

Women's Trials

THE women's trials got a record entry this year with fifteen pairs applying. This was due, in no small part, to the efforts of Nicole Cook, aided by Christine Duckworth and Sandra Landy, who staged a friendly week-end of bridge for would-be women triallists to assist with finding partners and to play deals provided by past and current international players. A record of these deals, together with a story about each of them, featured in a booklet for participants to take away and hopefully inspire them. Several of the entries came as a result of that weekend.

Sarah Teshome and Cath Jagger, the only applicants with an international record as a pair, were exempted from the trials, and the remaining fourteen played a first weekend where the top ten would qualify. There were several new partnerships: Nicola Smith now playing with Lizzie Godfrey, myself with Nevena Senior, Anne Rosen and Catherine Draper, and Audrey Hartley and Stefanie Rohan, to name a few. These four pairs ended up battling it out for the top places.

Anne Rosen and Catherine Draper had a fair bit to make up on the carry-forward from the first weekend, so a good start was much needed. In the second match, this piece of fine card-reading from Catherine Draper got them on their way:

E/W Game. Dealer South.

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

West	North	East	South
Grant	Rosen	Liew	Draper
1♥	Dble	Pass	1NT
2♥	3NT	All Pass	

1♣ could have been short, and the 1NT rebid ostensibly showed a weak no-trump. I must admit that if you open the bidding on a heap such as that, you need to be a top-class declarer player since you are going to end up in some pretty thin contracts! And so it proved, a combined 23 count and off the first five tricks. However, on the expected heart lead, Catherine was in with a chance. The ten of hearts held the trick in dummy and the contract now hinged on bringing in the club suit. She began by cashing the ace, and this produced the five from East and the nine from West. A few questions revealed that the opponents were playing standard count and no Smith Peters. When she played a low club from dummy, East followed with the two, and Catherine, believing the signal of her opponent, and figuring that West may well be short in clubs on the auction, finessed the seven. She was rewarded for her brave play when West discarded, and when the diamonds also broke, she had ten tricks.



Anne Rosen and Catherine Draper

Anne and Catherine had a tremendous weekend and finished up leading the field. Audrey Hartley and Stefanie Rohan were also putting in a fine performance, chasing them all the way and ending up a very close second. That left the old partnership, turned rivals (myself and Nicola Smith), to battle it out for third and fourth spot.

The following deal produced an example of good technique from Nevena Senior in



Heather Dhondy

an awkward 3NT contract which helped to seal the third spot for us:

Game All. Dealer North.

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

West	North	East	South
Rosen	Dhondy	Draper	Senior
Pass	1♣	Pass	1NT
All Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT

A natural sequence took us to 3NT and Anne Rosen led the queen of spades. This was ducked and the spade continuation won. Nevena now took a successful club finesse and then paused to consider the play. As the cards lie, there is an entry to hand with a heart and the clubs all come in, but of course Nevena did not know any of this. Even the success of a second club finesse could not be underwritten. Hoping to combine her best chances of re-entering hand, she cashed the ace of diamonds and exited with a spade. East, now on lead, could only help declarer with any card she chose. A heart was selected and Nevena rose with the queen and repeated the club finesse. When all was well, she emerged with ten tricks. □