



IBPA Column Service

Tim Bourke, Canberra

Members may use these deals as they wish, without attributing the author or IBPA.

741. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	4♣ ¹	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Splinter, agreeing spades

West led the jack of trumps and declarer was slightly disappointed by the rather threadbare dummy: four clubs was a bit of an overbid. However, that was in the past and his job was to make twelve tricks, not to complain about the auction.

Declarer saw that he needed trumps to be 3-2 and to have some luck in the red suits to make his contract. However, there were real transportation difficulties between the two hands. If the diamond finesse was successful, only one club ruff was needed, but if it were offside, two club ruffs would be necessary. Furthermore, if declarer took a diamond finesse at trick two and it lost he would no longer have the entries to take two club ruffs.

Declarer then considered the question, "What if I gave up on the diamond finesse?" The only issue was that while he could ruff two clubs, his only entry back to hand after the second ruff would be with a heart ruff.

After some thought, declarer decided the second approach was more appealing. He took the first trick with queen of trumps, then cashed ace of clubs and ruffed a club. The next card he called for surprised everyone at the table, particularly East: it was dummy's ten of diamonds. East took this with the queen and

exited with a trump. After winning this in hand with the king declarer ruffed another club. There was only one way back to hand, in hearts, so declarer cashed the ace-king of hearts and ruffed a heart. As that passed off successfully, declarer drew the last trump with the ace while throwing dummy's remaining heart. This left dummy with just the three high diamonds to cash.

742. Dealer West. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
1♠	Double	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led a fourth-highest the six of spades against three notrump. As only 14 high-card points were in the defensive hands, declarer saw that it was all but certain that West held all three of the missing aces. Declarer was about to play low from dummy when he saw that if he did so, West would grab the first round of diamonds to play the ace-jack of spades and he would have only eight tricks before he had to lead a heart. Then West would take the ace of hearts immediately and cash two spade winners for a one-trick set.

So, declarer called for dummy's king of spades. He then crossed to hand to lead a low diamond towards dummy. As the cards lay, if West rose with the ace and played on spades declarer would be safe as he would still have a spade stopper when the time came to develop a trick in hearts.

In practice, West played a low diamond on the first round and dummy's jack won the trick. Dummy's king of hearts came next. West took this with his ace and returned a heart to declarer's queen. Next, declarer

cash the ace of clubs and then led a second low diamond to dummy's king. The 4=1 diamond break was a disappointment but not a real problem. Declarer just cashed the king of clubs and the jack of hearts for his seventh and eighth tricks. All that remained was to lead a low diamond from hand. West took the ten and ace of diamonds but then had to give declarer his ninth trick by leading away from his ace of spades.

743. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣ ¹	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Double negative

West led the ace of clubs. Declarer ruffed, then played the ace of trumps. East's discard was a nasty shock and now declarer had to try and ruff a heart in dummy. He cashed the ace and king of hearts and then led the five. West ruffed this with the nine of trumps then crossed to East's hand with a diamond to the king. After ruffing the heart continuation with the jack of trumps, West exited with a diamond to East's ace to set four spades by one trick.

As ever, North was not sympathetic to declarer's cries of bad luck. "You should have discarded a diamond at trick one. Your aim should have been to surrender the two diamond losers early. If the defenders played a club at trick two, you should pitch a second diamond. If an unlikely heart shift came at trick two, you should win, cash the ace of trumps and, seeing the suit was 4=0, play a second diamond. If instead, the defenders continue with two rounds of diamonds, they would be doing your work for you in getting rid of those pesky diamonds. After gaining the lead at trick three, you would cash the ace of trumps and when East showed out, play the ace, king and five of hearts. Then it would not matter whether West ruffed in with the nine of trumps or discarded: if he trumped the five of hearts with the nine he would no longer have an entry

to East's hand to obtain a second heart ruff. All you would lose would be a trump and two diamonds."

"As the cards lay you could have recovered at trick three by playing a diamond," North continued. "However that risks going down when hearts are 4-3 and diamonds are 2=5 and East can play a diamond winner on the third round of the suit. That layout would see the defenders make either two trumps or a trump and a heart."

744. Dealer West. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the king of diamonds to declarer's bare ace. Declarer saw that he needed to do one of four things: (i) make a second heart trick, or (ii) make a club trick, or (iii) ruff a club in the dummy, or (iv) play the trumps for no losers. The questions were, (a) which of these alternatives to attempt and (b) how to achieve one of them as safely as possible. As it appeared from the bidding that both the heart and trump finesses might well fail, declarer turned his attention to clubs. Playing a low club from hand would succeed if West had started with ace and king of clubs, but that also seemed an unlikely proposition.

It was then that declarer saw that this was a simple avoidance play problem. He had to keep East off lead when the club ace and king were split to prevent the defence from playing two rounds of trumps. So he crossed to dummy with the ace of hearts and led the seven of clubs from the table. If East had played the ace or king of clubs this would have allowed declarer to develop a club trick. In practice, East played a low club and declarer contributed the jack, which West took with the ace. As West could not lead a trump without sacrificing his trick in the suit, he opted to try and cash a diamond. Declarer ruffed, then played the two of clubs to dummy's queen and East's king. East exited with the expected trump but it was too late. Declarer rose with the ace of trumps and ruffed the six of clubs in dummy. Declarer now claimed, conceding a trick to the king of trumps.