

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

HERO OR ZERO

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ 75 ♥ A52 ♦ K72 ♣ AJT62	
♠ K3 ♥ KQT8 ♦ T986 ♣ 853	North West East Declarer	♠ T86 ♥ J643 ♦ QJ3 ♣ Q74
	♠ AQJ942 ♥ 97 ♦ A54 ♣ K9	

Both Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

4♠ is an iron-clad contract, and the play is simply a battle for overtricks. Not a big deal if you are playing rubber bridge, but in the world of duplicate bridge, overtricks are important. You are West, do something brilliant!

All the West players led the ♥K (nothing brilliant there), won by Dummy's Ace, after which it was a routine matter for Declarer to lose the Spade finesse. West cashed a Heart, and Declarer won the Diamond shift in her hand. Trumps were drawn, then came the ♣K, the ♣A and the ♣J. When the ♣Q tumbled down, Declarer had 11 tricks.

The resulting -650 was the standard E-W score around the room, except at one table, where West did something wickedly clever. Yes, no doubt you spotted it right away, West ducked the ♠K on the first round of trumps! Of course, Declarer had no way of knowing that West now had the unprotected King, so she crossed to Dummy's ♦K and repeated the finesse. West won the King, cashed a Heart, and shifted to a Diamond and, although Declarer had made her contract, there were no overtricks and her score of +620 was worth zero matchpoints. That diabolical duck by West had persuaded Declarer to waste a valuable Dummy entry on a futile finesse.

However, West's play was not without risk, and he would hardly have been a hero if his Partner's trumps were, for example, Jx or JT_x. But, if that had turned out to be the case, then at least he would have had an amusing story to tell on himself later. And he could no doubt count on Partner's legendary sense of humor as they ruefully scored -680 and zero matchpoints.

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