

DON'S CORNER

by Don Gardner

You and partner are playing in your weekly pair game when you pick up these cards:

	Partner (North)
♠	6 3 2
♥	K Q 6 2
♦	A 7 3
♣	6 4 3

	You (South)
♠	A K J 9 8 7 4
♥	5
♦	4 2
♣	A K 7

You briskly bid to 4♠ and receive the opening lead of the Q♦. Before playing to the first trick, you notice that you have three losers: one ♦, one ♥, and one ♣.

After the game was over, you were checking the results and found every pair was in 4♠, but few made it. You went down also and wondered what you should have done to succeed.

Take a few moments to plan what you might have done to be successful.

SCROLL DOWN FOR THE SOLUTION

SOLUTION

Here is the full layout:

		Partner (North)		
		♠	6 3 2	
		♥	K Q 6 2	
		♦	A 7 3	
		♣	6 4 3	
	West			East
♠	---	♠	Q 10 5	
♥	J 10 8 3	♥	A 9 7 4	
♦	Q J 10 6 5	♦	K 9 8	
♣	Q 10 9 8	♣	J 5 2	
		You (South)		
		♠	A K J 9 8 7 4	
		♥	5	
		♦	4 2	
		♣	A K 7	

You had won the opening lead with the A♦ and played a spade to your ace. (You now had to fail in your contract.) Finding the 3-0 split, you played the K♠ and then lead a ♥. East won and continued ♦. You then had to lose a trick in each suit.

Before playing to the first trick, you notice that you can do nothing about the red suit losers. But the ♣ loser is a "slow" loser and you can do something about it. The opening lead takes away your one obvious dummy entry, but you need a second entry for discarding your ♣ loser on a ♥. How can you do that? Here's how:

- 1) Win the opening lead with the A♦
- 2) Immediately lead a ♠ and finesse the Jack.
- 3) a) If the finesse loses, you have your extra entry for the ♣ discard after drawing trumps.
b) If the finesse wins, you have no ♠ loser.

This is a clear case of a win-win play.