

This deal comes, originally from my regular *American Bridge Teacher's Quarterly* column "Out for the Count," published many years ago. I have edited it somewhat – after all, the article originally referred to rubber bridge!

Sitting West, I was dealer and picked up these cards:

Board 16

West Deals

E-W Vul

♠ A Q 4
 ♥ 8 6 3 2
 ♦ 5
 ♣ K J 10 8 7



A pretty average hand. The one good thing about it was that the honors I did have were concentrated in the same suits. The hand was not strong enough to open, so I passed. North opened 1♦. My partner passed and South responded 1♥. My hand wasn't good enough for a vulnerable two-level overcall, so I passed again. North raised to 2♥, partner passed, and South made a game try with 3♦. Again I passed. North accepted with 4♥ and it went pass, pass, back to me.

Here's the bidding again:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass

What had I learned from the bidding?

- The opponents had minimum values for their game. North made a minimum rebid of 2♥. South made a game *try* of 3♦. Apparently he couldn't force to game either. I expected them to have somewhere between 24 and 27 points, including distribution. If that was the case, partner must have some values – probably about 5-8 HCP.
- How were the hearts distributed? Each opponent had at least four. It was possible they had a nine-card fit. At any rate, they had at least eight hearts between them, and I was looking at four, leaving partner with, at most, a singleton. With short hearts, it seemed likely partner would have a few black cards to compliment mine.
- Where was the spade suit? Both opponents had the opportunity to bid spades at a low level and neither did so. It was likely neither of them held a four-card spade suit. If that was the case, partner must have at least four spades and, with his shortness in hearts, was a favorite to hold more than four.

All of a sudden my cards started to look golden. The black suit honors would be working with partner's length, the singleton diamond took on new luster, and even

Just Lucky

by [Rich Waugh](#)

my heart length was an asset, since it marked partner with no more than a singleton (and, presumably, no wasted values) in hearts.

Here was a hand not good enough for a two-level overcall and now I wanted to bid, vulnerable, at the four- or five-level! In fact, I was convinced it must be right to bid. The problem was *what* to bid. I wanted to make a takeout double but, a double at this point would be for penalties and partner would pass. The choice seemed to be between a really offbeat, but reasonably sound, 4♠ – the inference that partner held at least five spades was so strong that a 4♠ call might well be the winning action, and a somewhat saner 5♣.

I bid 5♣ with the full expectation of making it. At unfavorable vulnerability, I don't even *think* about sacrificing.

North doubled and led the ♥K.

Dummy hit the table with just about what I'd anticipated. This was the full deal:

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

When the ♣Q turned up onside, I quickly wrapped up twelve tricks. As expected, 4♠ would have been cold, too.

Was I simply lucky? Perhaps.

I was fortunate to find partner with the ♦A instead of some other, lesser values. But take away the ♦A and the hand still makes 5♣.

Lucky? You decide.