

## Brian's Brighton The Summer Meeting 2015

### Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> – More from the Swiss Pairs

This was an interesting deal from the final match of the weekend Swiss Pairs Championship, with points in both the bidding and defence.

Board 28. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

	♠	Q 7 3		♠	1♠	Pass	1NT 2♥
	♥	Q 7 4 2		♥	3♦	3♥	Pass Pass
	♦	J 7 4		♦	?		
	♣	A 9 7		♣			
♠	A 10 8 6 2		♠	J			
♥	-		♥	J 10 8			
♦	K Q 10 9 3		♦	A 8 2			
♣	K J 6		♣	Q 10 8 5 3 2			
	♠	K 9 5 4					
	♥	A K 9 6 5 3					
	♦	6 5					
	♣	4					

Firstly, is West worth another action and, secondly, if the answer is yes, what should that action be? I would say yes to the first question. While the hand may only contain 13 HCP, it does have excellent distribution. As to the second question, I am sure that many players would rebid their diamonds, but that is an unnecessarily committal choice. I much prefer double. This is take-out and keeps clubs in the game - a good idea on the actual deal - and also defending 3♥ doubled if partner, for example, is 2-4-2-5 shape. On the actual deal, E/W can make game in either minor, with the play rather more straightforward in 5♣. If West does double 3♥, East should drive to game, either by jumping to 5♣ or to 4NT to ask partner to pick the minor.

In real life, few E/W pairs managed to bid to game, and one or two who selected 5♦ failed to make it. The real interest tended to be whether they could beat South in 3♥, occasionally doubled.

The popular opening lead was the king of diamonds. It is no good East playing a discouraging card - even if his methods are not to give count on a king lead - and expect west to find a switch to ace and another spade. If he hopes to beat 3♥, East must overtake with the ace of diamonds and switch to the jack of spades. Now look at it from West's point of view. There are only two possible explanations for partner's defence - either he has a singleton diamond, or he has a singleton spade. Why else would he overtake, particularly with jack to three diamonds in the dummy?

On the auction, it is far more likely that East is short in spades than in diamonds - the latter would give South four diamonds, and South must also have at least three spades because East would have competed with 3♠ over 3♥ had he held three of the suit. So West should win the ace of spades and return a spade. East ruffs, leads a diamond to the queen and collects a second spade ruff for down one.

If you defended in that fashion, well done. If you were East and found the correct defence, only for partner to mess it up, my commiserations. I too was guilty of casting pearls before swine.

Board 32. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

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

At many tables, South opened 1NT and played there. My partner, Geoff Wolfarth led the five of diamonds to the king and ace. Declarer cashed four rounds of spades and Wolfarth discarded an encouraging low club followed by a heart, while declarer pitched a club. Now declarer led the jack of hearts and ran it to the king. Wolfarth led a low club - I had played all four spades up the line as a suit-preference signal and the logic of the play to date was that declarer had enough points in the other three suits to make up the required 15-17. I put in the jack of clubs and switched to the eight of diamonds for the nine and ten. A second low club to the ace allowed me to play the four of diamonds through and that picked up two more diamond tricks. The king of clubs was now the setting trick. It was mildly surprising just how well +50 scored for E/W.

At another table, Ros Wolfarth ducked the diamond lead - which is surely wrong in theory with such a good holding, but proved to be a winning action in practice. A second diamond went to the nine and ten, but now West did not have as much information as at the first table and did not like to lead away from the king of clubs. Instead, he switched to a spade. Ros could cash four of those and take the losing heart finesse but, though the defence could now take its club tricks, there was no third defensive diamond trick and the contract was made.

Board 31. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

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

If you sat N/S, how did you bid this one? Six of either minor is a trivial make, and most pairs managed to get there.

I am betting that virtually every standard or Acol bidder opened 2♣ with the South cards and rebid 3♣ over the 2♦ response. North bid 3♠ and suddenly it got difficult. Our opponent bid 4♦ now but that is also

consistent with a hand with spade support and a diamond control. Acol can get rather murky after a 2♣ opening and this was one of those occasions. North raised to 5♦, quite expecting that he might hear 5♠ next from partner, but on this occasion the 4♦ bid had been natural all along so, having found diamond support, South went on to 6♦ for +1370.

Another South foresaw the problem of making an ambiguous 4♦ bid so repeated his solid clubs over 3♠ and North had no very attractive option so chose to raise to 5♣ on the void, South went on to 6♣ and again that was an easy +1370.

I know you will think I am mad (you are not alone in this, as my wife will tell you), but I am very attracted to a simple non-forcing 1♣ opening. If you survive (i.e. somebody bids) you are so much better placed to describe your hand after a natural opening bid. You can reverse to show diamonds with longer clubs and, whether it is partner or the opposition who are bidding with you, you will get the opportunity to show a very powerful hand with something like six-five distribution. Of course, partner may need a sense of humour to appreciate just how strong you can be, but most of the time it is you who will be in control and making the final decision after discovering whether or not partner has diamond length/strength. And how often with 1♣ be passed out when you are one-one in the majors?