

Best Behaviour @ Bridge

Part II

Simon Cochemé continues to investigate what we can learn from other sports



Simon Cochemé

BB@B REVISITED

IT was half-time at the EBU's special invitation event to find out how bridge could benefit from studying the habits of other sports. The footballers were sucking orange segments, the tennis players were eating bananas, the darts players were drinking pints and the athletes were gathered in the corner, furtively taking coloured pills. Tournament Manager Jeremy Dhondy was looking apprehensive, wary of being approached by the agent of a far-eastern betting syndicate.

Meanwhile EBU Chairman Peter Stocken was deep in discussion with a portly official from the Football Association, explaining the intricacies of the 4-4-4-1 distribution. 'I think I've got it,' said the FA gentleman, 'It's like 4-4-2 with a packed midfield and a lone striker.'



Peter Stocken

'It was a really useful conversation,' Peter told me later. 'He learned that the Young Chelsea was not Roman Abramovitch's youth academy, and I learned that Abramovitch never actually plays for Chelsea. Can you imagine it? Not even when they have a huge lead with only five minutes to play.' He sighed and shook his head. 'If only we could find sponsors like that!'

The start of the second half was signalled by a scantily-clad young female walking around with a large board with 'Round 5' on it. I gathered she was boxing's contribution to the afternoon. 'What do you think?' asked Sally. 'Would that go down well at the Swiss Pairs in Brighton?'

The rugby players faced the cricketers, handsomely clad in coloured pajamas, in

the first match after the break. The rugby players had been spoiling for a fight ever since they had been told they couldn't perform their specially written haka (*text appended at the bottom of the page*) before every game. It wasn't long before a row broke out and a large second-row forward and a willowy batsman were squaring up to each other. Jeremy Dhondy hurried over to intervene.

'He called me a fat fool,' said the rugby player.

'I thought we had agreed there would be no sledging,' said Jeremy firmly.

'He started it,' replied the cricketer. 'He called me a big dummy.'

Jeremy looked at the Yarborough laid out on the table. 'I was being ironic,' explained the rugby player.

I watched the racing drivers play the last deal of the afternoon against the clay-pigeon shooters:

E/W Game. Dealer North.

♠ A K Q 5			
♥ K Q J			
♦ J 6 5 3 2			
♣ A			
♠ 6 2		♠ J 10 9 7	
♥ 10 7 4 3		♥ 8	
♦ A K 10 9 7 4	♠ N	♦ Q 8	
♣ 2	W	♣ 9 8 7 5 4 3	
	E		
	S		
♠ 8 4 3			
♥ A 9 6 5 2			
♦ Void			
♣ K Q J 10 6			

West	North	East	South
	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	6♣
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

West detached a card from his hand, East cried 'Pull!' and West spun the ace of diamonds onto the table. South's reaction to dummy was one of disappointment; he

could see thirteen tricks: five hearts, five clubs and three spades. He ruffed the diamond lead in hand, crossed to the king of hearts and drew a second round of trumps, East discarding a club. Declarer paused for a moment. If he cashed the jack of hearts next, there would be no convenient way back to his hand to draw West's last trump. He soon came up with the answer. He unblocked the ace of clubs and led the jack of hearts from dummy, playing the ace from hand. Now he ran the clubs; West could ruff in with his master trump when he wished, but declarer would make the rest of the tricks.

South was delighted with himself. 'Did you see that?' he exclaimed. 'What a great piece of overtaking! Schumacher would have been proud!'

He dashed off to the bar and was soon spraying champagne over everyone within a ten-yard radius. This had the advantage of breaking up the fight between a rugby player and a footballer about who would swap shirts with the blonde tennis player.

I left in a hurry, avoiding the football fans in the car park who were chanting never-ending choruses of 'There's only one Andrew Robson' and 'Three-nil, four-one, three-nil, four-one, Keycard Blackwood is easy'. If I was lucky I could just make it back to civilisation and the evening duplicate at my club. □

These are the words of the bridge player's haka, translated from the original Maori:

*'We will trump your ace,
We will finesse your king,
We will drop your queen.
We will cut out your heart when you
are vulnerable and the director is not
looking,
You will have a heart void. Aiee-Ya.'*