

Contract Bridge

FROM KING FEATURES WEEKLY SERVICE,

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CONTRACT BRIDGE

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By Steve Becker

THE BIDDING POINTS THE WAY

West dealer.

North-South vulnerable.

NORTH

♠ K 9 4
♥ Q 7 3
♦ K 9 8 2
♣ A 4 3

WEST

♠ Q J 10 5 2
♥ A J 10
♦ 5 3
♣ K J 7

EAST

♠ 8 7 6 3
♥ 9 8 6 5 4
♦ —
♣ 10 9 8 6

SOUTH

♠ A
♥ K 2
♦ A Q J 10 7 6 4
♣ Q 5 2

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
1 ♠	Dble	3 ♠	6 ♦
Dble	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead — queen of spades.

Let's say you reach six diamonds doubled on the bidding shown and West leads a spade. When dummy comes down, it occurs to you that North's takeout double was just a tad light, but you concentrate instead on how to play the hand.

At first glance, it seems you must lose a heart and a club and go down one. But when you give it some more thought, you realize you actually have an excellent chance for the slam. West

must have the ace of hearts and king of clubs for his bids, and if he also started with the ten of spades to go with the Q-J indicated by his opening lead, you're a virtual shoo-in for the contract.

So, you win the spade with the ace and lead the heart deuce. West can't afford to go up with the ace — you'd have 12 tricks if he did — so he plays the ten. You win with the queen, discard your king of hearts on the king of spades and ruff a heart.

Next you lead a low trump to the eight, ruff dummy's last heart, continue with a low trump to the nine and lead the nine of spades. But instead of ruffing, you discard a club!

West wins the spade with the ten but is helpless. If he returns a spade or a heart (if he has one), you can ruff in dummy and discard another club. If he returns a low club instead, you let it roll around to your queen. Either way, you make the slam.

As the cards lie, declarer can also make the slam after the queen of hearts wins at trick two by keeping the king of hearts and discarding a club on the king of spades, then running all his remaining trumps and conceding a heart to West's ace. But as this would involve guessing what West's last three cards are, the suggested line of play is preferred.

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