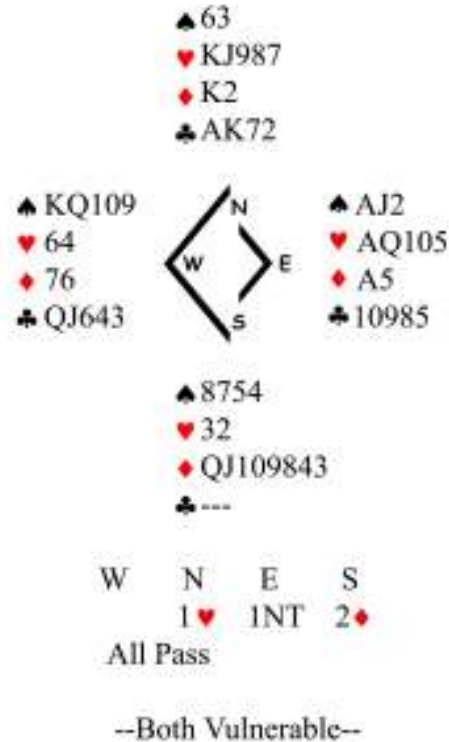


160. New Suit at the Two-Level

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The bidding:

North, with 14 points, opens his five card major with the intention of rebidding two clubs if partner responds one spade or one notrump. Whenever one opens the bidding, one thinks of one's rebids to whatever partner responds. It is usually likely that partner will respond in one's shortest suit, spades here.

East, with 15 HCP's and three heart stoppers, overcalls one notrump. Can you see how East's hand is actually stronger than 15 points. He also one more heart stopper than necessary.

As mentioned in last week's column, one tends to see if a double is a better bid with one or no stoppers in RHO's suit. He also is strong enough to accept an invite. I have mentioned in previous columns that point counters (still nothing wrong with that) are sometimes at a disadvantage because tricks not points make contracts.

The bidding so far is the same as last week. It diverges at South's turn. South bids two diamonds to play. This is a new suit at the two-level, however, it is not forcing here.

There are at least five times in Standard American where a new suit at the two-level does not promise 10 plus points and a rebid. It is when:

1. Partner opens and RHO doubles. (column 128)
2. Partner opens and RHO overcalls one notrump.
3. A player makes a negative double first (column 170).
4. A player bids one notrump first (column 49).
5. Partner overcalls one notrump if systems are off (column 159).

In all cases, the suit must be playable and partner passes even with a void. Fits and points drive auctions not misfits and weak hands.

West would have used Stayman had South passed, but in competition, Stayman is a cuebid and game forcing. West, therefore must pass.

The Lead:

The six of hearts, top of a doubleton. Partner bid one notrump over one heart so he likely would like a heart lead through the opposition's hearts.

The play:

Declarer loses the first two heart tricks and ruffs the heart continuation high. He does not touch trump and loses a spade. If the opponents switch to a diamond, East will win the ace and return a diamond, removing dummy's ruffing power. Declarer gets to dummy through the king of diamonds and pitches two spades on the top two clubs. Declarer will make eight tricks with diamonds as trump.

Result:

Two Diamonds making for +90

Note:

-All the bridge columns may be viewed at <http://watsongallery.ca>.