

<https://bridgepathshala.com>

Sarangapni Club is a weekend hangout of 4 budding youngsters just out management school and trying to build careers in Information Technology Mumbai. Read tlink for details https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eXKsYJw7BDX-pegg53Acy4k8BVb_xzK7/view?usp=sharing

The Sarangpani club members were seated around their table, looking at the menu, wondering what to order. After ordering and initial pleasantries, the talk veered round to a deal that could have won them a crucial match. On both the tables, the contract had made. However, Padma had looked up the results on the other tables and found that the defense had prevailed on 3 of the 20 total tables the deal had been played.

Mystified, Prabha showed the hand to Kaushik, who had not played the hand. After studying the hand, Kaushik asked Prabha – “Didn’t you study American history in your short college stint in the US?” Prabha nodded. Kaushik continued, “Haven’t you heard about the Merrimac coup?” The phrase rang a bell and Prabha thought furiously trying to remember what she had learnt about it, just couple of years back. She finally said, “Isn’t that related to the Spanish-American war?”

On confirmation, she turned to the other members. “He is referring to the 1898 Spanish American war in Santiago de Cuba, where the strong Spanish ship fleet was in the harbor. The Americans had a large coal carrying steamship named Merrimack which the Americans deliberately sank in the middle of the harbor entrance, in an attempt to block the exit to the harbor and to bottle up the Spanish fleet inside the harbor.” She turned back to Kaushik and asked incredulously “But what does that have to do with Bridge and the hand we played”

Kaushik replied “The Merrimack coup in bridge is a grand stand play of deliberately sacrificing a high card and a trick or two to gain strategic advantage. On the deal, you should have sacrificed your king of diamond to block the entry to dummy’s long suit.” All the players looked at the hand once again in wonderment. “That is a truly brilliant maneuver, it would have never occurred to me” said Padma. “I also would have never known about the Merrimac and this interesting fact of history.”

“Bridge is such an interesting game, I am learning new things all the time. The high level thinking, strategy, tactics - it never ceases to surprise me” said Prabha. Kingo said “I knew about the Merrimac coup all the time. I hope that you recognize and implement it next time you get a chance.” “Yes, we certainly will” the other members agreed and added one more technique into their bridge arsenal. We will all know what to do if and when we meet up with the Spaniards

Padma looked up from her phone and said “This link - <http://youth.worldbridge.org/tag/merrimac-coup/> - gives you an example of the Merrimac coup, I will forward it to you all.”

Tailpiece. Goofy barked for attention and wanted to know if I remembered my taking him to a movie in the 1990’s. I scratched my head and figured out he must be referring to the movie with the quote “Kabhi kabhi jeetne ke liye kuch haarna bhi padta hai ... aur haar kar jeetne waale ko Bridge Player kehte hai”