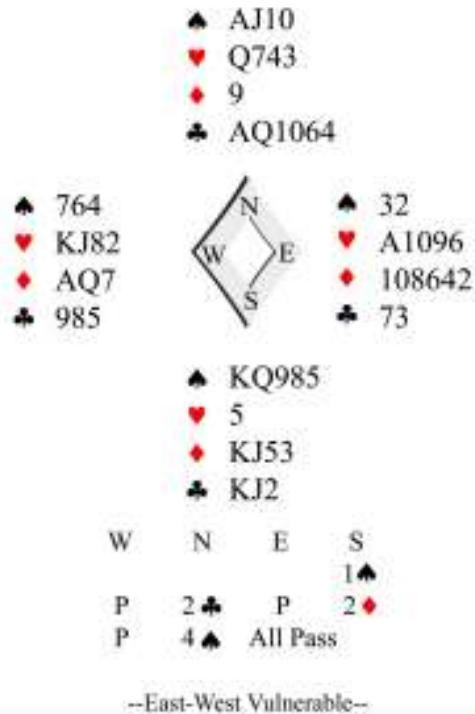


34. Forcing raise of a major

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The bidding:

South, with 13 HCP and five spades, opens one spade. North has an opener himself. An opener opposite an opener should make game, either four of a major or 3NT. Before deciding on 3NT, North South must investigate the presence of a golden fit.

North has an opening hand and the necessary three cards for the golden fit in spades. He wants to end up in four spades but a direct leap to four shows a weak hand with five-card support. Instead South bids clubs. A new suit at the two-level promises ten or more points, but when it is followed by a four spade bid, partner will get a clear picture of partner's game-going values and spade support.

North does not like South's two diamond bid because it shows that values opposite his singleton will likely be wasted. There is enough for game but not much more.

The contract: Four spades by South

The opening lead: The two of hearts

The play:

Declarer ruffs the second round of hearts. He then plays a little diamond and West wins the Queen and leads another heart through dummy's queen. Declarer has to ruff the heart, again with the long trump hand. In an ideal situation, it would be preferable for declarer to ruff in the short trump hand. Because declarer has ruffed twice in the long trump hand, he needs a three-two trump break.

He then ruffs two diamonds with the ace and the jack using clubs to get back to his hand. After the second ruff, the ten of spades is used to get back to his hand and draw trump.

The result: Four spades making plus one for +450

Note: The safest way to play the hand is to cash the ace and king of clubs and then ruff three diamonds in dummy ruffing hearts for transportation. This cross ruff will yield ten tricks for +420 no matter how trumps are divided. At matchpoints, I would play for five and at teams or rubber bridge, I would play for four.