

Daily Bridge Club

Trustworthy opponents

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“You write about logical thinking,” a fan’s email reads, “and drawing inferences from the bidding or opening lead. You should come play in my regular game. My opponents are untrustworthy. Sometimes they make bids and plays that defy logic.”

I can understand my fan’s distress, but the “I can’t trust my opponents” argument has never impressed me. Suppose you base a play on the assumption that your opponent has defended logically, and you go down because he did something silly. You won’t lose any sleep: You can tell yourself that you made a thoughtful play that failed because your opponent was out to lunch. But if you assume your opponent has erred when he was defending correctly, you will have only yourself to blame.

In today’s deal, West leads the seven of spades against 1NT, and East takes the ace and returns the deuce: jack, queen. South awaits a third spade, but West shifts to the jack of hearts! What should declarer make of that? How should he resolve his two-way guess for the queen of diamonds?

West’s failure to continue spades must mean that he has no sure entry to his long suit, so East has the ace of clubs. But East also showed the ace of spades and is marked with the queen of hearts after West’s lead of the jack. Since few Easts would

pass with 12 points in third position, South can place West with the queen of diamonds. So South takes the ace and leads to dummy’s jack. He will win at least seven tricks.

If East turned up with the queen of diamonds ... well, South would have a good story to tell after the game.

West dealer

Neither side vulnerable

NORTH

♠ 6 5 3
♥ K 4 3 2
♦ K J 7 2
♣ K 4

WEST

♠ Q 10 8 7 4
♥ J 10 7
♦ Q 6
♣ Q 5 3

EAST

♠ A 2
♥ Q 9 8
♦ 9 8 5
♣ A 10 9 8 7

SOUTH

♠ K J 9
♥ A 6 5
♦ A 10 4 3
♣ J 6 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
All Pass			

Opening lead — ♠ 7