

# 282. The handling of hearts

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : East-West vulnerable

North  
♠ Q1093  
♥ AJ102  
♦ A76  
♣ 104

South  
♠ KJ  
♥ Q97653  
♦ K2  
♣ K85

West	North	East	South
		1♦	1♥
Pass	2♦ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	3♥ <sup>(2)</sup>
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

(1) Strong heart raise

(2) Strong invitation to game

West leads the ♦5. Plan the play.

*What is the usual first question?*

Have you counted the points?

*Have you?*

Dummy has 11 points, you have 12, total 23.  $40 - 23 = 17$  points missing.

*Where will most of those points be?*

With East for the 1♦ opening.

In a trump contract, the next step is to count the losers between your hand and dummy. *Have you done that?*

You have 1 spade loser for sure, 0 or 1 heart loser, no diamond loser and 1-2 club losers.

*When might 4♥ fail?*

When you lose a spade, a heart and 2 clubs. If East has the ♣A, you are always OK. Catering for the worst, assume that West has the ♣A.

*What follows from that?*

If West has the ♣A and 17 points are missing, the missing 13 points will almost all be with East. That will include the ♥K, else East has opened with 10 HCP. That is possible in some circles, but highly unlikely in most.

*What follows if the heart finesse is working?*

If West has the ♥K, then only 14 points are missing and the ♣A will be with East (else East has opened with 10 points). You can afford West to have the ♥K.

*If you have assumed the worst scenario, ♣A with West and ♥K with East, how do you go about the play?*

From April 28 to May 8, 2020, a Europe-China Pro Bridge Challenge was held on BBO. Europe was represented by Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland and China also had four teams. This deal arose in Round 1.

Dealer East : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ Q1093	
	♥ AJ102	
	♦ A76	
	♣ 104	
West		East
♠ 8764		♠ A52
♥ 84		♥ K
♦ 1054		♦ QJ983
♣ AJ72		♣ Q963
	South	
	♠ KJ	
	♥ Q97653	
	♦ K2	
	♣ K85	

South was Simon de Wijs, playing for Switzerland. Recognizing that the only danger to 4♥ was if both the ♥K and the ♣A were offside, de Wijs took the extra percentage chance that the ♥K was offside and singleton. When the ♥A dropped the ♥K, declarer was home, losing a spade and two clubs. Note that if you finesse in hearts, the defence can beat you.

## Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass 1♠
?			

What would you do as West with:

West  
 ♠ K107  
 ♥ K10975  
 ♦ 104  
 ♣ A75

**Why not phone or email your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?**

*Why is it that when I hit 1 for English, I still cannot understand the person on the other end?*