

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 “What is the difference between the 8 and the 4 ...?” Submission by Alaric Cundy: [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 game contract that can be made on this hand, on any lead, is 3NT, which can be negotiated successfully by North or South. Nine tricks can also be made by the North hand in either Hearts or Diamonds.

Looking more deeply at the play in 3NT by S, after the lead of the ♦2, we can test how well Declarer actually performed at the featured table. East must win with the Ace, and the small diamond is a reasonable choice of return – though *Bridge Solver* says that any return other than a top heart will yield precisely 4 tricks for the defence.

Declarer has nothing to lose – but a possible overtrick to gain – by playing low from hand at trick 2, which West must take to prevent an overtrick. West must now return a red card, else Declarer has time to set up an overtrick. As mentioned in the article, the return of a third diamond looks to be the most awkward for Declarer, as that is the last entry to hand gone, and easy access to a possible second club trick has been cut off.

East / West need to have chosen their discard signalling system very well to achieve a ‘strong signal for a heart’ at trick 3 on this hand, as mentioned in the article! The popular McKenny system could have led to a disaster, but, as it happens, throwing the ♣3 (= partner, please lead the lower ranking of the other two suits, i.e., hearts) doesn’t actually cost. This hand is in fact a good advert for the ‘Reverse Attitude’ discard of the ♥2 – a scheme that I personally do not favour, especially against No Trump contracts, because you will be throwing a long suit card that potentially might have been a winner – but on this particular hand it would have served well. Let’s assume that East throws a McKenny-style ♠8.

At the table, we are told that Declarer cashed the last Diamond, and then Dummy’s four spades. In order to avoid conceding an overtrick, East has to be a bit careful with the discards, and has to come down to the position shown in the article, else an overtrick will beckon.

Bridge Solver then goes on to **undermine the basic premise of the article** It says that even if Declarer parts with the ♥4 rather than the ♥8, nine tricks can still be made..... In the ending shown in the article, Declarer must, as happened at the table, exit Dummy with a Club, which East can take. If East now plays the ♣T, Declarer *ducks it* to be won in Dummy.

Now, if Declarer has read the cards to perfection, and also has the wisdom of Solomon, he will exit Dummy by playing the ♥Q! This masterly play, pins West’s ♥T, and leaves East helpless! If he ducks the Queen, that is 9 tricks; if he takes, and returns the Jack, Dummy is good; if he takes and returns the 3 then Declarer wins in hand and claims his ♠K.

One of the joys of using *Bridge Solver* is that if you don’t like the outcome, you can always rewind a few tricks and try again.... So, turning the clock back to trick 8, when the fourth spade is led from Dummy, let’s have Declarer throw the ♥8 rather than the ♥4. Continue as before, with

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a club from Dummy, taken by the Ace, and a Club returned, won with Declarer's King. Now all Declarer needs to do is to run the ♥9, cover West's Ten – and East is still end-played.....

Oh, well, so the 2009 analysis wasn't so smart after all!!!! Perhaps the article should have been titled "A difficult 3NT" - but somehow, such a title is not so attention-grabbing!

