

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

PERILOUSLY HIGH

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ T2 ♥ JT43 ♦ KJ93 ♣ T95	
♠ K9 ♥ K6 ♦ Q854 ♣ AQ764	North West East Declarer	♠ 87643 ♥ 72 ♦ A72 ♣ J32
	♠ AQJ5 ♥ AQ985 ♦ T6 ♣ K8	

E-W Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	2♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

South's game-try got N-S perilously high, and with the Clubs badly placed, and with both major suit finesses destined to lose, it seemed that 3♥ would be going down one. But, of course, one way to avoid losing finesses is simply not to take them.

Against 3♥, West started with a low Diamond, low from Dummy, won by East's Ace. Now the defense played Clubs and Declarer ruffed the third round. Pausing to take stock, Declarer reflected upon the auction. West had made a vulnerable two-level overcall and probably had both major suit Kings. How about East? He had shown up with the ♦A and the ♣J, surely if he had an additional King he would have raised to 3♣. Yes, all the signs were that both major suit finesses would fail.

So, trusting her judgment, Declarer decided to play West for a singleton or doubleton Heart King. After ruffing the third Club she plunked down the ♥A, but West did not oblige with a singleton King. Next, Declarer removed West's safe exit cards by finessing the ♦J, cashing Dummy's ♦K and ruffing a Diamond. Now, when Declarer exited with a trump, West was end-played. Upon winning his ♥K West had the unpleasant choice of leading away from the ♠K, or conceding a ruff and discard by leading a Club.

A strange hand! Declarer had potential losers in both majors but declined to take the finesses ... but she *did* take the Diamond finesse when there were no remaining losers in the suit!

Post Script: West missed a chance to spoil Declarer's fun. After the defense takes the ♦A and two Clubs, if West reverts to Diamonds then Declarer can no longer extract all of West's exit cards and will be down one.

Visit www.acbl.org for more about the fascinating game of bridge or email marketing@acbl.org