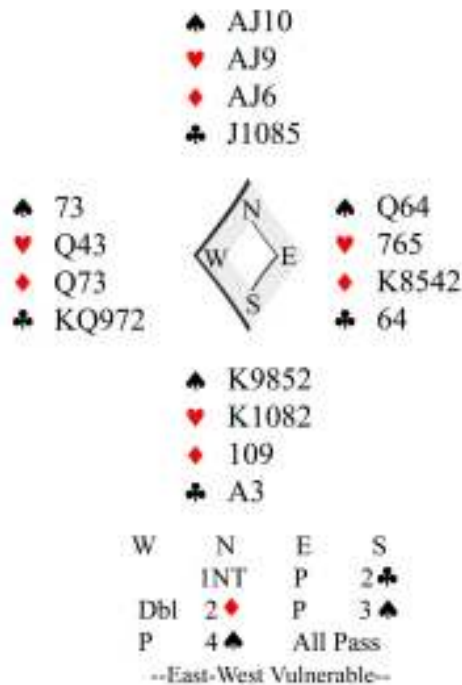


3. Stayman and 5-4 in the Majors

Published on Page 2 of the Trail Daily Times, September 21, 2010



The Bidding:

North, with 15-17 points and a balanced hand opens 1NT. South, with 5-4 in the majors, and 10 or more points, uses Stayman and bids 3 spades once partner bids 2 diamonds. 2 spades would have been to play. Partner either bids 3NT with two spades or 4 spades with three spades.

The Contract: 4 spades

The Opening Lead: King of clubs

The lead of the King of clubs is risky if South has the Ace and North has the Jack. This could be the case because North-South have the majority of the points. West could wait if he had a better lead because East will lead a club requested by the double when he gets in.

The Play:

Declarer wins the Ace and plays the 3 of clubs.

- West goes up with the Queen of clubs or
- West lets declarer win the Jack of clubs.

In case a, the clubs are set up in dummy. Declarer plays them and if East ruffs (trumps) the third round of clubs, declarer will over-ruff and then drop the Queen of spades by playing the Ace and King with no finesse. Therefore, East won't ruff a Club so declarer sluffs (discards) a diamond and a heart.

Declarer then finesses East for the Queen of spades because East refused to ruff a club. If East had small trump and no Queen, he would certainly have ruffed the third round of clubs to kill declarer's resting place for a diamond discard.

Case a: Declarer loses a club and a heart

Result: 4 spades +1 for +450

In case b, declarer has no clubs on which to pitch losers, and he must guess hearts and spades. Declarer chooses not to block hearts, and plays the Ace of hearts and then plans to run the Jack and then the 9 through. However, the Jack loses to the Queen. If the Queen had been in the pocket (meaning the finesse works), he could have needed two finesses because a 4-2 split is more likely than a 3-3 split.

Case b: Declarer loses a diamond, heart and maybe a spade.

Result: 4 spades makes for +420 (maybe +450)