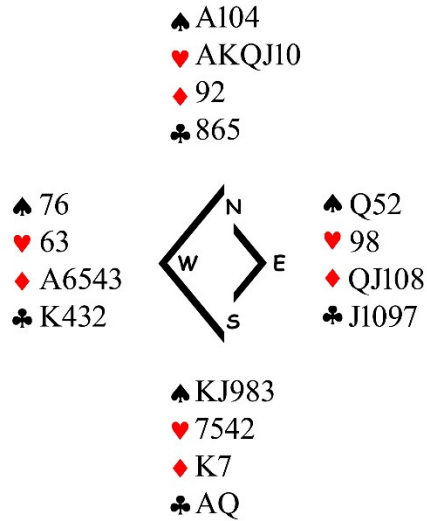


255. Two Hearts over One Spade

Published on page 2 of the Trail Times, Wednesday September 9th, 2015



| S | W | N | E |
|-----|---|-----|----------|
| 1 ♠ | P | 2 ♥ | P |
| 3 ♥ | P | 4 ♠ | All Pass |

--None Vulnerable--

The bidding:

South, with 13 points, opens the bidding with One Spade intending to rebid Two Hearts. However, North beats him to the punch and bids Two Hearts which categorically shows five Hearts and an opening hand. South raises to three Hearts, perhaps a little disappointed he will not get the lead to protect his Diamond King and Club tenace.

However, North surprises him, and places the contract in Four Spades because it is clear to North that his partner's hand and not his hand may need protection on the opening lead. Having the opening lead from West is the protection of the minor suits that South needs.

Because North had Spade support all along, his Heart suit may not be five cards, and because North did not use Jacoby Two No Trump, he likely does not have four Spades.

If North does not have three Spades, a Heart bid must be five cards, otherwise he will have a four-card minor to bid.

The Play:

West, wishing he were not on lead, leads a trump to protect his minor holdings. This tells declarer that West does not have Qxx of trump. However, a Heart lead is out of the question because both opponents have bid the suit, and he only has a doubleton. If West had four or five little Hearts than a Heart lead is a better lead.

If West had not led a trump, declarer would have finessed trump into West just to protect his minor cards and the finesse would have won anyways.

Declarer will lead up to the Diamond King, and if it wins, he will pitch the last Diamond on the fifth Heart completing a Morton's fork manoeuvre and then he will take the Club finesse. If East rises with the Diamond Ace or the Diamond King loses, the Club Queen gets pitched on the fifth heart. Declarer makes five Spades for +450.

If the contract is played in Four Hearts, declarer will get one more pitch than playing the contract in Spades, but East will lead the Diamond Queen and the result will be the same if declarer guesses the two-way finesse in Spades correctly.

Four Spades is by far the superior contract even though the Heart fit is one card more. North and South showed bridge smarts by choosing the contract to protect the right hand on the opening lead.