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Making sure of 10 tricks

Dlr: South ♠ K 6 4 3

Vul: None ♥ A Q

♦ 8

♣ J 10 8 7 5 3

♠ J 5

♥ J 3

♦ K J 10 9 7 6 5 3

♣ 2

♠ A Q 10 9 8

♥ 4 2

♦ Q

♣ K Q 9 6 4

♠ 7 2

♥ K 10 9 8 7 6 5

♦ A 4 2

♣ A

West	North	East	South
			1 ♥
4 ♦	Dbl	Pass	4 ♥
All Pass			

Surviving a four-level preempt is never easy, but North's flexible negative double was the perfect solution. Many partnerships play negative doubles through 3 ♠. A player who preempts at the four or five level, however, has a long, strong suit. Responder is unlikely to have length and strength in the preempter's long suit, so the double should not be for penalties. Therefore, North-South had agreed to play negative doubles through 5 ♦.

Of course, if South had no good bid, he would pass. With his sev-

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en-card major suit, however, he had an easy 4 ♥ bid.

West led the ♣2. Declarer was delighted to see dummy's two heart honors and singleton diamond. There were at least eight winners: two aces and a minimum of six trump tricks. If South could ruff his two low diamonds in dummy, he would have 10 tricks. Because North had the ♥A Q, declarer didn't have to worry about dummy being over-ruffed.

Unfortunately, North's ♠K was probably wasted. Because West indicated a weak hand with his preempt, East rated to have the ♠A.

South won the club lead with his ace. It was certainly possible that East was void in diamonds, but declarer had no good alternative to leading the ♦A at trick two. When East followed, South ruffed a diamond with dummy's ♥Q as East discarded a spade.

There was a definite chance that West's opening club lead was a singleton. Although South was now out of clubs, West probably was as well. Accordingly, South now made the key play of ruffing a club with his ♥K! He ruffed his last diamond with dummy's ♥A and ruffed a club with the ♥10. At this point, South did not care whether West over-ruffed or not.

In fact, once declarer ruffed with the three top heart honors at tricks three through five, the ♥J had become a sure winner for the defense. Even though South had to lose two spade tricks because the ♠A was offside, he made 4 ♥.

As you can see, if declarer had made the mistake of ruffing a club with a trump other than the king, West would have overruffed and

returned a trump. Regardless of how South continued, he would eventually lose one diamond and two spade tricks for down one.

A lovely dummy reversal

Dlr: West ♠ A 7
Vul: Both ♥ J 2
♦ A J 7 6 5
♣ A K 7 2

♠ K J 5 2

♥ 9 8 7 6

♦ 10 9 3

♣ J 3

♠ Q 10 8

♥ 5 3

♦ K Q 8 4

♣ Q 10 9 4

N
W E
S

♠ 9 6 4 3

♥ A K Q 10 4

♦ 2

♣ 8 6 5

North	South
1 ♦	1 ♥
2 ♣	2 ♥
4 ♥	Pass

West led the ♥9. After a sensible auction, you arrive in game with your chunky seven-card fit. Although 3NT is laydown, 4 ♥ is a good contract. Once West leads a trump, however, you'll never be able to ruff a spade in dummy.

You have nine winners: one diamond, one spade, two club tricks and five hearts. If clubs divide 3-3, you can set up dummy's last club for your tenth trick, but you'd rather not rely on this 36% chance, if possible. Is there any hope if clubs don't divide evenly?

The answer is yes. Win the trump lead with your ♥10. Lead a diamond to dummy's ace. Ruff a diamond with your ♥4 and then lead a club to dummy's ace. Next, ruff a diamond with your ♥Q and continue with a



Chalk Talk



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Dlr: North ♠ A J 7
 Vul: Both ♥ Q 8 3
 ♦ A J 10 7 6 5
 ♣ K

♠ 4 3 2 ♠ 5
 ♥ 2 ♥ A K J 10 9 7
 ♦ K Q ♦ 9 8 4 2
 ♣ J 8 7 5 4 3 2 ♣ 10 9

♠ K Q 10 9 8 6
 ♥ 6 5 4
 ♦ 3
 ♣ A Q 6

West	North	East	South
	1♦	2♥	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

West leads the ♥2.

Bidding commentary: East's 2♥ weak-jump overall is comparable to a weak two-bid — basically a reasonable six-card suit with 6–9 high-card points. It frequently serves as a good lead director. South's 2♠ two-level major-suit response guarantees at least five spades with at least 11 HCP. With 8–10 HCP, South is better placed to make a negative double.

Lead commentary: It should be painfully obvious. Some players will lead a singleton even if they don't have one!

► Bergen *continued*

club to dummy's king.

Ruff another diamond with your ♥K and lead a spade to dummy's ace. At trick nine, ruff dummy's last diamond with your ♥A. Dummy has the ♥J for your tenth trick. You had to use the ♣A K as entries *before* the ♠A. Otherwise, West could discard his last club on the fourth diamond. He'd then ruff a club and lead another trump. □

Defensive commentary: East wins the first trick as cheaply as possible and continues with the ♥A K. West anticipates making *two* discards. Why not discard the ♦K Q so a diamond can be ruffed at trick four? After all, declarer may have a singleton diamond and no diamond trick may be forthcoming. This is not only the best defense, it is the only defense that defeats 4♠.

When several discards can be envisioned, consider discarding from shortness, putting yourself in a position to ruff the suit you are discarding.

Dlr: South ♠ 3
 Vul: Both ♥ A J 10
 ♦ K J 6 4 3 2
 ♣ Q 10 9

♠ Q J 8 7 2 ♠ 10 9
 ♥ 6 4 ♥ 5 3 2
 ♦ Q 7 5 ♦ A 10 9 8
 ♣ K 8 3 ♣ A J 6 2

♠ A K 6 5 4
 ♥ K Q 9 8 7
 ♦ —
 ♣ 7 5 4

North	South
2♦	1♠
2NT	2♥
4♥	3♥
	Pass

West leads the ♣3.

Bidding commentary: North has a choice of non-forcing rebids (unless 2♦ is played as a game force): 2NT or 3♦. Given the weakness of the diamonds, 2NT is superior. Notice that one choice is not 3♥. In order to raise a secondary suit directly, four-card support is required — an important bidding principle. As it happens, it matters little whether

North rebids 2NT or 3♦, as East will rebid 3♥ to show five hearts. Responder happily raises to game.

Lead commentary: West's spade holding suggests a trump lead to stop spade ruffs in dummy. On the other hand, his diamond holding — honor third in dummy's long suit — suggests the more attacking club lead.

Defensive commentary: When dummy plays low at trick one, East plays the ♣J. The lead of a low card suggests an honor, and the only honor not visible is the king. After the defense cashes three clubs, both defenders should know that South, who has shown 10 major-suit cards during the bidding, has a diamond void. Furthermore, whoever winds up on lead after three clubs have been cashed should shift to a trump to stop spade ruffs. A trump switch, combined with East not playing the ♦A when a low diamond is led from dummy, defeats 4♥.

Play commentary: If the defenders do not shift to a trump after winning three clubs, declarer gets home on a cross-ruff, but must cash the two top spades before crossruffing. □