

278. Tim Time

By Ron Klinger

For many, many years now, Tim Bourke of Canberra has provided four deals of interest for each issue of the International Bridge Press Association Bulletin for journalists to use. Today's problem is based on one of Tim's deals in the June 2020 issue of the IBPA Bulletin.

Teams: Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

North
♠ A107
♥ 42
♦ AQJ10
♣ QJ103

South
♠ QJ9854
♥ 53
♦ K95
♣ A5

| West | North | East | South |
|-------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| | | 1♥ | 1♠ |
| 3♥ ⁽¹⁾ | 4♠ | All Pass | |

(1) Pre-emptive, 0-5 points, 4+ hearts

West leads the ♥Q. East wins with the ♥K and switches to the ♦8.
Plan the play.

What is the first thing you have done (or should have done)?

Count dummy's points (14) and add your own (10), total 24.

There are 16 points missing. *What do you know about the location of the missing points?*

West has led the ♥Q and figures to have the ♥J as well. That accounts for 3 points. East opened the bidding and so figures to have the missing points. As dummy has three queens and West has led the ♥Q, East has no queens. As dummy has two jacks, you have one and you figure West has the ♥J, East has no jacks.

Which high cards do you place with East?

East should have the ♠K, ♥A, ♥K (known) and ♣K. Take any of those cards away from East and East has at most 10 HCP, unlikely for a 1♥ opening.

What do you make of East's overtaking the ♥Q and switching to the ♦8?

That is a strange switch. It looks like the ♦8 is a singleton. Why else would East play a diamond?

Can you work out East's plan?

East is expecting to gain the lead with the ♠K. East will then play a low heart to West's ♥J and ruff the expected diamond return from West.

What can you do about that?

You can forego the spade finesse and play ♠A and a second spade. This works if East began with the ♠K singleton or ♠K doubleton. The plan fails if East began with three or four spades headed by the king. If East began with, say, ♠K-x-x, East will win the second spade and continue with a low heart to West's ♥J and ruff the diamond return.

As you know the highly likely location of the high cards, can you see a better chance?

Teams: Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>North</p> <p>♠ A107</p> <p>♥ 42</p> <p>♦ AQJ10</p> <p>♣ QJ103</p> | <p>East</p> <p>♠ K62</p> <p>♥ AK987</p> <p>♦ 8</p> <p>♣ K942</p> |
| <p>West</p> <p>♠ 3</p> <p>♥ QJ106</p> <p>♦ 76432</p> <p>♣ 876</p> | |
| | <p>South</p> <p>♠ QJ9854</p> <p>♥ 53</p> <p>♦ K95</p> <p>♣ A5</p> |

After ♥Q taken by ♥K and ♦8 switch, win this in dummy and play ♣Q. If East covers, you win with the ace, cash ♠A and play ♣J, ♠10, discarding ♥5. Play another trump and make 11 tricks, losing a spade and a heart.

East will almost certainly not cover the ♣Q. You play low and the ♣Q wins. Continue with the ♣3 to the ♣A and a low spade to the ♠A. Then play the ♣J. If East plays low, ditch your heart loser and play a trump.

However, East will surely cover the ♣J. Do NOT ruff this. Instead discard your heart loser. You have not gained a trick, but your loser-on-loser play has prevented East from reaching the West hand for a diamond ruff. Win any return (ruff high if East plays a club) and play a trump. You lose a spade, a heart and a club, but you have ten tricks, +620.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Teams: Dealer South: East-West vulnerable

North

♠ 109

♥ 873

♦ KJ643

♣ 1075

South

♠ J843

♥ AKQ

♦ A52

♣ AK9

| | | | | |
|--|------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| | West | North | East | South |
| | | | | 2NT |
| | Pass | 3♣ | Pass | 3♦ ⁽¹⁾ |
| | Pass | 3NT | All Pass | |

(1) No 5-card major

West leads the ♥J. Plan the play.

Why not phone or email your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?

Isn't it a pity there is no way to donate fat like we can donate blood?