

10- 2024 – Strong Minor

This came up at the Gold Coast Congress

Dealer East EW Vul

| | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| | NORTH | |
| | AQ73 | |
| | 10 | |
| | AKQJ1053 | |
| | 2 | |
| | | |
| WEST | | EAST |
| J9 | | K10865 |
| J63 | | AK942 |
| 762 | | 9 |
| K10854 | | A6 |
| | | |
| | SOUTH | |
| | 42 | |
| | Q875 | |
| | 84 | |
| | QJ973 | |

The bidding went:

| EAST | SOUTH | WEST | NORTH |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1S (1) | P | P (2) | 3NT (3) |
| P (4) | P | P | |

- (1) Intending to bid Hearts next time, depending on other bidding
- (2) Should West bid 1NT, or 2C, instead of Passing? Given the vulnerability, I would usually Pass, as I can always bid later
- (3) North has 7 Diamond Tricks plus SA = 8. Maybe SQ will be the 9th Trick or Partner will help. A good bid in my view (especially as I was North!)
- (4) Being Vul, and with no bidding from Partner, East Passes

CONTRACT

3NT by North, gambling in nature, holding a long solid minor suit

THE LEAD

What should East lead?

East led HA, to survey the scene as Dummy went down. East sees that it is virtually certain North's long suit is Diamonds. HA wins

THE PLAY

What should East play after HA, on seeing HQ in Dummy?

It is important in Defence for the Defenders to visualise where 5 Tricks are to come from, to defeat 3NT. Often this does not turn out, but all you can do is try

East should reason that for the 3NT bid, North must have a stopper in Spades, most probably SA. If North also has SQ, playing a Spade will give North the Contract. So, leave Spades alone

East needs West to get in, to lead a Spade through North. The only likely suit is Clubs, so cash HK, play CA then C6. West wins CK and plays SJ. Down goes Declarer

At our table, East played a Spade next, and I made the Contract

No other Tables were in 3NT, yet it is the standout bid given the solid minor suit. 5D fails to make

Bidding 3NT needs less Tricks to make, and even a minor slip by East and you are home

MORAL OF THE STORY

East needs to be patient in defence. Do not touch Spades

It is worth noting had West bid 2C, East has an easier path to finding the Club play after HA

Ian Morison

8 March 2024