

Let's start with a problem for the defence, which occurred on Board 5.

♠ 4	
♥ K	
♦ 7632	
♣ AKQ10854	
	♠ 109
	♥ AQ10954
	♦ AQJ
	♣ J2

You are East. North opens 1C. You overcall 1H and South says 1S. Partner passes, and North repeats his Clubs. You say 2H, and South closes the auction with 4S.

Partner leads ♥J, which you win with ♥A. How should you continue? Think now, before reading on!

It seems to me that there are three options. Maybe you should lead trumps, to stop declarer ruffing a Heart loser in Dummy? Or perhaps you should try to cash some Diamonds before Declarer can use Dummy's Clubs for discards? Leading a Club would work well if Declarer has a singleton, since he will be forced to take Dummy's tricks before drawing trumps, and so can cash at most two top Clubs. Partner's lead suggest a doubleton or singleton, so it looks as if Declarer started with about 7 good Spades and 4 or 5 small Hearts.

What did you decide to do at trick 2? I think on balance the trump return is the most likely to pay off, by a small margin, but on the night the hand was:-

	♠ 9	
	♥ K	
	♦ 7632	
	♣ AKQ10854	
♠ QJ8		♠ 109
♥ J2		♥ AQ10954
♦ 109854		♦ AQJ
♣ 976		♣ J2
	♠ AK76532	
	♥ 8763	
	♦ K	
	♣ 3	

If East plays a Spade at trick 2 Declarer will be able to take 10 tricks by drawing 2 rounds of trumps and then playing Clubs. However if East continues with a Club at trick 2 (or ♦ A followed by a Club), South is restricted to 9 tricks.

Now let's look at hand 11 – see the next page.

♠ Q9	♠ A86432
♥ QJ107	♥ 84
♦ K1052	♦ Q83
♣ J104	♣ AQ

At most tables North opened 1H after two passes, and East overcalled in Spades, buying the contract in 1S, 2S or 3S.

South starts with a Heart, taken by North's King, and a Club is returned. Declarer tries the Queen, but South wins with the King and fires back another Club:-

♠ Q9	♠ A86432
♥ QJ7	♥ 8
♦ K1052	♦ Q83
♣ J	♣ -

The lead is with Declarer, who decides to tackle the trumps – but how should they be handled?

It's time for you to decide!

North opened the bidding, and South has already produced ♣K, making it likely that the ♠K is with North. So a small Spade to Dummy's 9 seems a reasonable shot. However North wins with the Jack and continues with ♥K and a small Heart, which runs round to Dummy's Jack, Declarer throwing a Diamond:-

♠ Q	♠ A8643
♥ Q	♥ -
♦ K1052	♦ Q8
♣ J	♣ -

When the ♠Q is led from Dummy, North covers with the King, Declarer adds the Ace, and South plays the 10. That leaves the ♠8 master, able to draw North's last trump (the 5). Now there is only the ♦A to lose, for a total of 8 tricks.

	♠ KJ5	
	♥ AK32	
	♦ A97	
	♣ 986	
♠ Q9		♠ A86432
♥ QJ107		♥ 84
♦ K1052		♦ Q63
♣ J104		♣ AQ
	♠ 107	
	♥ 965	
	♦ J64	
	♣ K7532	

Here is the whole hand, and you can see how the play of a small Spade to the 9 restricted Declarer's trump losers to one. The play gains whenever South started with Jx or 10x in Hearts.