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DECLARER PLAY QUIZ - AUG 2013 - original - [Here](#)

By David Huggett

Dealer : Vul :	NORTH ♠ K973 ♥ QJ64 ♦ 864 ♣ KQ	
WEST ♠ 5 ♥ 9753 ♦ AK92 ♣ A542	Deal 1	EAST ♠ Q64 ♥ 102 ♦ QJ75 ♣ 10976
	SOUTH ♠ AJ1082 ♥ AK8 ♦ 103 ♣ J83	

After three initial passes, you are declarer in 4♠ and West leads the top two diamonds and follows with a third diamond to East's knave. How do you plan the play?

With a certain loser in the ace of clubs, you have to avoid losing a trump trick. The odds would favour playing the spades from the top but you can do something to improve your chances. You ruff the third diamond, of course, and play a club to the king and although this might not seem to achieve anything it does tell you who has the ace. If West has it, he cannot possibly hold the queen of spades as well because he passed at his first turn. So now you finesse against that card in the East hand.

Dealer : Vul :	NORTH ♠ KQ76 ♥ 6 ♦ AQJ96 ♣ K74	
WEST ♠ 92 ♥ AK9852 ♦ 73 ♣ J92	Deal 2	EAST ♠ J1083 ♥ J7 ♦ K52 ♣ Q1086
	SOUTH ♠ A54 ♥ Q1043 ♦ 1084 ♣ A53	

After West opens with a weak 2♥, you find yourself as declarer in 3NT. West leads the ♥8 and East plays the ♥J. How do you plan the play?

A count of the tricks needed should confirm that you have to play on diamonds at some stage and it is clear that you need only four tricks from that suit to ensure success. But you have to be a little careful.

West is very unlikely to hold the diamond king together with the top two hearts for his weak two bid and if East holds that card you have to be sure he does not have another heart when the diamond finesse loses. So simply duck the jack of hearts. Whatever happens next, you can eventually take a diamond finesse into the safe hand. It may be counter-intuitive but it is in fact just a simple hold up play.