

2 / A LEAP TO GAME IN PARTNER'S SUIT IS WEAK

They play for modest stakes at TGR's 'Big Game' in London. Usually, only a meagre Chicago Game for £50 or £100. When the likes of Zia Mahmood and Bob Hamman fly in, however, the bets increase, and £200, £300 or even £500 per hundred is not unusual.

In my experience the finer the players, the better the behaviour and atmosphere at the table. When comments do fly, they are usually sent on their way with a smile or a wink. In the case of this example, however, Zia's comment was intended to carry the weight of some considerable frustration.

Dealer South
N/S Game

♠ A6532
♥ K863
♦ A9
♣ 105

N	E	S	W
—	—	1H	NB
4H			

♠ 109
♥ 4
♦ QJ1085
♣ KJ874

♠ J7
♥ 109
♦ 7632
♣ AQ963

♠ KQ84
♥ AQJ752
♦ K4
♣ 2

At Game All, Zia, sitting South, opened 1H and, over West's pass, North – who shall remain anonymous – leapt to 4H. This was passed out, virtually without thought. Robert Sheehan, West, led Q♦, and within seconds all the hands were thrown in and 13 tricks claimed. 6H is rock solid and, without a club lead, 13 tricks were laydown.

'I don't understand you British,' Zia complained, throwing his arms into the air in exasperation. 'Everyone else in the world plays 1H-4H shows nothing. Having two Aces is impossible ...'

His fairly weighty opponents, Bob Hamman and Robert Sheehan, nodded sagely.

With strong supporting hands, you have a multitude of ways to describe your hand, from a 'Pudding Raise' to Splinters, Swiss, or Jump-Shift (see Tip 11).

When you have a weak hand with big support for your partner, you still have your opponents to worry about: they have a big fit too, and may be able to bid a Game or a Slam if you give them bidding space. To raise partner dramatically cuts out their room for manoeuvre.