

Book Reviews by Paul Lavings

Winning at Matchpoints

A complete analysis of every area of the matchpointed pairs game



Winning at Matchpoints

by Bill Treble
(Masterpoint Press,
Toronto, Canada,
2020, soft cover, 258
pages)

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Is bridge an art or a science? Well, as we all know it can be both. Matchpoints however is definitely a science and in Bill Treble's fifth book he treats the reader to a complete analysis of every area of the matchpointed pairs game. He looks into partscores, games and slams, pre-empting, balancing, the three level, after 1NT, doubling for takeout and penalty, declarer play, defence, opening leads and more.

His method is to use full hands as examples and poll other experts to reach a consensus. He finishes the book off with a full 27-board session with first the question then the full hand. This deal is from the section on freak hands. You hold:

♠ KQ109 ♥ AJ10 ♦ QJ10 ♣ Q98

Playing 1NT as 15-17 the bidding proceeds:

W	N	E	S
	P	1NT	P
2NT	P	?	

Why is a 4-3-3 shape hand a freak? A true rarity, ten honour cards with no card below an 8. The hand is jam-packed with intermediates that will likely produce extra tricks and despite your minimum point count you are well worth 3NT. The full hand:

Dealer N | Vul N-S

♠ KQT9	♠ 72	♠ AJ3
♥ AJT	♥ K842	♥ 965
♦ QJT	♦ A86	♦ 974
♣ Q98	♣ K743	♣ AT65
	♠ 8654	
	♥ Q73	
	♦ K532	
	♣ J2	

A diamond or heart lead is best for the defence but declarer simply leads ♣9 planning to take two finesses and ends up with 4 spades, 3 clubs and 2 hearts or a diamond and a heart. All those 10s and 9s created extra tricks as predicted. *Winning at Matchpoints* is recommended especially if you are of a more scientific bent.

As an aside why do clubs all around the world persist with matchpointed pairs when imps is so much less complex. I was speaking to an old bridge partner, Ron Mann, last week and Ron commented that newer players could never possibly comprehend the idiosyncrasies of pairs. At imps the aims and objectives are so much simpler and clearer.

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