

Article 14a Answer to Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid

Butch Cassidy has matured and is playing in the weekly con-man's bridge club in their Bolivian saloon bar when he and was dealt this hand. No-one else had bid what was probably potentially the optimum contract.

Butch is dealt:

♠ K92
♥ A7
♦ 63
♣ AKQJ85

South, the Sundance Kid opens the bidding with 3NT and West passes.

At least we know what sort of hand the Sundance Kid holds, if he is to be trusted!!

Henry Grondoff of *The Sting* is playing West at the next table

At the most tables 3NT was passed out and indeed one table managed to find a 3♦ contract (*Eleanor underbidding again?*) 😊

What should Butch bid and why?

You know exactly what kind of hand Sundance holds. He should have a long 7-card solid minor with little if anything outside. You can be sure of making 12 tricks in 6♦, so long as you are declarer. Because then your ♠K is protected. The full deal is:

	♠ K92	
	♥ A7	
	♦ 63	
	♣ AKQJ85	
♠ Q853		♠ AJ1074
♥ J953		♥ KQ82
♦ 42		♦ 97
♣ 942		♣ 103
	♠ 6	
	♥ 1064	
	♦ AKQJ1085	
	♣ 76	

♦6 played by North makes 12 tricks, *no sweat*.

All 3NT make 12 tricks, except one table next to Butch. so unless Butch had bid the small slam he would have been third bottom.

How did Henry Grondoff manage to put the 3NT contract back?

The textbooks tell you to lead an Ace against a gambling 3NT that is passed out. The idea being to see dummy and decide what suits to attack.

But what do you lead if you have no aces?

Henry never obeys any rules and leads the ♠Q, voilà: (*Isn't Henry's Spanish perfect, he knows that means "voilà"*) partner now makes 5 tricks to put the contract back.

Is there a case for Henry's eccentric lead?

Surely there is if you are aceless: you desperately need to lead a suit in which partner holds the ♠A and dummy has at best the ♠K, so an honour card even if unsupported, must be your best chance of success, and you need your partner to hold less than if you lead the ♥J.

As Sherlock says in article 1 ***"Elementary my dear Watson"***