

ACBL – BRIDGE HAND OF THE WEEK

Chances by Tim Bourke - Sep 12 2011

Dealer South Vul :Both	NORTH ♠8 6 2 ♥10 4 3 ♦J 10 ♣J 8 5 4 3	
WEST		EAST
	SOUTH ♠A ♥A K Q J 9 5 ♦A Q 2 ♣A Q 2	

North	East	South	West
--	--	2 Club	Pass
2 Diamond	Pass	2 Heart	Pass
4 Heart	Pass	6 Heart	All Pass

West leads the ♠Q against your small slam in hearts. After winning the ♠A, you cash the ace of trumps and both defenders follow. How do you plan to make another 10 tricks?

SOLUTION

The first move should be to cash the king of trumps. If the trumps are 2-2, cash the ♠A and continue with the ♠Q. If clubs are 3-2 you will always make one spade, six hearts, one diamond and four clubs as dummy's trump 10 is available as an entry to the clubs. You will also make the contract when the ♠K is singleton by taking three tricks in clubs and at least two in diamonds. The only problem comes when one defender has four or five clubs headed by the king. Then you will have to cross to dummy with the ♥10 and take the diamond finesse.

The question then is, "How do you plan to continue when one defender discards on the second round of trumps?" Suppose the full deal is:

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

Obviously, you could cross to dummy with the ♥10 and take the diamond finesse. When West has three trumps, it offers about a 58% chance of success but it is not the best line to bring the contract home.

Instead, you should aim to develop dummy's club suit. One way is to draw the last trump and continue with the ♠A and ♠Q. Here, West will signal that he has a doubleton in clubs, so East will hold up the ♠K until the third round. You do no better by playing the ♠A and ♠Q while you still have the ♥10 as an entry to dummy. On this layout, East will win the second round of clubs and give his partner a club ruff, defeating the contract.

You might now ask yourself if there is anything else worth trying? In fact there is. After the second round of trumps, you should lead the ♠Q from hand! If East takes the king, you will win his return, draw the last trump and enjoy the club suit. If instead East ducks, you will continue with the ♠A and another club. Then, after winning East's return, you will cross to the dummy with the ♥10 of trumps and run the clubs.

This plan always succeeds when clubs are 3-2. It also offers the residual chance of making 12 tricks when West has a singleton ♠K and East has the ♦K. Overall, when West has three trumps, this approach will make the contract around seven times out of 10.

When it is East who has three trumps, the chance of the diamond finesse working is a touch below an even-money bet. The recommended approach has about the same likelihood of success as when West began with three trumps