

TALES OF AKARANA

High Level Action at Rubber



Week 2 of the three week Rubber Swiss tournament saw Malcolm Mayer and Michael Curry create an almost uncatchable lead in this event .Not only have they four wins from their four matches but as each win has been by over 2,000 points, they have accumulated 8 bonus points to go along with 12 for the wins,20 in all. The next highest total is 14 points.

In most of the matches to date, the cards have favoured those sitting in one direction. One board offered the opportunity of grand slam. How would you have handled these cards?

Dealer West.

West	East
♠ K6	♠ AQ53
♥ AK7	♥ 6
♦ K952	♦ AQ84
♣ KQJT	♣ A432

Not a bad collection at any form of the game. Shame this was only competition not Rubber for money! The best contract is 7♣ which can survive a 4-1 diamond break even if trumps broke 4-1 too (just ruff a heart). Meanwhile a bad diamond break would defeat both the diamond and no-trump grand slams.

West	East
1♣	1♦

2NT

3♣

3NT

?

East-West ought to find their minor fit in whichever minor West opens, though a 1♣ opener and 1♦ response could mean the diamond rather than the club fit is found. It is not that easy, though, as West is too strong for 3♦ and may opt for 2NT (18-19) balanced. East's 3♣ checks on West's majors..and after 3NT? 4♣ from East needs to be natural (otherwise in these days of short club openings, one will never find a club fit, without inverted minor responses).

The sequence really needs to develop with East doing the asking for key cards as they can find out about the trump queen (if clubs are the agreed trump suit) and they hold the vital ♦Q and ♠Q themselves. It is not so easy, short of a punt, with most tables stopping in 6NT. Both minor suits broke 3-2.

However, that West hand is such a good 19 count that it could be upgraded to 20...and that just might give East the impetus to be even more ambitious.

One does not want to give too big a score away in Rubber when sacrificing. The following deal was exciting at all tables. What would you bid as South after the following auction with East-West only vulnerable:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♣	2NT (Michael's style, the red suits)
4♠	5♥	5♠	?

South holds: ♠ 9

♥ KQ642

♦ KQJT3

♣ A7

It's Rubber if they make it. You seem unlikely to make 12 tricks in hearts but partner did bid voluntarily. If you bid 6♥ as a sacrifice it should not be expensive but is it a phantom sacrifice? So? Your action is?

In fact, it was a phantom sacrifice but not an expensive one.

