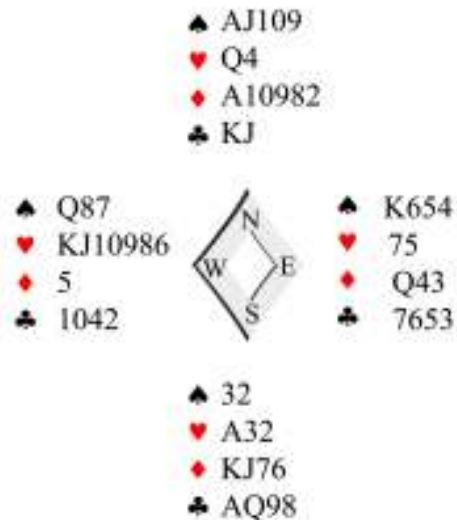


72. Western Cuebid

Published on Page 2 of the Trail Daily Times, Wednesday, January 25, 2012



--North South Vulnerable--

The bidding:

South, with 14 points, opens one diamond. Some may open one club, bidding four card suits up the line. However, a diamond opening allows a club rebid (not ideal but possible) if opponents were to bid a spade. West, not vulnerable, jumps to two hearts as a pre-empt (same requirements as a weak two opening bid).

North makes a negative double showing four spades. North knows they have a diamond fit if he does not like South's response. South does not have four spades which shows he has four or more diamonds and bids clubs instead.

North bids hearts. This is the opponent's suit and it cannot be to play. Therefore, it is forcing. "Tell me more partner" is what all cuebids say, but this cuebid asks partner to bid notrump with a heart stopper. This is called the Western Cuebid.

South bids three notrump with the ace of hearts.

The contract: Three Notrump by South

The opening lead: The jack of hearts

Sometimes it is better to lead another suit and let partner lead hearts first, but, in this case, it may be best to start hearts right away.

The play:

South wins the opening lead with North's queen and plays the ace of diamonds. He then finesses the jack of diamonds because West, who is long in hearts, is likely short in diamonds. This is an exception to the rule of "Eight ever, Nine Never." With a nine-card fit missing the queen, "never" finesse for the queen and play for the drop. However, a finesse is wise in this situation.

Declarer wins four clubs, five diamonds, two hearts and one spade for twelve tricks.

The result: Three Notrump making six for +690.

Note: Had West led the seven of spades, declarer can only make eleven tricks because defense wins the king of hearts and spades. Would West feel silly if he led a spade and partner had the queen of hearts?