

Daily Bridge Club

Uncertainty principle

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Life is full of uncertainties; after all, the middle of the word is “if.”

As declarer, you may start out with some idea of what the defenders hold, based on the bidding and opening lead, but you can’t know their hands with any certainty. Sometimes you must make assumptions about the lie of the missing cards: You may assume that they lie well so that you can succeed; you may assume an unfriendly lie that you must guard against.

In today’s deal, South opened one spade in third seat, and North jumped to game. West led a trump, and East won and returned a trump. Since trumps had been drawn for him, South next took the ace of diamonds, ruffed a diamond in dummy and led a club to his king.

West won and shifted to a heart, and South was sunk. He finessed with dummy’s queen, and East took the king and got the queen of clubs later.

South succeeds with astute card-placing. His game is at risk only if East has the king of hearts, so South should assume he has it. But East had the ace of trumps, and if he also had the king of hearts, ace of clubs and probably a diamond honor (since West didn’t lead one at the first trick), East would have opened the bidding.

At Trick Three, South must lead the four of clubs from his hand: eight,

jack, queen. He wins the diamond return and leads the king of clubs. When West takes the ace and shifts to a heart, South can take dummy’s ace and ruff a club to set up the clubs for heart discards.

If East’s clubs were A-x-x, South would still be safe since West would hold the king of hearts.

North dealer

E-W vulnerable

NORTH

♠ J 9 6 4

♥ A Q

♦ 7

♣ J 7 6 5 3 2

WEST

♠ 3 2

♥ J 9 5 2

♦ K 10 6 4

♣ A 9 8

EAST

♠ A 5

♥ K 8 7 4

♦ Q 9 8 3 2

♣ Q 10

SOUTH

♠ K Q 10 8 7

♥ 10 6 3

♦ A J 5

♣ K 4

North

Pass

4 ♠

East

Pass

All Pass

South

1 ♠

West

Pass

Opening lead – ♠ 2