

ACBL – BRIDGE HAND OF THE WEEK

An isolated ace by Tim Bourke - Dec 26 2011

Dealer South Vul :E-W	NORTH ♠ 5 3 ♥ Q 4 ♦ A J 7 6 5 ♣ 9 6 4 3	
WEST ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣		EAST ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣
	SOUTH ♠ A K Q J 4 2 ♥ A J 5 3 ♦ — ♣ A 7 5	

North	East	South	West
--	--	1 Spade	Pass
1 NT	Pass	3 Heart	Pass
3 Spade	Pass	4 Spade	All Pass

West leads the ♠10 against your game, East following with the 6. You have eight top winners and another trick can be developed in hearts. What is the best plan to make a 10th trick?

Solution in next page

If West holds the ♥K, you can succeed by drawing trumps and then leading a low heart towards queen. If West rises with the ♥K, you will score three heart tricks with the queen, ace and jack, with the ♦A for an overtrick. If West plays low, dummy's ♥Q will win the trick. You can then cash the ♦A, throwing a club, return to the ♥A and ruff a heart. You will make an overtrick as long as hearts are no worse than 4-3.

However, this plan will fail when East holds the ♥K. If you lead a low heart to the queen at trick two, East will take dummy's queen with his king and return a second trump. There will then be no way to score dummy's ♦A, and you will lose two hearts and two clubs.

The layouts you want to protect against are similar to this one:

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

The winning play when hearts are 4-3 is to lead the ♥J from hand at trick two! If the defenders win and return a trump, you will draw trumps and cross to the ♥Q to cash the ♦A for your 10th trick. On the given layout, if East allows the ♥J to win, you will cash the ♥A, ruff a heart and score the ♦A. Again, that will give you an overtrick.

The chances of success based on West having the ♥K are 50-50. The chances of hearts being 4-3 are 63%, so the second plan is the better one.