

# Better Bridge

By **ROBERT D. ROSENBLUM**  
Copley News Service

The maxims we learn as children we must often unlearn as adults. In the words of the immortal bard, it ain't necessarily so. What goes up no longer must come down. Whoever first suggested you can't have your cake and eat it never heard of the trump coup.

This form of end play occurs when a defender's finessable trumps are trapped without a finesse. The occasion arises when there is no entry to take a finesse. Or, more frequently, when there is no trump to lead for a finesse.

The bidding:

The auction was simple. Having passed, North had no convenient call at his second turn. Partner was apt to pass two clubs or two diamonds and any number of no-trump was out of the question with a worthless doubleton spade. Two hearts would be an underbid, so North chose three hearts although he held but three-card support. With a sound opening South eagerly carried on to the heart game.

Other bidding styles are instructive. Advocates of five-card major systems with forcing no-trump responses would have fewer compunctions about raising hearts. The Western Roth-Stone and-or Walsh approach might proceed: one heart — on no-trump (forcing); two clubs! (forced, since a five-card major is not rebiddable and a reverse to two spades would show a much stronger hand) — three hearts; four hearts. The three-heart bid here is a limit raise, and, following an initial no-trump response, shows 9 to 12 points with trump support and no singletons or voids.

Those that bid this way re-

serve an immediate jump to three hearts to show the same high card count including a singleton or void. Other five-card major players do not differentiate and would bid three hearts at their first chance.

Another popular approach is the convention known as Flannery. A two-diamond opening by South would show a minimum opening bid of 11 to 15 high-card points with specifically five hearts and four spades. Here, North would invite game in hearts by jumping to three hearts and South with a maximum for his opening would accept, bidding four.

The play:

In the tournament that produced this hand most pairs reached four hearts or three no-trump, although several stopped on three hearts. Hearts is superior for the limit of the hand in no-trump appears to be nine tricks whereas most declarers at hearts made ten tricks. Top score went to the declarer in four hearts who succeeded in making an overtrick.

The difficulty centers on the trump suit. A spade must be lost. How can South ruff two losing spades in dummy yet lead and later draw trumps while losing only one trick? Abra cadabra.

West led the four of clubs to East's queen and South's king. Declarer played a low trump and when West rose with the ace it suggested strongly that it was singleton. The diamond shift was won in dummy and a spade led to the queen and ace. West continued diamonds, declarer winning. The club 10 was led to dummy's ace and a club ruffed.

South cashed the king of spades and trumped a low spade. He reentered the closed hand with a diamond ruff to reach this ending:

S —  
H Q  
D 10  
C 6

S	J	S	—
H	—	H	J 8 7
D	9	D	—
C	9	C	—
S	9		
H	K 10		
D	—		
C	—		

The nine of spades was played and trumped with dummy's queen. East had only trumps left so had to undertruff. The lead of either of dummy's minor suit cards enabled declarer to complete his coup against East. Declarer simply overtruffed and won the last trick with his high trump.

North

S 6 5  
H Q 6 3  
D A 10 7 4  
C A 6 5 2

	West		East
S	A J 4 3	S	10 8 2
H	A	H	J 8 7 5
D	9 6 5 3	D	Q J 2
C	J 9 8 4	C	Q 7 3

South

S K Q 9 7  
H K 10 9 4 2  
D K 8  
C K 10

North was the dealer. East-West were vulnerable.

West	North	East	South
—	Pass	Pass	1 H
Pass	3 H	Pass	4 H
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the four of clubs.

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