

Grand National Teams Qualifier -- Problem

**Board 19**  
 South Deals  
 E-W Vul

♠ A K J 10 8  
 ♥ 8 3  
 ♦ A J 9 4 3  
 ♣ 5



♠ Q 7 6 5 4  
 ♥ K 7  
 ♦ Q 7 5 2  
 ♣ A 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
2 ♠ <sup>1</sup>	4 ♣ <sup>2</sup>	4 ♥	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	5 ♥	5 ♠

All pass

1. Michaels cue-bid: 5+ hearts, 5+ in a minor.
2. Splinter: 4+ spades, game values, 0-1 clubs.

Lead: ♣ K

Take over for Alan Watson in this round robin qualifying match to represent New England in the top flight of the Grand National Teams championship. The International Match Point (IMP) scoring of this event puts a focus on making the contract, never mind the overtricks.

Plan the play, and be specific.

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♠ A K J 10 8											
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♠ 9 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A 10 5 4 2		♥ Q J 9 6									
♦ K		♦ 10 8 6									
♣ K Q 9 7 6		♣ J 10 8 4 2									
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	♦ Q 7 5 2										
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S 6♠; S 5N; N 5♠; NS 5♦; EW 3♥; EW 4♣; N 2N; Par +800: EW 7♣×-3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
2 ♠ <sup>1</sup>	4 ♣ <sup>2</sup>	4 ♥	4 ♠
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All pass

1. Michaels cue-bid: 5+ hearts, 5+ in a minor.
2. Splinter: 4+ spades, game values, 0-1 clubs.

Lead: ♣ K

Watson won the opening lead, lead to the ♠ A on dummy, saw both opponents follow suit, and led a spade back queen.

He then led the ♦ Q, covered by the king: he ducked on the dummy! This guaranteed the contract, losing one diamond and one heart. (West could cash the ♥ A, establishing the king, or get the ace at the end, after one heart went on the fifth diamond.)

The layout above is what Watson feared. If he won the first diamond, East would get in with the ♦ 10, and a heart would come whistling through his king, down one.

This is a basic "safety play" to assure the contract - Watson saw it and made the play.