

July 2017

We are still at the South African congress and a few of the more optimistic players amongst us arrived at 4S on the following hand.  
Hands transposed for simplicity.

SSN 1  
Board 16

North

♠ 2  
♥ A106  
♦ Q10642  
♣ AK96

South

♠ A109865  
♥ KQ4  
♦ 8  
♣ J85

West leads the ♦A and seeing his partner's card correctly places you with a singleton so switches to the ♥9. Prospects look bad but not quite hopeless; if we can keep our trump losers down to 2 then perhaps a double finesse in clubs or finding the queen doubleton will bring home this ambitious contract.

Plan your play.

### Initial Analysis

The first decision to take is where to win this trick and how to tackle the trump suit. I usually bore you with facts and figures concerning the various possibilities open to you here, so why stop now? Clearly if the suit breaks 3-3 it doesn't matter if you start with the ace then play another or duck the first round then play ace and another. In fact if one or other opponent is sitting with the doubleton KQ, KJ or QJ it also doesn't matter. But if East started with four spades to the KQJ or a doubleton honour in spades then playing a small spade to the 10 gains. How often will it gain? There are 8 possibilities described above (try them) and as there are only 64 possible layouts of the opponents cards in this suit that's a fair amount.

So you win the heart switch in dummy and play a small spade to the 10 on which West wins with the queen. He continues a heart which you win in hand and when you cash the ♠A he drops the king. Now the ♠9 forces out the jack from East who exits with his last spade, West discarding yet another heart. In the meantime you have discarded 2 diamonds and a club from dummy.

This is now the position

#### North

♠ -  
♥ 10  
♦ Q10  
♣ AK9

#### South

♠ 65  
♥ Q  
♣ -  
♣ J85

#### Final Analysis

We are going to abandon the double finesse in clubs, there's a better line available to us. But first, just in case West started with a doubleton ace king of diamonds we play a small club up to the king followed by a low diamond ruffed. When nothing exciting happens here we try the effect of cashing the ♥Q followed by our last spade. This will squeeze West if he started with the ♣Q as he has to discard before dummy and must then hold on to the ♦K. This special squeeze also goes under the name of a discovery play for if West does not follow with the ♣Q when we now play a small club towards dummy then he ain't got it so we might as well play the king in the hope that Est will drop the queen.

Here is the full hand

**North**

♠ 2  
♥ A106  
♦ Q10642  
♣ AK96

**West**

♠ KQ  
♥ 98752  
♦ AK7  
♣ Q102

**East**

♠ J743  
♥ J3  
♦ J953  
♣ 743

**South**

♠ A109865  
♥ KQ4  
♦ 8  
♣ J85

**Conclusion**

They say that Lady Luck favours the brave, but the good news for the rest of is she sometimes also favours the foolhardy.