

Brian's Brighton – Part Eight

Defensive Problem

This defensive problem came up during the second session of the Swiss Teams. Would you have got it right?

Round 7. Board 28. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| ♠ | A J 8 3 2 |
| ♥ | A 9 5 |
| ♦ | J 10 9 5 |
| ♣ | 10 |
| ♠ | Q 9 |
| ♥ | J 8 |
| ♦ | A 8 7 6 3 |
| ♣ | K Q J 6 |
| ♠ | |
| ♥ | |
| ♦ | |
| ♣ | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|----------|
| 1♣ | 1♠ | 2♦ | Pass |
| 2♥ | Pass | 2♠ | Pass |
| 3♦ | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

A little explanation may be useful. One Club was either natural or could be two in a balanced hand outside the no trump range - clearly, West was treating his hand as a weak no trump. Two Diamonds was a transfer to hearts and 2♥ meant that West was not interested in game facing a competitive hand. Now 2♠ asked and 3♦ was natural (West could even have had two clubs and five diamonds according to his methods), and East ended the auction with 3NT. You are North. Partner leads the seven of spades to dummy's nine. How would you defend?

Declarer has the spades well held. South's lead is likely to be top of a doubleton. So we have to find an alternative source of tricks. Declarer has shown five hearts and opening values, so it is not likely that we can take many heart tricks. Which leaves diamonds.

If North makes the automatic play of the jack of spades at trick one, the contract is made - declarer wins and sets up the hearts. North must win the ace of spades and switch to a diamond, and that diamond should be the five! On the actual deal, declarer was void in diamonds so it didn't matter which card North played. Any diamond switch means down one. But North needs three diamond tricks. If declarer has the bare queen, switching to the low card is essential to give three defensive winners. And if declarer holds queen-doubleton, he will have to do very well to play low from hand. Again, if he plays the queen, you have your three diamond tricks.

Did you pass the test?

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| | | | |
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| ♠ | A J 8 3 2 | | |
| ♥ | A 9 5 | | |
| ♦ | J 10 9 5 | | |
| ♣ | 10 | | |
| ♠ | Q 9 | ♠ | K 10 6 5 |
| ♥ | J 8 | ♥ | K Q 6 4 2 |
| ♦ | A 8 7 6 3 | ♦ | - |
| ♣ | K Q J 6 | ♣ | A 7 5 2 |
| ♠ | 7 4 | | |
| ♥ | 10 7 3 | | |
| ♦ | K Q 4 2 | | |
| ♣ | 9 8 4 3 | | |