

## Brian's Brighton The Summer Meeting 2015

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> – Swiss Pairs session 4

The 2015 Brighton Swiss Pairs Championship for the Harold Poster Cup had the tightest possible finish. The top four pairs were covered by just 3 VPs, with tying on 197 VPs. The tie-breaking procedure gave the trophy to Michael Byrne and Kieran Dyke - congratulations to them. Should I also congratulate David Arundel and Andrew Bannock on their second place, or should I commiserate that they came so close to winning, only to be beaten by an esoteric tie-splitting mechanism?

The winners scored very well on this deal.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

	♠	Q J 3		West	North	East	South
	♥	A J 7 6 5 4			Byrne		Dyke
	♦	Q		Pass	Pass	1♣	1♦
	♣	7 4 3		Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
♠	10 7 5		♠	Pass	4♥	All Pass	
♥	9		♥				
♦	J 9 8 7 4		♦				
♣	K Q J 6		♣				
	♠	A 8 6					
	♥	Q 8 2					
	♦	A K 10 6 2					
	♣	10 6					

Byrne didn't like the quality of his heart suit for a vulnerable second-seat weak two bid, and perhaps also the fact that he had useful support if his partner held spades, so passed. However, when Dyke could raise the 1♥ response, Byrne was happy to jump to game.

The lead was a diamond round to the bare queen. Byrne played ace and another heart to East's king and back came a third heart to dummy's queen. He took two club pitches on the top diamonds then ruffed a diamond and led the jack of spades from hand, ducked by East. Next Byrne cashed his remaining hearts. West discarded the king of clubs to show that he had the queen and probably jack, but east erred by retaining the ace. With three tricks to go, East was down to king and another spade and the bare ace of clubs. Byrne threw him in with the club and that left East to lead away from the king of spades at trick twelve to give the overtrick.

Even bidding and making game was very good for N/S, so the eleventh trick was just the icing on the cake.

Byrne shone again on this next deal.

Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

	♠	A 9 8 6 3		West		North		East		South
	♥	Q 10 8 4				Byrne				Dyke
	♦	-		-		1♠		Pass		1NT
	♣	A Q 9 7		2♦		2♥		3♦		4♥
♠	K Q J 7 5		♠	2	5♦	5♥		All Pass		
♥	A		♥	J 7 6 5						
♦	K Q 10 8 5		♦	9 7 6 2						
♣	10 5		♣	J 6 3 2						
	♠	10 4								
	♥	K 9 3 2								
	♦	A J 4 3								
	♣	K 8 4								

Though he was a long way from being able to underwrite eleven tricks, Byrne took the push to 5♥ rather than settle for what he felt sure would be an inadequate penalty in 5♦ doubled. As it turns out, the sacrifice can be held to seven tricks, so the penalty would have been bigger than the score available in 5♥ - and 5♥ was a very long way from being secure.

The lead was a diamond. Byrne ruffed and led the ten of hearts, running it when East played low. West won the ace and returned the king of spades. Byrne won and returned a spade, East throwing a diamond, and back came the king of diamonds. West had won the ace of hearts very quickly, plus he was known to hold at least five-five in spades and diamonds, so Byrne played him to have started with the bare ace. He won the diamond return with the ace, ruffed a diamond and cashed three club winners then ruffed the fourth club. At trick eleven, he ruffed the last diamond with the queen of hearts, and now a spade lead allowed him to pick up the last two tricks with the king and nine of hearts via a trump coup.

Eleven tricks was a pretty impressive effort on this layout and gave the eventual champions another excellent matchpoint score.

Board 29. Dealer North. All Vul.

	♠	K Q 7 6 5		West		North		East		South
	♥	A 5				Byrne				Dyke
	♦	9 5		-		1♠		Pass		2♥
	♣	Q J 8 4		Pass		2♠		Pass		3♠
♠	10 8 3		♠	9 4	Pass	4♥		Pass		4NT
♥	K 8 7		♥	Q 4 2	Pass	5♠		Pass		6♠
♦	7 6 2		♦	K Q J 8 4	All Pass					
♣	10 9 7 2		♣	6 5 3						
	♠	A J 2								
	♥	J 10 9 6 3								
	♦	A 10 3								
	♣	A K								

Two Hearts was game-forcing, allowing Dyke to set trumps at his second turn. As soon as he saw a cuebid in his weak suit, he checked on key cards and bid the small slam.

As you can see, straightforward play produces only 11 tricks after a diamond lead. However, there is a way to

come to 12 tricks and Byrne duly found it. The twelfth trick has to come from a diamond ruff in the dummy, which requires that four rounds of clubs stand up.

Byrne won the diamond lead and cashed the ace and king of clubs then two rounds of spades. The queen and jack of clubs followed, for two diamond discards, and the required layout - four clubs and three trumps in the same hand - duly materialized. Having divested himself of dummy's diamonds, Byrne could ruff his diamond loser and simply concede one heart trick.

While the slam was a poor one, the thing was to find a layout which would permit it to make and then play for that layout. Plus 1430 was yet another big result for Byrne/Dyke, and they of course needed to bid and make the slam to win the championship.