

39- 2023 – Count before you Play

This one came up at the Club this week, you sit South

Dealer N Nil Vul

THE FULL HAND

	NORTH	
	QJ16	
	8	
	AKJ4	
	A10973	
WEST		EAST
7542		108
Q965		1032
10762		Q953
8		Q642
	SOUTH	
	AK93	
	AKJ74	
	8	
	KJ5	

BIDDINE

	N	E	S	W
	1C	P	1H	P
	2D	P	4NT	P
	5H (1)	P	6NT (2)	P

(1) 2 Aces

(2) Sensible risk to take

THE LEAD

S7 was led at our table

THE PLAY

At the Club, many players did not make 12 Tricks (irrespective of what level they bid to)

But it is quite simple.....

Before you play to the lead, count your Tricks

You have 4 spades, 2 hearts, 2 Diamonds and 2 Clubs = 10. So where do 2 more come from?

Look at your best suit – it is Clubs. You have 8 Clubs, and after CA and CK, you have CJ, C10, C9 – great intermediate Cards [In Diamonds and Hearts, you have fewer cards and no intermediate cards]

You simply take the Club finesse - it is a 50:50 guess which way (in my case, I reasoned West was more likely to have it, as she led a Spade, perhaps not wanting to touch her Clubs)

[Note it is a good idea to cash CA or CK before the finesse, as CQ may be singleton]

I cashed CK, then led CJ which lost to CQ, but then I had 12 Tricks

COMMENT

If West began with a Diamond, you must not take the Finesse. If it loses, then you must fall back on the 50:50 Club Finesse

I think that is what happened with those who did not make 12 Tricks – they took unnecessary Diamond and/or Heart finesses

MORAL OF THE STORY

Count your winners at the Start. In this Hand, making 12 Tricks is guaranteed once you see Clubs are the answer

Ian Morison

Bridge lover

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