

# DON'S CORNER

*by Don Gardner*

This hand came up in a recent club game. You and partner bid to a reasonable four spade contract with these cards. You are South

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

The opening lead was the Ace of Clubs with a club continuation. Plan the Play.

**SCROLL DOWN FOR THE SOLUTION**

# SOLUTION

I was going to give you this hint. "Every pair played a spade game contract but few made it." But this hint not available at the table might have led you to the correct approach with little thought.

A minor suit opening lead holds your minor suit losses to two and clearly focuses your attention on the trump suit.

Here is the full layout:

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

If you recognize you have the important spot cards in the trump suit, you can protect against a 4-1 split in either defender's hand by making a safety play in trumps. Playing the Ace of trumps and then a low spade to the nine will restrict your losers to one against any 4-1 split (and, of course, against any 3-2 split).