

DUPLICATE BRIDGE

Tom Hays

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Lina Crumpler's fine play made her player of the month for September. Mary Tryer and Lou Thurston combined for a big game to win Monday's Club Appreciation Game. Lina Crumpler and Mahesh Maruvada were second, just edging out Linda and Dick Hahn.

Some bridge hands are so simple that everyone ends up with the same result. Others give lots of opportunities for good bidding and good play. Board 15 is an example of the latter.

With only 27 high-card points between the two hands, East-West most likely will be looking for the best game. In fact, all East-West pairs on Monday bid three no-trump. However, the diamond void in the East hand, the eight-card club fit, and the solid major suits make six clubs cold as long as the clubs break reasonably. It would take a practiced partnership with a bit of inspiration to get to this slam.

Since East-West bid both of the red suits, North will likely start with a black suit. It is unattractive to lead from a doubleton king against no-trump, so North will likely lead a spade. In the actual play Monday night, all Norths started with the five of spades.

With five hearts, three spades, and a high club, West has nine tricks off the top. In duplicate, however, overtricks are crucial if the contract is one that just about all pairs will be in. Thus, West needs to find a way to take at least one more trick, if possible.

The club suit is a potential source of that overtrick. If South holds the king of clubs, four club tricks are possible. Even if North has the king of clubs, a losing finesse will set up two additional club tricks. Since West opened one diamond, North is unlikely to switch to diamonds if the club finesse loses.

When Lina and Mahesh defended the contract, Lina started with the five of spades, won by West with the ace. West cashed the jack of hearts and played a heart to the board, confirming that the hearts would run, then led a low club, finessing the ten. When Lina won the club finesse, she stopped to consider the hand. The hearts were established, the spades were finessable, and West seemed to have good clubs. The only hope seemed to be diamonds, so Lina led her three. Mahesh won his ace and returned a diamond to Lina's ten. Lina cashed the king of diamonds, holding declarer to nine tricks and garnering a well-deserved top.

While Lina is to be congratulated for her inspired defense, declarer should not have allowed it to happen. Assuming that the five of spades is fourth-best, declarer can use the rule of

eleven to determine that South's ten of spades is the only spade in the South hand higher than North's five. Declarer can take four spade tricks by finessing North. When the hearts are cashed, declarer needs to watch the defenders' discards carefully. It should become apparent that North is protecting clubs and South diamonds, so West should forego the club finesse and go up with the ace to take ten tricks.

To try out your bidding and play, meet us any Monday at 7 p.m. in the Woman's Club. For more information or partnership assistance, call Mary Tryer at 592-2374.

Board: 15
 Dealer: South
 Vulnerable: North-South

	NORTH	
WEST	♠: J 7 6 5 ♥: 10 8 6 3 ♦: K 10 3 ♣: K 7	EAST
♠: A 9 4 ♥: J 9 ♦: J 7 6 5 ♣: A Q 10 8	SOUTH	♠: K Q 8 3 ♥: A K Q 5 2 ♦: void ♣: J 6 4 2
	♠: 10 2 ♥: 7 4 ♦: A Q 9 8 4 2 ♣: 9 5 3	

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
Pass	1 D	Pass	1 H
Pass	1 NT	Pass	2 C (*)
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT
All Pass			

(*) New minor forcing (5 hearts, 10+ points)

Opening lead: Five of spades