

Test Your Play – Brian Senior Schapiro Spring Foursomes 2015

Day two of the 2015 EBU Spring Foursomes featured a number of interesting play problems, including these two, one of which was solved, the other not.

Board 26. Dealer East. All Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♥	Dble
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

East led the ace of diamonds then switched to a trump. Declarer can arrange to take one heart ruff but that will only be sufficient if either she also gets a heart trick or can enjoy three spade winners. As the cards lie, any simple line of play will therefore fall one trick short.

Nevena Senior won the club switch in hand and led a spade to the jack, ruffed a diamond and led a second spade up. East won and returned a second trump so she won the jack, ruffed a diamond with the ace and led the queen of clubs to dummy's king, drawing the last trump in the process. Now she cashed the two spade winners and led a heart to the jack.

Declarer's campaign to exhaust East of everything but hearts had succeeded. East could win the queen and ace of hearts, but had then to concede the last trick to the king for a nicely played +110.

Board 30. Dealer East. None Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	1♦
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

East led a spade, West putting in the queen which lost to declarer's king. Declarer cashed two top diamonds, getting the bad news there, then continued with two more diamonds. When East, Roumen Trendafilov, won and returned the queen of clubs, declarer was powerless. If he won in hand then crossed to the king of clubs to cash the diamonds he would establish too many winners for the defenders before setting up his own ninth trick, so he had to win the club in dummy to cash the diamonds – but now he squeezed his own hand, needing to have three hearts, two spades and the ace of clubs as his last five cards. And even Garozzo at his best couldn't manage to squeeze six cards into five spaces.

Once East follows to the first diamond, the contract is a sure thing on the assumption that the ace of spades is onside. The question is, which is more likely, the actual position or that the spade will be offside? To succeed, declarer must duck the diamond! If the defenders clear the spades, that establishes his ninth trick, while if they return a minor suit he wins in dummy and leads a spade towards the jack, again establishing the ninth trick, and still has the necessary communications to get at his winners. Simple, as everyone's favourite meerkat would say.