

Sneaking an extra trick *by Derrick Browne*

The pairs game (i.e. ordinary duplicate) is not about making dramatic slam contracts. Winning a partscore battle or making one more trick than everyone else can bring a top board. This column features two deals from pairs events at the recent Trumps Festival of Bridge. In each case, declarer took advantage of minor defensive slips.

Will Jenner-O'Shea was in 4H on this first deal, from the New Year's Day Open and Restricted Pairs:

Dealer South, E-W vul.

NORTH	
S AKJ85	
H 974	
D 76	
C 963	
WEST	EAST
S 9432	S Q6
H 85	H 63
D AK983	D QJT2
C J7	C AT842
SOUTH	
S T7	
H AKQJT2	
D 54	
C KQ5	

West led the DA, on which East threw the DQ. This promises possession of the DJ so West led a low diamond next, won by the D10. East now led a low club, hoping declarer might have the king and jack of clubs and try the jack.

However, Will had no such guess to make, and won the CK. Next he drew trumps with the A-K of hearts, then cashed the A-K of spades. When the SQ fell, he could see a sure route to an overtrick. He cashed the SJ, throwing the C5 from hand, then he led a fourth round of spades from dummy and ruffed *high*.

Dummy's last spade was now a winner and Will had carefully preserved the H2 in hand as a means to cross over to dummy's H9, enabling him to access the other spade on which the CQ was discarded, for 11 tricks and an outright top.

Peter Gill scored 82% for making an "unmakeable" 1NT contract on this board from the qualifying session of the Festival Pairs on 3 January:

Dealer East, both vul.

NORTH			
S 872			
H KQ83			
D K54			
C K75			
WEST	EAST		
S AQT43	S J5		
H A542	H 976		
D 87	D AQ63		
C 82	C J643		
SOUTH			
S K96			
H JT			
D JT92			
C AQT9			
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	<i>Gosney</i>		<i>Gill</i>
		Pass	1D
1S	Dble	Pass	1NT

All pass

Peter later commented that he does not routinely open 11-counts. This one, however, had some good features, notably the excellent intermediates (tens and nines). After West overcalled 1S, North negative doubled to show four hearts, and South finished in 1NT.

After winning the spade lead, Peter led the J-10 of hearts, ducked both times by West. With three tricks already, he saw that four club tricks would see him home. He cashed the CA and CK, then led a third round of clubs from dummy. The normal play now would be the CQ, hoping for the jack to fall – yet Peter finessed the C10, because he had observed each opponent give a count signal to show an even number of clubs.