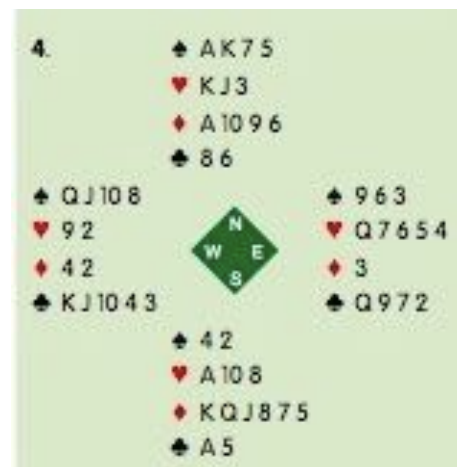


You are declarer in 4♠ and West leads the ♣J. How do you plan the play?

There is nothing too complicated about this hand but it does highlight the need to plan ahead. If spades don't break 4-0, there are ten easy tricks so you have to concentrate on the 4-0 breaks. If West has the four missing trumps then there is nothing you can do. However if East has all four then you have to play the queen first as you will then be able to pick up East's holding through repeated finesses.

But it is slightly more complicated than that. It is essential to win the first trick in hand because if you win it in dummy, then you may have insufficient entries for the finesses that you might need.



You are declarer in 6♦ and West leads the ♠Q. How do you plan the play?

You have eleven tricks on top and if you can locate the position of the queen of hearts you will succeed in your contract. Much better though is to let the defenders find her for you. Win the spade in dummy, draw trumps in two rounds and then take the other top spade and ruff a spade, followed by a trump to dummy to ruff the last spade. Then play ace and another club. Whoever wins this trick will either have to give you a ruff and discard or open up the heart suit.