

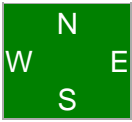
TALES OF AKARANA

“Full Marks”

There are some jobs in Bridge which are very hard to pass on to anyone else. One such role is President of the Akarana Bridge Club. Ask Jonathan Westoby although after at least a decade in the job, he did escape. Ask Mark Hangartner, as yet having completed but half of Jonathan’s period. Mark’s doing a great job too, currently actively trying to encourage more players to experience the unique challenging but friendly atmosphere which exists every Wednesday night, upstairs at the Auckland Bridge Club.

Advert over! Mark can play, too as the following hand from this week’s play demonstrated.

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

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

“OK,OK I do have a hold.”

A natural auction saw Mark (East) admit to having a spade hold at his fourth bid. South led a hopeful small spade which Mark won on the table. He would have 11 easy tricks had the diamonds broken but on the second round, North spoiled that plan with the ♣2 discard.

Mark did not fancy losing the lead twice in diamonds to the hand which had announced having at least 5 spades. So, he went for "Plan B" even though that low club suggested the club honours were not well placed for him.

He cashed his SA before playing a low club to the C9 and North's jack. North could only return a heart and when Mark exited another club to North, it was contract made, three clubs and two tricks in each other suit.

Double to South's rescue?

Any other suit lead at trick one, apart from the spade, should beat this contract though on some days, the spade lead could have been right play. The player at the table who knew best that an initial spade lead would be bad for the defence would be North. If the auction went like the one given, North could/ should have risked a double of 3NT suggesting a lead of dummy's first bid suit, clubs. After that lead, declarer must duck the first spade played by North and no amount of wriggling will now lead to 9 tricks.

Mark was fortunate with the opening lead but took the right line when the bad diamond break appeared.

I am sure he would be delighted to see a few more tables when the bridge hordes return from the Gold Coast at the end of the month.

Richard Solomon