

# POST MORTEM

## Part 2

Simon and Dolly have won the cut - again - and Simon is South and Dolly North. Vera is West and Wally East.

Both pairs feel they've had a good session, and settle down for a drink and 'Post Mortem' after the play has ended.

### BOARD 3 DLR S EW VUL

	♠ A 9 6 3	
	♥ J 8 5	
	♦ K Q 8	
	♣ A J 10	
♠ Q J 2		♠ K 8 4
♥ Q 7 6		♥ A 10 3 2
♦ 10 9 6		♦ J 7
♣ Q 6 3 2		♣ 9 8 5 4
	♠ 10 7 5	
	♥ K 9 4	
	♦ A 5 4 3 2	
	♣ K 7	

"Did you two get to 3NT on Board 3?" Vera wants to know.

"Without difficulty, though one might think that those playing Acol would have had even less trouble. When Dolly opened 1S as North and I responded 2D, she had a bit of a problem: should she take the conservative view and bid 2NT or bid game? Assuming that I had at least a nine count and more likely 10+ for my Two level response, she quite correctly bid 3NT. And she made four for what I would expect would be an equal top."

"They had no trouble against us either," sighs Vera, "North opened 1S and over South's 2D bid, rebid 2NT. In Acol that of course shows 15-16 HCP and South had no problem raising to 3NT. But at least they only made Three when we cleared hearts and gave nothing away in the discards. But I can't help wondering whether there was a way to actually defeat it."

"Not the way the cards lie," Wally joins in, "though I did notice that two people had gone down, on a spade lead. Seems like declarer did not realise the spades would break and finessed a club into the West hand, but even that is hard to believe. Maybe they squeezed themselves when they ran dummy's diamonds? Normally it's a good idea to run a long suit as this puts pressure on the defence. I do see how declarer might discard the wrong cards from hand, though. And it is interesting that so few pairs managed to bid and make 3NT on the hand."

## BOARD 11 DLR S NIL VUL

	♠ 7 6	
	♥ K J 4	
	♦ A Q 10 7	
	♣ 10 9 8 2	
♠ 9 8 5 4		♠ K Q J 10 3 2
♥ A 9 2		♥ Q 10 6 3
♦ J 8 2		♦
♣ 7 6 4		♣ A Q J
	♠ A	
	♥ 8 7 5	
	♦ K 9 6 5 4 3	
	♣ K 5 3	

Wally has been patiently waiting to tell everyone how well he played Board 11. He starts unassumingly and quite deviously: "Did you find the 5D sacrifice against the 4S by East?" he turns to Simon and Dolly.

"No, but we didn't need to. I played the hand in 4D, we must have frightened poor East!" Simon is pleased with their effort on the hand. "I opened 1D and when Dolly raised to 3D and East doubled, I used my knowledge of TNT and bid FOUR Diamonds."

"What's TNT?" Dolly is puzzled, "some sort of explosive?"

"Oh, don't you know about that, Dolly? It stands for 'Total Number of Tricks'. You see, we have half the points in the pack and TEN diamonds between us, so we can expect to make TEN tricks. As it happens EW have half the points and ten spades and they can make ten tricks in spades. I wasn't going to let them get there without getting in the way. Mind you, I saw the perplexed look on West's face. Maybe she would have passed East's double. No, she could hardly do that. Surely the double when both opponents have bid only ONE suit only just has to be for takeout, whether at the two, three, or four level."

"Yes, of course," Wally finally gets his chance, "but 4S isn't any certainty to make, especially if you play with the odds, unless you can engineer a 100% line."

Dolly looks at him with even more puzzlement. "What do you mean, Wally?"

Wally has a good memory and writes out the EW hands. "As you can see, East has two losers when the club finesse does not work. Therefore I had to limit my heart losers to one. If I lay down the ace and lead towards my Q-10, unless North is kind enough to pop up with the jack or king, I have to guess which one to play. In effect, a 50-50 shot. But if I can finesse through the same hand twice, that is now a 75% chance, wouldn't you agree?" They all nod in agreement.

"So, I should lead the queen from my hand, and if it loses to North's king, I should later lead from hand again and finesse the nine. Of course you remember that North had both the king and jack, don't you?"

"So, you went down. Bad luck Wally. You'll make the next three times, according to your theory, then," Simon is being facetious, but the coup de grace comes from Wally.

"Yes, I did run the queen of hearts, but I did not fail in my contract. You see, I knew that if either opponent opened up hearts I would not have to guess at all, so I cashed up the clubs and ruffed the diamonds, thereby eliminating both clubs and diamonds from both dummy and my hand, and when I led the queen of hearts, this was the end position,"

Wally carefully rings the cards left at that stage:

♠ 8 4	♠ J
♥ A 9 2	♥ Q 10 6 3

"I led the queen of hearts and and it didn't matter whether South covered, or North won with the king. In the latter case, North has no exit and has to either lead a heart THROUGH my 1063 to dummy's A9, or another suit, allowing me to discard the losing two of hearts while ruffing with the jack of trumps in my hand. Amazing how often the defenders concede a 'ruff and slough' even when they don't need to. This time they couldn't help giving me an extra trick either way. Of course I needed a diamond lead and for South to continue them when in with the king of clubs to get the timing right, but remember, South couldn't open up the hearts anyway and had a singleton spade, so seemingly 'forcing' me by continuing diamonds is a natural defence. I wonder if I would have taken the 75% line on the ace of spades lead, followed by a club? But it pays to look for extra chances all the time doesn't it?"

Vera looks at him admiringly. "It sure does. I take it you didn't make 4D, Simon."

*(Hands repeated for convenience)*

**BOARD 11 DLR S NIL VUL**

<p>♠ 7 6 ♥ K J 4 ♦ A Q 10 7 ♣ 10 9 8 2</p> <p>♠ 9 8 5 4 ♥ A 9 2 ♦ J 8 2 ♣ 7 6 4</p>	<p>♠ K Q J 10 3 2 ♥ Q 10 6 3 ♦ ♣ A Q J</p> <p>♠ A ♥ 8 7 5 ♦ K 9 6 5 4 3 ♣ K 5 3</p>
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"As a matter of fact I did. I too looked for the 'extra chance', as did Wally with the East cards. I won the spade lead and crossed to the queen of diamonds and led a club immediately. East won and led another spade and I was able to clear the clubs and East could not help but win the third club. Poor East had to either lead a heart round to my king, or lead another spade and give ME a 'ruff and slough' solving MY heart problem as well. In any case I had already figured that East might have done more than she did, with all those spades, the AQJ of clubs and four hearts to the ace, so would have played West for about all they could have, and gone up with the king had West won the club and led a LOW heart. You'll note that they have to lead hearts early to stop me making four and that is not an obvious play for either of them is it? Interesting hand, a potential elimination play to make ten tricks for BOTH NS and EW!

Poor Vera, she feels quite left out of it. Those boys are so clever, she thinks to herself.

### BOARD 13 DLR N ALL VUL

	♠ Q 9 7	
	♥ 8 4	
	♦ K Q J 9 5 2	
	♣ A 6	
♠ 8 3		♠ A K 5 2
♥ K J 10 6 5		♥ A 9
♦ 10 8 6		♦ A 4 3
♣ 9 8 2		♣ K J 10 5
	♠ J 10 6 4	
	♥ Q 7 3 2	
	♦ 7	
	♣ Q 7 4 3	

This had proved to be a 'trap for young players' for quite a few of the pairs, both NS and EW. After North opened 1D, Wally as East had Doubled, for takeout. With nineteen high card points, he had been too strong to merely overcall 1NT which shows 15-18 HCP. Wally had intended to REBID 1NT which would then show 19-21 after a Takeout Double. Few new players seem to understand that if you force your partner to bid, they may have to bid with nothing, so you have to allow for that possibility. Vera had bid 1H but North had bid his diamonds again.

"So, I doubled again, still for takeout. Vera bid 2H and I now gave up," Wally continues the story. "She played it very well, too. North led the ace of clubs, not a good lead of course. The king of diamonds is more sensible. He now continued with another club but Vera went up with the king, played the ace of hearts and successfully ran the nine. Another club and South was in, switching to a diamond but too late. Vera discarded one of her diamonds on a club, then played two rounds of spades and ruffed one, exiting with a diamond and catching South in a "trump coup": North won the diamond but Vera's last two cards were the KJ of hearts and South's were Q7 and North was on lead. Great, huh? She made Four, which should have been a top, but wasn't because of all the loony Norths bidding to 3D and going two down Vulnerable! But still, there were lots of EW pairs overboard in any number of No Trumps as well. I can also assure you that if North had bid to Three Diamonds, I would have doubled yet once more, and then it would have been a Penalty double and we'd have got at least 500!"

"Yes," agreed Simon, "we actually defended against Two No Trumps. "Dolly passed when West bid 1H in response to East's double of my 1D opening, and East bid 2NT. Having forced poor West to bid in the first place, that was about one level too high. Different if West had reponded 1H in a 'free' situation. But having forced the issue, so to speak, East could have shown his 19 count by bidding ONE No Trump. Personally, as the bidding went, I'd have raised East's 2NT bid to 3NT or at least bid 3H, but West passed. Nevertheless, East got what he deserved when I dutifully led Dolly's suit and Joe whatsisname managed to scrape five tricks. I must say you two bid the hand very well. Presumably you would have rebid 1NT, Wally, if North had passed as did Dolly, and you, Vera, would have bid 2H which would have still been the final contract. And you really did play it superbly, Vera. Twins do think the same way, don't they?"

**BOARD 15 DLR S NS VUL**

	♠ J 10 4	
	♥ 2	
	♦ Q 5 4	
	♣ A J 8 5 4 3	
♠ 7		♠ A K Q
♥ A 7 5 3		♥ Q 10 9 8 4
♦ A K J 9 7 3		♦ 10 8 2
♣ Q 2		♣ K 6
	♠ 9 8 6 5 3 2	
	♥ K J 6	
	♦ 6	
	♣ 10 9 7	

"Simon, how would you play A 7 5 3 opposite Q 10 9 8 4?" Wally turns to Simon.

Simon of course won't commit himself before finding out any other information that might help. "In normal circumstances, with only EIGHT cards between the hands, you would have a double finesse position, missing the king and jack. So you'd run the queen then finesse again. But doing that with NINE between you and dummy, you'd look silly if you lost two tricks to the doubleton king jack offside. So I guess the thing to do is to plonk down the ace first, which only loses if both the king and jack are still left sitting over the Q 10. But how had the bidding gone, and what was the lead?"

"No adverse bidding. You have, as declarer, the Q 10 9 8 4 and South, on lead, leads what looks like a singleton," continues Wally.

"Yes, that does make a difference, and I remember the hand now. The best thing to do is no doubt to lead the queen of trumps, which picks up the king with South. PLUS a singleton jack in the North hand for NO losers. And of course if NORTH wins, a diamond return from North does no harm even if South ruffs, since a losing diamond can't be avoided. Is that what you did, Wally?"

"Precisely. But of course I played three rounds of spades first and discarded dummy's two clubs. It seemed safe enough, and as it happens it was. I could even have led the queen of hearts first since South did have the king, but discarding your losers where possible is the FIRST priority, or so I have been taught."

"Yes, that's true you know," Dolly chimes in. "The guy who taught me just said to draw trumps first, and that's not at all what you should do first automatically is it?"

Vera has to have the last word here. "Actually, my teacher gave me an even better priority. He said that before doing anything, the first priority for declarer should be to switch on brain and think out how to play the hand. That's the best advice I've had."

## BOARD 23 DLR S ALL VUL

	♠ J 3 2	
	♥ K Q 10 7 6	
	♦ 9 3	
	♣ Q 5 2	
♠ K 10 4		♠ A 5
♥ J 9 2		♥ A 8 5 4
♦ A K J 8 5		♦ Q 6 4
♣ 10 4		♣ K J 6 3
	♠ Q 9 8 7 6	
	♥ 3	
	♦ 10 7 2	
	♣ A 9 8 7	

"Talking about priorities, I would have thought that getting to the correct contract would be one. I was absolutely astounded how awful the bidding was on Board 23. We played it last, and West opened 1NT and East raised to 3NT. That was bad enough, since East didn't even bother to find out if they had a heart fit, but at least they ended up in the right spot. Would you believe only one other pair was in 3NT?"

Dolly was absolutely livid. "The other North had led the seven of hearts whereas I knew to lead the king from a holding including the queen and ten as well. Fat lot of good it did us when people are playing in ONE No Trump, TWO No Trumps, Diamond part scores, and Heart and Spade contracts by North South! What is the problem with being able to bid those EW hands to 3NT?"

"Well, we didn't have any problem, and I was the one who made Five when that silly old Agatha Cornbuckle led her fourth best heart. You know, she's been playing for 20 years! No wonder she's still in this grade. Of course playing Acol, I have a perfectly good 1NT opener but I suspect most of the people here would automatically open 1D, in which case North might overcall 1H. East may now have a problem, though 3NT seems an obvious enough bid."

Vera also can't work out how the other pairs failed to get to the obvious contract. "Mind you, I did notice that one East bid and played perfectly: they were in 1NT and made exactly that!" Not like Vera to be facetious.

Wally adds his words of wisdom. "You can see that it's absolutely no use bidding less than you should, just because you have no faith in your play. That score of 90 was still a stone cold zero for that poor East. People should at least learn to bid the easy games like this one. Playing in the correct contract would also improve their play more, in my opinion; you tend to learn more by failing in a difficult contract than just managing to make an easy one."

## BOARD 24 DLR W NIL VUL

	♠ J 10 9	
	♥ Q 3 2	
	♦ K Q 7 6 5	
	♣ 9 7	
♠ A Q 4 3 2		♠ K 7 6 5
♥ 7 6		♥ A K 10 8 5
♦ A		♦ J 4
♣ K 8 5 4 2		♣ 6 3
	♠ 8	
	♥ J 9 4	
	♦ 10 9 8 3 2	
	♣ A Q J 10	

"Actually, the very next board was also an example of bad bidding as well as play, it seems." Vera had opened the West hand 1S and very quickly landed up in Four. Not only that, she had made Six quite comfortably and been very surprised when it hadn't been a 'flat' board.

She continues her story: "Nothing could have been any easier. North led the king of diamonds, I drew trumps, and led a club towards my king. Later, I played ace, king of hearts and ruffed a third heart. When they broke and dummy's last two hearts were good, I could hardly help but make twelve tricks. I can't understand how others couldn't make Six."

"I can," Dolly has the answer. "By doing what appears to be the obvious. Jerry played it against us in Two, would you believe that dimwitted partner of his raised him to just TWO? Jerry ruffed out the hearts BEFORE playing on clubs. He could either lead clubs from his OWN hand or enter dummy and waste a trump from each hand by so doing, leaving him with a diamond loser. Your play, Vera, was not at all straightforward. Jerry is a good natural player, but had not thought it through. There was no way that the heart suit could provide more than three club discards, so a club needed to be led towards the king anyway. To give yourself the best chance of setting up hearts or clubs, you had to get the timing right. I presume you thought your hand out after putting your brain into gear like your teacher taught you, Vera?"

"Actually, no. I guess I just got lucky, or was it feminine intuition? As for the others' bidding, how did they bid it against you?"

"West opened 1S and I overcalled 2D. East bid 2H and Simon of course should have bid any number of diamonds, but he passed. West did not know what to do and also passed. Boy, East was absolutely livid because his bid was 100% forcing. He was still explaining after the next hand that 2H was what's known as a 'free bid' and opener must bid again no matter how difficult it may be, and what was wrong with bidding her spades again, anyway? When I think about it, my overcall was quite stupid really and we could have ended up in 5D doubled. And that comes to -500 with normal defence. Would you believe I saw someone in 5D NOT doubled, minus 100? They deserved a zero and got a top simply because the opponents did not double what must have been clearly a sacrifice, nor did they defend too well either of course. Bidding 5D may have worked for NS this time but certainly won't when they play in a higher grade. Better to play sensibly from the beginning I would think. Another thought has occurred to me: West might have opened One Club in some cases. That is in fact the correct opening bid if you're playing old fashioned Acol, because opening 1S and rebidding 3C would be equivalent to a Reverse. Now North would have quite a reasonable overcall of 1D and after East's 1H South just might jump to 4D which would be too high for West to introduce the spade suit. But surely that sort of thing is unlikely at our level of play?"

"Well, whatever the case, both these last two boards seem to have been quite badly mishandled, both in the bidding and play," Simon has the final word, "we got lucky because the opponents did not know what a 'free bid' was or that it was forcing, you got lucky because of Vera's great play. Let's have a drink to our respective 70% sessions."

He wasn't quite correct there. Vera and Wally ended up with 61.4% but he and Dolly only managed 57.3%, such are the vagaries of C-Grade bridge. Nevertheless both pairs were in great shape for the final two sessions of the event.