

Daily Bridge Club

Taking it slow

By FRANK STEWART

Tribune Content Agency

I'm old enough to remember those wonderful roadside Burma Shave signs:

"Passing School Zone,
take it slow.

Let our little

shavers grow." – Burma Shave

Taking it slow benefits your dummy play. Plan before you touch a card. At today's four spades, the play to the first trick took less time than it takes to tell: West led his singleton seven of diamonds, dummy played the jack and East covered with the queen.

South won with the ace, drew trumps and led a second diamond. When West showed out, declarer took dummy's ten, let the eight ride and led a diamond to his king. He lost a club to East's ace and two hearts to West but made his game.

ENTRIES

Both South and East took it too fast. East can diagnose the opening lead and follow with his deuce of diamonds. Then declarer lacks the two entries to dummy he needs to pick up the diamonds, and he loses a diamond and goes down.

South always succeeds by playing dummy's eight of diamonds at Trick One.

DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ 9 6 5 2 ♥ A J 7 3

♦ 4 ♣ J 9 7 6. Your partner opens one diamond, you respond one heart and he next bids one spade. The opponents pass. What do you say?

ANSWER: You responded with a near-minimum hand, and partner's (opener's) non-jump change of suit is not forcing. I would pass with a hand such as 9 6 5 2, A J 7 3, 7 6 5, J 6, but the actual hand has a ruffing feature and may produce some winners. Bid two spades. Game is barely possible.

South dealer

N-S vulnerable

NORTH

♠ 7 3

♥ 10 8 4

♦ J 10 8 4

♣ K Q 5 2

WEST

♠ 9 6 5 2

♥ A J 7 3

♦ 7

♣ J 9 7 6

EAST

♠ 8 4

♥ Q 6 5 2

♦ Q 9 3 2

♣ A 10 3

SOUTH

♠ A K Q J 10

♥ K 9

♦ A K 6 5

♣ 8 4

South

1 ♠

4 ♠

West

Pass

All Pass

North

1 NT

East

Pass

Opening lead – ♦ 7