

A Bum Steer

♠ 9532	
♥ KT986	
♦ 43	
♣ 94	
	♠ KT76
	♥ QJ
	♦ A9
	♣ KQJ53

Bidding:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1D	Pass	2C*
Pass	2D	Pass	2S
Pass	3NT	Passed Out	

*game force, does not deny a 4 card major.

You are sitting West and the dummy shown is South. East got off to a good lead of the 7H. You covered dummy's JH with the KH and North won with the AH.

North led a club to the JC which won and continued with the QC which also won. Declarer then continued with the KC showing out of the suit herself which East won with AC. What did you discard on the third round of clubs?

Thoughts:

If you have an agreement with partner to signal on your first discard then this is your opportunity.

If you play high encourage then you can spare the 8H because it will need your partner to get in once more and have a third heart to defeat the contract. You also know that partner has the winning 10C. If you decide to keep all your hearts, then you will have to discard the 2S to discourage a lead in that suit but that might allow declarer to (maybe) finesse spades and make the 7S. If you choose to discard the 2D then that will make your partner's decision on what switch to make even more difficult.

If you play Odds and Evens finding an informative discard then is easy. The 4D discard calls for the lower of the other two suits, hearts.

The defenders played low encourage because it allowed the defence to avoid using up a high card and because West had never before found difficulty in finding an informative discard using this system, until this hand!

The defenders had agreed that any discard lower than 6 was encouraging but West did not hold a heart below the 6. She, therefore, had to choose between a diamond and a spade. The only card that was a discouraging 6 or higher in those two suits was the 9S which might be important to stop declarer making 3 or more spades.

West played the 3D hoping that East would not switch to that suit based on dummy holding Ax and declarer having rebid that suit.

Clearly, with all discard systems, occasionally you are forced to give partner a bum steer and this was a case in point.

The hand was played on BBO on July 23. In the event, it did not matter what East led other than a small spade because, with a heart lead North wins in dummy and plays off her 6 x diamonds for a total of 10 tricks before letting the defence in again at the 12th trick.

BOARD 16					
BD: 16	♠ Q8				Dlr: W
	♥ A52				Vul: EW
	♦ KQJT82				
	♣ 72				
♠ 9532					♠ AJ4
♥ KT986					♥ 743
♦ 43					♦ 765
♣ 94					♣ AT86
♠ KT76 ♥ QJ ♦ A9 ♣ KQJ53					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	5	1	4	5
S	4	5	1	4	5
E					
W					
					12
					3 9
					16