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Bridge column by Frank Stewart

5th April 2011

Dealer : South Vul : Both	NORTH ♠ A Q 8 ♥ 7 4 2 ♦ 8 6 5 4 3 ♣ A 9	
WEST ♠ 7 5 3 ♥ Q J 10 9 ♦ K 2 ♣ J 10 8 3		EAST ♠ 2 ♥ K 8 3 ♦ J 10 9 7 ♣ K Q 6 5 4
	SOUTH ♠ K J 10 9 6 4 ♥ A 6 5 ♦ A Q ♣ 7 2	

South	West	North	East
1 Spade	Pass	3 Spade	Pass
4 Spade	All Pass		

Opening lead: Queen of ♥

You have reached a good contract of four spades. Before reading on decide how you would play the contract after the lead of the queen of hearts.

There are two ways possible to come to 10 tricks — either a successful diamond finesse or establishing a diamond winner. Which do you choose? (You cannot combine the two chances because, should the finesse lose, the defenders can return a black-suit card and you will not have the entries to dummy to set up and cash a long diamond.)

As long as trumps are no worse than 3-1 and diamonds 4-2, you are safe as long as you spurn the diamond finesse. After winning the ace of hearts, cash the ace of diamonds and continue with the queen!

Best defense is for the defender who captures the queen of diamonds with the king to take two heart tricks before shifting to the king of clubs, forcing out a dummy entry. Win the ace, ruff a diamond high, get back to dummy with a high trump to ruff another diamond high, setting up a long card. Now cross to the table with the remaining trump winner and cash the good diamond for a club discard — you have limited your losers to two hearts and a diamond.

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