

NEC Cup *by Derrick Browne*

The NEC Cup last month was won by the Lavazza team of Italian world champions, 1½ IMPs ahead of Zimmerman. Going into the last board, it was Zimmerman who were 1½ IMPs ahead but then their player went down four in 2H while the Lavazza player was down three in the same contract so the places were swapped.

In this column, we shall see two other deals from the event where declarer was defeated.

Dealer West, nil vul.

NORTH	
S A84	
H 2	
D 854	
C AJT762	
WEST	EAST
S KT75	S Q963
H 75	H QJT3
D KQ73	D J96
C 543	C K9
SOUTH	
S J2	
H AK9864	
D AT2	
C Q8	

Those who refuse to open 1NT with a 5-card major may be horrified to hear that Tony Nunn opened a strong 1NT on the South cards, raised to 3NT by fellow Australian Sartaj Hans.

Spades were led, and continued till the SA was taken. A heart was played to hand, so that the CQ could then be led for a finesse. East ducked smoothly so declarer finessed again, losing to the now-bare king, and there was now no entry to North's clubs. Nunn therefore went four down.

On the next deal, it was an Aussie who found the successful defence:

Dealer North, nil vul.

NORTH	
S K	
H QJ3	
D A93	
C QT6542	
WEST	EAST
S QJ63	S 52
H T864	H A52
D KQ62	D T8754
C 9	C K83
SOUTH	
S AT9874	
H K97	
D J	
C AJ7	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1C	Pass	1S
Pass	2C	Pass	2H
Pass	2NT	Pass	3S
Pass	4S	All pass	

South's 2H was to show a strong hand by changing suit, thereby setting up a forcing auction. The DK was led, won the ace, and the SK then led to unblock. Next came a heart, as declarer attempted to cross to hand to continue drawing trumps. How should East defend?

Ron Klinger, sitting East, rose with the HA and led the C3, trying to act like a man with a singleton club. Declarer fell for the ruse, taking the ace rather than try finesse and be defeated if the lead was indeed a singleton. Instead, declarer hoped that spades would break 3-3 or that if they were 4-2 there would be a doubleton honour.

As you see, this time spades were not friendly while the club finesse would have won if declarer had taken it. He had fallen for another brilliant Klinger defence.