

Second Hand High?

♠AT93
 ♥AK84
 ♦QT8
 ♣KT

♠Q4
 ♥73
 ♦A976
 ♣AQ873

♠
 ♥
 ♦
 ♣

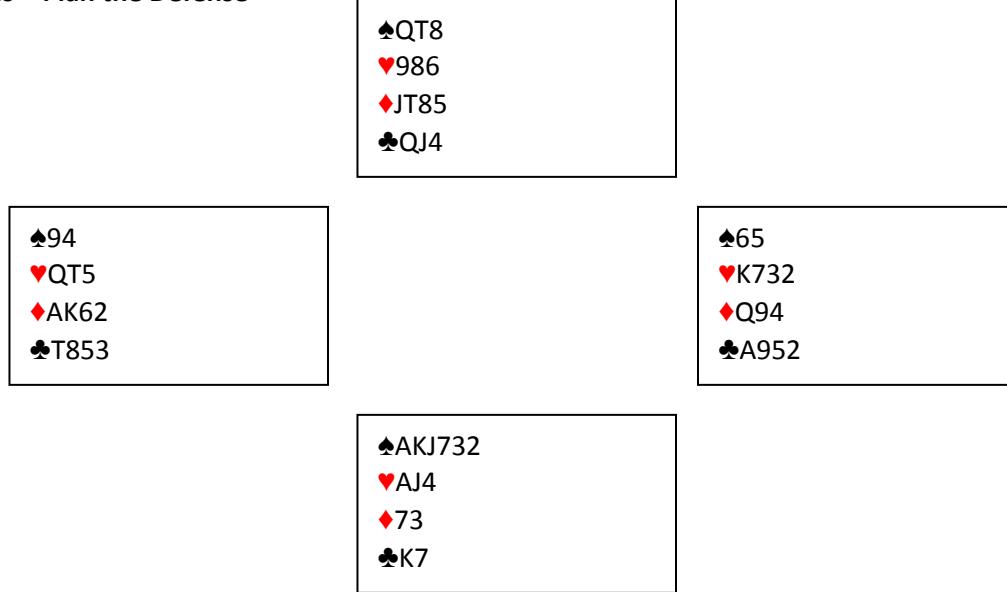
♠
 ♥
 ♦
 ♣

(you)	N	E	S
1♣	1NT	pass	2♠
pass	4♠		

The bidding is a little strange. South makes a 2S bid described as “drop dead” and North jumps to game. You lead the 7 of hearts against 4♠ and see what declarer is gambling on – one club loser and two diamond losers off the top, not a bad bet at IMPs. South takes the opening lead with dummy’s ace, partner following with the 9 (standard signals) – looks like you’ve found partner with the Q of hearts! Declarer plays the ♠A and another back to his king, partner following with the ♠J then discarding the ♦5. Now declarer leads the ♦J toward the ♦QT8 on the board.

1. What are declarer’s tricks (how many winners)?
2. What are our potential tricks (how many losers does declarer have)?
3. What is declarer’s likely distribution?
4. How many hcp might partner have?
5. What card does partner need to have to set the contract?
6. What do you play on declarer’s ♦J? No pressure, 12 IMPs are at stake.

Signals – Plan the Defense



S	W	N	E (you)
1♠	pass	2♠	pass
4♠	all pass		

West leads the ace of diamonds (from AK) against 4♠. Third seat, what should you signal? You have the Q♦ so should you encouraging with the 9? Before signaling, the count of the hand needs to be considered, especially in light of the danger posed by the ♦JT85 on the board. Based on the confident jump to game by South, is it likely he has three small diamonds? Much more likely is that partner has led from ♦AKxx(x) and declarer has one or two diamonds. Either way a continuation of the king sets up a trick for South. **You need to discourage partner from continuing diamonds and play low on the opening lead to suggest a switch!**

Back to West – so your partner is discouraging diamonds, what should you switch to? How many hcp may partner have? We have 9, dummy has 6, play declarer for 17 hcp (+/-) and a long spade suit – partner may have 7-9 hcp, possibly an honor in both round suits.

1. What's the problem with leading clubs?
2. Hearts looks dangerous but has promise ... why?

You switch to a low heart. Eventually you score both the Q and ten of hearts then cash the ♦K for down two. Nicely defended!

(Watch what happens when West continues with the K and a third diamond expecting you to ruff. It is declarer who ruffs the third round, setting up declarer's J♦ on the board for a discard. With the Q♣ also setting up for a discard declarer now loses only two diamonds and a club, making 4.)

Reading the Cards 1

♠KQJT
 ♥AQ54
 ♦KT87
 ♣J

♠876
 ♥K82
 ♦4
 ♣AK9642

♠A532
 ♥73
 ♦AQ652
 ♣Q5

♠94
 ♥JT96
 ♦J93
 ♣T873

N	E	S	W
X	1♠	pass	1♣
X	pass	2♥	2♣
3♥	all pass		pass

None vulnerable. A 3rd hand problem. Opening lead - ♣A (from AK). You play the 5 – which partner will interpret as ...? Partner switches to ♦4 – 7, Q, 9. What do we know?

- Partner opened, we can see all the high cards except the ♥K – partner must have that!
- But lousy opener, must be distributional. What is partner's distribution? Didn't raise spades, doesn't have four hearts, distributional (must be singleton of void somewhere) – probably 3316.
- How many diamonds does partner have? Cannot be three (why?).

Where are our tricks coming from?

- We can see a club, two diamonds and a spade – nothing else if N can pick up partner's ♥K.
- If diamonds are 22, partner can ruff with the ♥K. So cash the ♦A to see what the diamond situation is – entirely safe, remember declarer holds at least two.
- Partner shows out so we lead the ♦6 for a ruff, asking for a spade return. Now another diamond ruff with the ♥K and declarer is down two.
- Should we have doubled? Probably, we have 3 sure tricks and partner opened.
- Really, E should redouble after the second double (if not the first time). We have game points. Would you rather play 3NT or defend?
- What is the problem with the ♦9 falsecard?

Reading the Cards 2

♠ T
♥ Q654
♦ KJ9
♣ 87643

♠ Q98
♥ A32
♦ T75
♣ AT92

♠ J4
♥ KT87
♦ AQ8642
♣ K

♠ AK76532
♥ J9
♦ 3
♣ QJ5

N	E	S	W
	1♦	3♠	all pass

Both vulnerable. Another 3rd hand problem. Opening lead – ♦5 - J, Q, 3. What do we know?

- We have 13 hcp, dummy has 6, give South 8-10, partner has 10-12 hcp. Preempters usually do not have outside aces, certainly not two. Partner has room to hold both aces.
- Partner's lead was his low ♦ spot, could it be a singleton? Maybe, but who is likely to be short, partner or the preempter (and partner is leading our suit, a logical lead).
- So what do we play to trick 2? Declarer is not ruffing, no need for a spade. A low heart gambles partner having the ♥A, but potentially a disaster. ♦A seems safe, even if declarer ruffs he can't get to dummy. **But we want a club ruff and partner probably has ♣A so lead the ♣K!** Even if declarer holds ♣A he does not also have the ♣Q.
- The ♣K holds so now what? Now is the time to switch to a heart, lead the ♥8 – we don't want it back! Partner has encouraged a club but we switched – you must count on partner figuring it out.
- Partner is catching on and cashes the ♣A and leads another for a ruff and now you cash the ♥K. In time partner gets a spade for +300.
- What is the problem with South's preempt on ♠AK76532 ♥J9 ♦3 ♣QJ5? North made a really bad vulnerable preempt, holding ♠AK but no interiors is open to a bad split while ♠AK has defensive value. Same with ♣QJ5 – no offensive value but a defensive trick. A much better preempt is something like ♠QJT9432 ♥J9 ♦3 ♣AT5. Just 7 hcp but only one defense trick – opponents surely have something.

- Partner didn't have enough points to bid or shape to make a negative double. Should you have made a reopening double? Probably not, but at matchpoints N has paid the price and gets a zero.