

A Diamond is Forever

by Bernard Marcoux, Montréal

I used to be a chess player and I once qualified for the Canadian chess championship by correspondence; I worked my brains out for more than a year, 2 or 3 hours a day, in order to win the qualification; when I finally won, I discovered bridge and I just quit chess, never playing again.

What is the difference between chess and bridge? I don't want to offend chess players and fans, but I would say chess is a children's game, and I don't mean that in a negative way. It is easy to understand: at chess, you play alone, you have one opponent and you see all the pieces all the time. At bridge, you have one partner and two opponents (some would say that makes three opponents, but let's not digress). In the bidding, you see only 13 cards out of 52 and, during the play, you see only 26 cards out of 52. At chess, there are 32 pieces and you see them all the time. At chess, if neither player makes a mistake, the game will end in a draw. If player A makes a mistake and player B sees it, player A will lose. Sometimes, player A doesn't know he made a mistake; he will realise it on the next move, or 5 or 6 moves later. Bobby Fischer, still in his teens, once playing the American champion, started a combination (a series of forced moves including maybe sacrifices of one or even two pieces in order to mate or to gain a decisive advantage) so deep that the commentators in the other room, not understanding the complexity of the combination, explained to the audience that he was losing the game; at the same time, the American champion, suddenly "seeing" what was happening, resigned.

At bridge, sometimes, a defender doesn't make a mistake, but he still loses, when the declarer submits him to a squeeze for example. Other times, the defender makes a mistake, and the de-

clarer can succeed if he can "see" all the pieces and execute the combination in perfect order.

♠ A K Q 7 5
♥ A Q 6 4
♦ J 9 5 3
♣ -



♠ 6
♥ 10 7 3
♦ A 3 2
♣ A K Q J 10 9

In the first match of the Zonal Teams, opponents were silent and you play 6♣, LHO leading a middle heart. You play low, RHO wins the jack and plays back a club. Oops!! Maybe he should have played back a diamond but you have bid diamonds at some point, and maybe that deterred him from playing that suit. Now if spades break 4-3 you will make 12 tricks, but you have to see deeper into the hand. My friend Jean-François Boucher of Chicoutimi, Québec, played the hand. He made a little mistake in the play; so we examined the hand during supper with our friends Serge Hamelin and Marc-André Fourcaudot and we finally found the solution. You win the club and play three more clubs, LHO pitching a heart on the fourth club. You play a spade to the ace, then the king (on which you pitch a diamond - let's say the three), RHO following with the nine and the jack. You then play a small spade (the mistake is to play a third top spade, effectively squeezing yourself), RHO pitches a heart, and you ruff. Now the position is:

♠ 10 4	♠ Q 7	♠ -
♥ -	♥ A Q	♥ K 8
♦ ???	♦ J	♦ ???
♣ -	♣ -	♣ -

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ -	♠ -
♥ 10 7	♥ 10 7
♦ A 2	♦ A 2
♣ 9	♣ 9



Benard Marcoux

Now you play the nine of clubs. LHO cannot let a spade go, so he pitches a diamond. You pitch the heart queen from dummy, not a spade, in order to keep the pressure on West; RHO has to keep the hearts guarded, so he pitches a diamond also. Now we have reached:

♠ 10 4 ♥ – ♦ ?? ♣ –	<table style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ – ♥ K 8 ♦ ?? ♣ –
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ – ♥ 10 7 ♦ A 2 ♣ –										

Now a heart to the ace (the real Vienna coup, creating a winner in East's hand and a menace with the ♥10 in declarer's hand), and LHO has to keep both spades, so he pitches another diamond. Now we have:

♠ 10 4 ♥ – ♦ ? ♣ –	<table style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ – ♥ K ♦ ?? ♣ –
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ – ♥ 10 ♦ A 2 ♣ –										

Now you play the spade queen from dummy, RHO has to keep the heart king, so he pitches a diamond; you pitch the now useless heart, LHO (immaterial now) follows. Finally, at trick 12, the Jack of diamonds to the ace collects the queen from East and the king from West, and the 13th trick (your 12th) is the diamond two.

I don't know what name or names we can put on this sequence of plays, successive or double or compound or criss-cross or any other exotic squeeze name, but I do know one thing: to be able to foresee that kind of play while seeing only 26 cards out of 52, and then to be able to conduct it till the end is the most exhilarating experience, and it is the reason why I quit chess for bridge.

To win the 13th trick with the diamond two, with the opponents not able to do anything about it, is why I will play bridge ... forever.

(A nice story, but we would be equally happy to win the last trick with the three of diamonds. Editors.)

SYSTEMS DESK

All quarter-finalists in the Power Rosenblum and McConnell are requested to file a copy of their convention cards and, where possible, their systems, with Anna Gudge in the WBF Secretariat on the Conventions Level of the Queen Elizabeth Hotel.

Quack, Quack



Knowing when to duck and when to rise with one's high card is often not easy. Heather Dhondy of the English team of that name in the Round of 16 in the McConnell got it just right on this deal from their match against TERRANEO of Austria, the holders of the title from four years ago.

Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ 2 ♥ 9 4 2 ♦ Q 10 6 3 2 ♣ K Q 6 4	<table style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 10 8 6 5 3 ♥ 8 ♦ A K 7 4 ♣ 9 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K ♥ A K Q J 7 6 5 ♦ J 9 5 ♣ 10 2	♠ Q J 9 7 4 ♥ 10 3 ♦ 8 ♣ A J 8 7 5									

West	North	East	South
Erhart	Dhondy	Smederevac	Smith
		2♠	4♥
4NT	Dble	5♣	Pass
Pass	Dble	All Pass	

In the other room the Austrian N/S pair were allowed to play 4♥ for a simple +450. There was more action at our table.

Two Spades was weak with spades and a minor and 4NT asked for the minor. Dhondy doubled 4NT and doubled again when 5♣ came around to her. Nicola Smith cashed two top hearts then switched to a trump. Jovanka Smederevac won in dummy and led the singleton spade. Dhondy found her first smooth duck on this trick and the queen lost to the bare king. Smith returned a second trump and again declarer won in dummy. This time she tried leading a low diamond but, once again, Dhondy followed low. From here there was no way to establish either side-suit and Smederevac made just seven trump tricks; down four for -800 and 8 IMPs to DHONDY. Two ducks - quack, quack.

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