

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

A NASTY SURPRISE

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ Q75 ♥ Q3 ♦ K53 ♣ KQT96	
♠ T93 ♥ 742 ♦ J86 ♣ 8542	<i>North</i> <i>West</i> <i>East</i> <i>Declarer</i>	♠ AKJ8 ♥ JT98 ♦ QT9 ♣ J7
	♠ 642 ♥ AK65 ♦ A742 ♣ A3	

N-S Vulnerable

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

After this auction, the failure to use Stayman suggests that the defense attacks one of the major suits, unless there is a compelling alternative. In a recent team game, both West players led a Spade, but only one of the East players was extraordinarily devious.

It looks like a most straightforward deal. West leads a Spade, East takes his four tricks in the suit and, with no reason to take the Club finesse, Declarer plays that suit from the top and takes the rest. And that's exactly what happened at the first table. Making 9 tricks.

At the second table, East did some counting. He had 12 HCP, Declarer purported to have 15-17, and there were 12 in Dummy. That left West with one point or none. East also counted 10 tricks for Declarer, as he would surely be playing the Clubs from the top. That being the case, it seemed obvious to cash the Spades and give up, as happened at the other table. How did East trick Declarer into taking the losing Club finesse?

East won the opening lead with the ♠J, cashed the ♠K and ♠A and, instead of finishing off the Spades, shifted to a Heart! Declarer reasonably concluded that West has led from ♠T983, and that East had started with ♠AKJ. In that case, it was essential to develop a fourth Club trick without letting West gain the lead. There was a simple solution. Declarer would cash the ♣A and finesse the Club, making sure of 9 or 10 tricks. But Declarer got a nasty surprise when that devious East fellow won his ♣J and promptly cashed the last Spade for down one!

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