

♠♥♦♣ **FOURTH SUIT FORCING** ♠♥♦♣

South has dealt himself this hand:

S	South
♠	AQ94
♥	Q8
♦	64
♣	KJ1075

He opens 1♣ and partner responds 1♥. South shows his 4-card spade suit by rebidding 1♠. At this point partner rebids 2♦. This is a special bid. It is the 4th suit bid in the auction, and is considered a forcing bid in modern bidding. The convention is called "fourth suit forcing." It is a method of forcing the opener to keep bidding because the responder does not know where to play the contract. It may be in one of the first three bid suit; or in notrump. It is a request for more information. It is artificial and says nothing about the suit bid. When it was first invented, it meant the responder had a hand that was invitational or better in strength. Now, most play the convention promising an opening strength hand. Therefore, it is forcing to game.

But, what game? There is a hierarchy of rebids for the opener. His first choice is to rebid notrump if the opener has a stopper in the 4th suit. This hand doesn't have that stopper.

The second option is to rebid the responder's major with 3 cards in the suit. In the hand above, South does not meet that requirement. The next choice is to rebid the opener's first suit if it is 5 cards or longer. Therefore, South can now bid 3♣. By the way, some reverse the priority of the first two options.

In this auction, North suggests playing in a 4-3 spade fit by rebidding 3♠. Since he didn't support spades after South first bid them, he must be showing only 3 spades. Now South can only agree and raise to 4♠.

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

West leads the \spadesuit K and these are the two hands:

N	North
\spadesuit	KJ6
\heartsuit	KJ109
\diamondsuit	1095
\clubsuit	AQ6

West lead \diamondsuit K

S	South
\spadesuit	AQ94
\heartsuit	Q8
\diamondsuit	64
\clubsuit	KJ1075

South has 2 quick losers in diamonds and is also missing the \heartsuit A. Therefore, he must bring the trump in without losing a trick. This wouldn't be so hard if the spades split 4-2 and if he could keep the 4 spades in his hand for the pulling. However, he is going to have to use the \spadesuit 4 to ruff the third diamond. Now he must rely on a 3-3 spade split. This is only a 36% probability, but it is the only hope for making this contract.

The defenders take the first 2 diamond tricks and South wins the third trick with the \spadesuit 4. Should he now pull trump and see if they fall 3-3? The answer is no. He can't afford to use all his trump for pulling because he also needs one heart trick to go with the 4 spades and 5 clubs. When he loses the lead to the outstanding \heartsuit A, they will continue the diamonds and set the contract 2 tricks.

South could pull 2 rounds of trump, saving one in his hand to get the lead back after they take the \heartsuit A. If, by chance they duck the first heart, South should abandon the hearts and go for the remaining spades.

As luck would have it, the spades do break evenly and the contract was made.

This is the full deal:

11 D	N North	W N E S
	♠ KJ6 ♥ KJ109 ♦ 1095 ♣ AQ6	P 1♥ P 1♠ P 2♦ P 3♣ P 3♠ P 4♣ D D D
W West		E East
♠ 1072 ♥ A52 ♦ KQ832 ♣ 32		♠ 853 ♥ 7643 ♦ AJ7 ♣ 984
	S South	
	♠ AQ94 ♥ Q8 ♦ 64 ♣ KJ1075	4♠ S NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/ybejl5qx> , Or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.

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