

## Ivaska on Bridge



# Heart Suit Gives Declarer Blind Spot, Causes Dummy to See Red

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|        |          |        |
|--------|----------|--------|
|        | North    |        |
|        | ♠AQJ3    |        |
|        | ♥J5      |        |
|        | ♦872     |        |
|        | ♣AKQ4    |        |
| West   |          | East   |
| ♠10642 |          | ♠K7    |
| ♥7     |          | ♥Q832  |
| ♦KQ10  |          | ♦AJ653 |
| ♣J9763 |          | ♣108   |
|        | South    |        |
|        | ♠985     |        |
|        | ♥AK10964 |        |
|        | ♦94      |        |
|        | ♣52      |        |

|       |      |       |      |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| North | East | South | West |
| 1NT   | Pass | 4♥*   | Pass |
| Pass  | Pass |       |      |

\* Transfers are not used in this Rubber Bridge game.

Opening Lead: ♦K

This hand was partially responsible for breaking up a recent rubber bridge game. East began the defense with ♦K, ♦Q, ♦10, South ruffed the third round of diamonds and laid down the ♥A. Unblocking dummy's ♥J. He then crossed to the ♣A and led the ♥5 to his ♥10. Declarer now unsuccessfully finessed the ♠Q and East defended well by simply returning a club (a fourth round of diamonds would have forced South into a successful trump coup ending he might not have visualized for himself).

Declarer did his best at this point by ruffing dummy's ♣4, but East was able to pitch his remaining spade, and trump the ♠A as South attempted to return to dummy.

“Would you bet even money on a horse that was going off at 4-1?” North inquired in an apparent non-sequitur.

South admitted utter lack of knowledge of equestrian sports, but his partner ventured the observation that his ignorance of horse racing was surpassed only by his ignorance of bridge. End of game.

Oh, well, it probably wouldn't have gone on much longer anyhow. Declarer's play of the ♥A at trick 4 was guarding against a singleton queen in West, but as his partner impolitely pointed out, a small singleton was four times as likely.

Therefore, he should have taken a first round trump finesse. Many players have a blind spot about this suit combination. Somehow it seems much more ignominious to lose to a singleton queen than to a trebly guarded queen, relative frequencies notwithstanding.

**Here's another example** of a seemingly automatic play being incorrect: suppose you need all four tricks from the following combination:

|      |       |      |
|------|-------|------|
|      | Dummy |      |
|      | KJ42  |      |
| West |       | East |
| ?    |       | ?    |
|      | You   |      |
|      | A965  |      |

*Don't put down the ace first.* Just finesse low to the jack. Nothing can be done about a singleton queen to your right (except the saving of an extra undertrick), but the correct play picks up the suit if there is a stiff queen on your left and 10873 on your right (win the king, cash the jack, and finesse East's 10 with you're A-9).