**Week 75**

This week, a couple of bad boards from a recent event.  First you pick up this big hand

 AKQxxxx

 Void

 Qxx

 AKx

 It is Teams scoring and you hear 2d (weak) to your right.

 You start with double since the hand is too strong to bid 3s or 4s. (Systemically I could have bid 4d) LHO passes and partner bids 4h. You continue with 4s which shows a strong hand and partner bids 5d showing a first round control. You try 6c another cue bid and partner bids 6d so what does he have?

The grand slam is good opposite many hands although the heart bid is a downside for the hand. If partner has a no loser diamond holding singleton ace then seven may be good. I concluded he had this and boldly bid seven but partner held

 Xx

KQxxxxx

 AJ

 Jx

 And the contract went off.

 Then a play problem, which was interesting.

 Txx

 Jxx

 Jxxx

 AJx

KJx

KQ9x

AQT

Kxx

You play in 3nt on a club lead.  In order to make this one you will need tricks from both red suits. You play low in dummy and the nine forces your king. You try a heart to the jack which holds so now what?

 It appears as if the heart ace is on your left, so you try a diamond and lho wins the queen with the king and plays a second club. You finesse but the queen wins on your right and a third club is returned. You now play another heart and rho wins the ace and plays a spade. The long club is on your left so you try the king but the ace is on your left so you are two off. Fine defence ducking the heart ace and a losing board since the contract succeeded in the other room.

**Week 74**

A subject about which not much is written or taught is protective bidding. There are two common situations.

First when a one level bid is passed around to fourth player. The basic premise is that partner of fourth player will have a considerably better hand than right hand opponent who holds five or less points for the pass and so fourth player may bid a king lighter than in second seat.  
  
Imagine it has gone one heart pass pass and we hold any of these hands   
  
1 KQxx  
Xx  
KJxx  
Jxx  
  
Double is clear and I would double with as little as eight points here if shape suitable.  
  
2 Qxx  
Kxx  
AJxx  
Qxx  
  
A bid of 1 nt shows 11 to 15 so this hand is fine. Notice the difference in the range compared to second seat.  
  
3 AQxxx  
Xxx  
Qxx  
Xx  
  
Again 1s is fine and you might even bid this in second seat.  
  
The other protective situation is where the opposition auction stops at a low level for example 1 h p 2h or 1s 1nt 2d 2s.  
  
There is a fundamental difference between balancing when the opposition have shown a fit and when they have not. The first auction is a fit and the second is not so in the first case we should strain to double for takeout or bid spades whereas in the second where they are probably in a seven card spade contract we should mostly let them play.