

August Problem

IMPS

	♠A Q 5 4		
	♥A Q 7 5 2		
	♦7 5		
	♣K 6		
♠K 7 3 2		♠J 10 9 6	
♥J 10 8 6 4		♥9	
♦—		♦J 10 9 4 3	
♣Q J 7 4		♣8 5 3	
	♠8		
	♥K 3		
	♦A K Q 8 6 2		
E-W Vul	♣A 10 9 2		

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♦
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♣
Pass	4 ♦	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	5 ♣	Pass	6 ♦
All Pass			
<i>Trick</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>
1. W	♣Q	?	<i>4th</i>

This hand appears in the July, 2007 issue of *Table Talk*, the publication of the Central Carolina Bridge Association. The author, Don Gardner, gives no auction, so the one above is my own suggestion. The 6 ♦ contract is excellent, but the 5-0 break in the diagram was too much for Mr. Gardner when he played the hand. He thinks he should have made the hand by taking a first round diamond finesse as a safety play against the existing break. If East puts in one of his equals, Mr. Gardner suggests an immediate spade finesse, on the grounds that the odds on the finesse are better than the odds on a 3-3 heart break.

I commend Mr. Gardner and the CCBA for including interesting hands in their publication. The Teaser problem is: What is the best play to make the 6 ♦ contract, after the club queen lead, against redistributed, unknown East-West cards?

As is our custom, a Raleigh Bridge Club free play will go to the correct answer from the RBC member with the fewest masterpoints. "Correct" is a relative term; just saying "I lead X," even if X is the winning play, will probably not qualify unless nobody else finds the play. You need to furnish some justification for your play. (On the other hand, a briefly or poorly stated but correct justification will fully qualify, if I can figure it out. This is not an essay contest.) I am the sole judge of what constitutes "correct." Send answers to JohnCTorrey@aol.com. "Entries" from non-RBC members are welcome, and may be used in my problem summary next month.

July Problem

IMPs

	♠Q J 7 5 4 ♥A J ♦8 5 2 ♣7 6 3		
♠A 10 8 6 2 ♥K 8 3 ♦10 4 ♣9 8 4	♠? ♥Q 10 7 4 ♦? ♣A K Q J 2	♠? ♥9 6 5 2 ♦? ♣10 5	
N-S Vul			
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 ♣
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 NT	All Pass	2 NT
<i>Trick</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i> <i>4th</i>
1. W	♦10	2	9 Q
2. S	♥4	3	J 6
3. N	♥A	2	7 8
4. N	♣3	10	Q 4
5. S	♥Q	K	♦5 5

This problem is held over, as no correct answers were received. By way of hint, I here reveal the hidden holdings in hearts and clubs. (The club suit should not have been that hard to work out. South should have five for his reverse and surely would have worked on the suit more if it were not solid.)

Rules are as above. The free-play is still in play.

June Problem

	♠9		
	♥A 10 8 3		
	♦10 8		
	♣Q J 9 6 5 3		
♠6		♠10 8 3 2	
♥Q 9 6		♥K 5 4	
♦A K 9 6 2		♦Q J 7 5 4	
♣K 10 8 2		♣7	
	♠A K Q J 7 5 4		
	♥J 7 2		
	♦3		
	♣A 4		

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
2 ♦	Dbl	5 ♦	5 ♠
All Pass			
<i>Trick</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i> <i>4th</i>
1. W	♦A	8	J 3

This problem was held over because formatting problems obscured the suit symbols in the original version.

Even a suit-preference curmudgeon like me can recognize that East's jack of diamonds is a suit-preference card, indicating a high card in the higher side suit, hearts. (Surely East did not bid 5 ♦ on four to the jack!) The problem is that if we lead a small heart to partner's king and partner shifts to a club to set up our setting trick, South will win the ace, draw trumps, finesse our queen of hearts, and discard his club loser on the fourth heart. To prevent this we must lead the **queen** of hearts. If declarer wins, draws trump and then leads the jack of hearts, partner will have to let it win.

Ashok Damle wins the free play with a remarkable entry that nailed every aspect of this difficult hand – down to the likelihood that partner will duck if declarer immediately plays a low heart from dummy after winning the ace. This is only the latest in a series of entries that Ashok has submitted over the past year, which establish him as a highly accomplished and talented analyst, notwithstanding his modest masterpoint holding. To make it possible for others to win the Teaser prize, Mr. Damle will from now on be considered to have 5000 masterpoints. (This is not entirely unfair to him: several of the past Teasers have had exactly one correct response.)