

♠♥♦♣ **COUNTING LOSERS** ♠♥♦♣

You are the dealer and this is your hand:

S	South
♠	K5
♥	K95
♦	A103
♣	KQ864

Since you have 15 balanced HCP's, you open 1NT. Your partner responds 4♥. You and he are playing Texas Transfers, where he is insistant on playing in a game of 4♠. This convention has the advantage of jumping over any bids made by the opponents to disturb our bidding or to signal for leads. It guarantees at least 6 spades and 10 points. Since you must have at least 2 spades, he knows there is a fit. This ends the auction and West leads the ♦8. How are you going to make 4♠?

N	North
♠	AQJ10764
♥	Q83
♦	962
♣	

West leads ♦8

S	South
♠	K5
♥	K95
♦	A103
♣	KQ864

You always count your losers in a suit contact. You have no spade losers, but you have 2 heart losers, two diamond losers and a whole lot of club losers. I don't know about you, but my head explodes with all those losers.

We usually count losers in the declarer's hand, but that is because declarer usually has the most trump. The hand with the most trump is called the master hand and actually, we should be counting losers in the master hand. In this case, as is usual with transfers, the dummy is the master hand. Let's see how many losers North has.

North has 2 heart losers and 2 diamond losers. He has no spade or club losers. That's more manageable. We only have to eliminate 1 loser. However, it's not obvious how this can be done. Any thoughts?

Ruffing either of the red suits is not possible, since they are both 3-3. But, I hope you noticed the ♠KQ. You have to lose one of those honors but the other honor is provides a loser discard in dummy's hand. You have to work on this immediately.

Win the opening lead with the ♦A and lead the ♠K. If West covers with the ♣A, you will trump in the dummy, come back to the ♠K and discard the losing diamond on the ♣Q. If West plays low, you don't trump, but discard the diamond. This is called a "loser on loser" play. You are collapsing two losers (the ♠K and the ♦2) on the same trick. East will win the ♣A and take one diamond. You will ruff the next diamond in the dummy, pull trump and promote the heart winner. You lose 1 heart, 1 diamond and 1 cub.

Look at the entire deal:

11 D	N North	W N E S
	♠ AQJ10764 ♥ Q83 ♦ 962 ♣	P 4♥ P 4♠ P P P
W West		E East
♠ 982 ♥ A1042 ♦ 85 ♣ J1032		♠ 3 ♥ J76 ♦ KQJ74 ♣ A975
	S South	
	♠ K5 ♥ K95 ♦ A103 ♣ KQ864	4♠ S NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/yywsoeca>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.