



## Take Notice of Negative Inferences

**E/W Game. Dealer South.**

♠ Q J 8 3  
♥ K J 7  
♦ A K Q 10 2  
♣ J

♠ 7 6  
♥ A 10 5 4 3  
♦ 8 4  
♣ 10 9 4 2

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

PLAYING teams, South opens 1NT (12-14) and West passes. You bid 2♣, Stayman, with the North hand and partner responds 2♠. What call do you make?

You are worth a try for slam in spades and a jump to four of a new suit is a splinter, showing a singleton or void in the suit bid and four card trump support. So you bid 4♣, over which partner bids 4♠. Partner has denied a control in either red

suit, so you know that you are missing the ace of hearts. It is just possible that partner has the ace and king of trumps, the queen of hearts and the ace of clubs, but equally he may have more wasted values in clubs. You need the perfect cards, and even then, a slam might be beaten if there are bad breaks around and since you are not certain to make 5♠, you should now pass. As it turns out, even 4♠ can be beaten. Switch to the East hand now, and see if you can work out how.

West leads the nine of hearts. How would you plan the defence?

Dummy looks depressingly strong, and you know that trumps are breaking, so prospects look slim. With few high cards between you, a heart ruff seems your best chance. Could partner's be a singleton lead? If so, you must rise with the ace and give him a ruff. But suppose he has led from a doubleton: now if you win with the ace and return a heart, you will never be able to regain the lead to give partner his ruff.

The answer is there for you in the bidding. You know that partner's lead is not a singleton because declarer cannot

have four hearts to respond 2♠ to Stayman. Therefore you should duck the heart lead, and hope partner has a fast enough entry to be able to play another heart and get you in to give him a ruff.

This was the full deal:

♠ Q J 8 3  
♥ K J 7  
♦ A K Q 10 2  
♣ J

♠ K 4 2  
♥ 9 2  
♦ 9 7 6 5  
♣ A 8 7 5

♠ 7 6  
♥ A 10 5 4 3  
♦ 8 4  
♣ 10 9 4 2

♠ A 10 9 5  
♥ Q 8 6  
♦ J 3  
♣ K Q 6 3

Even if declarer plays the ace of trumps, and a second one, he cannot prevent the ruff in your partner's hand. That ruff, together with the king of trumps and two aces, is sufficient to beat a contract that, given the sight of dummy, some may have thought would be a lost cause.

### 'BRIDGE LICENSED BY THE EBU'

When you see this in an advertisement in the magazine it means:

- The organisers of the holiday have applied for, and received, a licence.
- They may choose to give master points in accordance with EBU scales.
- These master points will be accepted and added to player records.
- The bridge will be played in line with EBU regulations and bye laws, thus affording all players the protection of playing within the jurisdiction of the EBU.

All County events advertised have an EBU licence.

**NOTE:** Any events licensed by another National Bridge Organisation will not be able to have master points credited to members' records save for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland with whom the EBU have a reciprocal agreement.



### Heather's Hints

- Listen to the bidding when planning your defence, and remember the negative inferences. Here, the 2♠ response to Stayman, denying four hearts, was the key to your plan.
- Always try to think of a way to beat the contract playing teams (or rubber bridge), no matter how strong the dummy is. A secondary consideration is saving overtricks, but while there is still a chance to beat the contract, that is consistent with the bidding and play so far, you should go for it. □