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DECLARER PLAY QUIZ - March 2014 - original - [Here](#)

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By David Huggett

Dealer : Vul :	NORTH ♠ 953 ♥ 4 ♦ QJ2 ♣ KJ10974	
WEST ♠ 86 ♥ 832 ♦ K10874 ♣ 653	Deal 3	EAST ♠ QJ107 ♥ J10976 ♦ 95 ♣ A8
	SOUTH ♠ AK42 ♥ AKQ5 ♦ A63 ♣ Q2	

You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♦7. How do you plan the play?

This hand looks so simple it might cause an unthinking declarer to go astray, although the reality is that there are more than enough tricks available. However, you must resist the temptation of playing one of the two diamond honours from dummy at trick 1, but win with the ace in hand instead. If you lazily think you have a free finesse available, then you will be disappointed later when you find that you have no entry back to dummy to enjoy those fabulous clubs, assuming of course that the defence are astute enough not to win the ace at the first time the suit is played. So win the diamond in hand with the ace and then play clubs until the ace is taken. Now you will be able to get back to dummy with a diamond sooner or later.

Dealer : Vul :	NORTH ♠ A9 ♥ 8654 ♦ QJ53 ♣ 1075	
WEST ♠ KJ874 ♥ 73 ♦ 9742 ♣ A2	Deal 4	EAST ♠ Q5 ♥ QJ1092 ♦ 1086 ♣ 864
	SOUTH ♠ 10632 ♥ AK ♦ AK ♣ KQJ93	

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

You do not have enough tricks without setting up some clubs and there might seem to be a problem when the defenders win the ace of clubs as they will have enough spade winners to defeat you. But can that really be true? If West started with a holding headed by the K-Q-J, he would surely have led the king so East must hold a top honour and, if it is doubleton, you can block the suit by playing the ace from dummy at trick one. If East unblocks his honour, then your ten and nine will give you another stopper. And, of course, if spades were originally 4-3, then the defence can take only three tricks in the suit anyway.