

Lindsay's Challenge - November 2018 newsletter:

Grand Slam Coup

North

♠ A K Q 5

♥ 8

♦ 5 4 3

♣ A 10 6 5 2

West

♠ J 10 9 8 2

♥ 9

♦ 10 8 7 2

♣ Q 8 7

East

♠ 6 4 3

♥ 10 6 5 3 2

♦ J 9

♣ J 9 3

South

♠ 7

♥ A K Q J 7 4

♦ A K Q 6

♣ K 3

How can South make 7 Hearts with J spades lead from West?

Against South in seven hearts, West led the Jack of spades won by the Queen in dummy. Counting up the tricks, declarer had 14 winners - provided the heart suit broke. As this is one more trick than needed it was possible to take out a little insurance against a bad break. If there are five hearts in West's hand it is just extremely bad luck. But if East has five hearts there is a chance the suit can be picked up, provided declarer goes about things in the right way.

With the object of reducing South's trumps to five cards also, the five of spades was led at the second trick and ruffed with the four of hearts.

The Ace and King of trumps followed and disclosed the dire news when West failed to follow. Now South felt most satisfied with the precautionary play.

Next the Ace and King of diamonds were cashed, followed by the King of clubs and a cross to dummy at the eighth trick with the Ace of clubs. On the spade King, South threw the six of diamonds. The Ace of spades was led next. If East ruffs, South over-trumps as low as possible, draws the remaining hearts at once and comes home on top cards. But East threw a club and South discarded the Queen of diamonds.

East was left with three trumps and South with the remaining three sitting over them. A club from dummy at trick 11 permitted declarer to pick up the last three tricks to win the lot.

Accept my word, if declarer failed to trump the losing spade at the second trick the contract will never be made against good defence. All East must do then to beat the slam is to refuse to trump when dummy's winners are led out. Eventually declarer will have to lead hearts from hand and East will make the 10 of trumps.