

Eastbourne Bulletin 1

By Michael Byrne

The first session of the Swiss pairs on Friday night got off to a bang, with the dealing machine spurting out a wide variety of interesting deals to start with.

This was the first board at our table:

♠ AKQ9754
♥ J104
♦ -
♣ 432

It is game all and the hand on your right passes – how many spades do you open?

In an effort to show how macho I was (try not to laugh) I started confidently with 4S and was greeted with an even more confident double on the left. After some thought right hand opponent took it out to 5♦ which my partner doubled.

At another table the bidding started with an opening bid of 1S, now the auction continued like this:

P	1♠	X	P
2♦	2♠	P	P
3♦	P	P	X
P	?		

Although partner surely expects you to hold more defensive tricks than you do I don't see how removing to 3♠ is going to be the winning decision at this vulnerability, since if 3♦ is making the opponents are surely going to find a double of 3♠, and if 3♦ is going down (you'll need partner to hold 5 trumps with the intermediate cards which is a big ask) then at least it will score well for you.

In any event the player in question removed to 3♠ and was greeted with a sharp double. How did everyone do?

	♠ 1063	Board 7	Dir S	Game all
	♥ KQ96			
	♦ AQ2			
	♣ AK8			
♠ AKQ9754				♠ J
♥ J104				♥ 8753
♦ -				♦ K1098
♣ 432				♣ Q1096
	♠ 82			
	♥ A2			
	♦ J76543			
	♣ J75			

5♦x at my table was a simple two down, whilst 3♠x at the second table was one off for -200. The removal of the double saved some match-points, as two pairs scored 670 to gain 1 matchpoint each for the respective EW pairs.

In a pleasing parallel losing 500 in 4♠x was worth 8 match points out of 118, while losing 500 in 5♦x was also worth...8 matchpoints out of 118!

The decision to remove the double of 4♠ was very costly, although facing a more shapely hand (1444 or the like) then the law of total tricks does suggest it is right. EW have 10 spades between them and NS have 10 diamonds then 4♠x will be -790 against -200, or +200 against +600, so removing will improve your score.

In the interest of being fair to my opponents I should point out that 2 boards later I was faced with this gem:

♠ Q98
♥ 1063
♦ 8653
♣ J83

Love all - 1♠ X 3♠ P
P X P ?

In the long run it is right to pass these doubles, but sadly I was faced with the decision in the very short run!

It was of some comfort to discover (after I had gone for 500 in 4♦x) that 3♠x was cold for an overtrick, so effectively I was choosing between -500 and -630, thanks for that partner.

The top score on the board NS went to the pair that took 2200 from 4♥xx, the top EW score went to those who beat 4♠x by a trick, the play proved much harder than deep finesse suggests.

	♠ A10752	Board 1 Dir N Love all
	♥ AJ95	
	♦ A	
	♣ 1072	
♠ Q98		♠ J
♥ 1063		♥ K8742
♦ 8653		♦ KJ74
♣ J83		♣ AKQ
	♠ K643	
	♥ Q	
	♦ Q1092	
	♣ 9654	

Today's edition has withheld the names to protect the guilty – will I be so generous in future editions? We shall see....