

# Time out

## Janet de Botton

August is here, school's out and I'm on my yearly sabbatical. No more -470 for a month. No more patronising smiles from my long-suffering partner. No more listening to the utterly obvious line of play to which I had been completely blind and which cost my team another 12 IMPs. And no more shivering excitement at picking up the first hand of a match and getting into gear. Until September, that is.

Most serious players run the risk of getting 'bridged out' and could benefit from a break. In the closing stages of the European Championships, a normally solid English declarer had a complete blind spot on the hand below and not only went off at the table but also, when his team mates not-so-subtly pointed out that there were 10 'toppies', couldn't see it.

Dealer North

N/S vulnerable

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

♠ 8  
♥ K J 7  
♦ A Q J 9 7  
5  
♣ K Q 2



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

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1NT	pass	2♥
3♦	pass	pass	4♠
Pass	pass	pass	

West led the ♣K which held the trick and continued with the ♣Q won by dummy's Ace. A spade finesse and a heart to the queen produced two more tricks for declarer, but when West showed out on the second spade finesse there was work to do and South lost his way. Thinking he didn't have the required three entries to dummy for a trump coup he gave up a trump and hoped for a miracle in the endgame. There wasn't one.

In fact, he should just have pressed on. A diamond up will see West win his Ace and continue with the ♦Q to knock out an entry to dummy. Now South can ruff a club, enter dummy with the ♥A and ruff another minor suit card. With only the Ace and Queen of trumps and a losing heart left in his hand, he can exit with the heart and claim the last two tricks.

Roll on September!