

Clues from the Bidding Answers

#1) A successful heart finesse, or ruffing out the heart queen, will be worth nothing. Success depends solely on guessing the club position. If East holds the ♣A, you need to play a club to the king. If instead, East holds the ♣Q, you must play a club to the jack. Which is it to be? East has shown up with nine points in spades and diamonds. If he held the ♣A too that would give him a total of thirteen points and he would have opened the bidding. You should therefore play a club to the jack.

#2) It seems from East's two of diamonds at Trick 1 (a discouraging card) that West holds AKQ in the suit. After drawing trumps you should play on clubs to DISCOVER how the missing honors in that suit lie. If West holds both the ace and king, this will bring his point count to 16. He will not have room for the heart queen and you should therefore finesse East for the card. If instead West turns up with only the ace of clubs, he will need the heart queen to bring his total within the 15-17 point range. You will therefore finesse against West in hearts.

#3) Since West has overcalled, and holds six clubs to his partner's two, the odds favor East holding the Q X X in the trump suit. Should you therefore cross to dummy and take a trump finesse? No, because if East does hold the trump queen you can guarantee the contract by playing king and another trump. If East wins the third round with the queen he will have to break one of the red suits, giving you a tenth trick. Reading the most likely lie of the cards is one thing. You must still think of the deal as a whole and calculate the best play to deal with any lie of the cards.

#4) There are eighteen points out, so there is room for West to hold the ace of clubs. However, he will surely not hold the ace of clubs and the king of spades. This would mean East has opened on a ten-count and West had refrained from some sort of response when holding eight points and at least four spades. You should therefore rise with the king of clubs. If this loses to West's ace, you can be sure that a subsequent finesse will succeed.