

# MOUNTNESSING BRIDGE CLUB

Meets every Thursday at 7.25 for 7.30  
at Mountnessing Village Hall, Roman Road, Mountnessing, Essex, England, CM15 0UG

## “2020” Comments on “A neat play...” Submission by Dennis Valtisiaris: [Click here](#) Commentary by Alaric Cundy

The first thing I did with this hand when reviewing it was to analyse it using *Bridge Solver*, which can be downloaded for free, and used to analyse different contracts, Declarer plays and / or defences, on any hand – such as this one! The on-line version can be accessed through this link: <https://mirgo2.co.uk/bridgesolver/upload.htm>.

*Bridge Solver* confirms that the only makeable game contract on this board is 4♥ – but it has to be played from the **South** hand! So perhaps we need to start with a discussion about the bidding, and in particular, South’s choice of opening bid. The original 2008 article justified the choice of 1NT by describing it as the choice of ‘modern bidding styles’. The article then went on to talk about ‘non-rebiddable’ 5-card majors. Back in 2008, most players would have judged that a 5-card major headed by AKT was very much re-biddable, and therefore 1♠ would have been the choice of opening bid by many players at that time. However, the 2020 idea of ‘modern bidding’ says that a major suit is only re-biddable if it is **6-cards+** in length. Clearly, if South were to open 1♠, then the 4♥ contract would be Declared by **North**, and would be beatable.

Back in 2008, we were playing in 4♥ by South. *Bridge Solver* says that 4♥ can be made on any lead from West – and with overtricks if West chooses a spade, or, specifically, the ♥9. In practice, West chose the ♣3. Dennis was absolutely correct to win in Dummy.

The best play from this point is to lead a **Spade** from Dummy – Dennis’s choice of a small heart at that point leaves open a loophole for the defenders to exploit. Cash the two top Spades, then discard the losing Club on a third Spade, leaving West on lead. West’s choice of lead at trick 5 is immaterial, but a small Club will test Declarer more than a red suit lead. Ruff low in Dummy, and **now** play a small heart from Dummy towards the Jx. If East rises with the Ace, the contract become trivial, so let’s assume that East plays low. From this point on, Dennis’s 2008 strategy is fool-proof – though it does still require the judgement that East is by now down to singleton Ace.

Turning back to trick 2, when Dennis chose the small trump from table, but *Bridge Solver* says that three spades should be played first: the defence can now beat 4♥ so long as East plays low on this trick. West will win, and the Defender’s will cash their Club winner, putting East on lead. That defence gives East the opportunity to fire a diamond through Declarer’s holding, and the trick will probably continue J, Q, A. Now when East is in with the ♥A, he can play a second Diamond and take out the entry to Declarer’s long spades, so a Diamond loser becomes unavoidable.

*Bridge Solver* says that 4♥ by **North** is only beaten after a Diamond lead at trick 1 from East – so the possible choice of a top Club would let the contract through. 3NT from either hand should fail by one trick – unless East was on lead and made the unfortunate choice of a small club.....