

SUPERIOR SEX

Part 2

This is session two of the 'battle of the sexes'. Coincidentally, the two pairs again start at table 1 and Simon AGAIN wins the cut. This is the first board of the second session.

BOARD 1 DLR N NIL VUL

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

Wally opens 1NT. This hand LOOKS like it shouldn't be opened 1NT but it IS a balanced 12-14 count after all and they ARE playing ACOL. Simon bids 2C, having an ideal hand to be using Stayman. When Wally replies 2D, Simon's initial thought is to bid 2H but then he realises that because they can bid Stayman with ANY number of points including a ZERO count, he CAN'T do that since Wally will pass with any hand at all, including a MAXIMUM. Simon, just in time, therefore bids THREE hearts, which INVITES game and shows his hand almost exactly. He knows that a bid of 3H or 3S after a Stayman sequence is always INVITATIONAL, because an IMMEDIATE bid to 3H or 3S is FORCING to game. Just as well THEY know it, many others tend to get their bidding mixed up in such a situation. Wally has a maximum and THREE card support, so he raises to 4H. A simple enough auction, he thinks.

Dolly leads the queen of diamonds, her natural lead with such a holding. Unfortunately for her and fortunately for Simon, this places Vera with the ace and Simon is relieved that his king is sure to make. Vera wins the ace and returns the five but Simon has no further problem in the play, losing the ace and queen of trumps and claiming the rest. Later, they find that, surprisingly, only one other pair is in 4H and THEY manage to go down. West has led a club and declarer, in a hurry to discard possible losers, has discarded a DIAMOND on the third club and ended up with a spade loser at the end. A spade loser is CERTAIN if trumps are drawn, so if declarer DOES discard a diamond, they should then play queen of spades, ace and RUFF a spade before embarking on trumps, but this is fraught with danger and it's still best to discard a spade LATER and lead a diamond to the king early on. There IS a chance that even if West HAS the ace of diamonds, they may NOT cash a second diamond anyway, and persevere with another club to attack dummy's entries, and declarer can STILL discard the second diamond and now play on spades. THAT is Wally's after the session analysis, but they all agree that it's all too much for a C-Grader, but that 4H SHOULD be bid if you bid the hands properly, and SHOULD be made if West knows about leads and, if West does not, as long as declarer plays the hand to best advantage.

They all get great delight from the fact that the 3NT brigade have generally gone down, even though 3NT seems to be 'FRIGID' on a club lead if declarer plays on hearts immediately. In any case, FOUR hearts beats THREE No Trumps, and the boys are glad that THEY know how to get to a 5-3 fit, even though the GIRLS are not amused by their bad result on the board. 20/20 for the boys and NO match points for the girls. Certainly not what any of them expected when they played the board to start with!

The rest of the post mortem was a bit more positive for the girls.

BOARD 4 DLR W ALL VUL

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

Dolly opened 1S and Vera responded 2C. A 2S rebid from Dolly, and Vera now jumped to 3NT. An opening bid opposite an opening bid equals game as far as she was concerned, and she had no spade support and plenty in the other suits, so 3NT was the final contract. Dolly had no reason not to believe her so that was the end result.

South contemplated for a while and led the two of diamonds, to North's ace. North returned the FOUR. Vera thought about finessing the jack, but figured that if SOUTH had length, the jack would lose to South's queen and the suit could be cleared. The return of the FOUR looked like North either had no more, or was fourth highest and SOUTH had led from a three card suit. Hoping for some sort of blockage, and knowing that the defence was bound to continue diamonds anyway, Vera made the unusual play of NOT finessing and went up with her KING!

She needed at least one spade trick if she was to make nine tricks, so she tried a spade immediately, and when South played low, the queen held. Now Vera embarked on clubs and after three rounds the suit had broken and South was on lead. Sure enough, she played her queen of diamonds and then continued with a heart.

Vera happily made the rest and claimed an overtrick, thinking that this was bound to be a top. They were most disappointed that not only had one other declarer made Four as well, AND on the same lead, but that ONE declarer had actually made FIVE when South had made the absolutely DISGUSTING lead of the ace of spades. Nevertheless, 17/20 match points for the girls.

Against Simon and Wally, West opened 1S and rebid 2S and East didn't know what to do next and PASSED! West made Three and despite the fact that 3NT SHOULD have been bid AND made at the other tables, the boys scored just 6/20 match points.

BOARD 7 DLR S ALL VUL

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

This board turned out to be a good one for both pairs. They have learnt one thing well and that is how to COMPETE. SIMON opened the South hand 1S and West overcalled 2C. Wally AND East both passed. Simon wanted to bid 2S but in case Wally was sitting over West's clubs, DOUBLED instead. West passed and Wally bid 2D. East also passed and Simon now bid 2S which was where the auction ended.

West was clearly a very timid and unimaginative player, because she led the ace of clubs and then continued with the ace of hearts! And THEN, she just HAD to try the third suit, and tried the queen of diamonds, covered by the king and East's ace, Simon VERY quickly unblocking his jack. East wasn't any better, and blithely tried to cash the king of clubs, but the damage had been done. The defence made just four tricks and Simon chalked up + 140, 18/20 match points along with two others for the same result.

Dolly and Vera were much more aggressive and having some bidding sophistication available, blundered into a VERY interesting contract indeed. When Dolly overcalled 2C and North passed, Vera bid TWO SPADES!! South nearly jumped out of his chair, but Dolly very gently circled the bid as an alert and then, when South finally calmed down and asked about the meaning of the bid, explained: "We use the CUE bid in a situation where we have OVERCALLED to ask about the strength of the overcall. It helps to be able to find out just how good an overcall is, don't you think?"

South was unimpressed and DOUBLED. Yes, he did think that he could defeat 2S! Dolly, in turn, was unimpressed as well, and, having as good an overcall as she could possibly have without JUMPING, as well as a spade stop, bid 2NT! Vera was beginning to regret having made such a fatuous cue bid when she could, and should, simply have raised Dolly's 2C to 3C, so tried to retreat to 3C. She really WASN'T interested in going further, but the sign of club support from Vera, and the expectation of six club tricks plus a spade and heart at least, was too tempting for Dolly and she pressed on: with THREE NO TRUMPS!

South was totally incensed by now and DOUBLED. When all passed and North led the six of DIAMONDS, South (AGAIN!) nearly jumped out of his chair. He gawked at the lead and Dolly embarrassed him further by saying: "Shall I say it for you? NO SPADES?" turning to North. This of course was a rhetorical question and North had no right to say anything, but nevertheless she managed to splutter out a "No". The diamond ran round to Dolly's queen and she now laid down the jack of clubs. North wasn't going to do anything ELSE wrong, not having led her partner's suit, so she COVERED the jack. "COVER AN HONOUR WITH AN HONOUR", she'd been taught THAT often enough. Dolly won the king and now tried yet another finesse. She hadn't been going to finesse the clubs, but she certainly was going to finesse the hearts NOW, and led the queen. South was too smart to cover and the queen held. Just for the hell of it, Dolly continued with the jack which South DID cover this time, quite correct play, and then Dolly ran her clubs. After having taken the first ten tricks, she conceded the last three to NORTH and couldn't resist turning to South: "YOU made a lot of tricks for all your bidding and doubling didn't you? Sorry I can't stay and chat, must go to the next table, the move's been called!"

The boys were in stitches as Vera related the story with the after session drinks.