

## ♠♥♦♣ THE QUEEN DROP ♠♥♦♣

You are West and North is the dealer. North passes, as does your partner. South opens in 3<sup>rd</sup> seat with 1♥. You pass, and North raises to 4♥. This becomes the final contract. It is your lead. This is your hand:

W	undefined
♠	543
♥	532
♦	AQ65
♣	AK2

You have an opening strength hand yourself, but when South opens 1♥, you don't have way to enter the bidding. You haven't got a 5-card suit to overcall; you don't have the right shape for a takeout double; and you don't have the strength nor a heart stopper for a 1NT overcall. Pass is the only correct alternative.

The lead of the ♣A from ♣AK is standard. This gives you a look at the dummy and an attitude signal from your partner. This will give you additional information for your second lead.

N	undefined
♠	AQ109
♥	AJ76
♦	J82
♣	108

W	undefined
♠	543
♥	532
♦	AQ65
♣	AK2

East plays the ♣Q

The dummy has 12 HCP, the maximum for his initial pass – vulnerable, in 1<sup>st</sup> position. South opened in 3<sup>rd</sup> seat, so he can be a little light. Say he also has 11 HCP. With your 13 HCP, the three hands total 26 HCP. That leaves a maximum of 4 HCP for your partner.

The dummy plays low and partner drops the ♣Q. What does this mean?

The only time the Queen is played under her partner's Ace in the initial lead to a suit contract, is either when it is a singleton or it is backed up by the Jack. The reason for

this is that it gives the leader the option of leading low to the Jack (or to the void). Getting into partner's hand could be critical. You may want a lead of another suit through the declarer. On the other hand, if West had the ♣Q93, for example, he would play the ♣9, signaling that he holds the Queen.

With this hand, you certainly do want a critical lead from your partner. You can see the four tricks needed to set the contract. You need partner to lead a diamond through the declarer's ♦K. Your partner has "shown" 3 points. He can only have another Jack – not the ♦K.

You lead your low club to partner's ♣J. The fact that you didn't cash the ♣K tells East that a switch of suits is required. But a switch to what? East must look at the dummy for assistance. Trump is out of the question. A spade lead will finesse partner. It must be the diamonds that West wants led.

East dutifully leads the diamond and you get 2 diamond tricks to go along with your two club tricks. Notice that if you played the ♣AK on the first two tricks, the declarer would have time to pull trump and discard his 2 diamonds on the long spades in the dummy.

This is the entire deal:

<div style="background-color: white; color: black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">D</div> <div style="background-color: white; color: black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; font-size: 24px;">1</div>	<div style="background-color: white; color: black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">N</div> undefined	<div style="background-color: white; color: black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">W</div> <div style="background-color: white; color: black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; font-weight: bold;">N</div> <div style="background-color: white; color: black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; font-weight: bold;">E</div> <div style="background-color: white; color: black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; font-weight: bold;">S</div>
	♠ AQ109 ♥ AJ76 ♦ J82 ♣ 108	P P 1♥ P 4♥ P P P
<div style="background-color: white; color: black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">W</div> undefined		<div style="background-color: white; color: black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">E</div> undefined
♠ 543 ♥ 532 ♦ AQ65 ♣ AK2		♠ J876 ♥ 8 ♦ 10743 ♣ QJ93
	<div style="background-color: white; color: black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">S</div> undefined	
	♠ K2 ♥ KQ1094 ♦ K9 ♣ 7654	4♥ S    NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/yeede9pr>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. If you don't want to see the opponents hands, click on the white area in the South hand before you start.

Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.