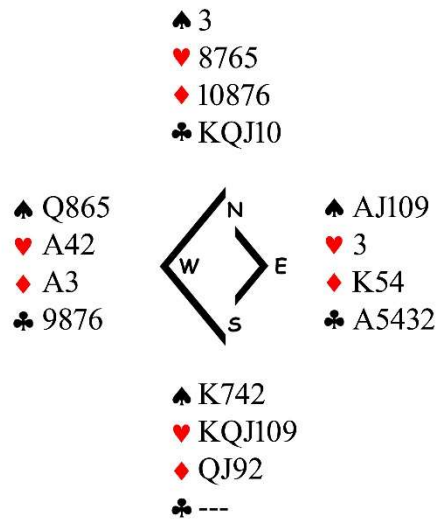


307 . Bergen Raises

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E	S	W	N
	1 ♥	P	3 ♣
P	3 ♥	All Pass	

--Both Vulnerable--

In a previous column, it was shown that Three Clubs over a major opening showed an invitational hand. However, some like to play Three Clubs as pre-emptive. In order to stop being pre-empted by partner, one can get him to play Bergen Raises.

Three Clubs became a conventional artificial bid showing a constructive raise, eight or nine points, with four trump. The Law of Total Tricks says that one should bid to the three-level with a nine-card fit to prevent the opponents from finding their eight-card fit which they must have somewhere.

The bidding:

South is not playing Flannery, so he opens One Heart. North has four-card support and a constructive raise so he bids Three Clubs.

South has a problem, and since he is playing matchpoints, he takes a surer plus over a marginal game. Game could be cold if South has no points in Clubs.

It is good that Bergen raises show a nine-card fit but where Bergen raises fail is one does not know whether one's points are working or not. South's Spade King is wasted opposite North's singleton and North's Clubs are completely wasted opposite South's void.

I prefer minisplinters which show shortness and invitational values. Using minisplinters, North would bid Two Spades showing Spade shortness and four Hearts in support. South would discredit his Spade King and choose to play Three Hearts.

Opening Lead:

West makes a popular lead of the Diamond Ace and then a small Diamond. A lot of people gravitate to this lead without knowing that they should have trump control as well, in case partner does not have the King, in which case, declarer's side suit has just been set-up.

The Play:

After West gets a ruff, he plays the Ace of trump then a small trump. Exiting a Club is obviously a wrong option with all of the Club values in dummy.

Declarer plays a small Spade, and West pops up with the Queen and exits a small Spade. Declarer ruffs and plays the Club King. East ducks smoothly, and declarer pitches a Spade. It wins, and declarer continues the top Club. East covers, and South ruffs. Declarer ruffs the last Spade and claims for -100. Some say down one is good bridge. This is only true if the opponents can get more if they play the contract. East and West can get +110 or +140 in Spades.