

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

“NICE TRY, PARTNER”

By: Brian Gunnell

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|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | ♠ J7532 ♥ 3 ♦ 9765 ♣ J62 | |
| ♠ Q ♥ T84 ♦ QJ42 ♣ KQ753 | North West East Declarer | ♠ T9 ♥ KQ76 ♦ AKT ♣ AT94 |
| | ♠ AK864 ♥ AJ952 ♦ 83 ♣ 8 | |

E-W Vulnerable

| East | South | West | North |
|------|----------|------|-------|
| 1NT | 2♠ | 3♠ | 4♠ |
| Dbl | All Pass | | |

Opposite a 15-17 1NT, West had the HCP for game and cue-bid 3♠, hoping that East had something in Spades and could bid 3NT. Does North’s 4♠ seem a bit nutty? Or completely so? It was neither, North expected that 4♠ doubled would be a good sacrifice against an E-W game.

Yes, North fully expected that 4♠ would go down and South went out of his way not to disappoint her. The play went like this: ♣K and ♦K and ♦A were cashed; Club ruffed by Declarer; trumps drawn in two rounds; Heart ruff; Diamond ruff; Heart ruff; Diamond ruff; Heart ruff. If you have worked your way through this orgy of ruffing you will see that Declarer had by now scored 9 tricks and had finally established that long Heart in his hand. That was the good news. The bad news was that all the trumps were now gone, the lead was in Dummy, and there was no way back to Declarer’s hand to score that long Heart. Down one!

North politely said “Nice try, Partner” which in this case loosely translates to “You blundering imbecile!” A nicer try by Declarer would have been to use his trump entries to better effect. After ruffing the Club, Declarer should cash the ♥A, ruff a Heart, return to hand with a trump and ruff another Heart. This subtle change in timing solves the entry problem and now, by the time that the Hearts are finally ruffed out, there will still be a way back to Declarer’s hand (via another ruff). Making four! “Nicely played, Partner!”

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