

This analysis is going to reiterate that bridge is a game of mistakes :)

Firstly, well done on nearly beating an experienced Berwick team. There were three Silver players, including Alan and Colin who are National Masters, and Helen has won two Bobby Allan twice and Penny is the current holder of that title.

To Harry I'd say that this is a partnership and team game, especially when you have an experienced partner. You should not be taking too many unilateral decisions - let your partner contribute too, especially when he is the stronger player.

In general I will try to point out clear mistakes and also what you should have been thinking about.

First set

<https://weutil.bridgebase.com/v2/tview.php?t=75968-1613311489>

#1

Although one no trump gets across the 15-17 points Harry holds, Harry is unbalanced with half a diamond stop. With a heart singleton, you do not want to bid one no trump. You could double with this many points, but the heart singleton makes this unattractive so I would overcall one spade knowing that I am maximum for this action.

This will probably be passed out and you will miss a very lucky game, but this is no great loss when non-vulnerable. In the long run overcalling one spade will work out best and, if they had competed more, you can double for takeout on the second round to show your strength.

You took your tricks well. Although you lost 10 imps because you were not in a very thin game, I would not worry about that and it is not a mistake. Occasionally the opponents will get lucky.

#2

Aidan and Harry got lucky here because Helen forgot to double. When an opponent doubles your weak no trump for penalties, then the system is OFF. Strong hands redouble, balanced hands pass, and weak hands run to their long suit, so Harry would have bid two clubs to play.

You defended two diamonds well, but never had the tricks to defeat the contract, for a flat board.

#3

Harry's one diamond overcall is borderline when vulnerable; you have the points, but it is a poor suit, you have aces, but one diamond consumes no space in the auction. In general, I tell juniors that when you are considering passing and bidding, then take the bid. This is a slightly dangerous strategy but stops you getting old too quickly.

Aidan's one no trump is a conservative bid as two no trump is probably the value bid. But both the opponents are bidding so I understand you think game is unlikely.

Having the absolute minimum for his one diamond overcall, Harry has a clear pass of one no trump. I'd expect 12+ points for an invitational raise.

Aidan went an extra trick down because he played diamonds before establishing his spade trick. I would have played a spade much earlier from dummy in case the ace of spades is onside. You have plenty of diamonds and spades to throw on the long hearts.

One down would have been a flat board instead of losing 3 imps. Playing in one no trump would have gained you 6 imps.

#4

Harry bid a vulnerable five diamonds without partner ever showing any points or diamond support on a balanced 18 count. This is how you lose -1400 in the Peggy Bayer, when partner does not have the king of diamonds. Even at favourable vulnerability this is not going to be a good sacrifice, because when it is they are not making game.

One way to get more of your hand across is to rebid three diamonds on the second round. This says you have a long suit, some values and makes it more difficult for them.

Obviously -800 is a very bad score on this board. Fortunately it was flat because your teammates made +790. They would have been very disappointed to get a flat board.

#5

The opponents missed a thin game here but you had a sensible auction. Well played by Aidan who took advantage of Helen's loss of concentration to make the contract.

#6

This hand shows how careful you have to be when vulnerable because going down is so expensive. Harry passed one no trump originally and then decided to offer two no trump as a contract. This makes no sense: if you were strong enough to invite originally then you should have done so.

Although you would like to compete for the partscore, when vulnerable it is normally right to let it go. If you are making a contract, then they'll probably go down. You are allowed to pass. You were lucky that the defence went wrong and only got +300!

#7

Once again overcompeting when vulnerable and I've no idea why Penny did not double you and collect +500 from three spades doubled. With her 2NT, Penny said she had spades covered and invitational values. It should be clear that Aidan has practically no values. They are threatening to make +120 in two no trump and you offered them +500.

#8

Once again Harry is bidding too much with a balanced hand. Three clubs is fine, but four clubs is too much, but once again Aidan has a perfect hand opposite. When he

doesn't you will be doubled and be losing points when you are only competing for the partscore.

Second set

<https://webutil.bridgebase.com/v2/tview.php?t=76514-1613314875>

#1

Three hearts was a well chosen overcall and see how they are now guessing at the four-level which suit to play in. They did okay but missed six no trumps. Well done!

#2

Aidan might have bid three spades instead of Harry, but he was probably worried about Harry overbidding. Harry's four spades is a bit of an overbid and I prefer a natural, invitational, two no trump over which Aidan should bid four spades.

#3

You competed well here, causing them to miss a slam.

#4

Well defended!

#5

The initial two spades overcall is fine and shows a lot of Harry's hand. Aidan should probably raise with three-card support, a singleton and an ace and Harry should pass this (and the three clubs).

Once again you both defended well.

#6

You reached a sensible spot here that was nicely played. Well done!

#7

Pre-empting and pre-empting again is a big no-no. It means that your first pre-empt was wrong. This is a difficult hand to decide on an opening bid, but I prefer four hearts to three hearts. At the other table they opened one heart, which I can live with too, and rebid four hearts.

But opening three hearts, and the bidding four hearts, gives the opponents more information and more room to do the right thing.

Having said that, you both defended five clubs really well. It is very easy to pitch the wrong cards and you did well.

#8

Aidan's overcall of two diamonds is fine on distribution but very misleading over strength. A pre-emptive three diamonds would have been a better call. Harry's double was poorly judged but would have worked out better if Aidan had some points.

A good performance overall but some lessons. I hope you found the session useful.

Cheers

Paul