

Board 18
South Deals
E-W Vul

Deception -- Problem

♠ Q 5
♥ Q 9 5
♦ J 10 9 6 5
♣ Q 9 8



♠ A J 7 6 2
♥ 8 6 4
♦ K 8 4 3
♣ 10

West	North	East	South
	Stew		Pete
			2 ♠

All pass
2 ♠ by South
Lead: ♦ A

Join me for a 14 table matchpoint pairs game at the new Bay State Bridge game in Wellesley MA. Our opponents this round are not strong players.

When not vulnerable, Stew and I are prepared for partner to open a weak two-bid on a five card suit: 2 NT would ask, and the step responses are: 3 ♣ = any hand with 5, 3 ♦ = bad, 3 ♥ = medium, 3 ♠ = good. Over 3 ♣ (5), partner may then ask with 3 ♦, and the steps are again bad, medium, good. Stew was pleased to pass this time.

This horrible spade suit may not appeal to you, but I decided to get in there at favorable vulnerability. A top requirement for making a weak two bid on a five-bagger is to have a four card side suit. Also, our range is 3 to 9 HCP, not vulnerable, so I held kind of a max.

The preempt has worked! We have only 15 HCP between us, so the opponents may have missed a game.

West leads the ♦ A, and East follows with the ♦ 2. Who has the ♦ Q?

Plan the play.

Surely, East has the ♦ Q. Why would West lead the ace from ♦-A-Q-7 here?

Assume these folks play standard carding - don't stir the pot with questions about the lead or carding, when this hand is about deception. I hope you smoothly played the ♥ 8 at trick one. If West has the ♦ 7, you really want to see it on the table at trick two. Signal like a defender when declaring. When you want the suit led again, signal high (standard carding). Also, you want to look like ♦-K-8, not ♦-K-8-4-3.

West obliges. What do you play from dummy on the ♦ 7? After capturing the queen with your ♦ K, how do you continue? What is your primary plan?

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Deception -- Solution

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

All pass
 2 ♠ by South
 Lead: ♦ A

Thanks to the friendly start, we now have a chance at eight tricks: four diamonds and four spades. However, the opponents can take at least six tricks, if they get it right: one diamond, one club, three hearts and at least one trump. The key is to muddy the waters. Call for the ♦ J from dummy, on the second trick. Maybe one or both opponents will play partner for holding the rest of the diamonds.

Now lead a spade toward dummy. East captures the queen with the ♠ K. (This is actually good news -- watch what happens!) Our main hope is that we can regain the lead by ruffing a club, draw trump, and enjoy the diamonds.

From the perspective of East, a lead of either a heart or a club could cost a trick, if declarer holds the king of that suit. (Placing the ♠ A with declarer, along with the ♦ K, it's unlikely declarer has either of those cards, but intermediate players often don't bother to count. Also, partner led an ace; assume a heart or a club lead would have been less attractive.) With no entry to dummy outside diamonds, East exits with a "safe" spade.

Trumps split. What now?

Run the diamonds and pitch the ♣ 10. Here are our hands:

♠ - ♥ Q 9 5 ♦ - ♣ 9 9 8
 ♠ 7 6 ♥ 8 6 4 ♦ - ♣ -

Don't ruff a club, which would shorten us to a single trump and probably prevent us from enjoying the ♥ Q if it became good. Smoothly call for the ♥ 5 from dummy. East, still not counting, flies with the ♥ A and leads another to West's king. Making three, + 140.

This would have been a top score, but two pairs played 5 ♣ their way, going down at least two (200). 3 NT made twice and failed once their way; 4 ♥ made once and failed once. This time, our overtrick did not affect the score, but going down in 2 ♠ would have reduced our score to only average. Especially in a mixed field, it's important to get inside the heads of the opponents and mess around a bit. Give them a chance to go wrong.