

SENDING SIGNALS

Consider this hand:

South
♠42
♥A10543
♦A65
♣854

The bidding goes:

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

Your partner leads the ♥2 and you see this dummy:

North	
♥2	
West	East
	♠ AJ5
	♥ KQJ9
	♦ Q109
	♣ K63
South	
♠42	
♥A10543	
♦A65	
♣854	

You have two sure ticks. What is your plan to set this 4♠ contract?

This first thing is to analyze partner's lead. Normally, when a low card is led, the message is, "I've got an honor or two, and I want to develop this suit." The opposite is true of a high spot card lead. It says, "This is my top card in this suit, so if you get in, partner, don't bother returning it; develop your own best suit." But here, when you consider the strength and length of the dummy's hearts, and the length of your own suit, the ♥2 is probably a singleton. Therefore, you must take this trick with your ♥A. Now what?

You're going to give your partner your hoped for ruff, but you also hope he will return a diamond so you can win the $\heartsuit A$ and give him a second ruff. You don't have to hope. You can signal him that you want a diamond return and not a club or a trump return. You do this with the size of the heart that you lead to trick 2. Whenever you give your partner a ruff, you always lead the card that cues him to lead the suit that gets him back into your hand. The signal is to lead a high card for the higher ranking of the two remaining outside suits; a low card for the lower of those two suits. Here the $\heartsuit 10$ send this very clear signal. It says, "Between the diamonds and the clubs, chose to return a diamond." By the way, if there is no possibility of getting back to your hand, lead an middle heart, like the $\heartsuit 5$. If he reads that correctly, he might be able to do something else intelligent that can get you the needed setting trick.

Here's the full hand. Notice that any other lead to trick 2 than the diamond will allow the declarer to get into the lead and pull the outstanding trump, thereby leaving you with only your three tricks.

The bidding is classic two over one. East's $2\heartsuit$ is game forcing and denies four spades. West's 2NT says he can't support diamonds, and he has no other 4-card suit of his own. East's return to $3\spadesuit$ shows either three spades or only 2 spades but an unwillingness to play in 3NT. West signs off in $4\spadesuit$ with his minimum strength hand. Ironically, 3NT can't be beaten.

		N North \spadesuit 763 \heartsuit 2 \diamondsuit J8732 \clubsuit J1072		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>WEST</th> <th>NORTH</th> <th>EAST</th> <th>SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1\spadesuit</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2\heartsuit</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3\spadesuit</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4\spadesuit</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1 \spadesuit	Pass	2 \heartsuit	Pass	2NT	Pass	3 \spadesuit	Pass	4 \spadesuit	Pass	Pass	Pass
		WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH															
1 \spadesuit	Pass	2 \heartsuit	Pass																	
2NT	Pass	3 \spadesuit	Pass																	
4 \spadesuit	Pass	Pass	Pass																	
W West \spadesuit KQ1098 \heartsuit 876 \diamondsuit K4 \clubsuit AQ9	E East \spadesuit AJ5 \heartsuit KQJ9 \diamondsuit Q109 \clubsuit K63																			
		S South \spadesuit 42 \heartsuit A10543 \diamondsuit A65 \clubsuit 854																		

If you would like to see the whole hand played out click on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/kq4watb> or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick.