

# Firing blanks

The Lederer Memorial, Britain's only surviving Invitation tournament, was contested by eight strong teams at the Young Chelsea Club. Thanks to Warwick Pitch's generous sponsorship, Barry Rigal's efficient organization, and the voluntary help of an army of willing hands, both players and spectators enjoyed a fine event.

The final result was:

**England** (Sally Horton, Steve Lodge, Robert Sheehan, Jeremy Flint) . . . **286VPs**

**Scotland** (Irving Rose, Barnet Shenkin, Victor Silverstone, Irving Gordon) . . . **225VPs**

**Poland** (Polish National Team) . . . **220VPs**

**"Crockfords"** (G. Breskal, J. Collings, David Edwin, A. Samson, N. Selway, J. Breskal) . . . **214VPs**

**Ireland** (M. Rosenberg, B. Senior, N. Fitzgibbon, R. Boland) . . . **204VPs**

It may appear discourteous to give no details of the Polish team, but as David Burn, the British coach, observed at the prizegiving, all their names would achieve huge scores at Scrabble.

Superficially our victory by a margin of more than one

clear match was most convincing. In truth, I must confess that Sheehan and I played in good luck throughout. Still, we had the satisfaction of winning the award for the best defended hand. There was no award for the worst played hand, which I might have claimed for my inelegant display on this board.

Teams. East-West Game. Dealer South.

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

Against my contract of four hearts West led the ♠10 on which East benevolently contributed the ♠J, gratuitously permitting me to win the trick with my singleton ♠K.

"Not much to this," I thought. I cashed the Ace and Queen of hearts, noting the 4-1 break without too much apprehension.

Provided West had at least one diamond honour, all would be well. The ♠J lost to East's ♠K, and East returned the ♥J. If I had ruffed a spade at that point all would still have been well. But no, I cashed the ♣K and ♣A, in case the ♣Q was doubleton, and took another diamond finesse. Après ça, la délué. Two down, -100, was greeted with polite disbelief by my forbearing team mates.

It is the sort of hand I give to my students. Consider the effect of cashing only one heart before finessing the ♠J. East is end played at trick three. He can't return a heart without giving up his trump trick; a spade is futile, and the return of either minor solves my problem.

Here is the defensive hand which caught the judge's eye. Teams. Game All. Dealer North.

♠ 2	N W E S	♠ A 9 6 5
♥ 10 9 7 6		♥ K 8 4
♦ 9 7 5		♦ A K 6 4
♣ 10 9 6 4 3		♣ 5 2
♠ Q 10 8 7 3	N W E S	♠ A Q 5 3 2
♥ A Q 8		♥ Q 8
♦ 7		♦ 7

	W	N	E	S
Sheehan			Flint	
—	—	1♣	—	1♣
No	—	2♥	No	3♥
No	—	4♥	No	No
No	—	—	—	—
			Opening lead: ♠7	

I won the first trick with the ♠K and continued with the ♠A, in the faint hope that Sheehan had a doubleton. Sheehan, seeing that no other suit offered any prospect, dropped the ♠5 rather than the conventional ♠9 (we lead the middle of three small cards). Naturally I continued with a third diamond, which declarer understandably ruffed with the ♠10. When declarer played a spade to dummy's ♠K, I won, and played a fourth diamond.

Declarer could still succeed by allowing the diamond to run. But that would look pretty silly if the trumps were 3-2, so she ruffed with the ♠8, allowing me to score my long trump in due course.

Sometimes when you have no live ammunition you have to rely on blank cartridges.

Jeremy Flint