

February 24, 2024

Bridge with Richard Ward

Good players are always looking to avoid taking finesses if there are any other possibilities available.

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

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

North's leap to four clubs promised at least a six-card spade suit and club shortage along with some slam interest. When South showed the ace of diamonds and then the ace of hearts North knew what to do. West led the queen of clubs to dummy's ace. Declarer drew trumps and led a diamond to the ace to ruff his last club in dummy, thereby eliminating that suit. Next came the king of diamonds and a diamond ruff. Unluckily, the suit broke 4-2, so declarer now tried a heart to his queen because, if that card held, there would have been 11 tricks. But no matter as West was end-played after winning the king of hearts. A heart return or a third round of clubs or a fourth round of diamonds would all have handed the contract to declarer.

There were dramas on Day 1 of the Gold Coat Congress when a flight from Canberra to Coolangatta on Saturday containing three tournament directors and many players was abruptly cancelled without warning leaving many stranded. So the congress started without most of them while they found various alternatives. The premier event, the Bobby Richman Pairs, went to internationals Ella Jacob and Phil Markey from Andy Hung and Alex Smirnov. Highest ranked Queensland qualifiers were Jan Randall and Don Cameron whilst winners of other sections included Tony Hutton / Malcolm Carter (ACT), Sonya & Shayne Palfreyman, Richard Spelman / Lyn Tracey, Sandy Greenwood / Anne Clarke, Andreas & Speros Pappas, Jennifer Finigan / Matthew Tiplady, Jenny Iliescu / Leanne Nugent and Elizabeth & David Ward.