

**Entry Finesse  
By Roger Lord**

**Dealer: South  
Vul: North-South**

	<b>North</b>	
	♠ K7	
	♥ A106	
	♦ 98652	
	♣ 1076	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
♠ J9		♠ 10852
♥ J874		♥ K932
♦ Q107		♦ J3
♣ KJ92		♣ Q53
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ AQ643	
	♥ Q5	
	♦ AK4	
	♣ A84	

South	West	North	East
1 Spade	Pass	1 Notrump	Pass
3 Clubs	Pass	3 Spades	Pass
4 Spades	Pass	Pass	Pass

Contract: Four Spades

Opening Lead: Heart Four

In some respects, South had enough to open two notrump. He chose to open a safer one spade, to which North responded one notrump, forcing one round and unlimited. Opener's jump shift to three clubs on a three-card suit was the cheapest game-force available.

North rebid three spades, which was a forced preference, not a raise. Fearing a heart attack, South eschewed three notrump, opting for a seven-card fit in four spades.

You are South, declarer. You get the four of hearts lead, which you duck to East's king. East returns the club three. What is your line of play to make four spades?

One line would be to win the club ace, cash the heart queen, cross to dummy's spade king, cash the heart ace, draw two more trumps in your hand, take the ace and king of diamonds, and hope that trumps have broken 3-3 so that your two remaining trumps will be good. Whoops! Trumps broke 2-4, so you made only nine tricks.

As the cards lie, the winning line is to establish a small diamond in dummy in order to discard a club loser. How can you do that without conceding four tricks in the process? Observe.

Start by unblocking the heart queen on East's king (you'll see why). When East switches to clubs, duck the first and take the second. Play the ace and king of diamonds (defenders follow). Next, lead a heart towards the table and finesse the ten. Your previous heart queen unblock enables you to enter dummy while taking the needed second heart trick. Now cash the heart ace and discard your diamond four. Nobody ruffs—so far, so good.

Next, lead a diamond from dummy and watch what RHO plays. He may ruff, in which case you'll sluff your remaining club. More likely, RHO will sluff, in which case you'll be able to ruff low, which establishes dummy's small diamonds.

In the latter case, play your spade ace and a spade to the king. Then lead a good diamond from dummy and sluff your club. If East does not ruff, that's a winner! If East does ruff with the eight, do not overruff— this is East's natural trump trick. Sluff your club, and your last two cards, the queen and six of trumps, are sitting astride East's trump ten for the ninth and tenth tricks.

Nine tricks in three no trump would have been easier. But ten tricks in spades would have scored a top.

If you are interested, you may study the deal and, assuming West's opening lead is a heart, figure out how four spades can be defeated. It's OK to inspect all four hands.