

Tales of Akarana

A Timely Duck

23 high-card points between the two hands, a holey longish 5 card “coming home suit” and a fair knowledge that a key finesse is going to fail (it does). It all sounds like 3NT is going to run into some degree of difficulty.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 NT	2 ♣	Dbl
2 ♥	Pass	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A 7 5
♥ A Q 7
♦ A J 7
♣ J 9 7 6

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q 2
♥ 10 4 3
♦ Q 5 3
♣ K 10 8 5 2

East showed the majors after North’s 15-17 1NT opening. South tried to show a non-forcing hand with clubs though North, Clair Miao, either expected a stronger hand opposite or at least longer clubs. She got neither and thus had to make do with the meagre assets at her disposal.

While the other three declarers in this contract all received major suit leads from East (and what would eventually be therefore their ninth tricks... East held both major kings), Clair received the unhelpful ♦ 10. She and West ducked this round to her jack.

Clair needed some help either from the defence or the card dealer...and she received a decent slice from the latter when she led ♣J from her hand. East contributed the queen and after a couple of low clubs, West played the ♣A on the third round. East discarded a discouraging spade and a smallish heart.

These were the four hands:

<u>Board 12</u>		♠ A 7 5	
West Deals		♥ A Q 7	
N-S Vul		♦ A J 7	
		♣ J 9 7 6	
♠ 8 6 4	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K J 10 9 3	
♥ 9 6 2		♥ K J 8 5	
♦ K 6 4 2		♦ 10 9 8	
♣ A 4 3		♣ Q	
		♠ Q 2	
		♥ 10 4 3	
		♦ Q 5 3	
		♣ K 10 8 5 2	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 NT	2 ♣	Dbl
2 ♥	Pass	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

West exited with ♥9 to East's jack with East returning to the danger suit, diamonds. Clair still only had 8 tricks (2 major aces, 2 diamonds and 4 clubs) and found the key play of letting East hold the ♦9. It looked like East's shape was 5431 though there was nothing she could do if East was 4441 (however, West's choice of 2♥ backed up the view that West did not hold 4 spades).

East continued diamonds won by the ♦A and out came a low spade from Clair's hand towards ♠Q. East could take it for the defence's 4th trick though Clair could use the club suit and ♥A to cross between the two hands to score two spade tricks and her contract.

A good duck and good card-reading by declarer to take advantage of the lucky fall of the ♣Q.

Richard Solomon