



Things I have seen ... - Part 1

Being the director usually means that you often don't get to see what happens at the table. Unless something significant has come up resulting in a director call, he will not normally know about any of the "interesting" hands that arise.

Over the next few articles I will describe some of the more unusual scenarios which I have observed while directing.

Next time, I will look at a couple of examples where the normal and correct application of the laws results in some extreme outcomes, but this time, here a few examples which were just plain "weird".

Expert Play at Trick 13

♠ A4	
♥ 9	
♦ KQ8743	
♣ Q1096	
♠ Q982	♠ KJ1063
♥ A85	♥ K1074
♦ A95	♦ ---
♣ AK5	♣ J432
♠ 75	
♥ QJ632	
♦ J1062	
♣ 87	

After an auction which probably doesn't bear repeating, West became the declarer in 3HX. Because of some infraction during the auction, I was called to the table and it was necessary for me to watch the play in case it was relevant to the eventual ruling. That's how I came to be able to report this hand.

The opening lead was ♦K, taken by declarer's ace, who then probably did best by setting up his rather good spade side suit. North ducked his ace, so dummy's ♠J won. Seeing it was South who had doubled, declarer now took the very deep, but maybe not unreasonable line, of running East's ♥7. From this point on, trumps were never led again. ♥7 lost to North's singleton 9 and now declarer was in big trouble. However, North let him off the hook by exiting with ♣10. Winning ♣J in dummy meant that there were no club losers. West now tried to cash his ♣AK, but South ruffed the second round. A spade to North's ace established the side suit. A diamond was led and ruffed in dummy to leave the following 5-card ending. At this point, the defence has won three tricks.

5-card ending

♠ ---	
♥ ---	
♦ 8743	
♣ Q	
♠ Q9	♠ KJ
♥ A8	♥ K10
♦ 9	♦ ---
♣ ---	♣ 4
♠ ---	
♥ QJ6	
♦ J10	
♣ ---	

Declarer led a spade ruffed by South who exited with ♦J. Declarer could see nothing better to do than ruffing this in dummy then ruffing a club in his hand. He then led another spade. South ruffed with ♥J to leave this rather amazing suit combination at Trick 13.

Trick 13

♠ ---	
♥ ---	
♦ 7	
♣ ---	
♠ ---	♠ ---
♥ A	♥ K
♦ ---	♦ ---
♣ ---	♣ ---
♠ ---	
♥ Q	
♦ ---	
♣ ---	

Non-Expert Play at Trick 1

The next hand featured a very regular partnership, who have played together for a long time. Why that is the case is a bit of a mystery. The North player never seems to be happy and spends a lot of the time at the end of each hand/round/session berating his partner for some perceived deficit in her skill or execution. (Some less kind players have questioned whether they are – or should be – married!) South just sits back and accepts it. It also appears that North is the type who likes to hog the bidding. He is declarer a lot of the time. And I wonder whether they don't have some "rules" to ensure that this is the case. One of these "rules" might be that if ever the opportunity arises, the "better" player, that is North, must be the declarer. A classic case where this could crop up is when there is an opening lead out of turn. And so I observed the following:

♠ 6	
♥ 4	
♦ AKJ108762	
♣ KQJ	
♠ 10875	♠ A932
♥ J85	♥ 972
♦ Q94	♦ 5
♣ 1062	♣ 98753
♠ KQJ4	
♥ AKQ1063	
♦ 3	
♣ A4	

West	North	East	South
		P	1♥
P	3♦	P	4NT
P	6♦	P	6NT
P	7♦	X	7NT
P	P	X	All pass

East was not a very experienced player and in his excitement at holding an ace against a grand slam, he led it. I was called to the table and explained the opening lead out of turn options to South:

- i. accept the lead, make themselves the dummy and let partner play the hand;
- ii. accept the lead, dummy comes down and they play next from their own hand;
- iii. demand a spade lead from West;
- iv. prohibit a spade lead from West;
- v. leave ♠A as a penalty card and allow West to lead what they like – on a spade lead the ace would have to be played.

It can be seen that only option (iv) gives NS any chance in this contract. If declarer guesses to play diamonds correctly they can come to thirteen with seven diamonds, three hearts and three clubs. At the table, however, South, perhaps mindful of her partner's insistence that he was the better player and should always be declarer, accepted the lead and made herself dummy. It was one of the few times where I saw North unusually silent at the end of the hand!