

People in Bridge

Derek Patterson



DEREK Patterson is a well known figure in English bridge circles. He is one of our leading players and a much admired teacher with his own successful local club. To cap it all he was NPC of the English Ladies on their medal-winning Venice Cup outing to India. I understand that he has emerged unscathed from this last experience.

Why bridge and how did you get started?

I was introduced to bridge at school and immediately became fascinated by the various facets of the game and I still am!

How about triumphs and disasters?

My bridge club (Chislehurst) is my greatest triumph and it is still going strong after more than twenty years! It sets the scene for one of my greatest disasters too – although I got away with it.

One evening, having asked a friend to direct in my absence, I returned half-way through to find that I recognised the board being played at table one in the beginner's section. I looked at table two and there it was again. I realised that they were using my teaching boards, without re-dealing them. It turned out that there were six identical copies in circulation. On the penultimate round, one of the players asked, somewhat tentatively, 'Has something gone wrong with the movement? I've a feeling that I've played this hand before.' In an attempt to be diplomatic, I thanked him for his concern but assured him that there was no problem with the movement. Accepting this, play continued and nobody else seemed to notice at all (even for beginners, I found this quite worrying . . . especially given that I had been teaching many of them).

In terms of disastrous bidding decisions, consider this hand. I picked up:

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

My LHO opened a precision 1♣ (advertising 16+ HCP). My partner overcalled 2♦ which was showing a weak hand, either three-suited with short diamonds or single-suited with long diamonds. My belief that partner had the former seemed to be confirmed when RHO continued with 2NT. As the

opponents were in a game-forcing auction, I decided that a jump to 7♠ had a certain (mischievous) appeal. I was doubled with some alacrity and received the lead of the ♣A. The full (somewhat suspicious) deal can be seen below.

N/S Game. Dealer West.			
	♠	7 4	
	♥	8 4	
	♦	K Q J 9 3	
	♣	10 5 4 2	
♠	–		♠ 9 8 6 5 3 2
♥	9 6 5 2		♥ A K Q J 10 7 3
♦	–		♦ –
♣	A K Q J 9 8 7 6 3		♣ –
	♠	A K Q J 10	
	♥	–	
	♦	A 10 8 7 6 5 4 2	
	♣	–	

Eight off!

After everybody had stopped laughing, I asked what the 2NT bid meant – '8-10 HCP'. Ah, the wonders of precision.

Do you use psychic bids?

Psyches are risky and so I have tended to use them very rarely and only if behind in a match. With the odd exception, most of these manoeuvres end in tears. Although not exactly a psyche, a memorable result was when my team bid and made 3NT in both rooms on the same deal. On my table partner opened 2♣, propelling us into game. Dummy went down and there was a certain surprise at the distinct lack of high-cards. It transpired he had used his favourite defence to a 1NT opening that had, in fact, been made at an adjoining table – no bidding boxes in those days! Somewhat disconcerted, the opponents lost their way and despite being severely short of high-cards, I emerged with nine tricks. □