

Here is board 24 from yesterday's (1st July) game at Shoreham, a very interesting deal where both sides had opportunities in play and defence. The bidding also had some points of interest. West was the dealer at Love All :

	QJ1097530	
	KJ6	
	Q4	
	Q	
A82		4
AQ975		---
J		9876532
J976		AK542
	K6	
	108432	
	AK10	
	1083	

West opened One Heart, North overcalled One Spade and East doubled, a negative double showing length in both minor suits (certainly true !) South had an awkward decision – enough points to bid something, but what ? South chose Two Spades. You don't often raise a one-level overcall with just doubleton support but I think it's a decent choice here. Partner has at least five spades so the doubleton Kx will be useful, as will the two top diamonds. (In passing, perhaps a Redouble would suggest this type of hand ?)

West competed with Three Clubs and North pressed on with Three Spades. East raised to Four Clubs, though maybe a jump to Five Clubs would have been a better choice with this distribution. When this was passed round to North he decided to bid Four Spades. West Doubled this – again East might remove the Double to Five Clubs – and it was East on lead.

Naturally enough, East began with the Ace of clubs ... and that was the end of the road for the defence. North ruffed the King of clubs continuation, knocked out the Ace of trumps and lost one further trick to the Ace of hearts. Ten tricks made for +590 and a top score.

It takes an opening diamond lead to defeat Four Spades. West will win the first round of spades, lead a club to East's King, receive a diamond ruff and then cash the Ace of hearts. That's one down so far and if West then continues by leading any black card the contract will be two down.

“Oh dear,” said West after the play had finished. “I think we might have been able to make Five Clubs. Actually I think we can make Six Clubs !” What do you think ?

Say North leads the Queen of spades. West wins and leads his singleton Jack of diamonds, won by North's Queen. Assume North now switches to his singleton Queen of trumps – as good as anything else – won by Dummy's King. Declarer now ruffs a diamond, ruffs a spade in dummy, ruffs another diamond to establish the suit, cashes the Jack of trumps, ruffs a heart in dummy, draws the last trump with dummy's Ace and dummy is now left with nothing but lovely winning diamonds. Twelve tricks made.

Many players do not like to lead a singleton trump, especially if it is an honour card. On this hand however, there is only one card that North can lead to defeat Six Clubs – the singleton Queen of clubs ! Declarer wins in dummy but is now an entry short to both ruff the diamonds good *and* be able to get back to dummy later on to access the established diamond winners. Try it out for yourself.