

Learning Points – Better Late Than Never

by Steve Moese (Mike Purcell ed.)

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Declarer Play LEVEL: Intermediate

East Deals
NS Vul
MPs

♠ 985
♥ 954
♦ A98
♣ A642

Steve

♠ K1074
♥ 6
♦ Q62
♣ KJ985

N
W 18 E
S

♠ AQ32
♥ AJ10732
♦ 54
♣ 3

Ron

♠ J6
♥ KQ8
♦ KJ1073
♣ Q107

EW: 2♥, 4♣
NS: 1NT

East South West North
1♥¹ 2♦ Double² 3♦
3♠ Pass 4♣ All Pass

1= 11-15 HCP, 5 card majors

2= Negative, showing ♠s

South leads ♦7.

(requiring a 3-3 break, 36% chance of success). The hearts are more likely to split 4-2 48% chance *a priori*, and EW's trumps are not high enough to avoid the risk of an over-ruff or trump promotion at the 3rd ♥ ruff. The ♣ finesse is a 50% chance.

Declarer played a low ♦ from dummy and North won the ♦A, continuing with a low ♦, establishing the minor suit trick East was looking for. South switched to the ♣7, fetching the ♣J from dummy and the ♣A from North. North switches to a ♥, won by declarer's ♥A. Declarer sets about the cross ruff, ruffing 1 ♣ low in hand, then 2 more with high trump. The 4th ♣ trick is ruffed low by North and over-ruffed by East. With 2 cards left the dummy holds the ♠K10 and declarer holds ♠3 and ♥7. Declarer can lead either card and over ruff South to make 4 for +420 and all the Match Points.

NS Pair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MPs	6	4	7	5	2.5	2.5		1		0
Score	200	140	420	170	-50	-50		-150		-300

Post Mortem

The standard opening lead ♦J does not give away a trick in that suit. Declarer must then guess the ♣ position or rely on a 3-3 ♥ break to make the contract.

Learning Points

1. Think “CROSS RUFF” when you need tricks. Score your trumps separately. They add up.
2. Choose the higher likelihood line of play *a priori*, but adjust as you learn during play. Here the ♣ finesse (50% chance) is better than the 3-3 ♥ split (36% chance)

Key Words: High Cross Ruff, Higher likelihood line of play, a priori chance, 4-2 split, 3-3 split

Tuesday Evening May 18, 2010, Club Championship. Mr. Michael Lipp Director. Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070 . My partner is Ron Babcock. We play Precision.

When Top Winners fall far short of your contract, look for a cross ruff.

The Bidding

Except for the opening bidder being limited to 11-15 HCP, the precision and standard auctions should be very similar. North offers well judged interference, but East has a 3♠ raise ready in advance. West has an easy decision to go to game.

The Play

Declarer can count 3 immediate losers and only 4-5 Top Winners. This is the perfect time for a cross ruff. In fact declarer needs only a minor suit winner to go along with a possible 8 trump tricks and the ♥A to make game. Alternatively, East could play to set up ♥s