

John finds out there's more to life than just bridge



Mike Swanson

DIRECTOR, PLEASE!

'ARE you sure about playing the Multi?' pleaded Julie.

'Absolutely! It always confuses me when I come up against it, so this way I can confuse my opponents instead,' replied John.

E/W Game. Dealer West.

♠ K Q 10 6 4 2		
♥ 5 2		
♦ J 3 2		
♣ 8 2		
♠ J 3		♠ A 7 5
♥ Q 10 9 4 3		♥ A K 6
♦ K 10 8		♦ A Q 4
♣ Q 10 5		♣ A K 4 3
	♠ 9 8	
	♥ J 8 7	
	♦ 9 7 6 5	
	♣ J 9 7 6	

After Julie opened 2♦, John alerted and East went into a trance. Eventually he came to life and started asking questions.

'What is the 2♦?'

'It shows either a weak two in a major or a strong two in a minor or a balanced 22-23,' replied John.

'And is it forcing?'

'Of course.'

'So you can't pass.'

'I am required to make one of three possible responses.'

After these questions, East tranced further and then eventually decided to pass and wait to see exactly what Julie held.

By now John felt fairly certain that East had a very good hand and, even though Julie could still possibly have a strong hand, he decided to take a chance at this favourable vulnerability and pass.

At this stage East turned a strange shade of purple and shouted for the Director.

'I asked whether 2♦ was forcing and South assured me that it was, so I passed

and so did he,' he pleaded.

'East asked so many questions that he practically announced to the whole table that he had a big hand, so I decided to pass,' responded John.

The Director turned to East: 'You are only entitled to know what South is supposed to do. If he then decides to deviate from the system as a result of your questions, he is taking a calculated risk which may or may not succeed.'

The auction continued and West could do little more than pass. The defence then managed to restrict Julie to just one trick, but -350 was a top as, even though not everyone had reached the slam, the lowest other score on the traveller was -680.

By now the atmosphere at the table was frosty to say the least, but there was another board to go and John just hoped that would pass by without incident:

Love All. Dealer North.

♠ 8 7		
♥ 10 7		
♦ Q J 10 9 8 7		
♣ A K Q		
♠ A K 6		♠ Q J 9 3 2
♥ J 9 8 5 3		♥ K Q 6 4 2
♦ A 3 2		♦ 6
♣ 4 3		♣ 6 5
	♠ 10 5 4	
	♥ A	
	♦ K 5 4	
	♣ J 10 9 8 7 2	

West	North	East	South
	Julie		John
	1♦	2♦	Pass
4♣	All Pass		

When East bid 2♦, John turned to West and asked what it showed, and was told 'Spades and clubs' and as a result he decided to pass, and West's 4♣ ended the auction.

Before Julie could choose her opening lead, East excused himself from the table, picking up his convention card as he left, and went over to talk to the Tournament Director.

'My partner has described my bid correctly but I have got the system wrong. I had forgotten that we had agreed to play modified Ghestem with a cue-bid showing two suits of the same colour, instead I thought we were still playing Michael's cue-bids where 2♦ over 1♦ shows the majors.' At this stage he proffered his convention card to prove his point.

'The opponents are only entitled to know what you have agreed that your bid should mean, not what you actually hold. You do not need to tell them anything; however, they may well guess that something is afoot by the mere fact that you have come over to talk to me,' replied the Director.

East returned to the table and Julie decided to lead the queen of diamonds rather than a club, as she felt West could easily have a club shortage.

When the dummy went down, East apologised for getting the system wrong and all that John and Julie could both think was: 'At least it wasn't John this time!'

After 4♣ had rolled home, Julie turned to John and observed how pleasant it was for the opponents to be the ones in trouble with the Director for once.

'Yes, and talking about pleasant things, are you free on the 14th?' asked John, and when he saw Julie eyeing him suspiciously, he added: 'Not a bridge event, just dinner if that's alright with you.'

Julie just smiled and nodded, thinking that maybe at long last John had realised that there was more to life than just bridge after all. □