

ACBL – BRIDGE HAND OF THE WEEK

One of the best - Jan 10 2011

This deal, played by Norway's Geir Helgemo, shows why he is considered one of the world's top declarers.

Dir: East Vul: None	NORTH ♠6 2 ♥10 8 6 ♦K Q 9 7 ♣J 9 6 4	
WEST		EAST
	SOUTH ♠K 10 4 3 ♥A J 4 2 ♦A 5 2 ♣A Q	

North	East	South	West
--	2 Club	X	Pass
2 Diamond	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 NT	All Pass		

The deal comes from the Copenhagen Invitational's daily bulletin, the report from which begins, "3NT is pretty high. Still, with 24 high-card points, nowadays nobody likes to miss game." East's 2♣ was natural and limited. West leads the ♣5. How do you plan to take nine tricks? Solution If you peek at all four hands, you will see that the diamond suit provides four tricks, but that is strictly double-dummy. Helgemo showed how to make it without four diamond tricks.

He won the opening lead with the ♣Q and played the ♦A and a diamond to the king. A heart to the jack lost to the queen. If West had returned a diamond, communications would have been difficult for Helgemo. West, however, switched to a low spade. East won the ace and returned the 9: 10, jack, 6. West played the ♦J to the queen, revealing the 4-2 split.

This was the end position, Helgemo needing all the tricks but one:

	NORTH ♠ -- ♥ 108 ♦ 9 ♣ J96	
WEST ♠ Q8 ♥ 973 ♦ 10 ♣ --		EAST ♠ 7 ♥ K ♦ --- ♣ K1087
	SOUTH ♠ K4 ♥ A42 ♦ --- ♣ A	

Helgemo played a club to his ace, catching West in a triple stepping-stone squeeze. If West discarded a spade, both of Helgemo's spades would be good. The discard of a diamond would make dummy's 9 good, and the fall of the ♥K under the ace would give Helgemo access to dummy.

West, therefore, had to discard a heart, so Helgemo cashed the ♥A, went to dummy with the ♥10 and played the ♦9, discarding his losing spade. West won but had to play a spade to Helgemo's king for his eighth trick. The low heart, now good, was trick number nine.

	NORTH ♠ 6 2 ♥ 10 8 6 ♦ K Q 9 7 ♣ J 9 6 4	
WEST ♠ QJ85 ♥ Q973 ♦ J1083 ♣ 5		EAST ♠ A97 ♥ K5 ♦ 64 ♣ K108732
	SOUTH ♠ K 10 4 3 ♥ A J 4 2 ♦ A 5 2 ♣ A Q	