

Husbands and Wives

by Jeff Tang

How do some women stand playing with their husbands?

Board 23
South Deals
Both Vul

♠ A J 5 ♥ K J 7 6 3 ♦ Q 9 7 ♣ Q J	♠ K 10 6 3 ♥ 10 4 ♦ A J 10 6 3 ♣ 8 4	♠ 4 2 ♥ Q 9 8 2 ♦ K 8 5 4 ♣ 10 5 3	♠ Q 9 8 7 ♥ A 5 ♦ 2 ♣ A K 9 7 6 2
West	North	East	South
1 ♥ All pass	Dbl	2 ♥	1 ♣ 4 ♠

When West led the ♥6 (dummy playing low), her husband paused for thought. If the lead was fourth-best, it must be from ♥KJ76 (Rule of Eleven), since an ace underlead was so unlikely. Therefore he privately congratulated himself as he played a clever ♥8. Declarer scooped up this trick with the ♥A and proceeded to misguess trumps by leading low to the ♠K and then back to the ♠9, losing to the ♠J. West cashed the ♠A (hubby discarding the ♥2), laid down the ♥K, and then demurely led ... another heart?

East exploded upon recognizing the impending ruff and sluff. "Why, why, why?" he cried. "I discarded the ♥2 to show an even number of hearts, and you don't even notice? Not to mention declarer can't even have the ♥Q now because he would have played it at trick one! What's the matter with you?" He slammed the ♥Q on the table as declarer ruffed the trick in dummy and pitched a club from hand.

But now the contract was doomed, as this was the position:

♠ — ♥ J 7 ♦ Q 9 7 ♣ Q J	♠ — ♥ — ♦ A J 10 6 3 ♣ 8 4	♠ — ♥ — ♦ K 8 5 4 ♣ 10 5 3	♠ Q ♥ — ♦ 2 ♣ A K 9 7 6
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There was no way for declarer to establish his clubs without losing another trick, and it wouldn't have helped if he had ruffed the heart in hand. Down one! Had West returned a minor suit, declarer could have won, ruffed a club in dummy, and then ruffed a diamond in hand to run the clubs.

"It's a good thing you discarded a heart instead of a club, dear," West said to her husband as they started the next deal.