

Dummy

♠AK6432

♥5

♦95

♣K1075

Declarer

♠8

♥Q96

♦AK432

♣AQJ2

<u>Dummy</u>	<u>Opp</u>	<u>Declarer</u>	<u>Opp</u>
1S	P	2D	P
2S	P	3C	P
4N	P	5S	P
6C	P	P	P

Opening Lead: heart 3

Your partner has excellent slam bidding judgment, as illustrated in this hand. You are playing 2 over 1, and once you show your club suit, your partner realizes what a powerful hand he has. He bids Roman Key Card Blackwood, and once you show 2 key cards and the Q of trumps, he knows six should have good plays.

The opponents win the opening lead with the ace of hearts and return a club. Can you justify your partner's confidence by finding the winning line of play on this hand?

Send your answers to me: billpuzzles@bridgesights.com

The Answer

I am going to do a small experiment. Just below, I present the same hands, except that dummy and declarer are reversed. Before reading further, now decide how you play the hand, assuming the same heart lead and club continuation.

Dummy

♠8
♥Q96
♦AK432
♣AQJ2

Declarer

♠AK6432
♥5
♦95
♣K1075

I suspect many of you came up with a different line when the hands are presented in this new way.

I will discuss the line assuming the hands are arranged as above (reversed from the original puzzle). Your best plan is to try and set up spades. Win the first club in dummy. Play a spade to the ace and ruff a spade, Lead a club, overtaking in your hand, and ruff another spade. Ruff a heart to get back to your hand. Draw the last trump (assuming trumps are 3-2). Assuming both opponents followed to the first two rounds of spades, you can now run your spades and take the last two diamond tricks. This line of play depends only on a 3-2 trump break and no worse than a 4-2 spade break, both of which are odds on favorites.

When the hands were as originally presented, I would guess that many of you tried to set up diamonds. This is a much more difficult line. You must also ruff a heart to get rid of one heart loser (the other heart can go on the 2nd spade). So, if diamonds are 4-2, you have to ruff 3 times in the long spade hand (2 diamonds and a heart), and the transportation between the 2 hands is virtually impossible.

The reason I presented the puzzle this way is that many players, even advanced ones, find it difficult to visualize setting up dummy. This is particularly true when you are playing live, and you are physically holding declarer's cards. Setting up dummy is sometimes referred to as a "dummy reversal". I suggest you add this to your arsenal of declarer play techniques, as it often comes in handy.