

Sitting South you pick up this hand:

♠ A Q 9 ♥ J 10 ♦ A Q 4 3 ♣ 9 6 5 3

The bidding goes: West North East South

1 ♦ pass 1 ♠ pass

1NT pass 4 ♠ pass

pass pass

The opening lead: it doesn't look attractive to lead either a spade or a diamond, the suits bid by the opposition, so the choice is between hearts and clubs.

With no high cards in clubs and touching honours in hearts, it looks reasonable to start with the ♥ J, top of touching honours.

This the dummy:

♠ 8 6

♥ A K 2

♦ K 10 9 2

♣ Q 10 8 7

♠ A Q 9 (you)

♥ J 10

♦ A Q 4 3

♣ 9 6 5 3

You lead the ♥ J and a low heart is played from dummy and declarer wins the first trick with the ♥ Q

Declarer now leads a heart to dummy's ♥ A and you follow with you ♥ 10, and partner plays a low heart. Declarer continues with dummy's ♥ K, partner plays a low heart and declarer discards a diamond.

You have your first key decision, what will you play to this trick? It seems reasonable to ruff this trick with the ♠ 9 as that will give you one defensive trick, and you are assured two more with the ♠ A-Q.

Another critical moment in the defence, what do you lead to the next trick?

It looks as though it would have been a good idea to lead the ♦ A at trick one, but too late for that now.

If you still decide to try the ♦ A it will defeat the contract if declarer has a diamond remaining, so it seems ok to try, however declarer ruffs with a low spade.

Declarer now leads a low spade and you win with the ♠ Q, but what now? The only suit left to try is a low ♣, however dummy's ♣ Q wins the trick and declarer plays another spade which you win with your Ace, but declarer claims the rest of the tricks with good spades and club winners.

When this actual deal was played in the 1967 World Championship, sitting N/S for North America were Canadians Eric Murray and Sami Kehela.

Let's see how they managed to defeat the contract against their opponents from Thailand.

Against Easts 4♠ contract Murray also lead the heart and declarer won with the queen...declarer continued with another heart to dummy and then followed with a third round of hearts, discarding a diamond (as before) and Murray ruffed this trick.

Murray then shifted to a club, he reasoned that since declarer was in such a hurry to discard a diamond, it would appear he only started with one diamond and two hearts. That left 10 cards in spades and clubs in declarer's hand.

If declarer held 7 spades there was unlikely to be any way to defeat the contract. If, however, declarer started with only 6 spades, declarer presumably also held 4 clubs. That meant partner, North, held only one club. It also meant partner started with 2 trumps.

If he could give partner a club ruff after gaining the lead with the ♠ A or ♠ Q, that would be the setting trick.

Dummy's ♣ Q won the trick with partner following suit. Next a spade was led from dummy to declarer's ♠ K and Murray won with the ♠ A. Then following through with his reasoning Murray led a club and was happy to see Kehela ruff this trick. It didn't matter what Kehela led next, sooner or later Murray was assured one more trick with the ♠ Q and 4♠ was down one.

Instead of getting a trick with the ♦ A, the defence got 4 spade tricks – three spades and a club ruff to defeat the contract.

The full deal:

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

The North American team went on to win the match.

Murray and Kehela are considered one of the best pairs to have never won the World Championship, they finished second three times. They were an imposing pair at the table and opponents were often intimidated playing against them. They both smoked cigars in the days when smoking was still permitted during bridge events.

In one match, when the opponents sat down at their table, they both pulled out their cigars and asked, "do you mind if we smoke?" "Not at all" replied the opponents. "Oh well," they said and put their cigars away!