

Hand 44

BOTH VULNERABLE EAST DEALS

South

♠ K Q J 9 7

♥ 6 4 3

♦ A

♣ K Q J 10

In second seat I open ONE SPADE and Alex raises to TWO SPADES. I'd like to make a game try but no useful try exists. Three clubs would encourage Alex if he had the ace of clubs but if he has three or four small ones, he won't like them. Since I have the KQJ10, it really doesn't matter what Alex has in clubs. Other game tries include three hearts but that would cause Alex to like his Qxx of hearts when, in fact, it would be of little value. I'm going to go ahead and bid FOUR SPADES. It may not make but since the defense won't know what I have, they may not defend accurately.

West starts with the queen of diamonds which is good news. I would hate to have seen the queen of hearts.

SPADE and Alex raises to TWO game try but no useful try exists. Alex if he had the ace of clubs all ones, he won't like them. Since doesn't matter what Alex has in the three hearts but that would cause trouble when, in fact, it would be of no use ahead and bid FOUR SPADES. The defense won't know what I have, they will bid. I have the queen of hearts.

**BOTH VULNERABLE
EAST DEALS**

♠ A 5 2
♥ K 10 2
♦ 5 4 3
♣ 8 6 4 2



♠ K Q J 9 7
♥ 6 4 3
♦ A
♣ K Q J 10

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1♣
Pass	2♣	Pass	4♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

LEAD: ♦Q

It looks like I have better than average chances of making this. If I can hold my losers to one club and two hearts, I'm home. In isolation, the heart suit offers me a sixty-two percent chance of getting a trick so my chances in total look good.

Unfortunately, there is a flaw in this hand. If the spades don't divide three-two, I may get tapped out before I can establish the club suit and my heart trick.

When I lead trumps, they divide three-two which is a significant hurdle. I draw three rounds of trump since I don't want anyone to get a club ruff and start on the club suit.

When I lead the king of clubs, East takes the ace and returns the king of diamonds. I ruff with my next to last trump. It's

time to come to some conclusion about the heart suit. Should I lead to the ten or the king?

The answer is strictly one of economy. If I lead to the ten of hearts and it loses to the jack or queen, the defense will tap my last trump. The defender with the ace of hearts will be able to cash a diamond when he gets in so my tenth trick will be unattainable.

Since I can't afford to make the ideal play in hearts (low to the ten and then low to the king), I am obliged to do what I can which is to lead a heart to the king.

It wins and four spades makes but the difficulties of the hand make me wonder if my bid was correct.

COMPLETE HAND

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

FURTHER ANALYSIS

This hand represents the interesting fact that few things in bridge are as they seem. Every item must be judged as much on the surroundings as on the item itself. In theory, declarer's play in hearts was wrong, but since other options were precluded, it was the best play available.

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7

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In the bidding, my four spade bid was abrupt but not outrageous. The final contract wasn't as good as you'd like it to be. But since the auction was uninformative, I might get some vigorish back from the opening lead.

If West leads a trump, I gain a tempo. If West leads a club, I gain a tempo if the defense doesn't get a ruff. Also, West might lead a heart giving declarer an extra tempo. The heart queen from QJ98 would not be a defensive success.

You can get all kinds of opinions telling you that you need such and such odds before bidding a game. What they don't tell you is that the defenders often do something to change these odds. The less you tell the opponents, the more likely they will do something 'wrong.'