

**November 2016**

For a change I thought that this month instead of testing you on your dummy play or defence, I would test you rather on how well you know the rules of the game.

Here is the hand

**North**  
**Theunis Kort**

♠ KJ4  
♥ A4  
♦ AKJ65  
♣ J54

**West**  
**Hannie Poot**

♠ 9632  
♥ J10  
♦ 1087  
♣ KQ83

**East**  
**Ian Koeksister**

♠ 8  
♥ Q87652  
♦ 92  
♣ A1097

**South**  
**Flip Van Winkel**

♠ AQ1075  
♥ K93  
♦ Q43  
♣ 62

**Bidding**  
**Dealer North**  
**None vul.**

W	N	E	S
	1D	pass	1S
pass	2S	pass	4S
all pass			

Theunis to serve opens 1D and when the ball is returned to him chooses to raise partner's spades rather than bid 1NT with his good 3 card spade support. The first set goes to NS who bid game.

Hannie leads the ♥J but Flip serves an ace with his first volley, Ian encouraging. After 2 or 3 minutes have passed, Theunis reaches over to his partner. "Wake up, Flip!" "I was just thinking with my eyes shut" responds Flip, "Play the king of spades". But clearly Flip Van Winkel was sleeping on this hand and committed an unforced error when he failed to ruff out his losing heart. Instead he drew trumps in 4 rounds Ian discarding two hearts and one club.

When he then played the ♦Q followed by a small one to dummy, Ian showing an even number in the suit, in an effort to speed things up Hannie faced his hand on the table claiming the last trick.

I once asked Hannie, a top bridge player, how he ended up with that Christian name? He told me that he comes from a large family with lots of children and by the time he was born there was a bunch of them, however his mother took pride in raising them all. Hannie could see that declarer had 5 spade tricks and 5 diamond tricks along with the ♥A. For his bid he must also have either the ♥K or ♣A bringing him to 12 tricks. Given that he has failed to ruff a heart then he almost certainly started with a 5-2-3-3 distribution.

"I don't accept your claim, I'm calling the tournament director" says Flip.

"Calling the tournament director, maar dit is makliker as 'n hoender en eier probleem!"

Loosely translates to – but this is easier than a chicken and egg problem.

"Careful Hannie, you know we don't tolerate fowl language at our club" retorts Theunis.

Finally Don Macrobrachium Rosenbergii arrives on the scene.

"Hey, this had a better be good - I was a busy eating my favourite spaghetti dish in the kitchen".

Flip gives a quick overview of what has happened. As soon as he has finished both opponents chime in together.

Uno momento" says the TD raising his hand "one at a time please". "We have a saying back in the old country – too many koecks spoil the minestrone"

The TD examines the end position then gives his ruling.

"Grazie, grazie El Capo" says Theunis kissing the TD's signet ring.

"Prego, now you owe me"

"Dis 'n varken dom beslissing" complains Hannie.

Very loosely translates to – this is a silly piggy ruling.

"Hannie Poot, that a sounds like a sour grapes to me" responds the TD strolling off.

So, given the facts what would your ruling have been and would you have reached the same decision as the TD?

## **Conclusion**

When a defendant claims he will win one or more tricks he must clearly state how this will be achieved (laws 68 to 71 apply) and this will depend in no way whatsoever on the play of his partner. Unfortunately for Hannie the correct defence did depend on his partner who had to hold on to 2 hearts in the end game, so by facing his hand he became guilty of giving his partner unauthorized information (where laws 16 and 73 apply). The opponents may argue that the correct defence is obvious, but the litmus test in these cases is whether or not, given the unauthorized information, the correct defence has become easier to find. On this hand the answer to that question is yes and so the correct ruling, and that given at the table by the TD, is that declarer can now claim 13 tricks.

Finally, any resemblance of characters in this article to persons living or dead is purely coincidental.

Or put another way, most of the bodies described in this article are fictitious. Only the hands are real.