

My friend Jude (the one who is known for obscure plays) loves pairs contests because he has only one person to whom he must justify his bidding. Usually he is trying to salvage something from the wreckage.

East/West Game. Dealer South.

♠ K1065
♥ 932
♦ J65
♣ 963

N
W S E

♠ Q97
♥ Q
♦ A98
♣ KJ10875

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♣
Dble	Pass	4♥	5♣
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

Jude's unilateral save with a good defensive hand mystified me.

"I thought they were stealing," he said, "and you know how I abhor thieves." Sure, I thought, the vulnerable opponents were stealing against our one club partial.

But Jude made his decision pay off. The opening lead was the (fourth-best) heart five. East won the king and shifted to the diamond two. Hoping for a fortunate diamond position, Jude ducked; but West won the king and returned the seven to East's ten. How would you play?

Jude won the diamond ace and put the seven of clubs on the table. A short while later, a spade to the ten allowed Jude to escape for down three. I understood the spade play, but needed help in following the trump suit logic. Jude was happy to explain. Indeed, he loves to explain.

"West was marked with the club ace, and I had to hope East had the queen. As West held only three diamonds, he was a heavy favourite to have four spades. I couldn't read the heart position to get a complete count, but it was clear that I couldn't pick up Q-x of trumps in East's hand. If I crossed to dummy in the spade suit, West would see his partner's signal and would play ace and another spade after winning the trump ace. So the actual trump position was the only one I could handle. Playing for a 2-2 split is an insult to the opponents."

JUDE GOES FOR THE MATCHPOINTS

by DAVID WEISS

The full deal:

♠ K1065
♥ 932
♦ J65
♣ 963

♠ AJ82
♥ J7654
♦ K73
♣ A

N
W S E

♠ 43
♥ AK108
♦ Q1042
♣ Q42

♠ Q97
♥ Q
♦ A98
♣ KJ10875

We bid another hand to what looked like the wrong contract, but I couldn't really see how to blame Jude for this one.

East/West Game. Dealer South.

♠ 742
♥ A4
♦ AJ7
♣ 87532

N
W S E

♠ AKQ1093
♥ 95
♦ 542
♣ AJ

West	North	East	South
—	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT*	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♣	All Pass	

* forcing

The opening lead was the club king, East following with the six. With nine obvious tricks in no-trumps available, our pair was in trouble. I could see how to make the contract if spades were 2-2 or clubs 3-3, but Jude considers even splits an affront to his talent. How would you play?

Jude won the club ace, drew three rounds of trumps and exited with the club jack. West won this, but East's ten was speared. That was all Jude needed. A diamond came back. Jude grabbed it and floated the club eight, pitching a diamond as East showed out. Once again Jude had outscored the good bidders.

♠ 742
♥ A4
♦ AJ7
♣ 87532

♠ J65
♥ KJ86
♦ 93
♣ KQ94

N
W S E

♠ 8
♥ Q10732
♦ KQ1086
♣ 106

♠ AKQ1093
♥ 95
♦ 542
♣ AJ

We reached a normal contract on the next deal, but with Jude at the helm an average score is always unlikely.

North/South Game. Dealer West.

♠ AK10943
♥ 2
♦ J6
♣ AJ32

N
W S E

♠ —
♥ AKJ108643
♦ Q2
♣ 764

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♥*
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

* forcing

West began by cashing the ace and king of diamonds, to which East followed small. The shift was to the club ten, taken by the ace and greeted by East's eight. When Jude cashed the high spades to shed his

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clubs, East followed with the six and queen, West with the two and eight. How would you play the trump suit?

You can guess that Jude finessed. When I inquired about what seemed to me an anti-field as well as anti-percentage play, Jude pontificated on the necessity of backing one's judgement in the pairs game.

"With East having two spades to West's five, the chance that East will have the heart queen is markedly better than 50%. The likelihood of West having singleton or doubleton queen is less than 50%. So I was prepared to look silly."

I objected to this logic, "But how did you know East had only two spades? Couldn't he falsecard with impunity?"

"Sure," Jude replied. "But I'm ready to give an opponent a good score when he makes a clever play. What I don't want to miss out on is my chance to get a good score when the guy is just following suit."

♠ AK10943				
♥ 2				
♦ J6				
♣ AJ32				
♠ J8752	N	♠ Q6		
♥ 7	W	♥ Q95		
♦ AK98		♦ 107543		
♣ 1095	S	♣ KQ8		
♠ —				
♥ AKJ108643				
♦ Q2				
♣ 764				

Love All. Dealer East.

♠ Q
♥ Q9432
♦ K62
♣ A932

N	E
W	S

♠ AK10432
♥ 87
♦ Q108
♣ 85

West	North	East	South
—	—	Pass	2♥*

All Pass

* 5/6 spades, 2/3 hearts, 8-11 HCP

West led the heart ace, presumably from ace-king, and his partner signalled with the ten. West shifted to the club king. How would you play?

Jude ducked the club and won the continuation of the club cover. Then

he cashed the spade queen and led a diamond to the queen. Two high trumps picked up the suit, and Jude exited with his heart. West grimaced as he won the heart; since he had no more black cards, he could only try a diamond. But of course declarer played him for the jack rather than the ace, and a seemingly routine nine tricks rolled home.

Jude asked me why this was a 70% board. "It was a normal contract, and all I did was cash my winners. I was lucky to catch West with a doubleton club and the diamond jack, but the overtrick was gravy. I felt sorry for my LHO, since he found a fine shift at Trick 2. Anything else and I'll make three without a care."

Some unfortunates actually went down in 2♠ after a club shift. One declarer won the second club, cashed the spade queen, and tried to get to his hand by ruffing a club low. He was overruffed, and the defence could cash its heart and exit with a trump. Jude knew that the diamond queen was a sure entry, since West could hardly have that ace in addition to what he had shown.

♠ Q				
♥ Q9432				
♦ K62				
♣ A932				
♠ 876	N	♠ J95		
♥ AKJ6	W	♥ 105		
♦ J975		♦ A43		
♣ K7	S	♣ QJ1064		
♠ AK10432				
♥ 87				
♦ Q108				
♣ 85				

We were back in form on the last deal. The wrong contract again, but Jude at the helm.

Love All. Dealer East.

♠ A8732	
♥ AKJ	
♦ J4	
♣ Q108	
N	
W	E
S	
♠ K4	
♥ Q9762	
♦ Q83	
♣ KJ3	

West	North	East	South
—	—	Pass	2♥*
Pass	3♥†	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

* 5-6 hearts, 2-3 spades, 8-11 HCP
† invitational

West led the spade ten. With four hearts likely (but not guaranteed) to make, how would you play 3NT?

Jude played the hand with undetectable brilliance. He won the spade king, crossed to the heart ace, and led a club to the king. No-one could blame West for grabbing the trick and triumphantly shifting to a low diamond. When East won the ace and returned a diamond, Jude had his ten tricks. By showing his high cards, Jude had terrorised West (East was simply mesmerised).

♠ A8732				
♥ AKJ				
♦ J4				
♣ Q108				
♠ 109	N	♠ QJ65		
♥ 1085	W	♥ 43		
♦ K972		♦ A1065		
♣ A954	S	♣ 762		
♠ K4				
♥ Q9762				
♦ Q83				
♣ KJ3				

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