

**Learning Points – Mini-Spangold Gem from DC NABC**  
 from Adam Parrish by Steve Moese (Mike Purcell ed.)

**October 1, 2009**  
*Declarer Play LEVEL: Expert*

Here's a gem of a hand that will challenge the most ardent double-dummy solvers. Thanks to Adam Parrish for this contribution.

West Deals None Vul IMPs	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣		Adam
♠ KJT ♥ K8xxx ♦ ATxxx ♣ -	N W 24 E S	♠ Qxxxxx ♥ AJT ♦ Qx ♣ Jx	
Partner	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣		

“Here's my favorite hand from DC. This was from the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the 5000 Mini-Spangold. Obviously 4♠ is a better contract, but you're in 4♥ Doubled. Can you make South pay for his double? My partner did not. ☹

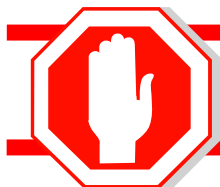
On the opening lead, South plays the ♣K.

Plan the play...



*Do not read past the red lines until you want to see the opponent's cards.*

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Double
Passed Out			
North Leads ♣6			



Need to see the rest of the hand? Here it is. Can you figure it out double dummy? It's still not easy. (Took me a day! ☺)

West Deals None Vul IMPs	♠ xx ♥ x ♦ Jxx ♣ Qxxxxxx	Adam
♠ KJT ♥ K8xxx ♦ ATxxx ♣ -	N W 24 E S	♠ Qxxxxx ♥ AJT ♦ Qx ♣ Jx
Partner	♠ Ax ♥ Q9xx ♦ Kxx ♣ AKxx	

The analysis follows next page.

## Declarer's Analysis

South probably has a ♥ stack, likely ♥Q9xx, in which case South has a guaranteed trump trick (stupid ♥9!). Even with ♣AK and ♠A, I don't think South's doubling without ♥Q-4th. With ♥Qxx South would never double, so South either has ♥Qxxx or ♥ shortness.

South has a trump trick and a ♠ trick coming. Somehow declarer needs to set up ♠ for ♦ pitches while retaining an entry to dummy. But dummy's only entry is the ♥A. If South also has the ♦K, South will be unable to lead ♦s when in (and South's going to get in a few times). That will provide enough time to set up the ♠s. But those pesky trumps...

## The Play

Going to need to play a dummy reversal!

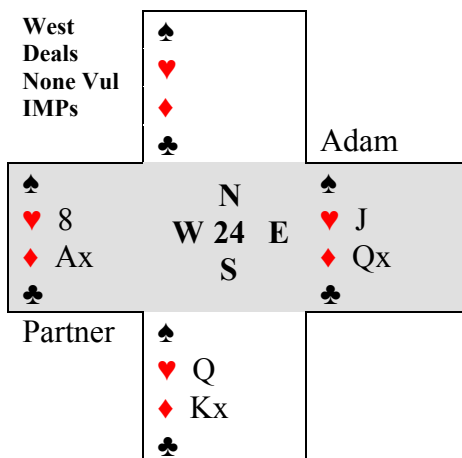
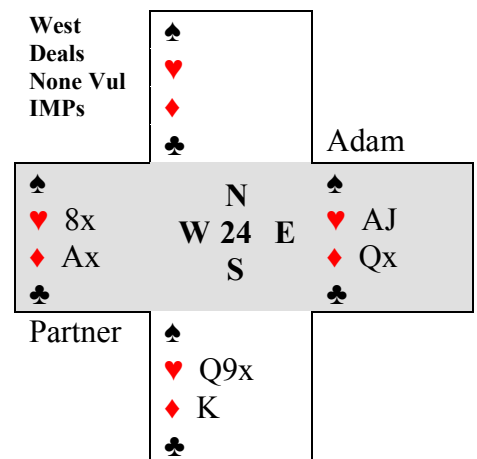
Ruff the first ♣ in hand and cash the ♥K. (Feels very strange knowing long trumps are on your right, I know, but we need to remove North's trump and retain the ♥A as an entry to dummy).

Now play ♠s (being sure to keep the ♠Q on the board and the ♠J or ♠10 in your hand). South will win eventually. Whether he wins the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> is immaterial. If he wins the 2<sup>nd</sup>, he is basically forced to play a 2<sup>nd</sup> ♣, as a ♦ away from his ♦K is not appealing.

You ruff in hand and play the ♠10, overtaking with the ♠Q. If South ruffs this ♠ or any of the subsequent ♠ you are going to run off, he is endplayed - a ♦ gives away a trick, while a ♣ lets you ruff in hand and pitch a ♦ from dummy.

Now you cash the ♦A and cross to the ♥A and start running ♠. South ruffs in with his last trump when he wants, but dummy is now good with a trump entry.

If South refuses to ruff, South gets squeezed into this end position →  
From here 2 ♦ tricks stick South in hand to lead away from the ♥Q for an overtrick.



← So South's best play is to take the 1<sup>st</sup> ♠ and return a ♠, which you win in hand. Now play the ♠10 and overtake with the ♠Q. South will ruff this (his 2<sup>nd</sup> trump) and return a high ♣. It does him no good to pitch – now you can run ♠ and overruff if he ruffs low. If he doesn't ruff at all, he will get squeezed and end up having to lead away from either his ♥Q or his ♦K. So you ruff the ♣ in hand and play a ♥ to the ♥A. This leaves you with the ♥8, dummy the ♥J, and South the ♥Q. South has taken two tricks at this point – the ♠A and a ♠ ruff. Now run ♠s. South can ruff if s/he wants, but you will win a ♣ return in dummy and pitch ♦ on the spades, so the last two tricks will be taken by your ♦A and ♥8. If South refuses to ruff, s/he gets himself stuck in a squeeze/endplay – South either has to bare the ♦K, in which case you just play ♦A and another ♦ and South gets the

trump whenever – or South holds onto the good trump and ♦Kx, in which case you throw South in with a trump to make South lead away from the ♦K.

Don't know how partner didn't find this at the table!! ☺”

## Bidding

Auctions that start 1♥-P-1♠ are considered among the most difficult to manage even among long standing partnerships. Raising partner with 3♣ cards and a minimum immediately often eliminates later difficulties. Here West has a legitimate 2<sup>nd</sup> suit (♦) and good 3-card support for opener's ♠. If any bid is suspect we would point to opener's 3<sup>rd</sup> bid. Here we think 3♣ is more descriptive and still forcing, and will point the partnership not only to the right strain but also to the right level.

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♠	Pass Out

## Learning Pointers

1. Take time to construct the threat opponent's hand. Often you can create a clear picture before playing to trick one just from listening to the auction.
2. Play the hand through before playing to trick one. This will help you determine how to find missing information safely, and how to manage entries so that you can be in the right hand at the right time.
3. Even if the play plan seems to go against "common sense bridge" (say, ruffing many times in the long hand – dummy reversal) if your plan works against the likely threat hand, just do it!
4. Sometimes bidding hands you lemons. Learn to make lemonade.
5. Some problems are too tough to solve correctly the first time they come up at the table in real-time play. Don't give up on them. Share them with friends and other experts. You might learn something. If nothing else you will have sharpened your ability to manage difficult situations the next time they come up – and they will!

Keywords: Construct threat-opponent's hand, plan play, end play, squeeze, dummy reversal, entries