WARWICK BRIDGE CLUB

Dealer: N *Vul*: N/S

NORTH
♠ 1094
♥ KQ7653
♦ 93
♣ 85

WEST
♠ K86532
♥ 108
♦ A
♣ 7642

EAST
♠ J2
♥ J843
♦ 87652
♣ 103

SOUTH
♠ AQ
♥ A
♦ KQJ104
♣ AKQJ9

Choosing a lead requires some thought,
Tony Hinde and Len Don, Monday winners,
take on Dianne Dawes and Carla Hall

It's not often that a humble nine can become a vital card for declarer. On Board 5 last Friday that card was the nine of diamonds, which is sometimes referred to as the "Curse of Scotland." The best-known explanation of this name is that after the British won the Battle of Culloden, the Duke of Cumberland wrote on a nine of diamonds playing card the order for his force to pursue the remnants of the Jacobite army.

A quick look at the monster hand held by South doesn't suggest that the nine of diamonds could play any important part in the play. At three of the five tables, South won the right to play in 3NT. At two tables West led a low spade, which was won by South's Queen. To force out the Ace of diamonds declarer could simply lead a small diamond towards the nine. West had to win with the Ace but there was no way to stop both declarers from winning twelve tricks. But what of the play when West led the seven of clubs?   This was a far better lead than a spade. The King should have lain in case declarer had no choice but to play the Queen.

Against the club lead Declarer still had a potential spade loser as well as a diamond if declarer was not careful. This time, on lead after beating East's ten of clubs with the Jack, declarer should immediately cash the Ace of hearts, followed by a high diamond. West perforce wins and does best to continue clubs but, back on lead, declarer can now use the four of diamonds to cross to dummy to cash a top heart and discard the Queen of spades. The four of diamonds was very useful as well. Again, twelve tricks were won.

Results:
Monday, 02/02/25 (4½-table Howell): T. Hinde L. Don (63.2) 1; R. Hart H. Price (57.6) 2; W. Milne J. Sipple (56.9) 3. J. Mobbs S. Goddard (55.6) 4.
Fri*day, 07/02/25* (5-table Mitchell): N/S N. Collins N. Bonnell (64.2) 1; C. Duggan S. Goddard (47.9) 2. E/W W. Milne J. Sipple (65.0) 1; J. Nankervis N. McGinness (62.5) 2.