

03/01/11 Stratified 0-20 & 20+

Board 24
North Deals
None Vul

♠ K 9 8 6 ♥ A J ♦ K 8 2 ♣ 10 8 4 3	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ A Q 3 2 ♥ 9 6 4 ♦ J 7 6 5 ♣ K 5	♠ J 7 4 ♥ 8 7 2 ♦ A Q 10 9 4 ♣ J 2
♠ 10 5 ♥ K Q 10 5 3 ♦ 3 ♣ A Q 9 7 6			

NS 4♥; NS 4♣; NS 1N; EW 1♠; EW 1♦

[Hands rotated CW]

West	North	East	South
<i>James</i>	<i>Barry</i>	<i>Steve</i>	<i>Pete</i>
	Pass	2♦	2♥
3♦	4♥	All pass	

4♥ by South

Misplay this hand with me...

James led the ♦2, won by Steve with the ace. From this I deduced the actual diamond holding. I ruffed the diamond return. When James did not unblock the ♦K, I decided to try to use this to my advantage, without having a full plan in mind. Figuring James had the ♥A, but uncertain about the ♠K, I lead the ♥K, which James won (see below). When James led the ♦K, I discarded my spade (an error), to retain control in the face of a possible 4-1 heart split. James shifted to a spade, won by the ace.

At this point, I can still make the contract: two top clubs and a club ruff with the ♥9, draw trumps (dropping the J in its known location). Instead, I played for trumps to be 4-1, which gives me *no* chance to make the contract. Besides, if James had ♥AJ87, I'd probably have been doubled. (I tried to ruff a club low to preserve the ♥9, overruff, ... down 3).

It really helps to *have a plan* before starting to play cards. A 3-2 trump split is actually likely, once Steve proves to have only five diamonds. I could have ruffed the ♦K and played as noted above to make the contract. If truly greedy, I could have made an overtrick by finessing in spades. Even if I had a second trump loser, I would have the spade finesse in reserve.

The double dummy solver says I can always be held to four - how? James must duck the ♥K, a counter-intuitive play. Then leading another another trump fails, since I would no longer have a re-entry in trumps to draw the last trump, after ruffing the club. So I switch to clubs and ruff out the suit, but James can win the ♥A and give Steve a ruff on the fourth round of clubs.

- Pete Matthews