

## Christmas Party Challenge – Hands from The Talk

### Hand One

	♠ A Q T 9	
	♥ K Q 9	
	♦ K T 5	
	♣ 8 5 2	
♠ 7 6 2		♠ K 8 4 3
♥ 8 7 4		♥ 5
♦ J 7 2		♦ Q 8 6 4 3
♣ A J 9 6		♣ Q T 3
	♠ J 5	
	♥ A J T 6 3 2	
	♦ A 9	
	♣ K 7 4	

South plays in 4♥. West leads ♥4

South can see that if he takes the Spade finesse and it loses, then a Club return will put the contract at risk if the Club Ace is wrong (which it is). A better idea is to set up dummy's Spades without allowing East to gain the lead. Win the trump lead in dummy (with the 9) and play a Diamond to the 9 (assuming East plays small). When West wins with the Jack he is likely to play another trump. You should win this again in dummy. Play a Diamond to the Ace and then lead the Spade Jack, overtaking with the Ace in dummy. Play the Diamond King and discard your last Spade. Now lead the Spade Queen for a ruffing finesse (discarding a club if East does not cover). Even if this loses to the King with West you can get to dummy with a trump and discard Clubs on the established Spades.


### Hand Two

	♠ 9 7 6	
	♥ 8 5 4	
	♦ A 9 2	
	♣ A 6 4 3	
♠ K Q J 5		♠ T 8 3 2
♥ 9 7 6		♥ T 3
♦ J T 5 4		♦ Q 6
♣ Q 5		♣ K J T 8 7
	♠ A 4	
	♥ A K Q J 2	
	♦ K 8 7 5	
	♣ 9 2	

South plays in 4♥. West leads ♠K

There are 9 tricks on top and if Diamonds were 3-3 it would be easy. What can you do if they are split 4-2? Suppose you draw two rounds of trumps, then play Ace, King and another Diamond. That's no good. The defender who wins the third round will either play another round of trumps, removing dummy's last trump, or (if his partner has the last trump) give his partner a Diamond ruff. The potentially dangerous moment will occur when the defenders take their Diamond trick. To prevent them doing any damage you should let them win the *first* round of Diamonds. Win the Spade lead, play just one round of trumps, and then play a Diamond to the 9 and East's Queen. When you get back in, either with a Spade ruff or a top Club or Diamond, draw a second round of trumps. Play Ace and King of Diamonds. East shows out on the third round, but has no trump with which to ruff. You can now ruff your last Diamond with impunity in the dummy and this is your 10<sup>th</sup> trick.

### Hand Three

	♠ K J 8 5 4	
	♥ 9 8 7 4	
	♦ 7	
	♣ T 6 5	
♠ A 3 2		♠ 9 7 6
♥ 5		♥ K Q J T
♦ J 9 5 4		♦ Q T 8 6
♣ K 9 7 4 3		♣ J 8
	♠ Q T	
	♥ A 6 3 2	
	♦ A K 3 2	
	♣ A Q 2	

South plays in 3NT. West leads ♣4 and when you play low from dummy East plays ♣J.

There are 9 tricks there (four Spades, a Heart, two Diamonds and, on the lead, two Clubs). However they will not let you make them because they will hold up the Spade Ace, so that you cannot make the Spade tricks in dummy. You must be cunning and win the first trick with the Club Ace, rather than the Queen. Lead the Spade Queen. West will duck and East will signal with the 6 (HELO) to show three cards in the suit. West takes the second Spade with the Ace, and, placing his partner with the Club Queen, is likely to continue with the Club 3. Imagine his surprise when the Ten in dummy wins the trick. Declarer has conjured up an entry to dummy to cash the Spade winners and make his contract.