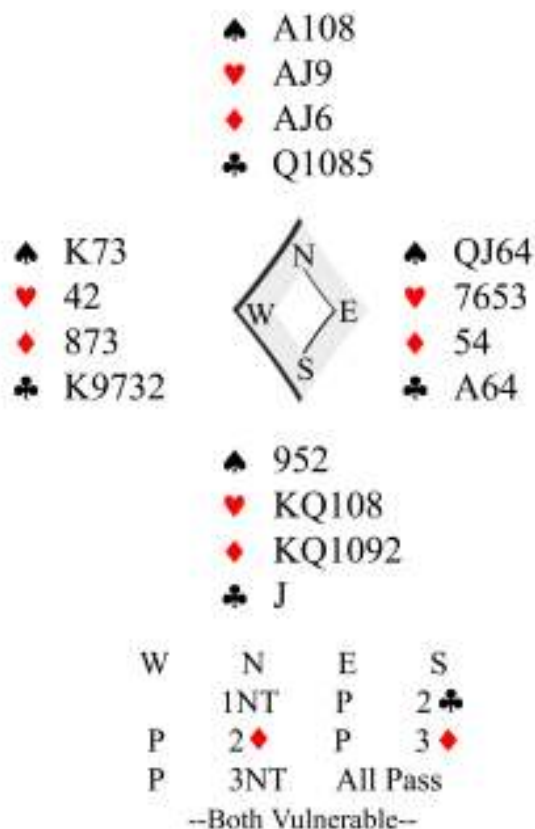


4. Stayman with a Five-card Minor

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The Bidding:

North, with 15-17 points and a balanced hand opens 1NT. South, with a four-card major, and 8 or more points, uses Stayman and bids 3 diamonds once partner bids 2 diamonds.

The three-level bid shows 10 or more points, not just eight or nine anymore, and five diamonds and a four-card major. Bidding in this fashion also shows that responder has two open (no stopper) suits, clubs and one major. Partner picks either a diamond part score (4 diamonds), a diamond game (5 diamonds) or 3NT.

The contract: 3NT

The Opening Lead: 4 of Spades

The Play:

Declarer counts ten tricks, five diamonds, four hearts and one spade. Because of the spade lead, declarer must take the Ace of spades and cash out his nine other tricks.

Here, there is no need to hold up in spades because his tricks are quick, meaning he does not need to surrender the lead. He can be kept to nine tricks if he mistakenly holds up twice in spades.

Result: 3N+1 for 630

If there had been a club Lead and continuation, declarer would have made eleven tricks losing only the Ace and King of clubs.

The Lead Revisited:

Now switch East and West hands. The lead is not so good. Leading from King empty (King and only low cards) usually just helps declarer but is probably the best lead with one possible spade entry.

If the bidding had gone 1NT 3NT, a major suit lead is called for. Leading from a three-card major would help declarer if he had 4-3. However, leading from a two-card major could possibly find partner's suit. Finding partner's suit is good only when, from one's own points, one knows partner has an outside entry or two.

However, Stayman was used, so a club lead from K9732, the 3 of clubs, is the best (had East and West hands been switched).

Result: 3N+2 for 660