

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

THE DEVIL'S COUP

By: Brian Gunnell

You could play a lifetime of bridge without pulling off a Devil's Coup, but it's worth a look purely for its entertainment value.

	♠ AT4 ♥ Q954 ♦ KJ96 ♣ A7	
♠ J73 ♥ A872 ♦ T82 ♣ Q54	North West East Declarer	♠ Q8 ♥ JT63 ♦ 753 ♣ J632
	♠ K9652 ♥ K ♦ AQ4 ♣ KT98	

It looks like Partner has overbid again because you find yourself in the dreadful contract of 6♠. West cashes the ♥A at Trick 1 and now the success of your slam depends upon losing no trump tricks, missing QJ873. The chances of one defender holding QJ doubleton are pretty remote (8%, actually) and you can do better by *not* drawing trumps.

(ending in Dummy), ruff another Heart, cash ♣A and ♣K, and ruff a Club, reaching this position, with the lead in Dummy:

	♠ AT ♥ Q ♦ 9 ♣	
♠ J73 ♥ 7 ♦ ♣		♠ Q8 ♥ J ♦ ♣ J
	♠ K96 ♥ ♦ ♣ T	

Do you see how to win the rest of the tricks? Sure you do! You ruff Dummy's ♥Q (even though it is a winner!) and, when the ♠T is led, the defense is toast. *If West ruffs low* then Dummy overruffs and you score the last two tricks with the ♠A and ♠K ... *if West ruffs high* then Dummy overruffs and there is now a finesse position against East's Queen! Devilish indeed!

To bring off this small miracle, West's distribution had to be precisely 3=4=3=3 or 3=5=3=2 and he had to hold one of the missing Spade honors. We don't know if that offers better odds than the aforementioned 8%, but we are sure that bringing off the Devil's Coup is so much more fun!

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