

Match-winner

Round 3 saw a desperately tight match between the number 4 seeds, Penfold, and 13th seeded Black. After 24 boards the score was only 24-23 in favour of Penfold, easily the lowest-scoring of the matches to date. With half the fourth set played, Penfold had extended their lead slightly, then came the decisive board.

Board 25. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Isporski	King	Trendafilov	McIntosh
–	2♦	Pass	4♥
5♣	All Pass		

Two Diamonds was a Multi and 4♥ pass or correct. That put West under extreme pressure and Vladi Isporski overcalled 5♣, where he played on a spade lead.

Isporski took the simple line of winning the spade and taking the club finesse followed by the jack of diamonds to the king and ace and a second club finesse. Alas, the four-one trump split meant that there was a loser there and, though a second diamond finesse would have been successful, the blockage meant that there was only one more diamond trick to be had. Isporski therefore took his only remaining chances, that the ♦10 would fall or that South would hold either both heart honours or only honour to three. He conceded the fourth club, won the return and led the ♦9 to dummy's queen. Had the ten fallen, he would have had the rest. When it did not he ran the ♥9, losing to the jack, and had to lose a second heart at the end for down one; –100.

There is a winning line in 5♣ after the spade lead. Declarer has to take two heart ruffs in the dummy and give up two clubs as he can no longer take any club finesses.

West	North	East	South
Patterson	N. Senior	Tredinnick	B. Senior
–	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♣	Pass	5♦	Pass
6♦	All Pass		

Nevena Senior did not open a multi on the scrappy five-card spade suit, leaving her opponents to have a natural two-over-one auction to the diamond slam. The key was Derek Patterson's decision to support diamonds after Gerald Tredinnick showed six of them. Tredinnick cuebid his spade control but signed off when Patterson in turn cuebid 5♣. However, Patterson had already decided to bid at least the small slam so raised to 6♦.

A spade lead defeats 6♦ – indeed, declarer has to get it just right to even make 5♦. If declarer plays to ruff two spades in dummy he will lose either two or three trump tricks, while if he tries to pick up the minor suits via a series of finesses the two four-one splits will doom him as the defenders have spades to cash as soon as they gain the lead.

How can 5♦ be made after a spade lead? It looks as though declarer has to play for the actual trump position – and there is no reason why he should find this double dummy play. Win the spade lead and take a club finesse then play three rounds of hearts, ruffing, ruff a spade, ruff the fourth heart and take a second spade ruff. With eight tricks in the bag, play the ♣A. North ruffs but has to return a spade and declarer ruffs. Down to just ♦AQ8, he exits with the eight and North has to lead back into the ♦AQ at trick twelve. That means five trumps in hand, four side winners and two spade ruffs in the dummy.

However, the auction seemed to imply spade shortage in dummy and Brian Senior saw no point in leading the suit. Instead, he led a low heart, hoping to take a late entry out of the dummy and that his club holding would mean that it would now be difficult for declarer to establish and cash the suit.

Tredinnick won the heart ace and led the jack of diamonds to the king and ace followed by a club finesse. Next he led the ♦9 and, when North played low, thought for some time before doing likewise. He continued with king of hearts and a heart ruff followed by queen and another diamond. North won but had only spades left so had to return that suit. Tredinnick won the ace and cashed the last diamond and South was squeezed between his fourth club and the ♥Q. He pitched a club but now away went dummy's heart and a repeat of the club finesse saw declarer make three more club tricks and 12 in all for +1370 and 16 IMPs to Black. They won the match by 10 IMPs and Penfold had lost one of their two lives in the competition.