

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

THE STRIPTease COUP

By: Brian Gunnell

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| | ♠ AQ765 ♥ 53 ♦ Q4 ♣ 9854 | |
| ♠ JT943 ♥ KQT4 ♦ 65 ♣ A3 | <i>North</i> <i>West</i> <i>East</i> <i>Declarer</i> | ♠ 82 ♥ 9876 ♦ JT982 ♣ K7 |
| | ♠ K ♥ AJ2 ♦ AK73 ♣ QJT62 | |

We round out our series on bridge coups with a personal favorite.

After West has overcalled in Spades, South finds herself in 5♣, a contract which appears doomed when West's opening lead is the ♥K. Declarer cannot play on trumps immediately because the defense has three cashing tricks ... she cannot pitch her two Heart losers on the top Spades because East will ruff the third round ... and she cannot pitch Dummy's

Heart loser on the Diamonds because West will ruff the third round.

But Declarer has a resource, let the striptease commence! Declarer's ♥A wins the first trick, the ♠K is unblocked, then over to Dummy's ♦Q. The ♠A is cashed (Declarer pitching a Heart, of course), and now, when Dummy's ♠Q is played, East must ruff to prevent another Heart pitch. He cannot ruff high (Declarer would pitch the Heart anyway) so he ruffs low and is overruffed. Next, Declarer plays his high Diamonds and this time it is West who is forced to ruff in order to prevent the Heart pitch. West must also ruff low and is overruffed by Dummy.

After those two low ruffs, both defenders have bared down to a singleton trump honor, so Declarer can lead a trump and enjoy the sight of the Ace and King tumbling down on the same trick! This was actually a double Striptease Coup as both defenders were divested of their protective small trump.

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