

November 21, 2020

Bridge with Richard Ward

When the European Bridge Union declined to conduct an online European Seniors' Teams Championship this year, the Polish Bridge Union stepped up and the PBU Online European Seniors' Cup was born. Twenty teams entered and the 48-board final was a close affair won by Poland I over Germany I by 6 imps.

At the start of the last match of the qualifying rounds, Poland 2 was virtually out of contention running 15th against 11th placed Israel.

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

| WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH |
|------|--------------------|------|-------|
| | OPEN ROOM | | |
| | | PASS | PASS |
| 1NT | 3H | 4H | DBL |
| 4S | PASS | PASS | PASS |
| | CLOSED ROOM | | |
| | | 2H | PASS |
| 4S | 5H | 5S | 6H |
| DBL | PASS | PASS | PASS |

There is an old Polish saying , “after a one no-trump opening, there is no play for the opponents at the 3-level”. The Israeli North-South pair in the open room did try the 3-level but no higher. South’s double simply showed a heart honour for the lead, so it was difficult for them. The four spade contract made ten tricks when declarer played the clubs for just one loser.

Life was much more exciting in the closed room where East’s opening 2H call promised a weak two-suiter with spades and a minor or various strong hands. For West, it seemed obvious that partner had the weak option, so he followed the principle of bidding what he thought he could make and jumped to the spade game. This could not stop North and, ignoring the saying that “the five level belongs to the opponents”, both East and South felt obliged to bid one more. There was no play for twelve tricks until East made an unfortunate lead – the jack of diamonds. Declarer won with the ace, took the ruffing finesse in clubs, preparing a place for the spade loser, and played the heart jack. West won and tried to give East a ruff, so that was +1660 and 19 imps to Poland 2 who won this battle and this match but still missed a place in the quarter-finals.
