

**The Pen Is Mightier Than the Sword
The J 10 is Stronger Than the K Q J 10 7
The 8 is King
THE DEUCE IS WONDER WOMAN**

Look at this hand from this week's Richmond newspaper.

	K 3	
	5 2	
	Q J 10 7 5	
	A 8 6 3	
9 8 7 2		J 10 4
K 8 7 4		J 10 9 3
8 3 2		A 4
5 4		K Q 7 2
	A Q 6 5	
	A Q 6	
	K 9 6	
	J 10 9	

SPOTS COUNT

Many of the new players know Govind Naryan. Some of you have played with him on Thursday nights when there was a game at the Bridge Center, and many of you have played against him. He is always glad to help new players. Even when you do not have the opportunity to play with him or against him, because of the Virus, you can learn a lot from his BBO handle, **SPOTSCOUNT**.

In chess a pawn can become a queen. At bridge little cards can become more powerful than big cards. Spots do count. Look at the hand above. While it is not immediately obvious, the 8 of clubs is the key to the correct play of this hand.

After a simple auction of 1 No Trump. Three No Trump, West led the 5 of clubs. Declarer did not go through the steps necessary to plan a line of play. He looked at his J 10 9 of clubs, and became very greedy. He assumed that West led from a good suit and that he could get three club tricks, in addition to four diamonds, a heart and three spades; 11 tricks would be a clear top.

He was correct about that last assumption, it would have, BUT he forgot to ask “What Could Go Wrong?” And failed to appreciate the power of the lowly 8 of clubs. And it went very wrong in a hurry.

East won the queen of clubs and shifted to the jack of hearts. No matter what declarer did from there, he was doomed to lose three hearts, a club and the ace of diamonds.

If declarer counted his spots, he would have won the ace of clubs at trick one. He would have seen that even if the opponents cashed the king and queen later, his 8 would hold up as a second stopper. If you don't believe it, try it. Take a pencil and scratch out the cards as they are played. The 8 would be king.

Now all that you have to do is knock out the ace of diamonds, and cash your top tricks. You will get three spades, four diamonds a heart and a club, and if West actually has the high clubs, you can set up the 8 for the tenth trick, without risking the heart finesse.

Three cheers for the lowly 8.

Wonder Woman vs. the Queen of Hearts

Now let's see how strong a deuce can be. To get there, you have to want to show off to your opponents, to be sort of a smart a—.

This was my hand.

	A K 2	
	4 3	
	9 8 7 2	
	K Q 5 2	
J 10		9 8 7 6 5 4
K J 10 9 8		7 6 5
A K Q		J 10
10 4 3		9 8
	Q 3	
	A Q 3	
	6 5 4 3	
	A J 9 6	

West opened one heart. Right or wrong, my partner doubled, and after East passed, I bid three no trump. West led a safe jack of spades, as good as anything. A new player would count tricks, four clubs, three spades and a heart, and would promptly take the heart finesse. But with West opening the bidding, that would be doomed to failure. West must hold that card for his opening bid.

Even if West had not bid, there is no hurry to take the finesse. If it would work at trick two, it would still work at trick twelve. There must be a better way to develop another trick.

Spots Count. Look at diamonds. The chance that a suit will divide 3/2, when your side holds 8 cards, is better than 60 percent. So, let's start there. I won the ace of spades and led the 9 of diamonds from dummy. West had to win, and he led a second spade. I won in my hand and led a second diamond. Again, West had to win. I played the 8 from dummy, and East followed. Diamonds were going to come home. West, not wanting to lead a heart into what was certainly my A Q and having no more spades, shifted to a club. I won in dummy and played the 7 of diamonds. These were the remaining cards at that point.

	K	
	4 3	
	2	
	Q 5 3	
_____		8 7 6
K J 10 9 8		7 6
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10 3		10 8

	A Q 3	
	6	
	A J 9	

West led a club, which I won in in my hand. I cashed the ace of hearts, played the last two clubs, ending in the dummy, and finally cashed the King of spades, discarding the six of diamonds from my hand. The deuce of diamonds - Wonder Woman - won trick twelve, and I conceded a heart. I never had to take the heart finesse.

The Queen of Hearts may be the most powerful card in Wonderland, but it was the deuce of diamonds that took the winning trick. Wonder Woman prevailed over the Queen of Hearts. If I had tried the finesse with the queen of hearts, my partner might have said OFF WITH YOUR HEAD.

Spots count. Always look for extra ways to win tricks and do it at the beginning of the hand before you play to trick one. On the first hand the eight of clubs would have saved the day. On the second, a small diamond was more important than the queen of hearts.

I am always glad to answer your bridge questions. You can reach me at maddhttr@hotmail.com. I always answer your inquiries at my first possible opportunity. I am hopeless with internet technology; so please send me a copy of the hands along with your questions.

Please support the Bridge Center games.

Monday at 2:15, 0 - 3500

Wednesday at 10:15. 0 - 3500.

Wednesday at 6:35, 0 - 299

Thursday at 1:15, 0 - 1500

Friday at 1:15, 0 - 500.

Please also support the Friendly Bridge/Richmond Bridge Association games:

Sunday at 1:15, 0-500 and 6:35, 0-200

Tuesday at 7:00, 0-500

And for the newer players who play in Linda's Sunday game, please join Linda for a review of several of the problem hands from that game. I will continue to join Linda when my work schedule permits. We have a great time, and the hour goes so quickly that it hardly feels like a lesson.