

November Problem

♠ J 10 4
♥ 10 6
♦ K J 8 7
♣ 6 5 3 2

♠ A 3 2
♥ A 7 5 3
♦ Q 3
♣ K Q 9 8

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
All Pass			1 NT

West leads the two of hearts to your 1NT contract; you play low from dummy and East plays the Jack. Plan the play.

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." Entries from non-RBC members are welcome and may receive mention next month, but of course will not gain the free-play prize. Send answers to JohnCTorrey@aol.com.

October Problem

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	1 NT
Pass	3 NT	Pass	2 NT
Pass	5 ♥	Pass	4 ♠
All Pass			6 ♠

<i>Trick</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
1. W	♦K	6	9	A
2. S	♥K	7	4	8
3. S	♥J	Q	A	2
4. N	♥5	3	♠Q	7
5. N	♠5	3	9	2
6. W	♠A	4	5	7
7. S	♠K	6	♣2	♥10

When I saw this hand played in a top knockout match, I thought it the best-defended hand I had seen. Jeff Meckstroth played as described, and then threw West (Glen Lublin) in with a diamond. Lublin had thrown red winners to save all his clubs and led the ten; Meckstroth covered and had to go down. (I think many top players would duplicate Meckstroth's play as declarer. Mere mortals hope for a doubleton club queen and end up winners on the above layout.)

Unfortunately the fine table play did not translate well to the teaser format. (The defense to very sequential, and the problem format is a moment of time.) My apologies to the RBC solvers. Ashok Damle is the winner.

September Problem (revisited)

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

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

Collins Williams notes that at the point where I wanted that dramatic king of hearts lead, a spade return works equally well to defeat the contract – and better if partner’s low spade spot is the five instead of the seven. I’m busted!

In my defense, I had worked out that a minor-suit return would lead to a position where dummy had the queen of hearts and two minor cards, and declarer had A 9 of trump and the last spade. Declarer leads the spade and West, with K 10 7 of trump, makes only the king. But if declarer does not get to score that extra minor-suit ruff, the ending collapses.

Collins gets a free play for his insight.