

A masterly defence

THE best defended hand was awarded to Scotland in the recent Lederer Memorial Trophy. The par contract was three hearts by north, holding S: J652, H: A983, D: Q, C: Q1072 opposite S: 94, H: Q19765, D: K1072, C: A9.

We are not told the bidding, but the scores varied from the sublime to the ridiculous, one declarer making 12 tricks!

Shenkin and Silverstone showed how it should be done. Shenkin, looking at S: KQ7, H: J2, D: J953, C: K864 led the spade king, then queen, followed by another which declarer ruffed in dummy.

When north played a diamond to his singleton queen, Silverstone, wide awake, hopped up with his ace and played a fourth

by
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spade, east discarding a discouraging club.

Declarer now played ace and another heart, and when west took the second heart with his king, he simply played a diamond back into the K10. Although declarer had two discards, he still had to come to a club loser for one down.

When one takes up the game, you are always being told how dangerous it is to give a ruff and discard, or allow declarer cheap opportunities.

I wonder just how many would have found the same defence? Still, we do expect the experts to get it right.

Would you try finesse?

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THE Lederer Memorial Trophy, sponsored by the Young Chelsea Bridge Club in London, was held recently, the winners being Sweden by 37 points. England came second, the team composed of Senior, Forrester, Lodge and Mrs Horton.

On one hand, Tony Forrester was declarer in four spades looking at S: KQ1064, H: AQ2, D: A96 and when the diamond queen was led, dummy went down with S: J53, H: k765, D: 732, C: AQ5. He won the ace in hand (to avoid the club shift) and when south took the spade ace and returned a diamond, had to decide what to do on a club return after the defence had taken their three tricks

(two diamonds and ace of trumps).

The percentage line, in abstract, may be to take the finesse, but Forrester knew north only had five cards in spades and diamonds. Therefore, if he had the club king, he was almost sure to have three or more hearts and thus be squeezed.

Forrester rose with the ace and when hearts divided 3-3, discarded his losing club on the fourth heart. This gave declarer the prize for the best played hand.

How many would have tried the finesse first?