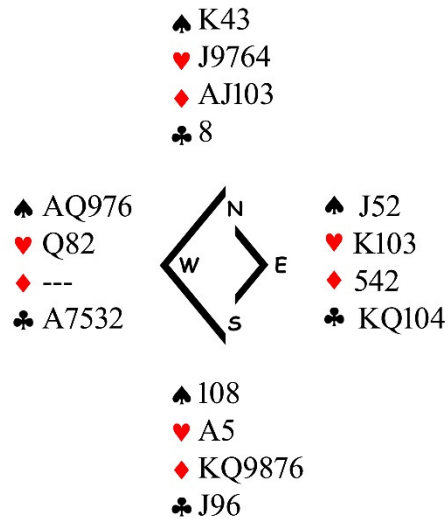


282. The Last Guess

Published on Page 5 of the Trail Times, Friday April 8, 2016



E	S	W	N
	2 ♦	2 ♠	5 ♦
All Pass			

--North South Vulnerable--

Five Columns ago, I mentioned Kit Woolsey's book titled "Matchpoints," with regard to a pre-empter bidding again after his partner makes a raise. This column and the next four will discuss the five best tips that Woolsey makes.

Today's column is about the last guess. It is important that one makes an opponent make the last guess not oneself. Therefore, one must bid to the limit of one's hand right away, and then the opponents may have doubt on what to do next.

The hands shown are an example of Last Guess that occurred at my bridge club while I was playing with a client.

The Bidding:

South opens a vulnerable weak two in Diamonds and West makes a Two-Spade overcall. North bids the limit of his hand right away with Five Diamonds.

East now has a guess. What to do with a flat nine points? A double could be right but is difficult to make looking at three small Diamonds. Bidding Five Spades could be right, but can nine points opposite a hand that did not double make five? Was Five Diamonds bid as a sacrifice or was it bid to make?

East decides to pass, and West has no idea whether East passed because she was bust or did not know what to do. If it is hard to double with three small Diamonds, it is certainly hard to double with a void. So West also passes.

The play:

West's best lead is a Diamond, but has none of those. Leading from Queen third is ugly and cashing an ace is likely worse. However, cashing an Ace from Ace empty is better than cashing an Ace from Ace-Queen. West leads the Heart Two.

All declarer has to do to play this hand is to take short hand ruffs. South loses a Club and ruffs two Clubs and then draws trump. South will lose, a Spade, a Heart and a Club for down one and -100.

Four Spade Contract:

North will lead a stiff Club against Four Spades. He has trump control and a ruff will not interfere with his natural trump trick.

Furthermore, partner likely has an entry. South plays the Club Jack under dummy's King telling partner that his entry is a Heart. Declarer understands a ruff is imminent and plays the Ace and a little Spade. North rises with the King, hoping it does not crash the Queen and exits a Heart. He gets his ruff. Four spades makes for +420. Even if the Five-Diamond contract were doubled, 200 is less than 420.