

January 23, 2021

Bridge with Richard Ward

Researchers at Scotland's University of Stirling have been investigating the skills and strategies necessary to become successful in the challenging, multi-faceted and fascinating game of bridge. Their findings are summarised: "Elite bridge players are displaying the capacity to make crucial gameplay decisions based on incomplete information whilst judging their partner's card play and opponents' impressions correctly (and incorrectly). At the same time, they need to be able to control their irritation with their own failings or those of their partner so as not to give their opponents an advantage through a verbal outburst, whilst also changing game-plans based on the ever-evolving card game."

NORTH		
♠	A J 6	N/ ALL VUL
♥	K 8 2	
♦	A Q 4	
♣	K J 5 4	
WEST		EAST
♠	Q 9 8	♠ K 2
♥	7	♥ A Q 10 4
♦	K 10 9 8 7	♦ J 6 5 3
♣	10 9 7 6	♣ Q 8 3
SOUTH		
♠	10 7 5 4 3	
♥	J 9 6 5 3	
♦	2	
♣	A 2	

West leads the ten of clubs against South's 4S contract and declarer has a lot to think about, hoping to restrict his losers in the majors to just three tricks. The top option in the spade suit will be to play for K-Q or a doubleton honour onside, a 37% chance – so best to start with a low spade to the jack. Our declarer, however, led the ten of spades and West played low. He should have covered with the queen, giving South a guess at the next trick. East won the king and, not wishing to play a club or a diamond around to dummy, returned a spade. So far so good – only one spade loser! Now it only remained to solve the problem of the heart suit. The percentage line here is to lead the nine of hearts and run it if not covered. Short of entries to hand, our hero started with the king of hearts. When the queen of hearts appeared later with East, he was one of the very few declarers to make ten tricks.

Youth Bridge Fun Day at the Toowong Bridge Club tomorrow at 10am. For players aged 8 to 25. No previous experience necessary. Free entry, pizzas and ice cream!
