

Bridge at the Brook by *Derrick Browne*

Today's deals come from the final session of the Waterbrook Greenwich Pairs on 23 August, which was won by Eunice Foo and Santosh Arora. Low level penalty doubles can often produce top boards, as they did on these occasions.

Dealer North, nil vul.

NORTH
S T73
H A96
D AT984
C 95

WEST
S J9862
H QJ7
D 2
C T432

EAST
S A
H T3
D QJ7653
C AK86

SOUTH
S KQ54
H K8542
D K
C QJ7

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	1D	Dble
1S	1NT	2D	Pass
Pass	Dble	All pass	

East opened 1D and South had the first real decision of the auction. She could have overcalled to show five hearts, but the suit was poor and she had four cards in the other major and some clubs too, so figured a takeout double was a better option.

West has only 4 HCP but opted to stretch to respond 1S. This did not deter North from bidding 1NT; a spade stopper is not essential for this, as partner's takeout double suggests length in all suits other than diamonds.

After East rebid the 6-card diamond suit, North figured his hand met the requirements for a penalty double: good trumps, good points (a couple of aces, and whatever partner had for the takeout double), and lack of a good fit with partner (although as it happened, there was one in hearts). Two down, doubled, was worth 300 points; the next best score was 140 points for South making 3H.

On the next board, the top was shared by the two North-South pairs who had this auction:

Dealer North, EW vul.

NORTH
S —
H AQ92
D 964
C AKQJT6

WEST
S 64
H 8764
D A875
C 742

EAST
S KJT952
H KT
D K2
C 853

SOUTH
S AQ873
H J53
D QJT3
C 9

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1C	2S	Pass
Pass	Dble	All pass	

South was looking at a spade stack, a good hand, and shortage in partner's suit, plus one other appealing factor – the opponents are vulnerable and you are not. However, South must not double as that would be negative, showing four hearts. Pass, counting on partner to reopen with a double in case you have this sort of hand, in which case you pass again, converting the double to penalties.

The C9 lead was overtaken by the C10, and two more clubs cashed, with South throwing the two small hearts. Next came the HA and another heart, ruffed. That was the first five tricks taken, and the A-Q of spades were still to come. As the cards lie, a fourth round of clubs at the start could have promoted an extra trump trick for South but at this vulnerability, two down for 500 points is better than making game anyway.