

TALES OF AKARANA

The Bizarre and The Absurd



Fortunately, the following board was only played at two tables as the results achieved at other tables would have taken too long to describe. Why at only 2 tables? Perhaps because all other tables passed the board in? That would be unusual as one hand had 19hcp! No, it was in the extra set in the three way match. Look what fun you missed by not playing in that match this week.

Firstly, what would you bid holding the following as West when South in second seat (after a pass from your partner) on your right opened 2♥, showing at least 5 spades (no misprint!), less than an opener and any shape except 4 or more hearts?

- ♠ KQ5
 - ♥ 53
 - ♦ AKQT7
 - ♣ KQ2
- One could not argue with double but it seemed reasonable at the time to have a shot at 3NT and rely on partner to look after the heart suit. A decent dummy would and indeed his hearts were better than mine...what more could I ask! Better hearts and the ♣A, perfect. The only doubt was “how much better?”

Board 30
 East Deals
 None Vul

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A J 10 3 2
♥ —
♦ J 6 5 4 3 2
♣ 10 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	2♥
3 NT	All pass		

As you can see, Sylvester Riddell, sitting North, had only 11 hcp, not enough to bid after his partner’s light opener! He made the excuse that he thought he could beat 3NT (tip 1: with a reasonable suit of your own, ignore any suit your partner had shown.) and duly, limply led his highest heart (tip 2: I

learnt from Tom Jacob many years ago when faced with a similar lead problem, lead 4th or even 7th highest but no lower than that!). Sylvester did comment when the ♥A hit the table that he did not expect me to make this contract. A cruel player would have told him it was his partner's lead and his was a lead out of turn but when Mark Robertson, South, discarded the ♠2 at trick one, I had to agree with Sylvester.

I did not give Sylvester the joy of playing out his heart suit. I ascertained that the ♠2 asked for a spade, that Sylvester had one and conceded an immediate 6 down (-300).

In theory, this was a great result for East-West as it is unlikely the defence can create 4 tricks to beat 4♥ while their own best game chance, 5♣, can be scuttled no matter whether East or West is declarer. It seems very unlikely that any East-West can bid to their making **slam**...6NT played by East which requires a first round diamond finesse and prior knowledge of the hand!

However, one has teammates and one of whom was not privy to the rather large powerful suit in his partner's hand. Dave Dolbel and Denis Humphries produced an auction where only one red suit was bid...and it was not hearts!

West	North	East	South
Russell	Humphries	Lewis	Dolbel
		Pass	1♦
X	2♦	All Pass	

After Tracey Lewis' pass, Dave Dolbel opened to show a spade suit (to quote Dave "real men don't deal in points".) Evidently! The only recognisable bid came from Douglas Russell. Denis Humphries made a very honest bid as 2♦ showed hearts. No doubt, Denis expected there to be further bidding...but he is still waiting! Dave had no liking for his partner's suit while the double indicated that a game was unlikely. So, why not play in his longer suit? Douglas agreed.

Denis and the dummy hand soon disappeared for a smoke (metaphorically speaking) as Dave toiled away for his 5 tricks, -150 and 10 imps out.

"A good save against your cold slam" Dave was heard telling his teammates after the score-up. "Mea Culpa for wrong-siding the slam", I replied.

Humour teammates...it keeps them sweet!



Richard Solomon