Puzzle Page

- **♦** J6
- **9**8754
- ♦ AKQ2
- AKQ
- **♠** A 7
- ₩ KQ32
- ♦ J 1086
- *872

West North East South
1 ♠ Dbl Pass 3♥
Pass 4♥ All Pass

West leads the **A**K, and you (South) win with the ace. What next?

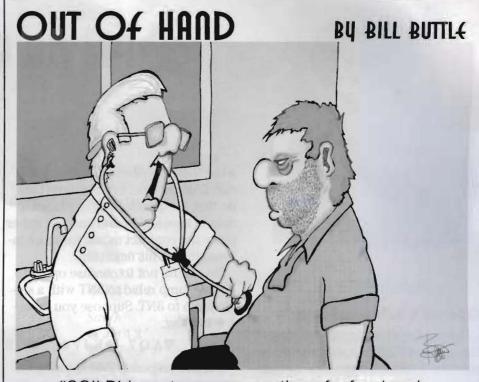
Answer

You need to tackle the trump suit. At first glance, it looks tempting to cross to the dummy in a minor suit and lead a trump toward the ♥ K Q. On this deal, however, that's a bad plan. Why? Remember the bidding: West opened 1 ♠, so he must have almost all the missing high-card points. Therefore, he must have the ♥ A and there is no point in leading toward the ♥ K Q.

The best approach is simply to play a low trump from your hand at trick two. If the enemy trumps are 3–2, it doesn't cost anything to play this way because you'll lose two trump tricks maximum.

Notice, however, what happens if the ♥A is singleton in the West hand. By playing a low trump the first time, you'll still make your contract:

↓ J6
↓ 8754
♠ AKQ2
♣ AKQ
♠ KQ1098
♠ 5432
♠ A
♠ 97
♠ 543
♠ 543
♠ A7
♠ KQ32
♠ J1086
♠ 872



"SO!! Did you try my suggestion of a few hands on the Internet before bed, to get to sleep faster?"

In My Humble Opinion

Marilyn Hemenway of Omaha NE is a teacher, director and Grand Life Master. She is also a columnist in the Bridge Bulletin.



- 1. There will always be auctions where you are not exactly sure what is going on. Some hands may not be easy for partner to describe, hence, a laborious auction may occur. My word of advice, therefore, is this: When in doubt whether partner's bid is forcing, bid. It may not work out, but I've seen too many times when passing was a disaster.
- 2. If you open the bidding with one of a suit but actually have a balanced hand, let partner know that as quickly as possible by rebidding some number of notrump. On the other hand, if you open with one of a suit on an unbalanced hand (one with a singleton or void), try to avoid rebidding notrump. Make your rebid the same suit or a different suit, and let partner determine if a notrump contract is an option. In other words, don't bid unbalanced hands and balanced hands the same way.

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