

Teaser No. 48

North

♠ A K 10 5 3

♥ A Q

♦ 8 4 3

♣ 10 9 7

East

♠ Q J 9 8 7

♥ 9 7 6 4

♦ A 6

♣ A 5

N/S Game, Dealer: North

Contract: 3NT by South

Lead: 5 ♦

North opened 1♠, South responded 2♣, North rebid 2♠ and South 2NT.

North Raise to game.

You win with the ace and return a ♦ to partner's king, declarer following suit with the nine and jack. At trick three partner leads the 2 ♦.

You are sitting East - Plan the defence – it's a teams' match.

Solution Teaser No. 48

Discard your Ace of clubs at trick three!

When partner leads the two of diamonds to the third trick you know they started with five and that declarer will win this trick with the queen. Partner will then have two winning diamonds in their hand but where is their entry? The only chance in light of the bidding is a slow entry in clubs. If declarer has a club suit headed by the KQJ the defence is dead, but if partner holds three cards headed by the jack the spectacular discard of the ace creates an entry. Declarer can score just two tricks in the suit and West can win the third round. The discard would also be essential if partner held a doubleton queen.

Now look at it from declarer's point of view. They will also have worked out that West has two master diamonds and that the contract is doomed if the ace of clubs is also in that hand. If you hang on to your ace of clubs they will make the assumption that you have it. By crossing to dummy twice in order to lead clubs TOWARDS their honours they will force you to play your ace on a low card and will then have enough winners.

South held: ♠ 42, ♥ K102, ♦ QJ9, ♣ KQ864

As you can now work out, West held J32 so the recommended defence works. Declarer can make only eight tricks as any attempt to endplay East fails with careful defence. It is rather less likely on the bidding, but the layout of the club suit may have been:

1097

Q2

A5

KJ8764

If you fail to discard your ace at trick three declarer will not have any problem guessing how to play the suit: they will surely play low to the king. If you DO throw it away they can come to just one club trick before letting partner in to cash their diamonds!

An unblocking discard of a club honour at trick three would be equally correct with KX or QX in the suit:

1097

J32

K5

AQ864

1097

J32

Q5

AK864

In both cases, East throwing away their honour prevents declarer establishing the suit without letting West in.

Failure to do so allows declarer to lead the suit from dummy (twice if necessary) and to duck when they see East play an honour. This 'avoidance' play allows them to score four tricks in the suit without West obtaining the lead.

Note that in all cases the defence is only entitled to one trick in the suit. The mission is to ensure that partner wins that trick, not you!