


Find the Lady

By Brian Gunnell

Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul

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



With both sides vulnerable, East opened three clubs and South wound up declaring six spades.

East's ace won the opening club lead and the next club was ruffed by declarer. Trumps were drawn in four rounds, East following once and then pitching three clubs. Now all that remained was for declarer to avoid losing a trick to the ♦Q. Was it a guess, or was it a certainty?

When the hand was actually played, our declarer was familiar with the idea that, with a nine-card fit, it was customary to cash the ace and king (playing for the queen to drop in two rounds) rather than finessing. But (unfortunately) he remembered that East's bidding had shown a long club suit, and this persuaded him that West was therefore more likely to hold longer diamonds. Accordingly, he cashed the ♦K, planning to finesse on the next round if West followed with a low diamond. Poor declarer got a nasty shock when, instead, West showed out and it was East who turned out to have the diamond length. Down two (East still has a club winner and the trumps are all gone) in a cold slam!

Declarer should have gone fishing for extra clues before taking the crucial diamond guess. If (after drawing trumps) he cashes three hearts first, East will show out on the third round. Now declarer has a perfect count on the hand. East started with one spade, two hearts and (based on the bidding and the play) seven clubs. That means East has three diamonds, and leading a diamond to dummy's ace, and finessing on the second round, is guaranteed to succeed.