

Two Against the World
By Roger Lord

Dealer: West
Vul: No one

	North		
	♠Q2		
	♥J3		
	♦AQ7542		
	♣A64		
West		East	
♠A10964		♠J5	
♥96		♥KQ10742	
♦986		♦J3	
♣K108		♣QJ7	
	South		
	♠K873		
	♥A85		
	♦K10		
	♣9532		

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 Diamond	2 Hearts*	Double
Pass	3 Diamonds	Pass	3 Notrump
All Pass			
*weak			

Opening Lead: Heart Nine

To most players, this deal warrants partscore bidding. Over East's weak jump overcall, South makes a negative double. North rebids three diamonds, which promises six or more cards in the suit. With fewer diamonds, North should find a different call, perhaps a bid of three spades with a three-card holding.

In the World-Wide Pairs of June 6, most of the nearly 4000 Souths passed three diamonds. Some Easts bought contracts in hearts or spades. A few aggressive but rational Souths reevaluated their sides' combined assets and tried three notrump. On top of 23 HCP, South should add maximum value for the K10 of diamonds for the prospect of solidifying partner's six-card suit.

West leads the heart nine. You can count six diamond tricks (you'll need a 3-2 diamond split or a singleton jack) and two aces, so you'll need to establish a spade trick for number nine. When you do this, you'll need the spade ace to be located with West and West to be out of hearts. Thus, you should duck the first heart lead, to sever West's communication with his partner.

Beware! You must not duck a second round of hearts, lest the defenders switch to clubs, get back in with the spade ace and cash the setting club tricks. Rely instead on East's holding six hearts for his jump overcall, which means West will be out of hearts after the second round.

If East overcalls just one heart, South will have a choice of ducking or winning the second heart. Watch West's opening and second heart spots. If the order is low-high, you must duck the second round and hope they will not find a club switch or, if they do, that West has only two clubs. If West's hearts are played high-low, study their convention cards to see what their lead tendencies are with three small cards, then decide.

The diagramed hands were rotated to make South the declarer, for instructional purposes. In actual play of board 11, I (Roger Lord) was West, declarer at three notrump, and Jacqueline Sincoff was East, dummy. For plus 400, our matchpoint score was 3,442 out of a possible 3,930 (the number of East-West pairs who played the board), which helped us achieve the highest East-West 24-board total score world-wide.