

John exposes an honour card during the auction

JULIE was waiting by her front gate when John pulled up. 'So we're going somewhere new tonight? I am so excited! Where are you taking me?' asked Julie.

'I have found this really friendly bridge club,' replied John happily, not noticing Julie's look of total disappointment. 'I'm just worried about one thing: the Tournament Director has asked to speak to us before we start. Do you think he has heard about my reputation for getting things wrong?' asked John.

'I hope not! I had hoped to start at a new club with a clean sheet. Mind you, I had hoped for a break from bridge this summer as well . . .' replied Julie.

'We would have only got bored trying to fill our evenings with other things,' asserted John, leaving Julie speechless.

Soon after they arrived the TD strolled over to them. 'Welcome to our club, it's good to see new faces. I thought you ought to know that we don't follow all the EBU announcement rules here: as nearly everyone plays a weak no-trump, we have decided that you only need to announce a 1NT opening when it is *not* 12-14 with a balanced hand; we announce a 2♣ response to 1NT as Stayman even if there is a fourth response of 2NT that promises two four-card majors, since lots of our members play it that way; also we announce natural jump overcalls as weak, intermediate or strong, as we found that most people did it anyway.'

'I thought you had to follow EBU rules to the letter,' said John.

'No, at club level we can vary the regulations as we wish, so long as we don't contravene the laws; however, if we are running a heat of a county or EBU event, then we have to abide by whatever regulations are laid down, including announcements.'

'Isn't that confusing?' asked John.

'No, most of our members only play in our normal weekly duplicate nights. Those who play in county and EBU events are quite capable of remembering what they have to do,' replied the TD.

John and Julie settled down to play; they were pleasantly surprised to find that nearly everybody took the trouble to introduce themselves and welcome them. All went well until:

Dealer South. Love All.			
		♠ Q 8	
		♥ 9 6 4	
		♦ K J 10 7 3 2	
		♣ K 5	
♠ A 10 7 6			♠ K 9 3
♥ J 5			♥ K Q 10 8 7 3
♦ 9 8			♦ 6 4
♣ Q 10 8 6 3			♣ A 2
		♠ J 5 4 2	
		♥ A 2	
		♦ A Q 5	
		♣ J 9 7 4	

West	North	East	South
Julie		John	
Pass	2♦	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♦	End	2♥

2♦ was announced by South as 'Hearts', which prompted John practically to drop all his cards on the table in surprise. He managed almost to recover the situation bar one card: the king of hearts dropped face-up on the table and Julie shook her head in disbelief, realising that a new bridge club hadn't managed to bring new habits.

The TD strode to the table and, when the situation was explained to him, said: 'Well, it is good that new members have brought me a challenge. I can't ever remember having to cope with an honour card exposed during the auction.' John hung his head in shame as the TD thumbed through his law book, until he came across Law 24; 'West must pass when next it is her turn to call and, if East-West end up as defenders, the king of hearts becomes a major penalty card.'

As John expected North to hold a five-



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DIRECTOR, PLEASE!

card heart suit, he passed throughout, although he was surprised when South passed 3♦. He wasn't too perturbed by the fact that he had to lead the king of hearts as it was his natural lead but, as the play progressed and North went just one off, he was sufficiently put out by the fact that North did not hold a heart suit to call the Director back to the table.

'I am sorry to be a nuisance on my first night, but South announced 'Hearts' when North bid 2♦ and now it turns out that North just has a weakness take-out into diamonds.'

'What else am I supposed to do? Surely everyone knows that 2♦ followed by 3♦ shows a weak hand with diamonds,' said North defensively.

'There is no problem with using 2♦ followed by 3♦ to show just diamonds, provided that the 2♦ bid is alerted rather than announced,' replied the TD. 'If you announce 2♦ as showing hearts, there must be an absolute guarantee that a five-card heart suit is held.'

'If I had known that 3♦ just showed a weak hand, I'd have bid 3♥,' said John.

'And made it!' added Julie.

The TD went away to consider all that he had heard and on his return he said: 'Had East known that 3♦ showed a weak hand with just diamonds, I am sure he may well have bid 3♥, most likely making nine tricks, so I am going to adjust the score to 140 to East-West.'

After they had left the table Julie turned to John, and said: 'Three visits from the Director on one board – and I thought that you were turning over a new leaf!'

'But only one was my fault,' pleaded John.

'Yes . . . This time!' replied Julie prophetically. □