

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

TRIPLE PLAY

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ 8754 ♥ AK65 ♦ 9832 ♣ T	
♠ K6 ♥ QT43 ♦ J ♣ J98764	North West East Declarer	♠ 3 ♥ J9872 ♦ AK65 ♣ K53
	♠ AQJT92 ♥ ♦ QT74 ♣ AQ2	

None Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

When, as a defender, we have a trump holding such as Kx or QJx or JTxx, conventional wisdom tells us that it is frequently better not to chase after ruffs as we would have scored that trump trick naturally. Let's see how that advice works on this deal.

First Play: West ignores conventional wisdom and leads his singleton Diamond. East takes his ♦K and ♦A and gives West his ruff. Now, with only two enemy trumps remaining, Declarer should play for the drop, and that is 10 tricks for Declarer. Actually, Declarer had a second compelling reason to play for the drop. If he were to finesse the Spade he would be playing West to have two singletons. That's not impossible, of course, but with such extreme distribution, and being non-vulnerable, he might have been heard from in the bidding, don't you think?

Second Play: Our second West decides to lead a Heart, reasoning that it would be better to win the ♠K (when Declarer finesses) and *then* try for the Diamond ruff. That way he scores *two* trump tricks. Dummy's Ace wins that opening Heart lead and, sure enough, the Spade finesse is lost to West, and the defense now scores two Diamonds and a ruff. Down one!

Third Play: That Heart was a better opening lead from West, but it was followed by some pretty atrocious play by Declarer! All he has to do is to cash both of Dummy's Hearts, pitching Diamonds, and then take the Spade finesse. Now the defense can cash their Diamonds, but Declarer can ruff the third round high. 10 tricks.

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