

Camouflage

By Tony Friday

Tony Friday lives in London and was the columnist for the Sunday Telegraph for over 35 years. He won the European Teams in 1961, playing with Alan Truscott, and went on to win the bronze medal in the 1962 Bermuda Bowl. He won the Sunday Times Pairs in 1970 and the bronze medal in the 1976 World Team Olympiad playing with his partner of long standing, Claude Rodrigue.

Military men give much thought to camouflage. Thus a general, when planning a defensive battle, will pretend to be strong in a part of the line where he is weak. He will also try to appear vulnerable in a place where he is strong.

Defenders at bridge have many opportunities to do the same. When you are strong in a suit, you aim to conceal the fact. There is then a good chance that declarer will misread your strength in another – and perhaps vital – suit.

This hand was played in a Camrose match between England and Northern Ireland:

<p>East Deals Both Vul</p> <p>♠ 10 8 4 2 ♥ A 6 5 4 ♦ 5 4 2 ♣ 7 2</p>	<p>♠ 7 ♥ J 10 ♦ A K Q J 10 6 ♣ A K Q 5</p> <div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W S E </div> <p>♠ 9 6 5 3 ♥ K 9 2 ♦ 8 3 ♣ 10 8 6 4</p>	<p>♠ A K Q J ♥ Q 8 7 3 ♦ 9 7 ♣ J 9 3</p>	
<p>West</p> <p>2 ♠ Pass All pass</p>	<p>North</p> <p>Dbl 4 NT</p>	<p>East</p> <p>1 ♠ Pass Pass</p>	<p>South</p> <p>Pass 3 ♣ 5 ♣</p>

West led the two of spades against five clubs and East quickly saw that the defenders had to try to take two heart tricks. East had opened the bidding, so South would surely place him with most of the strength. On the other hand declarer would still expect West to have one high card, because of his raise to two spades.

If East had won the first trick with the jack of spades, declarer would have had little difficulty in placing the vital cards. To camouflage the position, East won with the ace of spades, switching to a low heart. Placing West with the king of spades – and East therefore with the ace of hearts – declarer rose with the king of hearts and was defeated.

BOLS TIP: *When you are defending, remember the art of camouflage. If you can mislead declarer in one suit, he may well jump to a wrong conclusion in another. Even if you cannot come up with a deceptive play, you may be able to give declarer a losing option.*