



Camouflage

If you make it plainly obvious how you are going to play a contract, then the chances are that the opposition will know what they have to do to defend successfully. There are times where a little subtlety is required. Take the following:

<p>Board 5</p> <p>North Deals</p> <p>N-S Vul</p>	<p>♠ A 9 6 4</p> <p>♥ K 7</p> <p>♦ 10 8 5</p> <p>♣ Q J 9 7</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> </table>		N		W	S	E	<p>♠ Q 2</p> <p>♥ Q 10 8 5 4 2</p> <p>♦ A Q 9 2</p> <p>♣ K</p>
	N								
W	S	E							
<p>♠ J 10 8 5</p> <p>♥ A 9 6 3</p> <p>♦ 7 6</p> <p>♣ A 4 2</p>	<p>♠ K 7 3</p> <p>♥ J</p> <p>♦ K J 4 3</p> <p>♣ 10 8 6 5 3</p>								
<p>West</p> <p>1 ♠</p> <p>4 ♥</p>	<p>North</p> <p>Pass</p> <p>Pass</p> <p>All pass</p>	<p>East</p> <p>1 ♥</p> <p>2 ♥</p>	<p>South</p> <p>Pass</p> <p>Pass</p>						

Every East managed to make at least 10 tricks in hearts, with most being in game. A spade or club lead will give declarer time either to discard a spade loser on the ♣A or three diamonds on the ♠J10 and the ♣A. A diamond lead from South gives declarer an overtrick.

However, three declarers received the lead of the ♥J from South. A quick glance, as Jonathan Westoby did, confirmed there would be no quick discard on that ♣A as a trump had to be lost before Jonathan could reach dummy.

Up with the trump ace (in case North's king was singleton). Then unblock the CK and play a second heart. North can switch to a diamond with declarer playing the ace. East has to waste a trump to dispose of a spade from hand. Yet, with South clinging on to their SK, there can never be more than one diamond discard and one diamond ruff at best: two diamond losers, a spade and a heart..down one.

Jonathan took a totally different approach and never unblocked that CK. After winning the ♥A, he played on spades, to his queen and South's king. With nothing much to go on, South switched to the ♣8 to the ♣J and his king.

Now, Jonathan exited a heart to North with South asking for and getting a diamond switch. As indicated above, he could not afford to go in with the ace and discard a spade. So, he played the ♦Q, losing to the king....and awaited the return. A spade would see the contract down 1 but with South unaware of the club shortage, South exited a club.

The camouflage was thus thrown off, ♠Q discarded with the ♠J being covered and ruffed....and Jonathan had his 10 tricks. No gain but a 10 imp loss avoided. Defence is hard at the best of times but when the declarer does not show off his key weapon, it gets even harder.

Richard Solomon

Last week, I commented on how well the two young pairs of (ex)/Macleans College students were doing at Akarana. On the eve of their departure to China with the New Zealand Youth Team, we can report that Zachary Yan and Vincent He won the July event at Akarana, with Yiwei Qi and Eddy Tan in third place.