

Summertown Bridge Bulletin, 15th March 2022

Congratulations to Steph and Steven who won today. But unusually, the top score was only 56.18%. I always believe that this means the general standard is high. It's because years ago, the OBA (Oxfordshire Bridge Association) used to run a pairs event on Tuesday evenings at the OBC premises. It was generally referred to as the 'County Night' and used to have an excellent turnout, often 16 or more tables. I do remember it was quite rare for the winners even to score as much as 60%. It must mean something.

Could not find any particular theme this evening, so I've chosen hands pretty randomly.

Dir: South Vul: E/W	♠J7632 ♥K42 ♦K3 ♣A85	Optimum NS -100																																							
♠K4 ♥J76 ♦987 ♣QJ743	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="background-color: red; color: white;">W</td><td style="background-color: green; color: white;">North</td><td style="background-color: red; color: white;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: red; color: white;">e</td><td style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">3</td><td style="background-color: red; color: white;">a</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: red; color: white;">s</td><td></td><td style="background-color: red; color: white;">s</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: red; color: white;">t</td><td style="background-color: green; color: white;">South</td><td style="background-color: red; color: white;">t</td></tr> </table>	W	North	E	e	3	a	s		s	t	South	t	♠A85 ♥95 ♦AQ10654 ♣96																											
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On Board 3, the N-S hands look as though they make 8 tricks in either spades or hearts, losing 2 diamonds, 2 spades and a club, and indeed this is what should happen on best defence. In practice four tables were in spades, making 9 or 10 tricks, and four were in hearts making 8 or 9 tricks. All but one of these were played by South, as nowadays so many people open INT rather than 1♥ on this type of hand.

The commonest lead is ♦8, so East hastily takes the two diamond tricks and switches to a club. This is taken on the table and if playing in spades, declarer must first draw trumps, so leads a small spade. The winning play is for East to hop up with the Ace, and lead another club. When West gets in with ♠K, she can then cash a winning club. Of course no East did this (including me), so West takes the first trump, leads another club and when East subsequently takes the ♠A she has no club to lead. The losing club can then be thrown on the hearts.

Playing in hearts the first three tricks are the same, now declarer draws trumps, and then leads a spade. Whichever hand these are led from, West takes the first trick, and the same thing happens: the losing club is now thrown on the spades, as long as declarer keeps an eye on the entries to dummy.

But how did two players make 10 tricks? Not by brilliant play, I'm afraid, but by fortunate (for them) opening leads.

All players are bidding on Board 12, East plodding away with spades, West trying clubs and hearts, and N-S bidding diamonds. Generally the bidding subsided in 3♠: in our case, we were outbid to 4♦, which makes, and two tables bid 5♦, which doesn't.

When I saw the hands I thought at least we (E-W) would not have made 4♠: ♦A led, switch to a club for a diamond ruff, and then ♥AK. But no, four of the tables playing in spades made 10 or more tricks. When ♦A is

led, there is a singleton in dummy, so North's play should be regarded as a suit preference signal to indicate the switch – the play of the low ♦3 asks for a club continuation. No one did it. But even if one off, 4♠ would have been a good sacrifice over 4♦.

Dir: West
Vul: N/S

♠ 9 8 5
♥ A K 6 5
♦ K 9 7 5 4 3
♣ - -

Optimum
NS +100

♠ 6
♥ Q 9 8 4 2
♦ 6
♣ K Q 10 9 5 2

W	NORTH	E
E	12	S
S	SOUTH	T

♠ A K Q J 10 3
♥ J 10
♦ 8 2
♣ A 7 6

10	
7	15
8	

♠ 7 4 2
♥ 7 3
♦ A Q J 10
♣ J 8 4 3

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	4	-	-	-
S	-	4	-	-	-
E	4	-	2	2	-
W	4	-	2	3	-

Dir: West
Vul: All

♠ A K 10 7
♥ A K J 8 2
♦ K
♣ Q J 9

Optimum
NS +2210

♠ 3
♥ Q 6 5 3
♦ J 9 6 4 3
♣ 8 3 2

W	NORTH	E
E	4	S
S	SOUTH	T

♠ 9 2
♥ 10 9
♦ Q 8 5
♣ K 10 7 6 5 4

21	
3	5
11	

♠ Q J 8 6 5 4
♥ 7 4
♦ A 10 7 2
♣ A

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	2	4	6	7	6
S	2	4	6	7	6
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Board 4 is a laydown 7♠. No one got all the way there, but five pairs managed to reach the small slam. It is difficult not to bid it if North opens 2NT as some bid, or 2♣ as one person did. Would you open 2NT with this shape and a singleton K? But even if North simply opens 1♥, as I might have done, South bids 1♠, North raises to 4♠ and surely South will roll out the old Black.

Lastly, I won't bother to show Board 11, as the cards aren't that interesting (you can always look it up on the Summertown web site if you really want to see it). But it's not often you look at the scores and see that N-S played in 1♥ at one table and 6♣ at another. They both went one off.

Cliff Pavelin