

# 287. Auto-mechanical

*By Ron Klinger*

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

North  
♠ K43  
♥ AJ75  
♦ QJ74  
♣ Q8

West  
♠ J10985  
♥ 92  
♦ A8  
♣ 10432

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 1♦    | Pass | 1♥    |
| Pass | 2♥    | Pass | 4♥    |
| Pass | Pass  | Pass |       |

1. West leads the ♠J: three – queen – six.
2. East continues with the ♠A: seven . . .

Which spade do you play as West?

*What did East have in spades originally?*

With ♠A-Q-x, East would have played low on West's ♠J. Therefore, East began with A-Q doubleton.

*How many spades did South have initially?*

You had five, dummy had three and you have placed East with two spades. Therefore, South began with three spades.

*Your side has already taken two tricks? Where can you collect two more tricks?*

If partner plays a diamond next, you will win and then a spade from you will allow partner to ruff dummy's ♠K.

*How can you let partner know you want a diamond next?*

By a suit-preference signal, high card for high suit, low card for low suit, trumps excluded. With partner out of spades and hearts being trumps, diamonds = high suit, clubs = low suit. You should play the ♠10 under the ♠A to show partner you want a diamond switch.

*What is the big danger at trick 2?*

The huge risk is that you go on to 'automatic pilot' when partner plays the ♠A at trick 2. Since partner is winning the trick anyway, you might sleepily play the 'auto' ♠5 ('Don't want to waste anything here.'). Then you are disappointed when partner switches to a club and 4♥ makes. Here is the full deal ([see next page](#)):

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

|          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|
|          | North    |          |
|          | ♠ K43    |          |
|          | ♥ AJ75   |          |
|          | ♦ QJ74   |          |
|          | ♣ Q8     |          |
| West     |          | East     |
| ♠ J10985 |          | ♠ AQ     |
| ♥ 92     |          | ♥ 10     |
| ♦ A8     |          | ♦ 109652 |
| ♣ 10432  |          | ♣ J9765  |
|          | South    |          |
|          | ♠ 762    |          |
|          | ♥ KQ8643 |          |
|          | ♦ K3     |          |
|          | ♣ AK     |          |

The play should go:

1. ♠J: three – queen – six.
2. ♠A: seven – ten (suit-preference) – four.
3. ♦10 or ♦9 (high-hate): three – ace – four.
4. Spade – king – ruffed, one down, East-West +100.

If East switches to a club at trick 3, South wins, draws trumps and has ten tricks, +620.

## Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

|         |          |  |
|---------|----------|--|
| North   |          |  |
| ♠ QJ976 |          |  |
| ♥ QJ5   |          |  |
| ♦ 7     |          |  |
| ♣ QJ64  |          |  |
|         | East     |  |
|         | ♠ AK     |  |
|         | ♥ 97     |  |
|         | ♦ Q542   |  |
|         | ♣ 109532 |  |

|      |                   |          |                    |
|------|-------------------|----------|--------------------|
| West | North             | East     | South              |
|      |                   |          | 1NT <sup>(1)</sup> |
| Pass | 2♣ <sup>(2)</sup> | Pass     | 3♥ <sup>(3)</sup>  |
| Pass | 4♥                | All Pass |                    |

(1) 15-17 points

(2) 5-card major Stayman

(3) 5 hearts, maximum points

If South had rebid 2♦ (minimum no 5-card major) or 2NT (maximum, no 5-card major), North was planning to rebid 3♥ next as a transfer, showing 5+ spades.

West leads the ♣A, ♣4 from dummy . . . which club do you play as East?

**Why not phone or email your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?**

*I am on a nut-free diet. I try to avoid people who drive me nuts.*