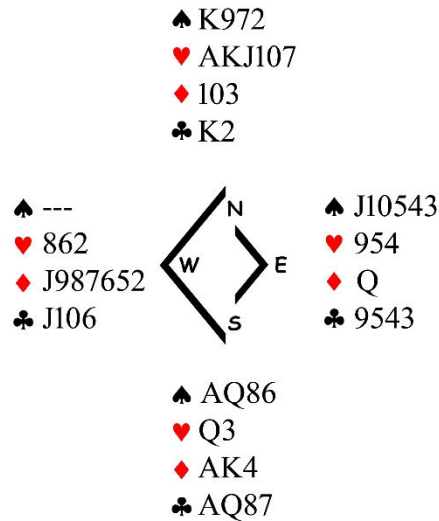


338. Choosing the Right Grand

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E	S	W	N
P	2NT	P	3 ♣
P	3 ♠	P	4NT
P	5 ♣	P	5 ♦
P	6 ♦	P	6 ♥
P	7 ♥	P	7NT
All Pass			

--None Vulnerable--

This was a hand that occurred in the Sunday AX Swiss teams of a Victoria regional tournament.

The bidding:

South, with a balanced 21 HCP's, opens Two No Trump. North bids Three Clubs, Stayman, asking for a four-card major. South shows his Spade suit, and North sets trump by jumping to 4NT, asking for keycards.

South shows three keycards, and North bids Five Diamonds asking for the Queen of trump. Six Diamonds shows the Spade Queen and the Diamond King. Six Hearts asks for third round control in Hearts. Seven Hearts says yes and it is the Queen. Seven Spades would say yes and it is a doubleton.

Opening Lead: The Diamond Seven, fourth best.

The Play:

Declarer has 13 tricks even without four Spade tricks. If South needed four Spade tricks, he would have cashed the Spade King first allowing him to double finesse East. There is no benefit to cashing the Spade Ace or Queen first.

The Result:

Declarer makes all 13 tricks for +1520. It is imperative, not to try Seven Spades because that could go down even if 13 tricks are available in 7NT. Furthermore, it would be a shame to lose a grand because of a ruff on the opening lead. West led a Diamond hoping not to give away a trick, but would have made the same lead against Seven Spades hoping his partner could ruff.