

## April 2018

How do you rate your table presence? How carefully do you follow the cards played by the defence and work out what they are thinking? Today you can pit your wits against that intrepid player Chris Bosenberg and see if you came to the same conclusion as he did sitting South on the following hand.

### Bidding

**Dealer South**

**None vul**

<b>South</b>	W	N	E	S
♠ AK5				2NT
♥ QJ	pass	3NT	all pass	
♦ AK96				
♣ QJ83				

The bidding has been straightforward. You are playing in a Pairs event at Graceland so overtricks are key and your opposition are good, in fact East is a brilliant player, he is also suave, charming and witty. But this hand is not about East it's about you as South. All you really need to know about the opposition is that they are playing UDCA so small cards when discarding are encouraging.

### North

♠ 982  
♥ A8  
♦ Q843  
♣ A974

### South

♠ AK5  
♥ QJ  
♦ AK96  
♣ QJ83

The lead is the ♣5 on which you play the ♣4, East the ♣2 and you win the first trick in hand with the ♣8. To confirm the club distribution you try the ♣Q covered by the ♣K and ♣A, East discarding the ♥3. You now draw four rounds of diamonds finishing in your

hand West following for two rounds then dropping the ♥6 followed by the ♥5 whilst on the fourth round East discarded the ♥4. You now cash the ♠A followed by the ♠K hoping to set up a favourable throw in. West follows with the ♠4 and ♠6, East with the ♠J and ♠Q

Plan your play.

### Initial Analysis

Everyone will get to this game contract. Unless the opposition are playing a very deceptive game the ♥K is sitting with East so at those tables where West found a heart lead declarer will be held to 9 tricks, but the club lead has set up a 10<sup>th</sup> trick for you. If someone has managed to play the hand from the North seat they will also make 10 tricks on a heart lead but I think it is safe to assume that making 10 tricks will put you ahead of the field. If you can squeeze out an 11<sup>th</sup> trick you're looking at a joint or possibly outright top.

It's time to sit back and take stock. If East holds the ♠10 you can end play him as after cashing his spade trick(s) he will have to exit with a heart. But does he have this card? And are we sure he has the ♥K? Before reading on decide how you are going to continue then see how your play stacks up against the line taken by Chris.

The full hand

	<b>North</b>	
	♠ 982 ♥ A8 ♦ Q843 ♣ A974	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
♠ 10764 ♥ 652 ♦ J5 ♣ K1065		♠ QJ3 ♥ K109743 ♦ 1072 ♣ 2
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ AK5 ♥ QJ ♦ AK96 ♣ QJ83	

### **Final Analysis**

Did you spot the vital clue? The ♥2 was conspicuous by its absence. Surely this card was held by West and as West surely did not start with a 5 card major (he didn't lead one) then he must be 4-3 in these suits. His play of the hearts strongly suggest he started with 3, confirmed by his play of spades which indicated that he started with 4 in his hand (remember these two are playing UDCA). And if he had 4 small spades, why is he desperately holding on to them? So the correct play was to lead out your ♥Q and when West fails to cover this with the king go up with the ace and exit with a spade. West can cash his spade tricks but must concede the last two tricks to declarer.

Of course East should have realized at trick 2 that all the missing points were with South and no one apart from South cared about where the ♥K was. So perhaps brilliant was an exaggeration - a false card in hearts might qualify as brilliant, naïve but honest might be a better description of his abilities on this hand. His attempt to avoid being thrown in in the end game was too little too late. And what about West? When declarer turned up with 8 cards in the minor suits holding on to a 4<sup>th</sup> spade was clearly a waste of time. But keeping at least two hearts was necessary in the unlikely event that he was ever thrown in. Chris read the cards perfectly and took full advantage of these mistakes. Did you?