

15		N North		W N E S	
D		♠ KJ		P 1♥ 1♠ X	
		♥ 96543		2♠ 4♥ 1♠ X	
		♦ A76		P 5♥ P P	
		♣ A53		P P	
W West		E East			
♠		♠ A			
♥		♥			
♦		♦			
♣		♣			
		S South			
		♠ 97			
		♥ AQ7			
		♦ J8			
		♣ KQJ842			
		5♥ N		NS: 0 EW: 0	

On Board 15, the opponents were successful in pushing us to 5H. East leads the SA and promptly switches to the C6. What do you make of this contract?

If we can manage to draw trumps losing only one trick, the diamonds go away on the clubs. Therefore, cash the HA (both opponents following small), cross back to hand with the SK, and play H3–HJ–HQ–

Or do you?

Would you have found the play of the HJ from an initial holding of KJx as East? I suspect I might not have, and I also suspect that against most opponents, it is now correct to attempt to *drop the HK* offside.

There is one complicating factor on this hand. East appears to be threatening a club ruff, and dropping the HK would not land the contract if the opponents subsequently ruff a club. Winning the HQ would if East had started with KJx, however.

So, which position do you play for?

We are basically attempting to compare the probabilities of two unlikely events—the probability that East played the HJ from KJx, and the probability that East switched to a club from a non-singleton against such a threatening dummy. It so happens that there is an additional point in favor of ducking—if East started with Jx in hearts and fails to find the diamond switch, we can escape for down one.

Alas, on the actual hand there is no happy ending. Declarer ducked, but the HK did not come tumbling down. East returned a diamond, and West eventually ruffed in and cashed a diamond for down two.

15		N North		W N E S	
D		♠ KJ		P 1♥ 1♠ X	
		♥ 96543		2♠ 4♥ 1♠ X	
		♦ A76		P 5♥ P P	
		♣ A53		P P	
W West		E East			
♠ Q1053		♠ A8642			
♥ K102		♥ J8			
♦ Q43		♦ K10952			
♣ 1097		♣ 6			
		S South			
		♠ 97			
		♥ AQ7			
		♦ J8			
		♣ KQJ842			
		5♥ N		NS: 0 EW: 0	

10 <sub>D</sub>	N North	W N E S
	♥	1♠ 3♥ P P
	♠	3♠ P 3NT P
	♣	4♣ P P
W West	♥7	E East
♠		♠ Q6
♥		♥ 109
♦		♦ KJ4
♣		♣ KJ10653
S South		
♠ 52		
♥ AQJ86		
♦ Q83		
♣ Q84		
	4♠ W	NS: 0 EW: 0

On Board 10, your Precision opponents bid confidently to game despite partner's preemptive efforts. Partner leads the H7—what is your plan?

It seems quite natural to win the HA and switch to a trump—we have *all* the heart spots, and we want to prevent heart ruffs in dummy. Dummy's club suit might seem a little threatening, but our Qxx actually does a good job of stopping declarer from running the suit immediately.

Now let's look at the hand from declarer's point of view. North leads a heart, South wins the HA and switches to a trump. North wins the SA and plays another (as in the diagrammed position), and South follows. What now?

10 <sub>D</sub>	N North	W N E S
	♥	1♠ 3♥ P P
	♠	3♠ P 3NT P
	♣	4♣ P P
W West	♥9	E East
♠ KJ10873		♠ Q
♥ K43		♥ 10
♦ A2		♦ KJ4
♣		♣ KJ10653
S South		
♠		
♥		
♦		
♣		
	4♠ W	NS: 2 EW: 0

North's shape is very likely to be 2=2=7=2. (If North had a singleton heart, the opponents might have taken their ruff, or South might have opened a weak two. North would have led a singleton club.) In any case, you can afford to cash all the trumps, the HK, and the CA, coming down to a 3-card end position:

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-           -
XX          -
-           -
x           KJT

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South pitched 3 diamonds: the D3, D8, and DQ. Now comes the critical decision. Is the CQ dropping from North, in which case you have all the remaining tricks by playing on clubs? Or does South have the CQ guarded, in which case you make your contract by endplaying him with a heart?

It pays to know your opponents' tendencies. Would North have overcalled 2D with 10 HCP and a 7-card suit? Would he have preempted with that? Would South have opened a quacky 11-count in 2<sup>nd</sup> seat, vulnerable?

In the absence of concrete information one could always fall back on the odds. South had three clubs to North's two, and thus is 60% to hold the CQ. The full hand:

10 <sub>D</sub>	N North	W N E S
	♥ A9	1♠ 3♥ P P
	♥ 75	3♠ P 3NT P
	♦ A1097652	4♣ P P
♣ 97		
W West	E East	
♠ KJ108743	♠ Q6	
♥ K432	♥ 109	
♦	♦ KJ4	
♣ A2	♣ KJ10653	
S South		
♠ 52		
♥ AQJ86		
♦ Q83		
♣ Q84		
	4♠ W	NS: 0 EW: 0