

WE LOVE THEM: WE HATE THEM

What are “they”? High level competitive decisions, of course! Get them right and the sun shines and the imps flow in. Misjudge and you are left with that “if only” feeling in your stomach.

I certainly had that second feeling when Board 23 was moved on to the next table.

There are some, maybe more than some, who might choose to open a 5 card spade suit before a six card club suit. I think it is worth showing a longer minor as the hand often plays better where you have that extra sixth trump. After all, you can always get to show your 5 card spade suit later, can't you?

So, I held ♠ QT982 ♥ 86 ♦ - ♣ AK9764 and at all vul opened 1♣, to hear 1♦ on my left, 1♥ from partner (all very quiet and normal up to now) and then 5♦ on my right. Would you bid on and if you did not, would you pull partner's penalty double to 5♠? For me, it is a long drive home, a very long drive to reflect on what I should have done:

Board 23			
South Deals			
Both Vul			
		♠ 3	
		♥ K Q 7	
		♦ A J 10 6 5 3	
		♣ J 5 3	
♠ Q 10 9 8 2	N	♠ A K 5	
♥ 8 6	W	♥ J 9 4 3	
♦ —	S	♦ 9 8	
♣ A K 9 7 6 4	E	♣ Q 10 8 2	
		♠ J 7 6 4	
		♥ A 10 5 2	
		♦ K Q 7 4 2	
		♣ —	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			Pass
1 ♣	1 ♦	1 ♥	5 ♦
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All pass

I could hardly blame partner for doubling though I had naively expected his heart suit might have been a tad more threatening. We managed to take the first top spade but no more. Keeping the opponents out of a 21 hcp cold small slam was no triumph.

5♠ by West is an interesting contract, a cold make if the opponents lead a diamond but a cold three down if they get their signalling right on a club lead. This time, playing in the longer minor will result in two losers, whatever the lead.

Two tables played the hand in 5♠, once doubled and both times successful. Most other tables played in diamonds, three times doubled and all successful. As I said, you always get to show your spades eventually and if not, there is only one person to blame.

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