**Week 2**

Do you have comprehensive or only third party insurance ?

 This week's hand comes from the final of the Garden Cities last year where the Bristol team finished 3rd.

 The contract was 4s at all 4 tables ( it was teams of eight )

KJ8x

Qxx

xx

AKxx

A9xx

KJx

KQJx

Qx

there are 2 red aces to lose and it is simply a question of how you tackle the trump suit .

 I can be sure that Mike Brady would offer you odds on that if the hand cropped up in the Tuesday duplicate every man and his dog would cash SA and finesse the knave sometimes making an over trick but this is a team event and the over trick is insignificant if a means of ensuring the contract can be found .

 Declarer should consider the possibility of a 4-1 trump break ( a 22% chance ) and play accordingly. There is a safety play to cater for both LHO and RHO holding QTxx in spades . Cash the SK and play a low spade inserting the 9 if RHO follows small and if RHO discards rise with the ace and lead a third spade towards the knave holding yourself to 1 trump loser in either case .

 I am pleased to say both the Bristol declarers took the safety play whilst both the opposition declarers did not and RHO did indeed hold QTxx in spades .

This illustrates the difference between pairs and teams scoring . Playing pairs the line for the over trick would be entirely normal but at teams would be a bad misplay .

**Week 1**

What Style of Bidder are you? Do you bid swiftly to the final contract or do you prefer to take it slowly ?

 Try this pair of hands as an uncontested bidding problem

 AQx

AQJTx

Jxx

xx

Jxx

Kx

xx

AKJTxx

South deals and opens 1c -p-1h -p- 2c ? Now what should north bid some would try 3nt and hope all passes off  ok but is that best ?

 On the actual lay out there is an even chance that  opponents will be able to cash 5 diamonds to defeat 3nt whilst 4h is practically  cold ( bridge speak for laydown ) and 5c is also a reasonable spot .

 So north should go more slowly in order to elicit further information from partner since it is possible that we may find 3 hearts opposite  and we also need to discover whether partner holds a diamond guard.

Therefore we should bid 2s now in order to show our values in the suit ( I have a mantra endlessly repeated " We bid where we live " ) and see what partner does if partner bids 3c we can try 3d to ask for a guard and now partner can bid 3h to show belated support unsuitable for 3nt and we bid 4h which is the place to be .If partner tries 3d himself ( 4th suit forcing ) we will rebid our hearts and he will raise .

Incidentally 2s on 3 cards is not at all dangerous since partner by passed the suit at his second turn so cannot hold 4 spades and this sequence is best played as game forcing otherwise you will be uncertain and attempting to land on a pin head ( clarity of agreement & flexibility in approach  are vital bidding principles ) .

The key with bidding is to take it slowly and flexibly if the hand is complicated and the final contract not clear and only jump to a particular contract when this is clear cut  and no alternative contracts are possible .So make the north hand AQx,AJxx,KJx ,xxx and a 3nt bid would be fine .