

## TIMING – PLAY

KQ75    2 NT (Jacoby)  
 AQ84    4 Spades  
 643      5 Spades (2 with the Q)  
 Q2

43        Pass  
 10752    Pass  
 J1098    Pass  
 K65

6        Pass  
 KJ96    Pass  
 Q75     Pass  
 J10943

AJ10982    DEALER – 1 Spade  
 3            3 Hearts (shortness)  
 AK2        4 NT  
 A87        6 Spades

The lead is the J of diamonds. You have 2 losers, one in each minor.  
 Once chance is to rely on the heart finesse to discard the 2 of diamonds,  
 but if it loses, you are going down – a club loser is inescapable.  
 Might it be possible to utilize the Q of clubs? Yes, by leading a low club  
 towards the Q, hoping the West was dealt the K. If this works, you unblock  
 clubs and later discard the diamond 3 on the Ace of clubs. It may seem like a  
 standoff, one blind 50% finesse versus another. However, correct timing allows  
 you two bites at the apple. Draw trumps, ending in hand, and start clubs.  
 If East turns up with the K of clubs, you still have the heart finesse in reserve.  
 You need one finesse to work, if both lose, too bad.

To build the Q of clubs, requires losing the lead. If you already lost a heart  
 finesse, you can't concede the losing trick. That's why clubs must come  
 before hearts.

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You should find out as much as possible about the defenders' hands before making a  
 Crucial decision. Simply cashing winners will not tell you much. The lesson is to  
 avoid committing yourself until the last possible moment.

KJ62    3 Spades (L.R.)  
 KQJ87    Pass  
 54  
 87

43    Pass  
 105    Pass  
 Q1086  
 K6532

A5    Pass  
 A9432    Pass  
 A732  
 94

Q10987    DEALER – 1 Spade  
 6    4 Spades  
 KJ9  
 AQJ10

South opens 1 Spade and North invites, South bids game.  
 Partner leads the 3 of clubs, declarer wins with the Q, and leads a trump.  
 You take your Ace and see three defensive tricks with your three aces.  
 Where is the fourth coming from? Partner might have a club honor,  
 but it doesn't look like it's going to be a trick.  
 Partner could have a heart ruff coming, you and dummy have 10 between you,  
 so someone must be short. You could play the Ace and another heart, hoping  
 to give partner a ruff. But, partner didn't lead a heart, which they surely would  
 have led one if they had a singleton.

A better chance is that you can score a second diamond trick. If partner has the  
 King, this is easy. But you could get a diamond trick if partner has the queen and  
 declarer guesses wrong. Your best play to defeat the contract is a low diamond.

Yes, underlead your Ace. Underleading Aces on opening lead – before you see dummy-  
 is very dangerous. But in the middle of the hand, it's often right if you can judge the  
 dangers to be minimal. If you play the Ace of diamonds and a diamond,  
 declarer wins the K, draws trump, sets up dummy's hearts to discard losers.

This play could cost you a trick. You must weigh the risks vs. the rewards. The big  
 hint here is not to try to give partner a ruff: if they had a singleton, would have led it.

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One of the first hints we covered for declarer was: "If they don't lead a  
 singleton, they don't have one". The same thing applies for a defender:  
 "If partner didn't lead a singleton, they don't have one."

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