

A Safe Line

North

♠ KQ10
♥ Q853
♦ KJ95
♣ 93

West

♠ 7653
♥ 1096
♦ Q102
♣ 1052

East

♠ AJ8
♥ 4
♦ A873
♣ QJ876

South

♠ 942
♥ AKJ72
♦ 64
♣ AK4

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

	1C	1H	Pass
2C*	Pass	4H	Pass
Pass	Pass		

*Good Heart Raise

Lead Spade 6

July is the Scarborough Congress run expertly by Oliver Cowan. Sun, sea, fresh fish and chips and some bridge, what more do you need?

The congress starts with a two session pairs event in which Dan Baines, despite partnering your columnist, managed an excellent win. A superb 66% in the first session saw us lead the field which, despite a less successful second, we managed to hold onto. Qualification for the A final of the teams followed, finishing a pleasing if agonising second, finished off with a fourth-place finish in the pairs completed a very successful weekend for Dan (and his partner 😊) putting him deservedly clear at the top of the county NGS.

This hand is from the teams and demonstrates the high standard of card play in this final, and a rare partial elimination.

After partner opened one club the opposition bid to the heart game. A cue of the opponents' suit is a useful tool for showing a good raise in partner's suit rather than a weak one (two hearts), however it has the downside that my partner can double for a lead showing good clubs. Here, as Dan didn't double, I looked elsewhere and led my suit, spades, which luckily turned out much better. I led the spade, and partner ducked encouraging. Notice this is the better play here as if East wins he can't continue the suit and if partner can only lead them once more getting to East's Jack is tricky. Ducking

once means, if declarer plays diamonds and guesses wrong, when I come in with the second diamond a second spade will now lead to losing two spades and two diamonds for one down. 😊

Can you see a way around this for declarer?

My lead of the six of spades and the opening bid make it look like both the spades are wrong but rather than try and guess the diamond position there is an excellent safe way home by eliminating the hand, then strangely playing spades even though they are wrong.

Ace king and ruff a club to eliminate the suit, draw two rounds of trumps (you need to leave one on dummy for an end play to work) then play a spade!! East can win and cash another spade but now must lead a diamond up to the King or concede a ruff and discard, either gives declarer the tenth trick. An excellent line! ..and very well done if you saw this too 😊

Rob Miller