

# Bridge

## Susanna Gross

Anyone who saw Dinah Caplan at the recent England women's bridge trials and assumed she'd be a soft touch couldn't have been more wrong. She and her partner Lizzie Godfrey won by a streak, which means that in April, Dinah will be making her international debut at the age of 78 — surely one for the record books.

The last time Dinah played in the trials was 35 years ago, after which she decided that juggling a job and children with competitive bridge was too much. Last October, however, she decided the time had come to get serious again. She booked some games with a top player, Jeremy Dhondy, formed a partnership with Lizzie, abandoned Acol for a more modern 5-card major, strong no trump system — and entered the trials. She didn't even mention it to her children or grandchildren: 'I didn't think for a minute that I'd qualify.' Dinah ended beating Sally Brock and myself, who came second (out of 18 pairs), and Alice Kaye and Bryony Youngs, who came third. We'll all form the team representing England in this year's home internationals.

Dinah used to play a lot of rubber bridge, and it shows: she's not afraid to back her instincts or bid boldly — as I discovered here:

N/S vulnerable

Dealer East

		♠ A Q										
		♥ 8 6 5 3 2										
		♦ K Q J 6 2										
		♣ K										
♠ K J 9 8 3 2	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 7 6	
		N										
W			E									
		S										
♥ 4	♥ Q J 9											
♦ 7 5	♦ A 10 3											
♣ A 10 4 3	♣ Q 9 7 6 5											
		♠ 10 5 4										
		♥ A K 10 7										
		♦ 9 8 4										
		♣ J 8 2										

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
2♠	Dble	3♠	4♥
4♠	5♥	All pass	

I was North. Dinah's weak 2♠ made life difficult; I opted for a take-out double, despite the risk of my partner bidding clubs. When Sally bid 4♥ over Lizzie's 3♠, I was delighted . . . until Dinah stepped up the pressure by bidding 4♠, flouting the rule that once you've preempted you shouldn't bid again. Feeling we'd been bullied out of a vulnerable game, I bid 5♥. On a spade lead we ended up one down. (Sally could have made the contract by taking a first round finesse of the ♥10, but reasonably enough cashed the ♥A first.) I should have doubled 4♠ (down two), but the point is that once Dinah had decided to bid it we were doomed: every other N/S in the room had been allowed to play in 4♥.