

“Currie(d) Ducks”




So, about playing a board with David Dolbel? We all know David’s system is a little “left field” but when it comes to being declarer, he is in the same uncertain melting pot as the rest of us. So, you reach 4♥ on the following, as South, after East had overcalled in diamonds:

Board 20	♠ A 2									
West Deals	♥ K Q 7 6 4									
Both Vul	♦ J 5 3 2									
	♣ 9 2									
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	N									
W		E								
	S									
	♠ K Q J 8 5									
	♥ J 10 3									
	♦ Q 8									
	♣ A Q 7									

West leads ♦10 and you can see that East is going to put you to the test with three rounds of diamonds. You have three top losers and so must be careful. Sure enough, East plays their two top diamonds to be followed by ♦6, suggesting a club continuation should West win the third round of diamonds.

However, on that third round, you ruff with your ♥J and win the trick as West discards a spade. So, what’s your plan? You want to draw trumps and run the spades but there is still a fourth diamond in dummy should East win the lead with the ♥A and West hold either the ♥9 or ♥10.

So, to minimise this very real threat, Dave played a spade to the ace and a heart towards the 10, inserting the ♥10 when East played low. Another heart now could be fatal. So, Dave decided to play two more rounds of spades to discard that dangerous diamond in dummy. ..or at least he tried to for look what happened when Dave played the ♠K:

<p>Board 20 West Deals Both Vul</p>	<p>♠ A 2 ♥ K Q 7 6 4 ♦ J 5 3 2 ♣ 9 2</p>		<p>♠ 7 6 4 3 ♥ 9 8 ♦ A K 9 7 6 ♣ K 5</p>
<p>♠ 10 9 ♥ A 5 2 ♦ 10 4 ♣ J 10 8 6 4 3</p>	<p>♠ K Q J 8 5 ♥ J 10 3 ♦ Q 8 ♣ A Q 7</p>		

West, Alan Currie, had already discarded one of his spades and was thus able to ruff the second round with a small trump and subsequently score the ♥A for one down. East had ducked the heart for a very sound reason. Her partner held the ace and had twice declined to play it, gaining an excellent reward of 13 imps when his teammates made 11 tricks in no-trumps at the other table.

Nice ducks, Alan. Dine out on them.

Richard Solomon