

My most outrageous psychic opening in a couple of decades (and my only psyche of the tournament) worked to perfection. Why West would lead fourth highest against that auction is a mystery to me, but I was pleased to rake in 11 tricks.

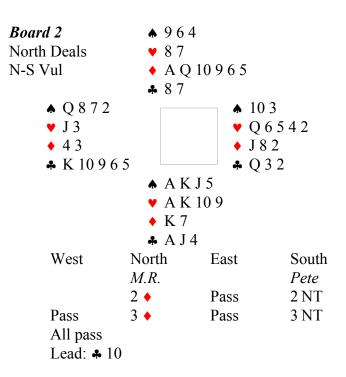
East was a colorful character, known to me only as the Mad Russian, who populates these individual events. He called the director to complain about my psyche, without recourse. West weighed in with a complaint that she had heard a similar complaint about me from another table. I piped up to complain about that falsehood. Quite a brouhaha.

This set the stage for the next afternoon, when I sat down with some trepidation to partner M.R. for a round

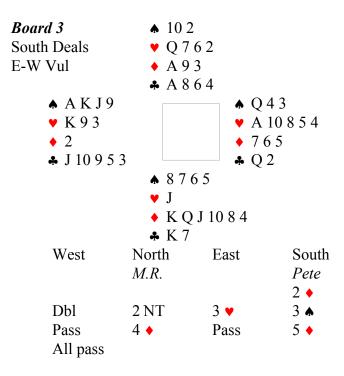
(see board 2)

Before the dummy came down, M.R. announced this was "an impossible auction: don't ask a question, if you don't need the answer." This was definitely an unlikely auction, but I intended to bid 6NT if M.R. had shown a feature (which should promise a good hand). I played the hand conservatively for 11 tricks, eschewing the both the losing spade finesse and the winning endplay against West.

M.R. asked if 6 • could be made. That contract is about the same as 6NT, except that it would be declared by M.R. - not a possibility I would ever consider. When playing with a weaker partner in an individual, grab every contract you can.



On the last board of the round, I decided to strike first...



I rebid 3 ♠, hoping for a spade game - with me declaring, of course. M.R. had made a game try, but did not bid game when I showed a max with spades. Since I had no wasted spade values, my singleton heart and club king must be gold, so I pushed on to 5 ♠.

M.R. went on the offensive, saying I could not bid like that. I probably asked what happened to the hand he held during the bidding. He said he just wanted to know if I had a feature! No mild manners this round. The opponents lead no trumps, so I was one down.