

# Bridge Today Digest - Online

The original bridge magazine by email

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Hot Off the Press!

There's a wonderful new book out, published by Bridge Plus and edited by Elena Jeronimidis. Highly recommended! It's called "The Joy of Bridge" and includes a collection of bridge quizzes from a variety of writers. Two examples follow. To order, contact your favorite bridge supply house or [bridgeplus@patrol.i-way.co.uk](mailto:bridgeplus@patrol.i-way.co.uk)

Magic at the One Level  
by Patrick Jourdain

At the 2000 Poland Seniors Congress held in Zakopane, the rare "Smother Coup" appeared in a humble one-spade contract, as if by magic, taking even declarer by surprise.

	North	
	♠ K 9 8	
	♥ 8 6 5 3	
	♦ 10 8 3 2	
	♣ A 3	
West		East
♠ Q 10 5 3		♠ A 4
♥ 10 2		♥ Q J 9 7
♦ A Q J 6		♦ 7 5
♣ K 6 2		♣ 9 8 7 5 4
	South	
	♠ J 7 6 2	
	♥ A K 4	
	♦ K 9 4	
	♣ Q J 10	

West leads the ♥10. With sight of all four hands, can you repeat South's conjuring trick?

	North	
	♠ K 9 8	
	♥ 8 6 5 3	
	♦ 10 8 3 2	
	♣ A 3	
West		East
♠ Q 10 5 3		♠ A 4
♥ 10 2		♥ Q J 9 7
♦ A Q J 6		♦ 7 5
♣ K 6 2		♣ 9 8 7 5 4
	South	
	♠ J 7 6 2	
	♥ A K 4	
	♦ K 9 4	
	♣ Q J 10	

Declarer won trick one with the ♥A, and then led ♣Q (which was not covered), a second club to the ace, and a heart back to the king, followed by a club ruff and a diamond round to West. West cashed a second high diamond and then gave East a ruff in the suit. Now East cashed his winning heart, West discarding his fourth diamond. The heart continuation was ruffed by South with the ♠6 and overruffed by West with the ♠10. This was the three-card ending with West on lead:

	North	
	♠ K 9	
	♥ —	
	♦ 10	
	♣ —	
West		East
♠ Q 5 3		♠ A
♥ —		♥ —
♦ —		♦ —
♣ —		♣ 8 5
	South	
	♠ J 7 2	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	

### What Could Go Wrong? by Matthew Granovetter

The following deal was entered in a Bridge World contest by Don Kersey, a mathematician at Queens University, Ontario. South is the declarer in 6S, a contract reached on the premise that South had three black cards (the 7, 6 and 5 of clubs) mixed in with his spade suit. He thought he had six spades instead of three, and never realized his error until dummy came down and he saw the ♠7.

South dealer  
All vul

North  
♠ 9 7  
♥ A K Q 3 2  
♦ A 6  
♣ A 4 3 2

West  
♠ 8 6 5 4 3 2  
♥ J 10 9  
♦ Q J  
♣ Q J

East  
♠ A Q  
♥ 8 7 6 5  
♦ 10 9 8 7  
♣ 10 9 8

South  
♠ K J 10  
♥ 4  
♦ K 5 4 3 2  
♣ K 7 6 5

Opening lead: ♣Q. Plan the play.

This particular 3-2 trump fit is baby stuff when it comes to the play, but it's nice when it comes up. You make your contract on a cross-ruff: Cash all your high cards outside the trump suit, then score five more tricks in the trump suit. South discards two clubs on two heart honors, and begins his cross-ruff with a ruff of a club or heart to his hand. That way he will be in dummy at trick twelve when East is down to ace-queen of trumps and South the bare king.

OK, it's true, West forgot to lead a trump, but probably he wasn't fully concentrating. With six trumps, he figured what could go wrong?

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From our email box:

Dear Pamela & Matt:

Thanks much for the great info from this semester's class, Matt. A quick bidding question for you, please:

A. In the bidding sequences 1 and 2 below, does partner's 5♦ bid mean the same thing?

	You		Partner
1) 3♠	4♥	4♠	5♦
2) 3♠	4♥	pass	5♦

B. What is the standard meaning of 5♦, in each case? Is 5♦ to play or is it a cuebid in support of hearts? Is there any bridge literature on this that you can recommend?

C. In Marshall Miles' book *Stronger Competitive Bidding* (p. 95), he provides sequence 2, and says that partner's 5♦ shows diamonds:

♠ K x x ♥ x ♦ A Q J 10 x x x ♣ 10 x

Thanks — Henry Jacobson

Dear Henry,

We play that partner's bid means the same thing in both cases. True, one could argue that since in the first case there's no room for a slam try (you can't cuebid and a 5♥ bid would not be a slam try), five-of-a-minor should be a slam try, whereas in example two, you can freely bid 5♥ or cuebid four spades if you want to make a slam try in hearts so 5♣ and 5♦ are now natural and probably deny heart support. However, I think the times you want to play in five of a minor even after the first auction are more frequent than the times you want to make a slam try in hearts. For one thing, after they preempt, your partner's bid is suspect since he was under pressure. For another thing, suits might not be breaking. I think the usual theory is to "stay fixed" after a high level preempt and hope for the best. Therefore, I think it's wiser to keep the 5 of a minor bid as natural. Who knows, you might even get to a slam afterwards.

Suppose you hold something like:

♠ — ♥ K x ♦ K Q J 10 x x x x ♣ x x x

Here your hand is worth very little in a heart contract (despite your good heart support and spade void) so you gamble on a diamond contract and hope partner has something like:

♠ A x x ♥ A J x x x x ♦ A x ♣ Q x

Four hearts could go down while your 5♦ is cold.

Suppose you have:

♠ K x ♥ — ♦ A K 10 9 x x x ♣ x x x x

Here you might even make six diamonds, which partner should bid if he has a little support and some aces, for example:

♠ A x ♥ A x x x x x ♦ Q x ♣ A K x; or

♠ A x x ♥ K J 10 x x x ♦ Q J ♣ A K

Here you probably make seven but you can't bid it.

In both of these cases it's possible to be cold for a slam in diamonds while you fail in 4♥!

Of course, we could make up hands where you misguess whether to bid six hearts because you have no cuebid available, so in the end it's all a matter of what is likely to come up more often (and I think the slams are less likely than the long minor suit). One more reason to play five of a minor as always natural is the memory factor (you might forget that five of a minor is sometimes a cuebid and sometimes natural). . .

Thanks for the good question and very best wishes,

Matthew and Pamela (See you next time!)