Why we lose and what to do

Patrick, Oct 14

OUR INTENT

- To play better bridge we must
  - Raise our standard
  - Play more consistently at our best
- After losing any match our reaction
  - Is not "they were just too good"
  - It is "I could have/should have done differently"
  - The issue is <u>we rarely play at our best</u>

COMFORT   ZONES

- Many externals can stop us playing our best
  - Athletes use routines to get them to comfort zone
    - Routines before the day
    - Routines before the game
    - Routines during the game
- We should remove external distractions
  - How important? Jury still out
  - Need to think what routines we actually have
  - And which help and which don't
  - The most important are during the game

ROUTINES AND DISTRACTIONS

- What might make your mind drift?
  - The view away from the table
  - Behaviours of the opposition
  - Food and drink issues
  - < add to the list >
- Discuss what we should do about them?
  - As an individual, as a pair, as a team

KEY FACT - MISTAKES

- Winning isn't about brilliancies, it's about avoiding mistakes; the better players make fewer
  - Most errors have no effect – the cards forgive
  - Some even result in unexpected plus score
  - Many time the opposition refuse the gift
  - But when it matters, it always costs
- Question – how to minimise them?
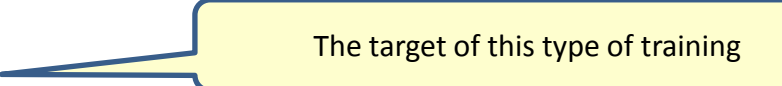
TACKLING MISTAKES

Three steps

- Understand the different types

- Know which we want to tackle first
    - Which happen most often?
    - Which cost the most?
    - Which are most easily fixed?

- Take action

SIMPLE PERSONAL ERRORS

- Playing too fast
  - Don't let opposition make you do this
  - The right bid with UI to partner beats the wrong bid
    - UI simply constrains partner to logical choices
    - Never to terrible choices
- Forgotten agreements
  - Little excuse : <u>if it is written down</u>
  - Do take time to revise, even Bocchi does
- Gambling
  - No excuse (if you are as good or better than the oppo)
  - And it does tend to insult partner/team

WHAT WE NEED TO DO RIGHT

- Success = strategy + the right building blocks

- Need to know our building blocks
  - <u>Familiarity, recognition</u> ← The target of this type of training
    - Recognise all suit combinations
      - you know to play   A9xx-KQTxx differently from A9xx-KQ8xx?
    - Know the nightmare scenarios and your plan
      - when you hold xxx and partner uses FSF on you?
    - Recognise special cases
      - when dummy has xxx and I'm over with QTx what will I do?

ERRORS PAIRS MAKE

- Missing agreements

  The target of this type of training

  – Partial and incomplete ?

  – Never talked about it ?

- Need to have default positions

  – "If unexpected it is always natural"

- Need to learn from others

  – why we talk about system

FORCED ERRORS

- Above examples under own control

- But oppo can make life difficult
  - Fast play (but resist this)
  - Giving you a guess
  - High level competition

- Accept these as difficult
  - Unforced errors are so common, and easier to fix

MEASUREMENT

- To know, recognise and learn from your errors
  – What I should have done differently
  – What I have learned now to do differently

- All deals must be studied
  – Not just the big losses

- LEARN FROM HISTORY, OR
- BE DOOMED TO REPEAT IT
  – And learn from others' history too, not just your own

CONCLUSION

- To improve you must take part
  - It can't just be done to you
  - Lots of avenues to work on
- You must analyse what is to be improved
  - Tackle what's most important first
  - And then monitor/measure the change
- These sessions give some of what you need
  - But not all of it