

# BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

## FROZEN SUIT

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ 542 ♥ AQ87 ♦ AK7 ♣ T32	
♠ QT83 ♥ 64 ♦ QJ98 ♣ Q98	North West      East Declarer	♠ J96 ♥ 932 ♦ T54 ♣ K764
	♠ AK7 ♥ KJT5 ♦ 632 ♣ AJ5	

### Both Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

3NT would have been an easy contract but South found herself in 4♥, where there are the same nine winners. N-S have mirror distributions, so there are no ruffs to add to that total. Where is the 10<sup>th</sup> trick?

This deal is all about the Club suit. On the lie of the cards, if Declarer breaks open the suit, she will score just the Ace and will lose the other two tricks. But if the defense breaks open the suit then Declarer will make two tricks. In other words, it's a frozen suit, and whoever plays Clubs first loses. But Declarer has the majority of the high cards and the trumps, let's see how she uses them to make the defense blink first.

West leads the ♦Q which is won in Dummy, and trumps are drawn in three rounds. Declarer avoids playing Clubs, of course, instead she cashes her Spade winners and her second Diamond winner, and exits with a Diamond. The defense can safely cash a Spade, but now they will be faced with unpleasant alternatives:

- *Either* they can play a Spade or a Diamond, giving Declarer a ruff and discard (one hand ruffs, the other discards a Club loser)
- *Or* they can break open the frozen Clubs and give up the 10<sup>th</sup> trick that way.

That line of play was not guaranteed to succeed. Imagine West with ♣KQx, and further suppose that East is able to win the third round of Spades and of Diamonds. Now, when Declarer exits a Diamond, East wins and fires a Club through, won by West. Back comes a Spade to East and another Club through, and that's down one. Declarer can avoid this grisly fate by ducking the opening Diamond lead (now East gets in only once and cannot lead Clubs twice), but that play will not be a great success if East is able to ruff the second round of Diamonds.

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