

DON'S CORNER

by Don Gardner

This hand was played in a recent club game. Most pairs bid to a heart game, but few made it. Here are the hands:

DUMMY (North)

♠ J
♥ A 9 8 5 4 2
♦ 6 5 4
♣ 9 6 4

DECLARER (South)

♠ A K 6
♥ J 7
♦ A K J 3
♣ A J 10 3

The bidding was typically:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|----------|
| South | West | North | East |
| 2 NT | Pass | 3 ♦ | Pass |
| 3 ♥ | Pass | 4 ♥ | All Pass |

The opening lead was the 10 ♥. Try to determine the heart holding of the opening leader as you play your play.

SCROLL DOWN FOR THE SOLUTION

SOLUTION

Here's the full deal:

| <u>WEST</u> | | <u>DUMMY</u> (North) | <u>EAST</u> | | |
|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------|---|----------|
| ♠ | Q 7 6 4 2 | ♠ | J | ♠ | 10 9 8 3 |
| ♥ | 10 | ♥ | A 9 8 5 4 2 | ♥ | K Q 6 3 |
| ♦ | Q 10 9 7 | ♦ | 6 5 4 | ♦ | 6 2 |
| ♣ | K Q 7 | ♣ | 9 6 4 | ♣ | 8 5 2 |
| | | <u>DECLARER</u> (South) | | | |
| | | ♠ | A K 6 | | |
| | | ♥ | J 7 | | |
| | | ♦ | A K J 3 | | |
| | | ♣ | A J 10 3 | | |

This is not a great contract. If you figured out that the opening lead was most likely a single, you will play the A ♥ and are off to a good start.

Play the A, K of spades, discarding a diamond and ruff the third spade. Play the 9 ♣ running it into the West hand (Key Play!). West is basically end-played, and any return will give you an extra trick.

Take another look at the opening lead. It is not likely that West has one or two small hearts with the 10. If he did, he would probably lead a small heart, if he leads a heart at all. Even more unlikely would West lead the 10 holding one or both honors in hearts.