

Lesson Notes

12 April,
2007

Plan your play!

NORTH

♠ 8 7 5 3
♥ 6
♦ A J 9 7 4
♣ K 7 2

WEST

♠ Q 10 9
♥ J 9 3
♦ 8 5 2
♣ Q 10 6 3

EAST

♠ J
♥ 10 8 7 4 2
♦ K 10 6
♣ A J 9 5

SOUTH

♠ A K 8 4 2
♥ A K Q 5
♦ Q 3
♣ 8 4

South West North East None vulnerable. Dealer
South.===== ===== ===== 1S p 2D p 2H p
2S p 4S all pass Opening lead: three
of clubs

Count your losers. At least one club, maybe two. A diamond loser if the finesse fails. And a trump loser if the spades aren't 2-2. You could get rid of dummy's club losers on good hearts from your hand, except that the defense will probably cash their clubs before you can pitch your losers.

That depends on the first trick. Who has the club Ace? It's probably sitting over dummy's King, in East. If you go up, the King is dead meat. But if you duck, East will win with the Jack or Queen, and then can't continue clubs without making your King a winner. And a diamond shift will give you a free finesse. So he has to exit, and that lets you in to pitch dummy's losers on heart tricks.

	NORTH	
	♠ 6 3	
	♥ 9 5 4	
	♦ J 4	
WEST	♣ J 10 8 5 3 2	EAST
♠ 2		♠ Q J 10 9 8 4
♥ Q 10 7 6 2		♥ J 8 3
♦ 9 6 2		♦ 5
♣ K 9 7 4	SOUTH	♣ A Q 6
	♠ A K 7 5	
	♥ A K	
	♦ A K Q 10 8 7 3	
	♣ - -	

West North East South None vulnerable. Dealer
 West.===== ===== ===== ===== p p 2S 6D all pass
 Opening lead: two of spades

When you count losers and can't find any, try counting winners. In this hand there are no apparent losers, but only eleven winners. That's a hint. You have two losers lurking somewhere, and you need to manufacture one more winner.

Dummy ruffs are a good place to look when you need extra winners, and here you may be able to ruff a spade. But watch out. The opening lead is an obvious singleton. So win the first trick, and give up a spade on trick two. You can then ruff the third round of spades in dummy high, with the Jack of trump.

You will never find plays like these if you don't plan ahead, before playing from dummy to the first trick!

April 11, 2007 (From Steve Becker's columns in yesterday's and today's Washington Times.)