

## HAND OF THE WEEK

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Here's a hand straight out of fantasy land (almost). A deal like this did occur when I was kibitzing, but the real life results weren't the finest. But there was an interesting card play theme hidden in the weeds. And you know about me and unusual card play themes by now.

♠1073 ♥Q4 ♦A9854 ♣J87

♠4 ♥AKJ10 ♦KQJ2 ♣A943

At the table I saw, South dealt and opened 1♦, West doubled, North raised to 2♦, East bid 2♠, and South ended the bidding with 5♦. The full deal was:

♠1073 ♥Q4 ♦A9854 ♣J87

♠KQ65 ♥9853 ♦3 ♣KQ105      ♠AJ982 ♥762 ♦1076 ♣62

♠4 ♥AKJ10 ♦KQJ2 ♣A943

Yes, E-W did a lot of bidding on their 15 points. But that's what bridge has become. Anyway, this is about the play. West led the ♠K and East overtook to shift to a club. Declarer rose with the ace, drew 3 rounds of trumps, ran hearts pitching the rest of dummy's clubs, and scored the remaining trumps in both hands separately, for 11 tricks.

Ho hum, anybody can do that. What's the point of showing all of you this deal?

Suppose you're South, playing the last board in a matchpoint game, and you think that one more top will win you the event. You decide to swing a little and open 1♥ on your robust suit. West passes, partner bids 1NT, and you rebid 3♣. Partner now corrects to 3♥ on their doubleton honor and side ace. (Bidding 3♦ here seems wrong to me. Maybe what people say about my bidding is true...) And you go for the gusto and bid 4♥.

West guesses to lead the ♠K, East encourages, and West continues with a low spade to the ace. Plan the play.

You have 10 easy tricks here – 4 hearts, 5 diamonds, and the ace of clubs. But how are you going to take them? If you ruff in hand and draw 3 rounds of trumps, West will ruff the 2<sup>nd</sup> diamonds and the defense will take the rest of the spade suit for down 2. So that's not an option.

What's your alternative play? How about pitching two clubs on the next two rounds of spades? Now if they play a 4<sup>th</sup> spade, you can ruff it in dummy, draw trumps, and claim your 10 tricks. Isn't that neat? Did you win the event without my help?