

Bridge By The Lake

By Ken Masson



The North American Bridge Championships were held in Toronto this summer and herself and myself participated in a few events with mixed results. These tournaments attract a very high calibre of player so it is a rare opportunity to pit one's skills against the cream of the game from all over the world. Over the course of 11 days, bridge addicts could find games beginning at 9.00 a.m. all the way to midnight!

The diagrammed hand occurred in the Seniors Swiss Teams with herself and myself sitting East-West. South dealt and opened the bidding 1 No Trump which was announced as showing 12 to 14 high card points. While my hand was worth a jump to 4 hearts, I was afraid that if partner held a few cards in the right places we could miss a slam. That is something one is more likely to take into consideration when playing against a weak no trump than the more traditional strong no trump showing 15 to 17 points. Therefore, I decided to temporize with a penalty double, intending to show my hand pattern after the opponents had found their fit and hoping that partner would understand my intentions.

North passed my double and South alerted, explaining that when the bid came back to her she was obliged to redouble. East passed and South duly did as requested. I should have asked for a further explanation of their methods at this point but did not, believing that North would now show a suit so I passed and was momentarily startled when North also passed! In effect, North

was saying that he believed his partner could make the contract. So the final contract was 1 No Trump Redoubled, not an everyday occurrence at the bridge table.

When I regained my composure I realized that we may have lucked out here, provided neither of our opponents held four hearts to the Jack or 10. I led the heart ace and was somewhat alarmed to see a doubleton of that suit in the dummy as there was still room for four hearts in declarer's hand but when my partner followed suit I knew we were okay. I ran all my hearts and cashed the spade ace to set the contract 2 tricks for the unusual non-vulnerable score of 600.

At the other table, our team-mates opened 1 club and after West bid 4 hearts they went on to 5 clubs. Fearing he had little defense against this contract, West continued on to 5 hearts which had to go down one, so it was a very good gain for our side.

North-South were somewhat unlucky that I held such a powerful hand with eight running tricks as the "normal" penalty double of a 1 no trump opening is a more balanced hand with high card points spread more evenly through the four suits. They were also unfortunate that I did not ask for a full explanation of their bidding as I may well have decided to bid rather than defend had I known exactly what was going on.

It just goes to prove that sometimes it is better to be lucky than good!

♠ Q10
♥ 84
♦ AJ106
♣ KJ1043

♠ A653
♥ AKQ9765
♦ 87
♣ VOID

♠ KJ7
♥ J102
♦ Q93
♣ AQ87

♠ 9842
♥ 3
♦ K542
♣ 9652

Vulnerability: Neither
Dealer: South

Bidding:

North	East	South	West
		1 NT	Dbl*
Pass**	Pass	Redbl	Pass
Pass	Pass		

*Penalty
** Forces Redouble
Opening Lead: ♥A