

MOUNTNESSING BRIDGE CLUB

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

The Director's Deal...

Hand played on 07/07/2011
Board number 10 (Computer Dealt)
Dealer East
Vulnerability Both
Submitted by Alaric Cundy (on behalf of Ken Hunter)

	North ♠ 10 9 6 ♥ A K 9 8 3 ♦ 2 ♣ A Q 8 7					
West ♠ K J 7 ♥ J 10 2 ♦ 10 9 6 4 ♣ J 10 9		East ♠ 3 ♥ 6 5 4 ♦ K Q 8 3 ♣ K 6 4 3 2				
	South ♠ A Q 8 5 4 2 ♥ Q 7 ♦ A J 7 5 ♣ 5		The Bidding			
			North	East	South	West
				No	1S	No
			2H	No	2S	No
			4D ⁽¹⁾	No	4NT ⁽²⁾	No
			5H ⁽³⁾	No	6S	End

1. Splinter: singleton / void in diamonds plus secondary spade support
2. Roman Key Card Blackwood, anchored on Spades
3. Two out of five 'Aces' (counting the King of spades as an 'Ace') but without the Queen of spades

There is a lot more to this hand than is immediately apparent. Firstly, it took a string of coincidences before the hand happened at all!

At the start of the evening, this board was set out with its partner board, number 9, on table 5, as is customary. It so happened that sitting North / South at table 5 was a player who was returning to the club after a lengthy 'lay-off' due to illness, and so he was unaware of the new regime of computer dealt boards, so while he was waiting he helpfully shuffled and dealt both boards 9 and 10, It is very rare for the club to have a non-playing director, but it just so happened that on this particular occasion while the shuffled board 9 was being played it proved possible to return board 10 to its intended layout, as shown above.

Looking at the North / South hands, 4S looks automatic, and 6S looks tempting, and indeed several pairs did try 6S on the hand. I'd like to think that my regular partner and I would have reached 6S following an auction as above. If we had have reached that slot, then Declarer would have needed to have been very sharp...

So South finds himself as Declarer, probably in 4S, perhaps in a slam. Remember that this is a pairs event and every trick counts. It is tempting for Declarer to think that if there is King doubleton trump on-

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side, and if the hearts are 3-3, then there are six trumps, 5 hearts and two minor suit Aces on offer, for a total of thirteen, tricks and even if things go slightly awry, there are still good chances of making it to 12 tricks. So when West kicks off with the Jack of Clubs, dummy rises with the Ace and plays a trump to the queen, and now West unavoidably will win two trump tricks to hold Declarer to 11 tricks.

Perhaps Declarer should stop for a minute and note that the chances of a 3-3 heart break are about one in three (see [How_will_that_suit_split](#)), and that by similar reasoning the chances of the spades falling so kindly are about one in five, so overall this plan for 13 tricks has about a 6-7% chance of coming off. Bridge players who pursue odds of that sort are not generally successful in the long run.

The key to success on this hand comes from recognising that in order to avoid two trump losers, it has to be played on a combination of cross-ruff, then by end-playing West at the end to force him to lead away from the Spade holding.

Declarer wins the club lead and immediately ruffs a club, then plays Ace of diamonds and ruffs a diamond. A second club ruff in hand is followed by a second diamond ruff. This play is followed by a heart to the queen, then a heart to the Ace. Now ruff a heart, and lead the last diamond from declarer's hand and ruff it in Dummy. We are now left with this 3-card ending, with the lead in Dummy:

	North	
	♠	
	♥ K9	
	♦	
	♣ Q	
West		East
♠ KJ7		♠ 3
♥		♥
♦		♦
♣		♣ K6
	South	
	♠ AQ8	
	♥	
	♦	
	♣	

Declarer plays any card from Dummy, and ruffs with the eight. West is powerless to prevent Declarer from making two of the last three tricks.

I would have been proud to find that play at the table. In practice, only one player in the room made 12 tricks (5S+1) – so who was that player? It was Ken Hunter, who was playing North / South at table 5, and who had just returned from illness... Well done to Ken!

It is worth noting that the end-play can be killed dead at trick 1 if the hand is played by North – East just has to lead a trump at trick 1 and now West really MUST make two trump tricks. However, we are taught that the lead of a singleton trump is often a bad idea, so if instead instead East were to lead, say, the King of Diamonds, the play would be similar to that outlined above.