

Teaser No. 14

♠ Q 7 2

♥ K Q 3

♦ K Q J 5

♣ A 6 4

E/W GAME, Dealer: South

Contract: 6♠ by South

Lead: J♣

E/W Silent

♠ A J 10 8 3

♥ A 8 7

♦ 10 2

♣ K Q 5

Plan the play.

## Solution Teaser No. 14

If the trump suit is played correctly it is possible to cope with any 3-2 or 4-1 break provided that East was dealt the king.

You should start with a LOW spade from dummy. This caters for East holding a singleton king. If that is the case, leading the queen promotes the nine of spades in the West hand. If East follows low you finesse the ten. Let's imagine that this wins, with West following low. You must now cross back to dummy in hearts in order to lead a second spade from the table. This time, however, you should lead the QUEEN. This is in case East holds all three outstanding trumps. They can do no better than cover, but when West shows out you have a marked finesse on the third round of the suit. Had you led low to the jack, East would be left with K9 sitting over the queen and would be sure of a trick. If, instead, you tried low to the eight you would have failed rather foolishly had West been dealt 9X. It is unusual to make two consecutive safety plays in the same suit, but by doing so you cater for K9XX as well as K bare with East.

A common dilemma is whether to lead a low card or an honour when planning to take a finesse. Leading an honour is generally wrong as there is often the

chance that the next hand will cover with a singleton or doubleton honour and thereby promote a trick for their partner. If there is no such danger, leading the honour may facilitate the play when the next hand has a longer holding. Here is a well-known example:

Q 9 6 4 2 Declarer cannot afford a loser

A J 8 7 3

Laying down the ace is a poor option, winning only when the king is singleton (26%). If you correctly intend to finesse, there is no downside to leading the queen: if East plays a singleton king on it nothing is promoted in the West hand. The upside is that it caters for K105 with East, assuming you can access dummy in another suit. You succeed whenever East was dealt the King (50%)

Leading an honour might also tempt an injudicious cover:

J 8 6 4 Declarer cannot afford a loser

A K 9 5 3 2

You should start by leading the jack, but with absolutely no intention of running it if East plays low. If East was dealt Q107 they might help you out by covering.