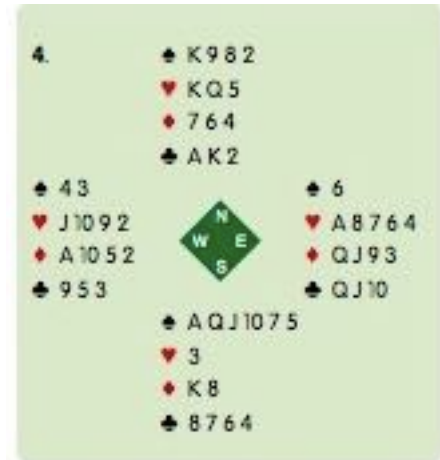


You are declarer in 3NT after West opened 1♠. West leads the ♠10. How do you plan the play?

With only fifteen points missing it is tempting to place them all with West after his opening bid. But can that really be the case? Surely with a suit headed by the K-Q-10 he would have led the king. The obvious conclusion is that East must have a doubleton honour, which makes it imperative for you to rise with the ace from dummy immediately. If you don't, East will win and return a second spade and with West bound to hold the ace of diamonds he will have the entry to cash four spade winners to defeat you. By playing the ace from dummy at trick one you will block the suit.



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.