monthly competition — played online — regularly attracted over 50 children aged between nine and 16.

An advantage of playing virtually is that the children have been able to participate while on holiday — from as far afield as Florida, Nice and a café in Prague. And, whether on holiday or not, many living far from the dreaming spires can join in from their homes.

Here is an exciting board from the August competition. West led his singleton ten of spades v 5♥ doubled. Declarer won the ace, cashed the ace-king of hearts drawing trumps, and led up her diamond.

West hopped up with the ace of diamonds but had no second spade to lead to partner. Sensibly unwilling to break open clubs, he continued with the queen of diamonds.

Declarer won dummy's king of diamonds and shed her singleton spade. She then advanced the jack of clubs, East smoothly playing low. Crunch time.

Declarer reasoned impeccably that if the ace and queen of clubs were swapped, West would have switched to a club (from the queen) when in with the ace of diamonds. East would have won the ace and cashed a spade. Therefore, assuming the defence had not erred, West had to hold the ace of clubs. She ran the jack, West winning the ace. Declarer could ruff West's ten of diamonds, cash the king of clubs, ruff the third club, and claim her

Dealer: East, Vulnerability: East-West

Pairs	♠ 98762	♠ KQJ43				
	♥ J42	♥ Q9				
	♦ K84	♦ J6				
	♣ J9	♣ Q432				
♠ 10	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">W</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W	E	S	
N						
W						
E						
S						
♥ 3						
♦ AQ109752						
♣ A865	♠ A5					
	♥ AK108765					
	♦ 3					
	♣ K107					

S	W	N	E
			1♠ (1)
4♥ (2)	5♦	5♥ (3)	Pass
Pass	Dbf(4)	End	

- (1) Skimpy but satisfying the rule of 20.
- (2) Practical shot — I like it.
- (3) Apart from the king of diamonds, North is trickless in defence and, at the favourable vulnerability, expects 5♥ doubled to be cheaper than conceding a vulnerable game. As it happens, 5♦ would have failed comfortably (as many as three down on an admittedly unlikely opening club lead); however, 5♥ was in with a shout of making.
- (4) Confidently, holding two aces facing a partner who opened the bidding, and a singleton in their suit.

Contract: 5♥ Dbled, Opening Lead: ♠ 10

doubled game.

Only the ace of diamonds lead then a spade (or heart) switch beats 5♥; declarer has to use a third trump to reach dummy to cash the king of diamonds, shedding the spade. When she then runs the jack of clubs to West's ace, West can exit with a diamond and declarer must lose to the queen of clubs at the end.

Do send Holly an email on juniorbridgeoxford@gmail.com to find out how to get involved.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk