

# Board of the Week 48

By Dick Chapman

Today's board was played in a casual BBO event. Test your defensive skills as West on this layout. It's not that difficult if you give it some thought.

	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣		
♠972 ♥10543 ♦Q10 ♣8765	V: EW D: S	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	
	♠A84 ♥QJ ♦KJ9853 ♣94		
North	East	South	West
1♣	Double	1♦	Pass
1NT	Double	3♦	Pass
3NT	All pass		

Upside down signals. Partner starts off with the heart 6. Jack from dummy, you elect to not give count so discourage with the 5, 2 from Declarer. Declarer pulls the club 9, ducked around to partner's king. Partner leads the diamond 4, ducked in dummy and your queen wins. What is your lead at this point, and why?

Give this some thought, because it's the make-or-break point in the defense.

I'll listen to Scott Joplin's [Maple Leaf Rag](#) while you think. I still have two of the three LP's of Joplin's music that the great Joshua Rifkin recorded for Nonesuch. Alas, I don't have a turntable on which to play them.

See the next column for the solution.

Partner wouldn't lead the heart 6 from AKx6 or AKx6x, so it's 100% that declarer holds the ace or king. But that's not the critical element of the defense.

It's also a certainty partner holds the diamond ace. You don't know the rest of the diamond situation. When you see a string in dummy, what is your duty? Knock out the entry, that's what. You aren't going to do that with a heart lead.

Finally, remember partner doubled the club opening and, more to the point, doubled the 1NT call. Partner has the majors. So you must switch to a spade.

Which spade? You see A84 in dummy. Assume Declarer and Partner hold honor(s). Your lead must be the 9 and only the 9 for anything to work out.

Here's the full deal:

	♠Q65 ♥K82 ♦2 ♣AQJ1032	
♠972 ♥10543 ♦Q10 ♣8765	V: EW D: S	♠KJ103 ♥A976 ♦A764 ♣K
	♠A84 ♥QJ ♦KJ9853 ♣94	

As you can see, 3NT was a poor contract, and if it makes it's going to be very bad for your side.

The spade 9 allows you to retain the lead (to continue spades) if Declarer ducks in both hands. If the 9 is covered, partner can drive out the ace while still holding the diamond stop. Dummy is dead after the spade ace is gone, and eventually your side will collect 3 spades to go with the club king, diamond AQ, and heart ace. Down 2. Declarer can run five clubs but can't score the second heart trick because you will grab the ace and cash your remaining winners.

That's not what happened at the table, and our side allowed the contract to make. It was -9 imps for us, when setting 2 would be +7. Oops.

When defending

- Visualize where the tricks can arise.
- Remember the auction
- Trust your partner to have the cards reflected by the auction (if those cards aren't there, it's partner's fault and not yours)