



Pat Harrington

Play & Learn

Can you see into the future?

A good declarer has to predict the future to be aware of what might happen when one line of play is chosen over a different line of play. Chances are you won't give your best effort if you don't take time to make a plan before playing the very first card from dummy. Test your psychic ability as you plan the play on the two deals shown below. Cover the East-West cards and decide how you would play these contracts on the specified lead.

1.

<p>♠ J 4 ♥ 9 4 3 2 ♦ K Q J ♣ 10 7 5 4</p>	<p>N W E S</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 5 ♥ 10 8 6 ♦ 10 9 8 4 ♣ A K 2</p>
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<p>♠ A K 9 8 7 2 ♥ K 7 ♦ A 7 3 ♣ J 9</p>
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West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Opening lead: ♦ K.

2.

<p>♠ J 9 8 ♥ J 10 9 3 ♦ 7 2 ♣ K Q J 10</p>	<p>N W E S</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 ♥ K Q 8 5 2 ♦ 9 8 4 ♣ 8 7 4</p>
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<p>♠ A K 7 6 5 ♥ A 6 ♦ A K 3 ♣ 9 3 2</p>
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West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Opening lead: ♣ K.

Answers

1. South's losers are two clubs, two diamonds and one spade (assuming a 3-2 split). South can afford only three losers, so two losers have to be eliminated. Dummy has two extra heart winners. Extra winners in dummy are a good place to discard losers.

Now plan the order of play. Can declarer draw trumps? There is no harm in leading the ♠ A K. When both opponents follow suit twice, however, declarer cannot afford to draw the last trump. That loses the lead, and all four minor-suit losers are fast losers, which East-West can take when they gain the lead. Don't let the opponents gain the lead when you have too many fast losers. The only way to make 4♠ is to leave the last high trump out and play hearts, hoping for a 4-3 split. Remember to play hearts by starting with the king, high from the short hand first

so the suit doesn't block. Discard two club or diamond losers on dummy's last two hearts.

Declarer needed some luck to make this contract: Spades had to split 3-2 and hearts had to split 4-3. Notice that declarer doesn't have to win the fourth heart trick. As it turns out, East can ruff it, but that still allows declarer to discard a loser. It's like magic! Declarer's spade loser and one minor-suit loser are lost on the same trick.

2. This deal seems similar to the first one. South's losers are one heart, two clubs, and one spade (assuming a 3-2 split), so one loser must be eliminated. Dummy's long diamond suit offers the chance to discard two losers. Again, East-West are left with one high trump after declarer leads the ace-king of trumps.

To make 4♠ this time, South must draw the last high trump before playing diamonds. What's the difference between these two deals? This time, declarer can afford to lose the lead because there are not too many fast losers. The ♣ K opening lead created two fast club losers for declarer, but South's ♥ A means the heart loser is a slow loser. There will be time later to discard the heart loser on North's diamonds. While it would be nice to make an overtrick by taking two discards, South knows diamonds can't run while there is still a trump out. With only one high diamond as the entry to use North's long diamonds, declarer leads a third trump. This prevents the defense from foiling declarer's plan by ruffing at a time that will cut transportation and prevent South from getting the needed discard. □