

Better Bridge

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Dealer — South. Both sides vulnerable.

Seeking solace the aggrieved declarer cries out, "There's no way I could have made that contract."

A less-than-compassionate partner, having witnessed the dismemberment, agrees. "You are right. There is no way YOU could have made it."

Familiar? Declarer's complaint — certainly. Most partners are more circumspect however, and resigned to not overturning the cart, if not hopeful of righting it, leave their sentiment unspoken.

Select the seat you occupy accordingly. If you are the better player or given to critical outbursts, sit South. Put partner where he can do less damage — make him dummy.

If you are unlucky by all means sit North. Declarers always complain of their poor luck.

Look at yet another declarer gone astray.

North			
S	K 10 6 2		
H	Q		
D	Q J 6 5 3		
C	Q 10 4		
		West	East
S	8 5 4	S	A J 9
H	10 8 6 4 2	H	K 7 5 3
D	9	D	A 10 8 4
C	9 7 6 2	C	8 5
South			
S	Q 7 3		
H	A J 9		
D	K 7 2		
C	A K J 3		

	South	West	North	East
	1 NT	Pass	2 C	Pass
	2 D	Pass	3 NT	All Pass

For want of better West began with a low heart striking South's weakest suit holding. East's king forced the ace. Assured of six tricks in hearts and clubs and seeing no danger, declarer went after diamonds, leading low to the jack. East won and returned a low heart. South tried the nine but this lost and another heart removed his last stopper.

The king of diamonds brought further bad news. When West showed out South had to pin his remaining hopes on East holding the ace of spades and no more hearts. Since this was not the layout, and East grabbed the first spade lead, the contract was down one.

East can hurt declarer by an early heart play but West cannot. Therefore, East must be kept off lead. At trick two declarer must enter dummy with the ten of clubs and lead a low diamond. East is forced to duck (or give up four diamond tricks) and the king wins. Dummy is regained with the club queen and now a low spade is led. Once again East must play low. On winning the queen South shifts back to diamonds and comes to nine tricks despite the 4-1 division.

Should West turn up with either missing ace he can do no immediate damage and South gains the tempo he requires to make his game.