

DECLARER PLAY - WEEK 5
ASSIGNMENT ANSWERS

LAST REVISED ON OCTOBER 12, 2017

1. For the deal on the left side of the front page:

Listen: The bidding is no help.

Observe: The ♠A should be top of connecting honors. West should have the ♠K but probably does not have the ♠Q because the lead is usually the King from AKQ.

Pick: South should be the master hand because it has the longest and strongest trump suit.

Pause: You can afford 3 South (master hand) losers.

Look: You have 3 South (master hand) losers (2 fast ♠ + 0 ♥ + 1 fast ♦ + 0 ♣).

Analyze: There is no need to eliminate a loser and because all of the losers are fast, there is no way to eliminate any of them to gain an overtrick.

Execute: You will probably lose the first two tricks. When you gain the lead, draw trump. Then lead diamonds until the ♦A falls. When you regain the lead, you can claim the remaining tricks.

2. For the deal on the right side of the front page:

Listen: The bidding is no help.

Observe: The ♣Q should be top of connecting honors. West should have the ♣J and might have the ♣A. East should have the ♣K and might have the ♣A.

Pick: South should be the master hand because it has the longest and strongest trump suit.

Pause: You can afford 3 South (master hand) losers.

Look: You have 4 South (master hand) losers (0 ♠ + 2 slow ♥ + 1 slow ♦ + 1 fast ♣).

Analyze: Can develop one heart if the missing hearts are split 3-2 (68%) Can finesse against the ♦Q (50%).

Execute: After ruffing the second club lead, draw trump. Then play the ♥A followed by the ♥K. If the hearts are split 4-1 (28%), lead the ♦J to try the diamond finesse.

You must use one spade to ruff the second club lead and at least three spades to draw trump. If you try the diamond finesse first and it fails, defenders can defeat the contract by returning a club to force you to play your last spade. That will give defenders a second club trick when you lose the heart.

You can make an overtrick if you gamble on the diamond finesse and it works. But the highest percentage play (68% vs 50%) is to develop the fourth heart.

3. For the deal on the right side of the back page:

Listen: The bidding is no help.

Observe: The ♥K is probably top of connecting honors. South should have the ♥Q and East should have the ♥A.

Pick: Either hand could be the master hand because the length and strength are about equal. Pick South as the master hand because it is mentally easier to develop a plan for the hand you hold.

Pause: Can afford 3 South (master hand) losers.

Look: You have 4 South (master hand) losers (0 ♠ + 3 fast ♥ + 0 ♦ + 1 slow ♣).

Analyze: The three fast heart losers will fall on the first three tricks. The only hope is to finesse against the ♣K (50% chance). In the unlikely event that spades are split 5-0 (4%), you can not make the contract.

Now Execute: When gain the lead, try the club finesse. Then draw trump and cash your winners.

4. For the deal on the right side of the back page:

Listen: East should have a weak hand with at least seven hearts. East must be short in at least one suit.

Observe: The ♥9 is probably a singleton or the top of a doubleton in partner's suit.

Pick: South should be the master hand because it has the longest and strongest trump suit.

Pause: You can afford 3 South (master hand) losers.

Look: You have 4 South (master hand) losers (0 ♠ + 2 fast ♥ + 2 slow ♦ + 0 ♣).

Analyze: Your only hope is that the missing diamonds are split 3-2 (68%) so that you can develop a fourth diamond.

Execute: When you gain the lead on the third trick, draw trump. Because you need to lose a diamond trick, lead the ♦9 and finesse it against the ♦QJ. The finesse will probably fail but if it works, lead another diamond and to repeat the finesse and make an overtrick.

You might be able to improve the odds if you lead all but one of your trump to force defenders to discard cards in other suits. If the missing diamonds are split 4-1 (28%) you might still make the contract if the defender with four diamonds discards one of the diamonds. But, be sure to save a trump to regain the lead after you lead the diamond loser.