

## Daily Bridge Club

# Knocked out

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

Opportunity knocked in today's deal, as it does on many deals, but declarer was out back looking for four-leaf clovers.

At 3NT, South won the first club with the ace, led a heart to dummy and returned the deuce of spades to his ten. When West took the queen, he accurately led a second heart, forcing out dummy's last entry.

Leading a second spade wouldn't help South if a defender withheld the ace, so South tried a diamond to his jack. West took the queen and led another heart. East took two hearts, and West's ace of spades scored for down one.

### OVERTRICKS

South might have made overtricks if East's spades had been Q-x, but that was asking for too much luck. For nine tricks, South should lead the king of spades at Trick Two.

If West wins and shifts to hearts, South wins and forces out West's queen of spades, promoting dummy's J-9. South can win any return and go to dummy with a high heart for the good spades. He wins two spades, two hearts and five or more minor-suit tricks.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ J 9 3 2 ♥ A K 6 5  
♦ 6 2 ♣ 7 5 2. Your partner deals and opens one club, and the next

player bids one diamond. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** A response of one heart would be acceptable, and some players would find it routine. A sound option is a negative double to suggest four cards in both major suits. To show both suits at once might gain if the player at your left raises diamonds. Discuss negative doubles with your regular partner.

South dealer

N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ J 9 3 2  
♥ A K 6 5  
♦ 6 2  
♣ 7 5 2

#### WEST

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

#### EAST

♠ 8 7 6  
♥ Q 9 7 4  
♦ 10 9 5 4  
♣ J 6

#### SOUTH

♠ K 10 4  
♥ 10 2  
♦ A K J 3  
♣ A K Q 4

South  
2 NT  
3 ♦

West  
Pass  
Pass

North  
3 ♣  
3 NT

East  
Pass  
All Pass

**Opening lead — ♣ 10**

## Daily Bridge Club

# Complimentary deal

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

Everything seems to be more expensive today than it was last week, but to pay a compliment doesn't cost anything. I'll let you earn my approbation in today's deal. Cover the West and South cards and defend as East.

Against four hearts, your partner leads the deuce of spades. Dummy follows with the three. How will you defeat the contract?

Even if South has a minimum opening bid such as 10 5, A Q J 8 4, 7 6, K Q 6 3, he is headed for an overtrick; finesses in both trumps and diamonds will work for him. To have any chance, you must assume that your partner has something helpful in trumps.

### NO GAIN

You have nothing to gain by shifting to trumps or to a minor suit. Take the K-A of spades and lead a third spade. Declarer wins in dummy and leads the deuce of trumps: five, jack, queen.

If West is on the ball, he will lead a fourth spade, and when you "uppercut" with your king of trumps, South must overruff with the ace and lose the setting trick to West's nine.

Well defended!

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ Q 9 7 3 ♥ 7 6 2  
♦ A Q 5 ♣ A J 8. The dealer, at

your right, opens one heart. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** This is a matter of style and judgment. Many players would double, fearing that to pass might miss a partscore or even a game. Others would pass due to the dull pattern and three possible heart losers. I would accept either call. With 10 9 7 3, Q 6 2, A Q 5, A J 8 — with the queen of hearts a better card for defense — I would surely pass.

South dealer

E-W vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ Q 9 7 3

♥ 7 6 2

♦ A Q 5

♣ A J 8

#### WEST

♠ 10 8 4 2

♥ Q 9 3

♦ K 10 7 6

♣ 6 2

#### EAST

♠ A K 6

♥ K 5

♦ 9 8 4 3 2

♣ 7 5 4

#### SOUTH

♠ J 5

♥ A J 10 8 4

♦ J

♣ K Q 10 9 3

South

1 ♥

3 ♣

4 ♥

West

Pass

Pass

All Pass

North

2 NT

3 ♥

East

Pass

Pass

Opening lead — ♠ 2

## Daily Bridge Club

# Attacking a weak suit

By **FRANK STEWART**

*Tribune Content Agency*

Cy the Cynic defines an honest person as someone who hasn't been caught yet. Today's declarer got away with some serious dishonesty.

Against South's 3NT, West led the ten of hearts, won by dummy's jack. South had eight tricks — no more, no fewer. If he attacked the spades, he would never win a spade trick with correct defense.

It's a principle of play for declarer to establish his best suit. But at the second trick, declarer led a diamond and played his ten when East followed low.

### SHIFT

West won with the jack but assumed South was in the process of setting up a long suit. If South held J 5 4, A Q 5, A Q 10 7 2, K 8, he would have nine tricks — three hearts, three diamonds and three clubs — unless the defense took five first. So at Trick Three, West shifted to the deuce of spades.

Dummy played low. Even if East took the ace and shifted back to diamonds, South would make 3NT. As it was, East played the ten of spades, and South took his jack and claimed seven more tricks.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ K 9 2 ♥ 10 9 8 7 ♦ K J 5 ♣ 9 6 4. The dealer, at your left, opens one club. Your partner

doubles, you respond one heart and he bids one spade. The opponents pass. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Partner doubled before bidding his long suit, hence his hand is much stronger than a minimum. If he held a hand such as A Q 8 5 3, K 6 5, A 10 6, 7 3, he would have overcalled one spade at his first turn. Since you have seven useful points, game is possible. Raise to two spades.

South dealer  
N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

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

#### WEST

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

#### EAST

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

#### SOUTH

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

| South | West | North | East     |
|-------|------|-------|----------|
| 1 NT  | Pass | 3 NT  | All Pass |

**Opening lead — ♥ 10**

## Daily Bridge Club

# Don't lose focus

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

You can't be a mental tourist at bridge; focus is a key to success. But even an expert can let his mind wander.

In a team match, both Souths played at four spades. North raised to three spades since his doubleton A-K resembled three-card support. West led his singleton club (not best).

One South took the ace and led the ace and a low diamond. West won and led a trump to dummy. South then discarded his heart loser on the king of clubs, but when West ruffed and led his last trump, South had two diamond losers. Down one.

### OTHER TABLE

In the replay, South led a trump to dummy at Trick Two and threw a heart on the king of clubs. West ruffed and led another trump, and South lost three diamonds.

Both Souths lost focus. After South wins the first trick, he can take the ace of diamonds and concede a diamond. If West wins and leads a trump, South wins, ruffs a club high and ruffs a diamond in dummy. Then he can pitch a heart on the king of clubs. West ruffs, but South has only three losers.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ A K ♥ 9 5 4 3 ♦ J 9 ♣ K 10 9 8 6. Your partner opens one diamond. The next player bids

two spades (preemptive). What do you say?

**ANSWER:** This case is close. A negative double, by agreement, would promise enough strength to act at the three level and length in hearts, plus diamond tolerance or club length. Because your hearts are ragged and you have a possible source of tricks in clubs, I would accept a bid of 2NT, inviting game.

South dealer

Both sides vulnerable

#### NORTH

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

#### WEST

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

#### EAST

♠ 6  
♥ K 8 7 6  
♦ Q 6  
♣ Q J 7 5 3 2

#### SOUTH

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

| South | West     | North | East |
|-------|----------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠   | Pass     | 2 ♣   | Pass |
| 2 ♠   | Pass     | 3 ♠   | Pass |
| 4 ♠   | All Pass |       |      |

Opening lead — ♣ 4

## Daily Bridge Club

# Arithmetical argument

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

“Arguing with my partner is impossible,” a club player grumbled to me. “He’s like math; he can’t be contradicted.”

My friend was declarer at today’s four spades, and West led the K-A and a third club.

“I was relieved when my queen won,” South said. “When I started the trumps, West took the ace and led a diamond. I won a finesse with the queen and drew trumps. Next I led a heart to dummy’s jack; West had opened the bidding. But East had the queen, and I was down one.

“My partner says I should have gone right in hearts, and I’ve never won an argument with him. I’ve never even finished second.”

### ARGUMENT

I agree that math is hard to contradict. South’s partner had a sound argument. West was known to have three spades. He had opened one club on at most a four-card suit and had no longer suit, hence his pattern was balanced.

West had also shown 14 high-card points: ace of spades, A-K of clubs, king of diamonds. With the queen of hearts, he would have opened 1NT.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ A 7 2 ♥ 7 6 3  
♦ K 8 6 ♣ A K 9 2. Neither side vulnerable. The dealer, at your right,

opens one diamond. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** You lack the strength to overcall 1NT and too few clubs to try two clubs. Your poor support for the majors argues against a takeout double. Nothing compels you to act despite your 14 points; your hand is better for defense. The ability to pass smoothly in these situations is the mark of a mature player.

West dealer

Both sides vulnerable

#### NORTH

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

#### WEST

♠ A 7 2  
♥ 7 6 3  
♦ K 8 6  
♣ A K 9 2

#### EAST

♠ 5  
♥ Q 9 8 4  
♦ J 10 7 5 4  
♣ 8 7 5

#### SOUTH

♠ Q J 10 9 4  
♥ K 10 2  
♦ 9 3  
♣ Q J 4

| West     | North | East | South  |
|----------|-------|------|--------|
| 1 ♣      | Dbl   | Pass | 2 ♠    |
| Pass     | 3 ♠   | Pass | 4 ♠(!) |
| All Pass |       |      |        |

**Opening lead — ♣ K**

## Daily Bridge Club

# Simple Saturday

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

"Simple Saturday" columns focus on basic technique and logical thinking.

You're declarer at today's four hearts, a good contract. West leads a diamond: deuce, ten ... and you must win 10 tricks.

If the missing trumps break 2-2, you can take the ace of diamonds and the A-K of trumps, concede one spade and ruff your low spades in dummy, making an overtrick. But trumps will break 2-2 only 40% of the time. If they break 3-1 and you take the A-K before you lose a spade, a defender may get to cash a high trump, leaving you a trick short.

Moreover, if you win the first diamond and lead trumps, the defenders will have a diamond entry to draw a third round.

### LOW SPADE

Duck the first diamond, win the next and cash only the ace of trumps. Then lead a low spade. You can ruff a diamond return and take your king of trumps.

When West discards, you can cash dummy's high clubs and the ace of spades and crossruff. East will get his queen of trumps, but your game is safe.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ A 5 3 2 ♥ A K 4 3 2  
♦ A 3 ♣ 5 3. Your partner opens one

club, you respond one heart and he bids 1NT. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** You will certainly bid game, but the best game is unclear. If partner holds K 7 6, 7 6, K Q 7 6, A Q 6 2, you belong at 3NT. If he holds K Q 6, J 10 5, J 8 7, A Q 6 2, a contract of four hearts may fare better. You need more information, hence bid two spades, forcing. If partner continues with 2NT, raise to 3NT. If three hearts, try four hearts.

South dealer

N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ J 4  
♥ 8 7 6 5  
♦ J 4 2  
♣ A K 4 2

#### WEST

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

#### EAST

♠ Q 7  
♥ Q 10 9  
♦ K 10 8 6  
♣ Q 10 9 8

#### SOUTH

♠ A 5 3 2  
♥ A K 4 3 2  
♦ A 3  
♣ 5 3

South

1 ♥  
3 ♥

West

Pass  
Pass

North

2 ♥  
4 ♥

East

Pass  
All Pass

Opening lead — ♦ 5

## Daily Bridge Club

# Louie and the queen

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

"I held the queen alone and wasn't sure what I should do," Unlucky Louie told us in the club lounge.

"I'd say it depended on what time the king was expected to return to the castle," Cy the Cynic offered.

Louie was showing us today's deal from that day's penny game.

"I was North," Louie said. "My partner opened two clubs, game-forcing, and I responded two diamonds, negative. For a positive response of two hearts, I needed two of the top three honors. Partner then leaped to six clubs. Wouldn't you bid seven with my hand? I had promised nothing, and I had the queen of trumps and an ace."

We all agreed that Louie's grand-slam bid was reasonable, even though he was jeopardizing a sure profit.

"West led the queen of hearts," Louie went on, "and my partner took the ace and discarded his jack of spades. He next cashed six rounds of trumps and the A-K of spades, but when West clung resolutely to all four of his diamonds, my partner lost the 13th trick."

"You were unlucky," the Cynic commiserated with Louie. "The jack of diamonds might have fallen or the defense might have slipped."

Louie was also unlucky that South was declarer. South should play a low heart from dummy at Trick One and ruff in his hand. He then cashes

the A-K of spades. When the queen falls from East, South goes to the queen of trumps, discards his ten of diamonds on the ace of hearts and easily takes the rest.

If the queen of spades didn't fall, South could lead a trump to dummy, discard the jack of spades on the ace of hearts and rely on the diamonds.

South dealer  
N-S vulnerable

### NORTH

♠ 9 7 5  
♥ A 9 7 6 5 2  
♦ 5 4 3  
♣ Q

### WEST

♠ 10 6 4 3 2  
♥ Q J 10  
♦ J 9 8 6  
♣ 3

### EAST

♠ Q 8  
♥ K 8 4 3  
♦ 7 2  
♣ 7 6 5 4 2

### SOUTH

♠ A K J  
♥ None  
♦ A K Q 10  
♣ A K J 10 9 8

| South | West | North | East     |
|-------|------|-------|----------|
| 2 ♣   | Pass | 2 ♦   | Pass     |
| 6 ♣   | Pass | 7 ♣   | All Pass |

Opening lead — ♥ Q

## Daily Bridge Club

# The best policy?

By **FRANK STEWART**

*Tribune Content Agency*

Cy the Cynic says that honesty is the best policy: The problem is that there are too few policy holders out there.

In today's deal, West led a club against four hearts, and East happily took the queen and continued with the king and ace. Declarer ruffed, cashed the ace of trumps and finessed with dummy's jack. East won and exited with his last trump.

South then had to find the queen of diamonds to make his game, but that was a snap: East had not opened the bidding and had shown the three top clubs and the queen of trumps. He couldn't hold the queen of diamonds, so South led low to dummy's ten. Making four.

### TOO HONEST

East was too honest. He must win the first club with the ace, then continue with the queen and four, hiding his king. When South must guess in diamonds, he will have a chance to guess wrong; he won't be able to locate the queen by counting East's points and drawing a simple inference.

"Concealment" is an advanced defensive skill. It's worth cultivating.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ 10 6 ♥ Q 10 4  
♦ 9 6 4 2 ♣ A K Q 4. Your partner  
deals and passes, the next player

passes and you open one club. Your partner bids one heart. The opponents pass. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** You opened light in third position, primarily to direct a lead. Partner's response of one heart is welcome, but you must pass. If you bid again, you will confirm that you had a normal, sound opening bid, and partner may bid again and get too high.

North dealer

N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

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

#### WEST

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

#### EAST

♠ 10 6  
♥ Q 10 4  
♦ 9 6 4 2  
♣ A K Q 4

#### SOUTH

♠ A K 4 2  
♥ A 9 7 5  
♦ K J 5  
♣ J 8

North  
Pass  
2 ♣  
3 NT

East  
Pass  
Pass  
Pass

South  
1 NT  
2 ♠  
4 ♥

West  
Pass  
Pass  
All Pass

**Opening lead — ♣ 5**



## Daily Bridge Club

# Spilling the milk

By **FRANK STEWART**

*Tribune Content Agency*

Cy the Cynic has no sympathy for declarers who run into a bad trump break. Cy was today's North, and West led the ten of spades against six clubs. South won and led the ace of trumps — and East discarded.

South next led diamonds, and West won the second diamond and forced with a spade. South then ran the diamonds. He would have been safe had West ruffed, but West threw two hearts. South took his other high trumps, but West won the last two tricks with a trump and a spade.

### 5-0 BREAK

"Why does this happen to me?" South mourned. "A 5-0 trump break would occur one time in 25."

"If you must cry over spilled milk," Cy growled, "do us all a favor and condense it."

After South sees the bad trump break, he must cash one high heart, then force out the ace of diamonds. He ruffs West's spade return and runs the diamonds. If West ruffs, South overruffs with the king and draws trumps. If West discards, South discards dummy's remaining hearts and ruffs his last low heart in dummy.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ J 5 4 3 ♥ A K 4 3  
♦ K 4 ♣ K 3 2. You open one club, your partner bids one heart, you raise

to two hearts and he tries 2NT. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Partner's 2NT invites game. He has about 11 points with balanced pattern and suggests 3NT as an alternative game. Although you have 14 high-card points, your hand is full of losers. Bid four hearts if your side is vulnerable. If not, sign off at three hearts.

South dealer  
N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ J 5 4 3  
♥ A K 4 3  
♦ K 4  
♣ K 3 2

#### WEST

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

#### EAST

♠ K 8 7 6  
♥ Q 10 9 6 5  
♦ 8 6 5 2  
♣ None

#### SOUTH

♠ A  
♥ 8 7  
♦ Q J 10 9 3  
♣ A Q J 10 4

| South | West     | North | East |
|-------|----------|-------|------|
| 1 ♦   | Pass     | 1 ♥   | Pass |
| 2 ♣   | Pass     | 2 ♠   | Pass |
| 3 ♣   | Pass     | 5 ♣   | Pass |
| 6 ♣   | All Pass |       |      |

**Opening lead — ♠ 10**

## Daily Bridge Club

# Mad bridge party

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

As the Mad Hatter's game continued, Alice wearied of the Queen of Hearts' bluster that no ace or king would dare capture her card.

"She needs to be taught a lesson," Alice muttered.

In today's deal the Dormouse opened three spades as East, and the Hatter boldly tried four hearts. Alice, West, led her king of spades and next a club. The Hatter won in dummy and led a trump. East's king came up, declarer took the ace ... and Alice resolutely played the queen!

"Off with her head!" roared the Queen of Hearts. "What sort of play is that?"

### DIAMOND TRICK

The Hatter then led a trump to dummy and a diamond back to his king, but Alice won and returned a diamond. Whatever declarer did, East would win a diamond trick and take the ace of spades for down one.

If Alice keeps the queen of trumps, South takes his other high club and exits with a trump. Then Alice must lead a club, yielding a ruff-sluff, or break the diamonds. Either way, South gets a pitch for his second spade.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ 6 3 ♥ A J 9 6 5 4  
♦ K 6 2 ♣ A Q. Your partner opens one spade, you bid two hearts and he

raises to three hearts. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Slam is possible if partner has a suitable hand. If he holds A K 7 5 2, K 7 3, A 5 4, 7 6, you would be a favorite for 12 tricks and would take 13 on a good day. To try for slam, cue-bid four clubs to show the ace. If partner encourages by cue-bidding four diamonds in return, bid five diamonds or six hearts.

West dealer

N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ Q 10 5

♥ 10 8 7 3

♦ Q 10 4 3

♣ K 7

#### WEST

♠ K

♥ Q 2

♦ A 7 5

♣ J 9 8 6 5 3 2

#### EAST

♠ A J 9 8 7 4 2

♥ K

♦ J 9 8

♣ 10 4

#### SOUTH

♠ 6 3

♥ A J 9 6 5 4

♦ K 6 2

♣ A Q

West

Pass

All Pass

North

Pass

East

3 ♠

South

4 ♥

**Opening lead — ♠ K**

## Daily Bridge Club

# Winning the postmortem

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

“Playing with Cy is hard enough,” Unlucky Louie told me. “To postmortem a deal with him is worse. We misdefended four hearts, and afterwards, I couldn’t have gotten in a word if I’d folded it in half.”

Cy the Cynic was today’s East, and Louie led the nine of clubs against four hearts. Cy won with the king and shifted to the jack of diamonds.

“I won and returned a diamond,” Louie said. “Declarer won, led a spade to dummy and let the jack of trumps ride. He made an overtrick.”

### THIRD CLUB

“Cy had a lot to say. He pointed out that if I led another club at Trick Three, he would win and lead a third club. I could ruff, and when dummy overruffed with a trump honor, Cy’s Q-9-7 would win a trick for down one. But if we didn’t take my ace of diamonds early, South could still succeed.”

“What if Cy’s jack of diamonds were a singleton?” I asked.

“Then Cy said he would have won the first club with the ace to help me,” Louie said, “Cy doesn’t take part in a conversation. He takes the whole thing.”

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ 9 6 ♥ A K 4 3 2  
♦ K 7 ♣ Q J 7 5. You open one heart, your partner responds two clubs, you

raise to three clubs and he bids three diamonds. The opponents pass. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Your partner may be hoping you have something in spades and can try 3NT. You can’t oblige, but you have a sound hand: You have top honors in hearts, help in diamonds and good trumps. Jump to five clubs. Your partner’s hand may be 7 5 3, 7, A 10 6 5, A K 10 8 2.

North dealer

N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ A K Q 10 7

♥ J 10 5

♦ Q 5 2

♣ 10 8

#### WEST

♠ J 8 5

♥ 8 6

♦ A 10 8 6 4 3

♣ 9 6

#### EAST

♠ 4 3 2

♥ Q 9 7

♦ J 9

♣ A K 4 3 2

#### SOUTH

♠ 9 6

♥ A K 4 3 2

♦ K 7

♣ Q J 7 5

North

1 ♠

2 ♠

4 ♥

East

Pass

Pass

All Pass

South

2 ♥

3 NT

West

Pass

Pass

**Opening lead — ♣ 9**

## Daily Bridge Club

# What's the secret?

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

I've heard that the secret to success is to go from one mistake to the next without losing any of your enthusiasm. There is no doubt that bridge is a game of mistakes. Everybody makes them. Winners make the fewest.

In today's deal, West led a club against South's contract of four hearts, and East took the king and ace (not best), pondered and led a third club. When South followed with the jack, West ruffed with the six of trumps. Declarer overruffed with dummy's king and led ... a trump.

East made no mistake: He stepped up with his ace and led a fourth club, and when South followed, West's eight of trumps took the setting trick.

### DISCARD

South made a bad mistake, but maybe he will learn something from it — and maintain his enthusiasm. After dummy overruffs on the third club lead, South must take his three high diamonds to discard his queen of clubs. He then leads a trump.

If East takes the ace and leads a club, South can ruff high. He can draw trumps and claim the rest.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ A 8 6 5 3 2 ♥ K 4  
♦ K Q 9 ♣ 10 7. Your partner opens one heart, you bid one spade and he

rebids two hearts. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** The key is realizing that partner has six or more hearts. He would never be obliged to rebid a five-carder. He would have a better option: 1NT with 2-5-3-3 pattern, two of a minor suit or a raise to two spades. Since you have a good hand with a possible ruffing feature in clubs, bid four hearts.

East dealer

N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ A 8 6 5 3 2

♥ K 4

♦ K Q 9

♣ 10 7

#### WEST

♠ J 9 7

♥ 8 7 6

♦ J 8 7 5 3

♣ 6 5

#### EAST

♠ K 10 4

♥ A 2

♦ 10 4 2

♣ A K 8 4 3

#### SOUTH

♠ Q

♥ Q J 10 9 5 3

♦ A 6

♣ Q J 9 2

East

1 ♣

Pass

All Pass

South

1 ♥

2 ♥

West

Pass

Pass

North

1 ♠

4 ♥

Opening lead — ♣ 6

## Daily Bridge Club

# Pushing buttons

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

Some people only have enough time to be impatient. They push elevator buttons harder — or go down at makeable contracts such as today's.

North-South bid prosaically to 3NT, and West led the jack of diamonds. South won in dummy and promptly led a club to finesse with his queen. West took the king and led another diamond.

Declarer won in dummy again — East threw a spade — took the ace of clubs and led a third club. He hoped for a 3-3 break but wasn't so lucky. When West discarded, South took only the eight top tricks with which he'd started.

### NO RUSH

South succumbed to impatience. He needs only two club tricks, hence he need not rush to finesse with the queen. South should lead a club to his ace at Trick Two and next lead a low club. When West's king appears, South has his ninth trick.

Suppose instead that East-West play low clubs. Then South can go to dummy to return a third club toward his queen. He will get a second club trick whenever the lie of the cards allows.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ K 7 4 ♥ 8 5 3  
♦ A K 3 2 ♣ 8 6 5. Both sides

vulnerable. Your partner deals and opens one diamond, and the next player bids one heart. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** This case is close. You have 10 good high-card points, too many in theory for a single raise. But your hand is full of losers, and partner may have heart honors trapped under the heart bidder. Bid two diamonds. It's no crime to have a bit extra. Sometimes partner will appreciate it.

South dealer  
N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ K 7 4  
♥ 8 5 3  
♦ A K 3 2  
♣ 8 6 5

#### WEST

♠ Q 9 8  
♥ 9 6 4  
♦ J 10 9 8 4  
♣ K 4

#### EAST

♠ J 10 6 3  
♥ Q J 10 7  
♦ 7  
♣ J 10 9 7

#### SOUTH

♠ A 5 2  
♥ A K 2  
♦ Q 6 5  
♣ A Q 3 2

| South   | West | North | East     |
|---------|------|-------|----------|
| 2 NT(!) | Pass | 3 NT  | All Pass |

Opening lead — ♦ J

## Daily Bridge Club

# The fourth suit

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

A reader asks for explanation of “fourth-suit” auctions, which often appear in my columns.

Today’s auction went easily. North’s jump to three diamonds was forcing, as per his partnership agreement, and South had an easy 3NT bid. North may have considered acting again.

Now say North had held A 5 4, J, A Q 8 7 4 2, 10 4 2. He can’t jump to three diamonds, forcing — his hand isn’t strong enough to commit to game — but he wants to invite game. So North needs a way to invite and to force.

Many players use a bid of the “fourth suit” to force. Today’s North would bid two hearts at his second turn, saying nothing about hearts but asking South to make a further descriptive bid. South would bid 2NT next, and North could then bid three diamonds, forcing. North-South might even reach six diamonds, a fair contract.

But suppose South plays at 3NT, and West leads the deuce of hearts: jack, queen, ace. South has eight top tricks, and since he will be safe if diamonds break 3-2, he might lead the king and a second diamond.

When West discards, South is in trouble. He can take the A-Q of diamonds and the A-K of clubs, dropping East’s jack. but since the clubs are blocked, South can’t score

both dummy’s ten and his own queen. He will go down one.

For an extra chance, South tests the clubs first, taking the A-K. Then he can go to the ten of clubs, come back to the king of diamonds, cash the queen of clubs and take two more high diamonds and the ace of spades in dummy to fulfill the contract.

South dealer

Both sides vulnerable

### NORTH

♠ A 5 4

♥ J

♦ A Q 8 7 4 2

♣ A 10 2

### WEST

♠ K J 9 8

♥ K 8 5 2

♦ 6

♣ 9 8 6 4

### EAST

♠ Q 6

♥ Q 10 7 4 3

♦ J 10 9 5

♣ J 7

### SOUTH

♠ 10 7 3 2

♥ A 9 6

♦ K 3

♣ K Q 5 3

South

1 ♣

1 ♠

3 NT

West

Pass

Pass

All Pass

North

1 ♦

3 ♦

East

Pass

Pass

Opening lead — ♥ 2

## Daily Bridge Club

# Excellent book

By **FRANK STEWART**

*Tribune Content Agency*

Barbara Seagram is a prolific and respected author and teacher. Her recent book "Barbara's Bridge Tips" is an excellent tutorial for aspiring players.

Seagram's writing is engaging. I find it admirable that she is willing to introduce learning players to counting and inference: the essence of the game. In today's deal, West leads a club against 3NT: eight, ten, queen. Declarer then leads a heart. When West wins, what should he do?

Seagram notes that the play to Trick One marks South with the A-K-Q of clubs. He opened in hearts and bid diamonds, showing nine red-suit cards, so he has at most one spade.

### SINGLETON

West should shift to spades: to the king, lest South hold a singleton queen. The defense will take three spades and two hearts. But if West fails to count and continues clubs, South makes 3NT.

"Barbara's Bridge Tips" is highly recommended. Baron Barclay has books and instructional software, plus gifts for a bridge player's Christmas stocking. See [baronbarclay.com](http://baronbarclay.com).

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ A 6 5 4 2 ♥ J 10  
♦ A J 7 5 ♣ 9 8. Your partner opens one heart, you bid one spade and he

rebids two hearts. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Partner promises six or more hearts. With only five, he would have a more descriptive second bid available: for instance, 1NT with Q 7, A Q 8 5 3, K 6 4, K 10 2. Since you have two aces, a possibly working jack, two heart honors and a potential ruffing value, you are worth a try for game. Raise to three hearts.

South dealer

N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ A 6 5 4 2

♥ J 10

♦ A J 7 5

♣ 9 8

#### WEST

♠ K J 8 3

♥ A K

♦ 8 3

♣ J 7 5 3 2

#### EAST

♠ 10 9 7

♥ 6 5 4 3

♦ Q 10 4

♣ 10 6 4

#### SOUTH

♠ Q

♥ Q 9 8 7 2

♦ K 9 6 2

♣ A K Q

South

1 ♥

2 ♦

3 NT

West

Pass

Pass

All Pass

North

1 ♠

3 ♦

East

Pass

Pass

**Opening lead — ♣ 3**

## Daily Bridge Club

# Back to Birmingham

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

In June, I was able to return to Birmingham, Alabama, for dinner and a fun game with former teammates. We always have interesting deals.

In today's deal, West opened three diamonds, and East bid four hearts. My partner, Jim Foster, isn't known for timidity; he came in with four spades. All passed.

West led the eight of hearts. I furnished a dummy with some useful cards, but Foster still needed luck and good play. He covered with dummy's queen, and East took the king and led a diamond: king, ace. Declarer ruffed the heart return and had to pick up the trumps.

### SHORTNESS

It would have been reasonable to play West, who had preempted, for shortness in spades and East for the queen. But Foster inferred that clubs were split 2-2: If West had a singleton, he might have led it, and if East had the singleton ace, he would have cashed it at Trick Two, then led a diamond to get a club ruff.

So Foster tabled his cards, saying he would take the A-K of trumps. Making four. Well done, old friend.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ Q 3    ♥ 8 4  
♦ A Q 10 9 7 4 3    ♣ 6 5. Both sides vulnerable. In today's deal, the dealer

opened three diamonds with this hand. Do you agree with that call?

**ANSWER:** I can't disagree with it, but I would rather not have 2-2-7-2 distribution, which is the least attractive for a preempt. In the hyperactive preemptive style that is common today, players tend to overlook such flaws. The philosophy is "preempt and worry later."

West dealer

Both sides vulnerable

#### NORTH

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

#### WEST

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

#### EAST

♠ 8 6  
♥ A K 10 9 6 5 2  
♦ 8 6  
♣ A 10

#### SOUTH

♠ K J 9 7 5 4 2  
♥ 7  
♦ K  
♣ K J 8 2

West

3♦

All Pass

North

Pass

East

4♥

South

4♠

Opening lead — ♥ 8



## Daily Bridge Club

# More from Birmingham

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

Here's another deal from my fun game in Birmingham, Alabama, with old friends and teammates.

Freak deals do get dealt at the table. West's bid of 4NT was "Unusual," showing length in the unbid suits. North doubled, and as East, I duly bid five clubs.

When South tried five diamonds, North cue-bid six clubs, showing grand-slam interest (and maybe, therefore, first-round heart control). South might have bid seven diamonds but settled for six. I might have sacrificed but not at the vulnerability, and I wasn't sure we could beat seven diamonds.

### 13 TRICKS

Sure enough, West led the queen of hearts, and South claimed 13 tricks, plus 940. Perhaps North might have bid five hearts instead of six clubs. Then, if South cue-bid five spades, North could bid seven diamonds.

North-South still beat the "par" result (the product of the best effort by both sides). We would be minus only 800 at seven hearts doubled by West, and if North-South went to seven spades, West could double for a diamond lead.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ K Q J 8 2 ♥ A 10 8 3  
♦ A Q 9 2 ♣ None. Your partner opens one diamond. The next player

passes. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** A grand slam is likely. Expert opinion might vary on how to proceed. Some experts might jump to four clubs: a "splinter" bid to show diamond support and club shortness. I would choose a strong jump-shift to two spades, then diamond support. Partner should be encouraged if he has the ace of spades and decent diamonds.

North dealer

E-W vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ K Q J 8 2

♥ A 10 8 3

♦ A Q 9 2

♣ None

#### WEST

♠ 4

♥ Q J 7 6 5 4

♦ None

♣ A K Q J 9 5

#### EAST

♠ 9 6 5 3

♥ K 9 2

♦ 4

♣ 10 8 7 6 3

#### SOUTH

♠ A 10 7

♥ None

♦ K J 10 8 7 6 5 3

♣ 4 2

North

1 ♠

Dbl

6 ♣

East

Pass

5 ♣

Pass

South

2 ♦

5 ♦

6 ♦

West

4 NT

Pass

All Pass

**Opening lead — ♥ Q**

## Daily Bridge Club

# Stocking stuffers

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

Many good books appeared in 2021, including Mike Lawrence's "Insights on Bridge," Randy Baron's "The Only Bridge Book You'll Ever Need" and "On the Other Hand" by David Bird and Larry Cohen. To stuff your favorite partner's stocking, try Alan Truscott's set of flash cards on suit combinations — the building blocks of good play.

South's leap to slam is questionable: The A-K of spades might be missing or the best spot might be 6NT. At six hearts, South wins the second club and must pick up the trumps.

### FINESSE

If South had 5-3-2 opposite A-K-J-10-4, he would cash the ace before finessing with the jack, guarding against a singleton queen offside. Here, South should lead to the jack immediately. He loses if West has the bare queen but gains if West has a low singleton: four times as likely. Similarly, Truscott notes that with A-K-4-3-2 opposite J-10-9, a first-round finesse is correct.

Baron Barclay has books and software, plus holiday gifts for bridge players. See [baronbarclay.com](http://baronbarclay.com).

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ A K Q ♥ 7 2  
♦ K 6 4 3 ♣ K J 5 2. Your partner opens 1NT, promising 15 to 17

points. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** If partner has a maximum 17-point hand, or 16 with good spot cards or a five-card suit, you will be a favorite at 6NT. Bid 4NT, not ace-asking but a "quantitative" try for slam, and let partner judge. True, if he has 7 6, A K 6 3, A 9 5 2, A 4 3, you belong at six diamonds. A convention such as "Two-way Stayman" can uncover minor-suit fits.

North dealer

N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ A K Q

♥ 7 2

♦ K 6 4 3

♣ K J 5 2

#### WEST

♠ 10 7 4 3

♥ 6

♦ 10 8 7 5

♣ A 9 7 6

#### EAST

♠ J 9 5 2

♥ Q 9 4 3

♦ J 9

♣ 10 8 3

#### SOUTH

♠ 8 6

♥ A K J 10 8 5

♦ A Q 2

♣ Q 4

North  
1 NT

East  
Pass

South  
6 ♥

West  
All Pass

Opening lead — ♣ A

## Daily Bridge Club

# Online instruction

By **FRANK STEWART**

*Tribune Content Agency*

The internet has changed the face of bridge pedagogy. Teachers offer online lessons and YouTube lectures, and instructional software is plentiful. Two excellent, inexpensive products are BridgeBee and Vu-Bridge, which offer deals to play interactively with expert commentary.

As South, you play 1NT after BridgeBee leads you through the auction. West leads the ten of hearts, and East takes the ace and returns the queen. If you grab your king, BridgeBee asks you to try again.

### SEVEN TRICKS

If you win the second heart, you must lose the lead twice to set up seven tricks. The defense will get three hearts, two clubs and two diamonds. But if you duck the queen, you will have time on your side, winning seven tricks before the defense has seven.

Complex defense, starting with a spade shift by East at Trick Three, might still prevail, but South surely fails if he wins the second heart.

For more, see [baronbarclay.com](http://baronbarclay.com). Baron Barclay also has books and gifts for your favorite partner.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ K Q 4 3 ♥ 7 6  
♦ 9 8 2 ♣ Q 10 9 7. The dealer, at your left, opens one diamond.

Your partner doubles, you respond (“advance”) one spade, and he bids two spades. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Partner’s double asked you to bid, and your one spade promised nothing. Still, partner raised. He thinks you can take eight tricks no matter what you hold. Since you have seven points and good spades, bid four spades. Partner may hold A J 9 2, A K 4 3, 3, K J 5 2.

South dealer

N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ K Q 4 3

♥ 7 6

♦ 9 8 2

♣ Q 10 9 7

#### WEST

♠ J 8

♥ 10 9 8 5 3

♦ K 7 4

♣ A 5 3

#### EAST

♠ 10 9 6 5 2

♥ A Q

♦ A 6 5

♣ K 8 4

#### SOUTH

♠ A 7

♥ K J 4 2

♦ Q J 10 3

♣ J 6 2

South

1 ♦

1 NT

West

Pass

All Pass

North

1 ♠

East

Pass

**Opening lead — ♥ 10**

## Daily Bridge Club

# Caught speeding

By **FRANK STEWART**

*Tribune Content Agency*

Cy the Cynic arrived at the club in a foul mood. He had gotten a speeding ticket and had to appear in traffic court.

“They hit me with a \$125 fine,” Cy grumbled. “I’d have asked for a jury trial, but I’d have trusted my fate to 12 people who weren’t smart enough to avoid jury duty.”

Cy often gets caught speeding as declarer. He seizes upon the first line of play he sees, whether or not it’s sound. When Cy played at today’s four hearts, West led the K-A of spades, and the Cynic ruffed and drew all the trumps, leaving him with none.

### DOWN TWO

Cy next took his club tricks and led the queen of diamonds to finesse. East won, cashed a club and led his last spade. Down two.

Cy’s play was more speedy than accurate. Cy must discard a diamond on West’s second high spade instead of ruffing. Cy ruffs the third spade, draws trumps and finesses in diamonds. When East wins, he has no more spades, and Cy can get back in to cash his minor-suit winners and make his game.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ 8 ♥ A K J 9 4  
♦ Q J 6 5 ♣ K J 5. You open one heart, your partner responds 1NT,

you bid two diamonds and he raises to three diamonds. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Partner’s raise to three diamonds promises a hand worth about 10 points with four-card or maybe five-card support. Even a perfect maximum hand for him won’t make slam a good proposition, but you can certainly bid five diamonds. Partner may hold 7 6 5, 6, A K 4 3 2, Q 8 7 6.

South dealer  
N-S vulnerable

**NORTH**  
♠ 10 9 6 4  
♥ Q 7  
♦ A 8 3 2  
♣ A Q 4

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

**EAST**  
♠ 7 3 2  
♥ 8 5  
♦ K 10 7  
♣ 10 9 6 3 2

**SOUTH**  
♠ 8  
♥ A K J 9 4  
♦ Q J 6 5  
♣ K J 5

| South | West     | North | East |
|-------|----------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥   | 1 ♠      | 2 ♦   | Pass |
| 3 ♦   | Pass     | 3 ♥   | Pass |
| 4 ♥   | All Pass |       |      |

**Opening lead — ♠ K**

## Daily Bridge Club

# Pandemic play

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

The American Contract Bridge League, which administers most tournament bridge in North America, had to cope with COVID-19. Clubs closed and tournaments were cancelled. To provide competition, the ACBL has held events online, offering a welcome refuge for many players.

The downside is that cheating online is easy, and the ACBL has dealt with a host of cases, some involving name experts. Afraid of protracted and costly litigation, it adopted an expedient but distasteful policy of “negotiated resolutions,” letting cheaters play after a too-brief suspension in return for an admission of guilt.

Players who dishonor the game and ruin the competitive experience for others should be gone for good. Preserving the integrity of the competition is foremost. I don’t want players, especially young players, seeing a convicted cheater at a tournament 18 months later. The message that sends is more than a little dangerous.

The ACBL publishes an excellent monthly magazine to which I have contributed for 40 years. Today’s deal comes from the inimitable Eddie Kantar, a contributor for 60 years. He asks how South should play at seven hearts when West leads the king of clubs.

Ruff in dummy, ruff a diamond,

ruff the last low club with the ace and draw trumps, pitching dummy’s A-K of spades. You have 13 tricks. To try to unblock the spades early might (and would) find a defender with a singleton.

For ACBL membership with its many benefits, see [acbl.org](http://acbl.org).

South dealer

N-S vulnerable

### NORTH

♠ A K

♥ A 3 2

♦ Q J 10 9 7 6 4 3

♣ None

### WEST

♠ 6 5 4 3 2

♥ 7

♦ K 8 2

♣ K Q 10 6

### EAST

♠ 7

♥ 9 8 5 4

♦ A 5

♣ J 9 8 5 3 2

### SOUTH

♠ Q J 10 9 8

♥ K Q J 10 6

♦ None

♣ A 7 4

### South

1 ♠

3 ♥

4 ♥

5 ♦

### West

Pass

Pass

Pass

Pass

### North

3 ♦

4 ♦

5 ♣

7 ♥(!)

### East

Pass

Pass

Pass

All Pass

Opening lead — ♣ K

## Daily Bridge Club

# Overbid or underplayed?

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

My friend Richard Oshlag sent today's deal from an online match. East perpetrated a weak two-bid with a ragged suit. Oshlag, North, wondered if his bid of four spades was too bold. After all, his king of diamonds looked poorly placed.

West led the ace of diamonds (not best, as it happened), then led a heart to dummy's ace. Declarer drew trumps — luckily, they broke 3-2 — and next led a low club from dummy.

West won cheaply and forced dummy to ruff a heart, and South was sunk. He led the king of clubs next, but East won and led a third club. South ruffed, but dummy had a diamond loser.

### SIXTH TRICK

Oshlag's bid was fine, but South erred. After West showed the ace of diamonds, East surely held the ace of clubs for his vulnerable bid. So at the sixth trick, dummy must lead the king of clubs.

When East takes the ace, he is stuck. If he leads a club to West's queen, South wins five trump tricks, three clubs, a diamond and a heart. A diamond return by East is no better.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ A K Q 10 ♥ A  
♦ K 9 5 ♣ K J 7 5 3. You open one club, your partner bids one heart, you jump-shift to two spades and he

returns to three clubs. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Partner's holding is unclear. Stall with a bid of three diamonds. If he bids 3NT next, pass. Incidentally, some players would open 2NT on this hand, promising balanced distribution when they don't have it. I can think of nothing good to say about that call.

East dealer

Both sides vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ A K Q 10

♥ A

♦ K 9 5

♣ K J 7 5 3

#### WEST

♠ 8 3

♥ K Q 10 9 6 4 3

♦ A

♣ Q 10 8

#### EAST

♠ J 5 4

♥ J

♦ Q 8 7 6 4 2

♣ A 9 2

#### SOUTH

♠ 9 7 6 2

♥ 8 7 5 2

♦ J 10 3

♣ 6 4

East

2♦

Pass

All Pass

South

Pass

2♠

West

2♥

3♥

North

Dbl

4♠

Opening lead — ♦ A

## Daily Bridge Club

# Venerable magazine

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

In October 1929, four years after the birth of contract bridge, The Bridge World published its first issue. It has appeared every month since, chronicling the game's evolution and maintaining a reputation for excellence.

The Bridge World has material for experts and aspiring players. In an "Improve Your Play" feature, South declares at four spades, and West leads the K-Q of clubs. After ruffing, how should South operate?

### CONTROL

South must keep trump control so he can take his heart tricks. He is at risk if West has A-J-x-x. Then, if South leads the king of trumps next, West will duck, win the next trump and force again with a club. South loses control, and West scores a third trump trick.

South must lead the ten of trumps. West can't prevail by taking the jack and leading another club: Dummy can ruff, and South preserves his own trump length.

No serious player should be without The Bridge World. For subscription info and interesting features, see [bridgeworld.com](http://bridgeworld.com).

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ A J 6 4 ♥ 6 5 3  
♦ 10 2 ♣ K Q 9 8. Your partner  
opens one diamond, you respond

one spade, he bids two clubs and you raise to three clubs. Partner then bids three spades. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Your three clubs invited game, and partner would have passed if not interested. His three spades suggests a good hand with 3-1-5-4 distribution. Since you have no "wasted" heart honors, bid five clubs. Partner may hold K 7 3, 2, A K 8 6 3, A J 10 5.

South dealer

N-S vulnerable

### NORTH

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

### WEST

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

### EAST

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

### SOUTH

♠ K Q 10 9 8 7  
♥ A K Q J 10  
♦ Q  
♣ 2

| South | West     | North | East |
|-------|----------|-------|------|
| 1 ♠   | Pass     | 1 NT  | Pass |
| 3 ♥   | Pass     | 3 ♠   | Pass |
| 4 ♠   | All Pass |       |      |

Opening lead — ♣ K

## Daily Bridge Club

# Lack of understanding

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

“When I was young and inquisitive,” a club player told me, “people said I would understand things better when I got older. Well, I’m older, and I understand absolutely nothing. How do these experts always guess right? Do they have X-ray vision?”

He had defended against four spades as West. North’s jump-raise to three spades was bold, as was South’s four spades.

“I led the king and queen of diamonds and next a heart,” my friend said. “Declarer had to guess, but sure enough, he played the jack from dummy.”

### FINESSE

“My partner took the ace, but declarer took the rest when the trump finesse won. Maybe in 2030 a declarer will misplace the cards when I’m defending.”

A “guess” may be a non-guess because declarer must make an assumption about how the cards lie and follow its consequences. Here, South will assume that West has the king of trumps. But West passed as dealer and has shown the K-Q of diamonds, so South is probably conceding defeat if he plays West for the ace of hearts.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ K 4 ♥ Q 9 8 6 2  
 ♦ K Q 10 5 ♣ 5 2. Your partner

opens one club. The next player jumps to two spades (preemptive). What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Your hand is too weak to bid three hearts, which would commit you to game. Double (negative) to show heart length with at least enough strength to act at the three level. If your values are minimum, you will also have club tolerance or diamonds. You might also have some type of strong hand.

West dealer  
 N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ A J 8 3  
 ♥ K J  
 ♦ J 4  
 ♣ A J 10 9 3

#### WEST

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

#### EAST

♠ 7 5  
 ♥ A 7 5 3  
 ♦ A 9 8 3  
 ♣ 7 6 4

#### SOUTH

♠ Q 10 9 6 2  
 ♥ 10 4  
 ♦ 7 6 2  
 ♣ K Q 8

| West     | North | East | South |
|----------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass     | 1 ♣   | Pass | 1 ♠   |
| Pass     | 3 ♠   | Pass | 4 ♠   |
| All Pass |       |      |       |

Opening lead — ♦ K



## Daily Bridge Club

# Harlow the Halo

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

"It's a wonder he hasn't won the lottery. Twice," Unlucky Louie grumbled to me in the club lounge. Louie meant the player we call Harlow the Halo. While Louie deals with misfortune, good luck shines on Harlow like good health.

In a team match, Louie and Harlow both played at four spades. West led the K-A of hearts.

"The Halo ruffed," Louie said, "took dummy's ace of diamonds, cashed the king of trumps, ruffed a heart and drew trumps. He had none left, but when he took the king of diamonds next, the queen fell conveniently. Making six!"

### BETTER PLAY

Louie's play was better. After he took the ace of diamonds, he overtook the king of trumps with his ace, cashed the Q-J and led the king of diamonds. Even if the queen hadn't appeared, Louie was safe. He would lose a diamond, a trump and a heart.

Harlow's play would cost the contract more than half the time; Louie would almost always make it.

"The man could fall into an outhouse," Louie sighed, "and emerge smelling like a rose."

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ 10 7 4 2 ♥ A K 6  
♦ Q 5 ♣ Q J 9 3. Your partner opens  
one diamond, you respond one spade,

he bids two clubs and you try 2NT  
(granted, a questionable call). Partner  
next bids three diamonds. What do  
you say?

**ANSWER:** Partner suggests  
six diamonds, four clubs and extra  
values. With a minimum 6-4 hand,  
he would have rebid two diamonds  
to limit the strength. You may have  
a slam. Bid five clubs or three hearts.

South dealer

Both sides vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ K  
♥ 8 7 4 3 2  
♦ A  
♣ A 8 7 5 4 2

#### WEST

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

#### EAST

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

#### SOUTH

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

#### South

1 ♠  
2 ♦  
3 ♦  
4 ♠

#### West

Pass  
Pass  
Pass  
All Pass

#### North

2 ♣  
2 ♥  
3 ♠

#### East

Pass  
Pass  
Pass

**Opening lead — ♥ K**

## Daily Bridge Club

# Unremarkable play

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

"Of all the inventions in the past 100 years, the dry erase board must be the most ... remarkable." — graffiti

When you're declarer, it might help if you could erase the first few tricks, or just your play to Trick One, and start over.

In today's deal, West led his singleton spade against four hearts, and South won with the ace and started the trumps. East took the king and returned a spade, and West ruffed, cashed his ace of trumps and exited with a club. Declarer won, but when he finessed in diamonds later, West took the king. Down one.

### CLEAN SLATE

South's play was unremarkable. I'll bet South wished he could go back and start with a clean slate. After he wins the first trick, he must take the K-A of clubs and ruff dummy's last club, then lead a trump.

Then, when West gets a spade ruff and takes his high trump, he is end-played. If he leads a diamond, South gets a free finesse. If West leads a club, South gets a useful ruff-sluff. Either way, South makes his game.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ J 10 7 5 3 ♥ K 6 ♦ 7 5 2 ♣ J 9 6. Your partner opens one heart, you respond one spade and

he bids two clubs. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** To return to two hearts would be reasonable; partner might do better at a 5-2 heart fit than at a 4-3 club fit. But with a hand this weak, I would pass. In theory, a preference is no stronger than a pass here. In practice, I would rather not give partner another chance to bid and maybe get too high.

South dealer  
N-S vulnerable

**NORTH**  
♠ Q 8 4 2  
♥ Q 8 4 2  
♦ Q J  
♣ A 5 2

**WEST**  
♠ 9  
♥ A 7 5  
♦ K 8 4 3  
♣ Q 10 8 7 4

**EAST**  
♠ J 10 7 5 3  
♥ K 6  
♦ 7 5 2  
♣ J 9 6

**SOUTH**  
♠ A K 6  
♥ J 10 9 3  
♦ A 10 9 6  
♣ K 3

|       |      |       |          |
|-------|------|-------|----------|
| South | West | North | East     |
| 1 NT  | Pass | 2 ♣   | Pass     |
| 2 ♥   | Pass | 4 ♥   | All Pass |

**Opening lead — ♠ 9**

## Daily Bridge Club

# Simple Saturday

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

"Simple Saturday" columns focus on basic technique and logical thinking.

When you're declarer at a major-suit game, keep first principles in mind: You need 10 winners and can afford three losers.

In today's deal, North's two-diamond cue bid showed a good hand with spade support. Against four spades, West led a diamond, and East took the nine and ace and led the king. South pondered and ruffed with the ace of trumps.

South next cashed the queen of trumps. When East discarded, South could lead a trump to dummy's ten and cash the king, but West had a trump trick. South also lost a heart to East and went down one.

### SIX TRUMPS

South neglected to count his winners and losers. He has six sure trump tricks, three clubs and a heart, and he can afford to lose two diamonds and one more trick somewhere.

On the third diamond, South must pitch a heart. If East shifts to a club, South wins and cashes the ace of trumps. He can proceed to pick up West's trumps and make his game.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ K 10 6 ♥ Q 10 9 4 ♦ 10 6 4 ♣ A Q 5. Your partner opens one diamond, you respond one

heart, he bids two clubs and you try 2NT. Partner then rebids three clubs. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Your partner says he wants no part of either game or notrump. He has a minimum hand, probably with five cards in each minor suit. Don't persist with notrump; bid three diamonds. Your 2NT described your hand, and to bid 3NT now would show the same values twice.

East dealer

N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ K 10 6  
♥ Q 10 9 4  
♦ 10 6 4  
♣ A Q 5

#### WEST

♠ J 8 4 3  
♥ 6 2  
♦ 7 5  
♣ J 7 6 3 2

#### EAST

♠ None  
♥ K J 7 5  
♦ A K Q J 9 3  
♣ 10 8 4

#### SOUTH

♠ A Q 9 7 5 2  
♥ A 8 3  
♦ 8 2  
♣ K 9

| East | South | West     | North |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| 1 ♦  | 1 ♠   | Pass     | 2 ♦   |
| 3 ♦  | 4 ♠   | All Pass |       |

**Opening lead — ♦ 7**

## Daily Bridge Club

# Rapid changes

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

Unlucky Louie has raised nine kids and still has some under his roof. According to Louie, adolescence is a time of rapid change: He says that between 12 and 17, a parent can age almost 20 years.

Given Louie's unending bad luck, he should know how to handle a sudden reversal of fortune. When he played at today's four spades, he took the ace of hearts and had no worries. If the missing trumps broke 2-2, he would have six trump tricks plus five side-suit tricks.

So at Trick Two, Louie led a trump to his ace ... and his trick-total changed from 11 to nine when West pitched a club.

Louie didn't give up. He took the A-K of diamonds, ruffed a diamond, went to the king of hearts and ruffed a heart. Louie then exited with a trump, hoping East would have to lead a club from the king. But West had that card, and the result was down one.

"A 4-0 trump break would happen only one time in 10," Louie sighed, "and I had a chance even then."

After Louie sees the foul break in trumps, he can take the king of hearts, ruff a heart, lead a diamond to dummy's king and return the last heart. East discards a diamond. If he ruffs, Louie throws his club loser. Louie ruffs, goes to the ace of diamonds and leads a third diamond,

and again East must discard. Having won the first eight tricks, Louie leads a club to dummy's ace and returns the last diamond.

East has no winning play. If he discards, Louie ruffs for his 10th trick. If instead East ruffs, Louie discards his last club and still scores one more trump trick.

North dealer

N-S vulnerable

### NORTH

♠ 6 3

♥ A K 6 2

♦ A K 3 2

♣ A 7 5

### WEST

♠ None

♥ Q 10 9 4

♦ Q 10 9 5

♣ K J 8 3 2

### EAST

♠ K Q J 10

♥ J 8 7

♦ J 8 7

♣ 10 9 6

### SOUTH

♠ A 9 8 7 5 4 2

♥ 5 3

♦ 6 4

♣ Q 4

North

1 ♦

2 NT

East

Pass

Pass

South

1 ♠

4 ♠

West

Pass

All Pass

Opening lead — ♥ 10

## Daily Bridge Club

# Touchy subject

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

“My wife insisted that I booted this contract,” a club player complained to me. “I told her to change the subject.”

“Did that do you any good?”

“She said, ‘OK, this contract was booted by you.’”

At four spades, my friend took the ace of hearts, cashed the ace of trumps and finessed with his jack, the percentage play in the trump suit.

“West took the queen,” declarer said, “and led another heart. I won, came to the king of clubs, drew the missing trump and led a club to dummy’s jack. I went down when East took the queen and cashed his queen of hearts. I say I was victimized by bad luck — or bad luck victimized me.”

### BEST PLAY

South can afford to lose a trump, a club and a diamond. He must avoid losing a heart. After he wins the first heart, his best play is to cash the top trumps, gaining time, then take the K-A of clubs.

When East-West follow low, South concedes a club to the queen. He wins East’s heart return and discards his last heart on dummy’s high club.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ K J 9 7 6 3 ♥ 5 4 2  
♦ 10 ♣ K 7 3. Your partner opens

one diamond, you respond one spade, he bids two clubs and you rebid two spades. Partner then raises to three spades. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** This case is close, but if partner’s hand is short in hearts as indicated, his values are likely to be useful, and the play may go well. His hand may be A 8, 7 6, A K 6 5 3, A J 5 4. Bid four spades, especially if you’re vulnerable, with more to gain by scoring game.

North dealer

N-S vulnerable

### NORTH

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

### WEST

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

### EAST

♠ 4 2  
♥ Q 8 7  
♦ A Q 8 4  
♣ Q 8 4 2

### SOUTH

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

North  
1 NT

East  
Pass

South  
4 ♠

West  
All Pass

Opening lead — ♥ J

## Daily Bridge Club

# Trials and errors

By FRANK STEWART

*Tribune Content Agency*

“Your honor,” the District Attorney intoned, “we will prove that South committed a felony. He lost a cold vulnerable game.”

“Proceed,” the judge instructed, and the Court heard evidence.

“Against four spades,” the DA began, “West, who passed as dealer, cashed the K-A of hearts and led a trump. Declarer drew trumps and next let the jack of clubs ride. East took the king and returned a club, and declarer took dummy’s A-Q, pitching a diamond. He then led a diamond to his jack, and West’s king won the setting trick. Case closed.”

“Baloney,” South’s counsel bellowed. “My client can’t help it if two finesses lost.”

Would you convict South?

### MISPLAY

South erred. After drawing trumps, he must lead dummy’s deuce of clubs. East must take his king or lose it, and South later discards two diamonds on the A-Q.

If West had the king of clubs, South would still make his game since the diamond finesse would win. West would have opened the bidding with an ace and three kings.

### DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ 6 4 ♥ A K 7 4 3  
♦ K 8 6 ♣ 10 7 3. Your partner opens one diamond, you respond one

heart and he bids two clubs. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Partner has five or more diamonds; he would not bid this way with 4-4 in the minor suits. You have barely enough strength to invite game. If in your partnership a jump-preference in opener’s minor is invitational, bid three diamonds. If that bid would be forcing or if you aren’t sure, bid two diamonds.

West dealer

N-S vulnerable

#### NORTH

♠ A J 7 2

♥ J 6

♦ Q 7 5

♣ A Q 6 2

#### WEST

♠ 6 4

♥ A K 7 4 3

♦ K 8 6

♣ 10 7 3

#### EAST

♠ 5

♥ 10 9 5 2

♦ 10 9 4 2

♣ K 9 8 4

#### SOUTH

♠ K Q 10 9 8 3

♥ Q 8

♦ A J 3

♣ J 5

West

Pass

Pass

All Pass

North

1 ♣

2 ♠

East

Pass

Pass

South

1 ♠

4 ♠

**Opening lead — ♥ K**