

Contract Bridge

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CONTRACT BRIDGE
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By Steve Becker

SIMPLEST IS BEST

West dealer.

East-West vulnerable.

NORTH			
♠	Q 10 5		
♥	6 2		
♦	Q J 7 4		
♣	K 9 7 3		
WEST		EAST	
♠	3	♠	8 7 6 2
♥	A K J 9 7 3	♥	Q 10 8 4
♦	A 9 2	♦	8 5
♣	10 6 2	♣	Q J 4
SOUTH			
♠	A K J 9 4		
♥	5		
♦	K 10 6 3		
♣	A 8 5		

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	Pass	2 ♥	2 ♠
3 ♥	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠

Opening lead — king of hearts.

Most deals do not require declarer to indulge in complicated strategy or exotic play. In the great majority of cases, the simplest approach will prove to be the best.

Consider this deal where South went astray. West led the king of hearts, followed by the ace. Declarer ruffed, played a trump to the queen and another trump back to the ace.

When West showed out, South was in trouble. Recognizing that he could

not afford to draw East's remaining trumps, which would have exhausted his own trumps and left him at West's mercy, declarer led the king of diamonds.

Had West taken the king, South would have had smooth sailing. But West, sensing South's problem, played low on the king as East followed with the eight to begin to show a doubleton.

South was now a deceased pigeon. He did as well as he could when he led another diamond, but West rose with the ace and returned a diamond for East to ruff, and South finished down one.

Declarer could have avoided this outcome by a simple maneuver. Instead of ruffing the ace of hearts at trick two, he should have discarded a club. The club was an eventual loser in any case, but because another heart lead at trick three could be ruffed in dummy, declarer would have retained control of the trump suit. Once South made this play, the defense would have been helpless.

Declarer could not be 100% certain that the club discard at trick two would make the contract, but it offered real protection against a possible 4-1 trump division. The solution was a simple one. All South had to do was to think of it.

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