



Around the world with 52 cards

Travels and adventures of a bridge pro

Migry Zur Campanile

Gorgeous beaches, warm water and glorious sunshine all year-round, this combination has put the Algarve firmly on the list of top European holiday destinations.

Situated in the extreme south of Portugal, most of the Algarve's trendy, modern holiday resorts were formerly little fishing villages. They still feature central areas with narrow streets, whitewashed houses and ancient churches, but it is the region's long sandy beaches and ubiquitous golf courses that have ensured its place as a holiday Mecca, especially for all the sun-starved Northern Europeans desperately craving a tan in the morning and a quick 18 holes to round up the day.

The Algarve and precisely the town of Vilamoura was the designated host city for the 1995 European Championships. Being Israeli, and as such rather used to a regular diet of sea and sunshine, I would have preferred a location closer to places of general interest like Lisbon or Oporto. Nevertheless, I found plenty to do during the few breaks allowed by a very intense playing schedule. After having scouted the local open-air street markets, I took a day trip to the nearby city of Lagoa. Once there I got happily lost in its maze of small streets full of shops and eateries, with a hustle and bustle that reminded me of Indiana Jones wandering through the streets of Cairo ...

the same whitewashed buildings, the same dusty heat, the same baskets full of exotic wares.

At the river mouth it was possible to hire fishermen to tour you through the grottos. I jumped at the chance and signed on with a sunburned, scar-faced fisherman, who looked like he just came out of "Treasure Island." He buzzed us along the many private coves, hiding perfect white-sand beaches and the amazing craggy rock formations. When we reached the grottos he expertly threaded the motorboat through narrow barnacled chasms to enter the inner section. The sea water in the caves glittered magically with the reflections of sunlight in many wondrous shades of the purest blue one can imagine, while in the background our Portuguese fisherman switched languages effortlessly to cater to his multinational clientele. Such are the wonders of modern day tourism.

"Back at the ranch," as they say, our ladies' team was doing pretty well after a slow start, and we managed to close the tournament with a respectable third place, enough for a medal and admission to the next Venice Cup.

The critical point that started our run towards the higher echelons of the standings was our 20-10 win against the strong Dutch team. Here's a hand from the match.

We were vul against not. Partner passed and RHO opened 1♦. I held:

♠ K Q 10 5 ♥ Q 10 7 6 ♦ K J ♣ A 8 6

I decided to double. I don't like to overcall 1NT with such hands; the insufficient trick-taking potential and the 4-4 in the majors means that the hand is much better (and more safely) described with a double.

My partner, Ruti Levit, bid 2♦, showing a good hand, within the context of her first-round pass, and asking me to describe my

hand further. Since I can double on a variety of distributions with 4-3 in the majors, we tend to give each other plenty of room to bid out our hands: There is nothing more frustrating than ending up in game on a 4-3 fit when there is an easy alternative in 3NT.

I replied by bidding my cheaper four-card major, and when Ruti raised me to 3♥ I was happy to accept her invitation and bid game.

A recap of the bidding:

	Ruti		Migry
West	North	East	South
—	pass	1 ♦	double
pass	2 ♦	pass	2 ♥
pass	3 ♥	pass	4 ♥
(all pass)			

West led the ♦3 (MUD from three small and second from x-x-x-x) and dummy came down:

North
 ♠ A 4
 ♥ 9 8 5 3
 ♦ Q 6
 ♣ K 10 9 7 4

South
 ♠ K Q 10 5
 ♥ Q 10 7 6
 ♦ K J
 ♣ A 8 6

The unfortunate duplication in diamonds meant that the contract was not as good as I hoped. East took the ♦3 with the ace and played back the ♦10 to my king and West's 5.

At first glance I thought that the only line would be to play a spade to the ace and continue with the ♥9, in the hope that East, an overwhelming favorite to hold the ♥A-K, might play low with A-K-x. I would then put up my queen, eliminate spades and play back a heart to throw East in and give her the option of a ruff and discard or opening up the clubs.

After some reflection I came to the conclusion that this was wishful thinking: This line would probably work against most opponents, but any expert worth his salt would know that I can easily place the top heart honors — thanks to the bidding — and would scuttle my plan by hopping up with the ♥A-K and exiting with a heart, waiting for the setting trick. Was there an alternative line?

On second thought, perhaps the winning shot was to play East for stiff ♥A-K, in which case I had to guess immediately how many spades she had started with in order to strip the suit before playing trumps to take away an easy exit. I had six spades and the outstanding seven cards would divide 4-3 most of the time (62% to be exact).

North
 ♠ A 4
 ♥ 9 8 5 3
 ♦ Q 6
 ♣ K 10 9 7 4

South
 ♠ K Q 10 5
 ♥ Q 10 7 6
 ♦ K J
 ♣ A 8 6

The ♦3 lead followed by the 5 on the second round pointed heavily towards the lead being from three small, and since East was, therefore, marked with diamond length, it was reasonable to assume that she was more likely to hold three spades than four. Besides, I would have no way of controlling the play if East had started with a 4-2-6-1 shape. If I tried to ruff a fourth spade, West would score the ♥J.

At this point, one of those strange *deja vu* experiences brought to mind a hand played by Helen Sobel, who in a vaguely similar layout succeeded in guessing a stiff A-K.

That sort of cheered me on and, according to my new plan, I cashed three rounds of spades, then led the ♥6 away from the Q-10-7-6 and held my breath.

I was elated when East took the trick with her ♥K. After some thought, she could not reconcile herself to any layout where I did not have Q-J-10-x of trumps and, therefore, instead of finding the winning defense of returning a third round of diamonds (followed soon by a fourth round), to set up a trump promotion for her partner's ♥J, decided to put me to a guess by cashing her ♥A and switching to the ♣Q.

I was not to be denied now. I assumed from West's carding in diamonds (the 3, then the 5) that West started with three of them and that East had a 3-2-6-2 shape. Therefore, West was twice as likely to hold the ♣J than East. I took the ♣Q with my ace, took out the last trump, finessed West successfully for the ♣J and claimed ten tricks. This was the complete hand....

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

At the other table the same contract was reached, but the Dutch declarer followed the original plan I had devised (leading a

spade to the ace and a trump), which my teammate foiled by cashing the trumps and exiting with a spade.

Editor's Note: To avoid an endplay, East could win the ♦A at trick one, cash two high trumps, and then exit with a diamond. But this defense would be wrong if partner led the 3 from 3-2 doubleton, and 10-x-x or J-x-x of trump. Declarer's ♦J could be a falsecard from K-J-5. However, then Migry would have overcalled 1NT, not doubled. Also, South might hold the ♣J and the endplay isn't necessary. All in all, East should probably just keep playing diamonds, hoping to promote a trump trick.