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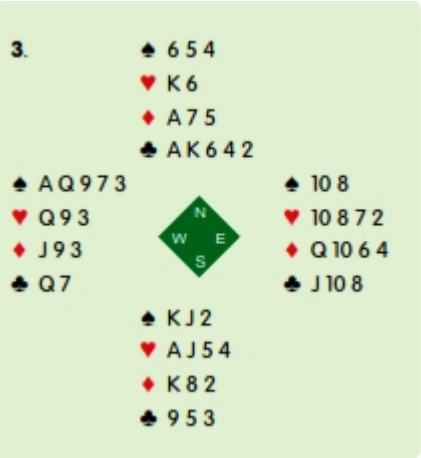
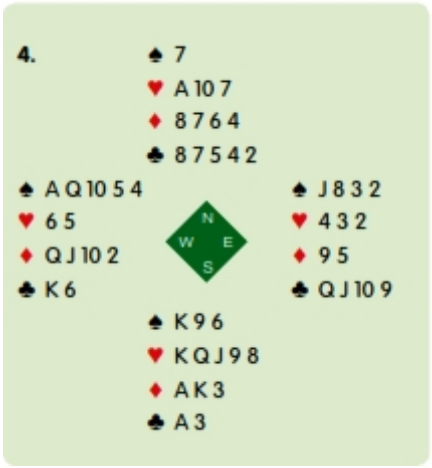
Declarer Play - Feb 2017 - original - Here

By David Huggett



You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♠7. East plays the ♠10. How do you plan the play?

Even if the heart finesse works, you still haven't got enough tricks without making an extra club and if you can make four club tricks then you need only two heart tricks, anyway. Chances are that the club suit will break 3-2, but if East wins the third round he can fire a spade through your remaining holding and that may not be good news. So play a club from hand at trick two and if West plays low win in dummy. Return to hand with a diamond and lead another club, but this time if West plays the queen you duck, keeping East off lead. If West plays low you have to win and play a third round, hoping that West started with three or that spades break 4-3. You must not play clubs from dummy because an astute West can throw the queen from queen doubleton to create an entry to his partner's hand.



You are declarer in 4♥ and West leads the ♦Q. How do you plan the play?

The contract is a good one although, with only eight tricks on top, it looks as if you may need a bit of luck in finding two more. Maybe it looks obvious to cross to dummy with a trump in order to lead up to the spade king, but that would backfire horribly if West won and played a second trump. Now you would be unable to ruff two spades in dummy.

Of course, that South hand is too good and the spade king is a mirage. Just lead a spade from hand at trick two and, even if they switch to a trump, you can still take two spade ruffs in dummy and ten tricks in all. ■