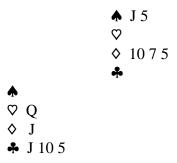


Join my partner, Al Muggia, for this rather amazing practice deal originally played in the quarter-finals of the Spingold NABC+ championship. Declarer was quite lucky to find that trump support on dummy, but luck can even out.

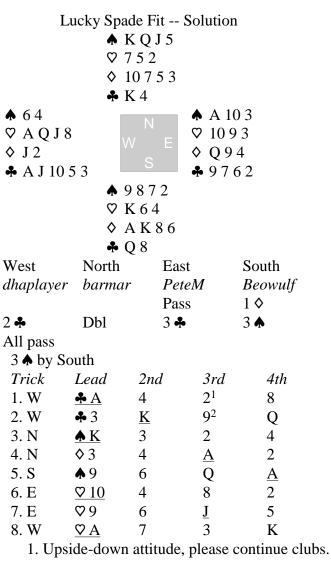
On the lead of the A, partner (yours truly) signals to continue the suit with the 2. Accordingly, you lead the 3 to dummy's king, partner playing the 9 (odd present count), and declarer playing the Q. Partner started with four clubs, and declarer is now out.

Declarer leads the  $\bigstar$  K, which wins; he then plays the  $\diamondsuit$  3 to the ace, and leads the  $\bigstar$  9 up to the  $\bigstar$  Q. Partner wins the  $\bigstar$  A and shifts the  $\heartsuit$  10, which holds. You overtake the  $\heartsuit$  9 with the  $\heartsuit$  J, and cash the ace, partner following and declarer dropping the  $\heartsuit$  K. Here is what you see:



The contract is already one down, but there may be more. What is your play?

## Board 14 East Deals None Vul



2. Upside-down present count (odd).

Down 3 — NS -150

A club lead clearly won't help, so it's between the heart and the diamond. If partner has the Q, then leading the ♦ J assures another trick. If partner has the ♠ 10, then the heart promotes a trump trick.

In fact, declarer told us that partner has the ♠ 10. Otherwise, why come to hand to belatedly lead up to dummy's spades? So we lead the  $\heartsuit$  Q. Declarer can do no better than discard a diamond from each hand as partner ruffs the trick.

Here's the amazing thing: despite the sluff-sluff, when partner returns the ♦ 9, declarer must still lose a diamond!