

Teaser No. 54

North



K J



10 8



9 6 5 2



K J 9 6 3

West



8 4



A Q 9 6 3 2



Q J 7



Q 5

E/W Game, Dealer: South

Contract: 3NT by South

Lead: 6♥

South opened 2NT (19-20 points) and North raised.

The ten of hearts wins the first trick, partner playing the seven

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

Solution Teaser No. 54

It is not your turn to play, but you should be thinking ahead and planning to unblock your minor suit honours! Play the queen of clubs under declarer's ace, and the diamond honours under declarer's ace and king.

You must hope that partner was dealt a small doubleton in hearts rather than a singleton, and that they obtain the lead in order to play a heart from their side of the table. The opening 2NT bid and the play to the first trick marks declarer with all the missing high cards except the queen of spades. This means they have seven top tricks (two clubs, two diamonds, a heart and two spades). If declarer has three or more clubs, that suit will provide the extra tricks needed without any danger of East obtaining the lead.

Assume, therefore, that declarer has ace doubleton in clubs without the ten.

K J 9 6 3

Q 5

10 8 7 4

A 2

When declarer plays the ace, you must play the queen underneath it. Now they can score just three club tricks before letting East win a trick in the suit. If you fail to unblock the queen, declarer will continue with a small club towards dummy. When they see your queen, they will duck in the sure knowledge that it will win the trick, thereby scoring four club tricks in safety.

Once you have thwarted their hopes in clubs, they will try to develop an extra trick in diamonds without letting East in. Again, you must jettison your honours in the suit underneath declarer's top cards, trusting that partner is able to win the third round of the suit. Declarer might play the top honours from hand, or might start by leading the nine from dummy (which partner must cover with the ten). You must unblock regardless, the worst it can do is gift an overtrick.

South held: ♠ A7632, ♥ KJ4, ♦ AK4, ♣ A2