

### *Errata*

Philip Martin pointed out a decided improvement over my ending in last week's deal. In my six spade contract, this was the six-card position:

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

On the low spades, West had to throw two diamonds. I discarded a heart and a club. Now the top clubs allowed me to pin West's ♦J under the queen. I was lucky to find East with the ♦K. But technique trumps judgment on this deal. Philip suggested that I throw a diamond on the ♠4 and a club on the ♠2. West has had to keep three clubs and must reduce to a single diamond. The ♣AK now turn the screw on East, who must keep a heart and is forced her to come down to one diamond. The ♦A5 win the last two tricks irrespective of who started with the ♦K or ♦J.

## 223. Ducks and Unblocks

Playing in the Minnesota GNTs, I hold in first position:

♠ K 4   ♥ A 8 6 4   ♦ K 6 5 4   ♣ K 8 5

With no one vulnerable, I open **one diamond**. West, on my left, overcalls **two clubs**, and partner bids **two spades**. East passes. My interior spots are terrible but my only choice is **two notrump**. Partner raises to **three notrump**, and everyone passes. The full auction:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

West leads the jack of clubs and partner puts down a reasonable 14-count:

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

♣ J led

♠ K 4  
♥ A 8 6 4  
♦ K 6 5 4  
♣ K 8 5

I try the queen and it holds.

*Preliminary evaluation:* There are seven tricks on top and my goal must be to keep East out of the lead. If spades break, this will be easy. Even if they don't, the suit may block. I play a spade to the king, and then lead low toward dummy. When West follows with the jack, I let it hold. West pauses momentarily before playing the jack of diamonds. My plan is to duck this jack as well, but East overtakes with the queen and I win the king. I lead a small diamond and West plays low. I win the ace with the idea of exiting to West's ten of diamonds later.

It is time to take the spades. On the ace, I throw a heart, and West surprises me by discarding the ten of diamonds. The diamond suit will no longer produce a ninth trick, so I throw diamonds on the two last spades as West throws clubs. This is my picture of the hand:

♠ —  
♥ J 10 9  
♦ 8  
♣ 7

♠ —  
♥ K Q x  
♦ —  
♣ A 10

♠ —  
♥ x x  
♦ 9  
♣ x x

♠ —  
♥ A 8 6  
♦ —  
♣ K 8

I have seven tricks and need two more. I lead the jack of hearts from dummy. West wins the queen but must give me either two hearts, or a heart and club.

The full deal:

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

♠ J 3  
♥ K Q 3  
♦ J 10 7  
♣ A J 10 6 4

♠ 10 8 7 2  
♥ 7 5 2  
♦ Q 9 2  
♣ 9 3 2

♠ K 4  
♥ A 8 6 4  
♦ K 6 5 4  
♣ K 8 5

*Points of interest:*

- The jack of spades was worthless and West should have taken her first opportunity to ditch it. This jettison fits the usual criteria: it was never going to win a trick and was not needed to push a card in dummy.

- If West defers the diamond unblock until later, declarer must be careful to save hearts instead of diamonds. An extra diamond loser was not fatal so long as there was a ninth trick available.