

Teaser No. 57

North

♠ Q 6 4
♥ K 8 5 3
♦ A K J 10
♣ 7 2

West

♠ 10 5
♥ Q 9 4
♦ 8 7 3 2
♣ K 9 6 3

Game All, Dealer: North

Contract: 4♥ by South

Lead: 10♠

North opened 1NT (12-16), East overcalled 2♠ and South bid 3♥ (Forcing).

North raised to game.

Partner wins the first three tricks with AKJ♠, declarer following suit.

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

Solution Teaser No. 57

Discourage partner from playing a club to the next trick!

You have to find a discard at trick three and should play whatever card is most likely to deter a club switch. Partner will be looking at dummy and thinking a club is the obvious card to play. You, however, can calculate that a fourth round of spades is 100% certain to defeat the contract. If you have a way to ask for a spade that's great, if not, just don't ask for a club: partner will get the message, you could hardly want a diamond! So, playing natural discards or standard attitude you throw your lowest club and playing reverse attitude it's the nine of clubs. If you favour Dodds/revolving/ odd-evens/Lavinthal/ anything else, choose the option most likely to deter a club and focus attention on spades.

Imagine that declarer has all the unseen high cards: a spade will still win. If declarer holds a trump suit headed by AJ10, a spade lead from East will promote a sure trump trick in your hand. If they ruff low or discard, you ruff with the nine. If they ruff with the ace, you discard. If they ruff with the jack or ten (this is most likely!) again you discard: your Q94 will be worth a sure trick so long as you decline to over-ruff.

This showcases an important defensive principle: when there is a chance to over-ruff an honour with a higher honour it is often better to throw a plain card instead, thereby retaining your length in the trump suit.

It is true that declarer might still go down on a club switch as there is a losing option in the trump suit. However, knowing that you started with just two spades to your partner's five, they are quite likely to play you for the longer trump holding and take a winning finesse. Their losing club then disappears on dummy's long diamond. Game made!

South held: ♠ 982, ♥ AJ1072, ♦ Q64, ♣ AQ