

Play Low, Low and Low Again

With plenty of action from Lyon at present and a quiet night at Akarana, here is a little story involving some unusual happenings in the spade suit.

The first was in the bidding. You are sitting there as West and hear:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	2♥	2♠

?

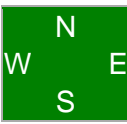
1NT was 12-15 and 2♥ showed hearts and a minor.

What would you bid holding: ♠ KQ653 ♥ 8543 ♦ 9 ♣ 1075?

With a decent five cards in trumps, it seems normal to defend. With four card support for partner, a singleton, likely to be in partner's second suit, and a smattering of high card points, it seems normal to bid.

I decided to do something "normal". I bid 3♥ fearful that partner will raise, expect greater strength and be doubled. It did not happen like that. The double came of 3♥ but was taken out to the 4 level and very soon we were defending 4♦ on the ♠7 lead from partner.

Board 32
 West Deals
 E-W Vul

♠ K Q 6 5 3		♠ 7
♥ 8 5 4 3		♥ A Q J 10 2
♦ 9		♦ 7 4 3
♣ 10 7 5		♣ K Q 9 4

	♠ 10 9 8 4 2	
	♥ 9	
	♦ A J 8 6	
	♣ A 6 3	

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 NT	2♥	2♠
3♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	4♦	All pass	

It was pretty obvious that partner had led their singleton and that if I played an honour, dummy's spades would soon be proving very useful for declarer. So, I let the jack score at trick one. Declarer played a trump to dummy and then a second spade. Playing low here did not prove hard. Declarer played their ace and to their mild surprise, partner's ruff secured the trick.

Next came East's ♣K and what often seems to happen, two wrongs, one by declarer and the next by the player in the West seat. Had North ducked the ♣K, the defence was powerless with East's only safe exit was their "lethal weapon", their last trump.

Alas for West, declarer won in dummy to play a high spade. With East still having a trump left, I should have played low for the third time. Then, there would have been no discard on any spade and two further club tricks would have defeated the contract.

"St Peter" disowned Jesus three times. I should have denied holding a high spade three times and would then have recorded a nice small plus score. Shame.

Richard Solomon

(What happened was that declarer ruffed my ♠Q high and returned to table with a trump, rendering the defence powerless to prevent a club discard.)