

A WILD RIDE

By Steven Gaynor

We are a husband-wife partnership where the husband has been a flight A player for a couple decades and the very intelligent wife shows some real promise to compete successfully at the 'A' level, but just does not have as much experience yet. We found ourselves playing against a couple with an identical partnership when this exciting hand came up. I was West, all vulnerable and South dealt and opened 1S. I held ---, QT92, 82, QJT8742. Most pairs can bid 3C, preemptive, but we play intermediate, so I decided to start with 2C, just to get in there. I could re-bid clubs and at least partner would know I do not have an opening hand, she just would not know how much below an opener I actually held.

Anyway, LHO, my male counterpart bid 2S and my partner cue-bid 3S. Now opener bid 4D. I passed, LHO bid 4S and partner doubled. I pulled it to 5C (we love pulling partner's penalty doubles – not). My flight A counterpart on my left doubled this and opener pulled that back to 5S. I should have pulled to 6C which only goes down 1 and would have been a great score, well better than -850 for sure.

Now here is what I was talking about as the 'experienced' player with the up-and-coming spouse. I recognized the quick, almost imperceptible scowl on my LHO's face in reaction to the 5S bid by his sweet and lovely wife. That rolled around to my sweet-and-lovely wife who was eager to double this! Of course, it came home for -850 our way. At least we cut down on the doubled overtrick. I am sure that afterward she told her partner about his scowl and he may say, "what scowl?", since he did not utter a word. My sweetheart can spot my scowl, ever so slight it may have been, but I have learned to keep my trap shut until after seeing the whole hand. Partner is more often than not vindicated by the actual hand. Even here who can fault her double with 4 decent trumps, AK,A on the side and a partner who was active in the bidding?

After the game I was surprised to see that we received 6 out of 13 matchpoints, nearly average! But looking at the hand I saw where I made my biggest error. Over the 4D bid I should have bid 4H, showing my other suit. Who knows, we may have now gotten to 6H, a much better sacrifice than 6c, since IT MAKES! Yes, 6SX for -200 is the 'par' score on the hand. Check it out below:

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

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

Diagram showing a 3x3 grid with N, S, W, and E labels.

Ah, the beauty of the game!