

Teaser No. 42

North

♠ A K J 2

♥ 9 7

♦ J 10 9 8

♣ K 10 5

East

♠ 8 5 4 3

♥ J 10 4 3

♦ K

♣ A Q J 2

E/W Game, Dealer: South

Contract: 3NT by South

Lead: 5♦

South opened a weak NT, North bid Stayman, South 2♦ and North 3NT.

You are sitting East - Plan the defence – its duplicate pairs.

Solution Teaser No. 42

Play the TWO of clubs at trick two.

When your king of diamonds wins the first trick partner is marked with the ace. Declarer would surely have won if they held that card! South must therefore hold all the other high cards that you cannot see. They don't have four hearts so can only score seven tricks in the majors: even with a cheap trick in clubs they are one short and must try to establish the diamonds. By playing the two of clubs you ensure that a club lead from partner (when in with the ace of diamonds) allows your side to take three tricks in the suit. It would be a mistake to play the queen of clubs at trick two instead, for if declarer holds four clubs (ANY four clubs) they will win the fourth round. Note that the bidding suggests that South is quite likely to have four clubs.

In a teams' game, the recommended play is definitely best as it defeats the contract whenever it is possible to do so. It only fails if declarer was dealt five clubs, in which case there is no defence. If declarer does have five, a club switch at trick two lets through an overtrick. At pairs, is there a case for going passive, switching instead to hearts or spades? Not really! A low club defeats the

contract if declarer holds either three or four and there is also another factor to consider. It is possible that other Norths will be less aggressive with their twelve count. If 2NT is the final contract at some tables your current opponents will score well just by making nine tricks and the tenth won't make much difference. In other words, there is a premium on defeating the game contract.

South held: ♠ Q107, ♥ AKQ, ♦ Q42, ♣ 9876