

## ***HAND OF THE MONTH FOR NEWER PLAYERS***

May, 2015

From our earliest days at the bridge table we are taught that as declarer, we should draw the opponent's trumps early to prevent them from making tricks by ruffing. With most hands this is an excellent general rule, ***BUT*** like all general rules there are exceptions.

This month, we look at a second of the most common reasons for delaying the trump extraction process.

	NORTH	
	S KJ3	
	H A73	
WEST	D 652	EAST
S 862	C 8643	S 105
H KQJ10		H 942
D J987		D KQ103
C 102	SOUTH	C K975
	S AQ974	
Vul. none	H 865	
Dealer South	D A4	
Opening lead HK	C AQJ	

Bidding			
South	West	North	East
1 spade	pass	2 spades	pass
		(constructive raise)	
4 spades	all pass		

It is important to for partnerships to have a clear agreement on the meaning of a single raise of a major suit opener. If the raise can be on anywhere from 6-10 points and three to five card trump support, that wide a range offers considerable potential for bidding games that aren't there, or failing to bid ones that are there. This partnership was playing that the spade raise showed 7-9 points with at least three card support; one notrump forcing followed by a two spade rebid would have shown a weaker hand with trump support.

Make sure you and your favorite partner(s) have a clear understanding on the meaning of the single raise of a major suit opener.

After the king of hearts lead, declarer follows the general rule for planning the play of the hand in a suit contract by counting possible losers. Here there are four, two hearts, one diamond and possibly also one club. The heart and diamonds losers look to be inevitable, so making the contract depends on finding the king of clubs favorably located. A good general rule of declarer play is that if a missing card must be favorably located in order to make a contract, then proceed on the assumption that it is.

Before reading further, assuming the king of clubs can be finessed, how would you proceed to play the hand?

The problem is that the opening lead knocked out the only entry to dummy outside the trump suit, and the lead needs to be in dummy twice in order to repeat the club finesse. Given that, the best line of play is to win the ace of hearts, play a low trump to the ace and low back to the jack, leaving one trump outstanding. When the club finesse works, the lead of another trump to the king in dummy draws the last trump and positions declarer to repeat the club hook.

Leaving that last trump outstanding runs the risk that a club will be ruffed, a small price to pay for the chance to make the contract.

**MORAL:** It may be necessary to delay drawing trump when the trump suit is a key source of entries to dummy!!!!