

05/07/2021 Hand of the Week 68: Declarer play

First week back and a tricky declarer play! In retrospect maybe we should have trusted partner and left their 3NT, but now we have to deal with a 6-1 trump fit.

11 D	N Erika Pick	W	N	E	S
	♠ AKQ74 ♥ 9 ♦ A105 ♣ QJ83	P	1♠	P	1♥
W bill7nt	♠ 6	P	3NT	P	2♥
E Ridgwelled		P	P	P	4♥
	S med029				
	♠ 109 ♥ KJ7653 ♦ K72 ♣ A2				
		4♥ S		NS: 0 EW: 0	

We have a double stop in diamonds, spades look solid and there is the chance of a club finesse- so potentially we can lose 3 heart tricks and still make the contract. With a 6-2 fit we would lead toward the KJ twice but this is not an option with the singleton on table.

If there is a 3-3 heart split, which occurs about 1/3 (35%), you will lose at most 2 tricks

What about a 4-2 split? This occurs about 1/2 (49%)- as there is no help from the bidding you are on a guess with the finesse. There will be a doubleton honour in about 1/3 of these

So what is the best way to play the heart suit?

Leading the 9♥ from table, if East plays an honour there should be no problem.

What if east plays low?

The preferred option here is to play the K♥

If West wins they will most likely lead a second spade, you can cross to hand with the diamond, and play a low heart to try and drop the Q♥

If this fails, you can still hope for the 3-3 split!

In fact there is about an 80% chance of making 3 heart tricks with this holding

The full hand

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">11</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; width: 20px; text-align: center;">D</div>		N Erika Pick ♠ AKQ74 ♥ 9 ♦ A105 ♣ QJ83	W N E S P 1♠ P 1♥ P 3NT P 2♥ P P P 4♥
		W bill7nt ♠ 63 ♥ Q1084 ♦ Q863 ♣ 1074	E Ridgwelled ♠ J852 ♥ A2 ♦ J94 ♣ K965
		S med029 ♠ 109 ♥ KJ7653 ♦ K72 ♣ A2	4♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0

As the cards lie the K♥ holds, and the second round of hearts drops the A♥. As expected you lose 3 hearts, but the K♣ is on side, or you can establish 4 tricks in spades so either way 4♥ is made.

On the night 4♥ scored 93% and 3NT scored 63%.