

ACBL – BRIDGE HAND OF THE WEEK

Finesse by Tim Bourke - Oct 10 2011

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|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Dealer South Vul : Both | NORTH ♠A K 4 ♥9 6 ♦A 9 8 7 5 ♣7 4 3 | |
| WEST ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ | | EAST ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ |
| | SOUTH ♠9 5 3 ♥A K 8 4 ♦K J ♣A 8 6 2 | |

| North | East | South | West |
|-------|----------|-------|------|
| -- | -- | 1 NT | -- |
| 3 NT | All Pass | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

West leads the ♠Q. How do you plan to make nine tricks?

Solution

You have seven tricks on top and need a minimum of four diamond tricks to make your contract. Suppose the full deal is:

♠ A K 4

♥ 9 6

♦ A 9 8 7 5

♣ 7 4 3

♠ Q J 10 8 2

♠ 7 6

♥ J 5 3 2

♥ Q 10 7

♦ Q 2

♦ 10 6 4 3

♣ Q 10

♣ K J 9 5

♠ 9 5 3

♥ A K 8 4

♦ K J

♣ A 8 6 2

Imagine you win the spade lead with the ace and finesse the ♦J. In this case, the finesse loses and a spade return will leave you at least a trick short. This would be the case even when the diamonds are 3-3 because the entry to the diamonds has been removed.

The best approach is to play a diamond to the king and continue by overtaking the ♦J with dummy's ace, even if West had followed with a low card. On the given layout, as the ♦Q has fallen, you will dislodge the ♦10 from East's hand and make nine tricks: two spades, two hearts, four diamonds and a club.

If the diamonds had been 3-3, the third round of diamonds would establish the suit, with the king of spades as the entry to cash them. Notice that you will succeed when either defender began with a singleton or doubleton ♦Q or ♦10. As we have seen, dummy's 9-8-7 are good enough to knock out the remaining diamond honor, allowing you to make four diamond tricks and the contract.