


## Hand of the Week 10/15/19

By John Stiefel

### Unblocking on Defense

I didn't play Tuesday, but Board 3 was reported to me by my friend Doug Doub, who sat North.

Dlr: W	♠ Q1084		
Vul: EW	♥ Q54		
	♦ J94		
	♣ 542		
♠ AJ96	N	♠ 52	
♥ K6	W	♥ A872	
♦ 653		♦ AQ72	
♣ KQ107	S	♣ A98	
	♠ K73		
	♥ J1093		
	♦ K108		
	♣ J63		
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠s	Pass	3NTs	All Pass
Lead: ♥J			

Winning at match-points has a lot to do with capitalizing on your opponents' mistakes. Take this hand, for example.

At Doug's table, the normal J of hearts opening lead was won by dummy's king. North encouraged with the 5. Declarer next cashed 4 club tricks. Both defenders discarded spades to trick 5 and declarer discarded a heart.

Declarer now led the A of spades to trick 6. Declarer hoped to eventually put South on lead to lead a diamond into her AQ. **But South, David Waltz, dropped the K of spades under the Ace!**

Declarer, in dummy for the last time, tried the diamond finesse at trick 7. David won and continued hearts to Doug's queen, which declarer allowed to win. A third round of hearts was now played, declarer winning.

Declarer now played the ace of diamonds at trick 10, hoping to put Doug, on lead at trick 11, to set up dummy's jack of spades in the end.

No luck here, either – **Doug dropped the jack of diamonds to this trick (trick 10)!** Then, when declarer played a diamond at trick 11, David could win the 10, cash his 10 of hearts and lead a spade to his Doug's Queen at trick 13, for down 1.

Declarer should have taken a more straight-forward line of play rather than playing for a mis-defense; i.e. take the diamond finesse at trick 2. Then, when it loses and South continues with the 3 of hearts (showing an original holding of 4), win and play Ace of diamonds followed by the 2 of diamonds. When diamonds split, declarer has 9 tricks – 4 clubs, 2 diamonds and Ace, King, Ace in the majors

A good guideline when playing hands is this – be able to clearly state what you are playing for; i.e. “I was playing to set up diamonds for 3 tricks if clubs don't run or 2 tricks if they do.”

What if South shifts to a spade at trick 3? Won't that set the hand? Yes, but that is very unlikely! North asked for heart continuation – and, from South's point of view, a spade shift would be a disaster if declarer held the 10 of spades . Indeed, 13 pairs out of 18 made at least 9 tricks in no-trump.