


TALES OF AKARANA

Dangerous Doubling

Welcome back to another year at Auckland's Teams and Swiss Pairs club, Akarana, scene of much interest and excitement at the bridge table. The first night of February was a relatively quiet evening, barring the odd missed slam. Could that explain why at one table, there was a lot of excitement created with players using the red card? The imps could flow either direction!

It started quietly:

Board 27
 South Deals
 None Vul

<p>♠ K J 10 7 6 ♥ Q J 7 ♦ K 9 ♣ K 7 5</p>		<p>♠ 4 ♥ A 10 6 3 ♦ J 8 4 3 ♣ 10 6 4 3</p> <p>♠ A 9 8 5 2 ♥ 9 4 2 ♦ 10 7 6 2 ♣ Q</p> <p>♠ Q 3 ♥ K 8 5 ♦ A Q 5 ♣ A J 9 8 2</p>
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West	North	East	South
			1♣
1♠	2♣	2♠	3♣
3♠	Pass	Pass	?

And then the doubles came. South offered partner the chance to defend this part-score doubled, a dangerous

manoeuvre as North would find it hard to differentiate this style of double from a more serious one where South had spade tricks.



With the $\spadesuit A$ well-placed for West, 9 tricks would be easy to make. However, the bidding continued:

West	North	East	South
			X
Pass	4 \clubsuit	Pass	Pass
X	All Pass		

North, who had barely found a bid on the first round, was not up to defending a doubled part-score. West's double seems dangerous on several counts, in doubling a part-score with neither a trump stack nor a strong hand and also with a total lack of aces. Should East have pulled to 4 \spadesuit , never easy when you have been doubled a level lower? The $\clubsuit Q$ looked a good card for defending.

Indeed, in theory, it was correct to defend since 4♣ can be beaten but the defence must not touch diamonds early on and must force declarer with the second round of spades so that by the time South plays ♦A and a low diamond, there will not be an entry to discard the heart loser on the DJ. (Oh, trumps have to be drawn before the ♦Q is played to prevent the diamond ruff.)

As you can imagine, that was all theory! In practice, West led a spade to East's ace. A low diamond was led to West's king. When the ♣Q soon fell under the ace, the ♣K was declarer's third and only remaining loser.

Doubling part-scores with Teams style scoring is dangerous unless you have an easy expectation of down one with the chance of more. Neither of the above doubles could really be justified using this criteria even if the North hand might have been stronger while from West's point of view, East did not have to have so many spades.

The board was not dynamic elsewhere with either South's strong no-trump opening silencing everyone (usually one down) or a quiet spade partial for East-West. Not a double in sight!

Richard Solomon