



# Play & Learn

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## Clues from the dummy – part 2

Here are two deals for you to practice planning your play. In each case, cover up the East–West hands when you make the plan as declarer, South.

Dlr: South ♠ 10 4 3 2  
 Vul: Both ♥ Q 6 2  
 ♦ A 9 8 5  
 ♣ 7 5

♠ J 8 7 5 ♥ 8 4 ♦ Q J 10 ♣ K J 9 3		♠ Q 9 6 ♥ 9 7 3 ♦ K 6 4 3 ♣ Q 10 8	♠ A K ♥ A K J 10 5 ♦ 7 2 ♣ A 6 4 2
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West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥	Pass	1♥
All Pass			4♥

North's raise to 2♥ made it easy for South to reach 4♥ with a maximum 19–21 point opening hand opposite a minimum responding hand. After West's ♦ Q opening lead, South pauses to plan the play.

Did you count four losers in South's hand (one diamond and three clubs)? Because dummy has a doubleton club, you can avoid one loser and possibly two, by ruffing clubs before drawing the opponents' – and dummy's – trumps.

South's first job is to prepare dummy to ruff clubs. The plan is to win the ♦ A, play a club to the ace, then lose a club. One diamond might be lost before South can regain the lead to play

a third club to ruff in dummy. Some declarers might be content with eliminating one loser and making 4♥ but, in pair games scored by matchpoints, overtricks matter and failing to score an extra 30 points could be costly. As long as dummy still has all three hearts left, going for an overtrick is virtually risk-free. Ruff the third club low. The odds favor a 4–3 split of the seven missing clubs, so you are likely to win the trick and can come back to your hand to ruff the last club with the ♥ Q.

Once West plays to the fourth club, all 13 clubs have been accounted for, and you know East will overruff if you use a low heart. Luckily, South's hearts are strong enough to handle even a 4–1 trump split. If clubs split 5–2 and East overruffs the third club, you are still OK; ruff your last club high to make 4♥.

Dlr: South ♠ K 7 6 3  
 Vul: E–W ♥ J 10 2  
 ♦ Q 8 3 2  
 ♣ A 3

♠ 4 ♥ A K 8 6 ♦ 10 7 6 5 ♣ 10 9 8 6		♠ 9 8 2 ♥ Q 9 7 ♦ K J 9 4 ♣ Q J 4	♠ A Q J 10 5 ♥ 5 4 3 ♦ A ♣ K 7 5 2
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West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	1♠
All Pass			4♠

West leads the ♥ A, East encourages with the ♥ 9, and the defenders quickly win three heart tricks. What is your plan to take the rest of the tricks? Do you see more losers?

South still has two club losers. Luckily, dummy's doubleton club provides a clue – cash the ♣ A and then the ♣ K and ruff South's remaining clubs in dummy. Making 4♠ isn't a sure thing. If the defenders' clubs split 5–2, there is a danger of an overruff by East. Declarer again has strong trumps and can afford to ruff one club high with the ♠ K, but won't make the contract unless both clubs can be ruffed. That means there is some risk ruffing the third club with a low trump. Ruffing the third club high is a surefire way to go down; you have to take the chance that it won't be overruffed.

Note that South should cash two high spades before playing clubs, leaving the ♠ K 7 in dummy. It doesn't matter on this hand but it will occasionally. You protect against East having a distributional hand with a singleton or doubleton spade and only two clubs. When East has a third spade and can ruff the third club, so be it; you made the best play to make your contract.

Declarer followed the short-suit plan on both these deals. Dummy's shortness in a side suit provided the way for declarer to avoid losers. ■