

ACBL - BRIDGE HAND OF THE WEEK

No barking - Jul 25 2011

Dealer West Vul :Both	NORTH ♠ Q J 3 ♥ 5 ♦ K 9 7 6 5 4 ♣ A 9 5	
WEST ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣		EAST ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣
	SOUTH ♠ A 2 ♥ A Q 9 3 ♦ A J ♣ K Q 10 6 3	

You find yourself in 6♣ as South after East opens 2♦, showing a weak two-bid in either major. West starts with the ♥10, which you win with the queen. You need tricks from diamonds, so you start on that suit right away, playing the ♦A and the ♦J. West surprises you by discarding a low spade on the ♦J. Now what?

Solution

This deal was played by Sweden's Per-Ola Cullin, who may have been mindful of the Sherlock Holmes story in which the legendary detective solved a case because a dog didn't bark in the night when it might have (in this case, it was a ruff that might have been taken but was not). The event was the Open Pairs at the 5th European Open Championships in Poznan, Poland, in June.

When West showed out on the second round of Diamond but declined to ruff, Cullin took the right inference - that West had four clubs to the jack (it was no good if he had all the missing clubs because in that case the slam was hopeless).

Backing his judgment, Cullin won the ♦K in dummy and ruffed a low diamond with the ♠K. Next he played the ♠10 from hand and let it run. When that card held, Cullin played a low club to the 9 and ruffed another diamond with the ♠Q.

Dummy now had two good diamonds. Cullin cashed the ♥A, removing that exit card from West, and played a club to dummy's ace. Declarer could play a good diamond for a heart pitch, and West could ruff, but he would have had to play a spade to let declarer back into the dummy to enjoy the other diamond. If West refused to ruff either diamond, he would have to bare his ♠K at trick 12.

It would not have helped West to discard his second heart on the ♦J. Declarer would have had to take a different route to 12 tricks, but he still would have been able to make his slam. The full deal:

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