

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

THE POWER OF DEDUCTION

By: Brian Gunnell

This deal follows continues the month's theme of counting the opponents' HCP.

	♠ ♥ 985 ♦ KJ842 ♣ 98432	
♠ 532 ♥ A764 ♦ AT3 ♣ JT6	<i>North</i> <i>West</i> <i>East</i> <i>Declarer</i>	♠ Q764 ♥ QJT ♦ Q75 ♣ A75
	♠ AKJT98 ♥ K32 ♦ 96 ♣ KQ	

Both Vulnerable

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

This is not the most swashbuckling auction ever to appear in Bridge Bites but the deal does provide a test for Declarer's powers of deduction. Cover up the E-W hands if you would like to test your own powers.

West leads the ♣J won by East's Ace and it takes half a nano-second for East to find the ♥Q shift. You could duck Hearts twice, hoping that West has the doubleton ♥A, but that would give East 5 Hearts and he would be unlikely to sell out to 1♠ in that case. So, you hopefully play the ♥K, taken by West's Ace. Two more Hearts are won by East's ♥JT, then a Club which you win. The ♠A and ♠K are cashed, followed by the ♠J to East's Queen (West following).

West leads the ♣J won by East's Ace

Back comes East's last trump, and decision time has arrived! You've already lost 5 tricks, and must avoid the loss of two Diamonds if you are to make your contract. A Diamond to the Jack? Or a Diamond to the King? Do you have your guessing shoes on?

Guess? What guess? Let's reflect upon East's bidding. Oh, that's right, he didn't bid - which is the whole point of this hand. So far East has shown up with ♣A, ♥QJ, and ♠Q. That's 9 High Card Points (HCP). Can East also have the ♦A? Absolutely not! He passed originally, that ♦A would give him 13 HCP and too much for said Pass. So, you lead a Diamond towards the board, West smoothly plays low, and you rise majestically with the ♦K. Making 7 tricks thanks to a little deduction.

Post Script: Upon winning the ♥A, West would have done better to shift fiendishly to a low Diamond, putting Declarer to the test in that suit before all the clues had been collected!

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