

## Teaser No. 44

### North

♠ 7 2

♥ K 2

♦ 9 8 6 3

♣ K Q J 10 5

### East

♠ 9 3

♥ A Q 5

♦ Q 10 7 4

♣ A 6 4 2

N/S Game, Dealer: South

Contract: 4♠ by South

Lead: J♥

South opened 1♠, North bid 1NT, South leapt to game.

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

## Solution Teaser No. 44

Win the first trick and play a trump. (If dummy plays low to the first trick overtake partner's jack with your queen)

This is similar problem to the Teaser 43. You can see that the club suit in dummy will not provide any discards as you will take your ace when declarer plays their last card in the suit. Declarer cannot draw trumps ending in dummy however many spades they hold, so the club suit is dead. The only possible source of an extra trick over and above their top winners is a heart ruff in dummy. You can prevent the possibility of this by playing a trump at trick two and a second trump as soon as you regain the lead.

Declarer will win the trump switch and sense that the defence is on the case. Their next move will probably be to lead a club whilst dummy still has a trump. (That trump prevents your side taking two further heart tricks straight away.) At this point it is imperative that West signals their length in the suit. The standard way to do this is play the top card from a doubleton and the bottom card from a trebleton, though you can reverse this with partnership agreement. Without this help from partner you will be guessing when to take your ace.

It is reasonable to assume that partner would have led a singleton club at trick one against this auction. Therefore, if you see a high club you assume it is top of a doubleton. That gives declarer a doubleton too, so you duck the first round of clubs and take your ace on the second. If you see a low club you assume it is from three, so you take your ace immediately and switch back to trumps.

Some players are averse to signalling their distribution as it can help declarer as much as partner and there is certainly merit in this approach. Indeed, the famous Italian Blue Team, winners of umpteen World Championships, rarely signalled length. One of the few exceptions was when dummy had a long suit to which there was no outside entry. In this position it is impossible to defend accurately without a helpful signal.

Finally, it is just possible that partner is void in clubs in which case it might be better to win the first trick and play ace and another club. This defence is not recommended as it is too unilateral. To be right, it requires a specific and rather unlikely layout.

South held: ♠AKQJ1065, ♥643, ♦A, ♣87