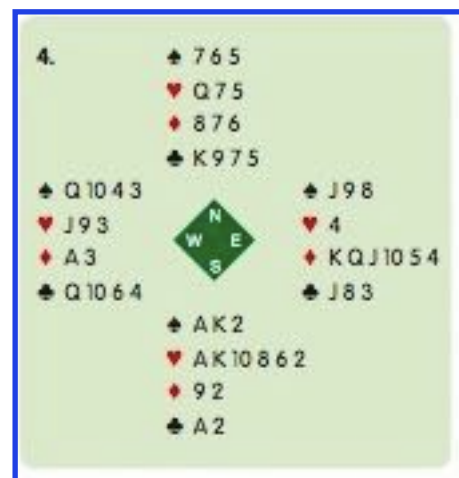


You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♠5 with East playing the ♠Q. How do you plan the play?

You know from the Rule of Eleven that East started with two or three spades, depending on whether West has led from a four or a five-card suit. Obviously extra tricks will come from the diamond suit and, as you only need four tricks from that suit, you might think the problem lies in keeping East off lead so that he can't lead a spade through your vulnerable jack. Indeed you would be unlucky to find East with the queen and two others but that is not the point of this hand. Simply duck the queen of spades at trick one and no harm can come to you. If you had started with Axx it would have been easy, but less so with the actual holding



You are declarer in 4♥ after East opened with a weak 2♦. West leads the ♦A followed by a low one to East who plays a third round. How do you plan the play?

The third round of diamonds is tedious and you might be wondering whether to ruff high or with the ten, hoping that East has the jack.

Of course, as you may have seen, you don't ruff at all but simply discard the card that you were always going to lose anyway – your little spade. Now a fourth round of diamonds can be handled by dummy and you make the ten tricks, as you were always destined make.

