

Hi everyone – It’s Roger Heath-Brown again. We had another interesting collection of hands yesterday. Congratulation to the winners – Sandra & Krys, and to runners-up David & Linda.

♠ AQ63	
♥ -	
♦ J86543	
♣ AK8	
♠ 5	♠ J87
♥ AQ1075	♥ K432
♦ AQ109	♦ K2
♣ 52	♣ Q1043
♠ K10942	
♥ 986	
♦ 7	
♣ J976	

Board 17 produced some exciting auctions, with North-South reaching 4 or 5 Spades, at some tables, making between 8 and 10 tricks, and East-West getting to 4, 5 or 6 Hearts, and making 10 or 11 tricks. The optimum contract is 6Hx, reached only by Ann & Mike. Defending a Heart contract, North-South have 3 top tricks, and it isn’t clear why they didn’t always take them.

However the interesting question is whether 5S should make. The usual lead against a Spade contract was a top Heart, ruffed in the North hand. It seems natural to play on Diamonds. The defence will win the first round and would do best to play a trump. North wins, and two Diamonds are ruffed in the South hand, using ♣ A as an entry to North. This leaves the following position, with South on play.

♠ Q6	
♥ -	
♦ J86	
♣ K8	
♠ -	♠ J8
♥ AQJ107	♥ 43
♦ A	♦ -
♣ 5	♣ Q104
♠ K10	
♥ 98	
♦ -	
♣ J97	

Declarer needs to ruff out the ♦ A, and has a choice of entries to the North hand. It is important to choose a Heart ruff for this purpose, in order to preserve the club position. After ruffing out ♦ A we are left with the layout in the next diagram.

	♠ Q	
	♥ -	
	♦ J8	
	♣ K8	
♠ -		♠ J8
♥ AQJ10		♥ -
♦ -		♦ -
♣ 5		♣ Q104
	♠ K	
	♥ 9	
	♦ -	
	♣ J97	

At this point one might cash ♠ K, playing for the remaining trumps to be 1-1. If this succeeds, North will be left with the requisite 3 winners. However West has already shown up with 4 Diamonds and a Club, and had bid Hearts vigorously, so it looks very likely that the remaining two trumps are both with East. Can you see the winning play?

	♠ -	
	♥ -	
	♦ 8	
	♣ K8	
♠ -		♠ J
♥ AQ		♥ -
♦ -		♦ -
♣ 5		♣ Q10
	♠ K	
	♥ -	
	♦ -	
	♣ J9	

We ruff a Heart in the North hand, and play on Diamonds. East ruffs, but Declarer refuses to overruff, leaving East on play at this point.

Now any return from East will give declarer the rest!

