**Week 73**

I prefer not to write about specific matches or plays good or bad made by particular players but the last set of a recent match saw some amazing boards crop up. The match was practically even after 40 boards and we sat down for the last set.

First,

AKTxx

KJx

xx

Qxx

Qx

AQT9xx

Axxx

x

6h is circa 50% but not bid in either room.

Then

AKxxx

Qxxxx

void

AKQ

xx

AJTxx

Jxx

Jxx

a cold 6h with seven making on the trump finesse missed in the other room by the opposition but bid by our team for 11 imps in.

Then you hold

KQx

void

AKJxx

AKTxx

2s from partner weak  first in love all 5h a toy called exclusion Key Card Blackwood collected 5nt (SA) so we went for the jackpot !

He held

AJxxxx

Qxx

xx

xx

So you test clubs which are 4-2 and then fall back on the diamond finesse to score up the grand slam for a flat board.

Then

x

AKQxxxx

xx

Axx

Axxx

xx

AKxxx

Kx

Another grand slam, the 3rd of the set.

It went 1h (4s) dbl -p 5h 6h and in the other room they reached 7nt which made on the double squeeze. Lose 13 imps. 7h is rather more straight forward !

Finally

AKxxx

Ax

x

KJTxx

xx

QTx

KJx

AQxxx

1s -2c -3d (short) -3nt -4c -4h -6c was the auction in our room. Declarer was known to hold good diamonds and 4h might be diversionary so a diamond from Axxxx looked unattractive so a heart was led for 1 off and team mates scored +400 in 5c.

 I guess if you have been counting you will realise the outcome of the match by now

**Week 72**

Two hands this week.

First something rather special.

You play in 4h on the following lay out on the lead of CQ. You win and note you have a loser in each minor together with at least one trump so it appears as if the HK needs to be onside with the suit 3 -2.

AKx

Qxxx

Kxxx

Jx

QJTxx

Axxx

X

Axx

You cash the HA at trick two and LHO follows with the king .So the trumps are 4 -1 with RHO holding 2 winners in the suit. You still have a chance if RHO has 3 or more spades since you can cash 3 rounds and then discard the club loser on the 4th round of the suit when RHO is ruffing in and thereby hold yourself to two trump losers and the DA.

You therefore play on spades but RHO ruffs the second round of spades and cashes the CK and you find you must lose the DA and a trump trick to West!!

The layout of the other hands was

Xxxx

KJT

AXxx

QX

X

Xx

QJxx

Kxxxxx

LHO followed to the HA with the HK holding KJT the effect of which was to throw declarer off beam in the belief that the trumps are breaking badly. This play was truly brilliant and the reason for the play was that West knows the trumps are favourably placed and they only have one trick in the suit so chuck a curve ball to declarer and see what effect it has.

Our second problem is a lead which I faced recently.

1c 2d 2nt 4nt 6nt was the auction. Opponents were playing strong NT and 5 card majors and 1c may be two cards. 2d was strong.

You hold

Kxx

Xx

Xxxx

Xxxx

What is your selection?

Do you go passive on the basis that it is two balanced hands and if so which suit do you choose? A heart could damage partner as could a club and a diamond is probably the most neutral selection. The alternative is to attack with a spade playing partner for a high card in the suit. Either approach could be correct but the diamond bid suggests five or Six tricks in that suit in the dummy and so it is not a case of two balanced hands and thus the reason for a spade lead is stronger here than it would be if the bidding had gone say 1nt 4nt 6nt. A spade was needed and of course I duly failed but did at least strongly consider that option.

**Week 71**

A couple of interesting hands this week the theme of which you will have to wait for.

First you reach 6h with the following hands

Ax

A9x

KJxxxx

AK

Kxx

KJ8xx

Ax

QTx

no opposition bidding and the lead is a low club. You win and lay down HA and the Q appears on your right. Declarer played 3 rounds of spades ruffing in dummy and received the shock of his life when RHO over ruffed with the ten and gave his partner a club ruff for 1 off. The play by RHO of the Queen from QT doubleton costs nothing and was a fine false card.

Playing in the teams at the club last week the following hand cropped up

A

Jxx

xx

T98xxxx

Kxxxx

AK

KQxx

AQ

most reached 3nt which is very poor and duly failed while  5c is lay down but an opportunity for another false card came up .

The lead was a high heart which you win pleased not to have received a spade lead you lay down the CA and the king appears. You know that clubs are now dead so potter around aimlessly for a while and drift two off. A thought occurred to me that a defender holding Kx should play the King under the ace !! Why ? declarer will assume the clubs are 3-1 and so dead as the proverbial dodo and not continue the suit. The cost of an overtrick may then defeat a stone cold contract.