

Daily Bridge Club

Exact change

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“My partner is starting to act strangely,” a club player told me. “He has a bumper sticker on his car: ‘Madness takes its toll; please have exact change ready.’ Moreover, he’s doing some odd things on defense.”

My friend’s partner was today’s West and led his singleton diamond against four hearts. Declarer took dummy’s ace and led the king of clubs, intending to ruff a club in dummy.

“I took the ace,” East told me, “and led my high queen of diamonds – and my partner ruffed it!”

West then led a spade. South had to finesse with dummy’s queen, and East took the king and cashed his king of diamonds.

GOOD TRICK

“We beat the contract even though partner ruffed my good trick,” East said, “but his aberrant behavior worries me.”

There was method in West’s madness. In fact, if West doesn’t ruff the queen of diamonds, South will make his contract. He has enough entries to dummy to set up and cash dummy’s fifth diamond for a spade discard, and East never gets his king of spades.

DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ A Q 10 ♥ K Q 4
♦ A 8 7 5 4 ♣ K 6. Your partner opens one club, you respond one

diamond and he bids 1NT. What do you say?

ANSWER: Your hand is worth about 19 points, adding a point for the fifth card in diamonds that may be a winner. It’s encouraging that most of your high cards comprise aces and kings. If your partner tends toward sound opening bids, raise to 6NT; if he often opens light, bid 4NT, a “quantitative” slam invitation.

North dealer

N-S vulnerable

NORTH

♠ A Q 10

♥ K Q 4

♦ A 8 7 5 4

♣ K 6

WEST

♠ J 9 8 5

♥ 8 7 2

♦ 2

♣ J 10 8 5 4

EAST

♠ K 7 4 3

♥ 9 3

♦ K Q 10 9

♣ A 3 2

SOUTH

♠ 6 2

♥ A J 10 6 5

♦ J 6 3

♣ Q 9 7

North

1♦

2NT

3♥

East

Pass

Pass

Pass

South

1♥

3♦

4♥

West

Pass

Pass

All Pass

Opening lead – ♦ 2