

Daily Bridge Club

The Cynic gives up

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In the club lounge, Cy the Cynic told me how he deals with tasks that are exceedingly difficult.

“It’s a four-step process,” Cy said: (1) struggle, (2) give up, (3) justify having given up, (4) repeat steps one, two and three until convinced.”

Cy’s dummy play is suspect even at contracts that aren’t difficult. Cy adopts the first line of play he sees, but the fastest play and the best play are seldom the same. The Cynic was declarer at today’s five diamonds. East, a passed hand, had doubled for takeout at his second turn, showing spades and clubs, and West had leaped to five clubs. West led the nine of spades: ten, jack, deuce. East shifted to a trump.

Cy took the ace, cashed his ace of clubs, ruffed his last club in dummy, returned a trump to his hand and led a second spade: seven, three, six. West then led a heart, and when Cy finessed with dummy’s queen, East took the king. Down one.

“I give up,” the Cynic growled.

For once, I had to sympathize with Cy: East could have held the king of clubs and West the king of hearts. Still, Cy could make his game if he placed the cards accurately. After Cy ruffs his club loser in dummy, he can run his trumps.

With three tricks to go, dummy has the king of spades and A-Q of hearts, and Cy has a low spade and two low

hearts. If East keeps the ace of spades and K-10 of hearts, Cy can exit with a spade to end-play him.

East would do best to discard three hearts, baring his king, and save the ace of spades and a club. It’s doubtful whether that would suffice to fool declarer.

East dealer

Both sides vulnerable

NORTH

♠ K 10 5 3
♥ A Q 3 2
♦ Q 8 7 6
♣ 5

WEST

♠ 9 8 7
♥ J 9 7
♦ 3
♣ K Q J 9 4 3

EAST

♠ A Q J 6
♥ K 10 8 4
♦ 2
♣ 10 8 6 2

SOUTH

♠ 4 2
♥ 6 5
♦ A K J 10 9 5 4
♣ A 7

East	South	West	North
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Dbl	3♦	5♣	5♦
All Pass			

Opening lead — ♠ 9