

May 9, 2020

### Bridge with Richard Ward

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This hand is all about searching for clues then drawing conclusions after examining the available evidence.

<b>NORTH</b>		<b>W/ NIL VUL</b>
♠	A Q 7	
♥	Q 8 3	
♦	A 8 3 2	
♣	K Q 10	
<b>WEST</b>		<b>EAST</b>
♠	K 10 3	♠ 9
♥	A J 9 2	♥ K 10 7 5
♦	10 7	♦ Q 6 4
♣	A 4 3 2	♣ 9 8 7 6 5
<b>SOUTH</b>		
♠	J 8 6 5 4 2	
♥	6 4	
♦	K J 9 5	
♣	J	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1NT	DBL	2C	2S
PASS	2NT	PASS	4S
PASS	PASS	PASS	

The opening bid was a weak no trump which could not include a 5-card major. Then there was a penalty double followed by a 2C bid, presumably a 5-card suit. The rest was essentially natural. West started with the ten of diamonds which eliminated the guess in that suit, but, provided East-West remained alert, there are always two hearts and a club to lose. The spade finesse must work if we are to succeed. What else do we know? West has no singletons, two diamonds and no more than four clubs. Neither opponent has five hearts so that suit is splitting 4-4. All of this signposts West's probable distribution as 3-4-2-4 and East is 1-4-3-5. Declarer can hope that East has the singleton 9 or 10 of spades by leading the jack of spades – king – ace – nine. Then return to hand to finesse against West's presumed ten. All very well I suppose, but, in most tournaments you have just 6-7 minutes to play each hand. By the time I had worked out all of this, I may have been fined for slow play. Many people find that they can't think and play bridge at the same time.

In 1985, Barry Crane, the flamboyant champion American bridge player and renowned Hollywood director was brutally murdered in Los Angeles. His killer was finally brought to justice in 2019. Crane had a number of 'Commandments' which seemed to work more often than not eg 'don't bid grand slams in swiss teams'; 'never gloat'; and, inexplicably, '7's are singletons' and 'the queen is over the jack in the minors and under the jack in the majors'.

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