

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

WHAT'S YOUR PLAN B?

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ QJ732 ♥ AQ6 ♦ J98 ♣ A3	
♠ AT964 ♥ 97 ♦ T7 ♣ QJ92	North West East Declarer	♠ 85 ♥ T32 ♦ K32 ♣ KT754
	♠ K ♥ KJ854 ♦ AQ654 ♣ 86	

E-W Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	4♥	All Pass

West leads the ♣Q, won in Dummy. You are playing a duplicate event, meaning that an overtrick will be well rewarded in the scoring. What is your Plan A for making as many tricks as possible? When Plan A doesn't work, you'll need to follow up with a well-reasoned Plan B.

Plan A must surely be to set up the Spades. If Declarer can lose a Spade, ruff a Spade, and draw trumps ending in Dummy, then there are 10 tricks (assuming that Spades are 4-3 and trumps 3-2), with a valuable overtrick in the offing if the ♦K is onside. But Declarer cannot draw trumps before playing on Spades, she needs the ♥A and ♥Q as later entries to the board. So, Declarer loses the ♠K to West's Ace, after which West cashes the ♣J and exits a trump, won in Dummy. Declarer ruffs a Spade, cashes a high trump and crosses to Dummy's last trump. But that well-timed play comes to naught when Spades turn out to be 5-2.

Goodbye Plan A, hello Plan B. This requires playing Diamonds correctly, with Dummy's ♦J98 opposite Declarer's ♦AQ6, and with ♦KT732 somehow distributed between the defenders. There are two certain tricks here, but what's the best play for three? Should you finesse the ♦Q and cash the Ace, hoping that East has ♦Kx? ... or should you lead the ♦J, playing for East to have Kxx and West to have ♦Tx? As West has the long Spades it makes sense to play for East to have the longer Diamonds. With that in mind, Declarer plays East to hold ♦Kxx rather than ♦Kx, which means that leading the ♦J from Dummy is the route to the coveted overtrick.

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