

PLAY PROBLEM

		109	DEALER - Pass		
		KQ	Pass		
		A98			
		986532			
AQ2				J7543	
97	Pass			3	Pass
KQ652				10743	Pass
KJ4				AQ10	
		K86			
		AJ1086542			
		J	4 Hearts		
		7			

West leads the K of diamonds. Declarer wins the Ace. You have eight heart tricks, the Ace of diamonds, and potential for another in the K of spades. You might win a trick with the King and perhaps you can ruff a spade in dummy.

Going down in 4 Hearts isn't bad because 4 spades can make. Making 4 Hearts would be better yet. How might South do that?

One of South's cards has more value than most players would appreciate: It's the 8 of spades. Having that card gives South a chance at 4 hearts.

Lead the 10 of Spades at trick two. If East plays the Ace, you have 11 tricks. If East plays the Queen or Jack, you cover and presumably lose to the Ace. Now your Spade 9 in dummy and Spade 8 in your hand are strong enough to knock out the other Spade honor. You will get 10 tricks after drawing trump and losing a second Spade.

If East plays a low spade on the 10, finesse it, probably losing to the Queen or Jack. Assume the defenders lead a trump. Win in dummy and lead the 9 of spades. If East plays low, your play low too, hoping to force out the Spade A.

This play works whenever the Q and J are divided or if East has both of them. Only if West has the Q and J will this line go down.

What do you think of the 4 Heart bid? It's perfect. East and West don't have a Safe way to get into the bidding over 4 Hearts. It would be dangerous for West to double with only 3 Spades, and isn't strong enough to make up for it.

K83 3 Spades
 J543 5 Hearts (RKC – 2 w/o Q)
 K42 Pass
 A73

75 Pass
 Q96 Pass
 109753 Pass
 Q84

64 Pass
 10872 Pass
 AJ6 Pass
 10965

AQJ1092
 AK DEALER – 1 Spade
 Q8 4 NT
 KJ2 6 Spades

West leads the 10 of Diamonds. Declarer plays low, East plays the 6, declarer wins the Q. Declarer has no trump losers, no heart losers, 1 diamond loser, maybe a club loser.

You're declarer, your contract is 6 Spades. Plan the play.
 Can you play it better than Irene did?

TIPS: When drawing trump, try to keep a flexible entry position after trumps are drawn.

When fortunate to have a powerful trump suit and being forced to ruff, tend not to ruff with your lowest trump. That tiny trump might be your only entry to dummy.

- Fault Signs:
1. Playing too fast.
 2. Cashing tricks, especially aces, too early.
 3. Trump mismanagement
 - a. Pulling too many trumps
 - b. Getting your winners ruffed because you didn't pull trumps

It's not enough to win tricks that belong to you. Try also for some that belong to the opponents.

It's not the handling to difficult hands that make a winning player: There aren't enough of them. It is the ability to avoid messing up the easy ones.