

279. Tim plate

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 another one of Tim's deals in the June 2020 issue of the IBPA Bulletin.

Teams: Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

North

♠ 109

♥ 873

♦ KJ643

♣ 1075

South

♠ J843

♥ AKQ

♦ A52

♣ AK9

West	North	East	South
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2NT

Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦ ⁽¹⁾
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Pass	3NT	All Pass	
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(1) No 5-card major

West leads the ♥J. Plan the play.

What have you done already (or should have done)?

Yes, you have counted dummy's points (4) and your own (21), total 25. When playing no-trumps, you also almost immediately count the tricks you have on top: 3 hearts, 2 diamond and 2 clubs, total 7.

Where will you find the extra tricks?

In time, you can set up a spade trick, but that takes you only to eight tricks anyway. You should look to the diamond suit for the extra tricks.

Suppose you play ♦A, ♦9 from West, and ♦2, ♦10 from West. Which card do you play from dummy?

Teams: Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

<p>North</p> <p>♠ 109</p> <p>♥ 873</p> <p>♦ KJ643</p> <p>♣ 1075</p>	<p>East</p> <p>♠ KQ752</p> <p>♥ 542</p> <p>♦ 7</p> <p>♣ J642</p>
<p>West</p> <p>♠ A6</p> <p>♥ J1096</p> <p>♦ Q1098</p> <p>♣ Q83</p>	<p>South</p> <p>♠ J843</p> <p>♥ AKQ</p> <p>♦ A52</p> <p>♣ AK9</p>

If you were playing pairs, you would capture the ♥J lead and play ♦A and finesse the ♦J. If the diamonds were 3-2, you would make nine tricks if East had the ♦Q and ten if West had started with ♦Q-x-x. Your concern at pairs if you are in a normal contract is to make the most tricks possible on the basis of the most common division of the missing cards in a suit.

Playing teams, your objective is to make your contract and not concern yourself with overtricks until the contract is safe. At teams, you want to guard against possible bad breaks.

After winning trick 1, if you play ♦A and finesse the ♦J, you will always succeed if diamonds are 3-2 (and make an overtrick if West began with ♦Q-x-x). However, if you do play ♦A and finesse the ♦J here, you can make only three diamond tricks and the opposition can come to five tricks before you can set up a spade trick.

To ensure your contract at teams, you play ♦A and if West follows to the next diamond, you play low in dummy. This guarantees nine tricks whenever diamonds are 3-2 and also when West began with ♦Q-x-x-x.

If West shows out on the second diamond, you are almost sure to fail. You can try for a miracle via a club and finessing ♣9, hoping East plays low with Q-J-x or longer. If the ♣9 wins, switch to spades. You will probably make only 7 or 8 tricks, but the other South player(s) are going to have the same bad split in the diamond suit.

Tim gave a good tip at the end of his analysis: ‘As a final point, have you noticed an unlikely defensive resource? If West had followed with the queen on the second round of diamonds, declarer might have been lulled into a false sense of security and have covered it.’

If declarer did capture the ♦Q with the ♦K, watch the colour drain from declarer’s face when East shows out.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

<p>North</p> <p>♠ J</p> <p>♥ KQ96</p> <p>♦ A8762</p> <p>♣ AKJ</p>		<p>West</p> <p>Pass</p>	<p>North</p> <p>4♠</p>	<p>East</p> <p>1♦</p> <p>All Pass</p>	<p>South</p> <p>3♠</p>
<p>South</p> <p>♠ KQ97643</p> <p>♥ 2</p> <p>♦ 5</p> <p>♣ Q1082</p>		<p>West leads the ♦3: ace – king – five. Declarer plays the ♠J: ace – three – five. East plays the ♦Q.</p> <p>Plan the play.</p>			

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

For maximum attention, nothing beats a good mistake.