

LOOK TO THE 5-CARD SUIT

Consider this constructive auction:

	North		
	♠1063		
	♥QJ8		
	♦K7		
	♣AK842		
West		South	
♦Q		♠A74	
		♥AK10952	
		♦85	
		♣93	
West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

North is too strong to make an initial response in hearts. 3♥ would be a limit raise promising 10-12 points, and 4♥, in modern bidding, would show a weaker hand with five spades. North makes a forcing response of 2♣ and waits to hear South's rebid. South's rebid of 2♥ normally promises six spades and a minimum opening hand. North can now put the partnership where it belongs – a game level 4♥ bid.

West leads the ♦Q and South turns to her plan. She has two spade losers, no heart losers, two diamond and no club losers. How can she eliminate one of those four losers?

Since the spade losers are slow, she should have time to set up the dummy's clubs on which she can dump a spade. She will need the outstanding clubs to break at least 4-2. But more important, she will need three trips to the dummy; two to set them up and one to access the good club. Her only entries outside clubs, is in the trump suit. Therefore, she can't afford to pull the opponents trump first. She loses her ♦K to East's ♦A and trumps the 3rd diamond. She plays her ♣AK, and trumps the third club. She must be sure to use a high trump to ensure against West overtrumping should he have started with only two clubs.

West, in fact, did start with two clubs and discards on the 3rd club lead. Now South leads a low trump up to the dummy (both opponents follow) and trumps the 4th club. The stage is set to go back to the dummy with another heart and discard the losing spade on the 5th club.

There are several time tested ways of eliminating losers. One of the lesser used techniques is setting up a 5-card suit in the dummy. Look for this possibility when promotion or trumping in the dummy isn't available.

Here is the full deal:

14	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ 1063 ♥ QJ8 ♦ K7 ♣ AK842	P	2♠	P	1♥ 2♥
W West		E East			
♠ K952 ♥ 74 ♦ QJ932 ♣ J7		♠ QJ8 ♥ 63 ♦ A1064 ♣ Q1065			
	S South				
	♠ A74 ♥ AK10952 ♦ 85 ♣ 93				
		4♥ S		NS: 0 EW: 0	

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

<http://tinyurl.com/nqj9x89> . 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.