

THE DECLARER



September 2025

Volume 68 Issue 2

Ken Trock, Editor

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The Declarer

NJBL web site: www.njbl.net Editor Ken Trock

kentrock1@gmail.com

Contributors Jay Korobow

Kelly Kiefer Ken Trock Peter Wright

Barbara Clark/Allan Bauer

Reporting/Proofing Brett Kunin

Susan Slusky

Arnold Kohn

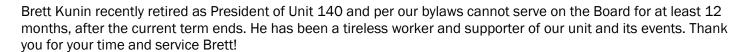
Technical Advisor Jay Korobow Web Master Susan Slusky

segslusky@aol.com

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President's Message

by Kelly Kiefer



Congratulations to Alex Shih and his team for winning a silver medal at the World Youth Teams Championship under age 16 category. Alex is 10 years old and has attended our Sectionals.

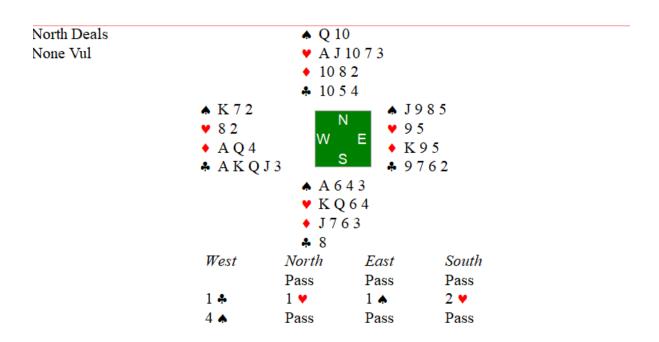
Congratulations to Princeton University for winning the Collegiate Bowl Championship at the recent ACBL National Championships held in Philadelphia.

Lastly, we have appointed Arnie Kohn to be the Vice President in charge of clubs. This responsibility entails Arnie being a liaison to club managers for matters pertaining to the ACBL and announcements of special games like STACs. He will also be responsible for handling any issues that club managers and directors have with players and scheduling. He hopes to visit our clubs whenever possible.

And I hope to see many of you at our October Sectional.

The Supreme Adventures of Second Hand Rose

by Jay Korobow



I was sitting West for a late night random IMP deal on BBO, and my partner was a random "advanced" player that selected 1♠ after a 1♠ opener by me, and 1♥ by my LHO. After a 2♥ raise by South, I placed the contract in game in 4♠ hoping we weren't missing a slam.

Since the advent of negative doubles, which one expects an advanced player to know and employ, I expected five Spades in length as well as 6 points. Well, at least partner was supremely consistent in that they had neither.

We are obviously too high, as no game makes, but there was more hope in $4 \pm$ than 3NT or $5 \pm$. If in fact South is dealt \pm AQ doubleton, the contract might legitimately come home if they don't play too many Hearts, causing a prolonged pump. Declarer can lead a trump towards \pm K72, and let's say South wins the \pm A, then makes some neutral shift. The \pm K now drops the \pm Q, and with the \pm J9 over the \pm Tx, a successful Spade finesse and run of Clubs brings in 10 unlikely tricks.

As East's Declarer play was supremely consistent with their bidding prowess, they won the Club shift after 2 rounds of Hearts and instead led a low Spade towards the \$J985. Now they could easily lose 2 Spades, a Club ruff, and 2 Hearts, for down 2.

Fortunately for us, North had heard one of my lectures of "second hand low, pard!" and dutifully played the €10. East covered with €J which forced the €A from South; then won the neutral return. The Spade King now dropped North's sole Queen, and trump was drawn for an undeserved +420 and 9 IMPs.

This layout is actually a variation of a well-known positional gambit, where a Declarer with a shortage of entries must lead towards their hand, and a defender with Qx in the suit must decide which card to play as second hand. On the theory that the closed hand likely has the Jack (if partner has the Jack it really doesn't matter) and will next play it for a finesse, playing the Queen doesn't cost. In fact, it may speed things up. One of course has to be alert to the reasonable possibility that; for example, if Declarer instead had AJT9x and was going to rise with the Ace then finesse the Jack back the other way, the Queen play now could be costly (as well as embarrassing.) No one said Bridge was always easy!

As I speedily vacated the table with this excellent result for a new adventure, I dutifully said "well-bid and well-played pard", to be supremely consistent as well.

Youth Bridge

by Allan Bauer and Barbara Clark

The sounds of "director please", the crunching of snacks, the slurping of drinks, the smell of pizza and the sight of lots of smiles were all in play at the Third Annual pre-national bridge tournament on June 21st in Hackensack, New Jersey. Our 12 players ranged from middle school to high school and even college. Medals were given to the first, second and third place finishers. Plastic "Winner" plaques were presented to everyone as well. Needless to say, everybody left happy. Everybody had fun!

Special acknowledgements are due to our volunteer coaches, Barbara Clark and Allan Bauer and to our tournament director, Vijay Ahuja. Let's also give a shout out to Pat Linnemeyer, Pat Ishill and of course, Unit 140 for their help.



Which Hand is it?

by Ken Trock

Here is a hand from the Summer Sectional in July in which we're on defense in a Matchpoint event.

 Dealer: East
 North

 ♣ 53
 Vul: Both

 ✔ QJ9
 Q5

 ♣ AKJ874

♣09

The bidding:

<u>Partner</u>	South	<u>Ken</u>	<u>North</u>
Pass	1♣	Pass	$2\clubsuit^1$
2♦	Pass	Pass	$3 \diamond^2$
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

- 1 Inverted
- ² Ostensibly asking for stopper

I lead the ◆4 and it goes 5, A, 3, Partner winning and cashing the ◆K, Declarer playing the 9. It appears I have a dilemma. Should I throw the ◆J and risk Declarer winning the ◆10, or hang onto the Jack, guaranteeing a 3rd trick in the suit? This would block the suit after 3 rounds.

Let's go back to the bidding. Did North's 3♦ asking bid show a half stopper? We didn't ask, and most people don't play this (maybe they're winging it?) The Western Que bid almost always simply asks for a stopper in that suit, period. If a half stopper was required to make this bid, what would you do with this? ♠ KQx ▼ xx ◆ AKxxx ♣ AQx. You open 1♠, LHO overcalls 1♥, partner bids 2♣. You would be prevented from making a 2♥ asking bid. Anything else would misdescribe your hand.

Anyhow, back to the hand. I'll concede that partner has a 5 card Diamond suit. So did Declarer start with

◆1093 (not really a half stopper) or ◆963? And what is partner's hand? One of these is the actual layout, the other isn't ☺️ Jump to the end of this Declarer to see the answer.

North Layout 1 **★** 53 ♥ QJ9 ♦ O5 **♣** AKJ874 Ken Partner **♦**10986 ♦ KJ4 **v** 1072 **V** 8654 **♦** J74 ♦ AK1062 **♣** Q9 **♣** 65 South ♠ AQ2 ♥ AK3 **♦** 983 **♣**1032 North

 VQJ9

 Q5

 AKJ874

 Ken
 Partner

 10986
 A74

 8654
 1072

★ 53

Layout 2

♦ J74

♣ Q9

South ★ KQJ2 ▼ AK3 ◆ 1093 ♣ 1032 ♦ AK862

4 65

Unit 140 Top Masterpoint Earners at July Sectional

	Masterpoint Range		
Player	0 - 1500 MPs	1500 - 5000 MPs	5000 + MPs
Kuo-Tung Hsu	9.65		
Leigh Walker	6.16		
Charles Dvorkin	5.92		
Komal Kamat		8.47*	
Francis Gupta		8.47*	
Sharon Gross		7.89	
Jiang Gu			23.63
Peter Stein			14.33
Alex Allen			11.83

Notable & Quotable

Michael Ledeen on Bridge and War Wall Street Journal - May 2015

"Great bridge players are great liars—as are brilliant military leaders and diplomats and politicians."

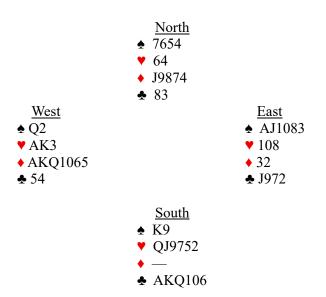
- On the night of Nov. 7, 1942, as allied forces in Operation Torch headed for the North African coast, commanding Gen. Dwight Eisenhower waited anxiously. It was foggy, and news of the invasion was slow to arrive. To pass the time, lke and three associates played bridge.
- The game was an important part of Ike's life—throughout the war, in the White House and in retirement. In those years many American leaders were passionate bridge players: One of the men at Eisenhower's table that night was Gen. Alfred Gruenther, later NATO Commander and for many years president of the World Bridge Federation. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles bragged about his mastery of the game, and his department long conducted a world-wide bridge tournament in embassies and consulates.
- You'll often hear that chess is the ultimate model for geopolitics, indeed for war itself. In the 1963 hit movie "From Russia With Love," James Bond is menaced by the brilliant Soviet chess master Tov Kronsteen (clearly modeled on Boris Spassky).
- But Eisenhower knew better. No board game can replicate the conditions of the battlefield or the maneuvers of geostrategy, for one simple reason: All of the pieces are visible on the table. Card games are better models because vital information is always concealed by the "fog of war" and the deception of opponents. Most of the time a bridge player sees only one-quarter of the cards, and some of the information he might gather from them is false.
- Bridge is largely about communication, and every message a player sends—by bidding or playing a significant card—is broadcast to the player's partner and his opponents. Frequently a player will have to decide whether he would rather tell the truth to his partner (thereby informing his opponents) or deceive the enemy (thus running the risk of seriously fooling his ally across the table).
- Nothing like this exists in even the greatest board games. They permit some feints, to be sure, but not outright lies. Great bridge players are great liars—as are brilliant military leaders and diplomats and politicians. To take the most celebrated recent example, Deng Xiaoping, the man who transformed modern China, was an avid bridge player who had a private railroad car for his games.
- The difficulty of weighing truth and lies is one reason that computers don't win at bridge, whereas at the highest level of chess they do very well. IBM's Deep Blue defeated grandmaster Garry Kasparov in a six-game match in 1997, but bridge is simply too tough for the machines.
- Bridge may also be too tough for contemporary Americans. The bridge-playing population is shrinking and aging. In Eisenhower's time, close to half of American families had at least one active bridge player; as of 10 years ago, a mere three million played at least once a week, and their average age was 51. Kibitz at a national bridge championship or a local club game and you'll be impressed by the white hair and the number of wheel chairs and oxygen tanks.
- Another measure: When Operation Torch landed, there were several bridge books on the best-seller list. Nowadays bridge books are printed in small numbers by specialized publishers. Poker books do somewhat better, but no writer's celebrity approaches that of Ely Culbertson or Charles Goren, the high-profile bridge authors in the past century.

- The shrinking population of American bridge players goes hand in hand with other evidence of declining mental discipline, including shortening attention spans and decreases in book readership. You can't be a winning card player unless you can concentrate for several hours, and mastery of the game takes years. Neither is bridge a solo activity; you need a partner with whom you must reach very detailed agreements about myriad situations. All this is good for the mind: Bridge provides stimulation that can help players retain their mental toughness and stave off dementia.
- Eisenhower and Gruenther would be disturbed by the declining popularity of bridge, knowing that it is a quintessential American game, developed in its modern form in the 1920s largely on board the Vagrant, Harold Vanderbilt's yacht. American players continue to win in international competition, but they are mostly professionals. Insofar as they have day jobs, they are often stock or options traders, not business leaders, diplomats or military officers.
- It might be helpful to introduce bridge instruction and competition to high schools and colleges, as has been done with chess. Bridge lovers like Bill Gates and Warren Buffett would surely approve and could sponsor programs and tournaments for young players, with suitable rewards.
- It's no accident that the greatest thinker of modern times, Niccolò Machiavelli, was a card player, nor that his masterpiece, "The Prince," remains essential reading for our special forces officers. A prince, Machiavelli wrote, should be "faithful to his word, guileless" but "his disposition should be such that, if he needs to be the opposite, he knows how." That's a lesson you can only learn from kings and jacks, not kings and rooks.

Hand from Southwest Virginia Bridge Club, 7-1-2025 by Peter Wright

This fascinating hand came up at the Southwest Virginia Bridge Club in Roanoke, where I now have browbeaten three partners into playing Gambling 3NT *in any* suit.

North-South were vulnerable. The dealer was South.



Bidding

South opened 1♥. West doubled. North Passed and East jumped to 2♠ (at least a King short for that jump). South persisted with 3♥. West doubled again and everyone Passed.

<u>Play</u>

West led the ♠Q, East won his Ace, setting up South's ♠K, and continued a Spade, won by South. She led the ♥Q, won by West, who tried to cash the ♠A. South ruffed and led the ♥J, won by West, who continued with the ♠K. South ruffed again and drew West's last trump. She now ran her Clubs, losing the 4th round but able to ruff any return and claim 9 tricks.

Double dummy

The contract can be defeated, but the defense is very hard to find and depends entirely on West's opening

lead. Here's what will happen with the opening lead in each of the 4 suits.

- 1. This sets up South's King for a 9th trick.
- 2. \blacklozenge (obviously, the Ace). If South ruffs and draws a round of trumps, West wins and continues with another top Diamond. South ruffs again and draws a 2nd round of trumps. West wins and persists with a 3rd top Diamond. South ruffs a 3rd time, leaving her with one master trump but with West still holding a lesser trump. If South draws that last trump, she can win three top Clubs but then must lose the last two tricks to East's ♣J and his remaining Spade. BUT, South has a counter at trick 2. Rather than starting trumps, she can cash two top Clubs and ruff a small club with one of Dummy's trumps, since West's small trump is lower than either of Dummy's trump spots and East must simply follow suit. Now Declarer can use Dummy's other Heart to start the trumpdrawing process, and in the end game her remaining Clubs will all be winners. Of course, no South without x-ray vision would ever take this line of play, since she cannot know the precise East-West holdings of trump spots. And there is always the chance that the &J will fall in 3 rounds.
- 3. This kills East's Club trick and gives South plenty of time to draw trumps and claim.
- 4. ♥ West must cash the Ace-King of Hearts and continue with a 3rd Heart. After this counter-intuitive defense, South can run Clubs, giving up the 4th round to East, who has a safe Diamond exit, and South must eventually lead Spades from her own hand, thereby losing two Spades, two Hearts, and a Club.

Full disclosure: I was the West player. South was my Thursday partner . . . but this was Tuesday.

* Editor's Note: Peter is the former editor of The Declarer and is checking in with us from Virginia.

Big Games

(Must be face-to-face to qualify)

June 2025 – August 2025

	OPEN	
78.57%	Muffie Gur - Reha Gur	Queen of Hearts BC
78.13%	Wieslaw Ostrowski - Harris Bobroff	Toms River BC
77.46%	Beau Norton - Robert Derosa	Stafford BC
77.08%	David Hoffner - Karen Hoffner	Stafford BC
76.19%	Ivan Smirnov - Andrew Harris	NJBL Sectional
75.16%	Christel Dynes - Ruth Macpherson	Canoe Brook
75.00%	Clifford Wilson Jr - Peter Stein	Bill's Bridge
74.54%	Robert Brolin - Charles Dvorkin	Monroe Bridge Club
74.15%	Robert Derosa - Beau Norton	Stafford BC
73.81%	Sonny Thaper - Mustafa Mahmud	Montclair Golf Club
73.63%	Violet Cohen - Judy Mizrachi	Deal Bridge Club
73.51%	Philip Werner - Andrew Barlow	Shadowfax
73.08%	Edward Bauman - Renee Geist	Summit Area Bridge
73.00%	Hans Neuteboom - Robert Derosa	Toms River BC
72.96%	Peter Jones - John Dell'osso	Summit Area Bridge
72.92%	Rachel Mouhadeb - Flora Tawil	Deal Bridge Club
72.62%	Muffie Gur - Elyse Menashe	Queen of Hearts BC
72.61%	Cho-Wei Sit - Om Singh	Summit Area Bridge
72.50%	J Eugene Salomon - Nancy Loisch	Toms River BC
72.22%	Linda Seyffarth - Peter Agnew	Montclair Golf Club
72.21%	Jim McCarroll - Arnold Kohn	Bill's Bridge
71.83%	Terrence Havican - Sheila Holderness	Montclair Golf Club
71.45%	Dorel Livescu - Julie Anderson	Spring Lake BC
71.43%	Jesse Reisman - Cheryl Angel	Montclair Golf Club
71.25%	Amy Ross - James Koss	Stafford BC
71.13%	Ronald Kraft - Richard Ross	Monroe Bridge Club
71.11%	Andrew Barlow - Leigh Walker	Shadowfax
71.03%	Paul Gessman - Michael O'Donohue	Regency at Monroe
71.03%	Esther Eisenberg - Martin Eisenberg	Spring Lake BC
70.75%	Renna Bildirici - Robin Tobias	Deal Bridge Club
70.75%	Susan Schwartz - Andrew Barlow	Summit Area Bridge
70.63%	Terrence Havican - Sheila Holderness	Montclair Golf Club
70.54%	Donna Dulet - Stephen Arshan	Jersey Bridge Club
70.34%	Richard Ross - Alexander Allen	Jersey Bridge Club
70.24%	Julie Anderson - Dorel Livescu	Queen of Hearts BC
70.24%	Dennis Thompson - Steve Albin	Bill's Bridge

	LIMITED/INVITATIONAL	
75.00%	Joanne Moynihan - Richard Gurak	Stonebridge BC
74.77%	Marilyn Jaclin - Robert Jaclin	Regency at Monroe
74.17%	Gail Kornfeld - Norm Kersh	Westlake BC
73.33%	Jennifer Mullins - Patty Whittemore	Seabright Bridge Club
73.33%	Connie Singelakis - Judy Jewell	Westlake BC
72.78%	Harry Lonsdale - Holly Hubbell	Bay Head Yacht Club
72.35%	Gail Kornfeld - Norm Kersh	Westlake BC
72.22%	Sherrerd Urner - Gael Habernickle	Bay Head Yacht Club
72.22%	Merle Barnett - Trevor Barnett	Stonebridge BC
72.22%	Alice Rochat - Jacqueline Hinshaw	Shadowfax
70.58%	Jaya Gupta - Prem Gupta	Regency at Monroe
70.51%	Susan Berry - Gael Habernickle	Bay Head Yacht Club
70.48%	Sherrerd Urner - Gael Habernickle	Bay Head Yacht Club
70.24%	Garret Sayia - William Ingram	Bay Head Yacht Club
70.24%	Sheila McCrossin - Mary Jane O'Hare	Rumson Friday
70.11%	Patricia Pritchard - Laura Haaren	Seabright Bridge Club
70.00%	Richard Gurak - Joanne Moynihan	Stonebridge BC
70.00%	Bob Welgos - Ginnie Thomas	Shadowfax



New Jersey Bridge League **Autumn Sectional** October 24-26, 2025



Edison Elks Lodge 375 Old Post Road, Edison, NJ 08817 Playing Site Phone: 732-985-2487

Tournament Chair: Arman Tookmanian (908)798-7654

Friday, Oct 24

10:00 AM • Open Stratified Pairs • 499er Stratified Pairs*

🌞 Free Pizza Between Sessions 🍁

New Time 2:15 PM ● Open GRASSROOT Stratified Pairs

499er GRASSROOT Stratified Pairs*

Saturday, Oct 25 10:00 AM • Open Stratified Pairs • 499er Stratified Pairs*

Free Assorted Sandwiches Between Sessions



499er GRASSROOT Stratified Pairs*

*499er events will be held provided there are sufficient pairs

Sunday, Oct 26

9:30 AM: • Free Continental Breakfast

10:30 AM: Playthrough Bracketed Swiss Teams with Free Hot **Buffet Lunch**

Stratifications: Open Pairs A (3000+) B (1000-3000) C (0-1000) 499ers Pairs A (300-499) B (100-300) C (0-100) (May be varied based on participation.) In pair events, strats are based as an average of the total master points of the pair. In any event or flight with a master point upper limit, no individual's MP total may exceed that limit.

GRASSROOT Games: Almost 30% More Masterpoints

Parking Policy: No parking in designated spots marked "Reserved" in the Elks parking lot. PARKING IS LIMITED, and carpooling is recommended. Overflow parking is available across the street in an Edison H.S. parking lot.

Food and Beverages: Free coffee and limited snacks; free pizza Friday and free sandwiches Saturday between sessions; and free continental breakfast and hot buffet lunch Sunday. Bottled water and soda, \$1.00.

Covid Policies: Masking is optional pursuant to ACBL protocols. Should any bridge player request that players mask at the table, please honor their request.

Partnerships: We will try to find you partners, but we cannot guarantee them. Please email your request to Amie Dorin at amied26@gmail.com or call him at 732-841-2351 by Friday, October 17th. Note that we are much more likely to be able to find a partner for you the EARLIER you make the request.

NJBL Website: Visit our website www.njbl.net to read about upcoming tournaments and events, past results, bridge clubs, THE DECLARER (NJBL's online newsletter), and many other useful bridge links.

Entries: \$34 per pair per session. \$152 per team for Sunday's Swiss teams' game. To participate, lapsed ACBL members must renew their membership, which may be done at the sectional. Non-ACBL members can sign-up for a free 4-month trial membership to be able to play.

Milestones

Changes in Rank: June 2025 - August 2025

Sapphire Life Master

Xiaowen Li Jersey City

Gold Life Master

Gordon Cable Jr. Monroe
Larry Gordon West Orange

Ruby Life Master

Jane Bassett Shrewsbury
Sandra Chang Roseland
Charles Dvorkin Manalapan
Manish Mehta Chatham

Silver Life Master

Andrew Barlow Lebanon
Cindy Dratch Livingston
George Kalb Millington
Phyllis Kearse Millburn
Kathleen Riepenhoff Skillman

Bronze Life Master

Jared Egerer Mount Arlington
Fred Malamet West Orange
Robert Martin Wall
Satya Rami Morganville
Harold Shane Livingston

Life Master

Janice Brenner Short Hills
Sid Klotz Manchester
Fred Malamet West Orange
Robert Martin Wall
Harold Shane Livingston

Adv. NABC Master

Sue Marcus Springfield
Judy Waller Springfield

NABC Master

Myung Bondy
Mary Brown
Susan Carle
Judy Kutin
Linda Levitt
Larry Shaw
Maria Zazzera
Summit
Roseland
Princeton
Skillman
Skillman
New Providence

Regional Master

Rochelle Castellano Monmouth
Beach

Sectional Master

Abe Binstock
Marcia Geltman
Phyllis Greenberg
Monroe
Joyce Manser
Stephen Mooney
Michael O'Donohue
Jane Ridolfi
Belle Mead
Randolph
Randolph
Bayville
Monroe
Bay Head

Club Master	
Stephanie Cuskley	Rumson
Heike Graef	Toms River
Advait Joshi	Berkeley Heights
Barbara Kirkpatrick	Shrewsbury
Richard Krauser	Short Hills
Cynthia Labrecque	Rumson
Talal Mahmud	Chatham
Michael Meyer	Monroe
Irem Ozbay	Weehawken
John Sampson	Rumson
Hamilton Smith	Skillman
Mary Lee Trousdale	Summit

Junior Master	
Jeffrey Benton	Madison
Thomas Berger	Eatontown
Flavia Blechinger	Scotch Plains
Robert Bullen-Smith	Lawrenceville
Samual Clement	Orange
Harris Goldberg	Monroe
Kiarra Jeffries	Orange
Paul Kolojeski	Tinton Falls
Randi Kronthal-Sacco	Princeton Jct.
Elaine Lukacs	Ocean
Diane Maguire	Summit
Christine May	Chatham
Robert Nunn	Monroe
Satish Pandey	Belle Mead
Lois Seidl	Princeton
Ryan Shokrpour	Springfield
Aidan Szilagyi	Montclair
Ounar Traore	Orange
Kathleen Walsh	Summit

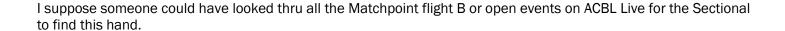
REMEMBRANCES

The Board of Directors of the New Jersey Bridge League offer their condolences to the families and friends of the following members of the ACBL Unit 140. They will be missed at our bridge tables. We would like to remember all who support and participate in this great game. Please notify Julie Anderson at Julie17rae@gmail.com of any deaths within our membership; indicate, when known, dates of passing and club(s) attended.

Yehuda Arie	Larry Pigula
d. July, 2025	d. August, 2025
frequent player at Princeton and Hillsborough	frequent player at Hillsborough
Howard Tycot	
d. September, 2025	
frequent player at Monroe and Princeton	

Which Hand is it?

Reveal (Continued from page 6)



Another possibility on the defense is that if I led ◆J from ◆J74 on opening lead it would solve the problem on one of the layouts but give away the contract on the other. On the layout where Declarer holds ◆1093, it becomes a stopper when the first trick goes ◆J, Q, K, 3. Anyhow, Declarer held layout #2: ♠ A74 ♥ 1072 ◆ AK862 ♠ 65. At the table, I got it wrong. At trick 2 I played my ◆J, giving Declarer a Diamond stopper along with 6 Clubs and 3 Hearts for a total of 10 tricks.