

# Zia to the Rescue

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The 2013 Lederer Trophy was impressively staged in the RAC Club in London's Pall Mall. On the last round, England Open faced 'Zia and friends'. Neither team was in contention and at the table where I was watching a bottle of the club's excellent house champagne had already been opened. This was the penultimate board.

Game all  
Dealer South

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Andrew</i>	<i>David</i>	<i>Alexander</i>	<i>Zia</i>
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Allfrey</i>	<i>Mahmood</i>
—	—	—	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Dble	Rdble
Pass	4♣	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	5♠
Pass	5NT	Pass	6♥
Pass	6♠	Pass	6NT
All Pass			

Bakhshi's 3♠ was a slam-try in hearts. Allfrey took his chance to suggest a lead and Zia redoubled to show the spade ace. South's 5♠ asked for kings and 5NT showed 'extras' but no minor-suit king to be shown. North's 6♠ was a seemingly ambitious venture towards a grand slam. Do you think 6NT should be made?

West guards the fourth round of clubs, while East guards the fourth round of diamonds. So, a double squeeze with spades as the pivot suit is possible (after giving up a club), provided a spade is not led. Robson did respect his partner's earlier double, leading the ♠ 10, and Zia won in his hand. A finesse of the ♣ J was successful and Zia returned to the ♥K before ducking a club to West's ♣ 10, East throwing a spade.

At this point West needs to play another spade, to break the double squeeze

mentioned already. After long thought, Robson switched to the  $\spadesuit 8$ . I thought at the time that he had diagnosed  $\diamond 10-x-x-x$  in partner's hand and (by showing his own  $\diamond J-9-8$ ) was trying to alert him to the fact that these cards needed to be retained.

Allfrey retained his diamond guard by following with the  $\diamond 3$  and Zia won with the  $\diamond K$ . He then cashed the  $\heartsuit Q-J$  and led the  $\clubsuit Q$ , covered by the king and ace. This end position had been reached:

	$\spadesuit K 4$	
	$\heartsuit A$	
	$\diamond 7$	
	$\clubsuit 2$	
$\spadesuit 9 6$		$\spadesuit Q J$
$\heartsuit —$		$\heartsuit —$
$\diamond J 9$		$\diamond 10 5 4$
$\clubsuit 9$		$\clubsuit —$
	$\spadesuit 5$	
	$\heartsuit 4$	
	$\diamond A Q 6$	
	$\clubsuit —$	

When the  $\heartsuit A$  was played, East had no good discard. He actually released a diamond, allowing Zia to score the  $\spadesuit K$  and the  $\diamond A-Q-6$  in his hand. Suppose East releases a spade honour, though, leaving West to guard that suit. West can only throw a diamond and declarer's last diamond winner will squeeze him in the black suits. At the other table Tony Forrester made  $6\heartsuit$  with an overtrick when Espen Erichsen led the  $\clubsuit 10$ , run to the queen.

The event was well won by the President's team (284 VPs): Bernard Teltscher, Victor Silverstone, William Coyle, Tom Townsend and Stelio Di Bello. In second place were the England Women (245 VPs): Heather Dhondy, Nevena Senior, Fiona Brown, Susan Stockdale, Sally Brock and Barry Myers (substituting for Nicola Smith).