

Teaser No. 11

♠ A Q 8 5

♥ A K 8

♦ 6 4 2

♣ K 4 3

LOVE all, Dealer: South

Contract: 3NT by South

Lead: Q♥

E/W Silent

♠ 6 4 2

♥ 7 6 3 2

♦ A K Q

♣ A 5 2

Plan the play.

## Solution Teaser No. 11

Two tricks from the spade suit is enough for the contract, but it is not necessary to score two quick tricks. In other words, you can afford to lose the lead. After winning at trick one (lest West decides to switch to clubs) the best move is to lead a low spade from dummy. By leading towards the closed hand you put the player in second seat under pressure if they hold the king but not the jack. If the spades were a side suit in a trump contract this pressure would be considerably more severe! Declarer may have JX! Anyway, it's a no cost play and if East does play the king your problems are over.

Let's suppose, though, that East plays low and West wins the trick cheaply. West switches back to hearts. If all follow to this trick it means you can afford to lose the lead a second time in spades. You therefore cash the ace of spades in case East started with KX and coolly ducked on the first round of the suit. If the king doesn't fall (it probably won't!) you lead a third spade towards the queen, playing the queen if West follows low. By following this sequence of plays you succeed:

- 1) Whenever West was dealt the king
- 2) When East was dealt K singleton, KX or KXX

3) If East errs and plays the king from a longer holding on the first round.

If East had shown out on the second round of hearts you couldn't have afforded the safety play of cashing the ace of spades.

To sum up, if you need two quick tricks without losing the lead you should finesse the queen and hope. The rest of the time you can be a little more cunning and can certainly avoid the indignity of the queen losing to K bare or K doubleton. The strategy of leading towards the closed hand is a powerful weapon for declarer.