

169. Exploring For Six or Seven

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♠ AKQ4
 ♥ K87
 ♦ 6
 ♣ KQ954

♠ J10987 ♥ 64 ♦ Q1075 ♣ 76		♠ 65 ♥ Q109532 ♦ J984 ♣ 8
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♠ 32
 ♥ AJ
 ♦ AK32
 ♣ AJ1032

W	N	E	S
			1 ♣
P	1 ♠	P	2 ♦
P	4NT	P	5 ♦
P	5 ♥	P	5 ♠
P	7 ♣	All Pass	

--None Vulnerable--

Local Bridge:

This hand was given to my Tuesday evening bridge workshop students.

The bidding:

South, with 17 points, is not balanced and cannot open one notrump. If both doubletons were stopped and South had 15 or 16 points, he could open one notrump. Seventeen points with a five card suit is more like 18 points.

South can open one club and can rebid two diamonds to show this reverse-strength hand. A reverse is done with an ace above a good opening hand, about 17 points, and the lower ranking suit is the longer suit.

North responds one spade and when South reverses, North realizes they have slam. Four notrump when the last bid suit is diamonds asks for keycards in diamonds. South has four keycards (three aces and the king of diamonds) shown by his five-diamond response.

North can count twelve tricks, three spades, two hearts, two diamonds and five clubs. If South has the Jack of spades, queen of hearts or the queen of diamonds then 7NT is cold. However, it is only possible to ask about the queen of diamonds. Five hearts asks for the queen of diamonds. Five spades is no and five notrump is yes.

Therefore, there are only 12 tricks in notrump but there are thirteen in clubs. South denied four spades, so a spade ruff will give the thirteenth trick.

The Lead: Against a grand slam, one does not want to accidentally give declarer his thirteenth trick. One does not ever lead a singleton, and one does not lead from an honour. Typical good leads against a grand slam are top of a sequence and top of nothing. West leads the jack of spades.

The play: South breathes a sigh of relief when there is no ruff on the opening lead, draws trump and claims.

Result:

Seven clubs makes for +1440. Six notrump also makes for +990.

Note:

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