

## July 2018

I'm watching a match on BBO when this hands comes up

### Bidding

Dealer North

N-S vul

South	W	N	E	S
♠ 87542		1C	pass	1S
♥ A62	pass	2NT	pass	3D
♦ QJ43	pass	3S	pass	4S
♣ J	all pass			

The bidding was uneventful and when West leads the ♥Q and dummy goes down you fancy your chances. E-W play standard carding and East drops the ♥3 on this trick.

### North

♠ AQ9  
♥ K54  
♦ K87  
♣ AK42

### South

♠ 87542  
♥ A62  
♦ QJ43  
♣ J

Plan your play.

### Initial Analysis

Assuming trumps break this hand looks easy. If West holds the ♠K the contract is assured, win the first trick in hand, take the spade finesse, cash the ace and it's all over bar the shouting. You might end up losing 2 diamond tricks but you still make 10 tricks. So you win the first trick in hand and finesse the spades. East wins and returns a heart. You still fancy your chances, but not as much as you did a minute ago. You win this trick

in dummy, cash the two club winners discarding your heart loser in hand, then cash the ♠A. The contract still makes if the diamonds break 3-3 or the defender sitting with the ♦A fails to hold the last spade. This will happen only half the time so the chances of things going pear shape are about 32%. All in all this line of play would have worked just over 80% of the time so when you go down, and you will, you were very unlucky. Or were you? What, if instead of cashing the ♠A you knock out the ♦A first? If the defence wins this trick straight away your contract is cold because now you can safely cash the ♠A and eventually ruff your losing diamond in dummy. To go down now, the diamonds must break 4-2, and the Ace must be held in the long diamond hand. If this is West and he gives his partner a winning ruff ( the ten or the jack) you must now guess the spade position to make. If East gives his partner a diamond ruff you must hope he started with 3 spades so that when you cash your Ace the remaining trumps drop. Your chances of making the contract have considerably improved.

And now that we have worked through these possibilities we see the correct play we should have adopted at trick 1. Win the first trick in dummy and play the ♦K. It will take a very astute defender to duck this. If they take this trick and switch to another suit you are home and dry. If they win it and play another diamond you win and take the spade finesse. You will only go down now if East started with 4 diamonds and 3 spades. Now that would be unlucky. You will have to take my word for it but that's about a 5% chance. If West holds up the Ace with the intention of giving his partner a diamond ruff, when next in you can make the safety play of cashing the ♠A in case East started with the king doubleton, then at a later stage playing up to the queen in dummy.

The full hand

	<b>North</b>	
	♠ AQ9	
	♥ K54	
	♦ K87	
	♣ AK42	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
♠ 1063		♠ KJ
♥ QJ108		♥ 1073
♦ A9		♦ 10652
♣ 9863		♣ Q1075
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ 87542	
	♥ A62	
	♦ QJ43	
	♣ J	

**Final Analysis**

The line suggested gives the defence a real chance of getting it wrong, but still succeeds in certain combinations where the line taken fails. Check it out for yourself.