

THOSE AGGRESSIVE ROBOTS

I was sitting in the South with this hand:

♠ AQ863 ♥ ----- ♦ K5 ♣ AQJ742

All the other players were robots. I was playing a money game on the iBridgePlus app I have on my iPad. The good thing about playing against robots is that they never criticize your mistakes. The bad thing is that sometimes you don't understand what they're doing.

After two passes, I saw that my RHO open 1NT. I didn't know what system my robot partner was playing over a 1NT opening, so I overcalled 2♠, planning to rebid my clubs if partner didn't like spades. West jumped to 4♦ which was a natural diamond bid. I didn't like being pushed around so I bid my longer clubs at the 5-level. That didn't stop West. He took the push to 5♦. This is where I thought my partner started going off the rails. He bid 6♣, which was doubled by my RHO. That didn't phase West. He now bid 6♦. My partner kept going with a 7♣ bid, doubled by my RHO.

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1NT	2♠
4♦	Pass	Pass	5♣
5♦	6♣	Dbl	Pass
6♦	7♣	Dbl	All Pass

West led the ♥J and I got to see this dummy:

	North
	♠J42
	♥98742
	♦ -----
	♣108653
West	
♥J	
	South
	♠AQ863
	♥ -----
	♦K5
	♣AQJ742

I thought maybe he was kidding. But robots don't kid. They are programmed to be competitive and have no fear of my being set. My partner had only 1 HCP but the combination of 5 clubs and a void in diamonds convinced him that a sacrifice would give us a better score than their making a game in diamonds.

So I grit my teeth and thought of various ways to play this grand slam without losing too many tricks. The standard play would be to trump the lead in my hand; then go to the dummy with a diamond ruff and lead the ♣10, hoping the ♣K is in East.

But I thought I could do better to cross ruff hearts and diamonds ending in the dummy. When I led the ♠J, East played second hand low (a mistake: he should have covered the honor with an honor) and it held. I then led a low spade to my ♠Q and West discarded. That meant he had no clubs and West started with 4 spades. That also meant I could set up my 5th spade for an extra trick. I led the ♠A from my hand and ruffed my 4th spade, felling East's ♠K. Now I could lead a club to my hand, finessing the known ♣K in East. I pulled his last trump and claimed 13 tricks.

Granted, the contract would have failed if East had put his king on my ♠J. But real players make the same mistake when they either play too fast or lose concentration and play by rote.

Here is the whole deal:

D 8	N North	W N E S
	♠ J72 ♥ 98742 ♦ ♣ 108653	P P 1NT 2♠ 4♦ P P 5♣ 5♦ 6♣ X P 6♦ 7♣ X P
W West	E East	
♠ 4 ♥ KJ105 ♦ QJ1076432 ♣	♠ K1095 ♥ AQ63 ♦ A98 ♣ K9	
	S South	
	♠ AQ863 ♥ ♦ K5 ♣ AQJ742	7♣ S NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/q29562c> . Or, copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the “Next” button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on “Play” you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.