

February 20, 2021

## Bridge with Richard Ward

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The excellent Netflix series 'The Queen's Gambit' highlighted the machinations and intrigues of the chess world and the passion with which the game is played at the top. It should surprise no one that the intensity is similar in the world of expert and professional bridge and it is a sad fact of life that some players fall prey to the enticement of cheating in order to win. This has been particularly prevalent overseas in recent times with the increased popularity of online bridge which is difficult to monitor effectively. To prove that, in all probability, an individual or a pair is cheating requires an enormous amount of investigation and statistical analysis of hands played by the suspected players. One such case in the United States recently took nearly five months to reach a guilty verdict involving the scrutiny of 250+ hands, fourteen days of live testimony and hundreds of pages of documents and expert reports. This process needed to be thorough, transparent and fair to the accused who, in the interests of natural justice, was given the opportunity to dispute the evidence presented against him. He has been suspended from playing bridge competitively for seven years.

**NORTH**  
♠ A K Q      **E/ NS VUL**  
♥ K Q 9  
♦ A K 5 2  
♣ J 4 3

**WEST**  
♠ 7 6 4 3  
♥ A 8 4  
♦ 9 7 6  
♣ K 7 2

**EAST**  
♠ 5 2  
♥ J 7 3  
♦ 10 8  
♣ A Q 10 9 8 5

**SOUTH**  
♠ J 10 9 8  
♥ 10 6 5 2  
♦ Q J 4 3  
♣ 6

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		3C	PASS
PASS	DBL	PASS	3S
PASS	4S	PASS	PASS
PASS			

West leads a spade won perforce in dummy. This hand is something of a curiosity because it is rare to take ruffs in the long trump hand when this will cause the defenders to end up with more trumps than declarer. In this case though, it is highly likely given the bidding that it will be West who holds the ace of hearts together with the trump length. The plan is to give up a club and then, by ruffing two clubs in hand, declarer will come to either four diamonds and a heart, or three diamonds and two hearts, in addition to five trump tricks.

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