```
                        Bruce
                     ♠ QJ976
North Deals          ♥ J8
None Vul             ♦ KQJ76
MPs                  ♣ A
      ♠ 843                        ♠ K10
      ♥ AQ65          N            ♥ 10974
      ♦ 832        W 33 E          ♦ A105
      ♣ 742           S            ♣ K1065
      Ron                          Steve
                     ♠ A52      NS:3N,4♦,4♠
                     ♥ K32
                     ♦ 94
                     ♣ QJ983
                        Karen
```

North	East	South	West
1♠	Pass	1N[1]	Pass
2D	Pass	3♠[2]	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

1=Forcing 1 Round
2=3-Card Limit Raise, 9-11 HCP

East leads the ♥9

Tuesday Club Game, June 15, 2010 Mr. Michael Lipp Director. Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070 . Bruce Parent partners Karen Kendall. Bruce and Karen play 2/1 Game Force. My partner is Ron Babcock. We play Precision.

Here's a very instructive hand on the last board of the evening. Bruce and Karen play 4♠ by North after a 3-card limit raise. Dummy was a bit of a disappointment as 6 of its points (♣s and ♥s) turned out to be worthless. Working points develop extra tricks in long suits. Worthless points offer no help setting up length tricks and often score no tricks on their own.

The Bidding
In 2/1 Game Force, 5-11 HCP hands respond to opener's major with 1N (announced as Forcing). This allows a response including weak, constructive, and invitational hands. Many pairs put their 3-card limit raise under an initial 1N response. This helps differentiate from an invitation with longer trumps, useful in close decisions. Stronger game forcing/slammish hands are bid through a conventional call (Jacoby 2NT/Bergen raise, or Splinter Raises) or a natural 2/1 game force. This approach helps identify when game should be bid or avoided at a low level. The cost is that 1NT is not available to play when partner opens 1 of a major. Some experts use 1N Semi Forcing – opener can pass any balanced minimum or a hand that would otherwise decline a 3-card invitational raise.

The Play
The opening lead allowed the defense to collect the 1st three tricks – ♥Q, ♦A, ♥A. West then continued the ♣7, not wanting to lead a trump. In with the ♣A, declarer must tackle the trump suit for no losers.

The ♠Q was covered with the ♠K and the ♠A West contributed the ♠3 the ♠2 was led from dummy and West contributed the ♠4 bringing declarer to decision time→

Advanced players are taught to cover the second of two touching honors when holding honor-doubleton (so declarer cannot finesse the 10 on the way back). Declarer must guess whether to play for a doubleton ♠K (lead small ♠) or a doubleton ♠10 (lead ♠J).

Declarer need not worry about East having the ♠K10x because then there is no winning line. For the same reason declarer need not worry about West having 4 trumps because the finesse cannot be repeated enough times. Declarer cannot count the defenders holdings in the side suits to decide what the trump break is. This discovery play is too risky with so many trumps at large.

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Declarer's          ♠ J976         ←to play
Decision            ♥
                    ♦ KQ76
Trick 6             ♣
      ♠ 8                          ♠ 10
      ♥ 65           N             ♥ 107
      ♦ 32        W 33 E           ♦ 105
      ♣ 42           S             ♣ K106
                    ♠ 5         ↑to play↑
                    ♥ K
                    ♦ 9
                    ♣ QJ98
```

Another way to capture a long trump in West's hand would be by a trump coup. West would need to have 4 ♠s and 4 ♦s to end in dummy for the coup en passant and declarer would have had to finesse the ♠7 the first time.

A form of restricted choice applies here. East cannot duck from ♠K10 doubleton because that gives up a potential trump winner. Since the ♠Q was covered by a reasonable player and because East had no choice if he had ♠K10 doubleton, the right play is to play the ♠J and drop the ♠10. If East has the singleton ♠K, then West always scores the ♠10. The only other relevant case allowing the hand to make consistent with East's play is if East held ♠K10 originally. Since West has played ♠3 and ♠4 and would play them holding the ♠8, play the ♠J and expect to lose no trumps.

West had 2 or 3 trump x's to play in any order. Trumps splitting 2=3 *a priori* means there are 3 cases to 1 for Kx instead of K10 with East. West can play small spots randomly with no material effect on trump tricks because the small cards are statistically equivalent. The inference from East's play is strong…or is it?

The game within the game: top experts might play the ♠K from ANY doubleton at the first finesse from the East hand. This gets into mind games that experts play against other experts. *"Would s/he really do that???"* Declarer did not believe East was playing mind games. Experts might deliberately make a lesser play on the hope the expert declarer would not believe the expert defender would make such a poor play – the expert game within the game.

There is another consideration at match points – cutting your losses.

Playing the ♠J the hand can never go down 2 tricks if East has ♠K10x and ♦s are not 3-3. If the ♠J fetches a small trump from East you just play ♦Q and ruff the little ♦. EW can only score their ♠10 which is already good.

If the ♠J fetches the ♠10 (hurrah, hurrah) you still play ♦Q and ruff the little ♦. If ♦s are 3-3 this cannot fail. If ♦s are 4-2 the long ♦s might be with the long trump and now 4 ♠s will make (West cannot successfully ruff a ♣ even if he is out of them).

Learning Points
1. A non-standard play from by a knowing opponent might suggest an unusual holding in the suit of interest.
2. Know what plays are best and why in standard situations. Then you can use you knowledge playing against strong players to find extra chances when declaring. What you know becomes inferences at the table.
3. When all else fails, consider the play that limits your losses. You might just finish well if enough declarers play with unbridled optimism.

Keywords: When to Cover an Honor, Inferences from defenders play, restricted choice.