

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

Take a look at this deal diagram.

		N North		W N E S
11		♠ QJ10		
D		♥ QJ1095		P 3♥
		♦ 542		P 3NT P P
		♣ 74		P
W West			E East	
♠ K9762			♠ 83	
♥ 83			♥ A764	
♦ 63			♦ QJ109	
♣ K1085			♣ J92	
		S South		
		♠ A54		
		♥ K2		
		♦ AK87		
		♣ AQ63		
				3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0

You have a perfect 2NT opening. With 20 balanced points, this bid describes your hand to a tee. Your partner will place the contract accurately with this specific information. He transfers you into hearts and to show only 5 hearts and no slam intentions, rebids 3NT.

This becomes the final contract and West leads a low spade. What is your plan?

You have 2 spades (if you win the first trick with dummy's ♠10), 2 diamonds and 1 club; 5 tricks in all. You can easily increase this to 9 tricks once the ♥A is knocked out. Whenever the hand seems too easy, you should ask yourself, "What could go wrong?"

Unless your playing against your parents, the defenders aren't going to put up the ♥A on the first heart lead of the ♥K. West will play the ♥8 to show an even number of hearts. When East wins the ♥A on the second heart trick, he will return a spade. Now the hearts are irretrievably blocked. If you win this trick with the ♠A and lead your last spade to dummy's ♠Q, West will come up with the ♠K. Now you have no possible entries to those four hearts. West will clear the suit for a total of 3 spades. The defenders will eventually take enough diamonds and clubs to set the contract by several tricks.

Of course, if you translated the title of this article, you would have been tipped off to the answer to this problem. You need to ditch that ♠A on the first trick! Yes, even though your ♠10 is high, you need to have two entries to the spades later, after the ♥A is gone. West can cover one of the low spades, but not both. *When everything looks too good, ask yourself whether you have the necessary entries.*

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

<http://tinyurl.com/nx8m86b>. 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.