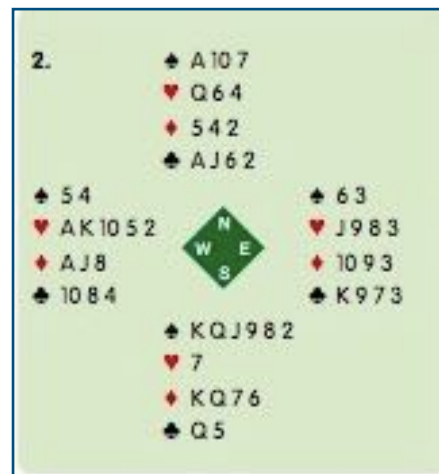


You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♥7. The ♥J wins. How do you plan the play?

You are looking for three extra tricks from the minors and at first glance it might seem right to enter the closed hand with a spade in order to lead up to the king of diamonds. But if you do that and the king holds you might be in trouble. Suppose you re-enter your hand with a heart and lead a second diamond to the queen with East producing the ace. Now you have no means of establishing the suit and getting back to dummy to enjoy your winners. The solution is easy once you see it. Simply lead a low diamond from dummy at trick two and as long as the suit breaks 3-2 you will be OK, with the spade king providing the entry that you need



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

The worst that can happen is that you lose one heart, one club and two diamonds if the ace of that suit is badly placed – so you have to assume that it is. If you play a top heart from dummy at trick one East will win and might well return a diamond, leading to defeat as the cards lie. Instead try the effect of ducking the jack of hearts lead altogether. If East overtakes then you have two club discards while if he doesn't, you can ruff out the ace and throw the low diamond from hand.

If East ducks at trick one, you will make eventually six spade tricks, one heart, two top clubs and a club ruff in dummy.