

## July 2015

In this month's hand I am back on BBO playing with the boys from the Cape. The hands have been wild all night and this hand proves to be no exception.

### Bidding

Vulnerable against non vulnerable

West	W	N	E	S
♠ AK1095	pass	4H	dbl	pass
♥ 96	4S	5H	5S	pass
♦ 752	pass(1)			
♣ K109				

- (1) Over my partner's double I have no thought of bidding anything other than 4S, but now that he has found another bid over 5H I wonder if there is a slam here? This is the strongest bid he can make without going to slam himself. He must be short in Hearts and given I'm holding most of the points in Spades, his minor suit holdings are going to be good. I think about it for a while but finally chicken out.

North leads the D10 and dummy goes down with the following hand

### East

♠ Q8632  
♥ K  
♦ A6  
♣ AJ874

### West

♠ AK1095  
♥ 96  
♦ 752  
♣ K109

As soon as dummy goes down I regret my decision to pass. This is one of those silly hands where you either make 10 tricks or 12 tricks depending on whether you can guess the position of the ♣Q. I start the hand by winning the Ace of Diamonds then cashing the Spade Ace and King, all following to the first round with North throwing a Heart on the second round. Plan your play.

## Initial Analysis

This looks like a simple textbook hand to play. We can eliminate all the red cards by the end of which time we will hopefully have a perfect count of opponents' hands. One or other of them (probably North) will turn up with a shortage in Clubs and we will play that suit accordingly. In every book I've read that's what happens, just as the good guy always gets the girl in the films at the cinema. But in real life things don't always work out that way. By the time I have eliminated Hearts and Diamonds I have learnt two things. The first is that I now know North started with two Clubs, the second is that I have horribly misplayed the hand. Are you superstitious? Do you believe in Lady Luck? I have watched opponents butcher hands but against all odds still make the contract. To be fair I have also squirmed when partner has found a way of going down in a rock solid contract but finds a kind distribution or kinder opponents who let him through. That doesn't happen to me. I have converted a rock solid contract into an iffy affair where I have to guess who holds the ♣Q. I am going to be punished. As for the ♣Q there are two schools of thought here. There are the touchy feely guys who will argue that North is more likely to hold the Q as he has pushed on to 5H on his own. Then there are the logical guys who will argue that South is more likely to hold this card as he started with three of them. All I know is that if I play for the finesse against South I should have played for the drop, and if I play for the drop then the finesse will work. I also know from past experience that if I decide to play for the finesse then change my mind at the last minute and play for the drop, the finesse will work. If I decide to play for the finesse and don't change my mind, I should have played for the drop. I think you get the picture. Will it be different this time? I don't think so. I think I will play for the finesse, but maybe I will change my mind at the last moment, but probably not.

Here is the full deal

**E**

♠ Q8632  
♥ K  
♦ A6  
♣ AJ874

**N**

S 7  
H AQ10875432  
D 10  
C Q2

**E**

S J4  
H J  
D KQJ8743  
C 653

**W**

♠ AK1095  
♥ 96  
♦ 752  
♣ K109

## **Conclusion**

Getting a count of the cards was a good plan but there was an extra chance for declarer that could easily be overlooked at the table, in fact I overlooked it with no difficulty at all. When at trick 4 you set off to get a count you must lead a Heart first. North will win this with his Ace and continue with the Queen on which you throw your losing Diamond from dummy. If North has another Diamond nothing is lost but on the actual deal he is now end played. He must switch to a Club or give you a ruff and discard allowing you to safely establish your Club suit.