

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

PROTECTING PARTNER'S ENTRY

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ K4 ♥ KT32 ♦ J876 ♣ KQ5	
♠ QJT83 ♥ 64 ♦ Q32 ♣ 876	North West East Declarer	♠ 975 ♥ QJ97 ♦ A4 ♣ JT94
	♠ A62 ♥ A85 ♦ KT95 ♣ A32	

Both Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

A combined 27 HCP is usually plenty for a 3NT contract, but here the N-S hands did not fit well together. Even so, East needed to keep his wits about him if he was to beat the contract. But, sadly for E-W, East's wits deserted him at the crucial moment. See if you can do better.

Against 3NT West led the ♠Q which held the trick. Dummy's King won the second Spade, the Diamond finesse lost to West's Queen, then back came another Spade, won by Declarer's Ace. Now, when Declarer conceded a trick to the ♦A, East was out of Spades, so West's Spade winners were useless and Declarer romped home with 9 tricks.

Declarer played her part well by holding up on the first Spade, in an attempt to disrupt the E-W communications, but East overlooked an effective counter-measure. With South opening a 15-17 1NT, East knew that his partner had a maximum of five HCP, and three of those had already shown up in the Spade suit. West's only possible entry to the long Spades was the ♦Q, and it was East's job to protect that entry for use later in the hand, when the Spades had been established. The way to do that was to disregard the old adage of "second hand low" and to grab the ♦A on the first round of the suit. Now, after the ♠A is knocked out, it is West who wins the second round of Diamonds and can cash his Spades for down one. Alert play by those Easts who hopped up with the ♦A!

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