

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

AN AFTERNOON NAP

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ Q432 ♥ J ♦ AKQT2 ♣ J53	
♠ ♥ 7432 ♦ 753 ♣ AKQ742	North West East Declarer	♠ AKJT965 ♥ 65 ♦ J64 ♣ 9
	♠ 87 ♥ AKQT98 ♦ 98 ♣ T86	

E-W Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
		1♦	3♠
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

East's 3♠ bid was preemptive, showing a long suit (usually 7 cards) and a weak hand, its purpose being to make life difficult for the opponents. And so it does, pushing N-S into an ugly 4♥ contract which has 5 top losers.

West cashes his three Clubs and then, for want of better, shifts to a Diamond. Dummy wins that, and draws trumps. It was fortunate for Declarer that West started with no Spades, otherwise he would have been down two in a hurry. But now, if Declarer can bring home the Diamond suit, both of those Spade losers will disappear and this rotten contract will actually make! Do you play Diamonds from the top (hoping that they are 3-3 or that East has Jx)? Or do you finesse the Ten (playing West to have Jxxx)?

It may be tempting to think "East has seven Spades and West has none, therefore West is more likely to have Diamond length" But that's only part of the picture and Declarer will count the whole hand. East started with seven Spades, two Hearts, and one Club, that much we know. This leaves three Diamonds, no more, no less! So Declarer confidently plays the Diamonds from the top and the Spade losers are thrown off. It pays to count in this game!

It also pays to stay awake. Yes, you noticed, the defense was fast asleep! East must ruff the third Club, just in case West has no Spades. Now the Spades are cashed and it is down two. And let's also mention that West should have helped his dozing partner by leading a *low* Club at Trick 3. *That* will wake him up!

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