

IMPROVE YOUR PLAY

With Larry Matheny

It is important to develop a plan before playing to trick one. This declarer considered several options before deciding on his strategy.

Scoring: IMPs (Teams)

[illegible]

Bidding: After East overcalled in hearts, South's 1♠ response showed 5+ spades. With only four he would have used a negative double. Although holding weak spade support, North invited game and South did not want to miss a chance for a vulnerable game in a team event.

Play: West led a low heart to dummy's ace. South saw at least two losers in spades and possibly two more in the diamond suit. One plan was to play for the diamond jack to be in the West hand and another was to find a favorable club distribution. Finally, declarer adopted another line. Placing East with most of the missing high cards, at trick two declarer led a low diamond from dummy. East played low and the queen won the trick. Next, declarer played his two heart winners discarding diamonds from dummy. Then he led a diamond to the king and ace. East switched to the ace and queen of spades but declarer won the king but declarer was able to ruff a diamond in dummy. This established the eight of diamonds in his hand as a winner. He now conceded a spade trick and had his 10 tricks.

This was a gain of 10 IMPs as the N/S pair at the other table stopped in 3♠ and scored only nine tricks.