

Easy Discard

(by T. Reese)

My BOLS bridge tip is this:

Study the early discards and consider this point: from what holding would the defender most readily have made those discards?

The answer to the above question will often resolve a critical guess.

For example, a defender who holds A-5-3-2 or K-5-3-2 will discard from that suit more readily than if he had held Q-5-3-2 or J-5-3-2.

That will give you a clue in situations of this kind:

This is a side suit in a trump contract and declarer needs to establish one fast trick.

♠ J 7 6

♠ Q 9 4

♠ A 5 3 2

♠ K 10 8

East has made two early discards. Conclusion: he is more likely to hold A-x-x-x than Q-x-x-x.

♠ J 8 6 2

♠ A 5 3

♠ Q 9 4

♠ K 10 7

West makes an early discard. Conclusion: he is more likely to have discarded from A-x-x than from Q-x-x.

♠ A 8

♠ J 9 4

♠ K 7 5 3 2

♠ Q 10 6

East makes two early discards. When you play the ace and eight he follows with the five and seven.

Play him for K-x-x-x-x rather than J-x-x-x-x.

♠ K 10 8

♠ A 5 3 2

♠ J 7 6

♠ Q 9 4

West discards twice. He is more likely to have come down to A-x than to J-x; but if a low card to the king is headed by the ace, be inclined to play East for A-J-x.

Such inferences are especially strong when dummy has what may seem to a defender to be establishable suit, as here:

♠ 10 5 2

♥ K J 6 3

♦ A 7 3

♣ 8 6 4

South Deals - None Vul

♠ 9 3

♥ Q 10 8

♦ 10 9 5 4

♣ K J 7 3

♠ J 7

♥ A 9 5 2

♦ J 8 6

♣ A 10 9 5

♠ A K Q 8 6 4

♥ 7 4

♦ K Q 2

♣ Q 2

West

North

East

South

-

-

-

1♠

Pass

1 NT

Pass

3♠

Pass

4♠

All pass

Lead: 3♣

West leads the three of clubs and South ruffs the third round. There is something to be said for leading a heart at once, putting West under some pressure if he holds the ace, but instead the declarer plays four rounds of trumps, discarding a diamond from dummy. (It is good play to keep the heart holding intact.)

West throws a club and a diamond, East a club and a heart.

After cashing three diamonds South leads a heart and West plays the eight. South should finesse the jack. Why? Because of East's heart discard. With A-9-x-x East, expecting the contract to depend on the heart guess, would not think it necessary to keep all four. But with Q-9-x-x he would not let go a heart, in case declarer held A-x.