

December 2019 Hand of the Month - Safety Play

Hand # 13 from the Fairlawn game on December 5, 2019 presents many good lessons:

Dir: N	♠ Q 10 8 4 3		13
Vul: All	♥ 9 7 4 3 2		
	♦ -----		
	♣ J 3 2		
3			
19 14			
4			
♠ A K 5		♠ J 6	
♥ 6 5		♥ A Q J 10	
♦ A Q 9 7		♦ K 8 6 3 2	
♣ A Q 8 7		♣ K 5	
	♠ 9 7 2		
	♥ K 8		
	♦ J 10 5 4		
	♣ 10 9 6 4		

Auction:

P - 1D - P - 2D

P - 2H - P - 2S

P - 3NT-P - 6NT

The West hand must be careful to find out how good (or bad) the East hand is. 2D is an inverted minor which could be 11 points or more, 2H is a stopper for NT, 2S is the same, but 3NT says I want to be in game even if West has an 11-point hand. That is all West needed (19 + 14 = 33, Slam). If either partner bids 2NT or 3D, they are willing to quit there (minimum). If you do not play Inverted Minors, it is a good convention to learn.

Play:

Club is led - be careful as there are limited entries to East - win the Ace. If you count your tricks, it appears there are 12 tricks: 2 Spades, 2 Hearts, 5 Diamonds, 3 Clubs. As my old friend Larry Long would say - "if the diamond suit breaks 2/2 or 3/1, my cat can make 5 tricks". (He had a smart cat.) But what if the suit breaks 4/0. If North has the 4 Diamonds, you are losing a Diamond trick. But if South has the Diamonds, you can win all 5 as long as you play a diamond to the King first!! Key safety play. Making 6.

Defense tip:

If declarer leads a diamond toward the AQ97, be sure not to play the ten or Jack - that would give up your position.