

POST MORTEM

Part 3

The third session of a four session event in 'C' grade at the club, with Simon and Dolly, and Vera and Wally. Yet again, Simon and Dolly won the cut and played NS and Vera and Wally EW.

With exactly eleven tables, our pairs played two boards against each other. This one was a contest between Vera's good defence and Simon's aggressive bidding.

BOARD 4 DLR W ALL VUL

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

After three Passes, Simon opened 1S. Vera doubled, for takeout, with her nice shape (Wally thinks so anyway!) but Dolly bid Two No Trumps. Simon and Dolly play 'Truscott' over an intervening double: a single raise is very weak, a double raise is equivalent to a single raise without a double, and a bid of 2NT shows a normal raise to Three of the suit. Dolly upvalued her hand slightly because of her trump support, controls (aces and kings) and doubleton heart. Simon only had 11 HCP but with HIS shape and controls, enough to expect game to make so he bid 4S without further ado. Vera led a club and when Simon led a trump to the ace and tried a diamond, she smartly stepped up with her ace and cashed her club. Making Four and that seemed a fair result. Would the others bid game? After the session they quickly grabbed the board to find that not only had quite a few others bid to 4S but they were the only ones to make only Four. Some Wests had led a diamond, either low, which allowed the king to score, or the ace which allowed a club discard on the king. Vera had hit on the best lead, and Simon and Dolly had to be satisfied with 10/18 match points.

"What a shame we couldn't have played it against one of the other pairs," Simon grumbled, "but at least we got more than 50% on the board despite your defence, Vera."

The Post Mortem now continues, Simon narrating the after play Post Mortem.

BOARD 10 DLR E ALL VUL

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

"What did you do on Board 10, Wally?" asks Simon.

"Two Hearts making Two, on the most abominable defence you could imagine. South took two top clubs and switched to the jack of diamonds!"

"You're kidding!" Simon can't believe it, "I started the same way but with four trumps in my hand it seemed obvious to keep on with clubs and force declarer to ruff. Declarer tried to get to dummy with the queen of diamonds but Dolly won her king and returned another diamond to my jack. I now led the queen of spades which declarer won in dummy and finally managed to get to take the heart finesse by running the jack. It worked - the first time, but unfortunately for declarer not the second time! I won the queen and continued clubs since all I had left were clubs and hearts, and declarer didn't even make the ace of diamonds! And if you wonder why I enjoyed taking her three down, it was that crabby old Dora Dingleby."

Simon really could be quite a supercilious little sod himself, muses Vera.

"People just don't seem to realise the damage they can do by forcing declarer to ruff in the long hand, especially when they themselves have a few trumps," she chimes in. "On this hand it seems quite obvious, though your duck of the first heart lead was quite brilliant, Simon. A shame more people weren't in hearts. I noticed quite a few people played in 2S by North, making 2 or 3, so if you chose to defend 2H you needed to take it at least two down."

BOARD 12 DLR W NS VUL

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

"Simon, did you play a hand in 3NT where everyone seemed to be going down even on a spade lead from the K J?" asks Wally.

"Yes, but West didn't lead a spade, yet I made Four!"

"What???" Vera is incredulous, "how on earth?!?"

"Quite simple, really. West led a club to East's ace and East won and returned a spade. I put in the eight and West won and continued clubs. That suit was already an open book anyway, and after finessing clubs as often as necessary, I ran them, and then the diamonds. Since West was showing signs of discomfort and throwing spades away, I played ace and another spade and he had to lead a heart from his king at the end. I could also have thrown him in with a heart to make him lead spades round to my AQ. I can't imagine how declarer can go wrong, on any lead and any defence, as long as they don't go cashing up their diamonds, where the entries are needed to finesse clubs."

Simon took a brief breath and continued. "On the expected spade lead, for instance, the logical play is to run the ten of clubs immediately. This loses to East and East returns a spade which declarer wins, finesses clubs, coming back to hand with a diamond if West covers, then runs off all the tricks that I did, and this time West can be thrown in with a spade for a heart lead round to the queen. Exactly the same result. Did you also notice all the NINE of spades leads? That is not the time to lead your 'fourth highest', surely? The jack is the normal lead from an 'interior sequence', or the ten if you and partner have a specific agreement, but the nine? Awful, surely it will confuse partner?"

"Vera led the jack, and declarer did exactly what you thought. Cashed the diamond suit and got herself terribly tangled up," Wally explains, "just as well for us, if you managed to make Four, Simon, and I can see how it can be done on any lead. It is worth noting that you should not finesse the queen of spades with a suit that can wait, and when East has no higher card to lead through, South should play the eight to give themselves some time. But it's all far too tempting for these people who have just learnt to finesse, isn't it?"

You'd think Wally was an old hand, wouldn't you?

BOARD 16 DLR W EW VUL

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

"Have you ever come across the SOS redouble?" Dolly asks no one in particular.

"The what?!?" both Vera and Wally exclaim in unison.

"SOS as in help, rescue," Simon takes up the story. "Dolly and I were browsing through an old bridge book and came across the SOS redouble. It can be a good way to get out of a tight spot if your partner gets doubled in a suit that you have nothing in. Say your partner overcalls and you have a void in that suit and 544 in the others. The opposition double, and you redouble. Since you would normally be quite happy with making a doubled low level contract, the redouble has to be screaming for partner to run. The most common situation I suppose is when partner has overcalled a 1NT opening. Of course the overcaller can also scream for help if it looks ominous. Too bad if the hand that's being asked to bid something else has only one suit. They used to have quite a lot of fun in the old days, with redoubled contracts going down three, or doubled 4-2 fits going down five. And it actually happened to us tonight! Dolly opened this hand 1D, East doubled, I bid 1H and Dolly chose to rebid 2D, having five of them. Personally, I'd have rebid 1NT but then the story wouldn't have been so good. East doubled Dolly's 2D bid and both I and West passed. Dolly looked at her putrid diamonds and REDOUBLED! I was delighted to run to 2S, and that wasn't even doubled. Actually, I wish it had been, as I managed to make Two, which was an OK board but not wonderful since 2NT was making, as well as EW going two or more down Vulnerable. But 2D would certainly not have made. Good bid, eh?"

"Actually, I must say that does appeal to me," Wally is looking quite excited, "they should have done that against us, shouldn't they, Vera? Remember, North opened 1NT playing Acol, and I doubled. They played it there, going down one, but if they had wanted to run, both of them had the opportunity. South could have tried 2C, then if doubled they could try 2D and if doubled, REDOUBLE for rescue! That would have asked North to bid their better MAJOR. And, if after I doubled the 1NT and the hand was passed to North, she could have bid 2D to run from the double, and after my double of 2D, South could have redoubled, knowing full well that North must have at least one three card major to escape in! That sounds like fun, doesn't it. Shall we play the SOS Redouble, Vera?"

"I'll tell you when I can work out what you have been gibbering on about."

BOARD 18 DLR E NS VUL

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

"Remember the second board you played against us?" Vera asks Simon, "the one you happily bid to game on your excellent fit? There was another one very much like that one later on as well."

"Yes," Simon remembers all the hands he played in game (or so he'd like to think), "but this time there's no way to stop me making five, is there?"

"No, though some declarers managed to hold themselves to nine or ten tricks. There's only one way to play the hearts: run the ten, since West needs to have the queen to avoid two losers in the suit, and two diamond ruffs in dummy should make 11 tricks quite easily. I can't even imagine how declarer could make less. They had no trouble against us, despite Vera's immaculate defence as per usual," Wally can only imagine that the other declarers had merrily kept leading out their trumps before realising that they needed to ruff diamonds.

BOARD 19 DLR S EW VUL

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

"We had a minor triumph on one board, thanks to the SIMPLE system we play," Dolly is quite chuffed. "I had a perfectly normal Acrol 1NT opening but had to open 1D and Simon responded 1H so we ended up in 2H. The NS hands were a complete mirror image, remember? Again there seems to be only one way to play the hand, and Simon made Four easily enough, but the only others to play in hearts made only Three. Simon drew trumps and made sure he could lead up to my K J 10 2 of diamonds twice. The queen needed to be with West and it was. How one declarer made Four No Trumps, and on a club lead to boot, is a total mystery to me, though."

"That wasn't against us, but the result for us was not much worse," moans Wally, "I led a club and declarer finessed the hearts by first leading the queen which I covered, and then led diamonds twice from dummy, finessing the ten first. All we could make were three clubs and a diamond. You wouldn't believe the terrible play there must have been to make fewer than nine tricks in No Trumps, in fact there are ten on any lead but a club!"

BOARD 21 DLR N NS VUL

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

"We actually had another success with the SIMPLE system on the hand where I had 4-4 in the majors and a 14 count, and most Acol players would open 1NT," Dolly continues. "I opened 1H and Simon responded 1S which I raised to Two. Simon, with 10 HCP and good controls, invited game with 3S and I had no problem going to game. Only one other pair were in game and they went two down. Not Simon, though. He made sure he got two club ruffs BEFORE drawing trumps. Admittedly we were lucky when the hearts broke 3-3 but his careful play deserved a top, don't you think?"

"Can't East stop him by leading a trump at trick one?"

"No, Wally, even ace and another spade allows two club ruffs and because the hearts break, declarer can eventually ruff a diamond back to hand to draw the last trump and then take the thirteenth heart."

This time, Dolly has all the answers.

With all those answers, Dolly and Simon have had an excellent session, 64.4%, but Vera and Wally have faded a little, with 54.7%. Next week's final session will certainly be very interesting indeed.