

# BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

## WORST-CASE SCENARIO

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	♠ AK82 ♥ 952 ♦ Q5 ♣ QJ42	
♠ J6 ♥ QT87 ♦ T9873 ♣ A7	North West      East Declarer	♠ QT943 ♥ KJ ♦ 6 ♣ K9865
	♠ 75 ♥ A643 ♦ AKJ42 ♣ T3	

### *E-W Vulnerable*

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Put yourself in Declarer's seat, with only the N-S hands in view. West leads the Heart Seven, East plays the King. Looks like two Spades, a Heart and five Diamonds will get you to eight. What can possibly go wrong?

Many Declarers would jump right in, grabbing the ♥A, and rattling off the Diamonds. But, as it happens, they don't rattle and the 5-1 split derails the contract. Declarer cannot cash four Diamonds, that would set up the defense's sixth trick ... and if he cashes only three Diamonds there is no way to come to eight tricks.

When things look easy, Declarer is advised to consider the worst-case scenario. In this case it is a bad Diamond break, giving Declarer only seven top tricks. Can Declarer do something about that? Yes, before going all-in with the Diamond suit, Declarer can hedge his bets by playing Clubs first, building a trick there just in case the Diamonds misbehave. The defense can take their three Hearts and two Clubs but that is all they get. Did you play on Clubs before Diamonds? Well done if you did!

One more point. Did you win the Heart at Trick 1? Or did you duck, planning to win the second Heart, in case the suit was 5-1? It's safe to win the first trick, the Hearts cannot be 5-1. East played the King, so he denies the Queen and cannot have five in the suit ... and if West had QJT87 he would no doubt have led the Queen. So, it's OK to win the first trick and play on Clubs, safe in the knowledge that the defense cannot cash six tricks. If you cautiously ducked the first Heart then it would be just your luck for the defense to find the killing Spade shift.

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