

Teaser No. 53

North

♠ 10 7 2

♥ K 4

♦ J 10 5

♣ A K J 9 2

West

♠ 8 3

♥ Q 10 9 2

♦ A K 8 4

♣ 7 6 5

Game All, Dealer: South

Contract: 6♠ by South

Lead: A♦

South opened 1♠, North bid 2♣, South jumped to 3♠ and North raised to 4♠. South bid Blackwood and jumped to the slam after partner shows one ace.

The ace wins the first trick and you continue with the king which declarer ruffs. Declarer now plays out all of his trumps, quickly revealing that your partner was dealt a small singleton.

You are sitting West - Plan the defence – its duplicate pair.

Solution Teaser No. 53

Discard red cards only and keep all three clubs.

If declarer held more than two hearts they would have ruffed a losing heart in dummy. It is therefore safe to discard your hearts. If declarer has just two hearts they have three clubs. If these include the queen, they have more winners than needed, so you must assume that partner holds that card. It would be a mistake to throw a club at any stage, though you might just survive one club discard if declarer reads you for QXXX. It would be a big mistake (and definitely fatal!) to throw more than one club! Provided that you hang on to all three of your clubs, declarer will probably go down. After running all seven trumps they will cash one top club just in case the queen drops, then cash king and ace of hearts and lead a club towards dummy. They will have no reason not to follow the normal percentage play of finessing the jack. The queen is more likely to be in a three-card holding in your hand than in a two-card holding in your partner's hand. (Note that throwing one club rules out the possibility that you started with QXX so declarer may well play to drop the queen rather than guessing clubs break 4-1).

It is also possible that declarer has four small clubs and only one heart (ace bare). If that's the case, a single club discard will prove terminal.

Regardless of the percentages, by throwing away only hearts and diamonds you create the impression that you are guarding something precious in clubs.

When under pressure, it is normally a good idea to discard small cards that cannot possibly win a trick. However, if the small cards are in the critical suit, the suit in which declarer has a choice of plays, even a single discard may compromise partner's holding.

South held: ♠ AKQJ964, ♥ AJ, ♦ 7, ♣ 1083