

TWICE IN A NIGHT BUT ONCE A YEAR



What is “Total Diversity?” You learn a lot when you play an evening’s bridge and it is not all about how you can bid, play and defend any particular hand. There are some things which you know already. For instance, playing Swiss Pairs, when the opponents “right side a contract”, they are going to score well, no matter how well you do.

Board 3		♠ 9 8 7 6 5 3	
South Deals		♥ —	
E-W Vul		♦ J 8	
		♣ Q 9 7 3 2	
♠ K 10 2		<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 4
♥ A J 10 9 6 4			♥ K 8 7 5 2
♦ 7 5			♦ A Q 4
♣ 6 4			♣ K J 8 5
		♠ A Q J	
		♥ Q 3	
		♦ K 10 9 6 3 2	
		♣ A 10	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♦
2 ♥	2 ♠	4 ♥	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	5 ♥	Dbl
All pass			

North’s 2♠ looked like it was intended to set up a sacrifice against a making 4♥ game though the reality was slightly different with 4♠ an interesting and makeable contract, as long as North is declarer. If South got to the wheel, a club lead will beat this contract, the ♠10 providing a second trump trick to go along with the ♦A and ♣K. (There is the little matter of West knowing they can reach partner’s hand in diamonds but not in hearts!)

However, played by North, 4♠ can be made, or can it? On a heart lead, declarer needs to draw trumps (or else that ♠10 will once again threaten) and take advantage of the favourable lie in diamonds. Playing clubs is not a good idea unless East plays the ♣J on the first round.

So, with 4♠ a likely make, diving at the 5 level with over half the high card points, vulnerable against not, is actually a good idea. With South very happy to double, a correct

club guess will see declarer escape for 1 down, - 200 and 6 imps out to the declaring side. Misguessing the club honours would be catastrophic!

There was even more damage to the “innocent” side on this next board when the opponents again chose the right player to be declarer:

<p>Board 10 East Deals Both Vul</p> <p>♠ A K 7 5 3 ♥ Q 8 6 5 3 ♦ 8 ♣ 9 7</p> <p>♠ 8 6 ♥ A J 7 2 ♦ K 7 6 4 ♣ 6 5 2</p>		<p>♠ Q 4 2 ♥ 4 ♦ A 10 9 5 3 ♣ Q 10 8 3</p> <p>♠ J 10 9 ♥ K 10 9 ♦ Q J 2 ♣ A K J 4</p>	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1 ♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥¹</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1 NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣²</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4 ♠</td> <td colspan="2">All pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>1. 4 plus spades 2. checkback</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>			Pass	1 ♣	Pass	1♥ ¹	Pass	1 NT	Pass	2♣ ²	Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All pass	
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		Pass	1 ♣																				
Pass	1♥ ¹	Pass	1 NT																				
Pass	2♣ ²	Pass	2 ♠																				
Pass	4 ♠	All pass																					

The key to this board was either to be playing a strong no-trump opening, where North can transfer to spades or else as above, play transfer responses to 1♣ so that South will either directly after the 1♥ initial response or as a response to check-back, get to bid the spade suit before their partner.

While, in theory, West can also beat 4♠ by leading the ♥A, on many days, that lead would be a disaster. Where West did lead a diamond, the best chance for East-West is that East exit passively rather than switch to their singleton. East would get their ruff...but they have a natural spade trick anyway. Let’s say South decided to take a losing spade finesse. Only then East could try for their ruff, successfully.

Where East is on lead to 4♠ and leads their singleton, West must return the ♥J to make it absolutely clear which suit to return. With the North hand hidden, East must under-lead their ace. In practice, six of the eleven North-South pairs made their game. ...more imps out on datum for those who watched South become declarer!

So, “twice” this night, we suffered from the opposition playing game from the right side....maybe more than twice but no more sad stories. Like all bridge players, we tend to remember only the unlucky boards! What then is “Total Diversity” and why did it happen this evening?

Total Diversity



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Well, it did not ...but it nearly did! An extract from a Bulletin at the recent US Nationals in Honolulu (why anyone would head that way with such wonderful weather in New Zealand, I cannot begin to imagine!) tells us that once a year you pick up a hand with just one card of each denomination i.e. an ace, a king etc down to a 2.

With that in mind, the West players on board 7 at Akarana must have been in awe of their hand...almost (just two 3s and no 9):

♠ Q632 ♥ K4 ♦ J75 ♣ AT83

It surely is the closest I have been to “Total Diversity” all year: something for everyone to now look for when they pick up a dull flat 10 count. I will have a reason to keep playing in 2019 looking for the perfect 10 count. “Tales of Akarana” will return in early February.

Richard Solomon