



IBPA Column Service

Tim Bourke, Canberra

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693. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ K 7 6 4 2 ♥ 5 ♦ 10 7 6 3 ♣ 8 5 4 ♠ 10 9 8 3 ♥ K J 8 2 ♦ K J 4 ♣ 7 3 ♠ A Q J ♥ A 10 3 ♦ A Q 5 ♣ K Q J 10	♠ 5 ♥ Q 9 7 6 4 ♦ 9 8 2 ♣ A 9 6 2
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West	North	East	South
—	—	—	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led a passive trump. Declarer cashed his trump honours, noting the 4-1 break. He saw that it would be fatal to cash the ace of hearts and ruff a heart in order to draw West's last trump; most of the time, the defenders would come in with the ace of clubs and cash three heart tricks.

After some thought, declarer decided to rely on the diamond finesse for his contract and so played on clubs. West signalled his doubleton and was given a club ruff on the third round of the suit with the nine of clubs. West exited with a heart and declarer had to lose two diamond tricks.

Declarer complained about his bad luck but dummy was, as ever, unsympathetic. "At trick four, just play a low heart. Say East wins and plays a diamond, you play low from hand and West wins the trick with the jack. A heart exit is as good as anything and you would ruff, draw the last trump, throwing the queen of diamonds from hand, and then play on clubs. All the defence would make is a trick in each of the side suits."

694. (see top of next column.) East thought that one notrump was the best choice on his hand but, after South doubled, he realised that discretion was in order and ran to two diamonds.

Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ 10 7 6 ♥ A Q 4 3 ♦ Q J ♣ A 6 3 2 ♠ 8 ♥ 10 9 7 6 ♦ 9 6 3 2 ♣ Q 10 8 5 ♠ A K Q J 9 4 3 ♥ 8 5 ♦ 4 ♣ J 9 4	♠ 5 2 ♥ K J 2 ♦ A K 10 8 7 5 ♣ K 7
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West	North	East	South
—	1♣	INT	Double
Pass	Pass	2♦	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the two of diamonds (fourth-best). East won the first trick with the king of diamonds and continued with the ace of diamonds. Declarer paused to form a plan.

The opening lead suggested that East started with at least six diamonds. Declarer counted nine winners and the extra trick had to come from either hearts or clubs. As there were only 16 points outstanding, the heart finesse was destined to fail. If East had begun with four hearts, then given his presumed six diamonds he would have a 6-4-2-1 or a 6-4-3-0 shape, both of which would have been inconsistent with the one-notrump overall. Consequently, declarer was confident that he could ruff out the king of hearts.

Declarer ruffed the second diamond and drew trumps with the ace and king. His next move was to duck a heart. West was surprised when he won the trick and he exited with the five of clubs. When declarer ducked in dummy, East won the trick with the king and returned a club. Declarer tried a hopeful nine but West played the ten and dummy's ace took the trick. Declarer continued with the ace of hearts and a heart ruff, bringing down East's king. Finally, declarer used dummy's ten of trumps as an entry to dummy to discard his last club on the established queen of hearts.

695. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	INT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led the queen of spades against this routine contract. East played the king and declarer ducked. East returned a spade and declarer won the trick with ace.

Declarer saw that five club tricks were required to make the game. The only issue was to avoid plays that would block the suit. As the cards lay, playing the three of clubs at trick three would have brought about just such a fate, as dummy's top clubs would have been needed to take care of East's clubs and declarer would have been left with a club higher than any in dummy, thereby finishing one trick shy of his contract. The other issue to consider was the possibility that West had the four outstanding clubs. In that case, declarer saw that he would then need to come back to hand and use the ten-nine of clubs to finesse against West's jack.

Consequently, declarer led the seven of clubs at trick three to dummy's queen. Luckily both defenders followed. Declarer's next move was to play the ace and king of clubs, unblocking the nine and ten from his hand. Next, declarer played dummy's four of clubs, which was high enough to take care of his three. The two of clubs was the crucial fifth trick in the suit and so the game was made.

696. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	Pass
1♠	Pass	Pass	INT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

The final contract was a touch on the thin side, but the declarer managed it with quite some skill. West led the three of spades and declarer made the key move of winning the first trick with dummy's jack of spades, as a prelude to unblocking dummy's three diamond honours.

After the diamonds were cashed, declarer played a spade to his king to cash the ace of diamonds. West had to find two discards and chose his two low clubs. This suggested to declarer that West began with a 5=2=2=4 distribution. Declarer placed West with a doubleton ace of hearts and so led a low heart next. West saw the endplay coming and so rose with the ace of hearts and exited with the queen of spades. Declarer cashed the king of hearts, to remove West's last card in hearts and then exited with a spade. West scored two spade tricks but at trick twelve, he had to lead from his ace-queen of clubs. The king of clubs was sure to score for the declarer's ninth trick.



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697. Dealer South. EW Vul.

<p>♠ 6 4 ♥ K J 7 3 ♦ 10 8 3 ♣ A 7 5 4</p> <p>♠ 10 9 8 7 5 ♥ 8 5 4 ♦ K J 5 ♣ 10 9</p> <p>♠ A 3 ♥ A Q 9 6 ♦ A Q 9 ♣ K 8 3 2</p>	<p>♠ K Q J 2 ♥ 10 2 ♦ 7 6 4 2 ♣ Q J 6</p>
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West	North	East	South
—	—	—	INT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led the ten of spades and East played the jack. Declarer won the trick with the ace, drew three rounds of trumps and exited with a spade. East won the trick with the queen and shifted to a diamond. Declarer played the nine and West won the trick with jack of diamonds, then exited with the ten of clubs. Declarer could do no better than play the ace, king and another club. Upon winning the third round of clubs, East led through a second diamond. When declarer's queen of diamonds lost to West's king, declarer was down one.

"What rotten luck: both diamond honours were wrong and East had the club length," complained South.

"Luck had nothing to do with it," said North. "You were on the right train when you exited with the spade at trick five, but it was too early. You should have cashed the ace and king of clubs beforehand. East can win, cash a club and exit with a diamond, but will then be endplayed when he takes your ten of diamonds with his jack. Essentially, you gave East two opportunities to lead diamonds instead of just one."

698. Dealer West. EW Vul.

<p>♠ 9 6 3 ♥ K 10 6 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ 10 9 8 4</p> <p>♠ A 7 ♥ 9 3 ♦ A J 10 9 2 ♣ Q J 7 2</p> <p>♠ K Q J 10 8 5 4 ♥ A 4 2 ♦ 6 4 ♣ 3</p>	<p>♠ 2 ♥ Q J 8 7 5 ♦ 8 5 3 ♣ A K 6 5</p>
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West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♣	2♠	4♣	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West judged correctly that East's four-club bid could not be forcing as he'd had a three-spade call available to him. With clubs 4-1 and both diamond honours wrongly placed, his discreet final pass was the prudent call at the prevailing vulnerability.

West led the nine of hearts, which was clearly from a doubleton or singleton. Declarer saw that he had a fine dummy; the task before him was to keep partner happy by making the game.

The main issue was that there was an apparent loser in each suit and that the only way to avoid a heart loser was to make two diamond tricks, with the ace being onside. Thus declarer won the heart lead with his ace and led a diamond at trick two (although a club would have worked as well). West played low and dummy's queen won the trick.

Declarer now paused to consider the rest of the play. If East had the ace of trumps, there would be no way to prevent the defenders from make a heart trick. If he played a trump next and West had the ace he would win and play a heart next; then when West makes his ace of diamonds he would put East in with a club to cash a heart trick.

As result, declarer saw that he had to cut the link between the defensive hands by leading a club at trick three. On this layout, East won the trick with the king of clubs and exited with the queen of hearts. Declarer took this in dummy with the king of hearts then played a trump to the king and West's ace. West exited with a hopeful club, as he had no heart left. Declarer ruffed, drew the outstanding trump and then led a diamond, taken by West with the ace. As the nine of trumps remained in dummy as an entry to cash the king of diamonds, West had to concede the contract.

699. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

♠ Q
♥ K J 10 6 3
♦ K Q 10 2
♣ K 8 2

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♥
1♠	2♠	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

North's cue bid of two spades promised a limit raise or better in hearts, as an immediate three hearts would have been pre-emptive.

West began with the ace of spades and followed with the king of spades, which declarer ruffed. After drawing the trumps in two rounds ending in dummy, declarer ruffed dummy's remaining spade to eliminate that suit from his combined hands. Declarer saw that crossing back to dummy leading towards the king of clubs would be a weak move, relying entirely on the ace of clubs being onside. Instead, declarer decided to combine his chances in the minors. His first move was to cash the king and ace of diamonds in that order. When he led a third round of diamonds towards his hand East followed with a low card and the decision point of the deal was reached. After a little thought, declarer decided to finesse the ten of diamonds. When this won declarer discarded a club on the queen on the ace of diamonds, crossed to dummy with a trump and led a club to the king. West cashed two club tricks but the contract was safe.

"That was a lucky guess in diamonds," West offered.

"Not at all," said South. "If the ten of diamonds had lost to your jack, you would have been endplayed. You would have been forced to lead a club or give a ruff-and-discard and either way I would have made the contract. So, it wasn't a guess; it was finesse that was certain to win, even if it lost."

700. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♠!
2♥	3♥ ²	4♥	4♠
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♦
Pass	6♠	All pass	

1. 5+-card suit
2. Promises a good raise in spades

As the opponents had competed freely to four hearts, North placed South with at most a singleton heart and consequently made a slam try. South was happy to cooperate and the slam was bid.

West expected that one of his opponents was short in hearts and so found the best lead of a trump. Declarer saw that if trumps were 2-2, he could draw trumps and ruff the fourth round of diamonds if necessary. Similarly, the contract would be made easily if the diamonds split 3-3.

As neither of these favourable breaks was particularly likely, declarer was relieved when East followed to the trump lead. He aimed to make twelve tricks on a dummy reversal, ruffing four hearts in the South hand. After taking the first trick with dummy's nine of spades, declarer ruffed a heart. He returned to dummy with queen of trumps and ruffed a second heart. As the trumps were 3-1, declarer crossed to dummy with the ace of diamonds to ruff a third heart. After playing a club to the ace to ruff dummy's last heart, all that remained was to lead a club to dummy's king and draw West's remaining trump. Declarer made three trumps in dummy, four ruffs in hand and the five minor suit winners for a total of twelve tricks.



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701. Dealer East. EW Vul.

<p>♠ A 10 5 3 ♥ J 5 ♦ A 9 8 7 3 ♣ 9 3</p> <p>♠ 7 ♥ A K 9 2 ♦ 10 5 4 2 ♣ A J 6 4</p>	<p>♠ — ♥ 10 8 7 6 4 3 ♦ K J ♣ Q 10 8 7 5</p> <p>♠ K Q J 9 8 6 4 2 ♥ Q ♦ Q 6 ♣ K 2</p>
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West	North	East	South
—	—	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

East's initial pass, the vulnerability, South's pre-emptive opening bid and West's reticence conspired to keep East-West out of the auction, where 12 tricks, albeit rather fortunately, are available in hearts.

West led the king of hearts and shifted to the two of diamonds. As the cards lay, playing low from dummy would have been fatal: East would win the trick with the king of diamonds and shift to a club, giving the defenders four tricks before declarer gained the lead.

Instead of playing low at trick two, declarer called for dummy's ace of diamonds and led dummy's jack of hearts at trick three, throwing the queen of diamonds from hand. This loser-on-loser gave declarer a real chance of establishing a long card in diamonds without letting East gain the lead. West won that trick with the ace of hearts and shifted to his seven of trumps. Declarer took this with dummy's ten and followed with the six from hand. After ruffing a diamond high, declarer led the two of trumps to dummy's three to ruff another diamond high. Next came the four of trumps to dummy's five to ruff a third diamond, thereby establishing dummy's last diamond as a winner. All that remained for declarer to do was to cross to dummy with the ace of trumps and discard a club on the good diamond.

If the diamonds had broken 5-1, declarer would have had to hope that the ace of clubs was onside.

702. Dealer South. Both Vul.

<p>♠ 8 7 6 ♥ K 9 7 4 ♦ K 5 3 ♣ A J 5</p> <p>♠ K Q J 10 5 3 ♥ Q 10 8 5 2 ♦ — ♣ 10 7</p> <p>♠ A ♥ A J 3 ♦ A 10 9 7 6 4 2 ♣ K 3</p>	<p>♠ 9 4 2 ♥ 6 ♦ Q J 8 ♣ Q 9 8 6 4 2</p>
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West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♦
2♦	Double	2♠	3♠
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

After West made a Michaels Cue Bid, showing length in both major suits, North doubled to show some values. East's preference for spades gave South a problem and his choice of three spades indicated a powerful diamond-based hand. When North showed diamond support with his leap to five diamonds, South had an easy raise to six.

West led the king of spades to declarer's bare ace. All seemed routine for declarer until West discarded a spade on the ace of trumps. Declarer saw that his main chance of making the contract was to find West with the queen of clubs. However, he noted that there was an extra chance if East began with exactly three spades and one heart, not unlikely in view of his bidding: then East could be stripped of his major suit cards and put on lead with a trump when he would only have clubs left in his hand – then it wouldn't matter who had the queen of clubs.

Putting this plan into action, declarer drew a second round of trumps with dummy's king and ruffed a spade. Next, he crossed back to dummy with the king of hearts to ruff dummy's remaining spade. This was followed by the crucial move of unblocking the king of clubs, to ensure three tricks in the suit when East started with 3-1 in the majors.

Declarer continued with the ace of hearts and East was fixed! If he ruffed with his winning trump he would then have to play a club into dummy's ace-jack tenace, thereby giving declarer two tricks in the suit and a parking place for his heart loser. When East threw a club instead of ruffing he was put on lead with a trump for the same outcome.

703. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

South's two notrump rebid was forcing, asking for more information about the North hand. The leap to four hearts confirmed that North had four-card support for hearts and South used Roman Key Card Blackwood on the way to bidding the heart slam. North showed two key cards without the queen of hearts.

West led the queen of diamonds and declarer counted ten likely winners, a loser in trumps and a possible loser in clubs. Declarer saw that he would always make twelve tricks if the trumps were no worse than 4-1, whenever East had the king of clubs.

However, this declarer was not one to rely on a finesse when there was a better line available - that of ruffing two diamonds in hand. He took the lead with the ace of diamonds, cashed the king of diamonds and then ruffed a diamond with the king of trumps. Next he led the seven of trumps to dummy's nine. When East allowed this to hold, declarer ruffed a second diamond with the queen of trumps and then led the ten of trumps to dummy's jack. East took this with the ace and shifted to a club. Declarer rose with the ace of clubs and then crossed to dummy by playing the six of spades to the ace. Then he drew East's two remaining

trumps with dummy's eight and six before claiming his contract. He made four spade tricks, three trumps, two diamonds, two diamond ruffs in hand and the ace of clubs for a total of twelve tricks.

704. Dealer East. EW Vul.

<p>♠ K 5 3 ♥ J 9 8 6 2 ♦ A 6 5 ♣ 10 5</p> <p>♠ Q 10 7 ♥ K Q 7 4 ♦ Q J 10 ♣ Q 9 6</p>	<p>♠ 4 ♥ 5 3 ♦ 8 7 4 2 ♣ K J 8 7 4 2</p> <p>♠ A J 9 8 6 2 ♥ A 10 ♦ K 9 3 ♣ A 3</p>
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West	North	East	South
—	—	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

This deal was played in a teams match and both Wests led the queen of diamonds against four spades after identical auctions.

The first declarer took the opening lead in hand and played a trump to the king followed by a second trump towards his hand. When East discarded a club the contract could no longer be made.

The second declarer saw that if there was a trump loser he would have to find a way to avoid a loser in each of the side suits and then proceeded to show how that could be done. He took the opening diamond lead in hand with the king and cashed the ace of trumps. After both opponents had followed with small trumps, he then made the rather strange-looking play at tricks three and four of the ace followed by the ten of hearts. West rose with the queen of hearts and continued with the ten of diamonds. Declarer took this with dummy's ace and led the jack of hearts, discarding the nine of diamonds from hand after East threw a club. West took this with the king and tried to cash the jack of diamonds. Declarer ruffed this in hand and crossed to dummy with the king of trumps. East's second club discard was a slight disappointment but declarer was still in charge for he could discard his club loser on the established nine of hearts. All declarer lost was two hearts and a trump.

The diamond lead gave both declarers a chance to make the game, while a club lead would have left neither with a way of making four spades.



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705. Dealer South. EW Vul.

<p>♠ A 6 2 ♥ 8 6 4 2 ♦ 7 4 2 ♣ 7 5 3</p> <p>♠ K 8 ♥ J 10 9 5 ♦ J 9 6 3 ♣ Q 10 8</p> <p>♠ Q 7 5 4 ♥ A K Q ♦ A K 5 ♣ A K 4</p>	<p>♠ J 10 9 3 ♥ 7 3 ♦ Q 10 8 ♣ J 9 6 2</p>
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West	North	East	South
—	—	—	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

South promised a 25-27 point balanced hand with his rebid of three notrump.

After West led the jack of hearts, declarer could count top eight tricks. The main chances were that one of the major suits would turn out to be 3-3 or that East had the king of spades. Declarer took the opening lead with the queen of hearts and cashed the king of hearts. When East followed to the second heart, declarer played the ace of hearts and was not particularly surprised when East discarded a low club.

Declarer now turned his attention to the spade suit, and did so by correctly ducking a round of spades before taking any positive action in the suit. West won the trick with the eight of spades and cashed the good ten of hearts, on which declarer threw the five of diamonds from hand. Declarer took West's diamond exit and played a low spade towards the dummy, intending to win with the ace and lead a spade from dummy. As it happened, West produced the king of spades and declarer now had two certain spade tricks for a total of nine tricks in all.

Declarer's method of tackling spades succeeds when East holds the king and when West holds the king singleton, doubleton or tripleton. This offers around an 85% chance of a second spade trick, once the 4-2 heart break is factored into the calculations.

706. Dealer South. Both Vul.

<p>♠ 8 5 3 2 ♥ K J 5 ♦ A 7 4 ♣ A 10 6</p> <p>♠ A K Q J 7 ♥ 8 6 3 2 ♦ J 9 2 ♣ 7</p> <p>♠ 10 ♥ A Q 10 9 7 ♦ K 6 3 ♣ Q J 9 3</p>	<p>♠ 9 6 4 ♥ 4 ♦ Q 10 8 5 ♣ K 8 5 4 2</p>
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West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♥
1♠	2♠	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

This deal came up in a teams match and both declarers found themselves in four hearts after an identical auction where each North's cue bid indicated a minimum of a traditional limit raise to three hearts, usually based on three-card support. As North was unlikely to have much wasted in spades, the game was bid at both tables.

At each table, West began with the king and ace of spades, while East signalled an odd number of cards in the suit.

The first declarer ruffed the second spade, drew trumps and ran the queen of clubs. When East won with the king of clubs and was able to produce a spade, this declarer finished up with only eight tricks.

The second declarer discarded a diamond loser on the second round of spades. After ruffing the third round of spades he drew trumps in four rounds before running the queen of clubs to East's king. However, this was not a disaster as East had no spades left. As it did not matter which minor suit East returned, declarer claimed ten tricks through five trumps, two diamonds and three clubs.

Discarding the diamond at trick two was a simple loser-on-loser play to cater for trumps being 4-1 and the king of clubs being offside.

707. Dealer North. E-W Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♥ ¹	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Splinter, agreeing spades

As a two-heart bid would have been a natural reverse, forcing for one round, North-South used a jump to three hearts as a mini-splinter try for game, agreeing spades and promising shortness in hearts.

West led the queen of clubs. Declarer took the trick with dummy's king of clubs then cashed the ace of trumps, pleased to find that the suit was not 4-0. Now he could count at least four trump tricks and three tricks in the minors. As ruffing two hearts would bring the total to only nine tricks when the trumps were not 2-2, he set about establishing the diamond suit. He continued with the ace and king of diamonds, followed by a third round of the suit.

When East followed, declarer was about to ruff the trick with a low trump when the thought occurred to him, "If I ruff this, what will happen if West has three trumps and two diamonds?" The answer was, "West will overruff with the ten of spades, cross to his partner's hand with the king of clubs and a fourth round of diamonds will promote West's queen of spades."

The solution to this problem came to declarer after a moment or two's thought. He could avoid such a fate by discarding his losing club. If East could play a fourth round of diamonds then declarer would ruff low and the defenders could take at most two more tricks.

At the table, East tried to cash the king of clubs, which declarer ruffed. Next, a low heart was conceded and the defenders were without recourse. East won and played another club. Declarer ruffed, played a trump to the ace and ruffed a diamond with the jack of trumps, establishing a long card in the suit. All West could take was the queen of trumps.

Of course, had declarer ducked the opening lead of the club queen, won the continuation, whatever it was,

drawn one round of trumps, then played a heart, he could not have been beaten on the lie of the cards.

708. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	INT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

After West led the king of hearts, declarer could count only seven top tricks. As the lead had given him another potential trick in hearts, he needed only one extra trick in spades for his contract. So he took the lead with the ace of hearts and led a spade to his queen and West's king.

West saw that the only hope for the defence was to shift to diamonds. So, he exited with the ten of diamonds, which was not a card welcomed by declarer. He tried dummy's queen of diamonds but East covered it with the king. As there was little point in holding up in diamonds, declarer took his ace, cashed his clubs, and then tested the spades. As East had not discarded a spade, declarer could do no better than play a heart. Alas, West rose with the queen of hearts to play the nine of diamonds and East claimed the rest of the tricks for down one.

"That was unlucky," moaned South. "Both kings were wrong."

"Luck had nothing to do with it," said North. "All you had to do was cross to hand at trick two and lead a low spade. If West takes the king of spades, you will have three spade tricks, enough for the contract. If the jack of spades wins the trick, you can then play the jack of hearts to establish your ten as the ninth trick."

South was about to speak when North imperiously held up a hand and continued, "Even if East was able to take the jack of spades with the king you would still make nine tricks as he could not profitably attack diamonds from his side of the table. So, no matter what East might return at that point, you would have time to establish a heart trick before West could attack diamonds."



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709. Dealer North. EW Vul.

<p>♠ A Q 10 8 ♥ A 7 5 4 ♦ K Q 3 2 ♣ 10</p> <p>♠ 3 ♥ Q 10 6 ♦ 10 8 5 4 ♣ K Q J 7 5</p> <p>♠ K J 9 7 ♥ 8 3 2 ♦ 7 ♣ A 9 8 3 2</p>	<p>♠ 6 5 4 2 ♥ K J 9 ♦ A J 9 6 ♣ 6 4</p>
--	--

West	North	East	South
—	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the king of clubs. Declarer won this in hand with the ace and played the seven of diamonds to dummy's king and East's ace. The expected trump return was made and declarer paused to consider how the rest of the play would proceed: he had three side-suit winners and so would have to make seven trump tricks, the one at trick three and six on a crossruff.

The question declarer asked himself was, "Where should I win this trump return?" Clearly, he needed to ruff three clubs and two diamonds, leaving a high trump in hand as his tenth trick. Declarer saw that if he ran the trump to dummy he would go down because he would no longer have the entries to ruff three clubs, so he took the trump return in hand with the nine and ruffed a club. As the standard plan when crossruffing is to cash the side winners, declarer played the queen of diamonds and the ace of hearts next. Then he crossruffed the minor suits for a total of nine tricks, with the ace of trumps still left in his hand as the tenth trick.

One final point is that, as the cards lay, West could have defeated the contract by leading his singleton trump.

710. (See top of next column.) North's weak major suits deterred him from responding with one notrump - he upgraded his hand a little due to the aces and doubleton heart and made a limit raise. West led the four of hearts. East took the trick with the ace and returned the queen, holding the lead. When West followed with two of hearts, declarer expected a third heart from East followed quickly by three more heart winners from West.

Dealer South. Both Vul.

<p>♠ 7 6 3 ♥ 10 8 ♦ A 10 6 3 ♣ A 8 6 4</p> <p>♠ 9 4 ♥ K 7 6 4 3 2 ♦ 5 ♣ J 10 9 3</p> <p>♠ A K ♥ J 9 5 ♦ K Q 8 4 ♣ K Q 7 5</p>	<p>♠ Q J 10 8 5 2 ♥ A Q ♦ J 9 7 2 ♣ 2</p>
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West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♦
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

However, instead of a third heart, the pleasant surprise of the queen of spades hit the table in its place. Declarer won this with the king of spades and realised that the hearts had been 6-2 originally, with the suit blocked. The task now was to take advantage of this unexpected twist.

Declarer counted eight top tricks and saw that there would at least nine tricks if one of the minor suits broke 3-2. As his pips in clubs were weaker than those in diamonds, declarer cashed the king and queen of clubs next. After noting East's spade discard, declarer could place West with 6-4 in the round suits. Thus the key to playing the diamonds was to discover how the other three cards in West's hand were distributed. So he cashed the ace of spades: if West had discarded on this trick, the diamonds would have been 3-2 and no special strategy would have been required to make four tricks in the suit. Once West followed to the ace of spades, however, he could have had at most one diamond: he must have begun with either 3=6=0=4 or 2=6=1=4 shape.

So declarer led his four of diamonds to dummy's queen, noting West's five. Next he led the three of diamonds and finessed the eight after East followed with the seven. This gave declarer four diamond tricks and the contract.

Obviously, it would have made no difference if East had split his jack-nine of diamonds. Declarer would then have won the trick with the king of diamonds and crossed back to dummy with the thoughtfully-preserved ace of clubs to finesse the eight of diamonds.

711. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Rather than perpetrate a reverse with 4-4 in the suits, South decided to take the slight risk of North's insisting on a spade contract and rebid two notrump. West led a fourth-highest two of diamonds to East's ten. Declarer decided to win the trick with his king of diamonds. This was a good move, for a heart shift would have defeated the contract as the cards lay – the defenders would then have made two spades, two hearts and a diamond.

Declarer could count seven winners in top cards and planned to gather two more from the spade suit. So, at trick two, he led the ten of spades of spades, which held the trick. Next, declarer cashed the ace of clubs and played the nine of clubs to dummy's jack, noting that the suit was 3-2. Then he called for dummy's queen of spades. East rose with the ace of spades and continued with the jack of diamonds to South's ace.

Declarer took advantage of the known 3-2 break in clubs to create an extra entry to dummy in clubs by leading the queen of clubs to dummy's king. Next he led the jack of spades and threw a heart from hand. West took this with the king of spades and cashed his two diamond winners, with dummy throwing hearts. When West exited with the ten of hearts, declarer took this in hand with the ace and led the three of clubs to dummy's five to cash the contract-fulfilling nine of spades.

Declarer would have succeeded if it had been West who won the second round of spades too, even if he had shifted to the ten of hearts. On that development, declarer would have played low from dummy and won the trick in hand with the ace of hearts and then led the queen of clubs to the king. As it would have been East who would win the next spade, the queen of hearts would've been safe from attack and again declarer would have made nine tricks.

Finally, if clubs had been 4-1 then declarer would have led up to dummy's queen of hearts in the hope that West had begun with the king of hearts.

712. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led a low trump. Declarer won the trick in hand with the queen and then drew the remaining trump with his ace. Next, he played the king and ace of clubs followed by his remaining club towards dummy's jack. While this was the best play in clubs, it did not work here as East was able to take the trick with the ten and continue with the queen of clubs. Declarer ruffed this and led a diamond to the queen which lost to East's king. Declarer's last chance to make the contract was the finesse of the ten of diamonds and when that failed he had to concede defeat.

"That was really unlucky," said South. "My line had better than a 90% chance of making ten tricks."

"Luck had nothing to do with the matter," said North. "There was a 100% line available. You started well by drawing trumps and cashing the ace and king of clubs. However, instead of playing a club at trick five you should have led the queen of hearts next. The defender who wins this cannot touch either minor without giving you a trick. So, he has to play a second round of hearts and, instead of ruffing, you discard the last club from your hand."

"After this, if East had been on lead and he had exited with a low club, you'd have discarded a diamond (intending to discard your remaining diamond on the jack of clubs if West were to win the trick with the queen). On the other hand, if it had been West who'd been on lead after the second heart as the cards lay, he would have had to play a diamond or give you a ruff-and-discard. (If West could have exited with a low club, you would cover the card with the jack and either win the trick, or East would have won and clubs would have been 3-3. If West had instead played the queen of clubs it would be a simple matter from there. So, no matter how the cards lay, you would have made ten tricks."



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713. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	INT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

This deal was played in a team game. The auction at each table was the same and each declarer received a fourth-highest five of hearts lead.

At the first table, declarer played the queen of hearts from dummy and this lost to the king. Noting that the declarer seemed unperturbed by this, East decided to try a spade switch. Declarer's queen lost to West's king and the spade return was won by declarer's ace. As he had only seven top tricks, declarer needed to bring in the diamond suit. As there was no reason to play for East to have begun with all of the missing diamonds, declarer continued by cashing the ace of diamonds. After West discarded a heart, this declarer had to lose a diamond trick and his contract.

The declarer at the other table showed how to make the contract safely. As a spade lead from East could cause difficulties, he called for the ace of hearts at trick one. As long as East did not gain the lead too early, four diamond tricks would give him contract. With that in mind, declarer led a low diamond from dummy and when East followed with the six, he played the eight from hand.

If West had been able to win the first diamond he would have had no winning return: declarer would make four diamond tricks and have time to set up a

second trick in hearts to make his contract. When the eight of diamonds held, declarer was able to play the diamond suit for five tricks and make an overtrick for a useful swing.

714. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	6♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

North's first response was a forcing-to-game heart raise and South's rebid indicated a six-card suit.

West led the jack of clubs. After winning the trick with the ace, declarer's dilemma was that there were finesse positions in three suits. The only finesse he could not avoid was in spades, so his next move was to lead the queen of spades. West covered this with the king, which was taken by dummy's ace of spades. After discarding a spade on the king of clubs, declarer ruffed dummy's remaining club.

Now declarer was in a position to improve upon relying on either a winning trump finesse or finding the queen of diamonds. After cashing the jack of spades, declarer played a trump to dummy's ace, then ruffed dummy's last spade. The elimination was now complete and declarer exited with a trump to East's king. East could see that a ruff-and-discard would give the contract away: instead he exited with the queen

of diamonds. This allowed declarer to claim his contract.

It should be noted that if the spade finesse had lost, declarer would have taken the trump finesse, hoping that the king was onside. If that were successful, the potential diamond loser would have been parked on dummy's king of clubs.

715. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led the five of spades, taken by dummy's bare ace. As he had only five top tricks and one more spade stopper, declarer saw that his best hope was to find diamonds 3-2 with the ace onside. When a low diamond was played from dummy East played the eight and declarer's king won the trick.

Next, declarer crossed to dummy's ace of hearts and led a second round of diamonds. East rose with the ace and declarer followed with the five from his hand, leaving him with the bare queen of diamonds in hand. All would have been well if he had received a major suit return but East could tell that the diamond suit was blocked and he attacked dummy's entry by leading the king of clubs. Declarer ducked two rounds of clubs but this led to naught as East persisted with the suit and the contract could no longer be made.

"You should have crossed dummy with the ace of clubs at trick three," said the ever-unsympathetic North. "Using the heart entry for the second diamond left you ripe for an entry killing club shift. As the cards lay, East could do no better than rise with ace of diamonds and cash three club tricks. However, that would be the end of the defence. If East exited with a heart, you would win in hand and cash the king of spades before unblocking the queen of diamonds. You could then cross to dummy with the ace of hearts and enjoy dummy's two good diamonds as your eighth and ninth tricks."

716. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

This deal occurred in a pairs game, which accounts for the declarer trying for ten tricks in hearts rather than eleven in clubs. West, who had been listening to the auction, began with ace, queen and another diamond. Declarer saw that his main chance was trumps breaking 3-3. He then pondered what he could do if trumps were 4-2. After some thought, he saw that he could survive a 4-2 trump break whenever the player with four trumps had both a singleton club and four spades. So, after ruffing the third diamond in dummy while discarding a spade from hand, he cashed the queen of trumps before playing the ace and king of clubs.

Now it was East's turn to pause to consider his options. As the cards lay, if he had ruffed the second club then the rest would have been easy for declarer: the best East could have done was to play another diamond, which declarer would have ruffed on the table, then crossed back to hand with a spade to draw trumps and claim.

There would be a similar outcome if East had thrown a diamond on the second club. Declarer would have continued with the ace, king and another trump to put East on lead with only spades left in his hand. Declarer would have won the forced spade return and run the clubs for his contract.

After some thought East discarded a low spade, and it was then declarer's turn to reconsider his options. Declarer knew East well: he was not the sort of player who would refuse to ruff the second club with only two or three trumps. So declarer decided to play East for four trumps and cashed the ace and king of spades, then ruffed his remaining spade in dummy. When the queen of clubs was played, East could do no better than ruff and play a diamond. As declarer had the ace-king-seven of hearts left, he ruffed this with the seven and took the last two tricks with master trumps for his contract.



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717. Dealer South. Both Vul.

<p>♠ J 10 5 ♥ K 4 ♦ A K 6 4 3 ♣ J 9 4</p> <p>♠ 7 2 ♥ J 10 9 8 3 ♦ Q J 9 5 ♣ K 2</p> <p>♠ A K Q ♥ A 6 ♦ 10 7 2 ♣ Q 10 7 6 3</p>	<p>♠ 9 8 6 4 3 ♥ Q 7 5 2 ♦ 8 ♣ A 8 5</p>
--	--

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	INT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led the jack of hearts against three notrump. Declarer counted seven tricks on top and turned his attention to the matter of finding tricks eight and nine. Clearly, the answer was not in playing on clubs as then, on most layouts, the defenders would have little trouble in taking at least three hearts as well as the ace and king of clubs. So, declarer focussed on making four diamond tricks. As this would have been routine if the diamonds were 3-2, he looked to see if he could overcome some of the 4-1 breaks. Upon reflection, he saw that the only such divisions that he could make four tricks against were those where East began with a singleton eight or nine.

As the king of hearts was the only side entry to dummy, declarer took the first trick with the ace of hearts and led the ten of diamonds. When West covered this with the jack declarer took it with dummy's king of diamonds and then played the three of diamonds to his seven. West had no answer: if he took the trick, declarer would be able to finesse the six on the next round of the suit while, if he ducked, declarer would continue with ace and another diamond to set up a long diamond, with that carefully preserved king of hearts as the entry to cash it.

Of course, if West had not covered the ten of diamonds, declarer would have played low from the dummy and won the trick. Then, the ace, king and another diamond would have set up a long diamond, again with the king of hearts as the entry to cash it.

718. Dealer South. EW Vul.

<p>♠ A Q 6 ♥ 7 6 5 3 ♦ A Q 9 ♣ 8 3 2</p> <p>♠ 8 4 2 ♥ Q J 10 8 ♦ J 8 3 ♣ 6 5 4</p> <p>♠ K J 10 ♥ A 9 4 2 ♦ 7 5 2 ♣ A K Q</p>	<p>♠ 9 7 5 3 ♥ K ♦ K 10 6 4 ♣ J 10 9 7</p>
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West	North	East	South
—	—	—	INT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

As North held a 3=4=3=3 shape with twelve points and a poor major suit, he bid a direct three notrump rather than use Stayman as he expected there to be a good play for that contract. West led the queen of hearts and, when East produced the king, declarer ducked, since no shift from East would be threatening. East switched to the jack of clubs, taken by declarer with the king. The suspected 4-1 heart division was confirmed when declarer cashed the ace of hearts and East discarded a diamond.

Declarer had eight tricks. Obviously, he could play on diamonds (finessing the nine first and then the queen, a 63% chance). As there was no particular hurry to start on diamonds, declarer delayed matters by cashing the ace and queen of each black suit. This brought no special information as both opponents followed suit. So, declarer cashed the kings of clubs and spades, finding both suits to be 4-3 – leaving East as having started with at most eight cards in the black suits. (If East had started with nine or ten cards in the black suits, declarer planned to finesse the queen of diamonds for his ninth trick.)

As East had at most two black-suit winners outside diamonds, declarer played a diamond toward the dummy with the intention of covering West's card. When that card was the three of diamonds, declarer played dummy's nine and East's took the trick with his ten. After cashing his two black-suit winners, East had to lead a diamond into dummy's ace-queen, surrendering the ninth trick to declarer.

Of course, if West had played the jack of diamonds on the first round of the suit, declarer would have covered it with the queen and it would have been taken by East with the king. After East had cashed his black-suit-winners, dummy would have taken the last two tricks with the ace and nine of diamonds.

Once both defenders had followed to two rounds of each black suit, declarer's subsequent overall plan would have succeeded in making a ninth trick close to nine times out of ten.

719. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♥
1♠	2♥	2♠	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

When this deal came up in a teams match, both tables reached four hearts by South on identical auctions. Both Wests led the king of spades and, after their partners indicated an even number of spades, they each shifted to the ten of diamonds.

The declarer at the first table was more of a card pusher than a card player and tried the jack of diamonds at trick two, which would not have been a fatal move for an expert on this particular layout.* Declarer took the queen of diamonds with the ace, then drew two rounds of trumps, ending in the dummy. Next, he led a club to his queen and West's king. (This declarer loved finesses.) As there was no way to avoid a further loser in each minor, declarer finished down one.

The declarer at the second table was in a different class: he hated finesses. This declarer played the two of diamonds from dummy and, after East followed with a low card, he played the three of diamonds from hand. West continued with a diamond but to no avail. Declarer took this with his ace, drew two rounds of trumps with the ace and dummy's queen. His next move was to ruff dummy's eight of spades. All of the preparation had been completed, and declarer crossed to dummy with the king of diamonds to lead the queen of spades and discard the four of clubs from hand on it. West took his ace of spades but found himself endplayed, forced either to lead a club or concede a ruff-and-discard: either way declarer had ten tricks.

* When East covers the jack of diamonds with the queen, declarer's objective is to keep East off play. Accordingly, he wins the queen of diamonds with the

ace, draws trumps and leads the six of diamonds. If West plays the four, declarer wins with the king and plays a third diamond, forcing West to win the trick and endplay himself. If West plays the nine or ten on the six, declarer lets him hold it. West can exit with a diamond, but this just delays the inevitable. Declarer wins with the king of diamonds, ruffs dummy's low spade, crosses back to dummy with a heart and throws a losing club on the queen of spades. West is endplayed just like the second declarer's defenders.

720. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The bidding was a little on the agricultural side but the final contract was a good one. West led the queen of hearts, taken by declarer with his ace. There were ten tricks on top and the main hope for extra tricks was in the diamond suit. If diamonds were 3-2, or trumps were 2-2 and diamonds no worse than 4-1, declarer saw that he would have twelve easy tricks.

Declarer's first move was to cash the ace and king of trumps, finding West had started with three trumps. Now all that remained was to establish the diamonds. As West held the missing trump, declarer began by cashing the ace of diamonds and leading a low diamond toward the king.

Although West had only one diamond, he was caught out by this! Eventually, he decided to ruff and play a second heart to dummy's now-bare king. Declarer cashed the king of diamonds, ruffed a club to hand and then ruffed the fourth round of diamonds with dummy's jack of trumps. The latter was his eleventh trick and the established diamond in hand was his twelfth.

If West had chosen to discard on the second diamond then dummy's king of diamonds should have won the trick. After that, declarer would have played a third round of diamonds to East. The best East could have done would have been to play a heart, after which a club ruff, a diamond ruff and a second club ruffed high would see declarer back in hand. Then, after drawing the last trump, declarer would have claimed as his hand would have contained only winners.



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721. Dealer South. Both Vul.

<p>♠ A 8 6 4 ♥ J 6 5 2 ♦ K 7 2 ♣ Q 5</p> <p>♠ Q J 10 7 3 ♥ Q 10 9 3 ♦ 10 8 ♣ J 7</p> <p>♠ 2 ♥ A K 8 7 4 ♦ A 5 3 ♣ A K 6 2</p>	<p>♠ K 9 5 ♥ — ♦ Q J 9 6 4 ♣ 10 9 8 4 3</p>
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West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

South saw little point in asking for key cards as that would have given East the chance to double North's response.

West led the queen of spades and, when dummy was tabled, declarer saw that it would be easy if trumps were no worse than 3-1. Things became a little more complicated at trick two when East discarded a club on the ace of hearts. After that unpleasant blow, declarer needed West to have begun with at least four spades. Since West had not led a minor-suit card, declarer also presumed that West had begun with at least two cards in each minor.

Declarer abandoned trumps and led a club to the queen to ruff a spade. After cashing the ace of clubs, he played the ace and king of diamonds, then ruffed dummy's third spade. He continued with the king of clubs, which offered West no winning option. At the table, West ruffed in with the nine of trumps to prevent a diamond discard from dummy. Declarer overruffed this with dummy's jack and continued by trumping dummy's last spade and cashing the king of hearts.

West had been reduced to the queen of trumps and a spade and dummy to a trump and a diamond, while declarer had a low card in each of the minors. Now declarer needed only to advance his last club. Nothing could then have prevented dummy's remaining trump from scoring a trick.

Alternatively, declarer could have trumped a spade at trick two and led a heart to the king at trick 11 to achieve a similar *en passant* position.

722. Dealer South. Both Vul.

<p>♠ K Q 9 2 ♥ A J 10 9 ♦ 7 5 3 ♣ A 2</p> <p>♠ 8 ♥ Q 8 3 2 ♦ A J 4 ♣ K Q J 9 5</p> <p>♠ A J 10 7 6 4 3 ♥ 7 4 ♦ K 8 6 ♣ 4</p>	<p>♠ 5 ♥ K 6 5 ♦ Q 10 9 2 ♣ 10 8 7 6 3</p>
--	--

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	3♠
Double	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

While his side had a reasonable save in five clubs, East decided that venturing to the five level, vulnerable, was far too likely to lead to disaster.

West led the king of clubs and declarer paused to form a plan. He had nine top tricks and the danger was that East would have one of the missing heart honours and West the ace of diamonds. In that case, declarer could have lost three diamonds and a heart. Declarer, rightly deciding he had to stop East from gaining the lead, consequently played a low club from dummy on the first trick. When East followed with the ten of clubs to suggest a heart shift, West duly shifted to that suit.

Declarer rose with dummy's ace of hearts, played a trump to his ace and followed with a trump back to dummy's king (in case trumps had been 2-0). Next, declarer discarded his remaining heart on the ace of clubs and then led the jack of hearts, running it when East played low. When West won the trick with his queen of hearts he saw that a club or heart return would have been hopeless and so exited with the ace and another diamond. The king of diamonds was declarer's tenth trick.

723. Dealer South. EW Vul.

♠ Q
♥ 9 3
♦ J 10 9 8 5 3
♣ A K 4 3

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

♠ A K 5
♥ K Q J 10 8
♦ Q 6 2
♣ 5 2

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	INT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led the ten of spades to dummy's queen. Declarer counted five tricks in the black suits. While four tricks from the heart suit would bring in the game, there was the sticky matter of entries to consider: the danger was that the defenders would take the second heart and lock declarer in dummy with a club shift, perhaps forcing him to lose two club tricks as well as the three obvious ones in the red suits.

As a result of these considerations, declarer led a diamond at trick two. East won with his king of diamonds and exited with the queen of clubs. Declarer took this in dummy with the ace of clubs and played a heart from dummy, catching East in a Morton's Fork. If he had taken his ace of hearts, declarer would have had nine tricks. When East ducked the heart, declarer's king of hearts took the trick. Now declarer needed only one more spade trick, so he cashed the king of spades, throwing a club from the dummy. The queen of diamonds came next, taken by East's ace. Declarer won the club continuation with dummy's king and claimed nine tricks: two spades, one heart, four diamonds and two clubs.

724. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ K 7
♥ 7 5 3
♦ A K 7 6
♣ Q J 7 5

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

♠ A J 3
♥ A Q 9 4 2
♦ Q J
♣ A K 8

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	2NT
Pass	6NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led the ten of diamonds. Declarer counted eleven sure winners and began to consider his options for making an extra trick. Clearly, a successful finesse in either major suit would do the job but his mind turned to considering whether there was anything better. He noted that the heart suit had promise and proceeded to show that he would make twelve tricks if he could extract all of West's minor-suit cards.

He took the diamond lead in hand with the queen and cashed the jack of diamonds. Next he played the ace, king and queen of clubs, pleased to see that the suit was 3-3. When both defenders followed to king of diamonds, declarer permitted himself a small smile as he continued with the ace of diamonds, throwing a second low heart from hand.

Now declarer led a low heart from table with the intention of covering East's card. When East put up the ten of hearts declarer played the queen and West won the trick with his king. As West had only major-suit cards remaining, he had no winning option. If he chose a spade, declarer would make three spade tricks. When he opted to exit with the six of hearts, hoping his partner had the nine, declarer won the trick with his nine of hearts and had made his slam.



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Tim Bourke, Canberra

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725. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

While both players stretched in the bidding, the final contract proved to be a good one. West began with the ace and king of hearts. Declarer ruffed the second heart and played the king of spades, which held the trick. West took the low trump continuation with the jack and forced declarer with a heart, reducing declarer to two trumps, the same number as West had. Now, no matter how declarer played West would make both of his remaining trumps and so defeat the contract.

As ever, dummy was critical of the line chosen. "If trumps had been 3-2, then almost any plan would have succeeded," he offered. "So, you should have thought about overcoming a 4-1 break in trumps. You had to ruff the second round of hearts, but you should have continued with a low trump at trick three. Suppose West had played his jack – you would still have had a low trump in dummy to take care of a heart continuation. It would have been no better for West to have played low, for then dummy's ten would have won the trick. The continuation of a trump to the king would have left West in a position where he could have done no better than to have won and forced you with a heart.

After discarding a club from dummy, you would have ruffed in hand and played the queen of trumps. This would have left West with just the master jack in trumps, which he could have taken whenever he pleased while you ran the diamonds and, if necessary, the top clubs. You would have made ten tricks by way of four trumps and six tricks in the minors."

726. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

After the Jacoby conventional response to his opening bid, showing at least a game raise in spades, and some control bidding, South drove to the small slam in spades. West led the jack of clubs and it was covered by the queen, king and ace. Declarer continued with the ace and king of trumps, getting the news that there was an unavoidable trump loser when West discarded a heart at trick three.

Declarer now paused to consider what he needed to make his slam with this turn of events. Obviously, he needed to play four rounds of diamonds with East following suit so that he could discard two of his club losers. If this came to pass, the fifth diamond would see his last club disappear; restricting the defenders to just East's certain trump trick. Declarer realised that if East started with four diamonds then he would be twice as likely as West to have the jack of diamonds. So, South finessed the nine of diamonds next. After it held, declarer cashed ace of diamonds, crossed to dummy with the king of hearts and played the king and queen of diamonds, discarding clubs from his hand as East helplessly followed suit. When East ruffed the next diamond it was a trick too late as declarer discarded his last remaining club. This was the only trick declarer lost.

You should note that if it had been West rather than East who had the trump trick, declarer would have

started diamonds by cashing the ace and then finessing dummy's ten.

727. Dealer West. NS Vul.

<p>♠ K J 9 4 ♥ 7 5 ♦ J 8 7 5 ♣ Q 6 3</p> <p>♠ A 8 ♥ A K 9 8 3 2 ♦ 10 4 ♣ A J 9</p>	<p>♠ 10 7 6 5 3 ♥ 6 ♦ 6 3 2 ♣ 10 8 4 2</p>
--	--

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	Pass	Double
2♥	2♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West began with ace, king and another heart. Dummy threw a low diamond while East parted with a spade and a diamond. After winning with the jack of hearts, declarer counted the six tricks in the red suits and saw that he needed three tricks from the black suits. As West was marked with both black aces, declarer took advantage of this by leading the two of spades from his hand at trick four. This caught West in a Morton's Fork: he could not afford to rise with the ace of spades as that would give declarer have three spade tricks and his contract.

After dummy's king of spades won the trick, declarer crossed to his hand with a diamond and led a low club, catching West in a second Morton's Fork. Again, West would have given the contract away if he had played his ace and so dummy's queen of clubs won the trick. This brought declarer's trick count to eight and all that remained was to play a low spade his queen and West's ace. Dummy parted with a club on the heart continuation and declarer won the trick with his queen of hearts. After crossing to dummy with a diamond to the jack, declarer cashed the jack of spades and then claimed nine tricks. He made two spades, two hearts, four diamonds and a club.

728. Dealer South. Both Vul.

<p>♠ 8 4 ♥ J 7 6 ♦ Q J 10 7 3 ♣ 7 5 3</p> <p>♠ J 10 9 6 ♥ Q 9 8 3 ♦ A 9 5 ♣ Q 8</p>	<p>♠ 7 5 3 2 ♥ 10 5 2 ♦ 8 2 ♣ K 10 9 4</p>
---	--

♠ A K Q
♥ A K 4
♦ K 6 4
♣ A J 6 2

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led the jack of spades after this straightforward auction. Declarer counted six top tricks. He saw that unless there were a singleton or doubleton ace of diamonds, he would make only two tricks in the diamond suit; otherwise the defender with the ace of diamonds would take it only on the third round of the suit. So, declarer had only eight certain tricks.

The one chance for a ninth trick outside of diamonds was in clubs. Any approach would do if clubs proved to break 3-3. Declarer saw that there was an extra chance available in the suit if he ducked a club at trick two. East took the trick with the nine and returned a spade to declarer's ace. Now declarer cashed the ace of clubs and was please to see the queen fall on his left. Declarer's next move was to play the king of diamonds, which was allowed to hold. A diamond to the queen won and declarer now led dummy's remaining club towards his jack-six. East rose with the king of clubs and declarer's jack of clubs was then his ninth trick.



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729. Dealer South. NS Vul.

<p>♠ 9 7 ♥ K 7 3 ♦ Q 8 2 ♣ A 10 8 7 3</p> <p>♠ K Q 10 8 6 4 ♥ 10 9 2 ♦ A 7 ♣ J 6</p> <p>♠ A J 5 3 ♥ A Q 4 ♦ J 10 9 4 ♣ K 2</p>	<p>♠ 2 ♥ J 8 6 5 ♦ K 6 5 3 ♣ Q 9 5 4</p>
--	--

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	INT
2♠	3♣	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the king of spades, which declarer ducked. As it was fairly obvious that declarer had the ace and jack of spades (the king lead had asked East to unblock an honour), West shifted to the ten of hearts. Declarer took this in hand with the queen and played a diamond to dummy's queen and East's king. East exited with a low heart, marking the spades as 6-1. Declarer took the trick on the table with the king of hearts and played a diamond to his jack and West's ace.

West got off play with a third round of hearts, which declarer took in hand with the ace. Declarer now cashed the ten of diamonds. After West discarded a spade, declarer paused to consider his position. He had eight certain tricks and had lost three, so he could afford only one more loser. Furthermore, the ninth trick could only come from an endplay in spades. If that was to happen, West's original distribution would have to have been 6=3=2=2. Declarer's next move was to cash the ace and king of clubs, which confirmed the hoped-for count of West's hand. Declarer was about to play a low spade from his hand when he saw that West could avoid the endplay by allowing dummy's nine of spades to win the trick, leaving East to take the last two club tricks with the queen and nine.

Instead, declarer played the nine of diamonds and threw the nine of spades from dummy. Only then did declarer advance the five of spades. West took the trick with the eight of spades but then had to return a spade into declarer's ace-jack tenace. As a result, declarer had nine

tricks: two spades, three hearts, two diamonds and two clubs.

730. Dealer East. EW Vul.

<p>♠ A J 7 ♥ 6 4 ♦ K Q J 9 ♣ Q J 10 3</p> <p>♠ 3 ♥ Q J 10 7 ♦ 10 8 7 5 4 ♣ 7 6 2</p> <p>♠ Q 10 9 8 5 4 ♥ 5 3 ♦ A 6 2 ♣ A 5</p>	<p>♠ K 6 2 ♥ A K 9 8 2 ♦ 3 ♣ K 9 8 4</p>
--	--

West	North	East	South
—	—	1♥	1♠
3♥ ¹	4♠	Pass	Pass

1. Pre-emptive

West led the queen of hearts, which East overtook with the king to play the three of diamonds. Declarer was certain that this was a singleton and that East was expecting to gain the lead with the king of trumps, with the idea of trying to cross to West's jack of hearts to receive a diamond ruff.

The bidding and play to date suggested that East would have both black kings; otherwise East would have opened on a ten count. Declarer did not fancy playing ace and another trump for that would rely on a 2-2 trump break and East beginning with a 2=5=1=5 shape. As it was far more likely that East began with only three or four clubs, declarer took the diamond shift in dummy and ran the queen of clubs. He continued by playing a club to the ace, then returned to dummy's ace of trumps to lead the jack of clubs. When East covered this with the king declarer discarded his remaining heart.

This loser-on-loser manoeuvre removed the possibility of a diamond ruff by killing the entry to West's hand. Seeing no future in hearts, East continued by play a fourth round of clubs. Declarer ruffed high then forced out the king of trumps. All he lost was one trump, one heart and one club.

731. The following deal was played in a teams match – both tables had the same auction and opening lead.

Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	INT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

The first declarer took the lead of the king of diamonds with the ace as East played the ten of diamonds. Next he cashed the ace and king of trumps, finding that the trumps were 4-1. As he could not afford to draw all of the trumps, declarer played a low heart next. East was on the ball and rose with the ace of hearts to lead a club. West ruffed then led a low diamond to East's advertised nine and received a second ruff in return.

While this declarer bemoaned his luck, the contract was made at the other table. The second declarer let the king of diamonds hold the first trick. After winning the diamond continuation, declarer played the ace and king of trumps. He saw that only East was the danger hand if he held the ace of hearts and five clubs. So, he played a heart next. If East rose with the ace and gave his partner a ruff then declarer would get a heart trick as compensation for the ruff. After East decided to play low declarer's king won the trick. Then South drew West's trumps and ran the clubs for his contract.

732. Dealer West. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

South promised a balanced hand of around 19 points with a spade stopper with his reopening jump to two notrump. His partner used Stayman to investigate the possibility of an eight-card heart fit before settling in the notrump game.

West led the queen of spades and declarer took this in hand. After playing a heart to the ace, South came back to hand with a club to play a heart to the jack. East produced the queen of hearts and the contract could no longer be made. "That was unlucky," was all declarer could say.

North was not so sympathetic. "There was no rush to play a heart to the jack. There was an extra chance in the hearts if you start by not cashing the ace of hearts and instead leading the three of hearts to the seven. If the queen of hearts is onside nothing will be lost: East will win the trick and you can try a heart to the jack on the next round. As the cards lie, the seven of hearts would have forced the queen of hearts since West had started with the ten and eight."

Ever one to flog a dead horse, North continued, "This is equivalent to managing an ace-queen-nine combination opposite low cards. In that case, you finesse the nine first, in case the jack and ten are onside. If that fails, you fall back on a later finesse of the queen."



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733. Dealer South. EW Vul.

<p>♠ 10 6 4 2 ♥ A J 5 2 ♦ Q 3 ♣ K 5 2</p> <p>♠ 8 3 ♥ 9 6 4 ♦ K 7 4 2 ♣ J 8 7 4</p> <p>♠ A K 7 5 ♥ 7 3 ♦ A J 10 ♣ A 9 6 3</p>	<p>♠ Q J 9 ♥ K Q 10 8 ♦ 9 8 6 5 ♣ Q 10</p>
--	--

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	INT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led the three of trumps, suggesting that he might have held a doubleton in the suit. Declarer took East's nine of spades with the ace, then played without much thought, crossing to dummy with the king of clubs to run the queen of diamonds. West won this with the king and exited with his remaining trump. Declarer took East's jack with his king and cashed two diamond winners, discarding a club from the table. Next, he cashed the ace of clubs and ruffed a club. All would have been well if clubs had proved to be 3-3, but they were not and, after East had discarded a diamond, declarer could do no better than to play the ace and another heart. East took the trick with the queen of hearts and cashed the queen of spades, leaving declarer with a losing club as the fourth defensive trick.

When South complained about his bad luck, North was unsympathetic. "You should have played a low heart to the jack at trick two. East would have won to play a second trump to your ace. Next, you'd cross to dummy with the king of clubs to run the queen of diamonds to West's king. Having no more trumps, West could have done no better than to exit with a heart to dummy's ace. You would continue with the ace and jack of diamonds, discarding a club from dummy. Then you'd play the ace of clubs and ruff a club in the dummy, on which East would discard a diamond as there would be no advantage in overruffing with the jack of trumps. Then you would get back to hand by cashing the ace of hearts and ruffing a heart. Lastly, you could ruff your fourth club in the dummy. All you would have lost would have been a trump, a heart and a diamond."

734. Dealer South. EW Vul.

<p>♠ A K 5 ♥ Q J 8 6 3 2 ♦ Q J 7 ♣ Q</p> <p>♠ 8 2 ♥ A K 9 7 ♦ 10 5 2 ♣ J 8 7 4</p> <p>♠ Q J 9 4 3 ♥ 10 ♦ A 4 3 ♣ A 10 6 5</p>	<p>♠ 10 7 6 ♥ 5 4 ♦ K 9 8 6 ♣ K 9 3 2</p>
---	---

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♠
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led a trump and declarer was allowed to win the trick with his nine. Declarer saw that ruffing clubs would not be successful after the trump lead and that it would be better to try to set up the heart suit. When declarer played the ten of hearts, West took it with the ace and exited with a second trump to dummy's king. Next, declarer ran the queen of hearts, discarding a club from hand. While this gave up a trick, declarer was now in control in the race to set up and enjoy winners in hearts.

After some thought, West exited with a low club. East covered dummy's queen of clubs with the king and this was won by declarer's ace. Declarer saw that he needed two more entries to dummy, one to establish the hearts if they were 4-2, and the other to reach any heart winners. He achieved this by leading a low diamond to dummy's queen, which left East with no winning option.

If East let the queen of diamonds hold, declarer would ruff a low heart high and return to dummy with a trump to run the hearts. So, East took the trick with the king of diamonds and exited with a club. Declarer ruffed this in dummy, ruffed a low heart with the jack of spades and drew East's last trump with his queen. Declarer returned to dummy with the jack of diamonds to throw his remaining club on the jack of hearts. Declarer made five trumps, one heart, two diamonds, one club and one club ruff for ten tricks.

735. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	1♣	Pass	1♥
1♠	Pass	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led the king of spades, taken by declarer with the ace. Declarer saw that with two losers outside trumps, the contract would be in danger only if the trumps broke 4-0. If that were the case, the only hope would be to make an extra trick in clubs before the defenders gained the lead. To enjoy that trick, declarer saw that he would need a quick late entry to the table, and that this could only be the king of trumps.

Thus declarer played an exploratory ace of trumps at trick two. When West discarded a spade, declarer put his backup plan into action by leading the queen of clubs, with the intention of running it if West had played low. However, West covered the queen with his king and dummy's ace of clubs won the trick.

Next, declarer led dummy's ten of clubs, planning to throw his spade loser if East had played low. In practice, East covered the ten of clubs with the jack and declarer ruffed. After returning to dummy with the king of trumps, declarer threw his spade loser on the established nine of clubs. Declarer could claim the contract then, losing only two trumps and the ace of diamonds.

736. Dealer East. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	1♣	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

North's cue-bid of two clubs promised a sound simple raise or better in spades. West led the queen of clubs and

continued the suit to East's king. Declarer ruffed in hand, then drew trumps with the ace and king. At trick five, appreciating the value of his eight of diamonds, declarer led a heart to the ace and ruffed dummy's third club. The he returned again to dummy with the king of hearts and ruffed dummy's last club.

The stage was set. Declarer exited from dummy with the jack of hearts, not caring who won it: he could afford one diamond loser. Had East won with the queen of hearts, he'd have been immediately endplayed, as happened in practice. However, had West won the jack of hearts with the queen, he'd also have been forced into leading diamonds. If he'd led the jack or ten, declarer would have covered with the queen, then won the king with the ace. The nine and eight would then have been equals against the other low honour. Had West exited with a low diamond, declarer was planning to let East's ten or jack hold the trick, effectively endplaying that defender. Declarer lost just one trick in each side suit.



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737. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♠
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the queen of diamonds and continued with a second diamond, very much against declarer's preference for a switch. Declarer saw that there would be no problem if both major suits divided favourably. If trumps were 4-0, he saw that he would need some luck in spades: either spades 3-2 or the hand with four trumps holding four spades.

What could be done if the spades were 4-1 and the hand with the singleton had three trumps? The only possible rescue plan was to try and set up dummy's clubs. So, after ruffing the diamond continuation, declarer cashed the ace of clubs then ruffed a club high. After crossing to dummy with via the nine of trumps, declarer ruffed another club high. As by now the clubs had been proved to be 4-3 and trumps no worse than 3-1, he returned to dummy with the ace of spades and ruffed a third club, thereby establishing two winners in the suit. Next, declarer led a trump to dummy's jack, then drew West's remaining trump with the king while throwing a spade from hand. The ten and nine of clubs provided parking places for his remaining low spades and he had made his contract.

Declarer was pleased to see that the actual layout would have seen six hearts fail if he had attempted to

set up his own hand: after drawing two rounds of trumps and playing on spades, West would then have ruffed in on the second round of spades.

Of course, if clubs had not broken 4-3 then declarer would have had to rely on the spade suit behaving favourably.

738. Dealer South. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♥
2NT	Pass	3♣	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West's Unusual Notrump overcall turned out to be a poor choice once his opponents settled in four hearts: it drew a roadmap of how to play the contract and all the declarer had to do was read the map.

West led the king of clubs, taken by dummy's ace. Declarer counted nine top tricks with an easy tenth if the spades were 3-2. As a result, declarer concentrated on the case where spades were 4-1. In order to obtain the likely layout of the major suits, declarer cashed the ace and king of trumps. When West followed twice, declarer decided that the simplest course was to hope that West began with 1=2=5=5 distribution. Accordingly, he made the best continuation of calling for dummy's queen of spades. This was guaranteed to hold the losses in the spade suit to two tricks if West's singleton were the jack, ten or nine: it would have lost only when West had started with a singleton king or five (and in the latter case there would have been no

approach to the spade suit that would have succeeded).

The spade queen was covered by the king and ace. Once West produced the nine of spades, the contract was assured. Declarer drew the last trump then played a spade to the dummy's seven and East's ten. After winning the queen of diamonds shift with the ace, declarer played a spade to dummy's six and East's jack. Declarer conceded a diamond but claimed ten tricks: two spades, six hearts, a diamond and a club.

739. Dealer East. EW Vul.

♠ A Q J 10 2
♥ J 9
♦ Q 2
♣ J 9 6 3

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	Pass	INT
Pass	2♥	Double	2♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

South promised three-card spade support when he volunteered two spades over the double.

West led a heart and East played three rounds of the suit, forcing dummy to over-ruff West's six of spades. Declarer could count ten tricks on a 3-2 trump break: he would be able to draw trumps, play the three club honours from hand and then cross to dummy with a heart ruff to cash the jack of clubs: that would yield five trumps, four clubs and the ace of diamonds, for a total of ten tricks.

However, when declarer cashed the ace of trumps, West gave him a problem: he discarded a diamond. As East was then marked with nine cards in the majors, declarer reasoned that a 3-3 club break was all but out of the question. Casting his mind back to the bidding, declarer recalled that East had shown up with nine high-card points and a good heart suit, but had passed as dealer. So, unless East had passed without noticing the king of diamonds, West must have that card.

As a result, declarer saw a way around his club problems. He drew all of East's trumps and discarded his ace of diamonds on the last trump! After taking his three club winners, declarer led the ten of diamonds

towards dummy's queen. West looked at this somewhat studiously but eventually rose with the king of diamonds. Dummy's jack of clubs and queen of diamonds took the last two tricks.

740. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ K J 9
♥ 6 5 3
♦ A Q J 9
♣ A 9 3

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

After a simple auction, declarer was faced with a trump lead. He saw that if he drew trumps and finessed the queen of diamonds, the contract would be in grave danger if East had started with the king of diamonds and West the ace of hearts.

Instead of exposing himself to such a risk, declarer embarked on an avoidance-type of play that might allow him to set up a diamond trick without giving East the lead. He took the first trick in dummy with the nine of trumps then played a club to his ten. West won the trick with the jack of clubs but could not attack hearts without conceding the contract. Instead, he exited with another trump.

Declarer won the trick in dummy and came to hand with the king of clubs. After crossing to dummy with the ace of diamonds, declarer discarded his remaining diamond on the ace of clubs. Although he had just swapped a diamond loser for a club loser, the benefit of this became apparent when he led the queen of diamonds for a ruffing finesse against East. If East declined to produce the king of diamonds declarer had planned to discard a heart. In practice, East played the king of diamonds. Declarer ruffed it and returned to dummy with the king of trumps to discard two hearts on dummy's two diamond winners.

Even if West had been able to win the second round of diamonds with the king, declarer would still have made the contract. The defenders could then have done no better than to take the ace of hearts as the third and final defensive trick.