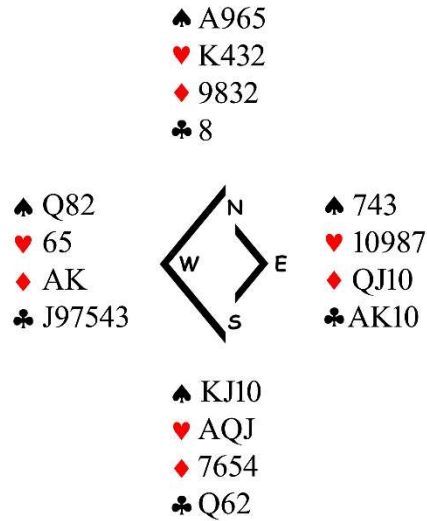


318. Better Minor Openings

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E	S	W	N
P	1♦	P	1♥
P	INT	P	2♦
All Pass			

--North South Vulnerable--

In a previous column, it was mentioned that the system of bridge herein is five-card majors. It is actually five-card majors and the better minor opening.

When one has 12 HCP's or more and the hand is not a balanced 15 to 17, one opens a five-card major. However, if these conditions do not exist, one opens the better minor. Better is a slight misnomer. Better means longer and has nothing to do with strength, unfortunately if partner is on lead.

If one has equal length in the minors, one opens One Diamond unless three-three, then one opens a Club. The only time One Diamond is opened with three Diamonds is when the majors are four-four.

The bidding:

South, with 13 HCP's, opens his longer minor, Diamonds. North bids his four-card suits up the line with a One-Heart bid. South with a minimum 12 to 14 HCP's and no singleton or void, responds 1NT. North knows that 1NT will not make with seven points in dummy unless opener has 15 HCP's.

The Rule of 22 states that in order to win seven tricks, one needs in the neighbourhood of seven HCP's. This is just an approximation since the 4321 point count system is itself an estimate. Therefore, the partnership needs a combined 22 HCP's to either make 1NT or to set 1NT.

Since South did not raise Hearts, South is not four-four in the majors and must have four Diamonds. Therefore, North bids Two Diamonds which has a better chance than 1NT making. In 1NT, East and West could possibly get nine tricks setting the contract by three for +300.

Opening Lead:

Because 1NT was pulled for a suit contract, a trump is the normal lead. West cashes two trump and exits a fourth best Club. East cashes a trump and exits the Heart Ten.

The Play:

Declarer will not be able to ruff two Clubs in dummy and must find the Spade Queen. Declarer will cash three Hearts and the Spade King and run the Spade Jack through, finessing West for the Queen. Declarer can now pitch losers on a Spade and Heart Ace.

The Result:

Declarer will lose four tricks for +110.