

December 16, 2023

Bridge with Richard Ward

Today's hand occurred at the recent Soloway Knockout Teams in Atlanta between two expert teams.

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	PASS	PASS	2C
PASS	2D	PASS	2NT
PASS	3H	PASS	4C
PASS	4D	PASS	4S
PASS	4NT	PASS	5C
PASS	6S	ALL PASS	

North's 3H bid was a transfer to spades; 4C was a super-accept; 4D was a cue bid; then key card Blackwood showed four key cards. Some players 'always' lead an ace against slams which would have worked nicely here. But this West was unwilling to lead from his red suits choosing a neutral small club instead, won by the ace. When the ace of spades revealed the 3-0 trump break, declarer decided that the diamond suit needed to be a source of tricks, switching to the seven of diamonds. This looked very much like a singleton to West, who rose with the ace and played a second diamond which, surprisingly, East ruffed. Down one and 11 imps away as the other table reached just four spades making 11 tricks on the same sequence of plays.

You will have noticed that both declarers had a blind spot here. Instead of playing on diamonds, the South hand has three losers which can be easily ruffed with high trumps. So at trick three, cash the other top club (neither opponent has a singleton club) discarding a heart. Ruff a club high, cross back to the king of spades, ruff another club high, back to the jack of spades, ruff a heart then give up a diamond.

TOOWOOMBA TEAMS [Director – Jan Peach]: 1 Ralph Parker / Richard Fox / Normand Maclaurin / Larry Moses; 2 Ivy & John Luck / Sue O'Brien / Paul Collins; 3 Pamela & Jim Evans / Janeed Solomon / Terry O'Dempsey; **B** 1 Hema & Shanaal De Zoysa / Katy Duke / Laurie-Marie McRoberts; 2 David Roberts / Paul Matthews / Elizabeth & Tony Thorne.

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