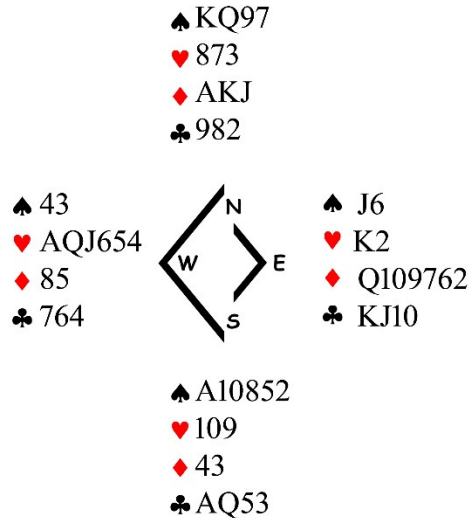


232. Balancing Action Over A Weak Two

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S	W	N	E
P	2♥	P	P
2♠	P	3♠	All Pass

--None Vulnerable--



The bidding:

As we saw in the last column, action over a weak two in direct seat shows at least 15 HCP's and the correct shape. However, things are different in the balancing seat. When a weak two is followed by two passes, one should keep the bidding open with at least a good nine points and the correct shape. The correct shape is a must.

West opens a weak Two Hearts with a six-card suit having three of the top five honours. The hand has a total of less than 10 HCP's with no four-card major.

North has an opening hand but does not have enough points to take action in direct seat. North passes. East could further the pre-empt by bidding Three Hearts but according to the law of total tricks, he should have three-card support. With only two-card support and a quacky hand (A Queen and two Jacks) and no aces, East's hand is better on defense so he passes.

South has the correct shape to balance with a Two-Spade bid, namely a five-card suit and shortness in opponent's suit. North must make a raise with four-card support, but does not jump to game in case partner is just balancing. If South had legitimate values, he would accept the invite.

The Opening Lead:

West cannot lead a heart in case declarer has the King. South took action not East so the King of Hearts could be with South. A trump lead could be bad if partner has Qxx. A Club lead is marginally better than a lead of the doubleton Diamond without trump control.

The Play:

Declarer wins whatever minor is led, draws trump and loses two Hearts. He ruffs a third Heart and the third Diamond. Declarer loses two Hearts and one Club making his contract plus one for +170.