

Teaser No. 33

♠ 9 2

♥ K 3

♦ 7 6 5 3 2

♣ A J 7 4

Game ALL, Dealer: South

Contract: 4♠ by South

Lead: Q♦

E/W Silent.

♠ A Q J 10 8 6 3

♥ J 4 2

♦ A K

♣ 2

Plan the play – it's a teams' match.

### Solution Teaser No. 33

On a good day you might make a slam on this deal, but if the key cards are badly placed there is a danger of losing three heart tricks and a trump. It would be a mistake to make the natural looking play of a low heart from hand at trick two. If the king loses to the ace, East will switch to a trump. The finesse loses and West plays another trump. You fall back on a heart to the jack, but if that loses to West's queen another heart defeats the contract.

There is a neat way of avoiding this fate. At trick two, cross to dummy with a club and then lead a low heart from the table. West may win the trick with the queen, but the defence is now dead (unless West also holds all four missing trumps and the ace of hearts). They cannot lead a trump from KX without surrendering a trick (\*).

They could lead one from KXX, but the contract is now secure regardless of which opponent wins the next heart: West loses their trump trick if they play one and East will be out of trumps so cannot play one.

If, instead, it turns out that East holds the queen of hearts you establish a heart trick by force and will have no need of the third round ruff.

	K3	
Q975		A1086
	J42	

This was the actual layout of the heart suit. It is a 'frozen suit', which means that neither side can lead it without gifting their opponents an extra trick. On this occasion, there is no way to force the other side to open up the suit: you must do so yourself. You can stand two heart losers and the key to success is to lose the FIRST of these to West. If you lead low from dummy, East cannot afford to foil the plan by playing the ace. They will take their trick on the second round and play a trump, but you rise with the ace of trumps and ruff your losing heart.

The recommended play gives up on the chance of an overtrick when the ace is onside, but it virtually ensures a third round heart ruff (or an extra trump trick instead) when a heart winner cannot be established by force. It is therefore the correct tactic in a teams' game.

\* Interestingly, West might survive a switch to a low card from KX of trumps if East has the ace of hearts. East will play a low trump when they get in and

declarer may well finesse. It would be a bold defensive move, but declarer's line of play does suggest that it might be the only chance to beat the contract.