

## ♠♥♦♣ DIRECTING YOUR FOCUS ♠♥♦♣

West dealt, and it's three passes to you:

<b>S</b>	South
♠	A10532
♥	53
♦	AKQJ
♣	84

You open 1♠ with this 14 HCP hand, and partner responds 2♣. In your system, this shows 10+ points. You bid your diamond suit and partner jumps to 3♠. This is highly invitational, showing spade support and 11-12 points. Your 5<sup>th</sup> spade and your quality diamond suit, adds at least 2 points to your hand. Your two doubletons adds another point. You happily raise to 4♠.

West leads the ♥K. What's your plan?

<b>N</b>	North
♠	KQ9
♥	1086
♦	9632
♣	AQ10

West leads ♥K

<b>S</b>	South
♠	A10532
♥	53
♦	AKQJ
♣	84

You have two sure heart losers and the ♣K may well be off-side. That means you will have 3 losers and cannot afford any spade losers. How can you play the trump suit for no losers?

You have 8 spades, including the top three. If they break 3-2, you have no problem. If they break 5-0, you have no hope. If they break 4-1, you have a chance. But you won't find out about that distribution until after the second trick. Therefore, if West holds the 4 spades with the ♠J, you can't get it. You can only capture the ♠J if it is in East.

Since that is the only distribution you can handle, that is the holding you must plan for. You have to win the first two spades to uncover the 4-1 distribution, ending in the dummy, keeping the ♠A10 in your hand. Thus, win the 3<sup>rd</sup> heart and lead a small spade to the ♠KQ. West shows out on the second spade so lead the ♠9 to your hand, finessing the ♠10 if East plays low; winning the ♠A if East plays the ♠J.

Now, you must draw East's last trump and take the ♣A. If you finesse the ♣Q and it loses, East may have another heart and you will have to use your last trump to regain the lead. East will set you with his remaining spade.

When you are planning your play, before the first card is played from the dummy, imagine the distributions that will allow you to make your contract and forget about those that would lead to defeat. Direct your focus to the alternatives that have a possibility of success.

Look at the entire deal:

♠ 8	<b>N</b> North	♠ KQ9	W	N	E	S
	♥ 1086	♦ 9632	P	P	P	1♠
	♣ AQ10		P	2♣	P	2♥
			P	3♠	P	4♠
			P	P	P	
<b>W</b> West			<b>E</b> East			
♠ 6			♠ J874			
♥ KQJ74			♥ A92			
♦ 854			♦ 107			
♣ 7532			♣ KJ96			
	<b>S</b> South					
	♠ A10532					
	♥ 53					
	♦ AKQJ					
	♣ 84					
			4♠ S	NS: 0	EW: 0	

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

<https://tinyurl.com/y3b2s7v7> 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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