

Margaret River Bridge #071226

The bridge club had their Christmas dinner this Monday, which included a few drinks with a fantastic meal. Unfortunately after these drinks, few of us would ever have been able to make the contract that most pairs would have ended up in today's hand.

Dealer - North	♠AQJ 3 2		
Vul - Both	♥AJ 2		
	♦8 7 6		
	♣K 4		
		N	
♠ -			♠K10 7 4
♥KQ 8 7 6	W	E	♥10 9 5 3
♦J 10 9 4 3			♦ -
♣A Q 8			♣10 9 7 5 2
		S	
		♠ 9 8 6 5	
		♥4	
		♦AKQ 5 2	
		♣J 6 3	
Bidding			
N	E	S	W
1S	P	3S	4H
4S	all pass		

The bidding is reasonably straight forward, except for West's 4H bid, which was more a sacrifice than a realistic bid. North pushes on to game and now East has to decide whether to bid. At this vulnerability it most probably not a good idea and East realistically should be thinking of getting North down, rather than a sacrifice bid.

East leads the 10 of hearts to show partner their highest card in the suit. This is taken by North with the Ace. North leads back the small heart and trumps in dummy. They then lead a small spade intending to finesse the King. When West doesn't play a spade you stop and think about how you will now make the contract. You have two spade losers, one club loser and possibly a diamond loser. Can you see how North can make their contract?

If you play the Jack of spades and lose to the King, then you keep controls in your hand for later. East doesn't have many options and will most probably lead a club (though a heart would be a better lead at this point). North will win one of the next two tricks and must lead their remaining losing heart so that they can trump. You then play out the trumps, losing finally to the 10 of spades. At this stage East has no good lead and you are able to take the three diamond tricks, a club trick and the remaining trump trick.

After getting rid of your losing hearts, It is important to remove the trumps as quickly as possible since you have winning tricks in the other suits. If you play the diamonds too quickly then East will get in a trump, followed by a lead to West's Ace of clubs and then another diamond trump in, taking you down.

If East continues to lead hearts at every opportunity, it does make it difficult for North to make the contract, but fortunately the Ace of clubs is on the right side. Towards the end of playing this hand, you must make sure that you lead up to the King of Clubs and not allow yourself to be stuck in North and having to lead away from the King, which guarantees losing two tricks.

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