

# BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

## THE SCISSORS COUP

By: Brian Gunnell

This week's deal features the Scissors Coup, so-called because it cuts communications between the two defenders.

|                                   |                                     |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                                   | ♠ J95<br>♥ AKJ7<br>♦ 43<br>♣ AT87   |                                   |
| ♠ A4<br>♥ T<br>♦ AJT65<br>♣ KQJ52 | North<br>West      East<br>Declarer | ♠ 2<br>♥ 8643<br>♦ KQ987<br>♣ 643 |
|                                   | ♠ KQT8763<br>♥ Q952<br>♦ 2<br>♣ 9   |                                   |

### Both Vulnerable

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| 1♦   | Dbl   | 4♦   | 4♠    |
| 5♦   | Pass  | Pass | 5♠    |
| Pass | Pass  | Pass |       |

East's 4♦ was preemptive, showing long Diamonds and not much else.

As West, what's your opening lead? It would be reasonable to lead ♣K, attempting to set up a Club trick while you still have the ♠A entry. That

doesn't work on the actual deal because of Declarer's Club singleton. A more promising plan might be to lead the singleton Heart, later winning the ♠A, then *underleading* the ♦A to East's hoped-for ♦K, and getting a Heart ruff for down one. As you can see, that plan is the winner. Well, not quite, because there is a clever counter-measure. How can Declarer deprive West of his ruff?

Enter the Scissors Coup. Declarer wins the Heart lead in Dummy, and before touching trumps she cashes ♣A and leads another Club, *pitching a Diamond* when East plays low. By this maneuver Declarer trades a Diamond loser for a Club loser, in the process thwarting West in his plan to reach East with the ♦K. Now, with the defensive communications snipped, Declarer loses only the ♠A and a Club (but there is no Diamond loser and no Heart ruff).

**Post Script:** As West you no doubt found that well-thought-out Heart opening lead. Then as Declarer you made a clever play to bring home the 5♠ contract. Next, imagine that you hold the East cards, but with the ♣6 replaced by the ♣J. Now, after Dummy's ♣A has been cashed, when a second Club is played, we are quite confident that you would alertly hop up with that ♣J, foiling the Scissors Coup. Nice play!

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