



Things I have seen ... - Part 2

This time around, on the same theme as last month, a few more absurdities that I have observed at the table while directing. On each of the following hands, the player in the spotlight did something wrong, which resulted in an outcome which seems way disproportionate to the error he had made. However, on each occasion, the correct application of the relevant laws meant the end result was quite bizarre. The sort of things which, when other tables see the score on the travelling score sheet, result in me being called and being told to go and fix it because that result is “clearly impossible”.

Careful with those Red Aces

♠K
 ♥J1064
 ♦106532
 ♣1074

 ♠6 ♠QJ1097
 ♥AQ85 ♥973
 ♦A984 ♦QJ7
 ♣A952 ♣86

 ♠A85432
 ♥K2
 ♦K
 ♣KQJ3

West	North	East	South
			1♠
X	P	1NT	2♠
X	All pass		

Declarer seems to have 3 losers in spades, two in hearts and one in each of the minors. Two down, +500 seems like it will be a very good score for EW, but it didn't turn out that way.... Rather than trying to find partner's strength outside trumps – if he had any – West found the best lead of ♠6. On winning dummy's ♠K, declarer tried to sneak through a trick, by leading up to his singleton king of diamonds. This shouldn't have worked, but West “won” with the ♥A and then banged down the ace of clubs. Yes, West had been careless in sorting his cards and had mixed up his **red aces**. This particular error is probably not that uncommon but the effect on this hand was quite devastating. Playing ♥A on the diamond constituted a revoke and then leading to the next trick established it. This meant that West could not correct his revoke – which in turn meant that ♣A was a lead out of turn, as South had now won trick two with ♦K! Declarer chose not to accept the lead out of turn, so ♣A became a penalty card. The ace of trumps was played and West had to discard CA. So by the time the hand was finished, declarer had lost no tricks in diamonds and no tricks in clubs. The defence still had to make 3 trumps and ♥AQ, but not enough to defeat 2♠X. To add insult to injury, still to come was the penalty for the established revoke – one more trick to NS, for a final score of NS +870. Quite a difference from the -500 declarer would have been expecting at the start of the hand.

Sublime Revoking

The second hand features a simple three card ending. In a contract of 5♣ by South, West is on lead to Trick 11 in the following position:

♠ ---	
♥ A	
♦ ---	
♣ AJ	
♠ ---	♠ ---
♥ 10	♥ ---
♦ ---	♦ 7
♣ 74	♣ Q10
♠ ---	
♥ 6	
♦ ---	
♣ K6	

West leads ♥10. Dummy's ace is ruffed by East with the ten, and declarer over-ruffs with the king. South next finesses clubs, losing to East's now singleton queen, and dummy's ace of trumps is there to win the last trick. When declarer's ♥6 turns up at trick 13, the revoke is discovered and the director is called. After an established revoke, the penalty when the offending player wins the revoke trick (here, Trick 11) is one trick plus an additional trick if his side wins any tricks after the revoke. That means that two tricks were transferred from NS to EW. Declarer, clutching the ace, king and jack of trumps in his hands with three tricks to go, had contrived with this rather "strong" holding to make a total of zero tricks!

SUBLIME!



Counting points

West is the dealer and the auction goes:

West	North	East	South
			1NT

A bid out of turn. The Director is called. West has the option of accepting 1NT, but chooses not to. 1NT is therefore cancelled, the call goes back to West and North **must** pass for the remainder of the auction. (It is one of the curiosities of the laws that in many of the circumstances where you do something wrong, it is your partner who is punished.) West decided to **pass**. North **passed** because he had to. East also **passed**, so it was back to South again. NS were playing a weak no trump and South had really “stretched” to open 1NT with

♠ Q84
♥ J742
♦ KJ8
♣ KJ10

and had then done it when it wasn't his turn to call! He now had to make the big decision for his side. Of course, he was vulnerable and the opponents weren't. He also knew that his right hand opponent was more than capable of a little legal deceit. That is, East could be holding quite a strong hand, but had passed expecting that South would have to guess at the final contract (since North had to pass), and that he might overdo it and go for a big penalty. After quite a lot of thought, South eventually decided that discretion was the better part of valour and took the lowest road of all – he **passed** the hand in.

Unfortunately for his side, East had not been laying a trap for him. In fact, this deal contained probably the biggest hand I have ever seen – 27 points. You may have guessed that it was held by North, who cruelly had been forced to pass because of his partner's bid out of turn. The travelling score sheet which looked like:

7NT	N	2220
7NT	S	2220
6NT	N	1470
7NT	N	2220
Passed in		
7NT	N	2220
7NT	S	2220

“Raised” more than a few eyebrows.

Counting cards

♠ KQ1053
 ♥ 74
 ♦ 109
 ♣ AK
 ♠ 62
 ♥ J1086
 ♦ J842
 ♣ 1064
 ♠ 8
 ♥ 953
 ♦ 765
 ♣ QJ9852
 ♠ AJ974
 ♥ KQ2
 ♦ KQ3
 ♣ 73

West	North	East	South
P	1♠	P	3♠*
P	4♠	All pass	
* strong			
Opening lead: ♣Q			

Declarer won in hand with the ace, drew trumps in two rounds, cashed ♣K, then played the king and queen of hearts and ruffed a heart, and then king and queen of diamonds and ruffed a diamond. At this point, declarer called for the director. He had only one card left, while dummy and both defenders still had three cards to go.

I asked if he had counted his cards at the start and he assured me that he did and he definitely held thirteen of them. Although I was a bit sceptical (the player was not particularly well known for following correct procedure), I checked to see whether any of his cards were stuck together in case two cards had been played at once on an earlier trick. This wasn't the case. The laws require that the director "institute a search for the missing cards". Usually when this occurs, one of two things has happened: the player has dropped the card(s) on the floor, or the cards are still on the previous table, usually under North's system card.

But in this case, neither of those searches solved the problem. It turned out that it was far simpler than that – *there were still two cards in the North pocket in the board* – so much for counting his cards and counting to thirteen! When the player's cards eventually turn up, the laws require that the hand be completed and the relevant laws are applied as if the cards had been in the player's hand throughout. At the time I was called, dummy just had three trumps left, so there was no more to the play. The missing cards were a heart and diamond. So, I needed to check to see if North may have revoked. So, I asked the questions: did you ruff a heart? "Yes" – two trick penalty for that. Did you ruff a diamond? "Yes" – two trick penalty for that as well. Final result: 4S by North, one down, EW +50.

Those of you have been following closely will have noticed which cards were missing from the hand diagram above – **the ace of hearts and the ace of diamonds**. So, while this declarer was going down in game, most of the other pairs in the room were bidding and making either a small slam or a grand slam. Sometimes, there is justice in the world.

