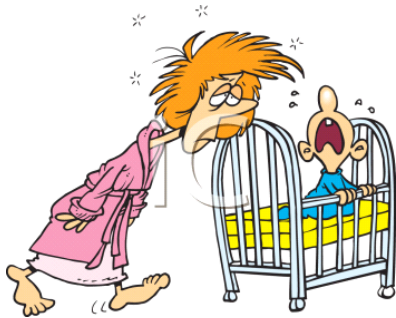


TALES OF AKARANA

PATIENT DEFENCE REQUIRED



Last week, I moaned at the lack of middle cards I was dealt. Moaning had little impact when it came to Board 26 this week. My trumps were ♠6543 and with partner holding the ♠2 among his four, it was hardly going to be a matter of drawing trumps and claiming!

Indeed it was my poor trumps that caused me just to invite on a 12 count I would otherwise have raised to game without thought...and although partner produced three trump honours, the timid auction caused an opponent to get out the red card!

Board 26
 East Deals
 Both Vul

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

♠ 6 5 4 3
 ♥ A 5
 ♦ A 8 7
 ♣ K J 8 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K Q J 2
 ♥ 10 7 6 3
 ♦ K 9 6 5
 ♣ A

♠ 7
 ♥ 9
 ♦ Q J 10 4 3 2
 ♣ Q 7 5 3 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♦	Pass
1♠	2♥	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	x	All Pass	

North led ♥K won by the ace. It looked normal to play a club to the ace and a diamond to the ace, though that play should make it easy for the defence as North can ruff, cash their heart trick and exit passively with a trump (it is against the odds for South to have a trump higher than declarer (except when I am at the helm!).

Eventually, South must score a diamond trick for one down. A club exit from North is, as you can see, far from safe for the defence.

Strangely, North discarded a club on the $\diamond A$ and I missed an opportunity of cashing my high club and then playing a heart or even better, a trump. I played a second diamond with North discarding again. However, I could not avoid the loss of a heart, a diamond and two trump tricks to finish one down.

West can see an almost certain two trump losers and one in each red suit. Yet, maybe playing a trump towards dummy at trick two is not too bad an idea. North must duck and the $\clubsuit A$ is cashed. Now exit a heart. North wins and continues the suit. Ruff, cash $\clubsuit K$ discarding a diamond and lead a diamond towards dummy. If North ruffs and leads $\spadesuit A$ and their last trump, you are still a trick short. If they discard a club, you win in dummy and ruff dummy's last heart and lead West's last trump. Again, North must duck but now has a certain two trump tricks and can force dummy by playing a heart. Declarer will soon lose control and lose three of the last four tricks, one down.

So, all routes really should lead to one down, especially when declarer leads a diamond to the ace early on. $4\spadesuit$ was played by 12 of the 15 West players, twice doubled and once redoubled (it was certainly not West who redoubled!). It was made, or shall we say misdefended, three times, once with an overtrick! Great going! All the doublers defeated the contract. Sometimes, defenders are required to be aggressive in some way to defeat a contract. On the above deal, the utmost patience was required to achieve their aim.

Richard Solomon