

DON'S CORNER

by Don Gardner

This hand proved to be an obstacle in the bidding and also in the play. It occurred in a local club duplicate game and few pairs bid game. Fewer yet took ten tricks. See what you think.

North
♠ A Q 5 4
♥ K 10 6
♦ 8 6
♣ Q J 6 2

South
♠ 10 2
♥ A 9 8 5 2
♦ 4 3 2
♣ A K 5

North was the dealer and the bidding started out this way:

N	E	S	W
1♣	1♦	1♥	2♦
2♥H	P		

Most South players passed and played in a heart partial, but several continued this way:

N	E	S	W
		3♣	P
4♥	P	P	P

South has made an invitational move forward, and North has the right hand to accept it. Would you have bid 3♣?

The opening lead was the Q♦ which East overtook with the King and returned the 10♦. West correctly understood this to be a suit-preference signal, played the J♦ and returned the 8♠.

Plan the play. Scroll down for the solution.

SOLUTION

Here is the full layout:

	North	
	♠ A Q 5 4	
	♥ K 10 6	
	♦ 8 6	
	♣ Q J 6 2	
West		East
♠ J 8 7		♠ K 9 6 3
♥ Q 4 3		♥ J 7
♦ Q J 7 5		♦ A K 10 9
♣ 10 9 3		♣ 8 7 4
	South	
	♠ 10 2	
	♥ A 9 8 5 2	
	♦ 4 3 2	
	♣ A K 5	

The defenders have taken two diamond tricks and will get one more in hearts. You must take ten of the remaining eleven tricks.

Take the A♠, two rounds of hearts ending in hand (they must break 3-2 for you to have a chance), and ruff your last diamond. The only chance you have at this point is for clubs to be 3-3 so you can pitch your losing spade on the thirteenth club.

The defenders have played well to challenge you the way they did, but imagine the added pressure they would have created for you had the opening lead been the 8♠. You would have had to reject the finesse and play as you did above. Not many of us could do that.