


## December Problem

<p>♠J 10 9 7 ♥9 4 3 ♦10 4 ♣J 9 3 2</p>		<p>♠8 5 4 ♥K J 6 ♦Q 9 5 ♣A 10 7 6</p>	<p>♠Q 3 ♥A 10 7 5 ♦K J 7 3 ♣Q 8 4</p>
<p>♠A K 6 2 ♥Q 8 2 ♦A 8 6 2 ♣K 5</p>			


<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	3 NT	1 ♦	1 NT
		All Pass	
<i>Trick</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i> <i>4th</i>
1. W	♠J		

You have (in all probability) two tricks each in spades, hearts, and clubs – and thus need three in diamonds. East will not have three diamonds unless he is four-four in the majors, and this looks unlikely when West leads the jack of spades. And there is no reason to expect East to hold five diamonds, either.

East needs the diamond king for his opening bid. Assuming East has four diamonds, there are three distributions where East has both the jack and ten, and seven where he does not; the actual diamond layout (or its equivalent) is a likely one. The play for this distribution actually has a name: the *Infra-Finesse*. Lead a diamond to the nine, losing to East's jack or ten. Then get to dummy and lead the queen of diamonds through East, pinning West's ten. If East covers, go back to dummy and finesse his seven.


This problem drew one (correct) answer, from Audrey Ventura. She wins the free play.

## November Problem

	♠J 10 4 ♥10 6 ♦K J 8 7 ♣6 5 3 2			
♠K 9 6 5 ♥9 8 4 2 ♦9 4 2 ♣7 4		♠Q 8 7 ♥K Q J ♦A 10 6 5 ♣A J 10	♠A 3 2 ♥A 7 5 3 ♦Q 3 ♣K Q 9 8	N-S Vul
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
				1 NT
All Pass				
<i>Trick</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
1. W	♥2			

“If I coulda thrown ‘em in *one more time*, I coulda made seven!” When I played this hand (in a KO match in Charlotte) I threw them in three times, and made my seven tricks.

Ashok Damle suggests leading a diamond to the jack at trick two. East has to duck, and you can lead a club to your king and *then* throw East in with heart winners. Walter Stein starts the same way I did, by “cashing” the queen of diamonds, and then putting East in with a heart. East took his other heart winner and advanced the jack of clubs, won by the king. The second round of diamonds put East in again; he cashed the ace of clubs and exited with the ten. I took my club winners, producing this cute position:

	♠J 10 4 ♥ ♦K ♣			
♠K 9 6 ♥8 ♦ ♣		♠Q 8 7 ♥ ♦10 ♣	♠A 3 2 ♥7 ♦ ♣	

I led my losing heart and discarded dummy's good king of diamonds. West had to lead a spade, producing my seventh trick.

Despite the pretty ending, I think the best play is to lose the heart at trick two. As I played, East had the chance to cash the ace of diamonds before exiting in clubs; this would limit me to two throw-ins. But even with ideal declarer play, I believe the defense can prevail.

I judge both entries as "correct." Walter Stein wins the free play.