

Winter Poser - Discussion:

Thanks to those who submitted answers to the "Winter Poser" but, unfortunately, there were no submissions that proposed that declarer win the club lead in dummy. The bottle of bubbly will now be awarded to the first member to identify the error in the article "Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics" published last week. Email your answers to info@suncoastbridge.com.au

| | |
|---|--------|
| ♠ | 3 |
| ♥ | AKT8 |
| ♦ | KQT874 |
| ♣ | J8 |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| ♠ | A962 |
| ♥ | 74 |
| ♦ | 96 |
| ♣ | AKT53 |

Teams of 4:

Dealer W. Nil Vul. You are North. Bidding:

| W | N | E | S |
|------|-----|----------|----|
| Pass | 1D | Pass | 1S |
| Pass | 2D | Pass | 3C |
| Pass | 3NT | All Pass | |

You get the 4C led by E. How you plan your play?

Discussion:

The first thing you need to ask yourself is would East lead a club with Qxxx given the fact that partner had bid clubs during the auction? The answer is probably not and if East has Qxxxx or even five rag clubs or, alternatively, is short in clubs and trying to lead through dummy, you are not likely to get five club tricks even by running the lead to the JC and finessing the 10C later. Hence you will need to broach the diamond suit and get 2 x diamond tricks to give you nine tricks and your contract. Having said that, if you can get 2 x diamond tricks you can expect to win several more and the club suit becomes less important.

At Teams of 4, making your game contract is most important and making overtricks secondary. What can go wrong here? What if you duck the club lead and West wins with the QC and switches to a spade while the AD is still out. This could be disastrous. To give yourself the best chance you need to win the KC with the intention of leading a diamond immediately towards the KQ10xxx in your hand. If the KD wins you need to re-enter the dummy with a club and lead your other small diamond. East did not lead a spade so West appears to be your dangerous opponent. If West plays another small diamond you should play the QD. If East has the AD, she may switch to a heart since she didn't choose to lead spades to begin with and you can still drive out the JD while you have a second heart stop and the spade stop.

Here is the full hand:

| BOARD 24 | | | | | |
|---------------|---|----------|---|-----------------|----|
| BD: 24 | | ♠ 3 | | Dir: W | |
| | | ♥ AKT8 | | Vul: Nil | |
| | | ♦ KQT874 | | | |
| | | ♣ J8 | | | |
| ♠ QT754 | | | | ♠ KJ8 | |
| ♥ J953 | | | | ♥ Q62 | |
| ♦ A52 | | | | ♦ J3 | |
| ♣ Q | | | | ♣ 97642 | |
| | | ♠ A962 | | | |
| | | ♥ 74 | | | |
| | | ♦ 96 | | | |
| | | ♣ AKT53 | | | |
| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | NT |
| N | 4 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| S | 4 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| E | | | | | |
| W | | | | | |
| | | | | | 13 |
| | | | | 9 | 7 |
| | | | | | 11 |

If you duck the club, expecting to win the JC and finesse for the QC later, you will be sorely disappointed. East had led from five rag clubs. West will win the singleton QC and if she now switches to a spade, her five-card suit, while still holding the AD, your “goose is cooked” and you will go two down.

In the event, if you follow your plan and play the KC, the unexpected fall of the singleton QC, means that 5 x club tricks can actually be obtained and your 3NT contract made without resorting to much effort with the diamond suit. A club back to the JC unblocking the suit, followed by the play of the KD to knock out the AD while the AS remains as an entry to dummy, will ensure you get 5 x club tricks as well as setting up one diamond trick, together with 1 x spade and 2 x hearts for your contract. If as normally occurs, your KD falls immediately to the defenders’ AD, the JD then drops when you play the QD and you actually find yourself making 12 tricks, overtricks to burn!

Alchemist 12/8//22