

Golden play by Derrick Browne

While Polish players took out most of the top spots at this years Gold Coast Congress, four of our local girls also starred. Popular local pharmacist Leslie Treasure with partner Yvonne Perkins won the Novice Graded Pairs, with their friends Jeanette Weaver and Loraine Neville coming third. The photo shows them enjoying each other's company after their win.



One of the keys to success at top level is to look closely at the cards – even the ones you can't see. Today's deal, from Stage Two of the NSW Interstate Teams Selection, had some of the state's top players battling to gain as accurate a picture as possible of the defenders' hands.

Dealer West, nil vul.

NORTH  
S A64  
H K962  
D K964  
C Q4

SOUTH  
S K973  
H AQ753  
D AJT7  
C —

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1D	3C	3H
Pass	4H	Pass	6D
Pass	6H	All pass	

West leads the C2 (playing standard leads), with East playing the CK. How should you plan the play? What useful information can you glean about the opponents' hands? When you draw trumps, they will divide 2-2.

There is a trick to be lost in spades so you must find the DQ to avoid a loser in that suit. There is no guarantee, but East who is long in clubs will tend to be short in the other suits, so West is odds on to have any cards there. Accordingly, after drawing trumps you might decide to cash the DA and then lead the DJ, planning to run it, playing West to have the DQ.

You can, however, do better. After drawing trumps with the HA and HK, lead dummy's remaining club and ruff it. Now play the ace and king of spades and then a third spade. If spades are 3-3, whichever defender wins the third round of spades will have only clubs and diamonds left; a diamond lead will solve your problem in that suit, and a club lead would allow you to ruff in hand and discard a diamond from dummy; another diamond from dummy could be pitched on the last spade.

Unfortunately this did not work, as the complete deal was:

NORTH  
S A64  
H K962  
D K964  
C Q4

WEST  
S QJT2  
H 84  
D 853  
C J872

EAST  
S 85  
H JT  
D Q2  
C AKT9653

SOUTH  
S K973  
H AQ753  
D AJT7  
C —

At the table, there is no way to know that East has the DQ, but there is a lot you do know. East is marked with a 7-card club suit (it will not be a 6-card suit because West would then have five clubs whereas the failure to bid 5C and the lead of the C2 as fourth best both indicate a holding of no more than four clubs). Once East follows twice to hearts and twice to spades, that is 11 of East's cards accounted for.

Declarer should now bang down the DA, to which all follow. Now East is known to have mainly clubs left in hand, plus one other card – either a spade or a diamond. Declarer leads the DJ and runs it. This will win if East's other card is a spade or a small diamond. If East happens to have the DQ – the actual lay of the cards – it does not matter; East will win but will have only clubs left so must lead one, allowing declarer to ruff in hand and discard the spade loser from dummy.