

Finesse

West leads the ♠Q. How do you plan to make nine tricks?

Solution:

You have seven tricks on top and need a minimum of four diamond tricks to make your contract. Suppose the full deal is:

Imagine you win the spade lead with the ace and finesse the ♦J. In this case, the finesse loses and a spade return will leave you at least a trick short. This would be the case even when the diamonds are 3-3 because the entry to the diamonds has been removed.

Board 19

South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ A Q 8
♥ J 10 8 7 3
♦ 6 5
♣ 7 6 4

♠ K 10 7 6 5 3 2
♥ 6
♦ J 7
♣ K 8 3

♠ J 4
♥ A K Q 5 4
♦ A
♣ J 10 9 5 2

♠ 9
♥ 9 2
♦ K Q 10 9 8 4 3 2
♣ A Q

West	North	East	South
			1 ♥
2 ♦	4 ♥	4 ♠	5 ♥
Dbl	All pass		
5 ♥ x by South			
Lead: ♠ 9			

The best approach is to play a diamond to the king and continue by overtaking the ♦J with dummy's ace, even if West had followed with a low card. On the given layout, as the ♦Q has fallen, you will dislodge the ♦10 from East's hand and make nine tricks: two spades, two hearts, four diamonds and a club.

If the diamonds had been 3-3, the third round of diamonds would establish the suit, with the king of spades as the entry to cash them. Notice that you will succeed when either defender began with a singleton or doubleton ♦Q or ♦10. As we have seen, dummy's 9-8-7 are good enough to knock out the remaining diamond honor, allowing you to make four diamond tricks and the contract.