

## Loser on Loser by Roger Lord

Dealer: West  
Vul: None

	<b>North</b>		
	♠ 83		
	♥ Q853		
	♦ A86		
	♣ A874		
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>	
♠ KQJ965		♠ 107	
♥ 10		♥ J764	
♦ 543		♦ QJ7	
♣ Q52		♣ KJ93	
	<b>South</b>		
	♠ A42		
	♥ AK92		
	♦ K1092		
	♣ 106		

<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>
---	2 Spades	Pass	Pass
2 Notrump	Pass	3 Spades	Pass
4 Hearts	All Pass		

Opening Lead: Spade King

Aggressive bidding propels North-South into a precarious game. When West's weak two spades is passed around, South has to decide how to respond. Double would leave South in a tough spot if partner's response is three clubs. Instead, South could opt for two notrump and hope that partner does not expect the full values that a direct-seat two notrump overcall would promise. North's hand is worth a game-going cuebid of three spades, looking for a 4-4 heart fit, which he finds.

In four hearts, South ducks the spade king opening and wins the jack continuation. South might start to draw trumps, ace first, then low to the queen, revealing LHO's singleton ten and RHO's jack-fourth. He could finesse the nine and pick up trumps, but then he cannot figure out how to take ten tricks.

To succeed, declarer must utilize dummy's ruffing power. He should advance a third spade at trick three, keeping in mind that RHO is likely to show out due to West's weak two-bid. How should declarer ruff--low, medium or high?

The answer is none of the above. Ruffing with any spot card would allow an overruff, whereas ruffing with the queen would weaken trumps and create a natural trump trick for the defense. In any case, a trump loser would bring declarer's losses to four, one in each suit.

The solution is to discard a diamond on the third spade, thereby substituting a spade loser for an eventual diamond loser. Declarer can win a club switch and play diamonds, ace, king, and low, ruffing low in dummy, as the queen and jack fall. (Note that East cannot foil this line by discarding a diamond on the third spade, as this would set up South's ten without his needing a ruff.) Now the trump suit is available for pick-up, ace first, then low to the queen and back to the nine and king. The diamond ten is South's tenth trick.

An interesting variation occurs when West, at trick four, persists in leading another spade. Now, declarer can ruff with dummy's eight, allowing East to overruff while sluffing a losing club. The effect is a second successive "loser-on-loser" play!