

Summertown Pairs – Mon 23rd Nov

First of all, congratulations to last night's winners, Moira and Trevor, with 61.1%. They were closely followed by Steph and Steven, and Erica and Christopher, tied for second place on 60.2%.

♠ J653
♥ K1054
♦ QJ7
♣ K3
♠ A
♥ J973
♦ K83
♣ AQJ106

I thought I would discuss just one of last night's deals in this bulletin, hand 15. The contract was 4♥ by North at every table. With South the dealer and EW silent, the sequence 1♣, 1♥, 3♥, 4♥ looks pretty standard.

Declarer might reasonably hope to lose at most 2 trump tricks and the ♦A, and indeed that is what happened at 5 of the tables.

However the contract should really be defeated, so let's consider the defence. Here is the full deal.

♠ J653	♠ K982
♥ K1054	♥ AQ86
♦ QJ7	♦ 954
♣ K3	♣ 97
♠ Q1074	♠ A
♥ 2	♥ J973
♦ A1062	♦ K83
♣ 8542	♣ AQJ106

What might East's opening lead be? At two tables the ♣9 was chosen. East can hope to get in with ♥Q to lead a second club, and when the ♥A wins East can put partner in for a third round of clubs. This produces a ruff, or an over-ruff, or a trump promotion.

At most tables East chose ♦5 for the opening lead. In general the hand is a battle for trump control. Here is one scenario. Declarer wins the opening lead in hand, crosses to ♠A, and leads ♥J, won by East's Q.

♠ J65	♠ K98
♥ K105	♥ A86
♦ J7	♦ 94
♣ K3	♣ 97
♠ Q107	♠
♥ -	♥ 973
♦ A62	♦ K8
♣ 8542	♣ AQJ106

East now forces dummy with a spade, and declarer plays ♥9, leaving the position on the next page, with East still to play...

	♠ J6	
	♥ K10	
	♦ J7	
	♣ K3	
♠ Q10		♠ K9
♥ -		♥ A86
♦ A62		♦ 94
♣ 854		♣ 97
	♠	
	♥ 7	
	♦ K8	
	♣ AQJ106	

With East still to play, we have reached the critical moment for the defence.

If East wins with ♥A, declarer will eventually reach his hand with ♣K, draw the last two trumps, and run the clubs.

	♠ J6	
	♥ K10	
	♦ J7	
	♣ K3	
♠ Q107		♠ K98
♥ -		♥ A8
♦ A62		♦ 94
♣ 854		♣ 97
	♠	
	♥ 7	
	♦ K8	
	♣ AQJ106	

But if East ducks we are left with this position, and now declarer has no winning option. If he tries another trump, East will win and cash two Spades and a Diamond; and if he doesn't play trumps, East must eventually make ♥8 as well as ♥A.

Not an easy hand, if yesterday's results are anything to go by.

Best wishes to all,

Roger Heath-Brown