

## What could go wrong?

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After three passes, you open 1NT (15-17 hcp) and partner bids 2C Stayman. You rebid 2S and partner raises to game. LHO leads ♥9, which does you no harm at all. RHO plays ♥K and you win with the ace.

♠AT87  
♥5  
♦AQ84  
♣8753

♠KQ93  
♥AQ6  
♦J753  
♣AT

Your plan should in the first instance be to ruff a heart in dummy, draw trumps and take the diamond finesse. If spades and diamonds break 3-2 and ♦K is doubleton on-side, you could even make 12 tricks!

Whenever a hand looks easy, it's a good idea to ask yourself – what could go wrong? On this deal, you've been fortunate that the opening lead wasn't a club, which would have been annoying. However, things could still get awkward if trumps break 4-1 (a 28% chance) rather than 3-2. Without X-ray vision, you can't cater for 4 spades to the jack on your left, but you can cater for that holding on your right if you play correctly.

So you ruff ♥6 in dummy, play a spade to the king and a spade towards the ace. LHO shows out, but you can finesse for RHO's ♠J. There's just one problem: when you play ♠10 from dummy, RHO refuses to cover. Wouldn't it have been nice to have ruffed with then ten instead of ♠7? Anyway, this is now the position :

♠-  
♥-  
♦AQ84  
♣8753

♠Q  
♥Q  
♦J753  
♣AT

RHO still holds ♠J. Do you want to come to hand to take the diamond finesse? What could go wrong?

If you play a club to the ace, draw the last trump and then the diamond finesse loses, you might end up conceding more club tricks than you can afford! So rather than giving up control in the club suit, you should play ace and a small diamond. As it happens, RHO wins this with ♦K and now all you will lose is one club trick at the end, so you make 11 tricks.

This was the full deal, now in its correct orientation:

<b>BD: 7</b>		♠J652	<b>Dir: S</b>	
		♥KJT87	<b>Vul: ALL</b>	
		♦K9		
		♣QJ		
♠AT87			♠KQ93	
♥5			♥AQ6	
♦AQ84			♦J753	
♣8753			♣AT	
		♠4		
		♥9432		
		♦T62		
		♣K9642		
			N	
	♣	♦	♥	♠
			T	
N	1			11
S	1		10	16
E	2	4	5	4
W	2	4	5	4

In fact, provided you had played the spades correctly, you would still make 10 tricks if you did cross to ♣A and then take the losing diamond finesse, because North-South can only cash two clubs. However, when this deal turned up on Monday 4 May, it seems hardly anyone played the spades to cater for a 4-1 break on-side. Six out of seven declarers made fewer than 10 tricks ...



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