

06- 2024 – Double or Nothing?

Over the next 3 weeks, I will show 3 Hands, 2 where the Penalty Double was invoked, and 1 where it was not invoked. A key question for all players is when to invoke the double

1. Dealer West, Nil Vul

	NORTH		
	K7542		
	A952		
	J103		
	7		
		EAST	
WEST		AJ	
Q9863		Q876	
4		KQ872	
A964		KJ	
1095			
	SOUTH		
	10		
	KJ103		
	5		
	AQ86432		
West	North	East	South
P	P	1D	3C
3D	P	P	3H
P	P	X (1)	P
P	P		

(1) With 16 Points and West promising a few, East smells blood

CONTRACT

3HX by South

THE LEAD

DA, followed by D4

THE PLAY

South ruffs the second Diamond, plays CA followed by a Club Ruff to Dummy (noting CK falls)

South then knows Clubs are set up, and tackles Hearts. HA, followed by a small Heart to HJ, which holds, West showing out - South must now deal with the bad break. The answer is simple – play CQ, planning to keep on running the Clubs

East wins the CQ with H8, cashes SA (better to wait) and then errs by playing HQ, South wins with HK and claims the last 4 Tricks with Clubs, making 3 Hearts doubled with an overtrick = 630 and a clear top

East should have continued with a Diamond (if East continues with a Spade, Declarer wins in Dummy, draws East's last Heart, ending in Hand, then plays the last 4 winning Clubs)

Defended properly, EW will take the Contract down 1, turning +50 into +100 because of the Double

But, by Doubling, EW lost -630

MORAL OF THE STORY

Doing a simple risk/reward analysis, East should not Double – the gain is too low and the cost if it makes is too high – NS were Doubled into Game

Just Pass or bid 4D. 4D may well make on a cross-ruff, and a Spade or CA lead by South will help

Ian Morison

[Suffering badly during our annual 'Dry February']

9 February 2024