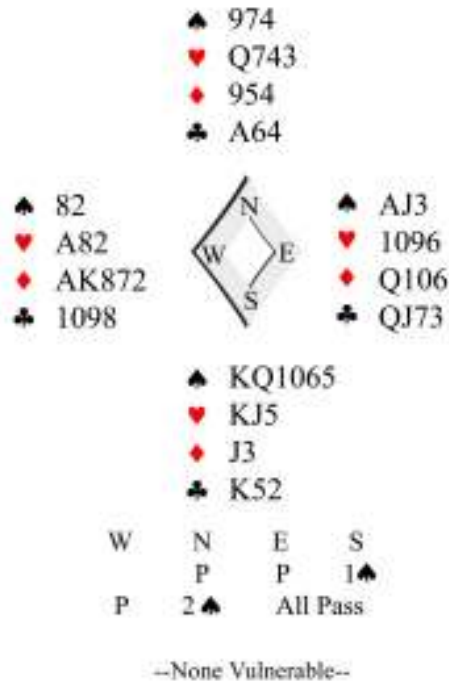


31. A simple raise of a five-card major

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Most play five-card majors, meaning that any opening of one heart or one spade shows at least five cards. While 1 NT is opened with 15-17 high card points (HCP), a suit is opened with a good 12 HCP or more. A distributional 11 HCP (a good six card suit, a good 5-5 or a good 4-4-4-1) may be opened. With 13 HCP, one should always make an opening bid.

The bidding:

North is the dealer and passes. South with 13 points and five spades opens one spade. Eight cards is the golden fit and North knows that they have one so he supports spades. Two spades is a simple raise showing 6-9 points and three or more card support. South has a minimum and passes.

The contract: Two spades by South

The opening lead: The ace of diamonds

The play:

The declarer ruffs the third round of diamonds and plays a little heart to the queen which holds. He then plays a little spade to the king and it also holds. If it lost, he would finesse the ten of spades next. If West

had the ace of spades, a good play would be to hold up on the ace of spades because the 10 finesse works. However, he did not have the ace.

South plays to the club ace and plays a small spade to the queen. East takes his ace and exits a club. South loses one spade, one heart, two diamonds and one club to make his contract.

The result: Two spades making for +110

It should be noted that the declarer can only do so much with the transportation he has. If the defense leads hearts or trump at any time, the tasks of South become simpler. He will be able to pitch a losing club on a heart to make three spades.

Leading ace empty (ace and small ones) is usually a poor lead and here it would give declarer 140. With ace empty, the mindset should be to hold up and not to cash. Accompanied by the king, the lead of the ace is a superior play.