

“Passing” Time.

I thought it would be nice to finish the Akarana year with the story of an exciting board, high level bidding, drama, a grand slam..the sort of story we all enjoy reading. Alas, no.

We start this story a couple of days before the final night’s play at Akarana took place. Several players that night held the following:

♠ T ♥ 874 ♦ A95 ♣ AQ9763

A nice 6 card suit but what to do when there are 3 passes before your turn to bid? You may well say “no problem”: “no bid”. You have a nice hand but not a hand to open. Make the clubs spades and it is a different story. At least one player opened 1♣ and ended defending 2♥ which made 9 tricks. Are you surprised? Probably not. If you have to open the above hand, then choose 3♣ though you would go minus there too.

It’s “Pearson’s Law”. There seems a little debate as initially the “Law” said that if one’s high card points and number of spades added up to 14 or more, open the bidding. It seems that now we use the yardstick of 15 or more.

This brings us to Board 7 at Akarana.

Would you open the following hand in 4th seat?

♠ A3

♥ 653

♦ AT732

♣ A74

12 HCP, three aces, one 10 and poor major suit cards. 14 “Pearson Points”. Close but the recommendation seems to be to pass.

If you could play in a suit contract and had a decent trump fit, those aces would be golden. Yet, what chance is there that will happen?

The four hands almost proved the rule:

<u>Board 7</u>		♠ 10 6 2		
South Deals		♥ A 10 4		
Both Vul		♦ J 9 6 4		
		♣ K 6 5		
♠ Q J 5	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A 3		
♥ K Q 7 2		♥ 6 5 3		
♦ Q 5		♦ A 10 7 3 2		
♣ J 9 3 2		♣ A 7 4		
		♠ K 9 8 7 4		
		♥ J 9 8		
		♦ K 8		
		♣ Q 10 8		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
			Pass	
Pass	Pass	1 ♦	1 ♠	
	Dbl	2 ♠	Pass	
2 NT	All pass			

East was both hero and villain. 2♠ can be beaten giving East/West a plus score, better than a passed in board. The defence must not touch clubs. West leads ♦ Q ducked to South's king. As long the defence leaves it to declarer to play clubs first, the defence will score 2 trump tricks, one trick in each red suit and two club tricks.

Alas, the news for East-West when either player tried their luck in 2NT as happened at 7 out of the 11 tables was not so pleasant. Another East player would have enjoyed the experience of 3NT even less. The defence will come to three spade tricks, at least one maybe two in each red suit and a club trick to make the experience of being declarer an unhappy one.

The two East players who passed in 4th seat earned a modest but well deserved match-point haul on this occasion. Well judged even if 2♠ could be beaten.

So, "bread and butter" with which to finish the year. The bridge break is getting shorter every year. We will have more "Tales of Akarana" soon in the New Year.

Richard Solomon