

January 22, 2008

Learning Points – Hiding an End Play

by Steve Moese; edited by Mike Purcell

E Deals

Both Vul

Mike	♠ 6 ♥ A ♦ 109765432 ♣ Q64	Steve
♠ KJ753 ♥ 9874 ♦ A ♣ 9736	N W 26 E S	♠ A10942 ♥ 1032 ♦ J8 ♣ AK10
	♠ Q8 ♥ KQJ65 ♦ KQ ♣ J852	<u>Duplimate:</u> EW: 2N, 3♠ NS: 3♦, 1♣

Here's an interesting hand from the 2 session Stratiflighted Open Pairs in a tough B flight at the January Cleveland Regional. Can you make 4 Spades?

The Bidding

Steve (East): This is a standard minimum 1♠ call, even in Precision.

Opponents: 5 hearts and 13 HCP rates an overcall 2♥.

Mike (West): A singleton with 5 spades makes 4♠ very attractive. I don't expect to make but we will keep them from any constructive bidding.

East	South	West	North
1♠	2♥	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

South led the K♥

North passed without missing a beat. North might have bid some number of Diamonds over 4♠ by West. 8 cards are too many to ignore with both vulnerable, even missing all top honors. This is a good sacrifice if EW are making game.

The Play

South leads the ♥K and East takes stock. Looks like 3 ♥ losers and a ♣ loser, with a possible loser in trumps if we get a 3-0 break and I can't guess where the ♠Q is.

Surprisingly North overtakes partner's ♥K and returns a small ♣. I win with the ♣Ace, and clear trumps in 2 rounds. North is marked with a singleton ♥Ace. I decided to play South for the ♠Queen. I also think ♣ honors might be split between the two hands. In any case the only chance is that North wins the third ♣ trick. I fear that if I cash clubs top down from my hand, North might wisely pitch the Queen, giving partner an entry with their Jack. If I lead from dummy, perhaps North will think I'm going to finesse a Jack I don't have.

I play ♦A then a trump to hand to ruff a ♦ clearing that suit too. I am in dummy so I can lead the ♣ toward my ♣K10, making it very hard for North to part with their ♣Queen. The ♣King fells small cards. The ♣10 endplays North as hoped.

On the forced Diamond return I drop a losing heart from my hand and trump on the table. The ♣9 eliminates the final heart loser. Making 5 worth +450 earned 9.5 Match Points out of 11.

Post Mortem – The Play

North had two chances to be a hero – one by bidding 5♦ over 4♠, and the other by playing the ♣Queen on the 1st or 2nd ♣ trick. While not bidding is a good choice, North has to back it up by finding the killing defense.