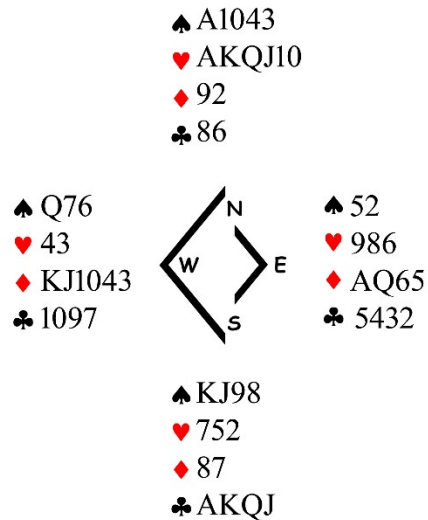


254. Not Skipping Four Spades

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S	W	N	E
		1 ♥	P
1 ♠	P	2 ♠	P
4 ♠	All Pass		

--East West Vulnerable--

The bidding:

North, with his lovely 14 points, opens One Heart. South responds One Spade and does not immediately bid Two Clubs to make the game force unless his Clubs are longer. North raises, and South goes to game knowing that since North could not jump, slam is not a possibility.

The Play:

West is in a quandary for an opening lead. He does not know which minor to lead. Had South bid Two Clubs just to put the game force on, West would have a clear but risky Diamond lead. Active leads (leads from a King or Queen) are called for when declarer has a side suit for discards.

However, South did not bid Clubs and West leads the Club Ten because the majors were bid by the opponents, and Diamonds is a tenace holding (broken or nontouching honours). Tenace leads are worse, but not by much, than leading from Qxx or Jxxx.

Declarer cashes all of his Clubs pitching two Diamonds from dummy. If West ruffs the fourth Club, declarer overruffs and then cashes the top two trump dropping the Queen. If West does not ruff, declarer will finesse West for the Queen of trump.

Usually, basing which way to take a two-way finesse on a slim clue such as the opponent with shorter clubs might have longer trump is better than making just a pure guess. Furthermore, declarer could play the Spade Jack to see if it gets covered, and if it does not, then take the finesse into West.

Declarer will make all 13 tricks for +510.

Note:

A four-four fit is almost always better than a five-three fit because declarer can choose which four-card Spade holding gets short-hand ruffs and which side draws the last trump, and he gets two discards on the Heart suit.