

Hand of the Week 09/24/19

By Victor King

Avoiding a Major Suit Fit

In third seat, I pick up:

♠ A K 9 6
♥ A K 10
♦ Q 9 2
♣ Q 7 2

If there is such a thing as an ugly 18 count, this might qualify. The flat distribution is a big minus. Well maybe I should downgrade this hand, but I don't.

After two passes, I open 1♣, and, of course, my partner responds 1♠. Well, I know the field will bid 3 or 4 spades with this hand, but I feel very comfortable bidding 2NT. If partner has some distributional values, he can use Checkback to find a different contract. But for my money, this is a NT hand. This is not the first time I have suppressed 4-card support and it will not be the last.

The most exciting part of this hand is when partner bids 3NT, and you get to see the results of your decision when this dummy comes down:

♠ 10 8 5 4
♥ Q 8 4
♦ A J 3
♣ A 8 4

Complete mirror distribution - really ugly! If you had bid 3 spades, partner might well have bid 3NT himself!

How would you play the hand? The opponents led diamonds. RHO won the diamond king, and switched to hearts. Before looking at the full hand, decide how you would play it. See the winning line and full hand on the next page.

The winning line was to win the heart queen, and play a low spade to the 9. Then you need to return to dummy and repeat the spade finesse. RHO also has the club king, so you can make 5. If you played it in this manner, you scored well! Nicely done!

West Deals	♠ Q J 3 2	
E-W Vul	♥ J 9 2	
	♦ K 6 4	
	♣ K J 10	
♠ 10 8 5 4	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A K 9 6
♥ Q 8 4		♥ A K 10
♦ A J 3		♦ Q 9 2
♣ A 8 4		♣ Q 7 2
	♠ 7	
	♥ 7 6 5 3	
	♦ 10 8 7 5	
	♣ 9 6 5 3	

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	2NT!	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Lead: ♦5