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After six years of living in the Advanced section, I've requested a move. My Real Deals (from actual play) are now in my more preferred address, the Intermediate section. Most of my writing and teaching is geared to this level, but don't get too complacent if you moved over from the Advanced section — the deals won't be "easy."

I held this South hand 25 years ago — but it made a lasting impression. You hold as dealer a once-in-a-lifetime hand:

♠ QJ1098542 ♥ — ♦ AKQ86 ♣ —

If you've never seen this kind of animal, you're probably considering 1♠, 2♣ and 4♠. The latter is definitely out — you are too strong for this "preemptive" opening. 2♣ usually shows more high-card points, so most would choose 1♠ (praying it doesn't go Pass-Pass-Pass!). There is, however, a better solution: a 5♠ opening shows this hand. You can look it up in *The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge* under "five-of-a-major opening." It shows a hand with 11 tricks, missing only the ace and the king of the major opened.

After partner gets over the shock of seeing your 5♠ opening, he will have an easy time responding. Without the ♠A or ♠K, he will pass. With one top spade he will

The Real Deal

raise to six, with both to seven. In this Real Deal, he actually raised to seven and this was the dummy:

♠ AK
♥ K9843
♦ 52
♣ Q943

♠ QJ1098542
♥ —
♦ AKQ86
♣ —

Apparently, partner was up to date on how to respond to a five-level opening. On a trump lead, right-hand opponent following, how should you play?

If diamonds are 3-3, you have no problems, and if they are 5-1 or 6-0 you have no real chance. The key is to not draw the other trump. You should play two high diamonds first and then ruff a low diamond in dummy. This way, you make the contract even if diamonds split 4-2.

A more difficult challenge was faced at the other table in the match (this was played in the Vanderbilt Knockout Teams). Declarer opened 2♣ and reached only 6♠. He received the ♣J lead, ruffed in

hand. Now what? The only danger in the small slam is a 5-1 diamond break. To cater to it, you must play accurately. Lay down the diamond ace and then play a low diamond out of your hand at trick two. In a team game, you don't worry about overtricks. If everyone follows to this diamond, you'll easily have 12 tricks (forfeiting the overtrick). The payoff comes when an opponent shows out (a 5-1 break). You can win any return (even a trump) and ruff your other low diamond in dummy to avoid any extra diamond losers. Suppose the full layout is:

♠ AK
♥ K9843
♦ 52
♣ Q943

♠ 73		♠ 6
♥ AQ1062	N	♥ J75
♦ J	W E	♦ 109743
♣ J10876	S	♣ AK52
		♠ QJ1098542
		♥ —
		♦ AKQ86
		♣ —

Laying down two high diamonds from hand (with or without drawing trumps) is fatal. If you draw trumps first, you lose two diamond tricks. If you don't draw trumps, West ruffs the second high diamond and returns a trump, leaving you a trick short. In real life, diamonds were 3-3, so all lines (even careless ones) led to a making contract. □

NABC entry fee increase

Beginning in 2006, the price per player per session at the NABCs will increase by \$1.50.

In the December issue of the *Bridge Bulletin* (pg. 11), the entry fees for the Dallas Spring NABC were listed with the old (2005) prices. The new entry fees are as follows:

- NABC+ events: \$18 per player per session
- NABC events: \$16.50
- Regional events: \$15.50 (\$17.50 for non-members)
- Intermediate-Newcomer events: \$14.50 (\$16.50 for non-members).

This deal is the first on My Favorite 52, my interactive CD-ROM that won the ABTA 2005 Software of the Year Award. They make a great gift — maybe for yourself! Try a demo of Larry's new software at www.larryco.com. Join Larry at sea this winter in the Caribbean and summer in Europe — lots of cruises with fun intermediate-level bridge programs and lectures.