

Daily Bridge Club

Technique or guile?

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“You’re a good person to ask this question,” I said to Wendy, my club’s ardent feminist. “You’re declarer. If you must choose between trying to make your contract with good technique or with psychology and deception, which way do you go?”

Wendy gave the answer I fully expected.

“It depends on whether my opponent is a man or a woman,” she said. “If a woman, I rely on technique. But a man will probably fall for a swindle. Men are like bottles of beer: empty from the neck up.”

When I watched today’s deal in a penny game, Wendy was declarer at four spades. West took his K-A of clubs and shifted to a heart. Wendy thought it over, then won with the ace in her hand and led the king of diamonds. West took the ace and led another heart to dummy’s king.

Wendy then ruffed a diamond, led a trump to dummy’s ten and ruffed a diamond. She got back to dummy with the queen of trumps and ruffed a diamond high. She drew West’s last trump, led a heart to dummy’s queen and discarded her last heart on the good fifth diamond. Making four,

“Cy the Cynic – or any man – would have led the jack of diamonds from dummy for a fake finesse at the fourth trick,” Wendy told me. “Fat chance that would have of working.”

Wendy could have drawn only two

rounds of trumps, then tried to ruff her fourth heart in dummy. That play would have failed.

Regardless of what Wendy says, psychology and technique both have their place. Part of the appeal of bridge is that it engages many aspects of a player’s personality.

South dealer

E-W vulnerable

NORTH

♠ Q 10 2

♥ K Q 5

♦ J 7 6 4 3

♣ Q J

WEST

♠ 9 6 4

♥ 6 3

♦ A 5 2

♣ A K 6 4 3

EAST

♠ 7

♥ J 10 9 8

♦ Q 10 9 8

♣ 9 8 5 2

SOUTH

♠ A K J 8 5 3

♥ A 7 4 2

♦ K

♣ 10 7

South

1 ♠

2 ♠

4 ♠

West

Pass

Pass

All Pass

North

2 ♦

3 ♠

East

Pass

Pass

Opening lead – ♣ K