

Four Spade Opening -- Problem

Board 9

South Deals ♠ 10 8 6 4
 ♥ J 5 3
 E-W Vul ♦ K J 7 6 2
 ♣ 10

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			4 ♠

All pass
 4 ♠ by South
 Lead: ♥ 4

[deal rotated for convenience]

East wins the ♥ K and leads the ♥ A. Plan the play.

Four Heart Overcall -- Problem

Board 11

North Deals ♠ A 5 3
 ♥ J 10 4 3
 None Vul ♦ J 3
 ♣ 6 4 3 2

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	1 ♦	4 ♥

All pass
 4 ♥ by South
 Lead: ♦ 8

[deal rotated for convenience]

The opening lead of the ♦ 8 goes to the ♦ 9. Plan the play.

Four Spade Opening -- Solution

Board 9	♠ 10 8 6 4			
South Deals	♥ J 5 3			
E-W Vul	♦ K J 7 6 2			
	♣ 10			
	♠ 3		♠ 2	
♥ Q 10 6 4		W N E	♥ A K 9 8 2	
♦ A 8 5 4		W S E	♦ Q 9	
♣ K 8 6 3			♣ A J 5 4 2	
	♠ A K Q J 9 7 5			
	♥ 7			
	♦ 10 3			
	♣ Q 9 7			
West	North	East	South	
			4 ♠	
All pass				
4 ♠ by South				
Lead: ♥ 4				

East wins the ♥ K and leads the ♥ A. Plan the play.

This is all going to come down to guessing the diamond suit, if that's possible. East has shown ♥ A and ♥ K (but not the queen), plus either the ♣ A or ♣ K, but not both. Having both top clubs, West surely would have led one on the opening lead, rather than lead from a broken heart suit; similarly, East probably would have taken one of two top clubs before returning to hearts.

All this is nice, but it is not clear who has the diamonds honors. There are two hints that West has the ace: the opening lead from a broken suit suggests a diamond lead was less attractive; and East has shown more points than West so far. If you feel these hints are sufficient, draw trump and lead a diamond to the King.

Here is another plan: Ruff the second heart, and immediately lead the ♦ 3, before the opponents can get any more information. If West rises with the ace, to prevent you stealing your second singleton, you are home. If not, assume West does not have the ace, and insert the jack. As Eddie Kantar says, it only hurts for a little while.

Either of these plans is better than what I did: fool around trying to get more information (I did locate the ♣ J), and then get locked on dummy to lead a diamond. Wake up, Pete!

Four Heart Overcall -- Solution

Board 11	♠ A 5 3			
North Deals	♥ J 10 4 3			
None Vul	♦ J 3			
	♣ 6 4 3 2			
	♠ Q 9 8 7 6		♠ K 4	
♥ 9 5		W N E	♥ —	
♦ 8 7 6 2		W S E	♦ A K Q 10 9 5 4	
♣ K 10			♣ Q J 8 5	
	♠ J 10 2			
	♥ A K Q 8 7 6 2			
	♦ —			
	♣ A 9 7			
West	North	East	South	
	Pass	1 ♦	4 ♥	
All pass				
4 ♥ by South				
Lead: ♦ 8				

With nine tricks, the best line is to play on clubs, hoping for the suit to break, or for an opponent to have to break spades. I'm sure you see that you cannot earn a second spade trick on your own, unless West foolishly covers your lead of the jack with the queen. Hold that chance in reserve.

Rule: Don't cover the first round of a repeatable finesse.

Ruff the opening lead. Lead a trump to dummy (East showing out), and ruff the last diamond with the ♥ A. Draw the last trump.

Now the ace and another club. At the table, West did not find the winning play of throwing the ♣ K under the bus. In with that card, West led a spade, ducked to the king. The subsequent spade finesse produced the tenth trick.

Note that if the ♣ 6 and 8 were swapped, the contract could not be beaten.