

# The New-York Times.

## Bridge

### Let's Give the Analysts A Real Big Hand

By ALAN TRUSCOTT

Published: January 15, 1989

IF you fancy yourself as an analyst, cover the East-West hands shown in the diagram and prepare for work. If you do not, look at all four hands and prepare for an unusual challenge that is as puzzling as the Chinese carved ivory spheres with a series of concentric layers.

The challenge for the analyst who has covered the East-West hands is to construct those hands correctly given this information: South can make six spades, against any subsequent defense, if, and only if, West leads a club initially.

This is one of an extraordinary collection of bridge puzzles in this rare genre: "Bridge: The Ultimate Limits" by Eric Mansfield, an Englishman who is a fellow of the Royal Society. His intellectual powers, usually devoted to aerospace structures, are equally formidable in constructing bridge hands. His book is available for \$17.50 including postage from Baron Bridge Supplies, 151 Thierman Lane, Louisville, Ky. 40207.

Peeling off the outer sphere of the puzzle, that is the coverings of the East-West hands, we have the solution as shown. The next layer is to decide why this layout meets the requirement that six spades can be made if a club is led.

Superficially it appears that the club lead helps the defense by forcing South to ruff. But the converse is true: The club lead squeezes East immediately.

The most obvious discard for East is a diamond. After ruffing, the declarer takes five trump winners followed by the ace, jack and queen of diamonds to reach this ending: [ Diagram ]

*-- The diagrammed deal has not been preserved by The New York Times --*

A winning diamond is led and East can score his trump trick whenever he pleases.

The effect is the same if East throws a heart at the first trick. South takes the king and ace of hearts, and East has no answer when a heart winner is led from dummy. If he ruffs, the diamond jack provides the entry to dummy to score a heart winner.

Finally, suppose East decides to ruff his partner's club winner at the first trick. South discards a low diamond, wins any return in his hand and plays all his trumps. At the finish East is unable to guard both red suits.

So South succeeds after any club lead, even the deuce. But if West leads any other suit East does not come under pressure in the same way and the contract fails.

It is, of course, easy to construct hands on which six spades succeeds. You can start, for example, by giving East a doubleton king of diamonds. But in such cases the slam will make with leads other than a club, and therefore they do not fit the conditions. The West hand shown is the only one that solves Mansfield's ingenious puzzle.

Source