

# The Sominex Coup

By Rich Waugh

Today, due to the Regional, we had no game. But we have another coup for you anyway. It's fitting that there is no actual deal to show you. Today's coup is the Sominex Coup.

**Sominex Coup:** (slang) to take so long over an action that, whether by accident or design, another player loses concentration. As declarer, tank significantly when it is your turn to play, as if having something to think about.

This coup has a twofold benefit: not only does it suggest some sort of nonexistent problem in the play, but it has the effect of lulling the opponents to sleep — or at least into a state of cerebral lethargy — as they await your next move.

Of course, pulling this stunt is improper, but it also is extremely difficult to prosecute the criminal.

Some shrewd bridge players attempt to control the tempo of bidding or play of their opponents. These players use ploys such as the declarer "quick play" maneuvers, hoping the defenders will not become aware of their vulnerability during play.

Conversely, our unscrupulous declarer might realize the contract is doomed if the defender offer a normal defense, thus delaying play an abnormal interval in an attempt to distract the opponents (the "Sominex" coup).

Along the same lines, during play a sneaky declarer may realize they are playing from the wrong hand; after waiting a considerable period, the declarer plays from the wrong side, hoping the opponent will have forgotten the correct side and mistakenly plays to the out-of-turn trick.

Claiming tricks at the end of play is always a controversial topic; devious opponents have been known to quickly make bad claims to secure a winning score. As the Romans taught us, "caveat emptor!" - let the buyer beware! Never accept a questionable claim when the declarer should be clearly stating the line of play. And don't allow the declarer to "play it out" knowing the offending defender holds the questionable cards. Instead call the Director for assistance.