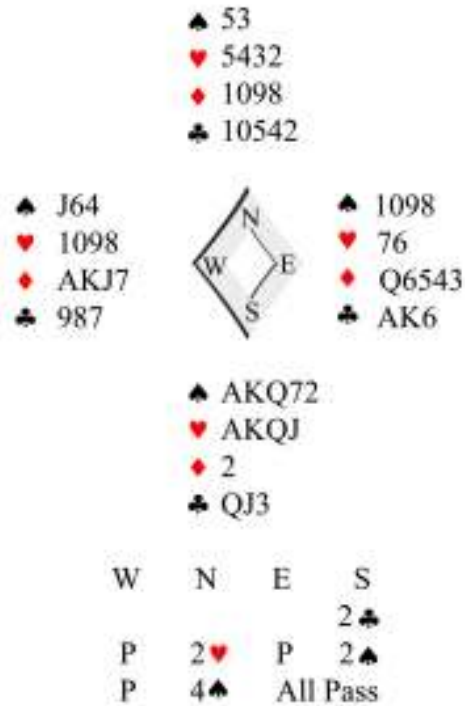


57. A Bust Hand Opposite a strong hand

Published on Page 2 of the Trail Daily Times, October 4, 2011



--East-West Vulnerable--

The bidding:

South with a hand of 22 high card points opens two clubs. North with no high card points responds a conventional two hearts meaning he has zero to three high card points. If he had a positive response in hearts, he bids two notrump. Confusing? It is if partners do not discuss it.

Two hearts, negative, is an important bid. It tells partner to put on the brakes if he is thinking about slam. It does not say put on the brakes for game however. Only in rare cases would South be left in a part score.

Principle of Fast Arrival

When a partnership is headed to game and one partner jumps right to game, he is showing nothing extra. With more points, the partnership can go slowly and explore slam.

North with two card support and nothing extra jumps to four spades. Three-card support would have been better, but he if he waits for it, they may get a 170 partscore.

The contract: Four spades by South

The opening lead: The ace of diamonds

The play:

South ruffs the diamond continuation and surveys the situation. He needs a three-three trump break to make the contract and has to play for it. Furthermore, if he draws trump, he will only be able to ruff one more diamond before losing control of the hand because he has to kick out both the ace and king of clubs. Therefore, he leaves trump alone and plays on clubs.

The defender will win a club and play another diamond which South will ruff in his hand. Declarer plays another club. Now dummy has no more diamonds and still has trump to ruff a fourth diamond. So if the defense plays another diamond, a ruff-and-a-sluff will be declarer's tenth trick. Whatever defense leads at this stage, declarer will win, draw trump and claim.

The result: Four spades making for +420

Note: The Forcing Game

If defense leads their suit whenever they can, they may force declarer to shorten his trump so that he may no longer be able to draw trump. This is the best defense in the case above and when one defender has four or more trump. When one has a singleton and long trump, it may be best to not lead the singleton and lead the partnership suit if there is one.