

The opponents' bidding can often guide you towards a particular line of play. Occasionally it can make a line of play quite obvious ... but that's assuming you make use of all of the information available to you. Here is a deal from recent game at Shoreham where South was declarer in Four Spades :

AQ85
Q72
KJ7
1043

KJ732
K104
AQ5
J7

West began with Ace, King and another club, South ruffing East's Queen and drawing trumps in three rounds (East discarding a low diamond and a low heart). What next ?

Clearly it all depends on the location of honours in the heart suit. If East has the Jack, declarer can lead towards his 10 and restrict his losers in the suit to one. But declarer did not follow this line of play because the auction had been very revealing :

West	North	East	South
1NT*	NB	NB	2S
NB	3S	NB	4S
End			

*12-14

West has advertised 12-14 points and has so far shown up with the Ace and King of clubs. The only honour cards that West could hold in order to justify his opening bid were the Ace and Jack of hearts, so a finesse of the 10 of hearts was destined to lose to West's Jack and the contract would finish one down.

With this crucial information in mind, declarer played three rounds of diamonds to reach this four-card ending with South on lead :

	8	
	Q72	

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AJ9		865
---		10
9		---
	7	
	K104	

Declarer now led the King of hearts and West had no answer. If he failed to win with his Ace, declarer would simply lead another heart towards dummy's Queen for the tenth trick. So West took his Ace but that was the end for the defence. West had to lead either a club (giving declarer a ruff and discard) or the 9 of hearts (which declarer could run round to his 10). Ten tricks made.

Notice the importance of playing three rounds of diamonds before leading the King of hearts. If declarer does not do this, West can win his Ace of hearts and then get off lead safely by exiting with a diamond. Declarer would not then be able to avoid losing a second heart trick.

The full deal :

	AQ85	
	Q72	
	KJ7	
	1043	
1094		6
AJ9		8653
98		106432
AK962		Q85
	KJ732	
	K104	
	AQ5	
	J7	

Enjoy your bridge.

Mike