

February 10, 2024

Bridge with Richard Ward

From 1974 through to 1994 bridge experts were invited to provide their favourite piece of advice to up-and-coming bridge players. Named the Bols Bridge Tips, UK international Sally Brock published a book in 1998 which contains all of the tips in one volume. Informative reading. Today's hand illustrates Zia Mahmood's simple suggestion that, "if they don't cover, they don't have it".

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1C
PASS	2C	PASS	4NT
PASS	5D	PASS	6C
PASS	PASS	PASS	

North-South were playing 'inverted minor raises' so 2C showed 5+ clubs and 10+ high card points. That was all South needed to check for key cards which propelled them into this 75 percent slam. After a club opening lead, declarer can draw trumps then play off four rounds of diamonds throwing a spade from dummy. Then, crossing back to dummy with a trump a spade can be led up to the king. If East has the ace the king becomes a winner and a heart loser can be thrown on it. If West holds the spade ace, slam will still make if East holds the heart king. Zia, willing to follow his own advice, found an alternative line deciding to sniff out the whereabouts of the heart king. At trick three he led the queen of hearts knowing that, if East held the king, this would force a cover catering for declarer holding, say, A-J-9 or similar. When East played a small card, he rose with the ace, discarded a heart on the fourth diamond and then took the ruffing finesse in hearts which later provided a spade discard.

QUEENSLAND OPEN TEAM SELECTION TRIALS STAGE 1 [Director – Alan Gibson]: 1 Christine Newbery / Richard Fox; 2 Greer Tucker Pele Ranking; 3 Kate Macdonald / Ben Leung; 4 Martin Qin / Kuldip Bedi; 5 Ian Afflick / Paul Collins; 6 Yolanda Floris / Toni Bardon; 7 John Luck / Larry Moses; 8 Maha Hoenig / Janeen Solomon.