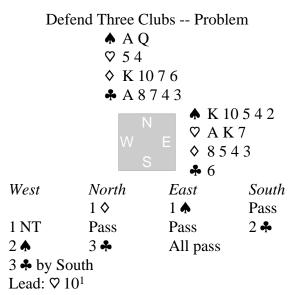
North Deals Both Vul

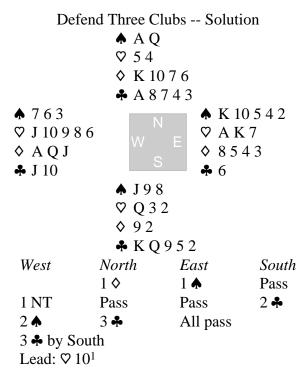


1. Rusinow, shows the Jack or shortness.

Join me as East for this deal from an online matchpoint pairs game. Declarer has the  $\nabla$  Q, and  $\wedge$  Q will be parked on it. Desperate times call for desperate measures: we win the  $\nabla$  K and shift to the  $\Diamond$  4 (third best from even) into the teeth of dummy's tenace.

Partner rises with the  $\diamond$  A and duly shifts to the  $\spadesuit$  3,  $\spadesuit$  Q,  $\spadesuit$  K,  $\spadesuit$  8. We are in. What next?

North Deals Both Vul



1. Rusinow, shows the Jack or shortness.

We must cash the  $\nabla$  A or our trick will disappear on the  $\triangle$  J. I fell from grace by returning a spade -- we got 22% for letting them make four, compared to 46% for holding them to three. Other pairs scored better by declaring a major suit our way, usually taking eight tricks, and never doubled.

During the early stages of play, partner and I prioritize count. At trick two, my  $\diamond$  4 was a careful lead, in case the count became necessary. Likewise partner's  $\spadesuit$  3 (lowest from odd, in our methods) was the correct count card.

Late in the hand, a low lead asks for the return of the suit, and a high lead asks for a shift. Late in the hand came early on this deal -- the count no longer mattered at trick three. Partner could have helped me out by leading the • 7 -- build a fence around partner, when you can. Still, I should have been able to figure this out -- did you?