

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

COUNTING THE HAND

By: Brian Gunnell

This week we start a series of hands where the key to success is counting the opponents' distribution, in each case turning a guess into a sure thing.

	♠ AJ94 ♥ QJ94 ♦ Q ♣ Q542	
♠ Q8 ♥ T72 ♦ AKT653 ♣ T9	North West East Declarer	♠ K3 ♥ K3 ♦ J9874 ♣ A876
	♠ T7652 ♥ A865 ♦ 2 ♣ KJ3	

E-W Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
	2♦	Dbf	4♦
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

West's 2♦ was a Weak Two, showing less than opening values and a 6-card suit. East further crowded N-S by jumping to 4♦ and South tried 4♠. The good news for E-W was that they had bounced N-S into a poor contract, the bad news was that South makes her contract if she does a little counting.

West leads the ♦A and shifts to the ♣T. East wins the Ace and returns the suit, vainly hoping that West can ruff. But Declarer's King wins the trick, then comes the ♠A, and a second Spade won by East. Declarer wins the Club continuation in Dummy, and leads the ♥Q which East declines to cover. What next?

Three tricks have been lost and Declarer must bring in the Heart suit for no losers if she is to make her contract. She can either play a low Heart to the Ace, hoping that East has started with doubleton King ... or she can lead the Jack, hoping to squash West's doubleton Ten and set up the Nine. There's no need to guess this one. West has six Diamonds for his 2♦ bid, and has shown up with two Spades and two Clubs. That leaves three Hearts! So, Declarer plays a *low* Heart from Dummy and, sure enough, the King pops out of East's hand.

Of course, if East had known that Declarer would be so unsporting as to count out the distribution, then he would have covered the Queen with the King and given Declarer a guess for the ♥T.

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