

NORTH  
WEST 3 EAST  
Dealer

# Bath Replays

## 14 Hindsight

Board 3. Avon KO match, 2007.

At a recent Avon KO match featuring four Bath club players - IMPS scoring and at favourable vulnerability as dealer, I pick up these beauties (South hand, shown right).

I naturally open 1♦, West overcalls an annoying 2♣, partner doubles and East, undeterred, bids 2♥. I bid 2♠ (worried that it's a catastrophic underbid), 3♥ from West followed by 3♠ from partner. East passes, but I raise to 4♠, which East doubles for penalties.

| South | West | North  | East   |          |
|-------|------|--------|--------|----------|
| 1♦    | 2♣   | Double | 2♥     |          |
| 2♠    | 3♥   | 3♠     | Pass   |          |
| 4♠    | Pass | Pass   | Double | All pass |

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♠ AJ63  
 ♥ 2  
 ♦ 10852  
 ♣ KQ96  
 ♠ KQ75  
 ♥ K986  
 ♦ AQ963  
 ♣ -

West tables the ♥3, and I turn my attention to dummy. Very nice: a 10-count (12 with distribution points) and a 7-loser hand, combined with my 14-count (17 with distribution) 4-loser hand. Not wishing to tempt fate, I can't help thinking it should make.

Thanking partner, I call for the heart, on which East plays the Ace, and I play low. After a brief pause East switches to ♦J, and I pause ... It might be fun if you plan *your* play before reading on.

...Think - think - think ... What is East doubling on? Obviously a bad trump split, but how bad? Can I cross-ruff? What would that require? 8 separate spade tricks, a diamond and a club. Bingo! ... Errrm, no, Doh! I can't make a club trick and ruff 4 clubs as well! I *have* to draw trumps and make the diamonds. But can I draw all the trumps and keep control? The ♦J smells like a singleton, West has overcalled a vulnerable 2♣ without the KQ, so it's odds on that he must have ♣A, coupled with ♦K (East's ♦J guarantees this surely, unless of course it's a very clever falsecard), West has supported hearts but led a low heart, so should have 3 hearts to an honour, probably the Q (sure! East holds 5 hearts for his bid). So ... West has a spade shortage for his call. It's all falling into place. West is something like 1-3-3-6 and East 4-5-1-3 ...

... Think - think - think ... Should I simply cover the ♦J, presumably losing to the K and a subsequent diamond ruff - lose the first 3 tricks and then make the rest? It might work! ... THINK ...

No, it won't work. East can exit with a spade and leave me short of ruffing tricks; if I win in hand I can't ruff my losing hearts and get back to my hand without losing trump control. Similarly, if I win on table, I haven't got enough trumps for a successful cross-ruff. ... THINK ...

EUREKA! I have it. Win with ♦A, play ♥K and ruff a heart, draw all the trumps ending in hand (if the trumps are 5-0 then I'm never making anyway) but because 3 rounds of hearts have been played (lead/K/heart ruff), West's safe heart exit has now vanished, so simply throw him in with a diamond. Result: losing either just a heart, a diamond and a club or 2 hearts and a diamond (if for whatever reason East does have ♣A!) - ten tricks making. SUCCESS! The full deal:

Success? Erm, no. Instead I go up with the ♦A, then play ♥K, throwing a club from dummy, and then on an attempted full cross-ruff, West ruffs the 4th heart with the ♠10, promoting a trump in East's hand. It would have worked if West's singleton trump had been the 4 or 2, but as the cards lay it was one down. So near and yet so far. Maybe I'm just a week away from my next 'brilliant' piece of hindsight.

*Simon Hill*  
*August 2007*

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♠ AJ63  
 ♥ 2  
 ♦ 10852  
 ♣ KQ96  
 ♠ 10  
 ♥ Q53  
 ♦ K74  
 ♣ AJ10754  
 ♠ 9842  
 ♥ AJ1074  
 ♦ J  
 ♣ 832  
 ♠ KQ75  
 ♥ K986  
 ♦ AQ963  
 ♣ -