

Pushing frontiers

Susanna Gross

If I could turn the clock back 50 or 60 years, my bridge would be considered far more impressive than it is today. Just as athletes are constantly setting new world records, bridge players are steadily pushing forward the frontiers of the game. It has evolved dramatically over the past few decades — just as I'm sure poker will do now it has exploded in popularity.

I was reminded of this while browsing through a recent booklet celebrating 60 years of the Lederer, a spectator tournament which takes place annually at the Young Chelsea Bridge club to showcase the country's top players.* This is a hand which two declarers were floored by in 1956; it's not easy, but you would expect any expert today to make it:

Both vul.

Dealer West

	♠ 7 5 4 2											
	♥ 5 4											
	♦ 10 5											
	♣ J 10 7 6 3											
♠ A J 10 ♥ Q 10 9 8 ♦ 9 7 4 2 ♣ 8 4	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ — ♥ A K J 7 6 3 2 ♦ A Q 8 3 ♣ A Q	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ K Q 9 8 6 3											
	♥ —											
	♦ K J 6											
	♣ K 9 5 2											

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	2♥	2♠
3♥	pass	4♣	pass
4♥	pass	5♦	pass
6♥	pass	pass	pass

Both Souths led the ♠K. One declarer ruffed, drew trumps and led the ♦2 to his ♦Q, losing to the ♦K. South switched to a club and declarer could not avoid losing a further trick to the ♦J. At the other table, declarer took the ♠A and discarded the ♣Q. He drew trumps, eliminated spades and clubs, then finessed a diamond. South again returned a club, giving declarer a ruff-and-discard but ensuring a second diamond for himself.

The winning line is to take the ♠A, pitching a diamond, and play the ♠J, discarding another diamond. South will win and continue spades but declarer can discard the ♦Q on the ♠10, cash the ♦A, enter dummy with the ♥10, ruff a diamond, enter dummy with the ♥Q and ruff another diamond. Finally he can cross to dummy with a third trump and discard the ♣Q on the established ♦9.

* This year's Lederer will take place on the weekend of 20/21 October; for more details contact Simon Cochemé on 020 76033032.