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7 Ways to Win at Duplicate

by Pamela Granovetter

If your goal is to win more duplicates, I can suggest some very easy tips/strategies which come up fairly often.

Matthew and I recently won a local duplicate with a score of about 64% and our game included a couple of errors by us, an unlucky result or two, plus relatively few errors by the opponents. Making use of these tips (and facing opponents who failed to make use of them!), however, was good enough to carry us through to a win, even though we weren't "dealt" a big game.

Here's what happened.

1. First try this as a bidding problem:

North dealer • None vul

You, South, hold:

♠ Q 7 5 ♥ 6 2 ♦ J 6 4 2 ♣ K Q J 7

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| — | 1 ♦ | 2 ♥ | ? |

I imagine that many people believe there is no choice but to make a negative double with this hand. Unfortunately for them, the next hand bids 4♥ and partner bids 4♠. You have nowhere to go, so you pass, but West doubles:

| West | North | East | South |
|--------|-------|------|--------|
| — | 1 ♦ | 2 ♥ | double |
| 4 ♥ | 4 ♠ | pass | pass |
| double | pass | pass | ? |

♠ Q 7 5 ♥ 6 2 ♦ J 6 4 2 ♣ K Q J 7

Should you pass out four-spades-doubled and hope for the best, or run to 4NT, asking partner to choose a minor? What if partner is 4-2-4-3? Playing in 5♦x might be a disaster. What to do, what to do....

Tip #1: Do not make a negative double without four-cards in the unbid major. It's true that your hand warrants a bid over their 2♥ bid, so bid 3♦. If your partner demands that you have five-card support for a raise of a minor, then you must bite the bullet and pass.

If you bid 3♦, West bids 4♥, and partner still bids 4♠. This time you can comfortably pass 4♠, because you already denied four of them, and your queen-third is a nice holding for partner under the circumstances. When West doubles 4♠, partner knows what to do himself — in this case, he runs to 5♦, which is doubled, down one trick, for a good save against their cold 4♥ game. The whole hand was:

North dealer North
 None vul ♠ A K 10 3
 ♥ J
 ♦ A 9 8 7 5 3
 ♣ 5 3

West East
 ♠ J 9 6 4 2 ♠ 8
 ♥ Q 8 5 4 ♥ A K 10 9 7 3
 ♦ K Q ♦ 10
 ♣ A 4 ♣ 10 9 8 6 2

South
 ♠ Q 7 5
 ♥ 6 2
 ♦ J 6 4 2
 ♣ K Q J 7

Four spades doubled would not have been a success. Suppose North ruffs the second high heart, and plays ace and a dia-

mond. West wins and returns a spade. West will be able to play spades twice more, and declarer ends up taking only four spades and three diamond tricks for -500, a zero. Partner might go down 300 if he pitches on the second heart, but will he? The play then becomes quite complicated, after a third round of hearts.

It's also true that you might survive on this particular deal if you guess to run to 5♦ (partner certainly won't!), but on another day, partner's hand is:

♠ A K 10 3 ♥ 7 3 ♦ A 8 7 5 3 ♣ A 5,
 and once partner bids 4♠ over 4♥, your side rates to go minus for a poor result no matter what you do. You should have been defending 4♥ doubled....

2. Here's another bidding problem.

North dealer • East-West vul
 You, North, hold:
 ♠ A K 2 ♥ J ♦ A 7 ♣ K J 9 8 6 4 3

| | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| — | 1 ♣ | 2 NT* | pass |
| 3 ♦ | 4 ♣ | pass | pass |
| 4 ♦ | ? | | |

*hearts and diamonds

At the table, North sold out to 4♦, and scored +50 instead of +400. South held:
 ♠ Q J 10 7 3 ♥ 9 8 5 3 ♦ 6 ♣ Q 10 2

Do you think South should have bid 5♣ over 4♣, or at least in pass-out seat? Perhaps, but meanwhile North had an extra ace for his bidding.

Tip #2: If you have an extra ace for your bidding, you must take another call. Since North would have bid 4♣ at this vulnerability without the ace of diamonds, he must double 4♦. South will bid 5♣ over the double, which is an easy make. It's true that West may ending up finding a good save in 5♦ (he had:
 ♠ x x x ♥ x x x ♦ K J 10 8 x ♣ A x),
 but at worst you score +300 for an average+ rather than +50 for a zero.

By the way, here's a bonus tip: Notice how well West did to "walk the dog" with his cards. Had he "pushed the opponents around" with an immediate 4♦ bid, he would have pushed them right into their cold 5♣ game.

3. Try this problem on defense.

North dealer North (dummy)
 N-S vul ♠ A K J 8
 ♥ 10 8
 ♦ A 6 5
 ♣ J 10 7 5

♥ 5



East (you)
 ♠ 10 6 3
 ♥ A K 7 3 2
 ♦ 3 2
 ♣ Q 4 3

| | | | |
|------------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| — | 1 ♣ | 1 ♥ | 1 ♠ |
| pass | 2 ♠ | pass | 4 ♠ |
| (all pass) | | | |

Opening lead: ♥5

You win the ♥K and cash the ace, as partner follows with the 9, and declarer the 4 and jack. Your play.

On this board, declarer was presented with an easy overtrick thanks to busy defense:

North dealer North (dummy)
 N-S vul ♠ A K J 8
 ♥ 10 8
 ♦ A 6 5
 ♣ J 10 7 5

West
 ♠ 4
 ♥ Q 9 6 5
 ♦ Q 9 8 7
 ♣ 9 8 6 2

East
 ♠ 10 6 3
 ♥ A K 7 3 2
 ♦ 3 2
 ♣ Q 4 3

South
 ♠ Q 9 7 5 2
 ♥ J 4
 ♦ K J 10 4
 ♣ A K

| | | | |
|------------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| — | 1 ♣ | 1 ♥ | 1 ♠ |
| pass | 2 ♠ | pass | 4 ♠ |
| (all pass) | | | |

Opening lead: ♥5


On the second high heart, West followed with the 9, suit-preference for diamonds. East switched to a diamond and that was that.

Tip #3: Be cautious about breaking their side suits.

You might think that West was entitled to show his diamond honor, since his queen was accompanied by such strong spot cards, and a diamond play by East was consequently in order, but what was the point? Why flag defensive honors to declarer?

West should not advertise his queen of diamonds, and once he did, East should ignore his signal (hoping declarer didn't notice or can't read the heart spot) and shift to a trump. Granted, East is looking at A-6-5 in dummy and not the K-J-10, but there is no reason to break diamonds. If declarer is 3-3 in the minors, a diamond is going away on a club, and there's nothing East can do about it. Declarer jumped to game and must hold most of the points in the minors, so a diamond shift can't help.

4. Again you are East:

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------|---|--------------|
| East dealer | North (dummy) | | East (you) |
| All vul | ♠ Q 10 6 | | ♠ — |
| | ♥ K 7 2 | | ♥ A Q 10 |
| | ♦ Q 8 | | ♦ K 10 9 4 2 |
| | ♣ A K 9 3 2 | | ♣ J 8 7 6 5 |
| | |  | |

| | | | |
|------------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| — | — | 1 ♦* | 2 ♠ |
| pass | 3 ♦ | pass | 4 ♠ |
| (all pass) | | | |

*not a recommended opening bid
Opening lead: ♦A

What diamond card do you play at trick one? Assume standard signals.

Tip #4: Do not signal attitude for the opening lead until you have thought about the whole hand.

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| East dealer | North | | East |
| All vul | ♠ Q 10 6 | | ♠ — |
| | ♥ K 7 2 | | ♥ A Q 10 |
| | ♦ Q 8 | | ♦ K 10 9 4 2 |
| | ♣ A K 9 3 2 | | ♣ J 8 7 6 5 |
| West | | South | |
| ♠ 4 3 2 | | ♠ A K J 9 8 7 5 | |
| ♥ 9 8 6 5 | | ♥ J 4 3 | |
| ♦ A J 7 5 | | ♦ 6 3 | |
| ♣ 10 4 | | ♣ Q | |

East didn't need West to play a diamond; she did, however, need a heart played through dummy's king. Therefore, the proper signal is the deuce of diamonds, which asks partner to play something else (obviously, a heart).

5. South dealer • None vul

You, East, hold:

♠ 10 9 ♥ A Q 4 ♦ J 10 9 ♣ A 10 8 7 5

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| South | West | North | East |
| pass | pass | 1 ♠ | ? |

Tip #5: Avoid overcalling two-of-a-minor with a five-card suit, particularly with a balanced, minimum hand.

The correct bid with the East hand is "double." Many duplicate players, however, prefer to overcall with a five-card minor at the two level rather than double without four cards in the other major. This is a losing strategy. The East hand in this case has nice three-card support for both red suits, and East therefore should not put all his eggs in one basket with a two-club overcall.

| | | | |
|------------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| — | — | 1 ♦ | 2 ♠ |
| pass | 3 ♦ | pass | 4 ♠ |
| (all pass) | | | |

Opening lead: ♦A

East hastily played the ♦10 at trick one, so West continued with another diamond and the hand could no longer be defeated. This is a baby tip for anyone who plays Switch-in-Time defense, because using that method you *always* must consider the whole hand before playing at trick one.

South dealer North
 None vul ♠ A 6 3 2
 ♥ 9 5 2
 ♦ A K 8
 ♣ 9 6 4

| | |
|--|---|
| West ♠ Q J 5 ♥ J 8 ♦ 6 4 3 2 ♣ K J 3 2 | East ♠ 10 9 ♥ A Q 4 ♦ J 10 9 ♣ A 10 8 7 5 |
|--|---|

South
 ♠ K 8 7 4
 ♥ K 10 7 6 3
 ♦ Q 7 5
 ♣ Q

| | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| South pass 3 ♠ | West pass 4 ♣ | North 1 ♠ double | East 2 ♣ (all pass) |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|

West's raise to 4♣ was ill advised with his flat shape and spade wastage, but it was difficult to resist supporting partner with king-jack-fourth in partner's suit.

Notice that North's four-card major opening bid precipitated the East-West disaster, but East-West would have survived after a takeout double by East:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| South pass 2 NT | West pass pass | North 1 ♠ 3 ♠ | East double (all pass) |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|

The average result was +140 N-S.

Tip: Don't overcall 2♣ or 2♦ with a five-card suit when a takeout double is possible.

6. What would you do in first seat, vul vs. not, with:
 ♠ J 6 ♥ A 9 7 4 3 2 ♦ 9 8 ♣ K 8 5

One thing that separates the men from the boys is respect for the vulnerability. Over the years I have won many matchpoints (and imps for that matter) against opponents who open this sort of hand with a weak two-bid. I also win many matchpoints (and imps) by holding this sort of hand myself and saying *pass*. Once again, that's all we had to do to win the board.

With a possible misfit, and facing a third-seat opening, West decided to bid conservatively, and East-West scored +150 (losing one trick in each suit) for a cold zero.

After a 2♥ opening bid, the bidding goes pass-pass-double, all pass, and the result isn't pretty — declarer takes one spade, three hearts, and a club, for -800.

| | |
|--|---|
| South dealer N-S vul West ♠ K Q 9 ♥ K Q 10 8 ♦ 3 ♣ J 7 4 3 2 | North ♠ A 8 7 4 ♥ 6 ♦ K 6 5 4 2 ♣ 10 9 6 East ♠ 10 5 3 2 ♥ J 5 ♦ A Q J 10 7 ♣ A Q South ♠ J 6 ♥ A 9 7 4 3 2 ♦ 9 8 ♣ K 8 5 |
|--|---|

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| South pass 1 ♥ | West pass 1 NT | North pass (all pass) | East 1 ♦ |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|

It's true that West might have passed the 1♥ overcall around hoping for a reopening double and a nice penalty, or she might have jumped to 2NT, but even so her result would have been well below average!

7. South dealer • East-West vul

You, South, hold:

♠ J 8 3 2 ♥ A ♦ A Q 10 8 4 ♣ 10 9 3

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| South | West | North | East |
| pass | 1 ♣ | 4 ♥ | 4 NT |
| ? | | | |

I haven't mentioned the amount of matchpoints that go flying our way thanks to light opening bids; perhaps I will get to that in another how-to-win-duplicate-games column. But here we were, once again, beneficiaries of the light-opening-bid virus combined with thoughtful partnership bidding by our side.

Tip #7: Help your partner find the right lead by making a thoughtful lead-directing bid.

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------|
| South dealer | North | |
| E-W vul | ♠ 7 | |
| | ♥ 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 | |
| | ♦ J 9 2 | |
| | ♣ 4 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ A 6 5 4 | | ♠ K Q 10 8 |
| ♥ — | | ♥ K Q J 10 |
| ♦ 7 6 | | ♦ K 5 3 |
| ♣ A J 8 7 6 5 2 | | ♣ K Q |
| | South | |
| | ♠ J 9 3 2 | |
| | ♥ A | |
| | ♦ A Q 10 8 4 | |
| | ♣ 10 9 3 | |

South was a passed hand, so the 5♦ bid was obviously for the lead and promised a fit (it was reasonable to expect North to hold stronger hearts but as it was, -500 rated to be a good score against their vulnerable game). West's 6♣ bid was possibly the king response to 5NT, and East did great to pass.

Nevertheless, North led a diamond. South won the ♦Q and cashed the ace, for +200 and a top score. Notice that the slam makes easily after any lead but a diamond.

(By the way, how did South know to cash the ace of diamonds rather than the ace of hearts? Knowing North's hearts were so weak, South expected partner to hold 8 of them. In addition, North might have bid 6♦ over 6♣ with 4 diamonds. Yes, third-and-fifth best leads would work well here.)

| | | | |
|--------|------------|-------|----------|
| South | West | North | East |
| pass | 1 ♣ | 4 ♥ | 4 NT (1) |
| 5 ♦ | 5 ♥ (2) | pass | 5 NT (3) |
| pass | 6 ♣ | pass | pass |
| double | (all pass) | | |

I hope these tips will be useful to you in future duplicates. If they are, please drop me a line and tell me about it! You can write to me at pam@bridgetoday.com.

- (1) meant as Blackwood (some play this as minors)
- (2) "DOPI" response, showing two aces
- (3) Poor East was off two aces and had nowhere to go; in your partnership would 5♠ still be the sign-off to 5NT? This pair hadn't discussed it and East no doubt hoped she would be allowed to play in 5NT.

Opening lead: ♦2

Kantar's Korner
by Eddie Kantar



How Can This be Wrong?

If a sequence seldom comes up, that doesn't mean you shouldn't assign some practical meaning to it — if it can bring in a bushel basket of points when it does come up. Consider this sequence:

| | |
|--------|----------------|
| Opener | Responder |
| 1 NT | 4 ♦ (transfer) |
| 4 ♥ | 4 ♠ |

What does 4♠ mean in this sequence?

My feeling is that it should be a "picture bid" (hello, Alvin Roth, are you there?) showing an 8 winner hand. Responder can have:

- (1) 7 solid (A-K-Q) hearts with the ace of the next bid suit.
- (2) 6 solid (A-K-Q-J) hearts with the ace-king of the next bid suit.
- (3) 7 hearts missing the ace with the A-K of the next bid suit.

Furthermore, responder cannot have a void or a singleton (this can be shown via another sequence — coming up in a minute) . Let's look at some carefully crafted examples to win you over.

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Opener | Responder |
| ♠ K Q x | ♠ A x |
| ♥ x x x | ♥ A K Q x x x x |
| ♦ A K x x | ♦ x x |
| ♣ A x x | ♣ x x x |
| 1 NT | 4 ♦ |
| 4 ♥ | 4 ♠ |
| 7 NT | |

Opener knows responder must have 7 solid hearts plus the ♠A. Voila, 13 tricks.

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Opener | Responder |
| ♠ Q J x | ♠ x x |
| ♥ x x x | ♥ A K Q J x x x |
| ♦ K Q J | ♦ A x |
| ♣ A Q x x | ♣ x x |
| 1 NT | 4 ♦ |
| 4 ♥ | 5 ♦ |
| 5 NT | pass |

In these sequences where opener knows responder's exact hand, there's no need to ask any further questions. Anytime the opener bids 4NT or 5NT, it's to play. Bidding 5NT means that the opponents have two taking tricks in one of the unbid suits.

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Opener | Responder |
| ♠ A x x | ♠ K Q J x x x x |
| ♥ x x x | ♥ A K |
| ♦ K Q J x | ♦ x x |
| ♣ K Q 10 | ♣ x x |

| | |
|------|------|
| 1 NT | 4 ♥ |
| 4 ♠ | 5 ♥ |
| 5 NT | pass |

Opener, holding the ♠A, knows responder has seven spades headed by the K-Q-J along with the A-K blank of hearts. (Responder is not supposed to have a singleton or a void.) Why not play it in an absolutely safe contract?

What if responder has the same high-card strength with a singleton? Say responder has:

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Opener | Responder |
| ♠ x x | ♠ A K Q x x x x |
| ♥ K Q x x | ♥ A x |
| ♦ Q J x x | ♦ x |
| ♣ A K x | ♣ x x x |
| 1 NT | 2 ♥ |
| 2 ♠ | 4 ♦ |
| 4 ♠ | 5 ♥ |
| 6 ♠ | pass |

What's going on? Responder transfers to spades, this time at the two level, and then jumps to 4♦ to show a singleton. Opener signs off at 4♠ and responder bids 5♥ to show the ♥A, seven spades headed by at

least the A-K-Q, a singleton diamond and no club control. Opener can count 12 tricks: 7 spades, 3 hearts and 2 clubs.

Can this method be used after a 2NT opening bid? Yes, but the responder does not need an 8-winner hand. Seven winners are enough to guarantee five-level safety. This time responder makes a four-level transfer and then bids a new suit holding:

- (1) a six-card solid major (A-K-Q-J-x-x) with an outside ace in the next bid suit.
- (2) a five-card solid major (A-K-Q-J-x) with an outside A-K in the next bid suit
- (3) a seven-card major lacking the ace (K-Q-J-x-x-x-x) plus the Ace in the bid suit.

Because of space constrictions, responder can have a singleton. There still may be room to sort it out.

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Opener | Responder |
| ♠ A x | ♠ K Q J x x x x |
| ♥ A K J x | ♥ x x |
| ♦ Q J x | ♦ x |
| ♣ K Q J x | ♣ A x x |

| | |
|--------|-----------|
| Opener | Responder |
| 2 NT | 4 ♥ |
| 4 ♠ | 5 ♣ |
| 5 ♥ | 6 ♠ |
| pass | |

Looking at the ♠A, opener knows responder has seven spades to the K-Q-J along with the ♣A. What opener doesn't know is whether responder has the needed singleton diamond or not. Opener cuebids 5♥ indicating a diamond problem and responder with a singleton diamond bids 6♠. Had opener cuebid 5♦, responder, with x-x in hearts, would sign off in 5♠.

In Conclusion

I'm pretty sure this idea can be expanded, but at least you have something to start with and surely improve upon. For example, I couldn't figure out how to work in A-Q-J-10-x-x-(x) suits without having opener hold x-x-(x), having to guess whether responder has a solid suit or a suit missing the king. If you want to tinker with 5NT, you can probably work it out, but then you can't use 5NT to play, a big winner at matchpoints. Perhaps at imps you could bid the same way with an A-Q-J-x-x-x-(x) suit as with a solid suit and then use 5NT to ask partner to bid 7 with a solid suit and to sign off at 6 with an A-Q-J suit.

Ciao.

Around the world with 52 cards

by Migry Zur Campanile



Thinking back over the recent excitement from Estoril and its nerve-racking Bermuda Bowl final, screened in real time for all to watch thanks to that wonder of wonders, the online Vugraph, it is difficult to reconcile ourselves with a time when the only detailed information from major events came from brief newspaper articles and tournament bulletins. The latter were stock-piled by the participants and became bridgistic gold dust for the majority of information-starved players waiting for them back home.

Not many know that the first tentative steps of our game on the information superhighway were made in 1994, when the World Teams and Pairs Championships were held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and for the first time ever the tournament bulletins were posted on a yet sparsely populated internet.

Founded by the Spanish in 1706, Albuquerque has quite a few interesting spots, most of them conveniently located along Central Avenue, the famous *Route 66*: The Old Town is the old Spanish part of the city, and well worth a look. Its center is the Old Town Plaza and the San Felipe de Neri

church, which look just the way you would imagine an old Spanish town center to look – complete with endless arrays of souvenir shops.

The championships took place at the end of summer from September 17 to October 1, and those who are familiar with the weather in New Mexico will know that summer in Albuquerque means one thing: heat. OK, there are probably a few other things going on too, bridge being one of them, but the major activity for residents and visitors alike seemed to be finding ways to avoid the oppressive heat.

During the fortnight of my stay it was often explained to me that mid-September should usually see a progressive cooling of the average summer temperatures, which are steadily in the high 90's.

Unfortunately nobody had bothered to tell the Great Shuffler in the Sky that he had left the heat on too long! To make things worse the effects of the heat are sharply intensified by the fact that Albuquerque is almost a mile above sea level: The air is thinner, and so the sun is more intense. On the plus side the heat is a dry

heat, which is infinitely more bearable than its humid counterpart.

Anyway, shuttling from air-conditioned motel in an air-conditioned car to the air-conditioned playing venue was not so bad. It certainly gave us a chance to concentrate on our bridge without outside distractions. The tournament was one of missed opportunities: We managed to surprise ourselves by getting to the quarterfinals of the

McConnell with a four-man (well actually woman) team, including the sponsor, only to lose a tight match to a strong USA team, which would eventually win the competition. In the Ladies Pairs, we finished sixth after leading at the half-way point.

Here is an instructive hand from the McConnell quarterfinals, where for one of the defenders the ace of trumps got too hot to handle!

| | | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|-------|
| East dealer | North | | |
| N-S vul | ♠ A J | | |
| | ♥ K 10 7 4 | | |
| | ♦ K Q 10 9 | | |
| | ♣ A Q 5 | | |
| | ♠ 4 | | |
| | South | | |
| | ♠ 7 3 | | |
| | ♥ Q 9 3 2 | | |
| | ♦ A 6 5 | | |
| | ♣ 10 9 8 6 | | |
| West | North | East | South |
| — | — | 2 ♠ | pass |
| pass | double | pass | 3 ♥ |
| pass | 4 ♥ | (all pass) | |

Opening lead: ♠ 4

After a normal sounding auction I was left to tackle a 4♥ contract, which seemed to depend on guessing the ♥J and, failing that, a super-friendly club layout. I could see no benefit in ducking and several potential dangers (like a club switch and an ensuing ruff if the ♥A is with West), so I won the ♠A and played a heart to the queen. Surprisingly, it held. This may be easier than expected, I thought, as I continued with a heart, small from West, 10 ... ♥J

from East! I was not a happy camper now and soon had to make another guess. East played back the ♠Q, overtaken by West with the king, and the ♣3 hit the table next.


Coming from a competent player the club switch could be from anything, including K-J-x. East, however, had already shown up with seven points and was known to be a free-spirit where light openings are concerned, so I assessed the chance of her holding the ♣K and not opening 1♠ at green vs red as remote. Should I then put all my declarer eggs in the club double-finesse basket or was there an appealing alternative?

What would you do?

East so far had shown six spades and three hearts, so by taking the "safe" club finesse I could probably find out more about her minors. Therefore, I played the ♣Q, which held, and then the ♣A, on which East played the jack. It looked as if she started with a 6-3-2-2 shape and that was just what the doctor ordered for a speedy recovery of my 4♥ contract!

Can you see what happened?

One of the most treasured bits of advice that I give to my pupils is: "Do not play the Ace of Trumps unnecessarily early, as then you will have relinquished control of the hand." As always, however, all rules have their exceptions and this hand proves how holding on to the ace too long can be equally fatal. This is the position we reached:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>West</p> <p>♠ 9</p> <p>♥ —</p> <p>♦ J 8 7 3</p> <p>♣ K 7</p> |  | <p>North</p> <p>♠ —</p> <p>♥ K 4</p> <p>♦ K Q 10 9</p> <p>♣ 5</p> <p>East</p> <p>♠ 10 8 6 5</p> <p>♥ A</p> <p>♦ 4 2</p> <p>♣ —</p> |
| <p>South</p> <p>♠ —</p> <p>♥ 9 3</p> <p>♦ A 6 5</p> <p>♣ 10 9</p> | | |

It was now easy to cash two rounds of diamonds and exit with a heart. East had no choice but to give me a ruff-and-sluff, which took care of the club loser.

Here is the complete hand:

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>East dealer</p> <p>N-S vul</p> | <p>North</p> <p>♠ A J</p> <p>♥ K 10 7 4</p> <p>♦ K Q 10 9</p> <p>♣ A Q 5</p> | |
| <p>West</p> <p>♠ K 9 4</p> <p>♥ 8 5</p> <p>♦ J 8 7 3</p> <p>♣ K 7 3 2</p> | <p>East</p> <p>♠ Q 10 8 6 5 2</p> <p>♥ A J 6</p> <p>♦ 4 2</p> <p>♣ J 4</p> | |
| | <p>South</p> <p>♠ 7 3</p> <p>♥ Q 9 3 2</p> <p>♦ A 6 5</p> <p>♣ 10 9 8 6</p> | |

Naturally, a sharper defender could have ensured my defeat by cashing the ♥A and then playing the ♠Q, but such a play is far from automatic at single dummy and certainly not obvious, as one needs to have the power to break a rule so deeply ingrained.

Diary of the World Championships (week two)

by Jan and Chip Martel

[When we last left the Martels, in the November issue of Bridge Today, they were reporting the first week of the Estoril tournament, where Jan was captain of the USAI seniors' team, and Chip was coach. The team makes it to the KO stage, and Chip meanwhile heads off to play in the Transnational team event. . . .]

11/1 Tuesday (reported by Jan)

Chip has started play in the Transnationals, so I'm taking over the diarist job. As a result, you'll get fewer bridge hands today and more "color." Our quarter-final match against the French team is a captain's joy – we start with an 11-imp carryover from the round-robin and add a bit each quarter to win comfortably.

The other match in our bracket, between USA2 and Netherlands is, to bring back some memories, "a ding-dong battle." In fact, this match is the closest of the quarter-final matches when the Vugraph organizers have to decide which final segment to show, so I can sit in the comfort of the beautiful Vugraph theatre to scout our semi-final opponents. The theatre is a sea of orange, as the Netherlands' Senior and Women teams are both in close matches. The Dutch supporters have the pleasure of cheering both of their teams home to victory. They are able to cheer not only for the on-screen Seniors, but also for the Women, because of a wonderful innovation that allows real-time scores from all the matches to be shown, thanks to a small Dutch company that makes Bridgemate machines. Each table has a little keypad on which the players enter the score as soon as a hand is

completed – the Bridgemate machine has a standard 10 key pad, plus buttons for ♠, ♥, ♦, ♣ and NT, DBL, RDBL, +, -, =, A, K, Q & J, N/S and E/W. So the person entering the result can enter the board number, contract, direction (one push of the N/S button gets N, a second push gets S) and result. The machines are connected wirelessly to a computer, where the scores from both tables are entered, and thus the Vugraph audience can see the contracts at all the tables, the results, and running scores from all the matches. In addition, these data are being posted on the Swangames Internet site, so supporters at home have real-time scores available. I think it's a great innovation and look forward to having the machines at United States tournaments. (I can promise that we'll be using them for the United States Bridge Championship (our team trials) in August; can't make any promises about ACBL tournaments.)

At the end of the day, our semi-final opponent is Netherlands, after a well-played and close match with USA2. The semi-final captains' meeting is held in the room that will be the closed room for all of the semi-final matches, and up until today has been the meeting room for the WBF Executives, many of whom apparently smoke. When I walk into the room I can tell that if something isn't done about the air quality I will have several very unhappy players, so after the draw for seating rights, I ask whether anything can be done. Ton Kooijman, the miracle worker who is in charge of logistics for the tournament, promises to do his very best to get the air conditioning turned on as early as possible in the morning, and also

politely looks the other way as I open the window in the room. By morning, Ton has worked his magic and the air in the closed room is actually better than that in the Open room.

11/2 Wednesday

We get off to a good start against the Netherlands, and lead 159-83 at the half (48 hands to go). In the Transnational teams Chip's team is not doing as well, but still in the hunt.

Our team continues to do well in the

Our opponents resign with one segment to play, so I can hang out in the Vugraph room again, and will therefore report on one hand from the Bermuda Bowl semifinal (between the two USA teams) that impressed me:

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------|--|
| East dealer | North | | |
| Both vul | ♠ 2 | | |
| | ♥ K 10 7 3 | | |
| | ♦ Q 10 5 3 2 | | |
| | ♣ A K 5 | | |
| West | | East | |
| ♠ 9 5 4 | | ♠ K Q J 8 7 6 3 | |
| ♥ A J 8 | | ♥ 9 4 | |
| ♦ A J 9 6 4 | | ♦ 8 | |
| ♣ 10 7 | | ♣ 9 4 2 | |
| | South | | |
| | ♠ A 10 | | |
| | ♥ Q 6 5 2 | | |
| | ♦ K 7 | | |
| | ♣ Q J 8 6 3 | | |

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| <i>Hamman</i> | <i>Greco</i> | <i>Soloway</i> | <i>Hampson</i> |
| — | — | 2 ♠ | pass |
| 3 ♠ | double | pass | 4 ♥ |
| (all pass) | | | |

The ♠9 is led to the jack and ace, and

semi-finals, eventually winning by 105 imps. The other match in our event is close throughout and Indonesia eventually wins by 14 imps. Interestingly, the same pattern develops in both the Bermuda Bowl and Venice Cup, with the match involving the round-robin winners (Italy vs Sweden and France vs USA1 — Italy and France having won the round-robin in the Bermuda Bowl and Venice Cup) being relatively one-sided, and the matches involving the other two teams (USA1 vs USA2 in the Bermuda Bowl and Germany vs Netherlands in the Venice Cup) close.

after much thought declarer (Geoff Hampson), leads the ♥Q. It is obvious to the Vugraph audience and also (I am confident) to the players that he's worried about 4-1 trumps. West (Bob Hamman) wins the ♥A and leads a second spade, ruffed in dummy. After some more thought, Geoff leads a diamond to the king and ace. Hamman returns a diamond for Soloway to ruff, and now comes the play that impresses me — Soloway returns a low club instantly. He's obviously trying to look like someone who now has the stiff ♥J and doesn't want to tap dummy, forcing declarer to drop the jack.*

Hampson very reasonably plays Paul for 6-3-1-3 distribution and plays the ♥K for down one. Of course, I don't know that he'd get the hearts right if Paul made the "routine" spade return, but I certainly wouldn't be surprised if he did.

One more story – after the captains' meeting, all the captains are congregating at

*In this case, that wouldn't happen, since declarer has only two spades and can ruff a spade return in his hand, but declarer may assume that East doesn't know how many spades South holds.

the lineup desk getting ready to turn in our lineups, but the WBF computer that prints the lineup sheets is malfunctioning, so there aren't any sheets for us to fill out. After a while it occurs to me that we don't really need official sheets, so I go over to the Indonesian captain and tell him what our lineup will be (they have the seed, so we submit first). Then he tells me his lineup, we write it all out on a blank sheet of paper and sign the paper and both of us go off leaving the

rest of the captains still waiting for the official forms!

11/3 Thursday (reported by Chip)

After 15 ten-board matches, my team qualified for the KO in the Transnationals (top 8 qualified and we snuck into 8th by one point with good wins in our final four matches. Meanwhile, our USA team is not doing well in the Seniors' final, down by 50 to Indonesia after 32 of 96 boards.

Here are a couple of hands that were big for us. In the last match of the day I held:
 ♠ 10 9 2 ♥ A K Q 10 9 6 5 4 2 ♦ — ♣ K.

Both vul, 1♣ on my right. I tried 4♥ and it went 5♦ (after some thought), pass-pass back to me. Well, a void and nine solid seemed like a hand to bid on, so I bid 5♥. Forcing pass, pass by partner, 6♦. I pass, pass on my left, double by Mark Feldman, my partner — the end. The full deal was this:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>West (Mark)</p> <p>♠ J 8 7 6 5 4 3</p> <p>♥ —</p> <p>♦ J 10 8 7</p> <p>♣ 10 2</p> | <p>East (Chip)</p> <p>♠ 10 9 2</p> <p>♥ A K Q 10 9 6 5 4 2</p> <p>♦ —</p> <p>♣ K</p> |
|--|--|

| |
|---------------|
| North |
| ♠ Q |
| ♥ J 8 7 |
| ♦ Q 6 5 |
| ♣ A Q 7 6 5 3 |
| ♠ South |
| ♠ A K |
| ♥ 3 |
| ♦ A K 9 4 3 2 |
| ♣ J 9 8 4 |

| | | | |
|--------|------------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| — | 1 ♣ | 4 ♥ | 5 ♦ |
| pass | pass | 5 ♥ | pass |
| pass | 6 ♦ | pass | pass |
| double | (all pass) | | |

On a spade lead, declarer played trumps and found out about the bad break. He then had to guess clubs, and took the normal play of a club finesse (perhaps further indicated by Mark's double of 6♦). I won the ♣K and cashed a heart for down two. Note that in 5♦ you can afford to play the ♣A to guard against stiff king (if K-x is on-side, you make five anyway, since LHO has no heart to cash). Teammates Roy Welland and Björn Fallenius defended 5♥ doubled, down one, to pick up 12 imps.

Another big swing was a system triumph for Roy and Björn:

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| Opener | Responder |
| ♠ — | ♠ Q J 10 x x |
| ♥ K Q 10 x | ♥ J 9 x x x |
| ♦ A 9 x x x | ♦ K x |
| ♣ K Q x x | ♣ x |

Our opponents bid 1♦-1♠; 2♣-2♦ and made it. Roy-Björn bid 1♦-1♠; 2♦, showing hearts and diamonds, not enough to reverse. Now they reached 4♥ and made it against normal splits. (They play 1♦ promises an unbalanced hand, and play transfer rebids after 1♦-1M; so here, 1NT would show clubs, 2♣ would be a rebid of diamonds and 2♦ shows hearts — opener had to choose whether to show diamonds and clubs or diamonds and hearts and chose the

latter since hearts are more important). Jan and I also have been playing this method for the past year or so.

In the quarterfinals of the Transnationals we play Rita Shugart's team: Shugart and Andrew Robson, Adam Zmudzinski and Cezary Balicki. We sit out the first half while teammates Bart Bramley and Warren Spector play with Roy and Björn, and are down by six (mostly because our team bids a good slam, down on a specific lead and bad split). This same hand also costs us in the Seniors, where the hands are duplicated. Still, Lew Stansby and Roger Bates, Peter Weichsel and Alan Sontag have a good final set of the day to close within 16 imps at the half.

I apply Kit Woolsey's theory to make a winning lead here:

♠ Q x x ♥ J x x ♦ x x x ♣ K 8 x x

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------------|
| South | West | North | East |
| 1 NT | pass | 2 ♦ | pass |
| 2 ♥ | pass | 3 NT | (all pass) |

Hearts look friendly, so it seems we need a five-card suit to beat 3NT (Kit's theory is to try to lead a suit you or your partner have five of, while four-card suits are not so good, since there are not enough tricks set up). I try a low spade (prefer spades to diamonds because there was no double of 2♦ by partner) and find partner with the ♠A-J-x-x-x and an ace. Down one. 3NT makes easily on any other lead.

On an early deal Andrew Robson takes about 20 minutes to defend a hand. He finds a killing defense but this will cost him later.

The hand is a 3NT contract. Put yourself in Andrew's seat (East):

Dummy
 ♠ A 10 9 8
 ♥ Q 10 x x
 ♦ 9
 ♣ J 9 8 x

♥ 2



East (Andrew/you)
 ♠ K Q x x
 ♥ x x
 ♦ J x x x x
 ♣ A 10

Declarer has shown about 19 balanced without a four-card major or five-card diamond suit. Partner leads a fourth best ♥2 to declarer's king. Declarer leads a club to the 9 and your 10, and you play a high diamond spot back (partner playing a middle spot) as declarer wins the king. Declarer now leads the ♣K to your ace. Fifteen minutes later or so Andrew leads a low spade. The full hand:

Dummy
 ♠ A 10 9 8
 ♥ Q 10 x x
 ♦ 9
 ♣ J 9 8 x

West (Rita)
 ♠ J x
 ♥ J x x x
 ♦ 10 x x
 ♣ Q x x x

East (Andrew)
 ♠ K Q x x
 ♥ x x
 ♦ J x x x x
 ♣ A 10

South
 ♠ x x x
 ♥ A K x
 ♦ A K Q x
 ♣ K x x

Declarer could make by winning the ♠A and playing a spade back or by ducking the ♠J and winning the next spade (then playing clubs), but was afraid of losing two spades and three clubs. So declarer ducked two rounds of spades, hoping for a 3-3 split, and was down. How did Andrew find this? He figured if declarer had ♠J-x-x, he'd be playing that suit, not the shabby club suit.

Things go well for us the rest of the set, though the table is in time trouble. The final deal is a tricky 3NT played by Andrew. Believe it or not, we win 28 imps on this hand!

North
 ♠ A 8 x
 ♥ A x x
 ♦ x x
 ♣ A 10 9 7 x

South (Andy)
 ♠ J 9 x
 ♥ Q 10 x x
 ♦ A K Q J
 ♣ 8 x

| | |
|-------|-------|
| South | North |
| 1 ♣ | 1 ♥ |
| 2 ♣ | 3 NT |

The auction is not pretty, but there you are. A middle diamond (attitude leads) is won in hand, and Andy passes the ♣8 to the queen. A spade back, low, 10, low. Another low spade, low, king, 9, and a third spade to the jack, queen and ace. At this point time expires. Andy next plays 14 minutes later! He cashes the ♥A and leads a heart, won by the king onside to cash the last spade, down one (and we gain 12, since Roy gets a spade lead and plays hearts successfully: ♥A and low to the queen, finding K-x-x onside). In addition, Andrew loses 16 imps in slow-play penalties. Fortunately, we won by 17 even without the penalty.

11/4 Friday

In the semifinals (32 boards) my Transnational team plays the Chinese national team (who just missed making the KO in the Bermuda Bowl when they got trounced in the final match of the round-robin, and fell from fourth to tenth).

We pick up a big swing on this hand from the first half:

| | | |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| East dealer | ♠ A Q 9 5 | |
| None vul | ♥ K 3 | |
| | ♦ K 4 | |
| | ♣ A Q 7 5 4 | |
| ♠ J 4 2 | | ♠ K |
| ♥ A Q J 7 | | ♥ 8 4 2 |
| ♦ A J 9 5 2 | | ♦ Q 10 8 7 6 3 |
| ♣ 8 | | ♣ K 3 2 |
| | ♠ 10 8 7 6 3 | |
| | ♥ 10 9 6 5 | |
| | ♦ — | |
| | ♣ J 10 9 6 | |

Table 1

| | | | |
|--------|--------|------------|-------|
| Warren | North | Bart | South |
| West | — | East | 2 ♦ |
| — | — | pass | pass |
| 2 NT | double | pass | 3 ♠ |
| 4 ♦ | 4 ♠ | pass | pass |
| 5 ♦ | double | (all pass) | |

Table 2

| | | | |
|------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | Chip | | Mark |
| West | North | East | South |
| — | — | pass | pass |
| 1 ♦ | double | 2 ♠ (1) | 3 ♠ |
| pass | 4 ♠ | pass | pass |
| double (2) | (all pass) | | |

(1) mixed diamond raise

(2) interest in competing further

At Table 1, Warren Spector didn't fancy his defense, so he saved. Bart Bramley loses a trick in each suit for down two, -300. At Table 2, Mark Feldman's aggressive 3♠ bid gets us to a touchy game. West leads his club, taken with the ace. With few hand entries, Mark does well to cash the ♠A, with a gratifying result. He ruffs a diamond, picks up trumps, drives out the ♣K, and later leads up to the ♥K for the overtrick. Plus 690 is good for 9 imps and a good part

of our 16-imp half-time lead.

In the Seniors everyone bid less, with the Indonesians bidding and making 3♠ at one table, and 3♦ at the other. However, overall, our senior team is doing well, and they finally retake the lead from Indonesia this set (the fourth of six sets in the final) when the Indonesians overbid to a no-play slam:

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|--|
| South dealer | North | | |
| N-S vul | ♠ A J 7 6 | | |
| | ♥ K 9 8 3 | | |
| | ♦ A 4 | | |
| | ♣ K 10 6 | | |
| West | | East | |
| ♠ Q 9 8 4 3 | | ♠ K 10 | |
| ♥ J 7 6 2 | | ♥ Q 10 4 | |
| ♦ Q 5 | | ♦ K J 10 8 7 6 | |
| ♣ 7 3 | | ♣ 5 4 | |
| | South | | |
| | ♠ 5 2 | | |
| | ♥ A 5 | | |
| | ♦ 9 3 2 | | |
| | ♣ A Q J 9 8 2 | | |

Open Room

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| South | West | North | East |
| <i>Lasut</i> | <i>Weichsel</i> | <i>Manoppo</i> | <i>Sontag</i> |
| 2♣ | pass | 2♦ | 3♦ |
| pass | pass | double | pass |
| 4♣ | pass | 4♦ | pass |
| 4♥ | pass | 4♠ | pass |
| 6♣ | (all pass) | | |

When Rose Meltzer and Garey Hayden stop safely in 3NT at the other table, we pick up 12 imps and lead 110-104.

Overall our Seniors team picks up 19 imps in the fourth segment to lead by 3. They lose 3 back in the penultimate segment, so are tied with 16 to go. A good final session results in a 23-imp victory and the gold medal for our weary but happy team.

In our Transnational semifinal match, we hold onto 11 of our 16-imp lead to make the final. We play Schneider-Baze, Gawry-Lesniewski.

The Transnationals Final is 48 boards, the first 16 boards played today (same hands as last 16 of the Seniors) and 32 tomorrow (opposite the final 32 of the Bermuda Bowl). These 16 hands go poorly and we are down 33 in part due to this sad hand. You get to 6♣ with:

| | |
|-----|----------------|
| | North |
| | ♠ A 10 9 7 4 2 |
| | ♥ K 8 2 |
| | ♦ A 5 |
| | ♣ J 10 |
| ♦ 4 | |
| | South (you) |
| | ♠ K |
| | ♥ A J 10 4 |
| | ♦ Q J |
| | ♣ A Q 9 8 7 3 |

You get the ♦4 lead and guess to go up ace (would you?). Now ♠K, ♥K, ♠A throwing a diamond. LHO plays the queen and jack on the spades, all follow low on the hearts. You lead the ♣J, 4, 3, 2. Now what?

It seems right to repeat the club finesse, which would lose on the actual hand, since LHO has: ♠ Q J ♥ x x x ♦ 9 x x x x ♣ K x x (so to make declarer must take the heart finesse when the ♣J wins). What does declarer do? Well, this situation doesn't arise. At trick one, when declarer plays the ♦A, our teammate (third hand) thinks declarer called low (perhaps due to a Polish accent, perhaps just hoping it was low) and plays the king promptly. Since the other three players agree that the ace was called, he is stuck with playing the king under the ace. Now 6♣ is easy to make. Since Roy-Björn

reasonably play 4♠ making seven, that is lose 12 instead of win 13 if 6♣ went down.

11/5 Saturday

We lose another 5 imps in the first set today to trail by 38. We do pick up 15 in the final set, mostly thanks to this hand:

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| South dealer | North | | |
| Both vul | ♠ 6 | | |
| | ♥ A K 10 4 | | |
| | ♦ A 9 4 2 | | |
| | ♣ 10 9 7 5 | | |
| West | | East | |
| ♠ A 9 5 2 | | ♠ Q J 10 | |
| ♥ J 9 8 5 3 | | ♥ 7 6 2 | |
| ♦ 5 | | ♦ Q J 10 8 7 3 | |
| ♣ 8 4 3 | | ♣ J | |
| | South | | |
| | ♠ K 8 7 4 3 | | |
| | ♥ Q | | |
| | ♦ K 6 | | |
| | ♣ A K Q 6 2 | | |

Open Room

| South | West | North | East |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|
| <i>Martel</i> | <i>Lesniewski</i> | <i>Feldman</i> | <i>Gawrys</i> |
| 1 ♠ | pass | 1 NT | pass |
| 2 ♣ | pass | 2 ♦* | pass |
| 2 ♥ | pass | 2 NT | pass |
| 4 ♦ | pass | 4 NT | pass |
| 6 ♣ | (all pass) | | |

*many hand types, see text to the right for the explanation of the whole auction

Mark's 2♦ shows one of several hands, including a weak hand with long hearts (my 2♥ says I am willing to play 2♥ opposite such a hand). Two notrump shows a good four-card club raise, and I then take off with a keycard 4♦ (4NT showing two without the queen). On a heart lead it is easy to duck a spade, ruff two spades and eventually throw two spades on the ♥A-K, Note

that going to dummy in diamonds to lead towards the ♠K takes away the late entry to the heart winners.

At the other table, 6♣ is one down on a diamond lead when declarer misguesses (ducking a spade) and suffers a diamond ruff.

This pair of results is replayed in the Bermuda Bowl. Meckstroth and Rodwell reach 6♣ and make on a heart lead. At the other table, the Italians get a diamond lead. Declarer wins dummy's ♦A and leads a spade to the king and ace. A trump is returned. Declarer ruffs a spade, comes back with a club and ruffs another spade. Then he cashes the ♥A-K to throw his last two spades. But Hamman (West) plays the ♥J on the third round to encourage declarer to cross to the ♦K instead of ruffing a heart. The ♦K is ruffed — down one.

Sadly, this hand was too little for each of our teams.

Still, overall it was a good and successful tournament, but we are happy to head home now.

The Bermuda Bowl Conclusion

by Matthew Granovetter

After 96 deals the score of the Bermuda Bowl Final was USA 183, Italy 191. There were 32 boards to go. In the seventh set of 16 boards, Sidney Lazard, captain of the USA team, fielded Nickell and Freeman East-West against Bocchi and Duboin. In the open room were Meckstroth and Rodwell, North-South, against Nunes and Fantoni.

The first board of any set is always difficult to handle, because players are not generally in a groove yet (perhaps bridge players should “volley” a bit, like in tennis, to get ready). So board one, which featured a 90+ percent grand slam, was bid only to a small slam in both rooms.

| | | | |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|--|
| Board 1 | North | | |
| North dealer | ♠ 9 7 | | |
| None vul | ♥ 10 8 4 2 | | |
| | ♦ J 8 6 4 3 | | |
| | ♣ J 5 | | |
| West | | East | |
| ♠ 5 2 | | ♠ A J 8 | |
| ♥ A K Q 3 | | ♥ 7 | |
| ♦ A 9 5 | | ♦ K Q 10 2 | |
| ♣ 7 6 4 3 | | ♣ A K Q 8 2 | |
| | South | | |
| | ♠ K Q 10 6 4 3 | | |
| | ♥ J 9 6 5 | | |
| | ♦ 7 | | |
| | ♣ 10 9 | | |

does a 2♠ overcall look like? I would bet that reaching 6♣ on the E-W cards would achieve a 75% score in any duplicate, sectional, or regional tournament in the USA, where almost everyone sitting South would overcall 2♠. West would make a negative double, and most Easts would jump to 3NT ending the auction.

Back to the Bermuda Bowl, where 1♠ didn't do much. At both tables West started with a negative double. The Italians then took 20 bids to reach 6♣, and I would be happy to show you their auction if I understood it, but it's not close – I have no idea what their bids meant (but whatever they meant, they didn't reach the grand). Let's look at the American auction, which is high-level itself. . . .

| West | North | East | South |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| <i>Nickell</i> | <i>Bocchi</i> | <i>Freeman</i> | <i>Duboin</i> |
| — | pass | 1 ♣ | 1 ♠ |
| double | pass | 3 NT | pass |
| 4 ♦ | pass | 4 ♠ | pass |
| 5 ♦ | pass | 6 ♣ | (all pass) |

Freeman's double jump to 3NT described a big hand with a long solid club suit (otherwise, with a normal 18-19 points he would have rebid 2NT). Nickell now envisioned six or seven, and he took over with 4♦ Roman Keycard Blackwood (or “Redwood”).

At both tables East opened one club and South overcalled a “brave” one spade. Hey, fellas, if this is a 1♠ overcall, what

| | | |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| Board 1 | North | |
| North dealer | ♠ 9 7 | |
| None vul | ♥ 10 8 4 2 | |
| | ♦ J 8 6 4 3 | |
| | ♣ J 5 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ 5 2 | | ♠ A J 8 |
| ♥ A K Q 3 | | ♥ 7 |
| ♦ A 9 5 | | ♦ K Q 10 2 |
| ♣ 7 6 4 3 | | ♣ A K Q 8 2 |
| | South | |
| | ♠ K Q 10 6 4 3 | |
| | ♥ J 9 6 5 | |
| | ♦ 7 | |
| | ♣ 10 9 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| <i>Nickell</i> | <i>Bocchi</i> | <i>Freeman</i> | <i>Duboin</i> |
| — | pass | 1 ♣ | 1 ♠ |
| double | pass | 3 NT | pass |
| 4 ♦ | pass | 4 ♠ | pass |
| 5 ♦ | pass | 6 ♣ | (all pass) |

Freeman responded 4♠, second step, using 1430 responses, showing zero or three keycards (he had three, the ♠A and ♣A-K). Now Nickell could have asked for the queen of trump, but instead bid 5♦,

saying that the partnership held all the keycards *and* the queen of trump! Nickell assumed his partner held at least six clubs for the 3NT bid, and his four-card support was equivalent to the queen (he also thought his partner held the queen, but in any case he was showing the queen with his 5♦ bid, which invited seven). Freeman now signed off in 6♣, which I think was wrong. He could have bid 5NT to deny the ♥K and ♠K but show the ♦K (Eddie Kantar, are you reading this? Is this right?). Personally, I think East should bid 7♣ over the invite to seven, since he can envision the following dummy: four cards in hearts for the negative double, four cards in clubs for the 5♦ bid (which showed the ♣Q or equivalent in length), at least the ♥A-K and ♦A. Now would West take over and invite seven with only the ♥A-K and ♦A? Not likely, is it? West must have at least the ♥Q or ♦J, which helps East to pitch spades from dummy on his diamonds.

Board 2 was a push and then the Italians got on the scoreboard first when Meckwell bid a typical light game, which needed a little luck that wasn't there. . . .

| | | |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| Board 3 | North | |
| South dealer | ♠ 6 5 | |
| E-W vul | ♥ K J 10 | |
| | ♦ 4 3 | |
| | ♣ K 10 9 8 4 3 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ K 10 9 2 | | ♠ 8 4 |
| ♥ Q 8 5 4 | | ♥ 6 |
| ♦ Q 6 2 | | ♦ A 10 9 8 7 5 |
| ♣ 6 2 | | ♣ A Q 7 5 |
| | South | |
| | ♠ A Q J 7 3 | |
| | ♥ A 9 7 3 2 | |
| | ♦ K J | |
| | ♣ J | |

| | | | |
|---------|------------|------------|---------|
| South | West | North | East |
| Rodwell | Nunes | Meckstroth | Fantoni |
| 1 ♣ | pass | 1 ♦ | double |
| 1 ♠ | 2 ♦ | 3 ♣ | 3 ♦ |
| 3 ♥ | pass | 4 ♦ | pass |
| 4 ♥ | (all pass) | | |

Opening lead: ♦ 2

Rodwell (South) opened a Precision club and Meckstroth made a negative response. So Fantoni's double showed diamonds. Rodwell bid spades followed by hearts, and over 3♥ Meckstroth was faced with a decision. He couldn't bring himself to pass, so he bid 4♦, the rare "choice of games" cue-bid. You read about this bid every decade or so, but rarely see it in action. South might have held six spades and four hearts or even five strong spades and four hearts, and 4♦ gives him a chance to choose the trump suit he thinks is best. Perhaps he will even bid 5♣ over 4♦ with ace doubleton and 5-4-2-2 shape.

Rodwell chose 4♥ and West led a diamond. East won and continued diamonds. Rodwell took a heart finesse through West and then a spade finesse through East. West won the ♠K and continued hearts, so Rodwell needed spades to break 3-3, and went down one.

| | | | |
|--------|------------|--------|---------|
| South | West | North | East |
| Duboin | Nickell | Bocchi | Freeman |
| 1 ♠ | pass | 1 NT | 2 ♦ |
| 2 ♥ | 3 ♦ | pass | pass |
| 3 ♥ | (all pass) | | |

Opening lead: ♦ 2

Here Bocchi (North) knew about the 5-5 shape but decided to play a quiet partscore anyway. The defense began similarly with two rounds of diamonds. Duboin also took the first round finesse in trumps and then the spade finesse, won by West. At this point, Nickell (West) tried to give declarer more problems than the other table by playing the ♦Q, giving a ruff-sluff. Declarer ruffed in dummy and now had to lose a trump trick, but he discarded the ♣J and lost no club tricks, so it came out the same. He gave up a spade trick and scored 140.

Nickell's idea was nice, but was it a trick too early? Suppose he leads a club to his partner and then East plays a third diamond. Declarer will pitch a spade and ruff in dummy, then play the ♥K. Hearts don't break, but if he now ruffs out the ♣A and cashes spades, he ends up with one losing spade and the ♥A-9. He plays the spade to West and West must lead a heart from the Q-8 at the end. So nine tricks are there no matter what. Italy went plus 50 and 140 for +5 imps.

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|--|
| Board 4 | North | | |
| West dealer | ♠ Q | | |
| All vul | ♥ J 10 9 7 3 | | |
| | ♦ Q 9 4 | | |
| | ♣ Q 9 7 2 | | |
| West | | East | |
| ♠ J 8 5 2 | | ♠ A 10 9 7 6 3 | |
| ♥ 6 5 | | ♥ K | |
| ♦ 8 2 | | ♦ K 7 6 5 3 | |
| ♣ A K 10 4 3 | | ♣ 8 | |
| | South | | |
| | ♠ K 4 | | |
| | ♥ A Q 8 4 2 | | |
| | ♦ A J 10 | | |
| | ♣ J 6 5 | | |

| | | | |
|-------|------------|---------|---------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Nunes | Meckstroth | Fantoni | Rodwell |
| pass | pass | 2 ♠ | double |
| 4 ♠ | (all pass) | | |

Opening lead: ♣5

This hand looks like it should be a push board, with the normal ♣5 lead allowing declarer to pitch the ♥K away at trick two. Fantoni then led a trump to the ace and

On the next board, a very small and subtle point in the auction caused a swing.

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| Board 5 | North | | |
| South dealer | ♠ K 8 | | |
| All vul | ♥ Q 9 5 3 | | |
| | ♦ J 10 8 5 2 | | |
| | ♣ Q 10 | | |
| West | | East | |
| ♠ A 10 7 2 | | ♠ Q 9 5 | |
| ♥ 7 2 | | ♥ A K 10 8 4 | |
| ♦ 9 7 | | ♦ Q 4 3 | |
| ♣ A J 8 7 3 | | ♣ 9 5 | |
| | South | | |
| | ♠ J 6 4 3 | | |
| | ♥ J 6 | | |
| | ♦ A K 6 | | |
| | ♣ K 6 4 2 | | |

played a low diamond from his hand. Even if diamonds split 4-2 he was OK, ruffing two diamonds in dummy. Plus 620.

| | | | |
|------------|--------|---------|--------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Nickell | Bocchi | Freeman | Duboin |
| pass | pass | 2 ♠ | double |
| 3 ♣ | 3 ♥ | 3 ♠ | 4 ♥ |
| 4 ♠ | pass | pass | double |
| (all pass) | | | |

Opening lead: ♥A

At this table, Nickell made a more scientific bid over the double: 3♣, a fit showing response by a passed hand. This might have been the only way to lose 13 imps, since Duboin now found the killing ♥A lead against the game. Perhaps West should jump to 4♣, fit showing – at least then North would have passed and South might have tried the ♦A instead (North’s 3♥ bid suggested that the ♥A would be the safer red ace to lead). Oh well, it seems a pity that by describing his hand accurately, it helped the opponents instead of his partner. Italy +13 imps.

| | | | |
|---------|-------|------------|------------|
| South | West | North | East |
| Rodwell | Nunes | Meckstroth | Fantoni |
| 1 ♦* | pass | 1 ♥ | pass |
| 1 ♠ | pass | 1 NT | (all pass) |

Opening lead: ♥4

At this table, Rodwell opened a “Precision catch-all 1♦” and landed in 1NT by North. East led a heart. Meckstroth (North) won in hand and led three rounds of diamonds. Now the spotlight was on East. He had to shift to spades to beat the contract (three spades, two hearts, one diamond and one club). But he switched to clubs, setting up declarer’s seventh trick before the ♠K was dislodged. USA +90.

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| Board 5 | North | | |
| South dealer | ♠ K 8 | | |
| All vul | ♥ Q 9 5 3 | | |
| | ♦ J 10 8 5 2 | | |
| | ♣ Q 10 | | |
| West | | East | |
| ♠ A 10 7 2 | | ♠ Q 9 5 | |
| ♥ 7 2 | | ♥ A K 10 8 4 | |
| ♦ 9 7 | | ♦ Q 4 3 | |
| ♣ A J 8 7 3 | | ♣ 9 5 | |
| | South | | |
| | ♠ J 6 4 3 | | |
| | ♥ J 6 | | |
| | ♦ A K 6 | | |
| | ♣ K 6 4 2 | | |

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| South | West | North | East |
| <i>Duboin</i> | <i>Nickell</i> | <i>Bocchi</i> | <i>Freeman</i> |
| 1 ♣ | pass | 1 ♦ | 1 ♥ |
| pass | 1 NT | (all pass) | |

Opening lead: ♦ 2

At the other table, the auction began naturally, with a 1♣ opening by South. So Freeman (East) slipped in a 1♥ overcall. East's hand is awful, but everyone would bid 1♥ for the lead, right?

West, however, could not know it was only for the lead. Sometimes partner has a very nice hand for a vulnerable overcall, so Nickell did not want to pass 1♥. He bid 1NT and regretted it. North led a low diamond. South won the king and returned a club to the 10. North led the ♦ J and a third diamond, on which declarer threw a spade. South switched to spades and North won the king, cashed diamonds, and exited with a spade. Declarer had only five tricks for down two. Italy +200, and 3imps. Maybe West should compromise with a 1♠ bid over 1♥ to keep the bidding alive with less risk. As it turned out, a spade contract East-West would have been much better. Do you think 1♠ must promise five spades in this position? I don't.

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|--|
| Board 8 | North | | |
| West dealer | ♠ K J 4 3 2 | | |
| None vul | ♥ J 10 | | |
| | ♦ J 4 3 | | |
| | ♣ 10 5 3 | | |
| West | | East | |
| ♠ A 9 7 | | ♠ 6 5 | |
| ♥ A K Q 6 3 | | ♥ 9 8 7 5 4 | |
| ♦ A | | ♦ Q 10 5 2 | |
| ♣ 9 7 6 4 | | ♣ 8 2 | |
| | South | | |
| | ♠ Q 10 8 | | |
| | ♥ 2 | | |
| | ♦ K 9 8 7 6 | | |
| | ♣ A K Q J | | |

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| <i>Nunes</i> | <i>Meckstroth</i> | <i>Fantoni</i> | <i>Rodwell</i> |
| 1 ♥ | pass | 3 ♥ | double |
| 4 ♥ | 4 ♠ | (all pass) | |

Opening lead: ♥ 8

The Americans gained back on this deal when the dreaded weak jump response backfired for the Italians. East's 3♥ bid serves only one purpose in my book: to help the opponents locate a nice fit. Rodwell doubled 3♥ and North then bid 4♠ over West's 4♥. East led a heart to West, who switched to clubs. Declarer came to hand with a trump to the jack, ruffed his other heart and led dummy's last trump. West won and dummy-locked declarer: He cashed the ♦ A and led a club. Meckstroth could cash the last two clubs, taking his diamond discard, but he then had to lead the ♦ K, ruffed by West – the setting trick. Down one, Italy +50.

Board 8
 West dealer
 None vul

North
 ♠ K J 4 3 2
 ♥ J 10
 ♦ J 4 3
 ♣ 10 5 3

West
 ♠ A 9 7
 ♥ A K Q 6 3
 ♦ A
 ♣ 9 7 6 4

East
 ♠ 6 5
 ♥ 9 8 7 5 4
 ♦ Q 10 5 2
 ♣ 8 2

South
 ♠ Q 10 8
 ♥ 2
 ♦ K 9 8 7 6
 ♣ A K Q J

| | | | |
|----------|--------|---------|------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Nickell | Bocchi | Freeman | Duboin |
| 1 ♥ | pass | 1 NT | double |
| redouble | 2 ♠ | pass | pass |
| 2 NT | 3 ♠ | 4 ♥ | (all pass) |

Opening lead: ♥J

At this table, Freeman's 1NT response was much more savvy. South doubled and the bidding crawled slowly to 4♥, so Duboin (South) decided to defend and Bocchi had already made two spade bids on the way and had nothing more to say. Four hearts was laydown. USA +9 imps.

Board 9
 North dealer
 E-W vul

North
 ♠ A J 5
 ♥ K 10 9 7 6 2
 ♦ 8 7
 ♣ 5 4

West
 ♠ 9
 ♥ A J 8 5
 ♦ 9 6 2
 ♣ A 10 9 8 3

East
 ♠ K 10 8 3
 ♥ Q 4 3
 ♦ K 4
 ♣ Q J 7 2

South
 ♠ Q 7 6 4 2
 ♥ —
 ♦ A Q J 10 5 3
 ♣ K 6

Multi 2♦, weak two-bid in either major, is a theoretically poor bid in my opinion, but it seems to work for Meckwell a lot. Here Rodwell had the perfect hand to pass 2♦ and when West balanced, East couldn't take the joke. He bid 3NT, down two after the ♦Q lead. USA +200.

| | | | |
|---------|--------|------------|--------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Nickell | Bocchi | Freeman | Duboin |
| — | 2 ♥ | (all pass) | |

Opening lead: ♣Q — down two

Here Bocchi opened the normal 2♥ and since both 2♠ and 3♦ would be forcing by South, Duboin passed it out. It was a good hand to play new suits not forcing. The result was down two, and the USA gained 7 more imps to tie the match at 212 to 212, after 105 boards. There were seven boards remaining in this set and 16 more in the final set.

| | | | |
|-------|------------|---------|------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Nunes | Meckstroth | Fantoni | Rodwell |
| — | 2 ♦ | pass | pass |
| 3 ♣ | pass | 3 NT | (all pass) |

Opening lead: ♦Q

On the next hand, both declarers made a nice play:

Board 10 North
 East dealer ♠ A 10 6
 All vul ♥ 6 4 3 2
 ♦ 7 2
 ♣ J 9 5 3

West
 ♠ 8 7 2
 ♥ J 8
 ♦ A 10 6 5
 ♣ A K Q 7

East
 ♠ K Q J 5 3
 ♥ K Q 10
 ♦ J 9 4
 ♣ 4 2

South
 ♠ 9 4
 ♥ A 9 7 5
 ♦ K Q 8 3
 ♣ 10 8 6

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| <i>Nunes</i> | <i>Meckstroth</i> | <i>Fantoni</i> | <i>Rodwell</i> |
| — | — | 1 NT | pass |
| 3 ♣ | pass | 3 ♦ | pass |
| 3 ♠ | pass | 4 ♠ | (all pass) |

Opening lead: ♦7

Board 11 North
 South dealer ♠ K 7 5 4
 None vul ♥ A 9 6
 ♦ Q 7 3
 ♣ 8 4 2

West
 ♠ A 8 6 3
 ♥ Q 10 2
 ♦ J 6 4
 ♣ A Q 9

South
 ♠ Q 2
 ♥ K J 8 3
 ♦ A 10 2
 ♣ K J 6 3

East
 ♠ J 10 9
 ♥ 7 5 4
 ♦ K 9 8 5
 ♣ 10 7 5

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| <i>Nickell</i> | <i>Bocchi</i> | <i>Freeman</i> | <i>Duboin</i> |
| — | — | 1 ♠ | pass |
| 2 ♣ | pass | 2 NT | pass |
| 3 ♠ | pass | 4 ♠ | (all pass) |

Opening lead: ♦Q

At both tables 4♠ was reached East-West (at table one, the Italians had what to me is a mysterious auction, but West ended up in 4♠). At both tables a diamond was led to the ace. Nunes and Freeman, the two declarers, played three top clubs, pitching a diamond, and then a fourth club discarding the last diamond. This prevented North from leading the fourth club after winning the ♠A.

On the layout, this play didn't matter, since if North rises with the ♠A on the first trump lead, declarer can ruff a club return high. But it would matter on many other layouts and was excellent technique.

On board 11, Meckwell reached 2NT down one, when Meckstroth raised a 14-16 notrump to 2NT with a 4-3-3-3 nine count.

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|
| South | West | North | East |
| <i>Rodwell</i> | <i>Nunes</i> | <i>Meckstroth</i> | <i>Fantoni</i> |
| 1 NT | pass | 2 ♠ | pass |
| 2 NT | (all pass) | | |

That 2♠ bid was an invitational raise in notrump (they use 2NT for another meaning) or other things. Two notrump was defeated a trick, while 1NT was passed out at the other table, making one — 4 imps to Italy. I won't comment on Meckstroth's position to invite game, since Meckwell have had great success in bidding light games. Nevertheless, I show you the hand as an example of how one can get carried away with the "aggressive game bidding" theory.

Then a really strange hand appeared. . . .

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|---------------|--|
| Board 12 | North | | |
| West dealer | ♠ K J 9 4 | | |
| N-S vul | ♥ K Q 4 | | |
| | ♦ 10 7 4 3 | | |
| | ♣ K Q | | |
| West | | East | |
| ♠ A 6 3 | | ♠ Q 7 5 | |
| ♥ — | | ♥ A 9 7 6 3 2 | |
| ♦ Q J 9 2 | | ♦ 8 5 | |
| ♣ A 9 7 5 4 2 | | ♣ 10 8 | |
| | South | | |
| | ♠ 10 8 2 | | |
| | ♥ J 10 8 5 | | |
| | ♦ A K 6 | | |
| | ♣ J 6 3 | | |

| | | | |
|--------|------------|---------|------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Nunes | Meckstroth | Fantoni | Rodwell |
| 2 ♣ | double | pass | 2 ♥ |
| double | pass | 3 ♣ | (all pass) |

Opening lead: ♥K

Notice that Fantoni (East) passed over the takeout double with his six-card heart suit. This worked like a dream when South bid hearts and West doubled for takeout. But East did not convert the double. Perhaps he needs seven hearts in this situation. Perhaps I shouldn't be so facetious. Three clubs went down two, 100 to USA. But what would have happened in 2♥ doubled?

Let's say West leads the normal-looking ♦Q. South is looking at seven top tricks: one club, two diamonds, three hearts, and probably one spade (West figures to have the ace). Instead of playing for a perfect

♠A-Q-x onside, Rodwell might try to score his four side winners (one spade, two diamonds and one club), and somehow ruff his third club in dummy with a heart honor. This would produce four trump tricks.

I think Rodwell would lead a spade to the king at trick two, then attack clubs, cash his other diamond and eventually get that club ruff. So Fantoni's pull to 3♣ with his six-card trump holding may have been a good decision after all!

According to the program Deep Finesse, there are only two opening leads that defeat 2♥: the ♦2 or ♦9. Amazing! I leave it to readers to try this double-dummy problem after a low diamond lead. But beware, there are lots of variations and you may spend a few hours on this!

Meanwhile at the more normal table:

| | | | |
|---------|--------|---------|------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Nickell | Bocchi | Freeman | Duboin |
| 1 ♣ | double | 2 ♥ | (all pass) |

Here Freeman bid the hearts first, as most would. Now South might have chanced a penalty double, but was worried, perhaps, about the opps running to 3♣. Two hearts by East wasn't Freeman's dream spot either, and he went down three, 2 imps to Italy.

Italy won 3 more imps in overtricks on the last four boards and gained one imp total on the set, to bring a 9-imp advantage into the last 16 boards: Italy 221, USA 212. We'll look at these 16 boards in the January issue.



The Wizards of Aus

Hands from Australian Tournaments

by Ron Klinger

Against 3NT you plan to lead this suit, A-K-J-10-9. You have no other entry. Which card do you choose?

In years gone by we used to lead the king from a suit headed by A-K-J, whether it was against notrump or a suit contract. From the above holding we would lead the ace against notrump. This asked partner to unblock an honor. With no honor card to unblock, partner was expected to give count (lowest from an odd number, highest from an even number.)

That allowed us to take five quick tricks when the layout looked like this:

| | | | |
|------------|---------------|------|--|
| | North (dummy) | | |
| | 5 3 | | |
| West | | East | |
| A K J 10 9 | | Q 4 | |
| | South | | |
| | 8 7 6 2 | | |

East would unblock the queen.

| | | | |
|------------|-------|-------|--|
| | North | | |
| | 8 5 3 | | |
| West | | East | |
| A K J 10 9 | | 7 6 2 | |
| | South | | |
| | Q 4 | | |

East would signal an odd number of cards and West would continue with the king and eliminate declarer's queen.

You would know not to continue the suit if the layout looked like this:

| | | | |
|------------|-------|-------|--|
| | North | | |
| | 8 5 | | |
| West | | East | |
| A K J 10 9 | | 7 3 2 | |
| | South | | |
| | Q 6 4 | | |

West leads the ace and East plays the 2. West figures East has three cards and South therefore has Q-x-x. West now switches to another suit to try to put East on lead to play the suit through declarer.

Similar considerations applied when you were on lead with A-K-Q-10-x. Playing the ace would have partner unblock the jack or give count. If this were the position:

| | | |
|------------|---------|------|
| | North | |
| | 8 5 | |
| West | | East |
| A K Q 10 2 | | 9 4 |
| | South | |
| | J 7 6 3 | |

These days players lead the ace from A-K-J suits. To cater for the desirable unblock, one can agree to lead the king from A-K-J-10-x and the queen from A-K-Q-10-x, asking partner to unblock the honor immediately below the card led.

West leads the ace and East would play the 9. If West judges that South is more likely to have four cards in the suit than two, West would try to put East on lead via another suit.

Having such an agreement would have been useful on this deal from the final of the NSW Interstate Teams Selection:

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| East dealer | North (Sartaj Hans) |
| None vul | ♠ 9 8 4 |
| | ♥ A 8 6 |
| | ♦ — |
| | ♣ K Q 9 7 4 3 2 |
| West (Bruce Neill) | East (Mike Hughes) |
| ♠ 3 | ♠ K J 7 6 5 2 |
| ♥ K J 10 9 5 | ♥ 7 3 |
| ♦ A 10 9 7 2 | ♦ K 6 5 |
| ♣ A 10 8 | ♣ 6 |
| | South (Tony Nunn) |
| | ♠ A Q 10 |
| | ♥ Q 4 2 |
| | ♦ Q J 8 4 3 |
| | ♣ J 5 |

Hoping to hit a singleton ♥Q in dummy or with partner, Neill began with the ♥K. There was no bare queen, but the lead was equally devastating by threatening to cut declarer off from dummy. Nunn naturally let the ♥K hold. Hoping partner had the ♥Q or declarer began with ♥Q-x, Neill played a second heart. Nunn won with the queen, forced out the ♣A and had nine tricks for +400. The second round of hearts would not have cost if East had the ♠A and ♦K. As it was, West had to switch to diamond to defeat the contract.

| | | | |
|------------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| — | — | 2 ♠ | pass |
| pass | 3 ♣ | pass | 3 NT |
| (all pass) | | | |

The datum was N-S 410. Other scores were 3NT +430, 3NT doubled +550, 3NT doubled +650, 5♣ doubled +550, 3♣ +130, 4♣ +130.

Opening lead: ♥K!

If East played the ♥7 on the king, showing a doubleton, West would know that a heart continuation was useless.



The Switch in Time Forum

by Pamela Granovetter

Matchpoints

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|------------|
| South dealer | North (Dummy) | |
| East-West vul | ♠ Q 10 9 | |
| | ♥ K 9 4 | |
| | ♦ Q 4 | |
| | ♣ A 7 6 3 2 | |
| | | East (you) |
| | | ♠ 8 6 3 |
| | | ♥ A Q 5 |
| | | ♦ J 10 8 2 |
| | | ♣ J 8 4 |



| | | | |
|-------|--------|-------|------------|
| South | West | North | East |
| 2 ♠* | double | 3 ♠ | (all pass) |

*could be a five-card suit at this vulnerability

Opening lead: ♦ A (ace from ace-king)

Which card to you play at trick one and why?

Sitting in the East seat, which red suit do you like more?

The whole hand was this:

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| South dealer East-West vul | North ♠ Q 10 9 ♥ K 9 4 ♦ Q 4 ♣ A 7 6 3 2 | West ♠ A 2 ♥ 10 7 6 2 ♦ A K 5 ♣ K Q 10 5 | East ♠ 8 6 3 ♥ A Q 5 ♦ J 10 8 2 ♣ J 8 4 |
| | South ♠ K J 7 5 4 ♥ J 8 3 ♦ 9 7 6 3 ♣ 9 | | |
| South 2 ♠ | West double | North 3 ♠ | East (all pass) |

Opening lead: ♦ A (ace from ace-king)

At most tables, South passed in first seat, then West opened a 15-17 notrump, and East passed with a 4-3-3-3 8-count. North led a club and East-West usually scored 120 or 150.

At one table, however, South opened with an aggressive 2♠ bid, and stole the pot in 3♠. If East-West could manage to take their seven tricks, they would get a good score for +150, otherwise they would get a very poor score.

West led a high diamond and East played the deuce, showing positive attitude for the obvious shift-suit, hearts. West was worried about hearts, however, because it was possible that a heart play would set up a discard for declarer's club loser. Say declarer had: ♠ K J x x x x ♥ Q J ♦ J x x ♣ J x. You might think West could lead a low heart and then partner wins the ace and switches to clubs to prevent the discard, but I think the right play is the ♥10 in case East's hearts are A-J-8. On the actual layout any heart shift helps declarer in hearts, because if declarer plays the suit himself, he may well lose three heart tricks (low to the king and low to the 8).^{*} Alternatively, declarer might have started with something like this hand: ♠ K J x x x x ♥ Q ♦ J 10 x x ♣ J x.

In this case, the heart shift gives him the whole hand!

West, therefore, shifted to a high club, knowing it wasn't necessary to attack hearts at this point. Declarer gratefully won the ♣A, ruffed a club, and played a diamond. The defense could no longer prevent a diamond ruff. The best they could do was score +100.

^{*}If East doesn't give the hand away with a helpful low-diamond signal at trick one!

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------|------------|--|
| South dealer | North | | |
| East-West vul | ♠ Q 10 9 | | |
| | ♥ K 9 4 | | |
| | ♦ Q 4 | | |
| | ♣ A 7 6 3 2 | | |
| West | | East | |
| ♠ A 2 | | ♠ 8 6 3 | |
| ♥ 10 7 6 2 | | ♥ A Q 5 | |
| ♦ A K 5 | | ♦ J 10 8 2 | |
| ♣ K Q 10 5 | | ♣ J 8 4 | |
| | South | | |
| | ♠ K J 7 5 4 | | |
| | ♥ J 8 3 | | |
| | ♦ 9 7 6 3 | | |
| | ♣ 9 | | |

Yes, it turned out the key to the defense was not whether to continue the suit led, make the obvious shift or make the “unobvious” shift — it was to lead trumps to stop a ruff!

It was difficult to envision the trump shift, because declarer will usually hold six spades for his 2♠ bid. But maybe East could have helped West with a different signal at trick one, a signal to show strong diamonds.

East could hardly like hearts more, but the correct play in this case is, I think, an encouraging signal for diamonds, to alert

West to the fact that declarer will need to ruff his diamond losers and the defense must shift to trumps. This brings out an important principle in signaling and defense in general: When you and partner have the strength in dummy’s short suit, you want to shift to trumps to cut down ruffs. Therefore, when you signal that you like a short suit, you are (in essence) signaling for a trump shift!

Let’s look at how it works here. After the ♦8 at trick one, West shifts to ace and a trump at tricks two and three (East following with the 8-6 to show heart interest). West knows declarer probably holds six spades, but if declarer has five, the trump shift will be important, and if he has six, it won’t hurt the defense. The ♦Q is then led to West, who plays a heart to East* for a third trump. Voila. Down three.

*West breaks hearts for declarer because he is convinced that East holds three trump by the fact that declarer, after winning the trump, led a diamond. If declarer held 6-2-4-1 shape, he would win the second round of trumps and attack hearts himself, in an effort to establish a heart trick if the ace was offside. He could do this by playing low toward his jack or leading the jack or a low one toward dummy.

In Summary

This hand illustrates the important concept that on defense you should not break suits for declarer unless you have to. It’s true that the defenders expected declarer to have six spades, but since East had the diamonds locked up, and West had club length for his takeout double, the defenders’ tricks weren’t going anywhere and it was important to play trumps either to cut down ruffs

or simply to avoid giving away a heart trick.

Giving attitude for the obvious-shift suit is a great tool, but it must be used within the context of the whole hand. Sometimes it’s more important to give positive attitude for the suit led. And in a trump contract, that may translate as a signal for a trump shift!