

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

DOUBLE END-PLAY

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ A8 ♥ K987 ♦ AJT8 ♣ AJ8	
♠KJT6532 ♥ J6 ♦ 32 ♣ K3	North West East Declarer	♠ 9 ♥ Q53 ♦ 9764 ♣ 97652
	♠ Q74 ♥ AT42 ♦ KQ5 ♣ QT4	

E-W Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1♣	3♠	Dbl	Pass
4♥	Pass	6♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

This is not a good slam! After a Diamond opening lead, even if trumps are 3-2 and the Club finesse works, it still looks as if Declarer must lose a Heart and a Spade for down one. How does Declarer avoid that Spade loser?

West's 3♠ overcall (showing seven Spades) points the way to the winning line. Declarer wins the opening lead with the ♦K, and now proceeds to remove all of East's safe exit cards. At Trick 2 he takes the Club finesse, then cashes the ♥K, back to hand with the ♥A, and another Club. After Declarer has taken his minor suit winners, the ♠A is cashed, at which point East is down to the ♥Q and two Clubs. Declarer now throws in East with a trump, and East is forced to return a Club, allowing Declarer a so-called "ruff and sluff", whereby one hand pitches a (Spade) loser and the other one takes the ruff. That's a pretty elimination play for 12 tricks.

Strangely enough, if South declares 6NT, there is a totally different elimination play, this time directed against West. Say that West leads a Diamond as before. Declarer wins, finesses the Club, returns to hand with another Diamond, and plays off the rest of the Clubs and Diamonds. By now, West is down to ♥J6 and ♠KJT5. Dummy's ♥K is cashed and a Heart is run around to West's Jack. West must return a Spade and that gives Declarer the 12th trick. West might try and wriggle out of the end-play by throwing his ♥J under the ♥K, but to no avail as that only serves to set up a Heart finesse against East.

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