

A Record That Will Never Be Broken

“Some men see things that are and say why, I see things that never were and say why not.”

Robert Kennedy

All sports and games have their records, some of which may never be broken. Because of one hand, I hold a unique record — one that I’m 100% positive will never be broken.

While playing in a national tournament several years ago, I was North on the following deal:

<u>North (Marty)</u>			
♠ KJ1094			
♥ J1098			
♦ Q			
♣ KJ6			
<u>West</u>	3NT ♥2 Lead	<u>East</u>	
♠ 7		♠ A863	
♥ A32		♥ K765	
♦ 8742		♦ 103	
♣ A9732		♣ 1054	
<u>South</u>			
♠ Q52			
♥ Q4			
♦ AKJ965			
♣ Q8			

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
P	P	P	1NT*
P	2♣	P	2♦
P	3NT*	All Pass	

* Imaginative.

I passed in second seat, and my partner opened 1NT (15–17). I responded 2♣, Stayman, asking about the majors. Partner denied a four-card major by bidding 2♦.

With my aceless hand, it did not seem right to try for 10 tricks. I was concerned that we might have a lot of fast losers; so I chose to suppress my five-card spade suit and jumped to 3NT.

West's opening lead of the ♥2 was strange. I would have led the ♣3 without a second thought, delighted to be holding a five-card suit and two entries. What did West have in mind? I can only believe that he was overreacting to the following: **When selecting an unbid suit to lead against notrump, prefer a major.**

Anyway, on to the play. East chose to withhold his king at trick one; instead, he signaled encouragement with the seven. After winning the first trick in dummy, declarer led the ♠J, which held. East also ducked the ♠10, but took his ace on the third round when the king was led.

East returned his partner's heart lead, and the defense took their ace and king. East now shifted to the ♦10, which was won in dummy with the queen. Declarer led a club to the queen and West's ace.

Here was the position with West to lead at trick nine. Declarer needed the rest of the tricks to make the contract.

<u>North</u>			
♠ 94			
♥ J			
♦ —			
♣ KJ			
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>	
♠ —		♠ 8	

♥ —
♦ 87
♣ 973

♥ 6
♦ 3
♣ 105

South

♠ —
♥ —
♦ AKJ96
♣ —

Obviously, the contract was not in jeopardy; both the North and South hands contained nothing but winners. However, there was a great deal at stake for me. I concentrated fiercely and West obliged by leading a club rather than a diamond.

Why did it matter? Reporting this hand in *The New York Times* on July 29, 1992, Alan Truscott wrote: “The diagramed deal from the first hand of the Spingold Knockout Teams set an unobtrusive world record. It was so unobtrusive that the declarer did not realize it, and it can be predicted that few readers will spot the unusual feature of the deal.”

Do you see what happened? The North hand, although unable to open the bidding, won all nine tricks! After opening 1NT, declarer failed to take a single trick in *his hand* in a contract that succeeded.

I do not know what fate has in store for me, but of one thing I am sure. On a lovely summer day in Toronto, Marty Bergen was the only passed-hand dummy in the history of bridge to single-handedly fulfill a game contract.