

## Brian's Brighton – Part Five

### Convention Fever

We all love our pet conventions, but sometimes they prove to be two-edged swords, cutting us rather than our opponents. I really believe that most people would be better off playing fewer conventions - somebody forgets what they are playing, or doesn't really understand the convention properly so abuses it. The example from the Senior Pairs final doesn't look so much like a case of a two-edged sword, rather like an example of seppuku (hara kiri).

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	2♦
Pass	2♠	2NT	3♠
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

Two Diamonds showed at least five-four in the majors, weak two strength, and 2♠ was preference. I overcalled with a natural 2NT and South competed to 3♠, which I doubled to end the auction.

I don't know whether North could have bid 3♣ to play, but if not she could not have enjoyed having to pick a major between her small doubleton and small singleton. I understand why South competed with 3♠ - she had a maximum for her opening bid - but it illustrated a lack of understanding of the convention. North had not promised spades, merely preference, and South's spades were both weak and as short as they could be. The only time that a player who has used this type of bid should compete further is if they have significant extra distribution, not just a maximum in high-card terms.

I suppose that, after the double, North might have rescued herself to 4♣, which is down only one if declarer takes the heart finesse for a diamond pitch.

Anyway, I didn't start with a trump as I had no way to realize what was going on, preferring the queen of diamonds. That ran to North's king and declarer played a heart to the ace and ruffed one, a diamond to the eight and ruffed another heart. Now came the king of clubs to the ace and ruff, but declarer was out of breath now. When she tried to cash the ace of diamonds, my partner could ruff and return a trump and we had the rest for down three and +500.