

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

THRUST AND PARRY

By: Brian Gunnell

East made a couple of fine defensive plays on this deal, but Declarer parried with some good plays of her own, and eventually prevailed.

	♠ 652 ♥ Q543 ♦ 42 ♣ QJT3	
♠ KQJT93 ♥ 762 ♦ 5 ♣ 842	North West East Declarer	♠ 4 ♥ A98 ♦ T9876 ♣ A976
	♠ A87 ♥ KJT ♦ AKQJ3 ♣ K5	

N-S Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West's 2♠ was preemptive, showing a 6-card suit and a weak hand. West leads the ♠K, and Declarer ducks the first round, just in case West was being frisky and bid 2♠ on a 5-card suit. The purpose of that "hold-up play" is to make sure that East is out of Spades when he later gains the lead.

Declarer wins the second round of Spades (East pitches a Club), and must flush out East's Aces in order to reach 9 tricks. She leads the ♣K, but East cleverly ducks that, making his own hold-up play in order to shut out Dummy's Club suit. Declarer persists with Clubs and East wins the second round, then exits with a Diamond. Next comes the ♥K, but again East holds up his Ace, and holds up yet again when Declarer plays the ♥J! East has succeeded in keeping Declarer from reaching Dummy, but only temporarily. Declarer leads another Heart, which East must win. Again, East exits with a Diamond. Declarer cashes the remaining Diamond winners and loses the fifth round to East. East's remaining card is a Club and that gives Declarer her 9th trick. It took a while, but finally, at Trick 13, Declarer reaches Dummy!

Post Script: If Declarer had held three Clubs instead of just two, East would have wanted to duck the second Club and win the third round. How did East know to win the second round instead? His helpful Partner gave him a *count signal*, playing the *Two* on the first round. By playing a *low* Club West showed an *odd* number ... if West had held a doubleton, he would have played his *high* Club to show an *even* number. Nice defense by E-W, albeit in a losing cause.

Visit www.acbl.org for more about the fascinating game of bridge or email marketing@acbl.org