

ACBL - BRIDGE HAND OF THE WEEK

High flyer June 27th 2011

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

North	East	South	West

Against 3NT, West leads the ♠Q. What is your plan?

Solution

Declarer could count eight tricks, and the diamond suit looked inviting, but there was little point in trying for the ninth trick there because spades were surely 6-3 and West was likely to have one of the missing diamond honors.

With that in mind, declarer turned his attention to hearts. A 3-3 split would see him home, but there were other chances.

After winning trick one with the ♠A, declarer played a low heart from hand. West rose with the ♥J (dummy played the ♥9) and continued with the ♠J. Declarer pitched a diamond from dummy and won the trick with the ♠K. Before committing himself in hearts, declarer played the ♣A, ♠K and the ♠J. When West followed three times in clubs, the chances of a 3-3 heart split dropped from one in three to about one in four.

If West began with two heart honors doubleton, cashing the ♥K and then finessing East for the remaining honor would succeed. Again, this is much worse than playing West for only one heart honor and one or two hearts.

So declarer overtook the ♠J with the queen and played a low heart from dummy, intending to insert the 8 if East followed low. It would not have helped East to play the queen or 10 because declarer could then win, re-enter dummy with the ♠10 and play another heart to repeat the finesse.

Once West was marked with nine cards in the black suits, playing hearts in this manner offered a 55% chance of success. The full deal:

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