

CAUTIOUS BIDDER [134]

Bridge would be an enjoyable game were it not for those pesky opponents. Consider these two hands from the Wiltshire Green Point Teams event, held at Bath University last weekend.

I should perhaps explain that, for me, aggressive bidding is as natural as breathing. My partner, on the other hand, told me very early in our relationship that she liked plus scores. There in a nutshell is an expression of competing bridge philosophies which we have as yet not fully resolved. At its worst it can lead to a downward spiral in which I, frustrated at my partner's passivity, make ever more aggressive and outlandish bids, whilst Sue, expecting that I will as usual do the bidding for both of us, retreats further and further into her shell. Not a recipe for bridge success.

We sat North/South on this first one. See if you can guess who sat in which seat.

Board 38; Dealer East; E/W vulnerable

	♠AQ7	
	♥KJ863	
	♦Q	
	♣KQ103	
♠K84		♠102
♥54		♥10
♦732		♦AKJ1098654
♣A9652		♣7
	♠J9653	
	♥AQ972	
	♦void	
	♣J84	

East dealt and opened a 'gambling' 3NT (not my choice; I far prefer Five Diamonds with that nine card suit). Would you bid over 3NT as South? You might, or I suppose you might pass for now. South passed. East bid Four Clubs, as per system. Would you bid as North? You might, or I suppose you might pass for now. North doubled. East now made the bid he should have made in the first place - he jumped to Five Diamonds. Would you bid over this as South? You might, or you might pass. And if you do elect to bid, what is your choice? Anyway, South passed. Five

Diamonds therefore came round to North. Do you bid on the North hand? If so, what is your call? North doubled again - for penalties, obviously - and South removed to Five Hearts. What a strange game this is, thought North, contemplating his five heart cards.

A club lead and ruff would have required declarer to bring in the trump suit for no loser, but West led a diamond, so declarer was not put to the test. A comfortable eleven tricks.

Who sat in which seat, do you think? I guess it's hard to tell.

This next hand arose in the same set.

Board 43; Dealer: South; both non-vul

	♠6	
	♥7	
	♦KJ865	
	♣AK9874	
♠KQ10872		♠9543
♥865		♥Q10
♦Q3		♦10972
♣J10		♣Q53
	♠AJ	
	♥AKJ9432	
	♦A4	
	♣62	

South opened One Heart, and West overcalled what in my view is a very feeble One Spade. Two Clubs from North, and Two Spades from East. What should declarer do now? Three Hearts, forcing to game, looks about right, but South elected to show her (or his?) extra values by doubling. West plucked up courage to bid Three Spades, and North now had a difficult decision. His (or her?) actual choice of Six Diamonds would not be to everyone's taste, but that was the bid found at the table. South converted this to Six Hearts. North passed, reflecting as he (or she?) did so that perhaps his (or her?) Six Diamond call hadn't been the wisest move. Anyway, West led a spade and thirteen tricks resulted.

Has anyone thought of setting themselves up as a bridge couples counsellor? I'd say there's a market.

GD