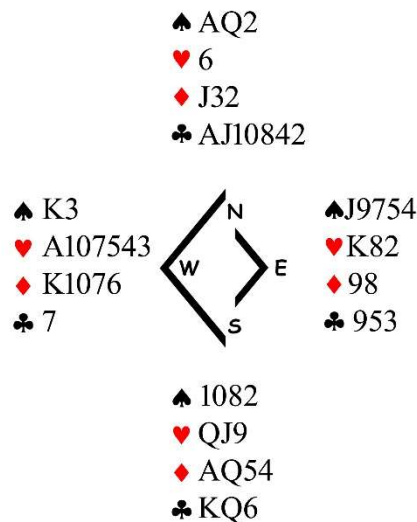


312. Three No Trump or Six Clubs

Published on page 9 of the Trail Times, Friday November 18th, 2016
(no column in the week of Nov 11th)



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

--None Vulnerable--

This is another hand that occurred during the recent fall sectional in Calgary. It is a good tournament because A/X is a separate section, and almost every opponent is a good challenge if one is in A or X.

The Bidding:

South opens One Diamond and West overcalls a Heart. North bids Two Clubs which is forcing one round and promises a rebid. East raises Hearts and South raises Clubs so North gets optimistic. Often when both opponents have bid one's singleton, slam is possible on fewer than normal strength if partner has no wasted values. North also has three to a honour in partner's bid suit which is often a real suit when he can raise the other minor.

North cuebids Hearts and when partner bids Three No Trump, slam is likely not there because South has wasted values in Hearts.

North leaves partner in No Trump. Had partner not had a stopper, the contract would be Five or Six Clubs.

The Play:

West leads the Heart five, and East ducks. When either defender gets in, the King will be played and a small Heart to partner's good Hearts. The duck is a must, because declarer may falsely play East for an entry.

Declarer wins his only Heart stopper and cashes his nine tricks. Because of the duck, declarer cannot take either finesse safely because if the finesse loses East still has a Heart to return.

Result:

Declarer has one Spade, one Heart, one Diamond and six Clubs for nine tricks. At teams, South makes sure he makes his game and does not risk a finesse for an overtrick. If the finesse fails, the contract will fail. However, at matchpoints, one will risk the contract for overtricks if the risk is 50% (like a normal finesse) or better unless one feels that the field will not be in game.

The Spade finesse is a better finesse to take than the Diamond finesse because if East has the Spade King, he may not have another Heart to return, but because the opening lead was ducked, this is unlikely. Declarer gets +400 a push (a tie-zero imps each) at teams. If he tries the diamond finesse, he will lose 11 imps and if he tries the Spade finesse, he will gain only one imp.