

Javea Bridge

Friday November 17th 2017

When I planned to write up this hand I thought I was going to write about Pianola getting it wrong. After very considerable investigation, the inevitable happened and Pianola was proved right.

Tues 31 Oct	North Bd3 Dealer S, EW Vul. ♠ KQ87 ♥ 65 ♦ AKQJ ♣ T53	
	West ♠ AT3 ♥ K74 ♦ T87 ♣ J987	East ♠ 54 ♥ JT93 ♦ 63 ♣ AQ642
	South ♠ J962 ♥ AQ82 ♦ 9542 ♣ K	

According to Pianola North can always make make 4S. At our table East led the HJ and declarer (mistakenly as the Ace and a Club switch wins) finessed so West won and switched to a small trump – effectively preventing two club ruffs.

Maybe the contract can still be made but I do not think so.

The interesting challenge is when East leads a trump at trick 1 –and West plays low. Now there is no hope of ruffing 2 clubs as East will lead another trump when in with the Ace of Clubs so North must look for an alternative 10th trick. If declarer pursues this original line there will be a 5 card ending in which both East and West keep 3 hearts and 2 clubs and will win 2 more tricks.

The search for an alternative 10th trick focuses on the Heart suit.

The simple heart finesse fails but there is another possibility that actually does work.

At trick two you can simply lead a heart and duck. Assuming EW continue to draw trumps you can set up a Heart trick by leading a Heart to the Ace and ruffing the third round.

Magic - you have your 10th trick.

In real play I am not sure that anyone would find this line – calculating the odds of a simple finesse versus the winning line is difficult but I suspect ignoring the finesse is the right line on any hand as it only loses when East has Kxxx.

What a wonderful game we enjoy.

PRH