

November 14, 2020

Bridge with Richard Ward

With the significant shift from face-to-face bridge to online events world-wide, bridge organisations have been struggling to find ways to conduct tournaments with integrity in the face of the COVID-19 restrictions. To put it bluntly, the opportunities for dishonesty when playing online have proven too tempting for some people and a number of experts and others have recently been banned from play because of their unethical behaviour. The damage that these unscrupulous people do to our beautiful game is immense. Meanwhile, the authorities have not been idle. For instance in China they recently conducted their Premier League with 11 playing areas in 9 cities, all players socially-distanced and under the supervision of professional directors. Electronic equipment was strictly scrutinised to ensure there was no accessible social media or other communication software available.

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

East opened a routine 3C. South overcalled 3NT and played there. West led the queen of hearts. There are just eight tricks on view and few, if any, prospects for a ninth. The lack of a club lead and the bidding confirms that East holds seven clubs so there is a possible line if you have the imagination. The idea is to strip East of his non-clubs and then endplay him, forced to lead a club away from an honour in the three-card ending.

So, allow West's queen of hearts to win the trick then take the heart king at trick 2. Now, the key play to cover all distributions is to duck a spade. West will probably overtake partner's queen so as to lead a third heart. Now play all of your non-club winners and East will be left with just a handful of clubs. Then a club to the jack, or simply leading club jack allowing the queen to win, will see East having to lead away from his king of clubs. Contract made.
