

DISASTERS!



So you think our top players always get it right? It's nice to show how well they can play. Sometimes, though, it is just not their night. So, if you have a bad night at bridge, then what follows is here to cheer you up. It can happen to our top players too. Are you sitting comfortably?

Disaster Number 1.

You are on lead at trick 1. No pressure, yet! You hold:

♠ AT65 ♥ 983 ♦ 98 ♣ KT75
and as West hear North-South bid as follows:

| North | South |
|---------------|-------|
| | 1♦ |
| 4♣ (splinter) | 4♦ |
| 4♥ | 4♠ |
| 5♥ | 5NT |
| 6♦ | Pass |

Both members of the partnership were clear on the meaning of 4♣ but then it got a bit murky. (This is not a night of vintage bridge..remember!) North claimed that 4♥ was in response to a Minorwood ask and showed 1 or 4 key-cards. They thought 4♠ was asking for the trump queen and outside kings with 5♥ showing the ♦Q and only the ♥K outside trumps. Meanwhile, South was cueing aces and kings and thought their partner was trying for grand-slam...hence 5NT. So, with that confused explanation, it is over to you.

Our West decided to go kind of passive, or cut down ruffs by leading a trump. That proved not to be a good idea:

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

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

There is a school of thought which says the less confident the opposition's bidding sounds, the more you should lead any ace you happen to find in your hand. Although the defence's spade trick could never disappear, the ace lead and a discouraging card from East should have told West what to do next. Had West led a club, it would seem logical for East to switch to a spade. So, the lead of either black suit (no heroic underlead of ♠A this time!) should have beaten this contract.

Teammates were not there for West as they played in the awfully boring, awfully sensible contract of 4♥: 12 imps away when it really should have been 13 in.

(In case you are wondering why North owned up to holding the ♦Q, holding a five card suit, they thought the extra diamond would compensate the lack of the queen.)

Disaster Number 2. It's a bidder's world. So, you would have no qualms about overcalling a naturalish 1♣ with your longest suit, holding ♠987 ♥A98 ♦K9754 ♣K2, a 10 count with the ♣K probably well-placed. Would you? What harm could come to you? You are vulnerable and the opposition are not...but you have to be in there.

Do you? Really? The bidding had an eerie silence to it:

| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | <u>Board 16</u> | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------------------|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---------|
| Pass | 1 ♣ | 1 ♦ | Pass | West Deals | ♠ A Q 10 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pass | Dbf | All pass | | E-W Vul | ♥ K J 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | ♠ 5 2 | ♦ J 6 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | ♥ 7 6 5 2 | ♣ A Q J 10 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | ♦ 8 | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table> | | N | | W | | E | | S | | ♠ 9 8 7 |
| | N | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| W | | E | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | S | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| How bad could this be? | | | | ♣ 9 7 6 5 4 3 | ♥ A 9 8 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | ♦ K 9 7 5 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | ♣ K 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | ♠ K J 6 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | ♥ Q 10 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | ♦ A Q 10 3 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | ♣ 8 | | | | | | | | | | |

Pretty bad...well awful. You did not even make your ♣K! In fact, East did make the ♥A, and one trump trick for down 5 or -1400. You may notice that the opposition can make 980 in 6♠, a pretty marked finesse if you overcall though a necessary one anyway. Teammates did as much as they could by making 980 but that was still 9 imps out.

Why did you bid 1♦? For the lead with such a poor suit? To tell the opponents something about your hand? Did you look at the losers before or after you conceded 1400? Sure, you were unlucky with the break and partner's rubbish hand but at adverse vulnerability, it pays to be cautious with the vulnerability is not in your favour. Should your partner have bid 2♣? That's only 4 down, also not wonderful when slam is not certain to be bid.

Point made.

Disaster Number 3.

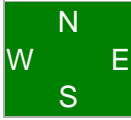
This is not for the faint-hearted. Your partner opens a weak 1NT, with just a small difference. The system bid which shows this bid is 1♠, a small but rather significant difference. You hold a modest collection: ♠ QT764 ♥ Q7 ♦ 87 ♣ A643 and do what just about every bridge player does, bid 2♥ as a transfer to 2♠...yes, even though partner has already bid the suit. Your left hand opponent doubles 2♥, showing length and some strength in that suit.

The bidding then got a tad complex: well, not really!

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------------|------|---------------------|
| | | | 1♠ (12-14 balanced) |
| Pass | 2♥ (spades) | x | xx |
| Pass | ? | | |

After the redouble which showed a willingness to compete in spades at the three level if necessary, what would you bid? West had taken time in passing while there was some table talk, which can occur at Akarana. None of that should have put off Denis (Humphries) from bidding 2♠. Yet, a wandering mind, maybe thinking about what to do over a competitive 3♥, was in no way connected with Denis' hand which had pulled out and used a "pass" card!

There was a bit of stunned silence to be followed by a "good luck" call from Denis to his partner, David Dolbel. Denis had to be told that **he** was declarer in the unattractive contract of 2♥xx!

| <u>Board 15</u> | | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |
|-----------------|---|----------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| South Deals | ♠ Q 10 7 6 4 | | | | 1♠ |
| N-S Vul | ♥ Q 7 | Pass | 2♥ | Dbl | Rdbl |
| | ♦ 8 7 | All pass | | | |
| | ♣ A 6 4 3 | | | | |
| ♠ J 9 5 |  | ♠ 8 2 | | | |
| ♥ 9 6 | | ♥ A 10 8 5 3 2 | | | |
| ♦ K 10 6 5 | | ♦ A Q 2 | | | |
| ♣ K Q J 8 | | ♣ 10 5 | | | |
| | ♠ A K 3 | | | | |
| | ♥ K J 4 | | | | |
| | ♦ J 9 4 3 | | | | |
| | ♣ 9 7 2 | | | | |

While Dave may have been rather surprised at the final contract, he would not initially have been too upset with excellent major cards. On any lead, Denis ought to have managed two tricks in each major and ♣A for down 3 or – 1600. However, how could a player who was

not aware of his own bid possibly play the board to perfection? Somehow, Denis contrived not to win any spade tricks and he managed just three tricks for down 5! In case you have not been down that way recently, that's -2,800, a poor sacrifice against a grand slam!

There were two ways teammates could save Denis. The first, of recreating the same auction, was unlikely to eventuate. However, there was still hope. Teammates were at the next table and were receiving boards after Denis and Dave's table.

It was near the end of the evening and the director, Julie Atkinson, was warning slow-playing tables, including Dave and Denis' teammates, that there was very little time to start any new boards. What a joy if they ran out of time and could not play that board! Fouled board! (*while the Law now allows a director to assess non-played board, there has been no use of this rule as yet at Akarana.*) The board was passed gingerly next door as the four players at that table seemed to be rushing with other boards.

Not only did they finish all 14 boards but the above board had been played over an hour before in the exciting and successful (just) contract of 2♠ by North. -110 to go with -2,800...21 imps out! Teammates were of no help!

Forgetting to accept a transfer is not good form but forgetting when the transfer has been redoubled is much, much, much worse. Believe Denis.

Three disasters of varying proportions and all verging on in degree of severity to the disaster that happened to the German football team on the same day. Were all 4 disasters avoidable?

Do you feel better?

Richard Solomon

Thanks to Denis and Dave for sharing their most significant board of the evening with you all. They are more used to bringing in imps in the "in" column.