

## CAUTIOUS BIDDER [128]

This Sunday saw the welcome revival of the WBU's Graded Masters competition after an interlude of the best part of a decade. Great credit goes to the principal organiser, Helen Houston, the East Wales ATO, who acted as Entry Secretary for both Section 1 and the East Wales heat of Section 2. Just occasionally someone comes along who has both energy and administrative ability, and it certainly makes a difference. Thank you Helen.

The event was run as two sections, with Section 1 at a single venue (Gwent Bridge Club) – the only practical arrangement. Section 2 was run as four separate heats. As far as I could tell it all came together well. Both Gwent heats were run by Tony Haworth – a demanding assignment, but Tony managed it without evident difficulty. Impressive.

Section 1 was run on a barometer movement, with the boards being played simultaneously across the seven tables in play, with current rankings displayed on a large screen and updated at the end of each round – an excellent feature, and the first time I can recall this being done in a Welsh event. Well done to all concerned.

Dave Birt and Gilly Clench staged a late rally to emerge top of Section 1, narrowly ahead of Goodman/Pownall and Rochelle/Gottschalk. Section 2 was scored across the four regional heats and was won by Jo Copping and Glyn Meredith.

Here are two hands where my partner was put to the test.

### Board 17, Session 1 North dealt; both non-vul

	♠107	
	♥J63	
	♦Q1072	
	♣QJ73	
♠J864		♠Q
♥AK974		♥Q85
♦void		♦A986543
♣A982		♣K6
	♠AK9532	
	♥102	
	♦KJ	
	♣1054	

We sat East/West on this one, against Mark Roderick and Mike Best. Our bidding was as follows.

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
P	1D	3S	X
P	4D	P	4H

all pass

Mark Roderick is an aggressive so and so, a style with which I am familiar, and his Three Spade overcall gave Sue a problem. She solved it by doubling in the first instance, which is probably right, and then bid Four Hearts at her second go. I wondered whether I should advance over this, but in the end decided to let it go. Not an entirely convincing auction,

but Mark had made life very difficult.

Mike Best led a spade, which Mark won, and he correctly returned a trump (the 2, as it happens). Mike played the Jack, and Sue won with the Queen in dummy. She then had to decide where ten tricks were coming from. It's fairly plain that you need the five trumps in declarer's hand to be winners, and you have three high card winners outside. So declarer needed two ruffs in dummy to bring her total to ten.

Sue played Ace of diamonds, discarding a spade (correctly; it leaves more options), and ruffed a diamond. There followed two rounds of clubs, then a club ruff, and a further diamond ruff. Sue now attempted to ruff her fourth club, but Mark was able to over-ruff and that was one down.

Effectively Sue was playing for Mike, in the North hand, to have both intermediate heart cards. You can see that she might have achieved one club ruff and one spade ruff and that would have brought her total to ten. Had Mark held seven spades, as was certainly possible, then Sue would have been right to attempt to ruff her fourth club, rather than a spade. It would all have depended, in that case, on who held the 10 of hearts.

We fared better on this next one.

### Board 20, Session 2 West dealt; both vul

	♠KQJ832	
	♥Q85	
	♦K3	
	♣K2	
♠A1074		♠9
♥A643		♥KJ102
♦AJ		♦109762
♣AQ7		♣1064
	♠65	
	♥97	
	♦Q854	
	♣J9853	

W	N	E	S
1H	2S	4H	P
P	P	P	

We were one of only two pairs to bid to Four Hearts (not surprisingly, you may think), and only Sue made it. North, Tim Barsby, led the King of spades, and Sue won. She next played Ace and Jack of diamonds. Tim won the second diamond, and played the Queen of spades. Sue ruffed, then cashed Ace and King of trumps. She followed this by running the 10 of diamonds. Steve Webb sitting South didn't cover, so Sue discarded a club and Tim Barsby ruffed with his master trump. Tim was now end-played, with either black suit exit giving declarer her tenth trick. He tried the club King, and Sue claimed. Well done indeed. She says she knew what she was doing.

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