

December 30, 2023

Bridge with Richard Ward

There have been many highlights for the bridge playing community in 2023 as we moved past the calamitous pandemic years with attendance at face-to-face bridge nearly returning to previous levels combined with a welcome increase in those signing up for beginners bridge lessons across the state. The Queensland Bridge Association is renowned for many things including its support for clubs and players in non-metropolitan areas and the development of youth bridge. It has conducted the internationally renowned Gold Coast Congress for more than six decades and entries to all of its major events continue to break records – most notably the Barrier Reef Congress in North Queensland, the River City Gold Mixed Pairs at the Toowong Bridge Club and the QBA Festival of Bridge at the Queensland Contract Bridge Club. In addition, the inaugural online weekend Bridge Directors Seminar in October attracted more than seventy enthusiastic people from all over Australia and New Zealand.

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

The bidding was over quickly: 1NT – 6NT, to which West led the three of hearts. There would be twelve easy tricks if the diamonds behaved so declarer's only concern was that one defender may hold D Q92 in which case South would need to guess how best to attack that suit. At trick two the queen of clubs was played to West's king who returned a deceptive five of hearts instead of the normal two in an attempt to conceal the heart distribution. Next came all of the winners in spades, hearts and clubs looking for clues. At first glance, not much had been gained. However, as the jack and ten of spades had fallen from East, the odds were three to one that this was from a three-card suit rather than from a four-card suit including the nine of spades. Consequently, on these assumptions, West could not hold three diamonds so declarer played the king of diamonds next. Success!
