

**Board 10**  
 North Deals  
 Both Vul

Club Special -- Problem

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



♠ A Q J 9 6 5  
 ♥ A Q 4 2  
 ♦ 6 3  
 ♣ 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2♦ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	2♠ <sup>2</sup>
Dbl	3♠	4♣	4♠

All pass

1. Two of top three honors or AJ10.
2. Natural & forcing (standard).

4♠ by South

Lead: ♣ K

In a club special matchpoint game, everybody has something to say. You push on to game with your 5-loser hand. After winning the ♣ K, West leads the ♣ 2 to partner's ace, and you ruff the ♠ 5.

Partner's two winners do not assure you will have ten tricks. This is the most difficult play problem I have yet presented. Take plenty of time to decide on your line of play. Be specific.

**Board 10**  
North Deals  
Both Vul

Club Special -- Solution

♠ K 8 7	<table style="border: 1px solid gray; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W     E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W     E	S	♠ 3
N					
W     E					
S					
♥ K J 7 6	♥ 10 9 8				
♦ 7	♦ Q 8 4 2				
♣ K Q J 9 2	♣ A 10 6 5 3				

  

♠ A Q J 9 6 5
♥ A Q 4 2
♦ 6 3
♣ 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2♦ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	2♠ <sup>2</sup>
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1. Two of top three honors or AJ10.
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4♠ by South

Lead: ♣ K

Assuming there is a spade loser, you have five spades, a heart, and two top diamonds. The opponents have bid to the four-level, with less than half the deck between them. Odds are, suits are not splitting. For the takeout double, West probably has four hearts headed by the king.

Knowing the heart layout, a creditable start would be to place the ♥ Q on the table. This yields the unavoidable heart loser while preventing East from leading a spade through. West wins and returns the ♠ 7. You win the ♠ 9 in hand, play ace and ruff a heart with the ♠ 4. Now cash ♦ A K. If they live, ruff a diamond with the ♠ A, and ruff the fourth heart with the ♠ 10. Unfortunately, unless West has a third diamond, they will now get a trump promotion for two trump tricks (ruffing small or discarding on your ♠ Q or J). In actuality, West ruffs the ♦ K and leads back the last trump. Down one, with an unavoidable second heart loser. However, you go down two, if you lead a small heart instead of the queen; East wins it for a trump through.

The contract can always be made by leading a diamond at trick three. Rise with the ♦ K, and finesse the ♥ Q. West does best to return a spade. Win the ♠ 9 hand and lead another diamond. West has two losing options:

1. Ruff and return the last trump. You win, ruff a heart, and pitch the last heart on the ♦ K. Diamonds are not good, but you have only trumps left. West has ruffed your loser with their trump winner; you get *six* spades in hand, one ruff on dummy, and three top red cards.
2. Pitch a club (a heart discard would let declarer establish your fourth with one ruff). Now you win the ♦ K *en passant*. Lead a high diamond, which East must cover with the ♦ Q to protect West's trumps. Ruff small.
  - a. If West overruffs, win the return, draw the last trump, and ruff to the good dummy.
  - b. If West pitches, play ♥ A, ruff a heart with the ♠ 4, ruff a diamond with the ♠ A, and ruff the last heart with the ♠ 10. All that are left are your ♠ Q J and West's ♠ Q 8.

Working all this out at the table is not trivial. The winning line includes multiple advanced techniques and perfect timing to prevent a trump promotion. All this would be moot, had East overtaken the opening lead to put a trump back, a much easier thing to do than to make 4♠ without that defense.