

Count Your Tricks

by Brian Senior

Declarer thought she was unlucky on this deal from Wednesday's Mixed Pivot Teams, and even dummy said 'Bad luck, partner', but actually it was a classic case of not counting one's winners.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

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

East declared 4♥ after a multi 2♦ opening from partner. N/S were silent throughout and South led ace and another club. Declarer ruffed with the ♥4 and played out the top spades, discarding both diamonds plus a club from dummy. She crossed to dummy with a diamond ruff then ruffed a club with the six of hearts. South over-ruffed with the seven and returned a heart to North's ace. North cashed the king of clubs and that was down one for –50. It appeared that it was just unlucky that not only were clubs five-two but it was South who held the shortage and also the seven of hearts. If clubs are four-three, or South has the club length or North the seven of hearts, the contract is made by the chosen line of play. Now try counting declarer's tricks, something which is always a good idea whatever contract one finds oneself in. Declarer ruffed a club in the short trump hand at trick two then cashed the top spades. That brings the total to four and there are five heart tricks in the dummy, making nine. One more successful club ruff makes ten, a good number when declaring 4♥. Ruffing the third round of clubs with the six is the correct way to try to make 11 tricks, but to guarantee 10 simply ruff with the jack. If South can over-ruff that it has to be with the ace and now there will be six heart tricks in dummy so still a total of 10.