

THE ADVENTURES OF BORIS THE IMPROVER

Hands from the club

These two hands were played at the club on Monday 16th July. In the first, board 22, four pairs played the contract in diamonds but only one managed to make five. Well done Val.

Boris opened the bidding with one diamond, Michelle bid one spade and Agatha bid five diamonds. This became the final contract. Michelle led the King of spades.

Agatha
♠ A 8 7 4
♥ 7
♦ Q 8 7 4 3
♣ A K J

♠ K Q J 5 3 2
♥ K J 6 5 2
♦ Void
♣ 8 4
Michelle

♠ void
♥ T 9 8 4 2
♦ K T
♣ Q T 9 7 5 2
Jodie

♠ T 9 6
♥ A Q
♦ A J 9 6 5 2
♣ 6 3
Boris

Boris put the Ace of spades up and was rather annoyed when it got ruffed by Jodie. She led back the ten of hearts. Boris took the trick with the Ace and then played the Ace of diamonds. This took out the last trump and Boris started thinking about what to do with his two spade losers. He rapidly decided that the club finesse was a terrible idea. Michelle had six points in spades and four in hearts. If she had the Queen of clubs that would make twelve points and she would have doubled one diamond instead of overcalling. It also looked like the hearts were evenly split and Michelle had only two clubs. Either way the Queen of clubs was far more likely to be with Jodie, exactly where Boris wants it to be.

At trick four Boris led the Queen of hearts. This was covered by the King and ruffed in dummy. Boris next played the Ace and King of clubs that gathered up small cards from the other three hands. The Jack of clubs followed and was covered by the Queen. Boris discarded his 9 of spades as a classic loser on loser end play. Knowing that she had no spades Boris wanted Jodie to be forced to lead either clubs or hearts. At trick eight Jodie led the 9 of hearts. Boris discarded the ten of spades from his hand and ruffed it in dummy. Having only trumps left in his hand Boris now claimed the rest of the tricks.

Basic card play technique

I'm not really sure where the line is between basic card play and intermediate level technique is or even if there is one. At any level it is important to make a plan. In board 11 the plan should be to use dummy's trumps to set up declarers long come home suit. This is more productive than haphazard cross ruffing. All pairs played in spades but only two declarers made six as they should. Well done Patricia and Gail.

The hand was played by East but I have turned the board 90 degrees to put declarer at the bottom of the page as usual. Some pairs also had trouble getting to the correct contract. I will spend more time on the bidding than usual to try and help them out.

Alice
♠ J 9 8 5
♥ A Q 9 3
♦ A 6 3
♣ K 8

♠ A 7 4
♥ T 8 5 4
♦ K J T 7
♣ Q 3
Albert

♠ 2
♥ K J 7 6 2
♦ Q 9 8 5
♣ J 7 4
Felicity

♠ K Q T 6 3
♥ Void
♦ 4 2
♣ A T 9 6 5 2
Tabitha

Alice opened the bidding with one no trump and Tabitha had a problem. Experienced partners had explained to her the importance of distribution. Her hand was too strong to bid two spades but not strong enough to bid three. Realising how powerful her hand would be if a spade fit could be found Tabitha bid two clubs to ask for a major. Having both Alice responded two hearts to which Tabitha replied two spades.

Alice is an experienced player and knows that what a partner doesn't bid can sometimes be as important as what they do. If Tabitha had bid two spades on the first round Alice would have known it was a weak take out and passed. Using Stayman first showed more than that. Tabitha had clearly been looking for a spade fit and Alice decided to treat the bid as invitational. She bid three spades to encourage her partner. Tabitha had never played with Alice before but got the message and bid four spades. This became the final contract.

Albert led the 4 of hearts. Tabitha won the trick with the Ace and discarded a diamond from hand. She then played a small spade to her king. When it won she played the Queen which was taken by the Ace. Albert led another heart. Tabitha put up the Queen from dummy and ruffed the King when it was played by Felicity. Tabitha had counted the trumps and knew there was one left. She took it out by playing a small spade to dummy's Jack, the King of clubs and a small club back to the Ace followed. There was a happy smile from Tabitha as she discovered the clubs had fallen 3-2 as they usually do. Her plan was working perfectly. She led a small club to be ruffed in dummy and cashed the Ace of diamonds. A small heart ruff to get back to her hand and Tabitha took the last three tricks with the ten, 9 and 6 of clubs.

It is interesting to follow this results on to X-club. All the percentage scores with the exception of the pair that got zero, go down. The lesson provided by mixing the scores in with those of other clubs is quite simple. Bidding and play are both important. In tackling either a plan should be made rather than taking one bid or one card at a time.

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