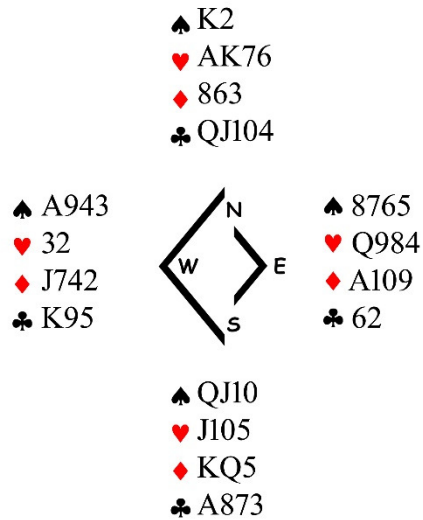


295. Showing Stoppers With Inverted Minors I

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

--North South Vulnerable--

One should use inverted minors and they should be always on, unless opponents have given a suit that can be cuebid. Inverted minors pre-empt the auction if weak and allows the search for stoppers if stronger than 10 HCP's.

The bidding:

North opens a club and South responds Two Clubs showing four or more Clubs and no four-card suit other than Clubs. North has no Diamond stopper and therefore bids his stoppers up-the-line. North has a Heart stopper and could still have a Spade stopper. He skips his unstopped suit, Diamonds.

South bids Three No Trump which guarantees an opening hand (to a bad 15) and a stopper in every suit he and his partner skipped. South is showing a Diamond and a Spade stopper and North has Hearts stopped.

One of my students asked how one knows if Clubs are stopped. North and South have seven or more Clubs. Any suit belongs to the side which has more cards (seven-card fits or better) than the other side. If the defender leads such a suit, it will likely help declarer or at least warn him, the split is bad.

The Play:

West leads 4th best Spade. Leading a Club is a task for the declarer. Declarer wins the Spade King and the Club Queen. West wins the King and plays another small Spade.

Declarer wins the Spade Queen and plays a Club to dummy. He then plays a small Diamond. The Diamond King holds and declarer counts his losers. West led his lowest Spade, so Spades split four-four. He will lose two Spades, the Club King and the Diamond Ace. He also has another slow honour loser, the Heart Queen. Therefore, declarer will not take the Heart finesse.

He has to set up nine tricks before the losers total five. He goes back to dummy on a Club and leads another Diamond to the Queen. East wins the Ace and exits a Spade.

The defense get four tricks and declarer gets nine for +600. The defense has potential for a fifth trick but can only attack Spades. If the defense switches, declarer may get ten tricks, two Spades, three Hearts, two Diamonds and three Clubs.