

## A RANDOM MIXTURE

I've been reading "Tournament Bridge: An Uncensored Memoir" by Jerome (Jerry) Machlin, a tournament director in the USA many years ago. I read about the book on BridgeWinners and purchased one of the last copies from Paul Lavings (copies are poorly bound and disintegrate as you read the book!).

He has a chapter called "Hands to Remember". As a director myself, I particularly enjoyed this story.

"The following hand occurred years ago when a revoke always cost two tricks, at Board-A-Match teams.

Dir South All Vul  ♠ 3 ♥ A J 7 6 ♦ A 7 5 ♣ A 10 8 3 2	♠ K ♥ 10 9 4 2 ♦ J 10 8 3 ♣ J 7 6 4  ♠ A 9 8 7 6 5 ♥ K Q 8 ♦ K ♣ K Q 9	♠ Q J 10 4 2 ♥ 5 3 ♦ Q 9 6 4 2 ♣ 5
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<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1♠
Double	Pass	2♦	2♠
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

As you can see, declarer rates to lose three trump tricks and three aces for a result of down one, -200, which cannot be good. What happened, with the help of a revoke, was that declarer made six!

The play went as follows:

The opening lead was the ♠3. Dummy's King won the trick and declarer was in dummy for the first and last time. Remembering that East had responded to the takeout double with a diamond bid, declarer played the ♦J from the board, hoping that East had the Ace and would duck the Jack. East played small, declarer played his singleton King, and West played a red Ace, and immediately led the ♣A. Unfortunately, West had pulled out the wrong red Ace, and the way the rules read, the ♥A doesn't take the trick when diamonds have been led (and spades are trumps).

The immediate play of the ♣A placed West in this position: he had led out of turn when he had not won the trick. However, his lead out of turn had also established the revoke on the previous trick and gave declarer certain options.

When I was called and presented South with his options, he elected to designate the ♣A as a penalty card. South was on lead with the ♦K, so now he lead down the ♠A. West, having no more spades, was forced to play his penalty card, the ♣A on this trick.

Look what happened to poor West. He lost the ♥A because he played it on the ♦K. He lost the ♦A because he had allowed the singleton King to win the trick. He lost the ♣A because he was forced to discard it on the ♠A as a penalty card. Furthermore, under the laws, since he had revoked, his side was subject to a two-trick penalty, so his partner lost two of his three sure trump tricks. This one revoke cost East-West their three Aces and two of their trump tricks, allowing declarer to make six!

I told the hapless East-West pair that my only regret was that I would be unable to be present to hear them explain to their partners how they lost this board."

## THE BRIDGE MIND

*This article comes from the IBPA Bulletin, December 2020.*

Have you ever stopped to consider how a top-class player thinks? We are sometimes presented with a piece of play or defence where it seems that the individual concerned is playing a game with which we are not familiar. In the recent Alt-Mixed, we witnessed a brilliant series of plays so instructive that we took the opportunity to ask the player to describe her thoughts.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>E Hessel</i>	<i>G Donner</i>	<i>I Hessel</i>	<i>C Rimstedt</i>
		1NT	Pass
3♣ (1)	Pass	3♦ (2)	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

- (1) Puppet Stayman
- (2) No 5-card Major

At every table but one, the auction went 1NT – 3NT (one West going via an invitational 3♣) and South led a diamond, presenting declarer with a ninth trick.

At this table, Cecelia Rimstedt led the ♠4.

*CR: Once West has not looked for a 4-card Major in partner's hand, this is like a 1NT – 3NT auction and I tend to lead a Major. Starting with a 6-card minor when dummy is known to be without a 4-card Major catches partner with a singleton quite a lot.*

North played the King and declarer won with the Ace.

*CR: Partner's King and declarer's Ace could be good or bad news. Partner could still have K-J-x-x/x, but declarer could have A-J-x-x, so it was unclear if the lead had been good or bad.*

Declarer continued with the ♠10 for the 3 – Queen – 6.

CR: Partner's spot was the highest out there which, unless it was a singleton (or a possible duck from K-6) meant it was a negative signal for the opening lead (a version of Reverse Smith Peters).

Next, the ♦3 was covered by the 8- Queen and King.

CR: We play UDCA, so partner should have either a stiff diamond or one higher card (it should be the Jack). It seemed like declarer was looking for a ninth trick, having started with six club tricks and two Aces. So, the question was whether partner held the ♥K-Q, so that we now had five tricks to cash, with declarer having the ♦A-Q-J-x, or whether partner had a higher diamond, when I can safely play one back.

South returned the ♦2 – 10 – Jack – 6.

CR: It seemed more likely to hope for partner to have the ♦J than both the ♥K and ♥Q, and some declarers might, by habit, play the 10 rather than low from 10-x opposite A-Q-x when taking that finesse.

When declarer ducked the ♦J on the second round of the suit, North returned the ♠10, covered by the Jack and Queen.

CR: Now I knew declarer's ninth trick was set up with dummy's ♠9, so I had to hope for partner to have the ♥K.

South cashed the ♥A and North's King was the setting trick.

CR: It was the right defence, but a bit lucky with our spots for our carding (partner's club spot was easily read, as was his diamond spot). However, if declarer had played a low club to the Queen, instead of the ♠10, my partner's ♣6 could have been low from 10-6, and things may have been harder.

Thanks to Cecilia Rimstedt for sharing her thoughts.

Reading such a sound defensive analysis can definitely provide insights to improving your defence. Bear in mind, these were all top-level players in an online tournament, yet every other South led a diamond!

## HOW WOULD YOU PLAY?

Dlr North ♠ A K 9 5 2

EW Vul ♥ K 6 2

♦ 2

♣ A 8 7 4

♠ Q 8 7 4 3

♥ 5

♦ 8 7 5 3

♣ K Q 3

♠ J 10

♥ A Q 7

♦ K Q J 10 9 6

♣ 10 5

♠ 6

♥ J 10 9 8 4 3

♦ A 4

♣ J 9 6 2

West

North

East

South

1♠

2♦

Double

3♦

Double

Pass

4♥

All Pass

West led the ♦3 – 2 – 9 – Ace (fourth-highest).

There are four possible losers – two hearts and two clubs.

There are entry issues, given South has a very weak hand, and the main entry has been removed.

*(Note: The ♦4 is not really an issue, since it can be discarded on the spades; the main issue is managing the club suit if the hearts are off-side.)*

Your best chance is to work on trumps at trick 2. When East wins with the Queen, then cashes the Ace, and then leads a third heart, your line is determined. Win the heart in dummy, cash the top two spades to discard your small diamond, then start work on the clubs.

You could cash the ♣A, hoping for a doubleton King-Queen, but that is against the odds. Instead, you should play for East to hold a singleton or doubleton ♣10/x, or doubleton honour-10. *(Bear in mind, East has a minimum of 6 diamonds – based on the lead, 3 hearts, and probably a minimum of 2 spades, so is short in clubs. Counting!)*

Now you should lead a low club from dummy: 4 – 5 – 9 – Queen. After ruffing the diamond return, lead the ♣J from hand, hoping to bring down the doubleton 10 in East's hand.

This is a 'classic' card combination that needs to be learnt, for when it arises at the table.

**Barbara Travis**

[www.bridgewithbarbara.com](http://www.bridgewithbarbara.com)