

## Fetching Partner - with John Koch

Playing in an “expert-newcomer” game opposite a much more fetching face than my usual fare, I hold in fourth seat:

♠ A K 9 6 5   ♥ 7   ♦ A 10 8   ♣ Q J 3 2

With our side vulnerable, West on my left opens **one club**. Partner passes, and East responds **one diamond**. I have a normal **one spade** overcall, and West bids a quick **one notrump**. Partner goes into an extended study, and I hold my breath as time stretches on. Suddenly, she grabs a handful of bidding cards and with a sweeping flourish puts **four spades** on the table. I peer at her over my glasses, and she blushes. Two passes follow, but West, a battle-tested veteran, **doubles**. I grimace inwardly and await my fate. The full auction:

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♦	1♠
1NT	4♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	All Pass		

West leads the ♦2 and partner tables a 4-3-3-3 seven-count with the same aplomb as she had displayed in jumping to game:

	♠ 10 7 2
	♥ A 8 6 2
	♦ 7 6 5
	♣ K 6 5
♦2 led	♠ A K 9 6 5
	♥ 7
	♦ A 10 8
	♣ Q J 3 2

### *Preliminary analysis:*

Goodness, she must believe in miracles! We are looking at two trump losers, two in diamonds, and the ace of clubs, for -500. But some of these hands are funny. If West has a singleton diamond, as the lead implies, this contract may play better than expected.

I win the ace of diamonds, and cash the ace of trumps, everyone following. Let me see if I can reconstruct West’s distribution. If he has a singleton diamond, he has twelve cards in the other suits. The double indicates four spades. There are eight hearts outstanding; since no one bid them, they are likely four-four. If so, I may be able to ruff two or three hearts in my hand. I lead a heart to dummy’s ace and take a ruff; next a club to dummy’s king, and another heart ruff. I have won six tricks, so the penalty won’t be too severe.

West wins my queen of clubs with his ace, and returns the queen of spades which I win with the king as East shows out. The jack of clubs holds with East discarding again. Now I ruff my last club in dummy, and lead dummy’s remaining heart: I ruff and West has to follow. I count my tricks: two red aces, two clubs, and six trumps, ten in all. West is left with two high trumps opposite East’s two high diamonds.

As West grumbles, partner gushes that she was sure we had enough for four spades. . . .

The full deal:

	♠ 10 7 2		
	♥ A 8 6 2		
	♦ 7 6 5		
	♣ K 6 5		
♠ Q J 8 3			♠ 4
♥ K Q 5 3			♥ J 10 9 4
♦ 2			♦ K Q J 9 4 3
♣ A 8 7 4			♣ 10 9
	♠ A K 9 6 5		
	♥ 7		
	♦ A 10 8		
	♣ Q J 3 2		

### *Point of Interest:*

- This is another example of a trump elopement. Declarer disregards his losers and concentrates on his winners. The goal is to ruff in hand with losing trumps under cover of the defender’s obligation to follow suit.