

Story by Ron Zucker

My bidding is only funny. My declarer play is hilarious. But sometimes things are actually humorous, as opposed to merely strange, at the table.

My personal favourite from my own experience came in the days before bidding boxes. My two roommates and a friend, all of whom had just begun learning the game at college, went to the Baltimore unit game, as we did once a month. As it happened, the four of us faced off in a late round. We were all novices, but very competitive, so we were all nervous, not wanting to make a big mistake against our peers and friends. My LHO dealt and passed, as did my partner.

Unfortunately, RHO heard a 1♣ bid from another table. He looked down and saw an opening hand with 4-4 in the majors. Even we knew what to do with those! He confidently doubled.

I must admit that I was burned out and tired by then, and was off in space. I heard my RHO double, so I looked carefully at my hand and counted 10+ HCP. Again, I knew what to do with that, so I smiled and redoubled. RHO and I were both proud. We've begun to figure out the whole bidding thing!

My LHO raised his hand and yelled, "DIRECTOR!" I was confused, but willing to wait out what Paul's problem was.

The director showed up and asked, "What seems to be the problem?"

"Well, we're playing in redoubled."

"Young man, WHAT redoubled???"

"Nothing. Just redoubled..."

When the smoke and laughter cleared, we were each given an average minus. Them for being the idiot that doubled a pass, me for trying to accept it.

I think this story is exceeded by David Burn of England and a regular columnist in bridge magazines and coach to English National teams

My international debut for Uruguay occurred in the year 2000. At the time, I was making my international debut for England in the Olympiad in Maastricht. It was the final day of the qualifying Round Robin, and with two matches to play England - rather surprisingly - were not only certain to qualify but to win the qualifying group.

We had been celebrating this perhaps too enthusiastically on the previous evening, so that during our morning match against Germany I was feeling severely dehydrated. It went 3♥ to my left from Klaus Reps, a young player with a fearsome reputation and movie-star looks. 4♣ from partner - a sophisticated convention known as NLNM for non-leaping non-Michaels, showing a club suit. Pass to the right, and to my shame I bid 5♣ without an awful lot. But I had selfishly calculated that five clubs would take longer to play than four, so I would have time to go to the water cooler and drink more than I would have done had I left partner in a partial.

I had to wait another rotation of the bidding tray while RHO doubled; cleverly remembering not to redouble, I put down the dummy and staggered waterwards.

Refreshed, I returned to my table and flopped into my seat. The tray came through with 1♣ from partner (strong) and pass on the right. I alerted, bid 1♦ (weak), alerted, and cast a perfunctory glance at LHO to ensure that he had seen the alerts.

At this point it dawned on me that something bad had happened. Either Klaus Reps had aged sixty years, shrunk about a foot, and shaved off his fashionable stubble, or I was at the wrong table. When the latter proved to be the case, the Director was summoned.

She performed her duties admirably: she guided me back to my actual table; she replaced me at the wrong one with the Uruguayan lady who had taken slightly longer to go to the bathroom than I had taken at the water cooler; and she bade the auction (at the wrong table) to be restarted with the usual caveats. As luck would have it, Uruguay were also playing a strong club, so I had performed impeccably on my international debut for that country in giving a negative response.

When I retook my seat at the right table, it transpired that I had performed less than impeccably - I should have redoubled. "Where were you?" said partner. "You don't want to know" said I.

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