

32. Do not skip a four-card major

Published on Page 2 of the Trail Daily Times, April 12, 2011

	♠ Q1075 ♥ AJ10 ♦ 954 ♣ J84		
♠ J62 ♥ 974 ♦ AKJ2 ♣ Q73		♠ A84 ♥ 32 ♦ 10876 ♣ A1096	
	♠ K93 ♥ KQ865 ♦ Q3 ♣ K52		
W P P P	N P 1♠ 2♥	E P P All Pass	S 1♥ 1NT
--North-South Vulnerable--			

The bidding:

There are three passes to South. South, with 13 HCP, opens one heart. It is an ugly 13 HCP hand with no quick tricks, and the number of slow defensive tricks is uncertain. It could be worse if the hand had more queens and jacks making up the 13 HCPs. Nevertheless, passing this hand for zero points is not recommended. It has the potential for 110 or 140 points.

North has eight HCP and heart support. He first bids his four-card spade suit on the way to two hearts. Two hearts is the bid with six to nine points. The objective of bidding is to accurately describe your hand to partner. If South wants to go on past two hearts, knowing North has four spades will be useful. The auction, however, passes out at two hearts. West with a four triple three hand decides not to balance.

The contract: Two hearts by South

The opening lead: The ace of diamonds

The play:

The declarer does not ruff the third round of diamonds. Instead he sluffs a loser, a club. This keeps West on lead and is a loser-on-a-loser play. West does not like leading a club or a spade so he exits a trump.

Declarer draws one more round of trump but leaves a trump in dummy to dissuade the opponents from playing diamonds, a sluff-and-a-ruff situation.

Declarer plays a little club and East takes his ace and exits a club. Declarer wins the king and plays the king of spades. East wins and exits a club. East is fortunate he still has a good exit card. Sometimes it is best to cash out your winners when you are down to your last safe exit card.

South ruffs the club and finesses the Jack of spades, draws the last trump and claims.

The result: Two hearts making for +110

Note:

As the cards lie, the spades break three-three, so it would have been better to sluff a spade on the third diamond then ruff spades good and pitch a club making three hearts for +140.

The one spade bid is a good bid. It not only describes the hand to partner, it also lays claim to the boss suit. Opponents could still balance at the three-level in a minor but balancing is more enticing when a two-spades bid is still possible.