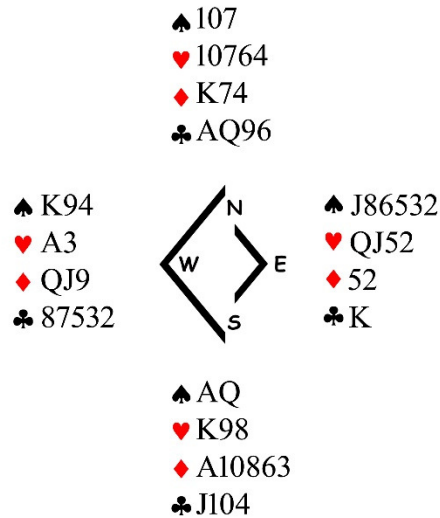


196. Rise with the Ace

Published on page 2 of the Trail Times, Wednesday July 9th, 2014



E	S	W	N
	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♦	P	3NT
All Pass			

--Both Vulnerable--

The bidding:

This column will aggravate the point counters. South has 14 high card points, but he has two tens and a five-card suit headed by an ace. In the 4321 point count system, Charles Goren originally counted Tens as one half of a high card point, but figured the math would be too difficult for bridge players and made Tens nothing. South opens one No Trump because he has a hand that behaves like 15 points.

A Spokane expert and friend told me that opening one No Trump with 14 points and a five-card suit always gets him a good board. This does not mean it never fails, but one should always consider long suits and good intermediate cards when assessing one's hand.

This is a hand that occurred on Bridge Base Online and my partner, with North's hand, used Stayman and rebid three No Trump. Note that the total high card points are a Queen less than the normal 25 needed for game.

The Lead:

West has good side-suit entries and has a decent chance at setting up his weak five-card suit. He should lead the eight of clubs. Partner will know that he is not leading from an honour and will be able to assess whether a switch is needed if East gets the lead. West actually led the three trying to make declarer take the opening finesse. West had a partner that paid little attention to the spot cards so he knew he would be safe trying to fool the declarer.

The play:

Declarer plays the Ace of clubs. If East has the King of clubs and switches to a spade, the cold contract, that most will not get to, will be defeated. Declarer loses a diamond to West who cannot hurt declarer with a spade switch and then takes the deep heart finesse, running the ten of hearts through.

Result:

Declarer will get one spade, one heart, four diamonds and four clubs for +630.

Notes:

- When one is playing a team game, or if one is in a game few will get to, one plays the contract as safely as possible not worrying too much about overtricks. Just making the contract is of utmost importance.
- North and South made fairly accurate assessments of their hands because game made an overtrick with only 23 HCP's.