

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

A HOPELESS CONTRACT

By: Brian Gunnell

E-W Vulnerable

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1♥	2♦	4♥	4♠
5♥	DbI	All Pass	

	♠ AQ8 ♥ JT873 ♦ 65 ♣ 764	
♠ 9 ♥ 92 ♦ KQT98432 ♣ AQ	North West East Declarer	♠ KT76532 ♥ 6 ♦ J7 ♣ K83
	♠ J4 ♥ AKQ54 ♦ A ♣ JT952	

North's jump to 4♥ was supposedly preemptive and hardly ideal given those defensive Spade tricks. The consequence was that South pushed on to 5♥, expecting that 4♠ would make and that 5♥ doubled would be a profitable sacrifice. As it happened she was wrong on both counts.

4♠ would have been down, and 5♥ also looked pretty hopeless. West led the Spade Nine, won by Dummy's Ace, Declarer dropping the devious Jack. It might seem obvious to draw trumps next, but instead Declarer did something rather clever. At Trick 2, she led a Club to her Jack, won by West's Queen. The Diamond shift was won by Declarer who crossed to the ♥J, ruffed a Diamond (high), crossed back to the ♥T, and led a Club, won by West's Ace. "Rats!" muttered West, who should have smelled one earlier. Left with nothing but Diamonds, West had to concede a ruff and sluff, a Club being pitched from Dummy and the Diamond ruffed in hand. Now a Club ruff set up the suit and Declarer had 11 astonishing tricks. Some sacrifice!

Either of the defenders could have saved the day. East could have hopped up with his ♣K at Trick 2 and cashed a Spade, though that was far from obvious. But West was the real culprit for walking straight into the end-play. In the post mortem West claimed that his defense was correct if Declarer held ♠J, ♥AKQxx, ♦Ax, ♣KJTxx, but in that case West should have wondered why Declarer was risking a defensive Club ruff before drawing trumps. Even though West erred, let's give credit to Declarer for playing Clubs early. If, after winning the ♠A, she had cashed the ♦A, crossed to the ♥J, ruffed a Diamond (high), crossed to the ♥T and *then* led a Club, West would have a road map to the right defense ... he'd squander the ♣A, lead his ♣Q to East's ♣K, and the ♠K would be the setting trick.

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