

March 18, 2023

Bridge with Richard Ward

Online bridge proved to be a lifesaver for many during the covid years when face-to-face bridge was not an option. In recent times, table numbers at clubs have gradually returned to pre-pandemic levels but there remains a significant number of players who are choosing to stay at home. The American Contract Bridge League recently found themselves in strife when they forewarned that the final rounds of the prestigious Vanderbilt Teams would be played using tablets – the ‘Tablets Trials’. A week later, in the face of vociferous, outraged expert players, they reversed this decision, shelving their laptops for the moment. This is a time for strategic planning as to the future of our game and, in particular, how to create a practical, harmonious relationship between online and face-to-face bridge in the years ahead.

It can be quite instructive to see how the top players handle wildly distributional hands in the bidding and the play.

NORTH		E/ NIL VUL/ TEAMS
♠	A J 7 5 4	
♥	A K 10 9 7 5	
♦	8	
♣	10	
WEST	EAST	
♠	10	♠ Q 8 6
♥	8 4 2	♥ -
♦	A K J 4 3	♦ Q 10 9 7 6 2
♣	Q J 9 7	♣ K 8 5 3
SOUTH		
♠	K 9 3 2	
♥	Q J 6 3	
♦	5	
♣	A 6 4 2	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
5D	6D	2D	DBL
PASS	PASS	PASS	6H

East started with a weak-two bid which encouraged South, looking at the perfect takeout shape, to double. West leapt cheerfully to five diamonds and North trotted out a ‘choice-of-slams’ six diamonds. Against the six hearts contract the defence cashed a diamond trick then switched to the queen of clubs. Declarer won this, ruffed a club then drew trumps while ruffing two more clubs. West was now marked with, at most, a singleton spade so, after the ace of spades dropped the ten, the rest was easy.

ROCKHAMPTON CONGRESS [Director – Les Bonnick] **PAIRS** 1 Diane & Max Holewa; 2 Jan Randall / Don Cameron; **B** Janet Hansen / Diane Morgan; **C** Frances Limage / Joie Day; **TEAMS** 1 Frances & Alan Brown / Janet Hansen / Diane Morgan; 2 Don Cameron / Jan Randall / Ron Lorraway / Adrian Lohmann; **B** Paula Gibb / Brian Blackmore / Mavis Anderson / Margaret Doak; **C** Duncan Welsh / Sue Mittermair / Thomas Peters / Stuart England