

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

SMARTER THAN A SECOND-GRADER?

By: Brian Gunnell

We learn to count in first- and second-grade, but somehow this basic skill deserts many bridge players in the heat of battle.

	♠ A832 ♥ Q85 ♦ QJ7653 ♣	
♠ 6 ♥ K63 ♦ K842 ♣ AQ543	North West East Declarer	♠ 754 ♥ AJ94 ♦ T9 ♣ 8762
	♠ KQJT9 ♥ T72 ♦ A ♣ KJT9	

None Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♦	1♥	1♠
2♥	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

West leads a low Heart and East (correctly) inserts the Jack. Two more Hearts are cashed, followed by a trump shift. "Rats!" mutters Declarer, who had been planning to cross-ruff the entire hand, scoring all nine trumps separately. Those ruffs, plus the ♦A, would be enough

to fulfill the contract. But, after the trump return, the cross-ruff leaves Declarer a trick short, so it's time for Plan B.

Our Declarer's (faulty) Plan B was to set up Dummy's Diamonds. He won the trump return in hand, cashed the ♦A, then Club ruff, Diamond ruff, Club ruff, Diamond ruff. This line of play required good breaks (such as Spades 2-2 and Diamonds 3-3, or failing that the doubleton ♦K). But Declarer's luck was out and, as the cards lie, it was impossible to enjoy those long Diamonds.

Our second-graders need no luck, instead they'll do some counting:

- N-S have 23 HCP, so the other guys have 17
- In the Heart suit East showed up with 5 of those 17 missing HCP
- West opened the bidding and surely has the remaining 12 HCP

Once Declarer realizes that West has the missing high cards (obviously including the ♣A and ♣Q), it's routine to win the trump return in hand, and take ruffing finesses against West's high Clubs. Declarer leads the ♣K which is covered by the Ace and ruffed. Back to hand with a trump. Then the ♣J is led, and run around if West declines to cover. When the dust has cleared, Declarer will have scored 5 trumps in his hand, plus two Club ruffs in Dummy, plus two Club tricks, and the ♦A. 10 easy tricks for the second-graders!

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