

ACBL – BRIDGE HAND OF THE WEEK

A devil of a play - Jun 6 2011

This deal was played at a club in Palm Desert CA by Irv Kostal of Indio CA. See if you can do as well as he did.

Dealer East Vul :E-W	NORTH ♠742 ♥K83 ♦A73 ♣AJ73	
WEST		EAST
	SOUTH ♠A5 ♥A10954 ♦K5 ♣8642	

zNorth	East	South	West
-	Pass	1 Heart	1 Spade
2 Spade	X	Pass	Pass
4 Heart	All pass		

West led the ♠K. How would you play to take 10 tricks?

Solution

Here's what Kostal did. He ducked the opening spade lead, won the continuation, then played the ♦K and a diamond to the ace. He ruffed dummy's last spade, played a club to the ace and ruffed dummy's last diamond. When Kostal exited with a low club from hand, East took the king and had the choice of giving a ruff-sluff with a diamond lead or opening up the heart suit.

East exited with a diamond, and Kostal discarded a club from hand, ruffing in dummy. When he played another club, West won and was on lead in this position:

	♠ —	
	♥ K 8	
	♦ —	
	♣ J	
♠ J		♠ —
♥ J 7		♥ Q 6 2
♦ —		♦ —
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ —	
	♥ A 10 9	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	

No matter what West did, Kostal had the rest of the tricks. A heart play would pick up the whole suit, but exiting with the ♠J was no better. Kostal pitched dummy's club and East had no good play. If East ruffed low, Kostal would overruff with the 9 and have the top two trumps to cash in the two-card ending. If West ruffed with the queen, Kostal could overruff and run the ♥10 to make his game. This end position is known as a Devil's Coup. The full deal:

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

West had two chances to defeat the contract: at trick one with the lead of a low club (tough to find given his spade holding) or at trick two by switching to a low club.